





# AFRICAN CITIES



LIBREVILLE, GABON

LUANDA

CONGO

WINDHOEK



After high school Rosa attended college, but she felt there was something missing. Watson longed to see more of the country and the world. So Rosa traveled all over Europe, then she explored Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean islands, and Ghana, West Africa. She married her husband Eric in 1983 and three years later they had a son, Antron. Soon after, the family moved to Sacramento, California, where Rosa worked for Electronic Data Systems (EDS) for nine years.

In 1996 the Watsons relocated to Richmond, Virginia, to be closer to Rosa's family in North Carolina. They then moved to Harrisburg in 1997. Antron, a graduate from Temple University, remains in the area and is currently working for Habitat for Humanity in Harrisburg.

Rosa's appreciation for heritage drew her to Kwanzaa. "While my family and I began practicing Kwanzaa in the mid-80's, it is not just something we do between December 26 and January 1 of each year," Watson observes. "In learning the seven principles of *Nguzo Saba*—Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith—we actually incorporate these principles into our everyday life and interactions with others. I live Kwanzaa every day, reflecting the *Nguzo Saba*."

Pouring of libations is another aspect of Kwanzaa that appeals to Rosa. "This ancestral tradition that I honor is done in tribute to those who have paved the way for people of African descent throughout the world," remarks Rosa. "Libation honors the presence of the ancestors in all that we do each day to continue the work of improving life for everyone."

Her awareness, reverence, and appreciation for those who have gone before provide a powerful foundation in Rosa's quest to understand her purpose. "If I could give an intangible gift to every person living in the world, that gift would be the ability to instantly tap into their God-given purpose in life," muses Rosa. "It is my belief that most people think material gain is equivalent to happiness and joy. But often, this is not true, for there are many wealthy people who are not happy, feel unloved, and don't have peace within. When a person discovers and acts on God's

purpose for their life, they find joy, hope, love, and peace in all that they do, because it is in harmony with who they are as a person."

Working collectively to heal the community is dear to Rosa's heart. "If I were given the opportunity," says Rosa. "I would love to sit at the table with community leaders of grass roots organizations to discuss, formulate, and implement plans to change the

state of the marginalized communities in this country." In keeping with that philosophy, in 2004 Rosa, her long-time friend Geraldine Walker, and the late Bryan Alston got together and founded YaaKofiAma Nia House, Inc., a cultural and educational center in the heart of Harrisburg. "Our non-profit, community-based organization built its foundation on the principles of the *Nguzo Saba*," states Rosa. "Our mission is to 'promote education and empowerment for the nurturing and healing of OUR community' through the educational programs we develop and conduct."

Rosa and Mrs. Walker continue the work of their ancestors through YaaKofiAma Nia House. There they conduct weekly S.O.U.L. (Searching Our Untapped Legacy) classes every Tuesday evening, where African history, science, spirituality, and other relevant topics are presented. They recently implemented a youth program called M.Y. L.I.F.E. (Making Youth Live Independently Fully Empowered), to address issues effecting the youth in our communities.

Through Rosa's global and historical perspective she envisions a support system that will build stronger families and communities. Her wish is that each of us will find our calling, because she believes in the African Proverb that says, "The chain is only as strong as each of its links." ❖

**NGUZO SABA  
(The Seven Principles)**

**Umoja (Unity)** To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

**Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)**  
To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.

**Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)**  
To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.

**Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)** To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

**Nia (Purpose)** To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

**Kuumba (Creativity)** To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

**Imani (Faith)** To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Mikell Worley is the founder and president of Mikell's Treasures. She has spent more than 20 years designing and delivering self-improvement trainings, has had several cover stories in various magazines and recently illustrated her first children's book. She is an advocate for women and children.