

Black Butterfly

by Del Jones aka Nana Kuntu
The War Correspondent

We have lost but we have gained as Mavynee has slipped from her earthly seven foot locked form and transferred her powerful energy into a Black Butterfly drenched in a love aura of endless proportions.

Qaraandin and I sat at your delicate feet exchanging ideas and information as we looked out to sea and visualized Mama Afrika and all its splendor. We were proud to have our work in your little museum and share your world that was more advanced than our own.



Fly Black Butterfly, Fly...

Our last visit with you was a cold one as the crisp winds lapped at our Afrikan humanity; we were warmed by your words, your vision, your love. I will miss this form and the bagful of locks that approached the floor but then u-turned into a bag of Ju-Ju under your brown arms.

Her encouragement and appreciation for Qaraandin's and my work was a gift only a Queen Mother could give. I could feel her presence and protection wherever we went and for that I am thankful Sistah Carol, in Philly we call her Bootsy, put her in our lives. Her friend David Thundershield Queen beared witnesses for us:

MaVynee was never alone. We held her warm hand; gently kneaded her feet with her favored, aromatic, sacred and American-Indian revered white-sage oil. We lovingly stroked and caressed her tired and drawn — but still proud — face and whispered words of endearment as we took turns sitting next to her and leaning caringly over her throughout the night as pearlescent stars glistened out over the ocean. Her eyes spoke of understanding, but she could not vocally respond back. She felt NO pain.

We give thanks to those who gently help MaVynee make her transition, she was a tired warrior for her people and Mother Earth and she deserved no less. David Thundershield Queen guides us gently on:

A few of us stayed with MaVynee late into the night and even fewer until

the wee hours of September 5... MaVynee was not alone in her final hours. She was surrounded by an intensity of love and support that few will ever experience. Her life, work and deep bonds with a number of “kindred spirits” commanded that! Following an emotional ceremony on Sunday evening at American Beach, attended by over 150 people in which MaVynee was briefly dipped in the cool waters of the Atlantic, she was taken to rest in her upstairs apartment — bed facing the ocean, where the cool sea-breezes from a Nor’ Eastern (her favorite) would caress and nourish her soul till its later departure.

She came in love and left surrounded by that emotion that she helped develop in us all as she fought the good fight for her children. Again our brother speaks:

The eco-warrior, heart and soul of American Beach, African goddess worshipping MaVynee Oshun Betsch closed her eyes and sighed a last, deep breath before her spirit finally departed her body at 6:50 a.m., Monday morning September 5, 2005, in the company of several of her most-loved ones.

Later, Carol Alexander, one of MaVynee’s closest friends and executive director of Jacksonville’s Ritz Theatre and La Villa Museum, would remark on how MaVynee “sure loved those 5’s ...1935 founding of American Beach ... she graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1955... she returned from Europe in 1965, etc.”

MaVynee is not only gentle breezes, ocean motion, beautiful sunrise and sunsets a power that defends Motherearth and her people forevermore. David Thundershield Queen adds:

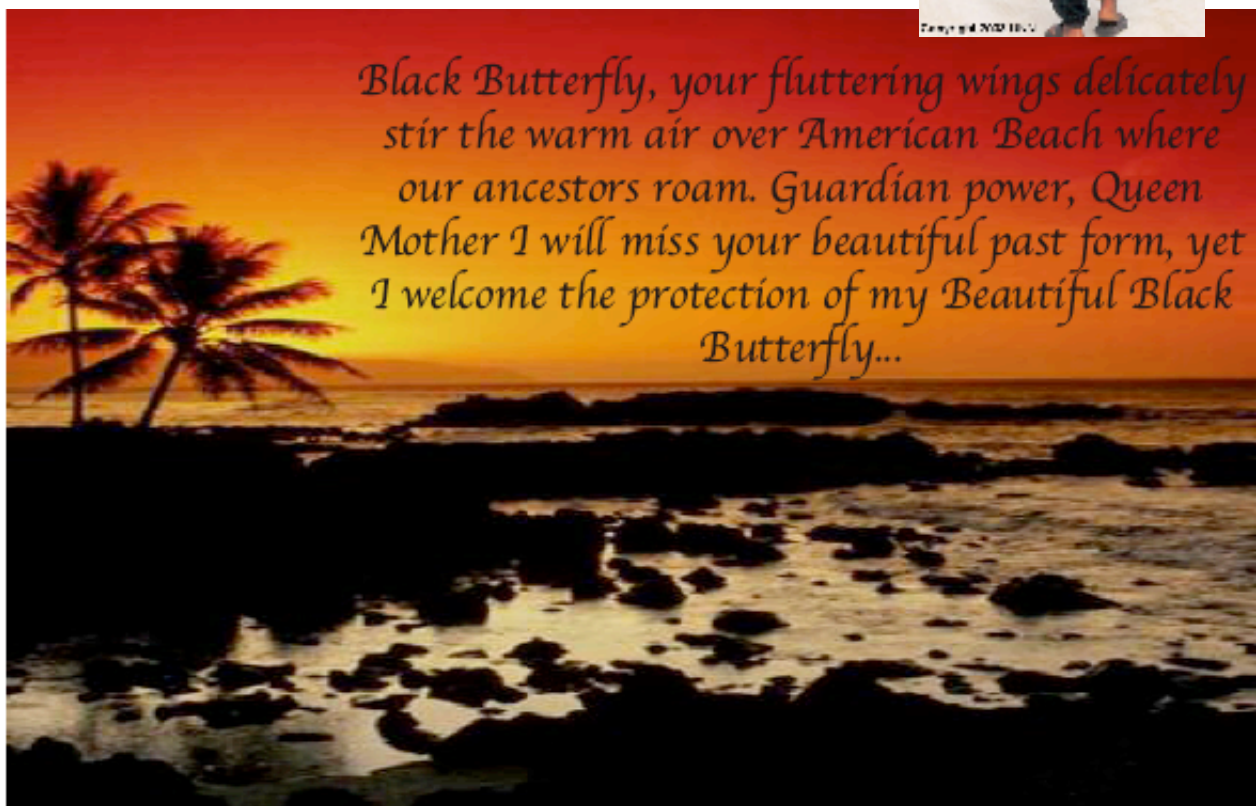
I stand with many others in honoring MaVynee for her pursuit of justice and cultural preservation for Black American Beach residents, for African-American history and culture, too often neglected or marginalized by mainstream society, and for American-Indians.

We honor her also for protection of the Earth and all the creatures of the Earth and the Oceans — including her favorite, highly- endangered Right Whales, one of which was named “MaVynee” in her honor. She inspired many of us to greater action than we thought capable. Her memory will keep inspiring...Only land-raping developers need fear the Beach Lady’s spirit.

MaVynee, Beautiful Black Butterfly, I will call on you to protect my warrior spirit

and I know you will be there as you are now sitting on my shoulder delicately reading as I write this piece with tears in my eyes in honor of you...

One of your children
Del Jones aka Nana Kuntu



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