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[Contents of Issue Menu](#)

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**Remembering Dr, Charshee McIntyre  
In Struggle Spotlight  
By Dr. Conrad Worrill, PhD  
BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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I often think of Sister Charshee McIntyre who had great impact of all of us in the Black Liberation Movement. I miss her dearly. I miss the late night talks, advice, and consultation. I am sure that many other activists, scholars, and leaders in our movement also miss her. Sister Charshee, like Queen Mother Moore, was one of the Queen Mothers of our movement.

On Saturday, May 15, 1999, the African Liberation Movement worldwide learned of the passing into eternity, in New York, of our great Queen / Sister / Mother, Dr. Charshee Charlotte Lawrence McIntyre.

Although Sister Charshee was not a household name in the African Community, in this country, she was one of our leading behind the scenes scholars, leaders, organizers, and activists, who worked tirelessly for the liberation of African and Native American people. Sister Charshee had indigenous, Native American, lineage in her family.

Sister Charshee had battled with the effects of Lupus and other illnesses for over twenty years. Even though she was often in severe pain, she continued to travel to important movement meetings, keep a busy lecture schedule, researched vigorously,

worked as a professor of Humanities and Chair of the English Language Studies Program at the SUNY Old Westbury.

Dr. Sister McIntyre was the first woman President of the African Heritage Studies Association, founded by our recent ancestor, Dr. John Henrik Clarke. She served on the Executive Board for many years and used this position to help mentor numerous young researchers and scholars in their development.

I attended her Celebration of Life on Friday, May 21, 1999 at the St. James Presbyterian Church in Harlem, New York. More than a thousand people from all walks of life attended and participated in the celebration, including her husband of 41 years, renown instrumentalist, Dr. Makanda McIntyre and her two "perfect sons," as she called them, Kheil and Kaijee.

My esteemed colleague and friend, Dr. Jacob Carruthers, who worked closely with Sister Charshee over the years, was not able to attend the celebration but wrote a beautiful and succinct statement that I was able to present to the family.

Brother Jake, as we call him, wrote, "In behalf of the Temple of the African Community of Chicago and the Kemetic Institute, I wish to make our tribute on the occasion of the transition of our beloved Sister and fellow worker. Dr. Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, *Maa Kheru* (The Voice is True). Sister Charshee was our Chief, a selfless leader in our movement who contributed mightily, spiritually, and materially to our projects."

Continuing, Brother Jake expressed that "Dr. Charshee McIntyre's specialty was promoting good will, friendship, love, and unity among the various organizations and personalities in our movement. In this regard, she was without peer. She promoted us all, often remaining in the background, although her spirit was always at the forefront."

In concluding, Brother Jake made this profound point. "Charshee always exuded the qualities of African Womanhood: an obedient daughter; a caring sister; a devoted wife; and a loving mother. Whatever the measure, she set the standard."

One of Sister Charshee's great scholarly contributions was her book, [Criminalizing a race: Free blacks during slavery](#). Given the white supremacy assault of the Criminal Justice System on African people in this country, I think it would be a fitting tribute to Charshee to read or re-read this most important book.

In our everyday conversations in the African Community in America, the issue of African males and the disproportionate number of them imprisoned in America's jails is frequently discussed.

Most of these discussions center around the current problems of drugs, youth violence, poor education, lack of economic opportunities, poor family life, and lack of proper racial identity and cultural direction.

Often, the missing aspect of these discussions is the historical context of the foundation of the white supremacy Criminal Justice System and its multi-million dollar Prison Industrial Complex.

Dr. McIntyre's book is a rare and profound African centered analysis of the structural design of this nation that has produced the disproportionate number of imprisoned Africans in America, particularly African in America, males.

Without a clear historical understanding of the continuous and growing trend of the

incarceration of African in America males, we will not be able to counteract this long standing white supremacy public policy of this country. Charshee's book helps us understand this issue.

A key revelation in Dr. McIntyre's book is her explanation of the development of America's prison system and its immediate impact on Africans in America. She points out, "To distinguish the prisons from earlier jails and to suggest the essence of what the institution should be doing these do-gooders coined a new name, penitentiaries, implying that prisoners would be taught to be penitent regarding their crimes."


In this connection, Dr. McIntyre asserted, "These do-gooders created penitentiaries for the reformation of deviants." They considered free Africans in America a natural population for these new institutions that began imprisoning African in America males as far back as 1790.


Those of us in the National Black United Front / NBUF, and other Black Movement organizations, have truly missed Sister Charshee. Her spirit is guiding our work and she would be particularly proud of our work in the Reparations Movement. Sister Charshee was a strong advocate of Reparations for African people. Let us continue to lift up the spirit of Sister Charshee and the millions of our other ancestors who contributed so much. Hotep!

**BlackCommentator.com** Columnist, Conrad W. Worrill, PhD, is the National Chairman of the National Black United Front ([NBUF](#)). Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Worrill.

[Contents of Issue Menu](#)  
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