



Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia, Inc. (KSOG)
NABS Annual Report 2020

JANUARY

January began with a new slate of officers for the 2020-2021 years. President, Gloria Elder opened the meeting with a welcome to members and introduced the newly elected officers. Some committee chairpersons were appointed and there were also opportunities for members to volunteer to join committees.

As Kuumba began to move forward into the new decade (2020!) we had a huge slate of programming to continue our mission of service in the community and “Tellin’ it Well in the ATL” and beyond.

In January KSOG partnered with our sister organization, Southern Order of Storytellers (SOS) to participate in its Friendship Luncheon. The purpose of this meeting was to share stories in fellowship and to look at the future of storytelling in Georgia. This was a collaborative effort. Two of KSOG’s members Gwendolyn Napier and Brad Mason attended the luncheon.

FEBRUARY

In February KSOG hosted its 19th Historical Portraits Concert, on February 9, 2020. This Year’s theme “ Called to Stand Out “ was performed to a packed house at the Southwest Arts Center. Featured tellers included Gloria Elder, Christine Arinze (AKA, Sister Olufemi), Brenda Griffin, Carsie Mason, Deborah Strahorn, Chetter Galloway, John Doyle, and Jerrell Smith, a Kuumba Tattletale. Other storytellers on program were Kenneth Green, Vern Bailey and Brad Mason. We thanked the Southwest Arts Center for once again opening its doors to use its Black Box Theater.

February Three (3) Kuumba storytellers told Historical Portraits for high school students at The New School. The tellers were LaDoris Bias Davis, Josie Bailey and John Doyle. The students expressed their appreciation for hearing stories about the many contributions made by African Americans across the country.

February KSOG members were invited to a naming ceremony for one of Atlanta’s own pioneers, Mary Frances Early, the first African American to earn a degree from the University of Georgia. Kuumba storytellers, Esther Culver and Gwendolyn Napier attended the all day event.

MARCH

In March KSOG canceled its in person meetings due to COVID-19. While we “Sheltered In Place” we immediately decided to meet via conference call and to carry on the business of Kuumba.

- **Kuumba COVID-19 Response Blog Post:**
<http://kuumbastorytellers.org/kuumba-and-covid-19/>

APRIL

April The KSOG met via conference and held its previously scheduled Strategic Planning Meeting while Sheltering in Place. In addition, we planned for our Annual Mama Tales storytelling concert.

MAY

In May KSOG held its first ZOOM meeting.

May 31, 2020 The Mama Tales Story Swap Concert was held via Zoom. We invited our storytelling partner organizations. There were two tellers from outside of KSOG who swapped a story. It was a big success! Gwendolyn Napier, Amy Johnson, Chetter Galloway, Salim Cox, Judy Bateman (OH), Robin Kitson (NC)

Kuumba participated in a podcast interview with King Williams regarding the COVID -19 Pandemic and its effect on storytellers during this time. This was also an opportunity for Kuumba to share its views and to increase visibility in the community. Gloria Elder and Gwendolyn Napier were interviewed.

Also, in May, two of KSOG storytellers and Wren’s Ramblers, Gwendolyn J. Napier and Chetter Galloway recommended that the Wren’s Nest open up its storytelling opportunities to other storytellers in the community to tell virtual stories in May, June and beyond. The tellers who participated were LaDoris B. Davis, Josie Bailey, Gloria Elder, Deborah Strahorn and the Wren’s Nest Ramblers, Gwen Napier, Akbar Imhotep, Chetter Galloway, Jerry White & Barry Stewart Mann.

Kuumba Tattle Tales, Madison Jackson, Jerrell Allen Smith and Javon Culver performed at the National Storytelling Network (NSN) Virtual Conference May 31st.

JUNE

Juneteenth Atlanta Parade and Music Festival partners featured Kuumba on a local affiliate TV station. Kuumba Storyteller, Christine Arinze shared a dramatic and moving overview of the history of Juneteenth.

June KSOG received its first federal grant to perform “Profiles of Color” for senior centers/facilities to be able to view on video/DVD. A big “thank you” to our grant writer, Deb Strahorn and the grant writing committee.

Kuumba was recommended to receive charitable donations from Apple employees through Benevity, the portal through which funds can be placed into KSOG’s account. The funds will benefit our youth, Tattle Tales.

