



Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacke

March 28, 1944 - September 4, 2025

Mapambano Yangu
“My Struggle”

Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacké, aka Khadim, Sankofa Oykeame, Okofo Kwabena, Imara Uhuru Askari, and Mwalimu was physically born on March 28, 1944 and given the slave name, Kenneth Allen Jones.

Cheikh, called “Bull” by his father, was the youngest of four siblings, Sele Kefing Uhuru (Allen Columbus Jones II), Raymond Howard Jones, and Lillian Ruth (Jones) Ireland born to Annette Marie (Clark) Jones (Queen Ani) and Allen Columbus Jones. His parents, siblings, and daughter, Zenzal Shelman, all preceded Cheikh as Ancestors.

His patrilineal ancestry extends to the Togo, Ateke, and Kota people of Gabon in what is now considered Central Afrika. Genealogical research located both his enslaved Great-Grandfather, Seaborn Jones in 1838 and Grandfather, Charlie Jones in 1862, on the Eudora Plantation, “the Old Jones Place, owned by Judge Francis Jones near Quitman, Georgia. Later, Cheikh’s father, Charlie’s son, would also be born in Quitman. The roots of his matrilineal ancestry trace to the Brame and Balanta people of current day Guinea Bissau In West Afrika.

He grew up near the historic mid-town Detroit crossroad of Woodward and Warren Avenues. During his childhood and early teens, much of his time was spent in the Detroit Institute of Arts, the main Detroit Public Library, and on the Wayne State University campus which all were within the shadow of his home. He liked to say that he and his friends were “not only spooks who sat by the door, but routinely went through the doors” of what eventually became the cultural center of Detroit. In divine order, when urban renewal eventually demolished his childhood home, the site would sit beneath the main atrium of the 1997 redesigned Charles H. Wright Museum of Afrikan American History.

Shortly before middle school, he met El Hajj Malik el Shabazz, then Minister Malcolm, at one of the many Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) gatherings he attended with his father who, like his own father, was an ardent supporter of the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey. Due to that chance meeting and eventual 3-year tutelage, he was introduced to Islam and became a life-long adherent to the philosophical teachings of Malcolm. He would later honor the memory of Malcolm by naming his first and only son, Malcolm X.

Cheikh attended Trowbridge Elementary, Garfield Jr. High, and Northern High School before graduating from Cass Technical High School. He chose not to attend his high school graduation. During his years at Northern High, other alum were Aretha Franklin, Ron Banks of the Dramatics, William “Smokey” Robinson of the Miracles, and Melvin Franklin of the Temptations.

An all-around athlete during his youth and young adulthood, he was a Golden-gloves boxer and outstanding baseball and track star; but his favorite sport was football where he excelled in high school and on several semi-professional teams in Michigan and Ohio. His mother maintained an extensive library in their home and like his siblings, he was exposed and encouraged to read. He mastered and became an avid reader before kindergarten.

By his early teens, he routinely read the works of the emerging architects who were spearheading the widespread National Liberation movements on the Afrikan continent and the Negritude movement of the Harlem Renaissance. Despite being a routine honor student, Cheikh experienced disciplinary suspensions during both middle and high school due to regularly challenging classroom instruction. In frustration, he protested that teachers and textbooks presented a distorted view of Afrikan and taught information that was biased, inaccurate, or incomplete. He had little interest in continuing his education after high school. He evolved as a Pan-Afrikan Nationalist borne out of a new generation rooted in the revolutionary spirit and consciousness ignited by the struggle for Black Liberation in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The knowledge he amassed through reading early in life and socialization as a young adult was a constant source of conflict during his formal Eurocentric education.

In keeping with his eclectic personality, Cheikh's literary taste constantly grew and built on his love for classic Afrikan history and culture, archaeology, language, semantics, and the sciences. Acquired knowledge became the foundation of his perspective on race and class.

With a strong sense of self, Cheikh was complex and complicated, but pragmatic in his approach to life and his humanity. He valued his privacy and often preferred his own company to that of others. He heard and followed his own drumbeat.

During much of the 1960's Black Liberation Struggle, he was loyal, committed, and typically known to be armed at all times. He would take life-altering steps upon becoming a member of the Black Panther Party, and later the Republic of New Afrikan. He also recruited and secretly trained members of Tutashinda

Pamoja, a small, militant, cadre of young, revolutionary Black Nationalists.

