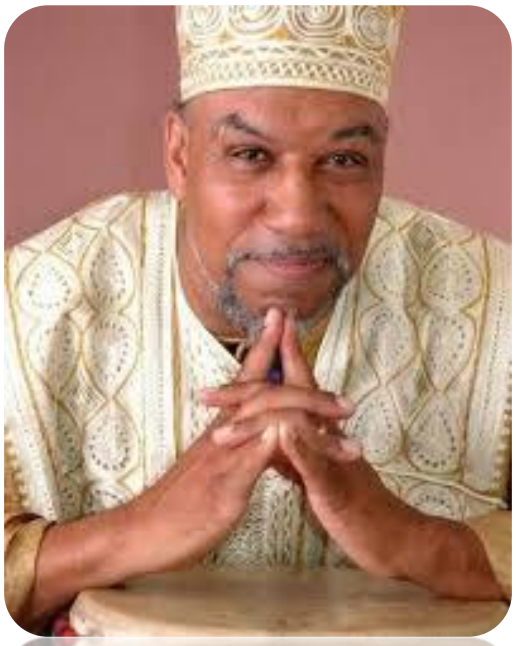
PRAISESONG

FOR

BABA JAMAL KORAM



1949 - 2025

By Mama Linda Goss,
Co-Founder of the
National Association of Black Storytellers

I ASK PERMISSION
FROM THE ELDERS TO SPEAK.
ASANTE SANA!
I FEEL YOUR AFFIRMATION.

LET THE DRUMS PLAY!
LET THE BELLS RING!
LET THE DANCERS DANCE!
LET THE CHOIR SING!
LET THE PRAISES BEGIN!

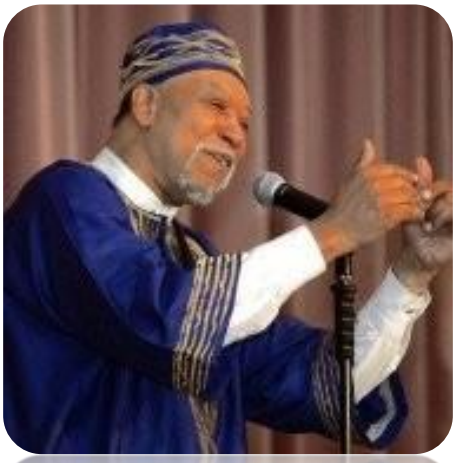
PRAISESONG FOR BABA JAMAL KORAM
THE STORY MAN
NOVEMBER 30, 1949 – JUNE 11, 2025

WE REMEMBER! WE RECLAIM!
WE RECALL THE ANCESTOR'S NAME.
BLACK! ANCESTOR! WARRIOR! KING!
BABA JAMAL KORAM, THE STORY MAN
ASE! ASE!



HE WAS FROM GREENBURGH/WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK. BABA JAMAL, THE STORY MAN STUDIED, RESEARCHED AND PERFECTED HIS MASTERLY STORYTELLING CRAFT AND ART IN "CHARM CENTER", BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.
“THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE.”

HE THEN MOVED TO ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA AND IN LATER YEARS HE MOVED TO CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA.
ASE! ASE!



BABA JAMAL TAUGHT US:
“AS LONG AS THE HUNTER TELLS THE STORY, THE LION WILL ALWAYS LOSE.”
ASE! ASE!

BLACK ANCESTOR WARRIOR KING,
BABA JAMAL KORAM WAS
SON, BROTHER, HUSBAND, FATHER,
GRANDDADDY, UNCLE, SOUL BROTHER,
COUSIN,DEPENDABLE FRIEND,
COMMUNITY PHILOSOPHER.
ASE! ASE!
MENTOR, TEACHER, SAGE, DRUMMER,
MUSICIAN, WRITER, POET, ORGANIZER,
VISIONARY, PRODUCER, PUBLISHER,
AUTHOR, RECORDING ARTIST, AND
PROMOTER. HISTORIAN, CULTURE
KEEPER, TRADITION BEARER, LEADER,
AND MASTER STORYTELLER,
GRIOT, JELI, JALI!
SUCH A MAN WAS HE!
ASE! ASE!



HIS NAME "JAMAL" IS ARABIC FOR KIND HANDSOME ONE. THE BEAUTIFUL ONE. HE HAD A BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT THAT LIVES ON IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.
ASE! ASE!

