



# TALKING DRUM

## AFRICAN SCHOLARS FORUM NEWSLETTER

### Spring 2020 EVENTS



**March 6th -Africa Day:** "*Challenges to Pan-Africanism: Afro-phobia and migration across African Borders*".

**Venue:** Campus Center Ballroom, 3rd Floor, UMass Boston.

**Time:** 12pm-8pm. Opening Luncheon

Keynote Address titled:

*"Afrophobia and Pan-Africanism: Lessons for the Continent"* by

[Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed](#), Ambassador to the African Union (AU) permanent mission of the United Nations (UN).



Keynote Plenary Panel titled:

*"Between Afrophobia and Afrophillia: Pan Africanism is a Middle Ground"* by [Panashe Chigumazi](#) (Harvard University), [Chipo Denderere](#) (Wellesley College), [Munya Bryn Munochiveyi](#) (Holy Cross College) and [Daniel E. Agbibo](#) (Harvard University).

Gala Reception keynote by [Rahman Oladigbolu](#), a Boston based, Nollywood Filmmaker, Producer and Director.



*The talking drum is one of the oldest musical instruments from West Africa, and it is prominent among the Yoruba and Hausa peoples of West Africa. It can be regulated to mimic the tone of human speech. The talking drum is used as a form of communication to send messages to people both home and faraway.*

## Professor Nada Ali Inaugural Amilcar Cabral Speaker and Kwanzaa Event

The Kwanzaa Fest & Amilcar Cabral Speaker titled *Sudan's 2018-2019 Uprising & Democratic Transition:*

*A Gender Perspective* by [Professor Nada Ali](#), came up on the 13th of December 2019. Professor Nada Mustafa Ali is a scholar, practitioner and an activist whose scholarship spans in the fields of comparative politics, gender, women and feminist studies, development studies, and African and middle eastern studies. In her presentation, Professor Ali explained that women played key roles in Sudan's 2018/2019 uprising which unseated Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir and outlawed the ruling National Congress Party. Furthermore, gender inequality and violations of the rights of women in different parts of Sudan were key feature of that regime's policy.



Through a gender and feminist perspective, Professor Ali contextualizes and analyzes the uprising as well as Sudan's transition. She talks about political repression, discrimination against women and girls in law and practice, corruption, war and excessive spending on the army, and economic crisis as some of the causes of the uprising.

The governing document after the successful transition includes: (1) the declaration of freedom and change which outlines commitment to women's participation and women's empowerment;(2 A constitutional declaration which gives women 40 percent representation at all levels of government,(3) A general framework for sudan's interim period, which focuses on the commitments to women's human rights, gender equality and participation at all levels. Notwithstanding, 10 priority areas were drawn from the constitutional declaration. These include peace, economic crisis, corruption, personal freedom and human rights, enhancing women's right, a balanced foreign policy, social development, and environmental protection. Also included were youth inclusiveness, democratization, constitution, free and fair elections.



The evening also hosted a session by the Pan African Graduate Students Association (PAGSA) on **KWANZAA**. In this session, Uche Nwangwu, a PAGSA executive and a Ph.D. candidate at SGSDI, presented on what KWANZAA symbolizes. Kwanzaa is a seven-day festival that celebrates



African and African American culture and history, and it takes place from 26th December to 1st January.

She further explained that the name "Kwanzaa" comes from the phrase 'matunda ya kwanza' which means 'first fruits' in the Swahili language (an Eastern African language spoken in countries including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe). Kwanzaa is mostly celebrated in the USA.

The seven days and candles in Kwanzaa represent the seven principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba):

**Umoja:** Unity - Unity of the family, community, nation and race.

**Kujichagulia:** Self-Determination - Being responsible for your own conduct and behavior.

**Ujima:** Collective work and responsibility - Working to Help each other and in the community.

**Ujamaa:** Cooperative economics - Working to build shops and businesses.

**Nia:** Purpose - Remembering & restoring African and African American cultures, customs & history.

**Kuumba:** Creativity - Using creating and your imagination to make communities better.

**Imani:** Faith - Believing in people, families, leaders, teachers and the righteousness of the African American struggle.

# As we reflect on the celebration of Martin Luther King's Day, here are few things about him and his contribution to Humanity by Ojemire Benjamin Daniel

**According** to history, Martin Luther King, was born in the US to African American parents. He was named Michael King, but his father later changed his name to Martin Luther King Jr. His philosophy was that just because people may look different on the outside, the content of their hearts and their character is what makes a person valuable. Martin Luther King had his first experience of segregation at the age of six years, when he

was told he was not allowed to play with his white friend anymore. In his lifetime, his first major role in the Civil Rights Movement came in 1955, after an African American woman **Rosa Parks** was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a bus.

Martin Luther King Jr. saw a social problem, developed a dream, and eventually by taking action, he changed the United States as well as the world. He is still today among the most well-known social activists in the world. In 1963, he delivered a speech titled "*I Have a Dream*" which was a call for an end to racism in the United States. This marked a defining moment in the nation's move towards civil rights.



The speech, offered to 250,000 people then, has reached countless millions since, and is hailed as a masterpiece of rhetoric. History also revealed that Martin was a great believer in peaceful protest, inspired by the Indian activist Mahatma Gandhi. Tragically, Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated in 1968 in Tennessee, where he had given a speech the day before. He is remembered for his tireless work during the Civil Rights Movement and his dream that one day everyone would be treated as equals. Based on his belief, he was able to set a standard for all nations to treat everyone equally regardless of skin color. He was also able to set examples which still stand till date that action without violence can be effective and successful. Furthermore, he made the world know that there is always an opportunity in every situation.

Finally, he enlisted the best allies, which revealed that we can still work together even if we are not best of friends. This means that there is need for unity among everyone. Some of Martin Luther King's famous quotes include: "*Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity*"; "*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter*"; "*We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope*" among many others. MLK's contribution reminds me of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Nigerian nationalist and statesman who played a key role in Nigeria's independence movement. Happy Martin Luther King Day!!!

*By Ojemire Daniel*

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