

Baba Hannibal Tirus Afrik: In Memory of a Teacher and Institution Builder



Baba Hannibal Tirus Afrik (third to the right, in the above photo), a.k.a. Harold E. Charles, M.Ed. was a retired Chicago, Illinois science teacher (biology) of 30 years (Farragut High School), and a dedicated African centered leader in independent Black institution building. He joined the ancestors July 27, 2011 at age 77.

In 1968, he led the Black Teachers Association in a successful community control movement using the Farragut Black Manifesto as a model, and in February 1972, he co-founded the Shule YA Watoto (school for children) as an independent community institution in Chicago which succeeded for 31 years through self-reliance. Among his many leadership positions for 50 years, he engaged the: Council of Independent Black Institution (CIBI); Afrikan National Rites of Passage United Kollektive (ANROPUK); National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA); Republic of New Africa; and since 1995, the Malcolm X College annual Kwanzaa celebration.

Baba Afrik received his B.S. degree in biology from Central State University in Wilberforce Ohio in 1955, his M.Ed in the teaching of science from Chicago Teachers College in 1962 and an advance certificate in Administration and Curriculum from the University of Chicago in 1966.

And additionally, he received certificates of achievement from Howard University in African Affairs, he did post-graduate work in inner city education at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago (he also taught there for eight years), and was the recipient of over 50 awards, three national awards, including the coveted Star Award from the National Science Teachers Association in 1975.

After moving to Mississippi in 1999, in 2004, he organized the Community Youth Achievers (www.cyavillage.com) in Hermanville, Mississippi, and established the Environmental Village Campus as a prototype sustainable community on a five acre homestead designed to provide urban & rural survival training through the Outdoor Leadership Skills Project (Southern Region). Hence, the institution is among the most unique African American tourist attractions in Mississippi.

As an educational consultant for School Tech Services, Baba Afrik presented over 15 workshops and classes throughout the U.S. He was indeed a master teacher wherein he taught at all levels of education, from pre-school to the GED, to graduate school, and the author of *Education or Self-Reliance, Idealism to Reality: An Analysis of the Independent School Movement* (Stanford, CA: Council of Independent Black Institutions, 1981); *Institutional Development: The Need for Black Educational Models and is the Community Control of Schools Still Alive?* (Chicago: Black Spear Press, 1981); *The Operational Philosophy of the AFENA Mentorship Society Rites of Passage Training* (Council of Independent Black Institutions); *Education for Self-Reliance, Idealism to Reality: An Analysis of the Independent School Movement* (Stanford, CA: Council of Independent Black Institutions, 1981), and *The Legacy of The Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey in the Development of Independent Black Education* (Washington, D.C.: Council of Independent Black Institutions, 1987?). He was also a member of the (1987-1988) editorial board of *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, and the author of a weekly column "For Black Education" in the *Chicago Defender* for 13 years.

In all his accomplishments, Baba Afrik was proud of his 37½ years marriage to Mama Marini (she made her transition in 1992), and of being the father of four children, the grandfather to four grandchildren, and the great grandfather to two great-grand children. Consequently, Baba Afrik personified the African proverb that says, "children are the reward of life".



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