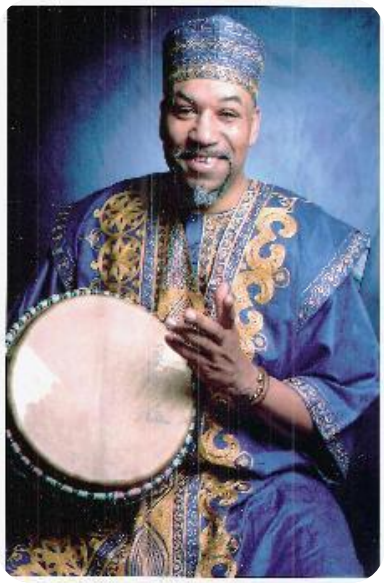
BABA JAMAL BELIEVED IN AND ADMIRED HIS HERITAGE. HE LEFT A LEGACY IN HIS CHILDREN BY GIVEN EACH OF THEM AN AFRICAN NAME:
ANIKA MEANS GOODNESS.
NILAJA MEANS PEACEFUL AND FRIENDLY.
KHENTE MEANS PRECIOUS POSSESSION.
OMARI MEANS FOLLOWER OF THE PROPHET RIGHTEOUS MAN OF GOD.
ADIYA MEANS A GIFT FROM GOD.
SEKOU MEANS GREAT WARRIOR/FIGHTER.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL BROUGHT AFRICANISMS TO BLACKSTORYTELLERS, TO BLACK STORYTELLING AND TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STORYTELLERS, INC. (NABS).
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL KORAM WAS ONE OF THE BACKBONES, BUILDERS, AND DESIGNERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKSTORYTELLERS.
ASE! ASE!

HE BROUGHT US THE CALL:
CALL: AGO!
RESPONSE: AME!
CALL: AGO!
RESPONSE: AME!
THIS GREETING COMES FROM THE TWI LANGUAGE, A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GHANA.
IT MEANS, "DO I HAVE OR I NEED YOUR ATTENTION!". THAT WAS BABA JAMAL'S CALL AT MANY GATHERINGS, MEETINGS, AND FESTIVALS.
ASE! ASE!





HE WAS A TOWERING PRESENCE IN HIS GLORIOUS FABULOUS ROBES AND KUFIS.
ASE! ASE!

HIS CALLING WAS STORYTELLING. YOU COULD SEE IN HIS FACE THAT HE LOVED WHAT HE DID AND HE DID WHAT HE LOVED. HE WAS VIBRANT!
ASE! ASE!

A PAINFUL ACCIDENT OCCURRED IN HIS YOUTH BUT HE OVERCAME IT WITH TRUTH. THE TRUTH OF PRIDE IN HIS ANCESTORS AND THE MOTHERLAND.
BABA JAMAL KNEW HOW TO "TALK THE TALK" AND "WALK THE WALK."
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL WAS A LIFE MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKSTORYTELLERS. (NABS)
ASE! ASE!

HE SERVED ON THE NABS BOARD. HE DRAFTED NABS' FIRST CONSTITUTION. HE DRAFTED THE OATHS OF OFFICE FOR THE NABS PRESIDENT AND THE NABS BOARD MEMBERS. HE WAS A FORMER TREASURER OF NABS.
ASE! ASE!

ANCESTOR WARRIOR KING, BABA JAMAL WAS THE THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKSTORYTELLERS. HE WAS THE FIRST PRESIDENT TO RECEIVE THE PASSING OF THE COWTAIL SWITCH.
ASE! ASE!



BABA JAMAL WORKED ON THE NABS FESTIVALS IN TERMS OF PLANNING AND DIRECTING FESTIVALS DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF NABS.
ASE! ASE!

HE WAS THE FIRST CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFFLIATE PROGRAM FOR NABS. DURING HIS TENURE HE OVERSAW AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING 15 AFFILIATES TO NABS.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL RECEIVED MANY AWARDS FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKSTORYTELLERS. THEY INCLUDE:

THE ZORA NEALE HURSTON AWARD

THE LINDA BROWN NIA AWARD FOR SERVICE, LATER RENAMED THE CHARLES AND LINDA BROWN NIA AWARD FOR SERVICE.

THE BROTHER BLUE
CIRCLE OF ELDERS AWARD.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FOURTH PRESIDENT, DR. CAROLIESE FRINK REED. ASE! ASE!

NABS HONORED BABA JAMAL WITH AN AWARD NAMED IN HIS HONOR:

THE BABA JAMAL KORAM HARAMBEE YOUTH AWARD. HARAMBEE IS SWAHILI MEANING "PULLING TOGETHER."





BABA WOULD ATTEND THE YOUTH AWARD CEREMONY (AS LONG AS HE WAS ABLE TO) AND PRESENT THE PLAQUE TO THE DESERVING YOUTH. ONCE WHEN HE PRESENTED THE AWARD TO AN 11-YEAR-OLD YOUNG LADY, SHE SAID,

"*I REMEMBER YOU! YOU CAME TO MY SCHOOL WHEN I WAS IN THE FIRST GRADE. AND I REMEMBER THE STORY YOU TOLD US*."

