

A JOURNEY TO HEALING



IDVAAC
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Institute on Domestic Violence In
The African American Community



FINDING THE PATH

**August 3 – 4, 2009
Long Beach, California**

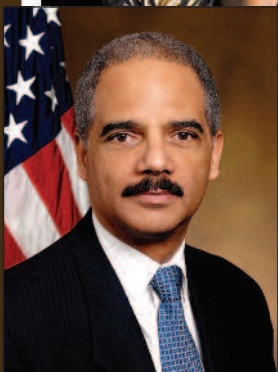
The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) held its national conference in Long Beach, California. The theme was *A Journey to Healing: Finding the Path*. This two-day

event featured several panels and individual presenters, including a panel of formerly battered women who shared their personal accounts of victimization and affirmed to an audience of nearly 600 participants that enduring the abuse was not the end of their story. The conference also featured a panel of adults who offered their perspectives on healing as they recounted their first-hand experiences of witnessing domestic violence as children.

The prevailing theme of the conference was that survivors of domestic violence and adults who witnessed violence as children can engage a process of healing.

Survivors may tread different pathways in their journey, but true healing is possible. Oliver Williams, Ph.D., executive director of IDVAAC summed up this way: "We're trying to change the dialogue a little bit to find the pathway to healing."

This sentiment was echoed by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who offered luncheon remarks through a video address to conference attendees emphasizing the importance of addressing domestic violence in the African American community, in particular children exposed to domestic violence. His remarks can be viewed online at <http://www.ovv.usdoj.gov/>. A transcript of his speech can also be found at <http://www.ovv.usdoj.gov/docs/ag-remarks-idvaac.pdf>.



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One of the highlights of the event was the live premiere of a short vignette, *Miss May's Flowers*, featuring the artistic talents of Academy Award nominee Margaret "Shug" Avery in the title role. A selected group of domestic violence survivors helped in the development of this emotional drama, which was written by Prestor Pickett specifically for the conference. A gifted up-and-coming actor, Ebani Edwards, gave a convincing performance as a victim attempting to flee her abuser.



The drama ended with a song, *The Path of Healing*, written specifically for the conference by Sounds of Blackness founder Gary Hines. Andrea Tribett's passionate, live performance of the song brought many participants to their feet and moved others to tears.

Participants left this conference with renewed hope. They expressed feeling inspired by the stories shared and the workshops they attended. They also indicated their understanding that there is still work to do, but felt well able and equipped to help victims as they pursue their own paths to healing.



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