Diasporic Soul Collaborates with Xavier University’s Stained Glass Initiative, the Bryant Educational Leadership Group & Chez Alpha Books to Recognize Black Grief & Those Now Gone

15 June 2020
ANNOUNCEMENT|PRESS RELEASE

On Saturday, June 20, 2020 Diasporic Soul, in collaboration with Xavier University’s Stained Glass Initiative, the Bryant Educational Leadership Group (BELG) and Chez Alpha Books (Dakar), will host **Stopping the Clock For Those Now Gone: A Remembrance Ritual for Black Loss, Black Love and Black Lives.**

**Stopping the Clock** is a response to the fact that we have collectively been facing a pandemic that is disproportionately affecting us and “racism [that] is as pernicious as ever” (Roxane Gay, *The New York Times*).

**Stopping the Clock** will allow us to acknowledge our loss and honor our grief with **SOUL**, a transformative healing resource that reflects the cultural sensibilities of the African Diaspora.
“As a child, I never fully understood my parents’ traditions when someone in our family or community died, but, now, as an adult, I now understand that they were practicing long-standing cultural traditions that helped them feel more grounded as they struggled with loss and death,” offers Cincinnati native Angela Franklin, 2019-2020 Xavier University Stained Glass Initiative Artist-in-Residence and owner of Chez Alpha Books in Dakar, Senegal. Franklin will help us to honor our loss and acknowledge our grief by tapping into the creative and spiritual aspects of SOUL as she shares some of her family’s grief traditions and explains her work - “When She Feels Blue She Looks for the Red Birds” which is part of her "A Soul to Keep" series.

Dr. Nana Lawson Bush, Traditional African Priest, Chair of Pan-African Studies at University of California - Los Angeles and BELG Board Member, will feed us spiritually and culturally by holding “sacred space for us to [express] the emotions of grief that we know can [provide us] with powerful relief and healing.” Recognizing the way that our ancestors are venerated in cultures throughout the African Diaspora, Bush will lead the ritual’s symbolic action for the deceased that gives participants the opportunity to testify, to name who or what they have lost. Testifying will contribute to ensuring that the deceased are able to move on spiritually, which Bush advises us is very important to the well-being of both the living and those now gone.

Our session on 20 June 2020 will be followed by seven additional opportunities to creatively and intentionally acknowledge our loss, honor our grief and stay connected.

Stopping the Clock also serves an opportunity for young Black folks to express their creative talents in this gift that we are humbly offering to our people. Adrian Parker and Taylor Zachary are members of the 2018 Xavier University Django Praxis Diasporic Soul cohort and Lailya Leech is currently serving as the 2020 Diasporic Soul in Residence. Other contributors include
members of the 2019 Diasporic Soul cohort and recent Ohio State University graduate Lauren Todd as well as visual artist and 2018 Fulbright Scholar Winifer Estevez.

**Ritual Leaders:**

Angela Franklin  
Multi-Media Artist  
Founder|Owner of Chez Alpha Books (Dakar)  
2019-2020 Xavier University Stained Glass Initiative Artist-in-Residence  

Dr. Nana Lawson Bush  
Traditional African Priest  
Chair, Pan-African Studies California State University, Los Angeles  
BELG Board Member  

Dr. Kyra Shahid  
Director, Stained Glass Initiative & Center for Diversity & Inclusion Xavier University  
BELG Board Member  

Phyllis Jeffers-Coly  
Co-Founder & Co-Owner Diasporic Soul  

**Ritual Team Members**

Lailya Leech  
Diasporic Soul-in-Residence Videographer and Video Editor  

Adrian Parker  
Vocalist  
Ph.D. Student Miami University|Education Leadership  
2018 XU Diasporic Soul Cohort Member  

Taylor Azi Zachary  
Author, Song Writer & Interviewer  
2018 XU Diasporic Soul Cohort Member  

Eddy Coly  
Co-Founder & Co-Owner Diasporic Soul  

Lauren Todd  
Photographer & Videographer  

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