TO BE REMEMBERED AND RESPECTED IS A BLESSING.

ASE! ASE!



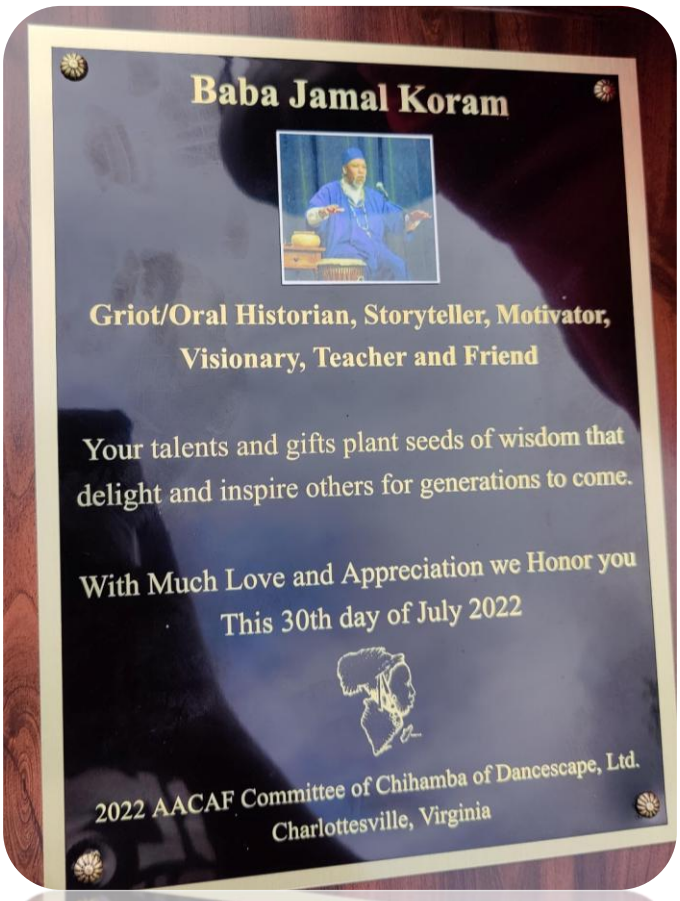
BABA JAMAL PULLED THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TOGETHER.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL WAS A POWERHOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM. FOR MANY YEARS HE OPENED AND CLOSED THE "IN THE TRADITION..." NATIONAL BLACK FESTIVAL AND CONFERENCE CEREMONIES. HE WOULD STROLL AROUND PLAYING HIS DRUM. HE WOULD DIRECT THE GATHERING TO FORM A WELCOME CIRCLE OF LOVE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE ANCESTORS. EVERYONE BECAME **FAMILY**.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE GRIOTS' CIRCLE OF MD., AN AFFLIATE OF NABS. HE WAS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE GRIOTS' CIRCLE OF MD.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD FROM THE NATIONAL STORYTELLING NETWORK.
ASE! ASE!

BABA JAMAL WAS A RECIPIENT OF THE LOVE AND APPRECIATION AWARD PRESENTED TO HIM FROM THE 2022 AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL COMMITTEE OF CHIHAMBA OF DANCESCAPE, LTD. CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.
ASE! ASE!



BABA JAMAL AND BABA MITCH "GRAN'DADDY JUNEBUG" CAPEL FOUNDED THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STORYTELLERS RETREAT IN THE EARLY 90'S. FOR MANY YEARS STORYTELLERS AND LOVERS OF STORYTELLING WOULD TRAVEL TO CARDINAL PARK IN PINEBLUFF, NORTH CAROLINA AND PARTICIPATE IN WORKSHOPS ON DRUM MAKING, TIE DYEING, TELLING STORIES, SINGING AFRICAN SONGS, AND EXPERIENCING HOW THE BEAUTY OF NATURE GO HAND IN HAND WITH STORYTELLING.

ASE! ASE





BABA JAMAL TAUGHT US WELL. HE TOLD US THE TRUTH ABOUT AESOP THE AFRICAN STORYTELLER WHOSE REAL NAME WAS AETHIOP. WE GAINED A NEW INSIGHT FOR THESE GREAT FABLES AND PROVERBS. HE PUBLISHED A VOLUME ONE OF AESOP TALES, ENTITLED, "AESOP: TALES OF AETHIOP THE AFRICAN."

ASE! ASE!



