

# In Memory of Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru



Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru, International President (1990-2011) of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) at the 2010 ASCAC Midwest Regional Conference in Detroit, Michigan (photo by The Kemetic Institute of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois).

Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru was the international president of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC), and co-founder and executive director of Rivers Run Deep Institute and editor-in-chief of *SERЕК*, an African centered newsletter. Her articles have appeared in the *Knowledge Broker* (Long Beach, California), the *Los Angeles Watts Times* ([www.lawattstimes.com](http://www.lawattstimes.com)), *Pace News* ([www.pacenewsonline.com](http://www.pacenewsonline.com)) and the *Community Circle*. She was a scholar on African and African American women's history and had lectured throughout the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Central America, and Europe. Over the past three decades, she has been involved in numerous African cultural reclamation and preservation projects.

## **ASCAC International Board**

The ASCAC International Board presented the following tribute to Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru at her memorial service in St. Paul, Minnesota on August 27, 2011 (source: [ww.ascac.org](http://ww.ascac.org)).

Through her good character, brilliant organizational skills in countless organizations culminating in her twenty-one year leadership of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations and lifelong activism and struggle for the social, political, intellectual, and cultural liberation of African people, Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru exemplified womanhood and peoplehood for the African global community. Here, near the northern reaches of the Mississippi River where her ancestors chose to migrate and to create her home in St. Paul, Minnesota, surrounded by her blood relatives and representatives of her worldwide African family, we recognize and celebrate all of her efforts in service to our community and to human kind.

In this world, it is easier to profess abstract virtues than it is to practice real ones. In other words, it is easier to talk the talk rather than walk the walk. Queen Nzinga did both very well, and in so doing provided a pathway for those workers in "Nzinga's Army" to do the same. She was a tireless servant-leader in the African community. Her life's calling emerged out of the cauldron of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement, wedding a powerful sense of social responsibility to the determination to ensure the optimal development of our community, especially our youth. Her mission was to instill the love of Africa and African people, discipline, courage, and hope in our youth; to help them to see how they could overcome obstacles and hardships, transform their lives and aspire toward excellence and nurture; and to help them maximize their God-given potential and make contributions to society and African people. Queen Nzinga was always able to effectively distill her knowledge to young and old alike with great vibrancy and purpose, always making deep human connections that reach, reflect, and affect everyday African people and their life philosophies and practices.

Queen Nzinga was a public force in our communities for over 40 years, helping to lead movements for African consciousness from her base of Los Angeles for most of that time. She devoted her skills as an organizer, administrator, technical professional and educator to the singular task of institution building. In 1984, she served as one of the principal organizers of the First Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference, consenting to serve as National Treasurer of the newly-formed ASCAC a year later and, in 1990, agreed to serve as the determined and inspiring International President of ASCAC, taking the reins of leadership from our founding President, Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr. [maa kheru]. From that time until her transition on Tuesday, August 23, 2011, she worked to establish for the Association the global foundation on which it will rest eternally.

A dutiful student and intellectual daughter of John Henrik Clarke and Yosef ben-Jochannan, Queen Nzinga counted among her closest confidantes, comrades and collaborators the vanguard of African-Centered warriors, none closer to her than three ancestors: Jacob Carruthers [maa kheru], Asa G. Hilliard III [maa kheru] and Charshie McIntyre [maa kheru]. She was, as her middle name Ratibisha signifies, “she who corrects things and makes things right,” whether as a member of the International Black Women’s Congress, the National Council of Negro Women, the Fannie Lou Hamer Queenmother Society or as the co-founder of Rivers Run Deep Institute with her beloved sister.

Nzinga said that when she went to Brazil she received a spiritual reading from a Candomble priestess. Nzinga said that in response to her query about finding a man, the priestess jumped up ecstatically and told her that she did not need a man because all of the men were already at her feet! As a fierce and respected leader, Queen Nzinga played a pivotal role in helping ASCAC to spread African-Centered education, expose the community to African cultural ideas, practices, and activism, communicating ideas for the betterment of society, heightening our collective historical and cultural consciousness and self-consciously bringing the values of our African traditions and heritage into the contemporary world in our struggle for the African renaissance and the liberation of African people worldwide.

