

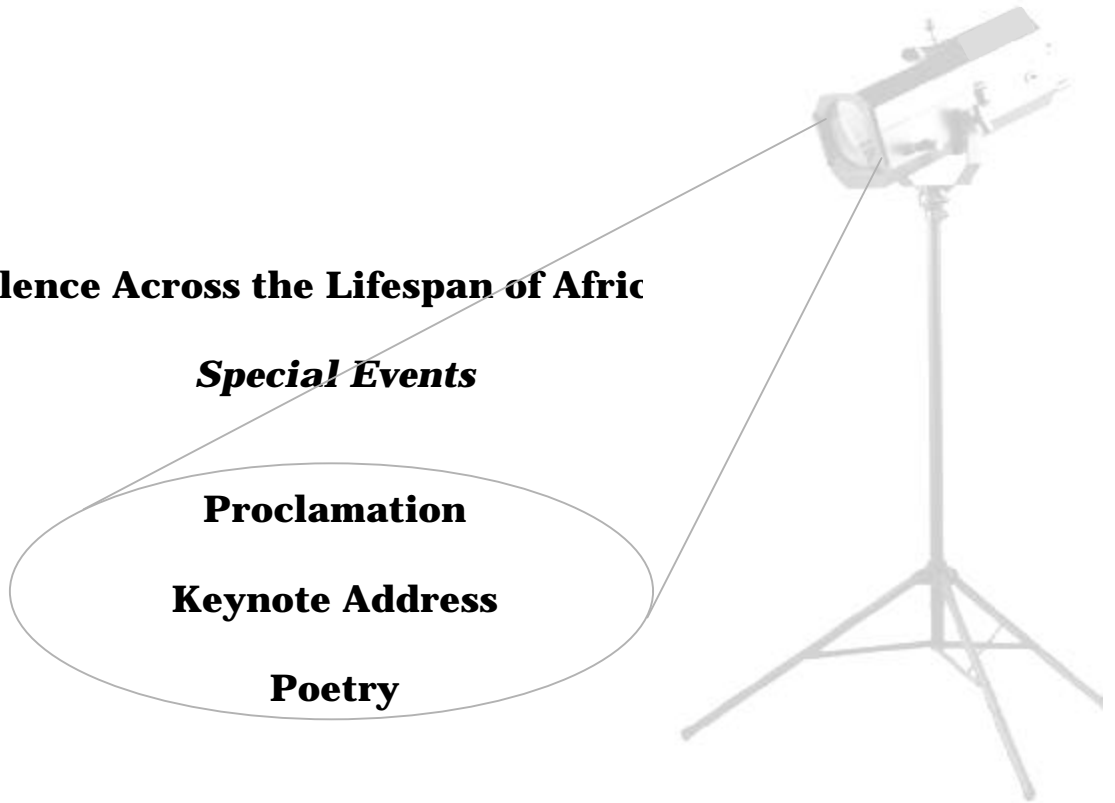
**Domestic Violence Across the Lifespan of Afric**

***Special Events***

**Proclamation**

**Keynote Address**

**Poetry**





## Special Events Introduction

Special events during the *Domestic Violence Across the Lifespan of African Americans: Traditional Strategies and Contemporary Practices—Exploring the Possibilities of Popular Culture Interventions* forum highlighted the importance of addressing violence in the lives of all African Americans. In recognition of the Institute's work to eliminate violence in African American communities, Willie L. Brown, Jr., Mayor of San Francisco, proclaimed December 4, 1998, as Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community Day. During the forum networking reception, community educator Mr. Ras Mo Moses set the tone for the conference by reciting poetry that addresses domestic violence. Finally, Dr. Joseph E. Marshall, Jr. provided a keynote address discussing how the Omega Boys Club and its syndicated radio show *Street Soldiers* work to eradicate violence among African Americans. Documents relating to these special events are included in this section.



