

PULSE HOPE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ISSUE



P.U.L.S.E

At the Powerful United Ladies Striving to Elevate (P.U.L.S.E.), we remain dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive space for women of color on Binghamton University's campus. By educating, elevating and empowering, we uplift and support one another, ensuring that every woman—regardless of background, identity, or race—knows her worth and limitless potential. As we step into February, we embrace not only Black History Month but also the opportunity to celebrate the unwavering strength, resilience, and love of Black mothers, who are the backbone of our communities.



PULSE would like to honor the Black mothers who have shaped our histories, nurtured our futures, and continue to be pillars of strength, wisdom, and love. Whether they are birth mothers, community leaders, mentors, or caregivers, black mothers embody resilience in the face of adversity and provide the foundation upon which our communities thrive. Join us as we recognize their sacrifices, celebrate their triumphs, and reflect on their vital role in shaping our lives. Through shared stories, discussions, and events, we hope to illuminate the significance of Black motherhood and its lasting impact on our culture and society.



BLACK HISTORY

Coretta Scott King



Historically known for being the wife of the prominent civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr, she is often overlooked in her role of ensuring her Husband's message remained alive and pushing the fight for the protection of African Americans rights. Born on April 27,1927 her life changed as she became a part of the biggest movement in the 1960's. After her husband's assassination, she was left alone in raising their four children. Coretta Scott King's bravery was admired and honorable, she didn't halt her plans from challenging the government. Only a few days after her husband's death, she led a march protesting for sanitization workers. She also publicly criticized the Vietnam War, supported Women's rights which all resulted in her securing a federal holiday and a memorial for her Husband's legacy.

Wangari Maathai

Wangari Maathai, born in Nyeri Kenya on April 1st,1940. Maathai changed history for the women in East and Central Africa once she became the first woman to earn a doctorate degree in 1971. Maathai has earned multiple accolades for her work such as a Nobel Peace Prize, in democracy, human rights and environmental issues. She founded The Green Belt Movement, which aided in the improvement of Kenyan women who suffered from food scarcity because of streams turning dry. Maathai has deeply devoted herself to the fight for women's rights, she has variously addressed these issues publicly in spaces such as the United Nations. Maathai was an extraordinary force, an icon for all the physical contributions she has done for the betterment of her country.



Viola Davis

Born on August 11, 1965 Viola Davis is an American renowned actress with EGOT accolades, and grew up in Rhode Island. Growing up in poverty only exacerbated her passions in succeeding and wanting a better life for her and her family. Davis graduated from Rhode college in 1988 and continued to pursue her education in the well known performing arts academies, The Juilliard School. Davis' role in the film industry is crucial as she is a major representation for Black women, specifically dark-skinned women and women who are not given a chance in Hollywood due to ageism. She has worked in many remarkable films such as Fences, The Woman King and The Help. One of her struggles was uterine fibroids, requiring surgeries like myomectomy and hysterectomy. African American women face a higher risk of developing fibroids than others. As this procedure affected her ability to conceive, this led to Davis and her partner welcoming their adopted daughter Genesis in 2011.



Afeni Shakur

Afeni Shakur, born on January 10, 1947, most known for being the mother of the famous rapper Tupac Shakur. However, what most people miss is that Afeni Shakur played a crucial role in Black Panther Party during the 1970's in the New York Chapter. In 1968, Afeni Shakur and her Black Panther members were charged with plotting on bombing several New York establishments, and aid in the of murder several police officers. After serving eleven months in jail, facing a decades long-sentence, Shakur chose to defend herself in court. After eight intense months Shakur and the rest of her members were successfully acquitted of all charges. Afeni Shakur is one of the many women in the Black Panther Party who were left out from conversations involving their contributions for the group. Shakur was a fearless, ambitious and well-respected woman.



Question Loop

What's a piece of advice from your mom that has stuck with you?

Mwende - A piece of advice my mom gave me growing up was to always be kind and be myself. This has stuck with me since childhood because it reminds me that being true to who I am and leading with kindness will always take me further than trying to fit into someone else's mold. It's a lesson that's guided me through some tough moments, whether it was making new friends, handling setbacks, or stepping into leadership roles. My mom's words always remind me to stay grounded and trust that being my best self is enough.