Over the next 20 years, he learned to maintain a near invisible profile as a “shadow warrior” while in various national and local groups. Being the most challenging years of his life, he would later acknowledged that they taught him sacrifice and perseverance, often alone, in the face of hardship, and adversity. It was also the time at which the full realization of what his role would be in the struggle for Afrikan reclamation and liberation.

In 1969, a day after his 25th birthday, he was arrested following the deadly gunfight between RNA security and a mix of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies at New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit. In 1971 police informant implicated him in planning a series of nationwide bank robberies. Though never convicted of those charges, he fought the next ten years to successfully clear his name and expunge the records. Amid his chaotic life during the 60’s and 70’s, he would find time to become an intense essayist and poet published in some of the more revolutionary periodicals of the time.

Ironically, impacted by an unintended message from Huey Newton’s “Revolutionary Suicide,” he again found himself at another life-altering decision point. He chose what he reasoned to be a safer, simpler, more viable path where he could use his fund of knowledge to extend his commitment to Afrikan liberation. That path was higher education.

Despite having been an honor student throughout the years of his formative education, and a youth member of Mensa in middle school, few knew of his life long struggle to find comfort under the pressure of being in the top 2% of individuals in the world whose intellect placed them either near or above the 160 I.Q. genius category.

Cheikh returned to Wayne State University where he went on to earn a

Bachelor's (Magna Cum Laude/Valedictorian) majoring in Humanistic Sciences, and a Master's (Summa Cum Laude/Salutarian) with co-majors in Criminal Justice and Counseling. Though speaking at his undergraduate ceremony, he elected not to attend his Master's graduation ceremony.

Uncertain of his next step, opted for several post-graduate classes in Clinical, Abnormal, and Social Psychology at the University of Michigan. He eventually became a Ph.D. candidacy in Public Administration at Wayne State, but later shifted to Global Business Management at Kennedy International University. It was not long before he once again found himself at odds with the Eurocentric institution of higher education.

Over the next 40 years and remainder of his life, he made a conscious choice to not complete the Ph.D., preferring the permanent All But Dissertation (ABD) designation. He said that being asked why he never completed his Ph.D. allowed him to share his views on higher education and the thesis of Dr. Carter G. Woodson's, "Miseducation of the Negro."

By the late 1980's, with both formal and Afrikan-centered education coupled with 20 plus years of unprecedented life experiences, he embarked on a journey that featured travel throughout the world. By his transition, he had reunited with over 35 countries in the Motherland, 6 continents, and more than 50 countries of the Afrikan world community.

Many will remember his 13 years as Chief Executive of a nationally acclaimed, Detroit crisis intervention and counseling agency that served Afrikan American children, at-risk youth, and their families. His professional career spanned decades in mental health, juvenile justice, substance abuse, and youth service as a social work administrator, supervisor, case manager, researcher, and trainer while achieving local, state, and national recognition in child, youth, and family services. A highly regarded professional, he was a

Fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, American Sociological Association, Eureka Communities, and Kellogg Youth Development.

He launched, implemented, and coordinated Check Up! Or Check Out! an award-winning U.S. Office of Minority Health initiative addressing Afrikan American Male Health disparities in Michigan. He was also a founding member of the Michigan Minority Health Coalition while serving as President and interim Chief Executive Officer of a multi-county, community-based elder health care network. He was Contract Manager for Black Family Development, Inc., one of the most prominent and successful non-profit organizations serving children and families in Metropolitan Detroit.

In 1984, he formed Ujima Consortium International, a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation; he increased his efforts to provide Afrikan-centered training, program development, and consultancy. In 1997, he launched Sankofa Arts to promote Afrikan cultural awareness through Afrikan art, artifacts, clothing, and education. In 1997, he was also a founder of Michigan's first and only Afrikan American Pop Warner Little Scholars Football and Cheer program to promote academics and athletics while developing leadership skills, teamwork, and cultural awareness in 8 to 15-year-old children. He joked that it was of his few involvements that did not feature Afrikan or Black in its name.

Cheikh was a supporter and eventual consultant for Partners for Afrikan which promoted self-sufficiency among women's organizations involved in micro-finance and HIV/AIDS related activities. His consultancy in Afrikan included the nations of South Afrikan, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In honor of Patrice Lumumba, he was also a staunch supporter of Friends of the Congo.

