



Queen Ann Nzinga Center, Inc.  
Empowering Through the Arts

15th Annual  
Constance “Connie” Renee Wilson Collins

# Exceptional Women Concert 2024

**Saturday, April 6 at 2pm**

New Britain Museum of American Art  
56 Lexington Ave, New Britain, CT

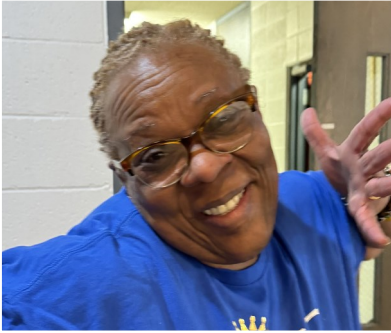
**qanc.org**

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**CT**humanities





## **A Note from the Executive Director**

*All I do is win win win no matter what Got success on my mind, I can never get enough. And every time we step up in the building Everybody hands go UP..... And they stay there, and they stay there, And they stay there - up down up down up down Cause all I do is WIN, WIN, WIN And if you goin in put yo' hands in the air, make 'em stay there - DJ Khaled*

I am so excited. Are you excited? I am excited about how far we have come. Queen Ann Nzinga's Center continues to build community and impact the lives of others. We just pour this "heart work" into these young people and they shine. They shine and everything around them shines. This afternoon we celebrate 15 years of honoring pioneers from this community. Women who said yes in a world that doesn't always make things easy. But here we are today sharing the shine. Speaking of shine how about this new venue, the museum is here for us. The museum is a perfect home for our youth, organization and honorees. I am so proud of these young people and their parents for just showing up. And I am glad to see you here to shine with us. Enjoy the afternoon.

**Dayna R. Snell**

In Honor of

**Constance “Connie” Renee Wilson Collins**  
(1928-2013)

Constance “Connie” Renee Wilson Collins held a high standard of community responsibility as she was not a talker, but a doer. Mrs. Collins coined the phrase “You are your brothers’ keeper”, and lived by example every day of her life.

A Harvard graduate, African American woman who made a tremendous contribution to the Greater New Britain community, Collins worked to help people reach their full potential through her work in political, spiritual, fraternal, and non-profit organizations.



Mrs. Collins is an exemplary role model for the youth who participate in programs at the Queen Ann Nzinga Center and the annual concert in celebration of Women’s History was renamed in her honor in 2014.

She seems to always be here with us.

# Order of Show

- Pre-show Video** ..... Program Participant Highlights
- Drumming, A Love Letter from India Arie** Nzinga’s Daughters
- The Red Carpet** .....Honorees  
**Connie Bailey & Toni Lynn Collin** - Constance “Connie” Renee  
Wilson Collins’ Family
- Invocation**.....Dr. Jonathon Counts, Pastor  
Spottswood A.M.E. Zion Church
- Alabaster Box** .....Carolyn Jordan
- Opening Dance** - *Ego Trippin* by Nikki Giovanni .....Lauren  
Horn//Subira Vs Movement (Nzinga’s Daughters Tague)
- Welcome** .....Alison Johnson, Board President  
& Issac Gonzalez
- Introduction of MC , Mrs. Tracy Nixon-Moore** ....Taylor Mills,  
Geleah McCoy, Kyra Jones
- National African American (Negro) Anthem**  
*Lift Every Voice and Sing*..... Lead by Jaylee Rodriguez  
(all who are able please rise, see inside back cover for song lyrics)
- Musical Selection, In the Stone** .....Nzinga’s Daughter R&B
- About Connie Collins** .....Dazira Fulton
- “You are your Brother’s Keeper”** .....Words from the family,  
Connie Bailey, granddaughter
- About Queen Ann Nzinga Center** ..... Nathaniel Aroian,  
Kayden Gamble & Emory Ibraheem
- Why Women’ History Month** .....Jakara Fulton, Taylor Mills
- Dance Performance, Dai Dance**  
“There is a Beautiful Place” .....East Cultural Arts

**Scene I - Connie's Exceptional Women's National Empowerment Summit 2024**

Christine Bryant: Jaylee Rodriguez, Rebecca Martinez:  
Delilah Jimenez, Jodi Hill-Lilly: Sameem Bradley,  
Malloy Deprey: Zoë Corbin

