



Keepers Of The Culture, Inc.

Philadelphia's Afrocentric Storytelling Group

2022 Annual Affiliate Report

Peace and Blessings from the Executive Board, Council of Elders, and Membership of Keepers Of The Culture, Inc. the Philadelphia Affiliate of NABS, Inc. We send love and gratitude to our ancestors who came before us, to our co-founders Queen Mother Mary Carter Smith and Queen Mother Linda Goss, and to the current leadership of NABS Inc., President Kwanza Brewer and the NABS Board of Directors. As this year has been full of ups and downs, we continue on the life- calling of telling our stories but realize that we must also take the time to rest and care for ourselves, for we can only be of good to others, when we are good to ourselves. This year we realized that we were gathering only to handle the business of our organization but not to tell stories. In the late summer, we shifted our focus to getting back to the basics: just telling stories. It was stories that brought us together, and it is stories that will keep us together. May all Black Storytellers within NABS and beyond keep this in mind as we reemerge into our communities and begin a new chapter for Black Storytelling.

In Spirit, In Love, In Culture,

Paul D. Best, "Our Sun Paul"
President
Keepers Of The Culture, Inc.
Philadelphia's Afrocentric Storytelling Group
P. O. BOX 15083
Philadelphia, PA 19130
www.kotcinc.org

October

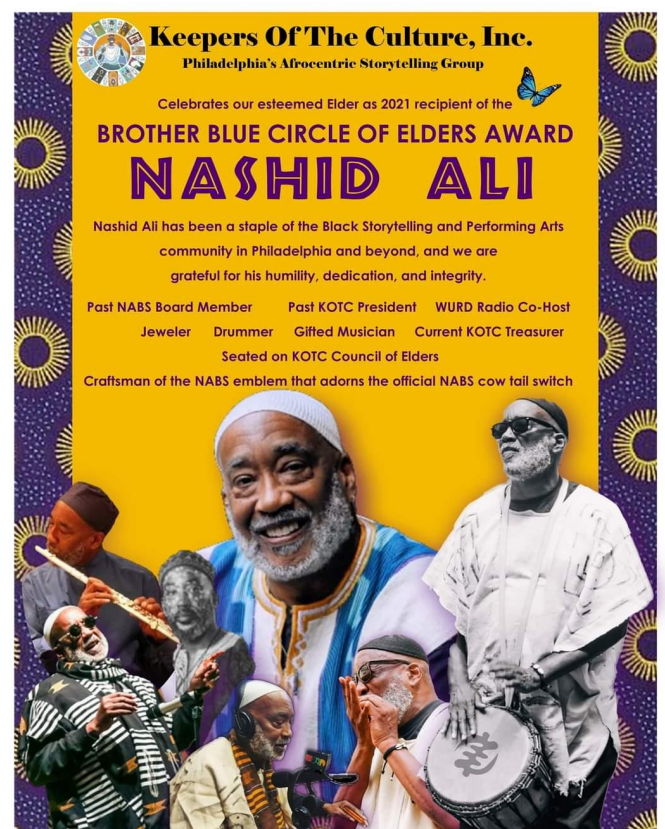
KOTC revives its Youth Program by enrolling four youth into the **Growing Griots Program**, a youth program of the **Griots Circle of Maryland**.



KOTC President Paul D. Best and NABS & KOTC Co-Founder Mama Linda Goss receive an apprenticeship grant through the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**. For the next twelve months, Paul sits under the tutelage of Mama Linda to deepen his craft as a Black Storyteller.

November

KOTC attends the NABS Festival & Conference, virtually. KOTC members participate in The Adopt- A- Teller Program and are featured as special presenters during a storytelling concert. Veteran Member **Nashid Ali** is inducted into the **Brother Blue Circle of Elders** for his years of service and dedication to Black Storytelling.



