

and civil rights. Smith was an activist for 30 years. During this time, he was a co-founder of Artists for a Free South Africa and Black voice for Peace. His efforts ranged from a stint as executive director of the Washington Office on Africa during the anti-apartheid movement to work on gun violence and police brutality with the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice.

According to the Afro American article, Ron Daniels founder and president of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, reflected that Smith was an incredible organizer, an incredible leader and teacher. He was also an incredible human being. I certainly second that assessment.

Journalist George E. Curry wrote that Damu Smith who died at age 54, crammed more into his 54 years on earth than people who live twice as long. Yet, the feeling lingers that he left us too soon. Curry wrote that Smith was a man of integrity and he was a visionary. Those are words of high praise and they are true in describing Damu Smith. I want to add, he was a man with a great heart who spent his life working for those who most needed him.

Damu Smith loved his one child very much. His many friends knew how much and how deeply he loved Asha Hadia Vernice Moore Smith, his 14-year-old daughter. They have set up a trust fund so she will have the opportunity for the education he wanted for her.

I believe if Asha has inherited his heart and his character Damu Smith's daughter will be a light in the world just like her father.

[From the AFRO American News, May 10, 2006]

DAMU SMITH, POPULAR ACTIVIST, DIES AT 54
(By Makani Themba-Nixon)

Damu Smith, internationally renowned activist and a founder of the environmental justice movement, passed away early on May 5 at George Washington Hospital. Surrounded by a crowd of friends and family that spilled down hospital corridors, Smith, 54, succumbed after a year long bout with colorectal cancer. Smith was a dedicated organizer who even at the height of his health challenges found time to support social justice work. In recent months, Smith addressed the Millions More March and a capacity crowd for a TransAfrica forum, despite his ailing health. "He loved his people," says Donelle Wilkins, co-chair of the National Black Environmental Justice Network (NBEJN) an organization she and Smith founded in 1999. "You may have seen him at the big podiums and the big meetings but he was also in the country corners, the small towns, the little places. He rolled up his sleeves. He got his hands dirty."

A St. Louis native and long time Washington, D.C. resident, Smith was a leader and co-founder of several social justice initiatives including Artists for a Free South Africa and Black Voices for Peace. A consummate organizer and bridge builder, Smith's work extended over 30 years and several issues. "He was about bringing justice wherever it was needed," said Wilkins.

Smith's efforts ranged from a stint as executive director of the Washington Office on Africa during the anti-apartheid movement to work on gun violence and police brutality with the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, the National Wilmington 10 Defense Committee and the National Black Independent Political Party. An outspoken activist on peace and disarmament, Smith served as associate director of the Washington Office of the American

Friends Service Committee and traveled internationally to support movements for peace and justice around the world. "He was undoubtedly one of the most important activists of our time," reflected Ron Daniels, founder and president of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century. "He was an incredible organizer, an incredible leader and teacher. He was also just an incredible human being." Perhaps Smith is best known for his groundbreaking work to establish the environmental justice movement. As national associate director and national toxics campaigner for Greenpeace USA, he helped carve out the racial justice analysis that helped distinguish environmental justice from the "green space" focus that typified environmental work of the day.

As the first coordinator for environmental justice for the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, Smith gained firsthand experience of the corporate pollution practices that target poor and African American communities. He organized Toxic Tours in the South to help bring national attention to the issue, taking celebrities Alice Walker, Haki Madhubuti and others to the infamous area in Louisiana dubbed Cancer Alley. "The work in Cancer Alley was his heart. He didn't think anything about his well being. He stood in the face of the threats, of the violence, of the toxics. He set an example for what was possible. It gave his community a sense of strength, a sense that together they can make a difference. And they did. It was profound," said Wilkins.

The campaign to force a PVC plant out of Norco, La. was eventually the subject of a Lifetime cable channel movie, {Fenceline: A Company Town Divided}. Smith's efforts helped draw attention to the disproportionate toxic dumping in African-American communities nationwide, which led him to help found the National Black Environmental Justice Network.

"It was his vision to bring Black people together from all over the country to unite us around this issue," Wilkins said. "He single-handedly brought together folk from more than 30 states—welfare moms to PhDs—to give birth to this network. Damu's leadership and commitment was relentless." Although Smith remained executive director of the network until his death, his primary campaign over the last year was his own survival. Friends launched the Spirit of Hope campaign to support Smith with living and healthcare expenses as years of organizing work left him with little resources and without health insurance. His wide network responded with an outpouring of support including a star studded gala last July that brought together artist activists Danny Glover, Bernice Reagon and Sonia Sanchez.

"These resources went to support Damu in acquiring the care he needed," said Sandra Rattley, Spirit of Hope coordinator. "Damu was so grateful. The doctors were saying he only had three months last year but the community came together and literally extended his life. And every month he had, he continued to give back."

Survivors include his daughter Asha Hadia Vernice Moore Smith, 13. He is also survived by a sister Sylnice Williams; two brothers Richard Anthony Smith and Leslie Dudley Smith; a significant other Adeleke Foster, two nephews, six nieces and thousands of friends and fellow soldiers in the battle for peace and justice.

Rattley said the community is rallying to ensure that Asha is provided for. Smith often referred to his daughter as the crown jewel of his life and once boasted had started a Black Kids for Peace organization. Friends and colleagues often remarked on what a devoted and caring father Smith was. "I know

that Damu wanted to make sure that Asha is alright," says Rattley. A memorial service is scheduled for 5 p.m. May 20 at Plymouth Congregational Church, 5301 North Capitol St., N.W. in Washington, D.C. In lieu of floral arrangements, the family requests all donations be made to the Asha Moore Smith Trust, 1750 Columbia Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009 or online at www.damusmith.org.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
LIVONIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and recognize the 50th anniversary of the Livonia Historical Society in Livonia, Michigan.

For five decades, the Livonia Historical Society has worked to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of our community. Initially founded in 1956 by Gladys and Don Ryder in the Bentley High School library, the Livonia Historical Society serves as guardian over Livonia's original buildings, museums, and homes.

The Livonia Historical Society's extraordinary accomplishments include preserving the Quaker House; and naming a library after prominent Livonia engineer Alfred Noble; and developing the 160-acre Greenmead historical village, which contains the 1820 estate of Joshua Simmons, an 1841 Greek Revival farmhouse, a one-room school house, and a general store. Further, the Livonia Historical Society has collected and protected ancestral records and artifacts; educated the public about the history of Livonia; and held fundraisers to support restorative projects on Quaker Acres.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating my hometown's Livonia Historical Society for its first 50 years of noble civic service; and in extending our best wishes as they embark upon their next 50 years of preserving our community's uncommon legacy—and, in the process, selflessly affirming their own.

TRIBUTE TO THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH FLINT
TABERNACLE

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to South Flint Tabernacle as it celebrates 75 years of worship. The Tabernacle will come together on Sunday, May 21st to pray and rejoice in the blessings be stowed by God for the past 75 years.

Reverend John McLaughlin founded South Flint Tabernacle in 1931. The original worship services were held at Lincoln School in my hometown of Flint, Michigan. A few years later the congregation purchased the land now occupied by the current church in Burton Michigan and embarked upon building a permanent