What's your favorite memory with your mom?

Anna - My mom would pick me up from dance every Saturday afternoon in 8th grade. My favorite memories are of her and I going to the pizza shop next door to the studio to vent about all the drama in our lives. It was those months when we giggled together on the bus home where our tight-knit bond began to blossom and I knew she would be my best friend for life.

What's a habit or skill you've picked up from your mom that you're grateful for?

Briana - I have picked up my mom's empathy. She is always concerned with the well-being of others and does everything in her power to make sure that everyone is okay. I now see myself demonstrating this same quality and I am grateful for it. I think that my empathy allows me to connect with others easily and makes me mindful of how my actions might affect others.

How has your mom influenced your view of the world?

Julia - My mom has continued to pursue all of her interests and goals even as she gets older. I think oftentimes as women, we are told to stay in our lane or respective line of work. On top of that, if a woman so chooses to have a family, usually society expects her focus to shift towards motherhood and possibly still continue working whatever job she had before. Thankfully, my mom has shown me quite the contrary. From interior design to personal training, she has honed in on all of her interests regardless of skill level. She is now a successful business owner of her very own gym and she still makes time to learn new skills like taking guitar lessons and updating her P.T. certification specialties through various forms of training. My mom influenced my view on the world especially when it comes to college because I now try to focus on my major without feeling a pressure that I'll have to stick to it for the rest of my life. There is always an opportunity to learn more and dive into all of your interests/skills later on in life so enjoy what you are doing now because it doesn't have to be permanent.

What's something your mom does (or did) that always made you feel special?

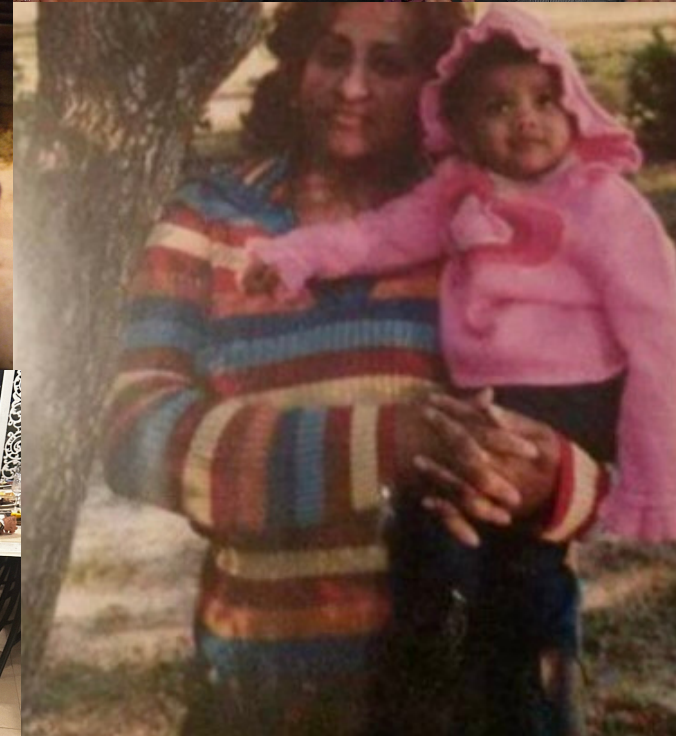
Arianna: My mom is the type of person that always has a fun fact to share and she loves all things art history and architecture! So whenever we are out in the city or in a museum she's always giving little presentations about everything around us. It made learning a more exciting experience and something I sought after to be able to inject my own fun facts.

What's a trait of hers that you admire and hope to embody?

Daniella: I really admire my mom's compassion and her heart. She has so much love and understanding for people and the world. She acts as my personal reminder to spread love and affection, while having compassion for others.

If you could thank your mom for one thing, what would it be?





Carrie Mae Weems

Kitchen Table Series

Carrie Mae Weems is a groundbreaking artist whose work has reshaped how we view the intersections of race, gender, and domestic life. One of her most significant projects, "The Kitchen Table Series," presents a fictional yet deeply resonant narrative, with Weems herself as the protagonist.

Centered around the kitchen table, Weems constructs an entire world where the drama of everyday life unfolds. The stage is carefully set, consisting of a small room, a table, and a single overhead light.

