

Title of Panel: ***Voices from the Past: Invoking the Wisdom of our Female Ancestors to Aid Our Path to Empowerment and Gender Equality***

Panelist: List All Panelist (3 or more) Name and Affiliation

Contact (Panel Organizer): Main Contact - Panelist Name and Affiliation
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Type of Proposal: **Complete Panel Presentation**

Abstract (100-250 words)

Asante (1998) states that “There are no people without traditions and traditions are the lifeblood of people.” Further, he believes that a people who refuse to express its love and appreciation for its ancestors will die because in essence, not to means you are expressing love and appreciation from someone else’s ancestors. One of the cornerstones of indigenous African religions is the belief in human spirits, specifically, the ancestral spirits, and the powerful role they play in the life, livelihood, well being, social harmony, and longevity of their families and their communities. This tradition of an intimate interactive relationship with ancestral spirits is kept alive by acknowledging and honoring our ancestors in libation ceremonies at weddings, anniversaries, church events, family affairs such as family reunions, and cultural events. The presenters’ voices convey hope, disappointments, fear, pride, and struggles as examples to call upon the ancestors, specifically, their female ancestors to provide hope, strength, validation, and affirmation for their feminist work. Throughout the presentation, they share powerful and soul-searching counter narratives of the healing wisdom of this African tradition that they in turn used to help their students discover the gifts and the ability within. In the spirit of the African tradition of ancestral spirits, the presenters, women from different cultural backgrounds, share critical incidents of initiatives, projects, and practices of where they invoked the wisdom of their female ancestors to help them along their feminist journeys. The audience will identify their feminine cultural wisdom and how to use it their work.

Summary (80-90 words)

Asante (1998) states that “There are no people without traditions and traditions are the lifeblood of people.” Further, he believes that a people who refuse to express its love and appreciation for its ancestors will die because in essence, not to means you are expressing love and appreciation from someone else’s ancestors. One of the cornerstones of indigenous African religions is the belief in human spirits, specifically, the ancestral spirits, and the powerful role they play in the life, livelihood, well being, social harmony, and longevity of their families and their communities. In the spirit of the African tradition of ancestral spirits, the presenters, women from different cultural backgrounds, share critical incidents of initiatives, projects, and practices of where they invoked the wisdom of their female ancestors to help them along their feminist journeys. The audience will identify their feminine cultural wisdom and how to use it their work.