## **Proclamation**

**WHEREAS**, domestic violence is a serious international problem that affects all racial, socio-economic and cultural groups; and

**WHEREAS**, domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women 15-44 years old in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, nationally, African American women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, and a San Francisco study found that of solved homicides, 36% of women who died as a result of domestic violence were African Americans in a city that is only 11% black; and

**WHEREAS**, the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community seeks to advance meaningful and authentic responses to address the real-life relationship between African Americans and violence; and

**WHEREAS**, the Institute is creating a community of African American scholars and practitioners working in the area of violence in the African American community to promote the partnership between scholarship and practice, raise community consciousness about the impact of violence in the African American community, informing public policy, gather and disseminate information on domestic violence, organize and facilitate local and national conferences and identify community needs and recommend the best practices; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Willie L. Brown Jr., Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, do hereby proclaim December 4, 1998 as...

**THE INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY DAY in San Francisco!**



## Keynote Address: Omega Boys Club/Street Soldiers

### **Presenter:**

Joseph E. Marshall, Jr., Ph.D.  
Executive Director and Co-Founder  
Omega Boys Club  
San Francisco, CA

By many accounts, life today is more violent than it was 25 years ago. Too many of today's youth are turning to readily available illegal work because there is a lack of legitimate employment opportunities. Youth have far greater access to weapons, and the presence of drugs—particularly crack—is destroying African American communities.

Such harsh realities are further promulgated by the fact that African Americans no longer ascribe to the belief that it takes a village to raise a child. Adults today fear youth and do not make efforts to reach out to children other than their own. Indeed, African American youth have fallen prey to bad advice, bad examples, bad information, and bad instructions conveyed through television, peers, music, street codes/commandments, and other outlets. African American males are taught to act a certain way, and the street commandment "*Thou shalt not snitch*" is understood. Consequently, African American males are being socialized to be violent. When this socialization is combined with the historical devaluation of African American women and girls, the cycle of violence is imminent. Negative views of women remain risk factors associated with domestic violence and have even resulted in the infanticide of female newborns in some cultures. It is important to curtail youth's exposure to such negative input and arm them with the information necessary to deal with risk factors associated with violence.

Part of the effort to mitigate violence must entail spreading the message of love. Youth—particularly young women—need to understand that love should not lead to a threat of violence and that they are still whole beings, even in the absence of companionship. Young women must learn to reject the unhealthy commandments learned in their socialization process. "*Thou must have a man,*" and other such commandments can serve to negatively influence their decisions and destroy their self-esteem. Young women must learn to reframe these commandments and replace them with affirmations that will begin to rebuild their self-esteem.

One organization making efforts to diminish violence in African American communities is the Omega Boys Club/Street Soldiers, headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area. Omega Boys Club is a violence prevention organization for youth and young adults that emphasizes academic achievement and the avoidance of drug activity. The goal of the organization is to help young people stay alive and free by providing them with information that helps to reduce the risk of them becoming involved in violent behavior. College scholarships are also provided to young men and women through the Joseph E. Marshall Foundation. Financial assistance is limited to Omega Boys Club members who have met certain criteria, including attending classes and meetings held at the organization's headquarters. By the end of the 1998-99 school year, the Omega Boys Club will have provided scholarships for 55 college graduates.

Street Soldiers is the name for the Omega Boys Club's violence prevention outreach efforts. Through its various programs, the Omega Boys Club is attempting to reach and teach individuals who want to decrease violence in their communities. Omega recommends the following in efforts to stop the violence:

- Read *Street Soldier: One Man's Struggle to Save a Generation One Life at a Time* by Joseph E. Marshall, Jr. (Dell Publishing, 1996) and share it with others. The book tells the story of

the Omega Boys Club and Street Soldiers and contains many inspiring stories of young people who have turned their lives around.

