



PERFORMING ARTIST · EDU-CULTURAL SPEAKER/CONSULTANT

Dr. Marguerite Mariama is an internationally recognized performing artist, educator, activist, cultural strategist, and transformational speaker whose work resides at the nexus of artistic excellence, social justice, education, and human development. A lifelong practitioner of the term activism—the integration of artistic expression and social transformation—her career spans more than five decades of leadership in the performing arts, higher education, cultural diplomacy, and community engagement.

Dr. Mariama is the co-author of two Amazon #1 bestselling books, *Book on Love* and *The Art of Connection* series, and a contributing author to *The Heart of Success* with bestselling author Jack Canfield. Her forthcoming memoir, *Artivism: The Spirit of the 60s, Lessons for Today* (2026), chronicles a lifetime devoted to cultural consciousness, civic engagement, and the transformative power of the arts.

Emerging from the cultural renaissance of the Black Arts Movement, Dr. Mariama belongs to a generation of artists who viewed creative expression not merely as performance, but as a vehicle for liberation, education, identity formation, and social change. Influenced by the cultural nationalism and Black consciousness movements of the 1960s and 1970s, she developed an artistic practice grounded in the belief that the arts are among humanity's most powerful instruments for personal and collective transformation.

Professionally trained in music, dance, and theatre, Dr. Mariama is also a clinically trained dance/movement therapist and retired professor who taught within both the City University of New York (CUNY) and the City Colleges of Chicago systems. Her scholarly and practical contributions culminated in the creation of Performance Pedagogy®, an interdisciplinary theory and methodology that integrates the performing arts, arts therapies, educational psychology, and trauma-informed learning practices.

Performance Pedagogy® employs artistic performance as both a teaching methodology and an evaluative framework, enabling participants to engage cognitive, emotional, physical, and social dimensions of learning simultaneously. Implemented in schools, universities, communities, and corporate environments, the model has demonstrated measurable outcomes, including increased student engagement, improved attendance and academic achievement, reduced behavioral conflicts, enhanced communication skills, strengthened self-efficacy, and heightened organizational creativity and innovation.

Throughout her career, Dr. Mariama has designed educational initiatives and performing arts programs for nonprofit organizations, public institutions, and private-sector enterprises in both New York and Chicago. Central to her work is a commitment to advancing cultural literacy, fostering human potential, and utilizing the arts as a catalyst for healing, empowerment, and social cohesion.

An activist since adolescence, Dr. Mariama's civic engagement began at age thirteen when she participated in the historic Chicago school desegregation protests against the Willis Wagons, a pivotal event later chronicled in the Academy Award-shortlisted documentary '63 Boycott. Her activism expanded throughout the Civil Rights and Black Power eras, including participation in the 1966 Soldier Field rally and march led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., involvement with the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program, organizing efforts with the Black United Front in Cairo, Illinois, anti-apartheid activism through TransAfrica, and training with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Her artistic and intellectual development was profoundly shaped by extraordinary mentors, including academic and artistic tutelage from renowned educators such as Dr. Barbara A. Sizemore and international composer and teacher, Lena McLin. She played French horn in the Harlan High School concert band led by William Abernathy – and was a featured soloist in the dance performing ensemble, Orchesis, under the leadership of Alonza Austin. Her dance training was reinforced at Mayfair Academy – where alums include former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama.

Scholarship, in hand, she headed to Southern Illinois University and continued her dance training with W. Grant Gray, a former Martha Graham dancer, who invited Ms. Graham to perform at the University where she regaled the students with her stories and presence. Marguerite also co-founded the dance troupe *MUWARA DADA*, and the group traveled to East St. Louis to study with the legendary dancer and anthropologist, Katherine Dunham and her Senegalese drummers and dancers. Turning point: *“Sitting at Ms. Dunham’s feet and hearing her stories was awesome; and she reminded us of our social responsibility as young artists. We answered the ‘call’ in performances throughout the Midwest that made social commentary on the turbulent 1960s and 70s.”*

Arriving in New York after graduating from SIU as a master’s degree HUD Fellow, she met and trained with Charles Moore, a former Dunham dancer, and guest performed with his Drums and Dancers of Africa Dance Troupe. Later, she trained with two other Dunham dancers, Lavinia Williams, and Ms. Dunham’s primary protégé, Alvin Ailey. Still active, she is in her 9th season as a member of the Chicago Bulls Basketball Team’s Swingin’ Seniors Dancers.

Marguerite has traveled the world as a national and international big band and small ensemble jazz and blues stylist. She has held music artist residencies in Singapore, Taiwan, and Shanghai, China. Marguerite has performed with “some of the greatest musicians on the planet” – including her mentor, Jimmy Sigler – former music director to jazz great, Dinah Washington. Working together for 14 years, her CD, “Wild Women Never Get the Blues...Well, Not Anymore” was his final recording.

Over the years, acting programs and classes have led to roles and appearances in films, commercials, print, and theatre – including an 8-week run in Chicago in the role of matriarch, Madame Armfeldt, in the Stephen Sondheim/Hugh Wheeler musical A Little Night Music. She narrated the award-winning documentary “70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green” and was a contributor to “The Blues” a history of blues music produced by Martin Scorsese as a 7-part PBS TV series. Mariama also made a cameo appearance in the Chicago segment, Godfathers and Sons.

Dr. Mariama currently serves as an advisor to the Global Citizens Circle, an international organization dedicated to advancing peaceful and just solutions to global challenges. Throughout its history, the organization has included such distinguished figures as Coretta Scott King, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jimmy Carter, Harry Belafonte, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate John Hume. She also co-authored and narrated What the World Needs Now, a documentary commemorating the organization's fiftieth anniversary.

A former United States Department of State Arts Envoy (cultural ambassador), Dr. Mariama has represented the United States internationally through multimedia performance-dialogues and cultural exchange initiatives. Her signature series, OurStories in the Music®, explores the American experience through the lens of African American musical culture, illuminating themes of democracy, identity, resilience, and cross-cultural understanding. These programs have been presented domestically and internationally, including a cultural diplomacy tour in the Republic of Moldova, and have engaged audiences associated with the United Nations, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiatives. In recognition of her contributions, she was honored during a United Nations-supported event with an introduction by United States Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

Among her many honors, Dr. Mariama is a Distinguished Alumna of Southern Illinois University's College of Liberal Arts, a former Illinois Humanities Road Scholar, a member of the International Dance Council (CID), the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA), and the Smithsonian Regional Council. She is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Dr. Marguerite Mariama holds a Ph.D. in Performance Education with specialization in African American Musical Culture. A member of SAG-AFTRA and represented professionally by Stewart Talent and SMG Speakers, she continues to create, teach, perform, and consult internationally.

At the heart of her life's work is a singular conviction: that the arts are not merely a reflection of society, but a transformative force capable of cultivating consciousness, restoring humanity, and inspiring individuals and communities to become their highest selves.