

TRIBUTE TO MAMADOU MOUSTAPHA DIOP

A PASSION FOR AFRICA AND VISIONARY FOR THE PROMOTION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT



Mamadou Moustapha Diop Lived His Life to the Fullest!

He played a pivotal role in the promotion of travel and tourism opportunities to West Africa and was active on many fronts, serving as Director General of his own travel and tourism agency – PHISCO International based in Dakar, Senegal. He was the first West African tour operator to actively engage the African-American clientele and promote tours to West Africa. He pioneered the Black History Month Promotional Campaign with Air Afrique in the 1990s that provided an opportunity for African-Americans to experience the joys of Returning to the Motherland! He was not only a travel and tourism promoter extraordinaire, but he also owned a restaurant, bed-and-breakfast, and fashion boutique amongst many other enterprises.

His ongoing efforts with the Africa Travel Association (ATA) when it held one of its eco-tourism conferences in Senegal opened the doors towards developing new business opportunities between African-American and Senegalese enterprises. He frequently traveled to the United States, promoting his various tourism packages to many African-American travel agents and tour operators as well as black churches and schools. He also reached back into his own community by recruiting and training many successful tour guides who went on to start their own Senegalese travel agencies such as Fallou Mboup of DEFI Tours and Cherif Ndiaye of PHISCO International.

I personally came to know him through my tenure both as the President of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter and the Executive Secretary and Member of the International Board of Directors of the Africa Travel Association for almost ten years. He was very supportive of those who desired to explore expanding travel and tourism interest in Africa. During the time that I served on the ATA's Board of Directors he also encouraged me to pursue my interest in African fashion and culture. When I achieved my entrepreneurial dream of establishing my own travel and tourism agency - Venue International Professionals, Inc. - he eagerly welcomed my tour groups and gave me good advice and counsel about how to expand my company. Over the years, we collaborated on many Black History Month Tour Promotions to West Africa to include both Senegal and The Gambia. He was also very interested in what new destinations I had experienced on the African Continent.

I will always remember that he was a true friend who willingly introduced me to many influential people in the Africa travel and tourism industry as I continued to grow Venue International Professionals, Inc. He often complimented me on the many informative articles that I wrote about my ongoing travel adventures on the African continent and also encouraged me to research my African ancestry. He impressed me with his passion to build sustainable linkages between African-Americans and Africans through cultural awareness, economic development and social networking. His entrepreneurial enthusiasm about the positive attributes of Africa was infectious to everyone that he met on the African continent. We all will really miss such a great friend and business colleague and he has truly made my own "Journey to the Motherland" that much more meaningful and pleasurable!

Helen Broadus

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