June 28, 2020 Papa Tales Virtual Story Swap Another big success! Featured tellers were Gwendolyn Napier, Brenda Griffin, Marsha Holden, Renee Brown, Akbar Imhotep, Vern Bailey

NSN Virtual Conference Chetter Galloway conducted a panel discussion Title – Race, Class, Ambiguity: People of Color in the LGBTQIA+ Community

CDF Action partnered with Kuumba for virtual Stories from Around the World: We Are All in This Together (Chetter Galloway, LaDoris Bias-Davis & Deborah Strahorn)

JULY

July 25, 2020 Six KSOG storytellers videotaped 2-3 stories for Hammonds House Museum. John Doyle, Gwendolyn Napier, LaDoris B. Davis, Deborah Strahorn, Christine Arinze & Akbar Imhotep These tellers’ stories will be a part of a curriculum for children, youth and families to view online. The curricula will encourage children to read and to improve their storytelling and writing skills.

Chetter Galloway represented Kuumba on the storytelling program – Better Said Than Done (July 25th)

AUGUST

August 8, 2020 Professional Development (PD) workshop titled “How to Tell a Tall Tale”. The workshop was conducted by PD chair, Vern Bailey. The workshop ended with three tellers sharing a story that had been created during the breakout sessions. Each story was voted on and the winning story was posted on Kuumba’s website. Christine Arinze told the story that was created in her group. The workshop received excellent reviews from the participants.

Christine’s story is featured on the Kuumba Website: <http://kuumbastorytellers.org/video/>

SEPTEMBER

September 12, 2020 Grand Parents Tales and KSOG Membership Drive had more than 40 people to sign up to view the program. This was the largest number

of people we've had to sign up for one of our programs this year. The featured tellers were Christine Arinze (AKA Sister Olufemi), Gloria Elder, Gwendolyn Napier, Akbar Imhotep, and Brenda Griffin. KSOG Membership Chair, Kenneth Green gave the membership promotional pitch. This event was a big success!

September-October 2020 Akbar Imhotep, veteran Kuumba storyteller was celebrated by the Wren's Nest for his 35th Anniversary as a Wren's Nest Rattler. Akbar tells Brer Rabbit stories there weekly. People from all over the world visit the Wren's Nest just to hear these stories.

The Butterfly Storytime with Queen Nur was at Perkins Arts Center. Gwendolyn Napier represented KSOG on the subject, "Dreams".

Chetter Galloway represented Kuumba on the storytelling program – Better Said Than Done (September 26th)

Southern Order of Storytellers (SOS) Reunion Kuumba's partner organization and six KSOG tellers participated in this event.

OCTOBER

Gwen Napier, KSOG representative did a virtual story for the Toni Morrison Bench by the Road in Cartersville, GA. In that event KSOG was mentioned as community servants and sharers of African American Sankofa History by the Cartersville History Center.

Jump Start Reading Across America KSOG Storytellers/Educators Gwen Napier and Josie Bailey participated in the virtual program.

October 31, 2020 Kuumba hosted its annual Triple Tales Festival. This virtual event featured Kuumba Tattle Tales, Jerrell Allen Smith, Madison Jackson and Clayton Mayfield.

Gwen Napier participated in Family Storytelling with Shelia Arnold.

LaDoris B. Davis participated in Indigenous Peoples Day Program, that was live in Decatur, GA.

CDF Action – Fall Storytelling Festival: Stories of Transformation (Chetter Galloway, LaDoris Bias-Davis, Barry Stewart Mann, Denise Mount, & Deborah Strahorn)

NOVEMBER

Kuumba is partnering with Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting TV (AIB) to produce eight 8 series of storytelling shows for youth, preschool-17 years. Eight tellers will

be featured on the show. The theme will be “A Patchwork of Stories” using quilts as the backdrop.

Kuumba is partnering with APEX Museum and a videographer, to produce four CDs of two storytellers per CD. The theme “Profiles of Color” and tellers will share historical portraits. The CDs will be distributed in senior centers in metro Atlanta. This program was made possible through a grant from 400 Years of African American History and Culture.

DECEMBER

KSOG will host its 25th Anniversary with a virtual celebration early in December.

Lastly, Kuumba is proud to report that we’ve had thirteen new members join in 2020!

Respectfully submitted by
Gloria Elder, President