

Our Authors Study Club of Los Angeles, Inc. Senior Legacy Recognition Program

Name: Dr. Maulana Karenga

Recognition Category: Distinguished Seniors Recognition

Class: Charter Class of 2026 Inducted: August 1, 2026

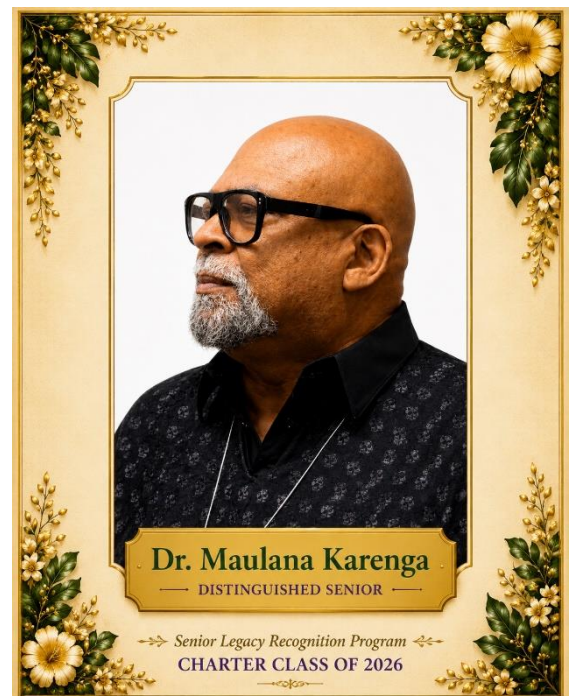
Recognized By: Our Authors Study Club of Los Angeles, Inc.

Dr. Maulana Karenga is one of the most influential scholars, cultural theorists, and public intellectuals of our time. For more than six decades, he has devoted his life's work to advancing the study, preservation, and celebration of African and African American history, culture, and thought. As a professor, author, institution builder, and internationally respected advocate for cultural renewal, his scholarship has shaped academic discourse while inspiring millions of people throughout the United States and around the world.

Widely recognized as the creator of Kwanzaa, Dr. Karenga established the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles), a value system that has encouraged generations to embrace unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. What began as a cultural celebration has become an enduring international observance that strengthens families, communities, educational institutions, and organizations committed to honoring the richness of African heritage and the ongoing contributions of people of African descent.

Beyond Kwanzaa, Dr. Karenga's scholarly contributions have profoundly influenced the fields of Black Studies, Africana Studies, ethics, philosophy, and cultural history.

Through his extensive body of books, articles, lectures, and public addresses, he has



challenged individuals to understand Black history not as an isolated narrative, but as an essential and inseparable part of the human story. His work has consistently emphasized the importance of historical knowledge, cultural identity, moral leadership, intellectual excellence, and service to humanity.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Karenga has remained steadfast in his belief that scholarship must be connected to community. His leadership has encouraged countless educators, students, civic leaders, and organizations to preserve historical memory, celebrate cultural achievement, and build institutions that empower future generations. His influence can be seen not only in classrooms and universities, but also in museums, libraries, community organizations, cultural centers, and annual celebrations of Black History Month across the nation.

After 40 years of distinguished service as Professor and Chair of the Department of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach, Dr. Karenga retired from the university in 2025. Yet, as he emphasized during his retirement celebration, this milestone does not mark the end of his work. Instead, he described it as "stepping into another special space" to continue his lifelong mission of scholarship, teaching, institution-building, and service.

Dr. Karenga explained that his work "is not a professional career, but a life vocation," and affirmed that he would "in no way cease the work of my life, but will simply step into another special space... continuing to teach, write, do community work, mentor, counsel and struggle as always."

Today, Dr. Karenga continues to serve as Executive Director of the African American Cultural Center (Us) and Chair of the National Association of Kawaida Organizations. He remains an active teacher, lecturer, mentor, and author, continuing to publish scholarly works, including a major volume on The Liberation Ethics of Haji Malcolm X, a new edition of Introduction to Black Studies, and collaborative research exploring the writings of ancient Egyptian women. He also continues to speak nationally and internationally while mentoring students and scholars and supporting educational and community institutions.

Our Authors Study Club is especially honored to welcome Dr. Karenga as one of its newest members. His lifelong dedication to preserving Black history, advancing cultural literacy, and promoting scholarship reflects the very principles upon which OASC was founded in 1945. As one of the nation's oldest continuously operating organizations devoted to the study and preservation of African American history and literature, OASC proudly recognizes Dr. Karenga's extraordinary legacy as one that has enriched the intellectual, cultural, and historical landscape for generations.

As a member of the Charter Class of 2026 of the OASC Senior Legacy Recognition Program, Dr. Maulana Karenga is celebrated not only for his extraordinary achievements, but also for his continuing commitment to education, scholarship, cultural renewal, and service. His life reminds us that a legacy is not measured solely by what

has been accomplished, but also by the enduring work that continues to inspire others. Through his writings, teaching, mentorship, and community leadership, Dr. Karenga continues to challenge us "to know our past and honor it, to engage our present and improve it, and to imagine a whole new future and forge it."

His life's work continues to educate, inspire, and affirm that preserving history is more than an act of remembrance; it is a responsibility to those who came before us and a gift to those who will follow.