**Musical Selection, God Provides** .....Onyae Hill  
**Black Lives Matter Poem** .....Jalen Oates

**INTERMISSION**

**Musical Selection, We are One** .....Nzinga's Daughters  
**Musical Selection, Can't Hide Love** .....Nzinga's Daughters  
R&B Band

**Dance Performance**

"Flying Tiger in the Sky" .....East Cultural Arts

**Rap Performance, Afroland** .....Randall Womack

**Scene 2 - Can You Feel It**

Christine Bryant: Jaylee Rodriguez, Rebecca Martinez:  
Delilah Jimenez, Jodi Hill-Lilly: Sameem Bradley,  
Malloy Deprey: Zoë Corbin

**Musical Selection, Can You Feel It** -featuring Zoë Corbin  
Jaylee Rodriguez, Sameem Bradley, Savannah Bradley,  
Josiah Rodriguez, Messiah Sprolling

**Musical Selection, I Wanna Say Thank You** .....Dayna Snell  
& Joi McKay

**Musical Selection, I'm Every Woman** ..... Full Cast

**AWARDS**

**Finale, Love Train** .....Full Cast

# 2024 Honorees

**Our 15th annual event honors outstanding and inspiring women from central Connecticut.**



**Christine "Chris" Rose Bryant**, raised on her grandparents' North Carolina farm, embodies strength and resilience. Relocating to New Britain, CT at 11, she excelled in her studies while maintaining close family ties. Christine, a devoted mother of six daughters, prioritizes family above all else. Actively engaged in her community through Grace CME Church, Anna Warmsley Temple #1073, and former White Rose Court #487, she emphasizes the importance of service. Her leadership roles within these organizations, including trustee and usher, reflect her commitment to inclusivity and hospitality. Christine's enduring legacy as the matriarch of the Rose family is defined by her unwavering spirit and dedication to others.



**Rebecca Martinez** is a dedicated nurse at Elara Caring Home Health Services and a member of the State Board of Nursing. Actively involved in politics, she serves on the Democratic State Committee and chairs the Plainville Democratic Town Committee. Elected to the Plainville Board of Education in 2019, Rebecca is currently in her

second term, serving as Vice Chair and leading the Curriculum Committee, always prioritizing student advocacy. Known for her determination, she is a strong supporter of the Middle School Renovation project. Beyond politics, Rebecca is passionate about community service, contributing her time to various organizations.



**Jodi Hill-Lilly** is the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) with over 35 years of child protective services experience. As a national consultant for 18 years, she contributes to state and federal initiatives. Jodi lead CT DCF's Racial Justice initiative,

focusing on policy, training, and coaching on race and culture. She received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute in 2019 for her outstanding workforce development work. With bachelor's and master's degrees in social work, Jodi is an Anne E. Casey Fellow and actively participates in community organizations, including The Links Inc., Chums Inc., and Jack and Jill of America. Her commitment to children, families, and coaching leaders defines her dedication.



**Mallory Deprey**, Community Services Program Manager for the City of New Britain, CT, oversees a wide range of community initiatives, including Youth Services Bureau and homelessness programs. With a decade of service at YWCA New Britain, Mallory revitalized programs for girls and established the House of Teens. Engaged in various community roles, she served on the Board of

Education and chairs the Professional Development Committee for the Coalition for New Britain's Youth. Mallory is also a Board of Director for the YMCA and OIC. A White-Riley-Peterson Fellow and New Britain native, she blends over 20 years of community-based work with a degree from Southern Connecticut State University. Passionate about youth development, Mallory offers consulting services in after-school quality and team building, believing in the power of resilience and passion to foster greatness.



**Jinelle Hooker** is the Assistant Executive Director of Queen Ann Nzinga Center, Inc. Jinelle has over 18 years of experience in the areas of social services, Youth Development, Preparation for Post-Secondary and Workforce Development. Jinelle specializes in managing teams and

implementing wrap around programs and services for youth and young adults in both Central and Eastern Connecticut.

"This program year was so special as we were able to work with amazing children that in participating in our services got exposed to the power of believing in themselves. Each one of them possess unique talents and gifts that makes them trully extraordinary and I have no doubt that they will go out and make the world a better place."



