

Philanthropist to keynote African-American educational forum in Pomona

By Imani Tate, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Sunday, October 12, 2014

POMONA >> Bernard Kinsey, a Los Angeles philanthropist known for his passion for education, arts, economic development and corporate innovations, will be keynote speaker at a western regional educational forum presented by the African American Museum of Beginnings and the California Alliance of African-American Educators on Saturday at the Village Conference Center, 1460 E. Holt Ave.

The forum, scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., will focus on educational strategies for African-American children.

Kinsey and his wife, Shirley, are well-known for creating The Kinsey Collection, one of the nation's largest collections of African-American history, culture, artifacts, art, books, documents and manuscripts.

The collection, a national touring exhibit featuring 400 years of African-American history, has been featured at the Smithsonian, DuSable Museum of African-American History, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, California African-American Museum and the Epcot Center.

The collection received the President's National Award for Museum and Library Services. The Kinsey Collection coffee table book is a 198-page companion to the exhibit and was adopted by the Florida Department of Education to teach African-American history to K-12 students.

The New York Times described Kinsey as an "aggressive achiever." He earned the moniker for his pioneering and philanthropic success in cultural, community, educational and economic enterprise.

He was among Xerox Corp.'s first black executives and helped break down racial barriers during his 20 years there. While he led the Xerox Black Employees Association, the firm hired thousands of black, female and Latino employees and Xerox black employees donated \$100,000 to the United Negro College Fund.

In December 1995, he was appointed honorary consul general by the U.S. State Department and the Central African Republic. He served as a business consultant to

the governments of South Africa, Germany, England and France and a founding board member of the William H. Johnson Foundation for the Arts.

Kinsey earned a bachelor's degree at Florida A&M University and a master's of business administration from Pepperdine University. As ReBuild Los Angeles co-chair and chief operating officer, he generated more than \$380 million in investments for inner-city economic enterprise.

Kinsey also raised millions for the Mandela Freedom Fund Committee, Florida A&M and College Bound. He and Shirley were early financial backers of the NAACP Image Awards and "Real Men Cook," a culinary competition created by Dr. Fred Parrott to raise money for black medical schools and prostate cancer testing/treatment.

The forum is co-presented and hosted by African American Museum of Beginnings' co-founders Khalif and Victoria Rasshan; Ganesha High School graduate Debra Watkins, founder, president and executive director of the California Alliance of African-American Educators; A. Carl Duncan, executive director of Kweli Educational Enterprises, and Amauri Ross, president of United Black Student Unions of California.

The \$25 registration fee covers the keynote address, three workshops, a continental breakfast and lunch. Vegetarian and vegan options are available. Reservations are mandatory.

Gary Lett of Pomona, ceramics artist, painter, muralist and sculptor, will be featured in a solo exhibit from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. The artist's reception is from 5 to 9 p.m.

The forum includes the 6:30 p.m. play, "Slabtown Convention." Admission is \$10.

Forum workshop facilitators include Watkins, Duncan, Khalif Rasshan, John Browne, Ross, Joyce King and Garfield Bright.

Watkins, who was raised in Pomona, earned a bachelor's degree in English, French and psychology from Pitzer College and two master's from Stanford University in education and educational counseling before embarking on a 35-year educational career in San Jose's East Side Union High School District.

She helped start the Pegasus Alternative High School, coordinated Project WORD (Working On Refining our Destiny), served as a director for Partners In School Innovation and, in 2001, founded California Alliance of African-American Educators.

Tickets for the forum may be obtained online at [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). Ninth- to 12th-grade students attend free. Students must call 951-415-9207 or email aamuseumofbeginnings@gmail.com for the free registration code.