

A Message From NBT Board Member Michelle Wilson



As if birthing National Black Theatre fifty years ago were not bold enough, it was Dr. Teer's visionary commitment to owning her own space that was the ultimate act of revolution.

The act of black folks creating art has always been an act of rebellion; It continues to challenge the "3/5ths a man" discourse and transform our one-dimensional story of struggle into complicated narratives of the human experience. In a world which continues to relentlessly police people of color's every public action, what we've had on the corner of 125th and Fifth Ave is the safe space to explore our whole messy selves.

Our legacy was bought and paid for, and I and generations of black artists including myself have pilgrimed to the mecca that is NBT to wrestle with our vulnerability. That raw, human vulnerability is the essence of good art. It is the safe container of NBT that allowed us to rise and fall in the process of growing our craft.

As stewards of Dr. Teer's legacy, we begin the next fifty years growing the space on 125th and breaking beyond its borders. As the physical theater enters a major redevelopment project, a period of incubation and literal rebirth, we take the art out into the world in a program entitled, NBT Beyond Walls. The programming of NBT Beyond Walls allows us to go into the community of Harlem, New York, and the world as a whole, and continue to provide artists with a safe space to birth new ideas.

What Dr. Teer knew was that the Soul of Black Folk is literally the Cultural Capital that fuels this nation. What her visionary ownership has empowered us to accomplish is a literal meeting of the future - anchored, yet boundless.

I am so proud and humbled to be partnered with Sade, Jonathan, the Staff, and Board of Trustees on this journey into the unknown. As we enter into the womb to give birth to Dr. Teer's ultimate vision, and as we pick up the mantle of ushering the next fifty years of NBT, I urge you to offer your gifts. This legacy is collectively ours, and your gifts, be it your time, talent or donations, are needed. We have been the beneficiaries long enough; the time is now to step into our responsibilities as stewards for the next generation and usher in the next fifty years of human liberation by investing in this Soul Soaring institution protecting our collective grace.