BABA JAMAL'S STORIES ARE PUBLISHED IN THE FOLLOWING ANTHOLOGIES:

"THE LION AND ASHIKO DRUM", A FABLE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLISHED IN TALK THAT TALK: AN ANTHOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STORYTELLING, EDITED BY LINDA GOSS AND MARIAN E. BARNES. INTRODUCTION BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

"PULLING THAT YAM" AND "THE LITTLE CORNBREAD MAN", TWO STORIES PUBLISHED IN JUMP UP AND SAY: A COLLECTION OF BLACK STORYTELLING. EDITED BY LINDA GOSS AND CLAY GOSS. INTRODUCTION BY OSSIE DAVIS

"UTUCHEKULU" PUBLISHED IN SAYIN' SOMETHIN': STORIES FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STORYTELLERS, EDITED BY LINDA GOSS, DYLAN PRITCHETT, AND CAROLIESE REED. INTRODUCTION BY ELEANORA TATE.

ASE! ASE!

“AND PAPA WAS PULLING THAT YAM!
OH YEAH!
AND MAMA WAS PULLING THAT YAM!
OH YEAH!"

“RUN, RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN.
YOU CAN’T CATCH ME. I’M THE LITTLE
CO——-RN BREAD MAN!”

“CHANGE YOUR MIND, AND YOU WILL
CHANGE YOUR LIFE.
MOST TIMES, WHAT WE TRAVEL MILES TO
SEE IS CLOSER THAN WE THINK.”
ASE! ASE!

LET US SIT ON THE RIVER BANKS OF
COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND SOAK OUR
FEET IN ANCESTRAL WATERS AND RECALL
AND REFRESH THE STORIES,
AND HISTORIES BABA JAMAL TAUGHT US.
ASE! ASE!



WHEN THE ELDERS SPEAK,
WE LISTEN!

MAMA ONAWUMI JEAN MOSS,
ONE OF THE QUEEN MOTHERS OF NABS,
EXPRESSES PRAISE FOR
ANCESTOR BABA JAMAL:

"SO LET US REMEMBER, AS WE SIT ON THE RIVER BANKS OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY, THAT OUR ANCIENT ORAL AND WRITTEN STORYTELLING HISTORY REVEALS CHALLENGING PERSONAL AND INTRACULTURAL LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT HAVE ENRICHED OUR CREATIVITY. LET US ACKNOWLEDGE THESE COMPELLING, PRECIOUS AND UNAPOLOGETIC KINSHIP TIES THAT BIND US BOTH HERE AND NOW AND TO OUR BELOVED ANCESTORS. UBUNTU."
UBUNTU IS FROM THE NGUNI LANGUAGE WHICH MEANS
“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE.”



BLACK! ANCESTOR! WARRIOR! KING!
BABA JAMAL KORAM, THE STORYMAN
IS CARETAKER OF NOMMO, THE SACRED POWER OF THE WORD.
NOMMO! HE IS THE GATEKEEPER OF OUR STORIES AND OUR JOURNEYS.
ASE! ASE!

ASANTE SANA, OH CREATOR ,
WE THANK YOU FOR GIVING US
BABA JAMAL THE STORYMAN.
ASE! ASE!

ASANTE SANA, DEAR FAMILY.
WE THANK YOU FOR LETTING US
BE A PART OF YOUR FATHER'S LIFE
AND CELEBRATE HIS LEGACY WITH ALL OF YOU.
ASE! ASE!



BABA JAMAL WAS A SELFLESS HUMAN BEING. HE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY LEAVING A BLUEPRINT, A FOOTPRINT, AND A HANDPRINT ON HOW TO MAKE BLACKSTORYTELLING A LASTING IMPRINT ON THE SOUL.
ASE! ASE!

"OH, I KNOW I'VE BEEN CHANGED,
OH, I KNOW I'VE BEEN CHANGED.
OH! I KNOW I'VE BEEN CHANGED.
BLACKSTORYTELLERS
DONE CALLED MY NAME."
ASE! ASE!

A MIGHTY MIGHTY STORYTELLING TREE HAS FALLEN IN THE FOREST OF KNOWLEDGE AND WONDER. THAT TREE IS NOT DEAD. THE ROOTS ARE ALIVE!
THE SEEDS WILL SPROUT NEW GROWTH.
IT IS UP TO US TO KEEP THE TREE'S STORY AND HIS GLORY ALIVE!
ASE! ASE!



LIGHTING THE WAY, STORY WALKING!
LIGHTING THE WAY, RHYTHM TALKING!
THROUGH THE NIGHT.
AND THROUGH THE DAY,
BABA JAMAL KORAM SHALL ALWAYS
LIGHT OUR WAY.
ASE! ASE!

THE ANCESTORS ARE ALIVE
AS LONG AS WE REMEMBER THEM.
ASE! ASE!



OUR HEARTFELT LOVE
AND PRAYERS
ARE WITH THE FAMILY.

NABS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK STORYTELLERS
"In The Tradition..."



IN THE SERVICE OF LOVE
AND STORYTELLING,
MAMA LINDA GOSS, CO-FOUNDER
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BLACKSTORYTELLERS, INC.

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