"The Kitchen Table Series" is particularly remarkable for its exploration of Black womanhood. Weems presents herself in various roles: a lover, a mother, a friend, and a woman in solitude, each interaction shedding light on different dimensions of her identity. The presence of others—whether a child, a partner, or friends—reveals the kitchen as a communal space, where relationships are nurtured and challenged. Yet, in moments of solitude, the table transforms into a place of self-reflection, emphasizing the inner emotional world of the protagonist. Through striking compositions and evocative storytelling, Weems affirms that the kitchen table is not just a place of labor but also one of power, connection, and self-discovery.

Since this breakthrough project, Weems has continued to push artistic boundaries through photography and video, earning widespread recognition. Based in Syracuse, New York, she has built an impressive body of work that has earned her numerous accolades. And in 2014, she made history as the first Black woman to receive a retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum.

Source: nga.gov



Women Who Lead

My name is Dior Wright, and I am a junior double majoring in Psychology and Graphic Design. My pronouns are she/her, and I am Co Public Relations Chair for Black Dance Repertoire, a student organization on campus. My involvement on campus also extends to Residential Life, where I am a residential assistant and a research assistant for a lab within the Psychology Department. I am also a sound technician at Binghamton Sound, Stage, and Lighting (BSSL). Besides my current commitments, I've been a BSU intern, a model in one of BSU's fashion shows, a dancer on MODA, a dancer on the Binghamton University Dance Team, and more. An interesting fact about myself is that I am trained in multiple dance genres.



Q:What inspired you to begin your dancing career?

A: Interestingly, I started dancing because of my stepfather. He encouraged me to get out of the house on weekends, so he signed me up for dance. Over time, I developed a genuine love for dance and decided to pursue it more seriously in high school.

Q:What are some ways, things, or people that motivate you or spark your inspiration?

A: My family came from humble beginnings and worked to give me the foundation and support to chase my dreams. Dancing and being at a University is a prime example of the outcome of the sacrifices they made and I show great gratitude for the opportunities they created for me. My accomplishments are possible because of my support system and they are a great representation of my family's resilience and hard work, further fueling my inspiration.

Q:What are some challenges/hardships you have faced as a woman of color in creative, academic and/or professional spaces?

A: In creative, academic, and professional spaces, I am sometimes the only woman of color. With that comes microaggressions and unconscious biases. Being able to navigate uncomfortable situations while remaining professional is a challenge I face often and still trying to navigate. By providing my ideas into these spaces I hope to challenge the stereotypes put onto the black community.



The Overlooked Transition

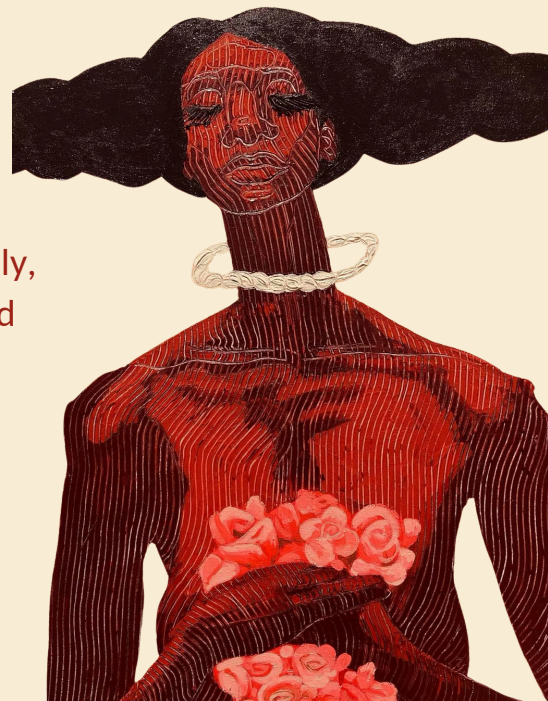
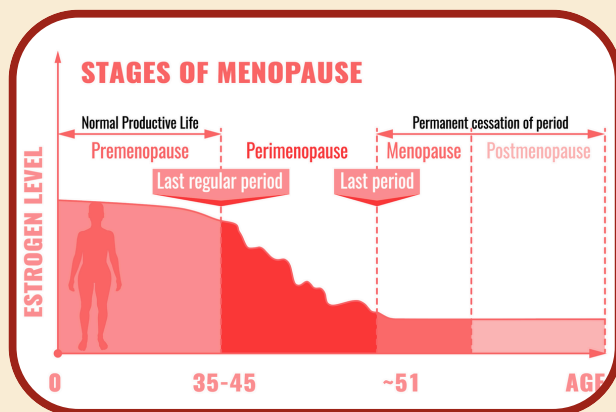
Black Women, Perimenopause, and the Healthcare Gap

