

Dr. Kim N. Archung

Letter of Interest in ASWAD Board Membership

ADC Website: <https://www.adcexchange.org/>

ADC Student Study Exchange Website: <https://www.adcexchange.org/studentstudy>

My interest and passion for Africa and its Diaspora began early in my life. I came from a family of musicians and was exposed to art forms from across the Diaspora early on, hence I developed a hunger for African Diasporic culture. At age four my parents took me to see Babatunde Olatunji and his Drums of Passion. I was instantly smitten and at the end of the performance I cried until my parents took me on stage to meet Baba, as he became affectionately known. I fell in love with Africa at that moment and vowed I would live and work on the “Mother Continent” one day.

I held a vast curiosity about family origins and history. I pestered my parents regularly to tell me stories of my ancestry, inquisitive about my maternal Jamaican and Virginian grandparents and my paternal Chinese, African, Native American grandparents. It wasn't until much later in life that I learned about the European mixtures. However, my curiosity, interest, and passion for African history and culture was nurtured and I took every opportunity to learn, read about, and experience expressions of African Diasporic history and culture. While I longed to visit Africa throughout high school and college, the closest I got was through pen pal letters, college courses, and engaging in African dance and drum classes. Soon after graduating from undergrad, my first trip to Jamaica validated my visions of Africa as I imagined what the Motherland looked and felt like. However, I did not get my first opportunity to travel to Africa until my journey to graduate school began. I was hit with “Africa Fever”, driven all the more to make living and working in Africa a reality.

In the years beginning in 1982, I have had a number of opportunities to live, work, and travel in various parts of the Diaspora, from the Senegambia region, Cameroon, and other parts of West Africa to Kenya and Ethiopia in the East and Zambia and South Africa in the South. I have visited a total of 15 African countries as well as traveling, living, and working in a number of countries in the Caribbean. These experiences have solidified my passion for the African Diaspora and have propelled me to infuse my knowledge of the Diaspora throughout my professional and personal interactions and commitments. As Vice President of Global Student Affairs for the African Diaspora Consortium, I uphold and am eager to spread our goal to

- Engage in cutting-edge research
- Bring theory and scholarship to practice in ways that create educational success and outcomes for African descendent populations
- Utilize the Arts as a vehicle to enhance understanding and connectedness as historical and cultural uplift
- Participate as a thought-partner in national and global conversations and shape policies that impact the African Diaspora

I bring all of these energies to my membership in ASWAD, and would be honored to share my expertise, knowledge, and passion to serve as a Board member.