

Afeni Shakur Davis Keynote Speaker at NBOBA Convention

Written by Brittany Roquemore ID2131
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Commenting on the state of the black community at the NBOBA's 4th Annual State of Black Youth in the New Millenium Convention Friday, the keynote speaker, mother of slain hip-hop / rap icon Tupac Shakur; Afeni Shakur Davis said "It is not our color that's our enemy; it's our behavior."

Blacks are disproportionately affected by some of the nation's highest rates of incarceration, drug trafficking, abortions and domestic violence.

According to the Bureau of Justice of Statistics, 28 percent of black men will be sent to jail or prison in their lifetime. About 12 percent of black men ages 20 to 34 are currently in jail or prison.

Educator and former Black Panther Party member, Neferet Ptah-Hotep, said she's intimidated by these statistics. She attended the lecture.

"We are not decreasing, we are increasing and that's a threat," she said.

Mohammed Luwemba, founder of the NBOBA, believes that the drug trade between blacks is a large part of society's downfall.

"It's killing our community," he said.

He also believes that black people who sell drugs are being disloyal to their brothers and sisters — and contributing to black-on-black crime.

"A black person selling drugs is committing treason in the community," he said.

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One of the speakers, Judge Debbie Thomas, spoke on black youth and the law. She told the audience that abortion was a factor hurting the black community.

According to a 1992 Planned Parenthood Service Report, abortion services have been strategically targeting blacks. A surveillance report released by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Abortion in 1999 by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that 35 percent of abortions are performed on black women.

Later, Afeni Shakur Davis said, "If our children don't make it, there is no future."

Luwemba stated how mistrust between the black male and the black female is hurting unity among blacks.

He depicted a misogynistic black man who mistrusts black women and the domestic violence that ties in with that mistrust.

"Many don't know what a real black man is. He's not a pimp, drug dealer or a rapist," he said.

Luwemba said the new phenomena of the NBOBA are the elite brothers and sisters set to take the torch for this generation. This coincides with their mission: To reclaim the image of the black male and female.

Dennis Thompson, the NBOBA's WSU chapter chief of staff, informed the audience about the Willie Lynch Doctrine. He said Willie Lynch established it in 1712 when he spoke to the public on the banks of the James River in what was then the colony of Virginia.

When referring to the Lynch Doctrine and the state that blacks are currently in, he acknowledged that the doctrine is still affecting them today.

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“Two hundred ninety-three years ago, they took the shackles off our bodies and put them on our minds,” he said.

He went on enforcing how the modern Emancipation Proclamation starts with blacks’ own initiative.

“We need to take the shackles off our minds,” he said.

He also discussed how the media shapes the image of the black male and female.

Hotep acknowledged the influence that violence in the media has on black youth and the black community as a whole. She is disappointed by the effect.

“It is very disappointing when our young people are exposed to violent media,” she said. “It’s going to take you guys to educate yourselves.”

In efforts to help educate, improve and unite the underprivileged black youth, the NBOBA has set up programs such as a weekend clothing drive, a food program, mentoring program and a spelling bee.

The clothing drive is going on its third year.

The NBOBA also goes to shelters around the Detroit area to donate food to the less fortunate.

NBOBA member, Krish Sincere, established the mentoring program called Support Our Youth (SOY). SOY was established to guide males and females and to build relationships between mentors and children.

Darryl Tucker, president of the NBOBA, believes education is an important component for the advancement of black youth.

“We’re trying to pass the baton to them in the right way,” he said.

The spelling bee program called “Words to Riches” is a yearly program that showcases the top five elementary students in Detroit.

At the State of Black Youth, Luwemba presented 10-year-old Blake Calloway his first place trophy.

The NBOBA is currently setting up a DVD capturing the spelling bee, clothing drive, food drive and other events of them shown working in the neighborhoods of Detroit.

“We’re just human beings trying to do God’s work,” Tucker said.

When referring to the State of Black Youth program, he said, “We’re trying to expand on it. This is just temporary.”

Michelle Pryor, journalism major at WSU, said the program helped her get a better understanding of her heritage.

“We as African-Americans must not only know our history but know how to affect change by taking the mantle from those who came before us,” she said.

She also said that a way to affect change is by “putting out ideas into a way that people will

know who we are and how we got over.”

*The South End is the official student-run, independent, daily newspaper of Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. First and foremost, TSE is the voice of the student body.

Among its many duties, TSE reports on Wayne State’s campus life, as well as social issues both in and around the realm of the university.

This article was written by By Brittany Roquemore / Contributing Writer for The South End.

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