Cheikh proudly admitted that he was affirmed and deeply moved upon tracing

his maternal DNA to Guinea Bissau and his paternal DNA to Gabon. It was ironic that of all the Afrikan countries he visited, Senegal was among his favorites. It was in Senegal that he developed his business ties and long-time friendship with Mamadou Ka, who became a close family friend. In Senegal, Ibrahima Mbacké, who was the great, great grandson of his namesake, the founder of Mouridism and Saint of Senegal, Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacké (PBUH), also embraced him.

Over the course of his life, as a revolutionary and activist, his involvement included 36 years as a member of the National Association of Black Social Workers, serving terms as National President, Vice President, and Secretary. He was a recipient of a Pyramid, the organizations highest award, as well as both the Lifetime Achievement and Distinguished Service awards. He was a graduate of the Afrikan Centered Social Work Academy. He served 3 terms as President of Michigan ABSW, and two of Greater Detroit ABSW.

He was a founding member of the Nationalist Black Leadership Coalition, Chairman of Pan Afrikan Affairs Task Force, and founding member of the National Afrikan American Drug Policy Coalition, and Chairman of the Detroit affiliate.

As a founding charter member of the Association for the Study of Afrikan American Life and History, he served as Vice President of the Detroit branch. He was a member of the Association for the Study of Classical Afrikan Civilization, and the Council of Elders. He served on the Board of the Black Star Collaborative Corporation, which collaborated with the Afrikan Diaspora Chamber of Commerce to promote revenue-generating opportunities between Afrikan and the Afrikan diaspora through large-scale financial investment and import-export ventures.

He was the North American President of Afrikan Brothers United, a Senegal-

based organization for which he promoted and assisted in the development of micro-business ventures in West Afrikan. He was a founding member and served as Treasurer of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network,

Following his retirement from the State of Michigan in 2005, he dedicated more of his energy toward other interests and initiatives central to his life. He personally supported a women and children AIDS clinic in West Afrikan, and advocated for several local, national, and international efforts to address health inequities and disparities among diasporic Afrikan populations.

In 2011, he was the co-founding Vice President of Friends of Royal Oak Township, Inc., which served a community dating to 1833, becoming one of the first and oldest Michigan communities comprised of formally enslaved Afrikaans and chartered in the United States.

His love for Afrikan prompted Cheikh to routinely proclaim that “Let’s be clear, the true Alpha and Omega is Afrikan, not Greek. Afrikan is anywhere there is an Afrikan, and the first human touched by the Sun on this planet was an Afrikan, and an Afrikan will be the last.”

As his spirit joins the Ancestors, he leaves behind memories to Brenda Denease (Baker) Mbacké, his loving wife and partner of 37.5 years, son Malcolm X. Higgins, his nephew Logan Banks, his former wife, Marsha L. Wilson (Jones) Shelman, son and daughter, Leonard and Antoinette Shelman, a host of other nieces and nephews, and an extended family of life-long comrades, friends, professional colleagues, and business associates throughout the Afrikan world.

Adupe Aruku Baba Wa

“In the Spirit of the Ancestors”

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 11. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Kemp Funeral Home & Cremation Services
24585 Evergreen Rd
Southfield, MI 48075
(248) 702-5367
info@kempfh.com
<https://www.kempfuneralhome.com>

Family Hour

SEP 13. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church
7625 Linwood St.
Detroit, MI 48206

Funeral Service

SEP 13. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church
7625 Linwood St.
Detroit, MI 48206

Tribute Wall

CT

“ Our Entire Family from Cleveland, Ohio are Sending All of Our Sympathy and Condolences for My Cousin Mrs. Brenda Mbacke’ Husband Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacke’.

Absent of The Body is Present with the Lord 🙏🙏🙏❤️❤️❤️🌹🌹
🌹

To Our Cousin Mrs. Brenda Mbacke’ and Family Stay Prayer Up and Stay Lifted Through Everything on This Precious Day!

We Love You All and I will be in Detroit, MI soon.

Sincerely Your Cousin Cassandra Tabron & Entire Family 🌹🌹🌹

Cassandra Tabron - September 13, 2025 at 10:14 AM

BO

“ Berth Arnette Brewer OCABSW purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacke.



Berth Arnette Brewer OCABSW - September 11, 2025 at 05:17 PM

DP

“ Diane Griggs, ABSWGLA Chapter President purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacke.



Diane Griggs, ABSWGLA Chapter President - September 10, 2025 at 03:29 PM

MG

“ *Michael "MTUMISHI" Guynn purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacke.*



Michael "MTUMISHI" Guynn - September 10, 2025 at 03:21 PM