- Listen to *Street Soldiers*, a syndicated violence prevention radio program that airs on Sunday evenings from 9 p.m. to 12 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. The call-in radio show, which can be reached at 1-800-SOLDIER, discusses issues that relate to violence in African American communities: gangs, drugs, guns, teen pregnancy, fatherhood, and more. A key issue counselors have confronted since the radio show's inception is dating violence among teens. To date, the program is available in only a few markets. However, Omega is making efforts to expand its market.
- For those who work with youth in a direct service capacity, the organization offers The Omega Institute, a program designed to teach, train, and instruct individuals in violence prevention and intervention skills. The Institute is held three times a year in San Francisco, and some scholarship assistance is available. Additional information on The Omega Institute is available upon request.
- Obtain a copy of *Street Soldiers - The Documentary* by calling the National Black Programming Consortium at 1-888-464-6272. This 1997 documentary is an award-winning film that has aired on PBS stations across the country. The 90-minute film follows the stories of three juvenile offenders trying to turn their lives around.
- Invite directors and youth of the Omega Boys Club to speak to groups and at conferences. Since many Omega members reside in different areas around the country, Omega is capable of accommodating requests for speaking engagements nationwide.
- Call 1-800-SOLDIER, Omega's toll-free nationwide number, to keep in touch with this organization. Additionally, the organization is accessible via the Internet at [www.street-soldiers.org](http://www.street-soldiers.org).

The Omega Boy's Club wants and needs persons to be committed to eliminating violence from their own lives and eliminating violence from their community. Omega wants and needs people to help combat the disease of violence that is ravaging African American neighborhoods. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had his army of civil rights workers. The Omega Boys Club wants an army of Street Soldiers. Every time has its movement and every movement has its movers. Omega believes that the current movement is to stop the violence and save the lives of youth.





## Poetry

### ACT LIKE A MAN

Ever since Ah small Ah try to understand  
what it really means to be a man  
because some things I learn since I was a baby  
like pink for a girl and blue for me  
so I ask myself constantly  
what does it mean to be manly in this pink and blue society

(chorus)

How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?

My daddy he say you know big boys don't cry  
my bigger brother Junior try to explain why  
he say in this life you got to be ruff and tuff  
ain't no woman gonna love you if you suff

How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?

My coach you know he really coach me  
teaching me the basics of being manly  
he say got learn to keep all your pain inside  
when you feel pain just show manly pride

How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?

My homies teach me the craftsmanship  
how to manage a relationship  
never show girls that you love dem  
cause they will upset your whole system  
Always have 1 or 2 on the side  
and from the main one that you must hide

How should I act like a man?

How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?

The media, movies, entertainment industry  
teach me about violence and drugs constantly  
even the magazine ads go too far  
they say to be a super star  
you got to have expensive wear  
or drive a fancy car

How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?  
How should I act like a man?

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## **LOOK OUT**

Look out look out look out  
Look out me ah shout  
Say we ain't going back to colonialism  
We ain't going back to slavery  
We ain't going back to feudalism  
We come here to set the captives free  
We ain't going back to paternalism  
We come to rule freedom and equality  
Look out

Say we tired of defending  
So in this time we attacking  
Yes we attacking alcoholism  
We attacking racism and sexism  
Yes we attacking drugs and violence  
Inferiority complex lack of self confidence  
Yes we attacking so look out  
So look out look out look out  
Look out me ah shout

Forward ever back ward never  
On the attack  
No turning back  
Say we tired of defending  
So in this time we attacking  
Yes we attacking  
ain't with no guns  
ain't with no bombs  
ain't with no guns  
ain't with no bombs

But with word sound and power  
We got to come together  
We got to come together and  
Defeat each and every enemy  
In this here hour so look out  
Look out look out look out  
Look out we ah shout

Hail Brother hail up sister  
In a de concrete jungle  
You are like a trapper  
Humble shepherd you are  
The lambs' protector

Every one is their brothers  
Or their sisters keeper  
Come together let us unite  
Gather resources for the fight  
The fight to restore humanity  
The fight to regain our dignity

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