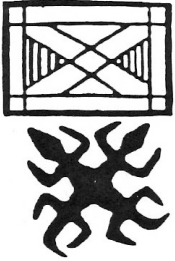


Organization of Women Writers of Africa, Inc.

OWWA's First 20 Years



Adrinka Symbols:

“House built to stand windy and treacherous conditions.”

“Need for Unity.”

Co-Founders

Ama Ata Aidoo
Jayne Cortez

Executive Board

Jayne Cortez
J. c. Franklin
Rashidah Ismaili
Rosamond S. King
Louise Meriwether

Board of Directors

Ama Ata Aidoo
Margaret Busby
Gabrielle Civil
Alexis De Veaux
LaTasha N. Diggs
Zetta Elliott
Donette Francis
Paula Giddings
Cheryll Y. Greene
Renee Larrier
Tess Onwueme
Coumba Touré

Advisory Board

Maya Angelou
Maryse Condé
Nancy Morejón
Sapphire

The Organization of Women Writers of Africa, Inc. (OWWA) was founded in 1991 by Jayne Cortez of the USA and Ama Ata Aidoo of Ghana for the purpose of establishing links between professional African women writers. The Founding Executive Board members were J.e Franklin, Cheryll Y. Greene, Rashidah Ismaili, and Louise Meriwether. OWWA is a nonprofit literary organization concerned with the development and advancement of the literature of women writers from Africa and its Diaspora. OWWA is also a non-governmental organization associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information.

OWWA's achievements include the international conferences: *Yari Yari: Black Women Writers and the Future* (1997), *Yari Yari Pamberi: Black Women Writers Dissecting Globalization* (2004), and the first Symposia in the United States to be a part of the UNESCO Route of the Slave Project: *Slave Routes: The Long Memory* (1999) and *Slave Routes: Resistance, Abolition and Creative Progress* (2008). (*Yari* means *the future* in the Kuranko language of Sierra Leone; *pamberi* means *forward* in the Shona language of Zimbabwe.) All of these events were held in New York City and were co-sponsored by New York University's Institute of African American Affairs. Additional support was provided by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York Council for the Humanities. The *Yari Yari* conferences and *Slave Routes* symposia were large scale international events which brought together hundreds of distinguished writers, scholars, artists, and organizers from over thirty countries. Several thousand people attended the activities and the population at large was reached through the televised viewing of selected sessions. The next *Yari Yari* gathering – *Yari Yari Ntoaso: Continuing the Dialogue*, will be held in Accra, Ghana in May 2013.

OWWA has also created an ongoing series of videotaped conversations with creative women, a literary literacy project connecting young students to literature and professional writers, and occasional literary awards, critical panels, readings, and film/video screenings. All of OWWA's programs have been documented on film and are available in the OWWA archives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

In 2011, it's twentieth year, OWWA added a new generation of board members: poets and performers Gabrielle Civil and LaTasha N. Diggs; award-winning children's and young adult author Zetta Elliott, scholar Donnette Francis, and critical and creative writer Rosamond S. King. These women join the writers and literary activists who created OWWA to keep the organization vibrant for another 20 years.