

Update

Africa Is In Her Heart

TWENTY YEARS after Alice Windom returned from a decade in Africa, she is still trying to make people aware of the impact African culture has had on American life.

She spent much of the 1960s traveling around Africa, during the days of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Haile Selassie in Ethiopia. "When I wear a headdress and a robe from Ghana, it's more than a style statement for me," she said.

Windom, 56 and single, is a Sumner High School graduate who has brought the idea and practice of African customs to St. Louis. As the director of the Bush Center at the University of Missouri at St. Louis, she develops lectures that link science and technology to ancient African customs.

In the early '80s, the Federal Communications Commission required that KTVI (Channel 2) form an advisory group to monitor the station's minority hiring practices and its sensitivity to women and blacks.



Renyold Ferguson/Post-Dispatch

The station asked Windom to sit on the committee — and she accepted, even though she didn't own a television set. "I went and spoke my mind," she said. "I felt at the time that the media was a waste. If, for example, you report that people have died in a bus crash in Bangladesh and don't take the time to tell us something about those people, with the understanding that someone's family member or friend is involved, then it's sensationalism."

Her commitment to Africa extends to her membership in the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization, the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority's Global Affairs Committee and the national Association of Black Social Workers.

"My goal is to get Africans their due in the world cultural continuum," she said. "It could easily be a life's work." ■

— Darrell McWhorter

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