

Sacred Expo

(Continued from Page 1)
Embracing Our Youth Expo." The Expo will showcase two artists. A reception for the artists will be held at 4 p.m.

"Each year in the ten years that we have been open, the West Las Vegas Cultural Arts Center has provided programming that helps uplift individuals and the community," said Marcia Robinson, the center's director. "Find Your Sacred Spaces" gives women the opportunity to help other women. Something has been planned for everyone."

Ameenah Shafeeq hails from Las Vegas. Her photography captures the mountainous terrain surrounding the Las Vegas Valley. Judith Long, who creates media in oil, watercolor and fired clay, will travel to the Expo from Salt Lake City. Her recent experience, as an artist, is that of a "Sister of Discovery."

"This conference and exposition will demonstrate our diversity and how well women blend together for a common purpose," Ferguson-Muhammad said. "Judith Long and Ameenah Shafeeq are two excellent artists."

Long is indeed a "Sister of Discovery." Conducting genealogical research a couple of years ago, Long discovered what had been hidden in her family for several generations. Long found her family has African ancestors. What would have been a shock for some was a moment of revelation for Long.

"Two years ago in May, my sister, mother and I traveled into the South to research our ancestral lines and discovered that we have two White-mulatto marriages in our family from the late 1700s," said Long, who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mormon beliefs encourage members to search out family roots. For Long, the confirmation of African blood in the family was a mystical discovery.

Before her ancestral discovery, Long, a self-taught artist, was captivated with painting Black women. She really didn't know why. Now she knows it was an internal longing for acceptance of the sisterhood she felt with Black women.

"For years, I have found Black women to be absolutely fascinating," Long said. "I always had a sense about Black women and felt a special closeness to Black women without really knowing why. When we discovered that our ancestors were mixed with Africans, I was delighted and with that dis-

covery came a moment of clarity. Since then, I have experienced what I called a raised consciousness. I have a deeper understanding of who I am."

Shafeeq has an associates degree in photography from Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland. She holds a bachelor's degree from Cleveland State University.

"At this time, the focus of my photography is the Las Vegas Valley of Fire and Red Rock Canyon," Shafeeq said. "What I'm looking to do is capture the spiritual and serene aspects of the Nevada Mountains, desert and surrounding areas."

Two will serve as mistresses of ceremony. Dr. Rochelle Hooks is an instructor at the Community College of Southern Nevada and storyteller. Titilayo Akinlana is a spiritual teacher in the religious traditions in the West African region of Ifa. Her husband is a "Babalawo" and chief in the African Traditional Religion of Ifa.

"Women are the foundation of humanity," Hooks said. "We give birth to humanity. Because of this, we must continue to honor and heal each other. Women who attend the conference will experience an inner healing and learn to recognize the sacred spaces within themselves."

Three conference facilitators will lead workshops to help women "Find Your Sacred Spaces."

Antoinette M. Stanton, a native of Chicago, is certified personal trainer, group fitness instructor and professional dancer. She is a former featured performer with internationally acclaimed MUNTU Dance Theater in the Windy City. The troupe specializes in West African Dance. She has lived in the valley for 14 months.

Stanton will lead a session titled "Strengthening Our Inner Spirit through African Dance and Drum."

"What do I hear that makes me dance or want to dance?" Stanton asked rhetorically. "I have studied most forms of dance and because of that I have been exposed to all types of music. However, none of the music has touched my soul like the drums I dance to in African Dance. Those drums are the rhythm of my heart and the history of my people."

"When I hear those drums I feel as if I am the music and the music is me," said Stanton. "I feel as if I am my ancestors, and my ancestors are me."

Last summer, Stanton worked as a community-

based instructor for the "Healthy Hearts Project" programmed by the University of Nevada-Reno's Cooperative Extension.

"Your health is your wealth," said Stanton, who has committed the past 15 years of her life to increasing awareness about the benefits of incorporating regular physical activity into our lives.

She has consulted or instructed fitness projects for the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Bally's Total Fitness. Stanton is currently a personal trainer through the YMCA of Southern Nevada. She teaches step aerobics, aqua aerobics and senior chair aerobics, as well as instructs an adult African dance class at the West Las Vegas Cultural Arts Center.

Colette Lundy is a spiritually centered personal development and lifestyle coach. Her session, which will touch on mind, body and spirit, is titled "The Power in My Hair: African-American Sisterhood." An adept guide, she creates a sacred space where participants can witness their natural power and beauty.

"Some of the exercises used to help amplify one's true nature are inwardly focused," Lundy said. "Others are shared with the group, creating a supportive atmosphere and allows participants to declare and claim their acquired insights."

I believe in the healing power of community in women's lives," Lundy said. "I am committed to the process of creating communities which encourage women's growth, both individually and collectively."

Lillian Grant Baptiste is an expert at leadership and building community. She helps young women become rooted in a sense of self, culture and goal setting through rights of passage programs. In Savannah, Georgia, Baptiste plans, organizes and implements the programs of the Leadership Development Institute.

The Leadership Development Institute is an extensive training program which aims to build the capacity of neighborhood-based leaders and grassroots organizations to affect the change necessary to improve the quality of life in Savannah's neighborhoods.

"I have been active in the social-change movement for more than ten years," Baptiste said. "I believe in the power of community as a social force that can make a difference in the lives of young people."

For additional information, call 229-4800.

OPPORTUNITY DOESN'T ALWAYS KNOCK.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES THE FORM OF AN AD.



Announcing the start of something big. Your career at one of the world's most renowned resorts – The Mirage or TI.

We promise you a fun, challenging environment with some of the most generous benefits in the industry; including comprehensive health coverage and more chances for growth and promotion than anywhere else.

If you're motivated, outgoing, and ready to make a difference, contact us today.



ti
TREASURE ISLAND

mgmmirage.com/employment

For a complete listing of jobs at The Mirage or TI call 792-JOBS (5627) or log on to mgmmirage.com/employment.

Located at the NW corner of the TI Guest Parking Garage.

Equal Opportunity Employer. Pre-employment drug testing is a condition of employment.