

Barbara Becnel Receives The First Stanley Tookie Williams Award

Written by Robert ID2291

Friday, 20 January 2006 15:56 -

Barbara Becnel Receives: The First Stanley Tookie Williams Award for Leadership, Service, & Struggle

On 31 December 2005, the day of Kwanzaa, an ingathering of approximately 100 people occurred at Southeast Community Church in San Diego at the

inaugural commemorative ceremony "In Memory of Tookie: A Celebration Honoring the Life and Legacy of Stanley Tookie Williams –the Peacemaker."

The Serudj Institute of Effective Socialization as an act of culturally centered expression to pay honor to legacy of Stanley Tookie Williams established this commemorative event. The Serudj Institute is an Afrocentric social justice & activist ministry whose mission it is "To provide, service, education, advocacy, and research to prisoners and ex-offenders in their struggle to transform themselves into morally grounded, educationally competent, and socially responsible members of society: through education, organization, mobilization, and engagement in the context of a social justice movement."

"We believe in the person and cause of defending and honoring Tookie Williams. Without question in our mind what he stood for, lived for, and worked so hard for is certainly worthy of our memorializing him now that he is an ancestor" said Minister Tukufu Kalonji, Founder & Executive Director of the Serudj Institute during his opening Remarks. Furthermore, "Stan's life, redemption, work, and his death by way of state sanctioned murder offers us a wealth of the hard rock of reality; that we must study in our struggle against the death penalty, the established order's politics of oppression of Black and other people of color, the poor, and other issues facing us that require correcting, through our struggle to raise possibilities of a better society in which we live."

The memorial was marked by opening libation, to the ancestors and the lighting of the Kwanzaa setting's candles by children of the community. Next participants experienced a spirited poetic tribute by Sisters Kim & Michelle who through spoken words focused on our turning weaknesses in to strengths; such as Stan did in his personal redemption that translated into the transformation of nearly 200,000 young peoples. Next were reflections on Tookie's life by Mr.

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Doug Oden, President of the San Diego NAACP, Mr. Stephon Wilson of Overcoming Gangs and readings of Letters to the Living by Pastor Harry Cooper and Sis. Marissa Cole. Letters To The Living are a compilation by Dr. Maulana Karenga of Ancient African praise poems illustrating those in transition to the realm of the ancestors speaking to us as community.

San Diego's representative of the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, Minister Hugh Muhammad of Mosque #8 delivered an informational and inspirational reflection that built on the eulogy given by Min. Farrakhan at the Los Angeles on Dec 20th service for Stanley Tookie Williams. Min. Hugh moved the audience emotionally and spiritually as his teachings illustrated a comparative analysis between Stan Tookie Williams and Paul of Damascus. Min. Hugh building on the issue of Tookie overcoming religion described Tookie as "a man who walked in the footsteps of Jesus and united the human family." He went on to say that Tookie "was not murdered

because he was a bad man, he was murdered because of the potential good he could do, he said, Tookie was murdered for a crime he did not commit but repented for crimes he did commit." Furthermore Minister Hugh challenged the established order's white supremacist ideology for their savage murder of Tookie and also he challenged the community to do that which is required as a definitive community of Black peoples and the multicultural human family to challenge the oppressor and change the societal condition through a god driven spirit of resistance and building on the best of what our faith means impractical terms.

Another feature of the memorial service was the recognition of Ms. Zakiya Khabir, Ms. Jackie Clark, Ms. Marissa Cole, Pastor Anthony Currin, Ms. Kim Moore, and Ms. Laura Woodard for their high level of commitment and work as members of the Serudj Institute. Following was a reading of Tookie's obituary by 16 year old Tanreka Gilbert, and a Eulogy of Tookie by Minister Kalonji titled 'A Man of Dignity, Good Character, and Soul.' During the eulogy Minister Kalonji conducted a libation for Tookie which demonstrated practicing the African collective as he was assisted Ms. Marissa Cole and children of the community.

Minister Kalonji told the audience participants that in addition to this memorial honoring Stanley Tookie Williams; every year someone based on his/her good works will receive an award in Stanley Williams' name. The first recipient of the Stanley Tookie Williams Award for Excellence in Leadership, Service, & The Struggle for Justice, Peace & Bringing Good Into The World was none other than Ms. Barbara Becnel.

Ms. Becnel, Stan's closet friend and advocate who for a long time fought single handedly on behalf of Tookie. Ms. Becnel who was surprised expressed an emotional appreciation when

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hearing the announcement of her getting the award. While Ms. Becnel was unable to be physically present in San Diego due a storm in the bay area she was able to speak to San Diego; hear the reading of her letter of recognition; and receive the award via cell phone and sound system technology.

Additionally, San Diego was spoken to by Travon Williams, Stan's eldest son. Both Barbara and Travon was warmly received by San Diego with a highly spirited thunderous applause, testifying, and cheers that expressed a genuineness of love and respect for the both of them as Black people in struggle for the good. Likewise Barbara and Travon reciprocated San Diego with a heart felt appreciation for the work done in San Diego and will continue to be achieved in defense and honor of Tookie as they both made statements of adulation in reference to Minister Kalonji for his leadership and the work of those who supported and worked with him in the Campaign to Save Tookie as well as his ministry's other and especially its Community Peace Initiative The program ended with a beautiful Power Point & musical tribute to Stan titled "Tookie's Reception by the Ancestors."

Please visit The Serudj Institute of Effective Socialization

www.serudjinstitute.org

*Article was sent by Minister Tukufu Kalonji, we thank would like to thank him.