

Bio for Kim Casey and Diane Knoepke's Event: "Becoming Together"
October 29, 2027 Presentation: 1-1:30

Mama Edie McLoud Armstrong is a speech and language pathologist who began using storytelling, poetry, music and movement in her language programs in the late '70's to more holistically meet the needs of her multiply challenged children and adult clients.

Many of them also suffered from low self-esteem resulting largely from lack of self-knowledge and of personal cultural history. With interactive folktales, cultural/historical stories, personal and spirit-filled stories, Mama Edie found through this medium a way to empower her children. She imparted the knowledge that each of them was beautiful, unique and capable of doing great things, while also meeting their speech and language goals as well. With increased requests for paid performances and workshops from colleagues outside of the school setting, often blending Spanish with English, a professional bilingual storyteller was born. Including American Sign Language was a way to honor her deaf and hard-of-hearing children and simultaneously taught her hearing children how to "see and tell a story with their hands."

Teacher workshops have included how to use the power of story and music to bring subjects like history, math and science to life. Parent workshops address how to create a nurturing communication environment in the home that can facilitate safe and harmonious social interactions. Parents were also taught how they could transition from simply being a "Parent Council" to being "Extended Family," providing support to each other in various ways. Within these settings, the power of "Sisterhood was also introduced and greatly explored.

Mama Edie's original stories, songs and research articles have been included in various publications. "How to Reach a Multilingual Audience" is included in ***Tell the World! Storytelling Across Language Barriers***, edited by storyteller Margaret Read Macdonald. ***Literacy Development in the Storytelling Classroom***, edited by Norfolk, Stenson and Williams, includes an overview, personal anecdotes and lesson plans on the efficacy of using storytelling and music to teach cultural history, to enhance personal empowerment, and to explore the STEM topics of science, technology, engineering and math during speech and language therapy. "Storytelling: A Powerful Tool for Educating Children" was published by poet/playwright Useni Eugene Perkins (who wrote "Hey, Black Child") in his ***Black Child Journal***. A 4-page photo article called, "I Walk by Faith," published in ***Storytelling Magazine***, describes Mama Edie's pilgrimage in Iraq in 2017, when she was invited, among others from 15 different countries, to participate in an international peace conference hosted by the New Horizon NGO.

Mama Edie was the Founding Co-Chair of Ase: (pronounced "ah-SHEH") The Chicago Assoc of Black Storytellers, and served for 9 years as Membership Chair of the National Assoc of Black Storytellers, based in Baltimore, MD. In this capacity, she established a new tradition called "The Akwaaba Gathering," where newcomers to the annual

storytelling festival/conferences were especially honored, recognized and welcomed into the fold with processional drums, hugs and words of wisdom.

With the support of multiple arts awards, with national and international engagements, and with the never-ending support of her village in Chicago – most especially the Council of Sisterhoods - Mama Edie continues to thrive at 75 and remains grateful.

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Affiliations to be recognized:

National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.
Ase: The Chicago Association of Black Storytellers
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
International Black Women's Congress
The Council of Sisterhoods
National Black Child Development Institute
Institute of Positive Education (Founder: Dr. Haki Madhubuti)
Kemetic Institute of Chicago
National Black Speech, Language and Hearing Association
Sankofa Mbofra Fie & Sankofa Preparatory School (Ghana, West Africa)
National Storytelling Network
N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America)
Africa International House
Las Caras Lindas ("the beautiful faces," a sisterhood of African Diasporic Women)
IL Speech, Language and Hearing Association
Little Calumet River/Midwest Underground Railroad Network