By Roxy Wallace

Meaning around menopause, perimenopause is the time your body transitions into menopause marking the end of the reproductive years. The beginning of perimenopause has individual differences with some women notice changes as early as their mid 30s and others in their 40s. Throughout the menopausal transition some women experience subtle symptoms like menstrual irregularity while others experience more severe or higher frequency of symptoms. Symptoms include: irregular periods, hot flashes, sleep problems, mood changes, vaginal and bladder problems, decreasing fertility, changes in sexual function, and more.

Most women do not start perimenopause until their late 40s but some studies have found that Black women start perimenopause earlier than other races. Research has shown that the duration, frequency, severity, and types of symptoms are different across races. Research shows that the menopausal transition for Black women starts, on average, 8.5 months before white women. A study of women's health across the nation (SWAN) followed 3,000 women through peri/menopause for a decade and found several key differences.

Black and Hispanic women reach menopause earlier than White, Chinese, and Japanese women. Black and Hispanic women experience certain menopausal symptoms for 10 or more years prior (twice as long) as white women. Additionally, black women are more likely to experience more intense and more frequent hot flashes.

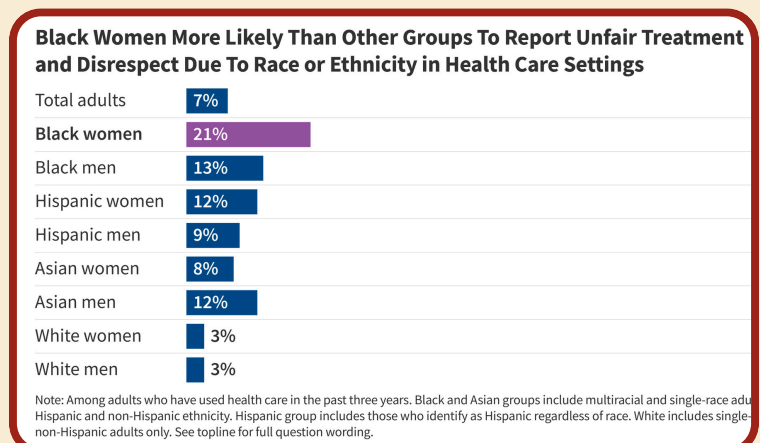


The race differences in perimenopause and menopause are important because health care providers are often not aware or fully equipped to help women navigate their transition. Because there is research showing that women of color experience these transitions earlier than their counterparts it can lead to unmanaged menopause symptoms which have been associated with sleep disturbances, reduced productivity, and elevated risk for long term disease: coronary heart disease and neurodegenerative disease. The disparities between Black and white women might be explained by structural racism leading to greater disease burdens for Black women. Black women are more likely to report financial instability, experience instances of discrimination, be involved in police violence, and experience illness or death of close family members which have potential to erode a person's overall health and accelerate aging.

Black women's experiences are often compared to research conducted on white women which has increased Black women's risk of long term chronic disease. Additionally, the disparities in research has led women to manage their perimenopause and menopausal symptoms alone without the guidance of a medical professional as there are accounts of being laughed at or treated as unintelligent for inquiring about their experiences.

The longer women of color go without adequate care and their comfort is minimized by doctors the longer their lives are disrupted. To advance the healthcare field while validating women's experiences more research needs to be done about Black women and their experiences with perimenopause and menopause. Medical professionals need to be taught the intricacies of menopausal transition in order to adequately treat and advise women. With the long standing disparities in the medical system, women of color should do their own research, advocate for themselves, get second opinions, and be validated in their experiences.