Queen Nzinga walked “on top of the earth” with a great deal of dignity and integrity. She was a warrior on the battlefield of African liberation and she demanded that you see the truth and face the truth, regardless of how uncomfortable and unpleasant it might make you feel. Her good name and good speech bears witness to all of the good things that she has done for the African community. Those who have experienced the beauty of her love and friendship knew that she was always encouraging and willing to share in your joy and even in your sorrow.

Over this past year battling her illness, Queen Nzinga demonstrated tremendous interior fortitude to confront the trials and difficulties of life. She was charting the future of ASCAC until her very last breath. Everyone of us will and must face circumstances in life that will cause us heavy burdens of sorrow, but the Creator and the ancestors give us the power and the strength to meet these disappointments and to see the joy after the sorrow, to see the shimmering sunlight after the piercing darkness, to see the brighter tomorrows after the dark yesterdays. Queen Nzinga stood tall amid the trials and storms of her life and faced them with great strength and courage. She erected a monument of good character on this earth and I know that it will serve her well for eternity. In her life, Queen Nzinga stood up for righteousness. She embodied the spirit of Maat.

### **Stela for Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru**

An offering to Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru,  
daughter of Ra, spreading your rays throughout the African world,  
daughter of Isis, protector and nourisher of African youth,  
daughter of Montu, warrior on the battlefield of African culture,  
daughter of Heru, strong, mighty, indestructible leader,  
You fill every place with your beauty.

You are a brilliant link in the chain  
African rivers run deep in your veins  
You are one who humbly understands and interprets the wisdom of the ancestors  
Queen Nzinga says “just because we don’t know what you know don’t mean that what we know don’t count”  
Hail, Queen Nzinga, in your beauty, your splendor,  
On your throne, in your radiance.  
Heaven shouts, the earth trembles at your leadership  
Your staff in your arm, your scepter in your hand  
A Queen that stands at the gates with the common people!  
Queen Nzinga says “we do high drama on a low budget!”  
As you travel the earth  
With all things African in your heart and on your tongue  
You help open Africa’s path to reconstruction  
You help open Africa’s path to restoration  
You help open Africa’s path to renaissance  
You who look backward to look forward in Classical Africa  
Flood of the lake, surge of the sea,  
Drinking the flowing waters from Africa’s deep well  
Ferrywoman who rows ASCAC to the African lightland

Rise up, Queen Nzinga, your good works shall never die!  
You are an imperishable star,  
Queen Nzinga, O Great Strider,  
Walking and talking boldly  
You smite the enemies of Africa with your crown.  
Africa rejoices in your strength,  
A champion who acts with her arm,  
A possessor of knowledge, wise planner, skilled leader, keen strategist  
You have protected and preserved Africa's traditions and customs.  
Your good speech is a field of offerings  
Of the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of African people.  
You are beloved of your mother and father, beloved of your siblings, and beloved of African people.  
Ptahhotep says "the hearer is one who hears what is said,  
He who loves to hear is one who does what is said."  
Queen Nzinga, you are a speaker and doer of Maat, skilled in speech in anxious situations  
You are one who loves what is good, who hates what is oppressive  
You have done what people love and elders and ancestors praise  
You are one who knows the profit of doing what is good and helpful in this life:  
A storehouse for the children who come after.  
Your good character is a monument for those that come after.  
May your good name and actions remain in the mouth of African people for eternity.

Spirit in heaven, power on earth,  
Maa Kheru, True of voice, in the necropolis,  
And revival after being death-cold:  
These are the gifts of the faultless woman.  
A righteous one is she who receives them,  
She will be counted among the ancestors,  
Her name will remain as a monument,  
Her deeds will not perish from earth.

May the Creator grant eternal life, prosperity, health, love, and joy, her eyes seeing, her ears hearing, her mouth filled with Maat daily as is done for a righteous woman for the spirit of Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru, maa-kheru, true of voice. We love you.

In Maat,

ASCAC International Board

Maa Kheru  
Queen Nzinga Ratibishi Heru



A Royal Celebration of the Life of the Great Queen

Nzinga Ratibishi Heru

Monday Aug 29 2011

Viewing **12:00 NOON**

Service **1:00 PM**

Camphor Methodist Church  
585 Fuller Ave  
St. Paul Minn 55103  
651-224-0341

Spielman Mortuary  
344 University Ave  
St Paul Minn 55103  
651-222-6363

Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn - St. Paul City Center  
St. Paul, MN  
(651) 291-8800  
\$67 via [www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)