

Update on Morales Shakur Center

Written by Ronald B. McGuire ID3286
Monday, 05 February 2007 04:26 -

Morales / Shakur Center Update by Ronald B. McGuire

Youngbloods, Elders and Friends:

Yesterday about 80 students and several elders attended a forum on the history of the GUILLERMO MORALES / ASSATA SHAKUR COMMUNITY AND STUDENT CENTER at Harlem University (a/k/a CCNY) and to give students returning to classes an overview of the controversy over the Community Center's name. The panelists included ABIODUN OYEWOLE of the Last Poets, Esperanza Martel, a Puerto Rican activist and former City College faculty member who was purged for supporting student activists, and myself.

City Council member Charles Barron has called for a press conference on Thursday, February 8th at 1 PM outside the MORALES / SHAKUR COMMUNITY CENTER located in room 3/201 in the North Academic Center (NAC Building) at City College.

Council Member Barron has been outspoken in his support of the right of community members and students to name the Community Center in honor of GUILLERMO MORALES and ASSATA SHAKUR and he has condemned the decision by CUNY to remove the sign bearing the name of the Community Center from the room's entrance. Mr. Barron has called for the sign to be restored and for CUNY to officially designate the room in honor of GUILLERMO and ASSATA.

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The controversy over the name of the Community Center erupted in December after the New York Daily News published a prominent article and editorial condemning the decision to name the Community Center in honor of GUILLERMO MORALES and ASSATA SHAKUR, two former City College student activists who live in Cuba where they have been granted political asylum. A day after the Daily News article was published the City College administration removed the sign bearing Guillermo and ASSATA'S names from the entrance of the Community Center and threatened students who work at the Community Center with disciplinary action if they replaced the sign.

Yesterday's panel was organized by the students working at the Community Center to introduce City College students to the history of the Center that was founded in 1989 and the importance of the decision to name the Center in honor of GUILLERMO and ASSATA.

I spoke on Guillermo Morales' role as one of the leaders of the historic 1969 student strike that forced CUNY to implement Open Admissions and to establish departments and programs in ethnic studies. Esperanza spoke on the Puerto Rican independence movement which Guillermo was a part of and of the importance of supporting freedom fighters held as political prisoners in the United States for participation in the movements for Black Liberation, Puerto Rican independence and Native American sovereignty. ABIODUN recited poetry and spoke of his experiences with ASSATA and the importance of opposing the terrorism being perpetrated by the U.S. government.

Students at the forum peppered the panel with questions and displayed enthusiastic interest in supporting the ongoing work of the MORALES / SHAKUR Community Center and defending work and the name of the Community Center.

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Yesterday's panel was ably moderated by Hank Williams, a CUNY Graduate Student and long time activist at the Community Center and CUNY graduate student David King.

The MORALES / SHAKUR Community Center needs volunteers to help in the Center's projects and activities, including the campaign to save the Community Center.

The MORALES / SHAKUR Center is located in room 3/201 in the NAC Building at City College at 137th Street at either Convent of Amsterdam Avenues.

The phone number is 212-650-5008.

For information about the press conference contact Charles Barron's office at 212-788-6957 or 718-649-9495.

Hands off ASSATA and GUILLERMO!

Hands off the Community Center!

Ronald B. McGuire

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