Sources: [Study of women's health across the nation \(SWAN\)](#), [harlow](#), mayo clinic



HAIR NIGHT

BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

Saturday night smells of biscuits and
burning hair.

Supper done and my grandmother has
transformed

the kitchen into a beauty shop. Laid
across the table

is the hot comb, Dixie Peach hair
grease,

horsehair brush, parting stick
and one girl at a time.

Jackie first, my sister says,
our freshly washed hair damp

and spiraling over toweled shoulders
and pale cotton nightgowns.

She opens her book to the marked page,
curls up in a chair pulled close

to the wood-burning stove, bowl of
peanuts in her lap.

The words

in her books are so small, I have to
squint

to see the letters. Hans Brinker or The
Silver Skates.

The House at Pooh Corner. Swiss Family
Robinson.

Thick books

dog-eared from the handing down from
neighbor to neighbor.

My sister handles them gently,
marks the pages with torn brown pieces
of paper bag, wipes her hands before
going

beyond the hardbound covers.

Read to me, I say, my eyes and scalp
already stinging
from the tug of the brush through my
hair.

And while my grandmother sets the hot
comb

on the flame, heats it just enough to
pull

my tight curls straighter, my sister's
voice

wafts over the kitchen,

past the smell of hair and oil and flame,
settles

like a hand on my shoulder and holds me
there.

I want silver skates like Hans's, a
place

on a desert island. I have never seen the
ocean

but this, too, I can imagine—blue water
pouring

over red dirt.

As my sister reads, the pictures begin
forming

as though someone has turned on a
television,

lowered the sound,

pulled it up close.

Grainy black-and-white pictures come
slowly at me

Deep. Infinite. Remembered

On a bright December morning long ago...
My sister's clear soft voice opens up the
world to me.

I lean in

so hungry for it.

Hold still now, my grandmother warns.

So I sit on my hands to keep my mind
off my hurting head, and my whole body
still.

But the rest of me is already leaving,
the rest of me is already gone.





PULSE PRESS



Alana

I grew up on songs and artists from Tevin Campbell, New Edition, Micheal Jackson to songs such as “Poison” by Bell Biv DeVoe and “Cupid” by 112.

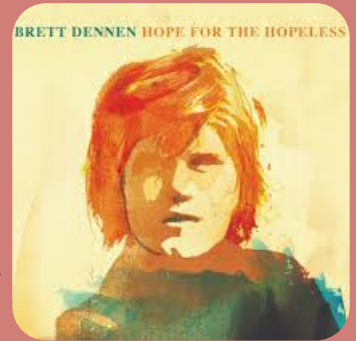


Kara

My childhood was filled with the experience of being Jamaican and being Black in America. I listened to a lot of dancehall (from the golden age), ate a lot of Caribbean food and watched a lot of black comedies, Coming to America, specifically because it's my days favorite movie and School Daze because my mom is a Howard University Alum.

Savanah

I grew up in a West African and African-American household with two parents who needed to have music playing at all times. There was a blend of the oldies, specifically R&B, Soul, Rap, and Jazz; but also Afrobeats, specifically all of the early 2000 bangers, especially P-Square, Wizkid and Don Jazzy. I would say some of the key musical figures of my childhood were Alicia Keys, Heather Headley, and Beyoncé. However, I couldn't talk about the tunes of my childhood without including an album by this funky ginger dude named Brett Dennen called Hope for the Hopeless. That album went double platinum in my house.



Zasmine



I was raised on two distinct genres of music: freestyle and salsa. My mother was a big music lover, especially during family events. Some of the freestyle artists I grew up listening to include Collage and Rockell. For salsa music, I was captivated by artists like Héctor Lavoe and Marc Anthony. In particular, I love Rockell's song “In a Dream” and Héctor Lavoe's “El Cantante.” Whenever I listen to these artists and genres of music, I'm transported back to the times when my mom would dance, laugh, and party with us during family gatherings. Growing up, I cherished watching my family come together through the music I was raised on. It fills me with joy to know that I was fortunate enough to be raised on such great genres of music.

