Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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From Childhood Through Adulthood to Godhood: Using Njia (The Way) to Inspire African-Americans to Become the Stars of Their Story

Date: May 15th, 2023
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
This autoethnographic narrative examines the importance of conceiving and sharing liberating stories, and participating in independent communal training processes that advance young African American males’ psychosocial and mental development. To bring my analyses to light, I applied the foundational frameworks of African Worldview and Critical Race Theory to my research. Using these lenses, my research uncovers many of the influences that helped me evolve from childhood (nescient) to adulthood (laborer) and later to Godhood (master who is in union with all).

Employing the autoethnographic methodology enabled me to share key points in my educational and life journey, which propelled my transformation. This contemplative engagement was a moving meditation that revealed both my miseducation in America’s racial caste system and the process that was critical to my liberation from a path of self-destruction to the road of excellence.

My findings highlight the importance of following a productive guiding light, maintaining high quality social connections, seeking inspiration from experienced mentors and working and dedication oneself to not only survive, but more importantly thrive. This journey involves reconnecting with the cultural and spiritual best practices from my great African past to create healthy communities in the present that positively transforms the future. Learning, in this context, created healthy spaces that helped me to develop a productive life story, and ultimately a personal trajectory of love, peace and happiness.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Thomasina Hassler, Ph.D., Chairperson
Kenton Mershon, Ph.D., Committee Faculty Member
Keith Miller, Ph.D., Committee Faculty Member