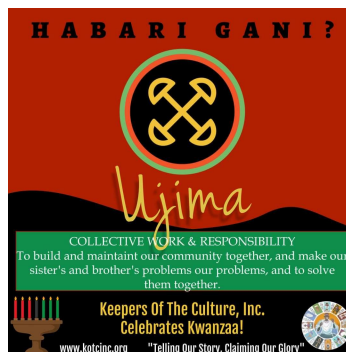
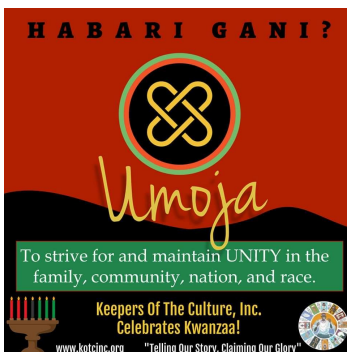


KOTC hosts Family Day, a 25^{year} tradition with the Free Library of Philadelphia for their Sundays On Stage Series. With KOTC Member **Carla Wiley** as creative director, the theme was "Once Upon A Family: Stories of Diverse Families", featuring the return of veteran KOTC Member **Cousin Millie!**

December

KOTC joins the **African American Museum of Philadelphia** for Kwanzaa, opening up with a daily kinara

lighting and stories of family and healing. KOTC posts a daily infographic, educating its online community about the principles of Kwanzaa. For the third year, KOTC partners with **WURD 900AM Radio**, Philadelphia's Black radio station for a three-hour radio program, playing stories listeners may have missed from the past two years.



January

KOTC began its residency at the **Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures (FACTS) Charter School** in the Chinatown section of Philadelphia. Each month a KOTC teller spends half a day telling stories to various classrooms.



FACTS Mural by Jessica Mark



KOTC gathers together to celebrate the transition of longtime KOTC member **Ivy Collick.**

February

Due to the multiplicity of events that take place in Philadelphia during Black History Month, KOTC members devoted their time to collaborating with various schools and community organizations to produce virtual programming.



KOTC partners for the third time with sales software company **Highspot, Inc. of Seattle, Washington** and puts on a virtual Black History Happy Hour for their 400 Millennial employees. Themed “Black Wealth, Black Health, Being My Best Black Self!” KOTC Storytellers tell stories about Black health and wellness, and the many meaningful and humorous nuances that lie in our pursuit of taking care of ourselves. The featured tellers were **Nashid Ali, Adara Dismuke**, and **KOTC Co-Founder Mama Linda Goss!** View the program [HERE!](#)



KOTC President Paul D. Best appears on a panel for the **Philadelphia**

Mayor’s Office of Public Engagement, a conversation on how Anti-Black Racism shows up in all of our lives and what we can do to end it. View the broadcast [HERE!](#)



March

After a busy Black History Month and the resurgence of COVID-19, KOTC Members rest during March in preparation for the Spring.

April

KOTC Treasurer **Nashid Ali**, continues his weekly appearances on the “**Groundings with Brother Shomari**” Radio Show. Throughout the show, he tells stories from the character “Pop Pop Grow Somethin” based on his



grandfather. Nashid opens the opportunity and KOTC members come on the show to tell stories throughout the year. This past year included appearances from **KOTC Co-Founders Mama Linda Goss** and **Charlotte Blake Alston**, and **KOTC Spiritual Caretaker Nzinga Asele**. Listen in on Sundays from 6pm to 8pm EST on [WURD Radio](#).

June



KOTC Co-Founder Jawara Bishop & President Paul D. Best put on a Juneteenth Program for the **Salem Baptist Church of Abington**, a historically Black Church in the Philadelphia region.

July



KOTC Members gathered at **Rowan University** to remember the life and legacy of longtime Brother and Friend in Black Storytelling, **Lamont Dixon aka "Napalm Da Bomb"**. Organized by his family and **KOTC & NABS Past President Queen Nur**, KOTC members recited his poetry and told stories of their times with him.



August

KOTC Vice President Irma Gardner Hammond and veteran member **Carla Wiley** Team up to present “Revival Walks in Tacony Creek Park”. The sisters told stories of Black presence in nature as attendees walked the trail and picked up surrounding litter.



KOTC members sent a delegation to Charlottesville, VA for the **Chihamba African Arts Festival**, where they honored **Past NABS President Baba Jamal Koram** for his impact on the community and youth during years of service as the **Director of the Upward Bound Program at the University of Virginia**. View the award ceremony [HERE!!](#)





September

KOTC has its first In-Person Meeting since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

KOTC hosts a picture day, where members meet to fellowship, take updated headshots, and a group photo for the NABS Festival Souvenir Journal.

Members of the **Nicetown-Tioga community** unveil the image of Dinah, a formerly enslaved woman at the **Stenton Mansion**. **KOTC Vice President Irma Gardner Hammond** has portrayed Dinah for over 20 years, and was present to share the story of Dinah with the attendees.