Lizabeth



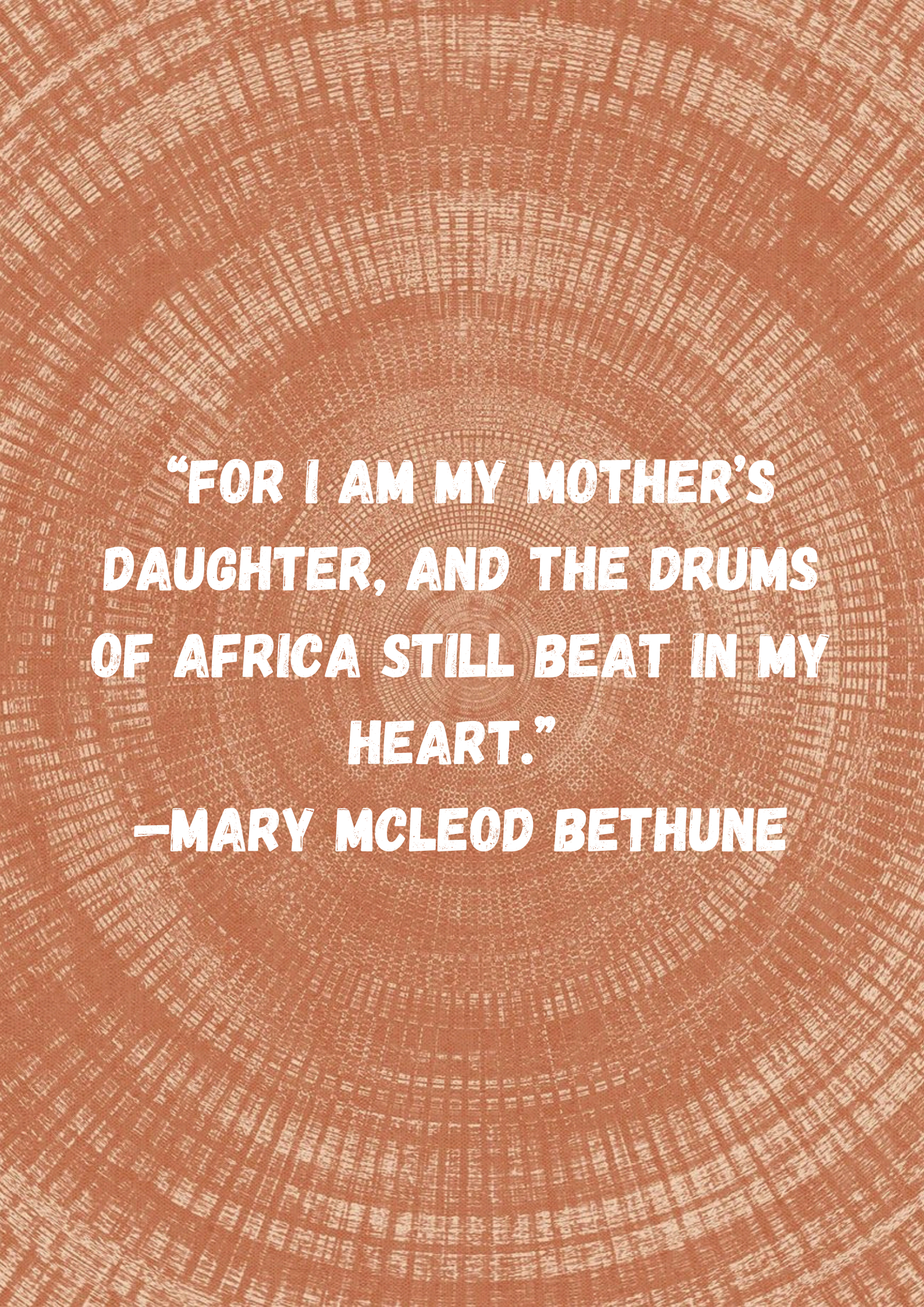
Coming from an African family my family believed that it was important to familiarize their children with music and songs of their country. Growing up my house was entirely filled with popular and older Afrobeats artist like Castro, P-Square, and later on Davido.





Thanks for reading! Be sure to follow us on Instagram @thepulseofbging to stay in the loop on all our events and publications.





**“FOR I AM MY MOTHER’S
DAUGHTER, AND THE DRUMS
OF AFRICA STILL BEAT IN MY
HEART.”**

—MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE