

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

Dr. Maulana Karenga is professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach. He holds two Ph.D.'s; his first in political science with focus on the theory and practice of nationalism (United States International University) and his second in social ethics with a focus on the classical African ethics of ancient Egypt (University of Southern California). Professor Karenga is the foremost exponent of Maatian ethical thought, having developed over the last three decades, a creative and scholarly Kawaida interpretation of ancient Egyptian ethical thought as a living tradition and a useful philosophical option for critical reflection on the urgent issues of our time. His second dissertation, a major work of 803-pages titled *Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics*, and submitted in 1996, was the most requested work from UMI out of 45,000 dissertations and theses worldwide of that year. Published as a book in 2002, it has received praise from the Africana Studies and Egyptological communities as a seminal and defining work which has opened up a valuable new dialog with ancient Egyptian thought and culture.

An activist-scholar of national and international recognition, Dr. Karenga has had a far-reaching effect on Black intellectual and political culture since the 1960s. Through his organizational and intellectual work, and his philosophy, *Kawaida*, he has played a vanguard role in shaping the Black Arts Movement, Black Studies, the Black Power Movement, the Black Student Union Movement, Afrocentricity, ancient Egyptian studies and the study of ancient Egyptian culture as an essential part of Black Studies, Ifa ethical studies, rites of passage programs, the Independent Black School Movement, African life-cycle ceremonies, the Simba Wachanga Youth Movement, Black theological and ethical discourse, and the Reparations Movement.

Moreover, he is the executive director of the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies, Los Angeles, and national chairman of The Organization Us, a cultural and social change organization, so named to stress the communitarian focus of the organization. Dr. Karenga has also played a key role in national united front efforts, serving on the founding and executive committee of the Black Power Conferences of the 60's, the National Black United Front, the National African American Leadership Summit, the Black Leadership Retreat, the National Association of Kawaida Organizations (NAKO), and on the executive council of the national organizing committee of the Million Man March/Day of Absence, as well as authored the *Mission Statement* for this joint project.

Dr. Karenga is also internationally known as the creator of *Kwanzaa*, an African American and Pan-African holiday celebrated throughout the world African community on every continent in the world. He is the author of the authoritative book

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on the subject: *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and lectures regularly and extensively on the vision and values of Kwanzaa, especially the *Nguzo Saba* (The Seven Principles), in various national and international venues. In addition, he has lectured on the life and struggle of African peoples on numerous campuses of the U.S.A. and in Senegal, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Trinidad, Britain and Canada.

Dr. Karenga is author of numerous scholarly articles and books, including: *Introduction to Black Studies*, the most widely used introductory text in Black/Africana Studies; *Selections From The Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*; *The Book of Coming Forth By Day: The Ethics of the Declarations of Innocence*; *Kawaida: A Communitarian African Philosophy*; and a translation and ethical commentary on the classical Yoruba text, *Odu Ifa*, titled *Odu Ifa: The Ethical Teachings*. His most recent publications, in addition to *Introduction to Black Studies*, 4th edition, are *Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics*, *Handbook of Black Studies* (co-authored with Molefi Kete Asante), and *Kawaida and Questions of Life and Struggle*.

He also served as chairman of the African American delegation to the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, Lagos, Nigeria; spokesman for a delegation of African American Educators of Independent Schools to the People's Republic of China; member of the Planning Committee for the Pan-African Festival of Arts and Culture, Dakar, Senegal; chairman of the delegation of educators/activists of the Organization Us to Cuba; co-planner and co-convenor of the Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, Cairo, Egypt; Inaugural Lecturer for the initiation of Black History Month, London, England; Honorary Doctorate Recipient and Commencement Speaker, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa; and Official Guest and Lecturer, 160th Anniversary of Emancipation, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

A highly respected senior scholar in Black/Africana Studies, Professor Karenga has played a major role in the founding and development of the discipline and is the recipient of numerous awards for scholarship, leadership and community service from the preeminent professional organizations, departments and programs in the field, including:

The Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Excellence in Activist Scholarship, Best Book of the Year—*Kawaida and Questions of Life and Struggle*, Diopian Institute for Scholarly Advancement (DISA); ▲ Paul Robeson-Zora Neale Hurston Award for Scholarly Work Significantly Contributive to the Understanding, Development and Appreciation of African World Culture, National Council for Black Studies (NCBS); ▲ the Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Excellence in Scholarship, Best

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Book of the Year—*Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt*, Ankh Scientific Institute (ANKH); ▲ the C.L.R. James Award for Outstanding Publication of Scholarly Works that Advance the Discipline of Africana and Black Studies, National Council for Black Studies (NCBS); ▲ the National Leadership Award for Outstanding Scholarly Achievements in Black Studies, National Council for Black Studies (NCBS); ▲ the President's Award for Scholarship and Service in the Development of Black Studies, African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA);

▲ the Peace Education Award for Distinguished Leadership, Scholarship and Education in Building Bridges Among Africans Throughout the World, Center for African Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR), California State University-Sacramento; ▲ the Legacy Award for Milestone Contributions in Scholarship, Activism and Creativity, Institute of the Black World, 21st Century; ▲ the Distinguished Visiting Scholar Chair and Award, Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI; ▲ the Executive Committee Award for a Lifetime of Achievements, Department of Africology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; ▲ the Distinguished Africanist Award, New York African Studies Association; ▲ the Outstanding Humanitarian Award, Nigerian Community of Southern California and Associated Groups; ▲ the Richard Allen Living Legend Award, African Methodist Episcopal Church; and ▲ the Pioneer Award, Rainbow PUSH Coalition and Citizenship Education Fund.

His fields of teaching and research within Black Studies are: Black Studies theory and history, Africana (continental and diasporan) philosophy; ancient Egyptian (Maatian) ethics; ancient Yoruba (Ifa) ethics; African American intellectual history; ethnic relations and the socio-ethical thought of Malcolm X. He is currently writing a book on the liberation ethics of Malcolm X.

Dr. Karenga is the subject of the book *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait* by Dr. Molefi Kete Asante which is the definitive text on his organizational and intellectual work.

Websites:

www.MaulanaKarenga.org

www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org

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