**Lauren Horn** is a movement and text based artist from Connecticut. She graduated from Amherst College with degrees in Psychology and Theatre and Dance. Lauren's work explores identity and how it can be uncovered, marginalized, highlighted, and erased. By utilizing movement and text to foster a more welcoming form of vulnerability, her work creates a space for self-reflection and conversation for both the

performer and viewer. Lauren's choreographic work has been showcased at The BAM Fisher Theatre in Brooklyn, NYC, The Meydenbauer Center Theatre in Bellevue, WA, Judson Church in Manhattan, NYC and other venues.





Our MC **Tracy Nixon-Moore** serves as the Workplace Culture, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer at General Dynamics Electric Boat, overseeing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives along with talent management and HR functions. With over two decades of experience in training, human resources, and leadership development, she has previously held roles at corporations such as Travelers Inc., Aetna, and CIGNA Group. Tracy is also a former President of the Board of Directors for the YWCA of New Britain and serves on the boards of several non-profit organizations including the Grace Community & Economic Development Corporation and Capital Workforce Partners. A Bryant University alumnus, Tracy holds certifications in various psychometric assessment tools and training programs, including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Certificate from Cornell University. Recognized for her contributions, she has received awards such as the 100 Women of Color Award, 25 Most Influential Blacks of New Britain Award, and the Queen Anne Nzinga Exceptional Woman Award. Tracy, a Connecticut native, enjoys reading, art, and cooking. She resides in New Britain with her husband, Willis, and is the proud mother of three children, Maya, Samantha, and Will.



**Randall Womack** aka Bull Dogg is a gospel rapper, singer, and songwriter. He was born in 1995 in Hartford and grew up in New Britain. He's the son of Lavonne and William S. Womack Sr. Womack and has been performing with QANC for many years and making music since the age of thirteen. He released three studio albums including *Jehovah IV Lyfe*, *Love & Resurrection* and *HOODSTAR*. He currently resides in New Haven, CT.



**East Culture Arts, Inc. (ECA)** is a non-profit organization, and was founded by their president, choreographer, song and skit writer, Lena Tan and others in West Hartford, CT in 2002. ECA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose special purpose is to increase the awareness and understanding of Chinese-American culture and to promote cultural exchange through singing, dancing, and other activities associated with arts.

ECA has performed more than 30 shows each year, at events such as the CT Chinese New Year Gala, Dragon Boat Race & Asian festival, Foxwoods Casino and Mohegan Sun Chinese Culture events, Martin L. King Festival, Yale University, Manhattan ChinaTown New Year Parade. Cultural events or shows in Connecticut, New York city, Massachusetts, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Las Vegas, Ohio, many universities, schools, senior center. ECA also performed in Niagara Song & Dance festival, Niagara, Canada, National Middle-Senior Spring Festival Gala in BeiJing China, Nanning International Folk Song Festival, Guangxi, China, Shanghai Citizen Festival, Shanghai, and Jiashan popular show, Zhejiang, China.



### **Nzinga's Daughters,**

directed by Gail Williams, is a performing ensemble of women from the greater Hartford area who educate through entertainment. They travel throughout New England performing at schools and multi-cultural

events and have developed a program around the Underground Railroad using stories and prose to educate students. Nzinga's Daughters is part of Queen Ann Nzinga Center, Inc. and performs at the annual events. Members include Valerie "Gail" Williams, Dayna Snell, Taffie Ann Bentley, Joanne James, Alison Johnson., Onyae Hill, and Donna Crockett.



### **Nzinga's Daughters R&B Band Performers**

are all talented and come together to make magic! Nzinga's Daughters R&B Band: Donna Crockett - Vocals, Theo Tomasitis - Drums, Taffie Bentley - Vocals, Gail Williams - Bass, Alison

Johnson -Keyboard, Joi McKay - Vocals, Joanne James - Percussion, Onyae Hill - Vocals, Falonte Moore - Keyboard, Josh Albino -Guitar, Dayna Snell - Musical Director & Vocals, Mike Carabello - Saxophone, Willis Moore, Jr - Drums.

## **Watoto**

Mariester Ayala  
Destiny Baldwin  
Sameen Bradley  
Savannah Bradley  
Zyhir Brown  
Zoë Corbin  
Kayden Gamble  
Isaac Gonzalez  
Naylani Hemmingway  
Emory Ibraheem

Delilah Jimenez  
Kyra Jones  
Jayden Mack  
Geleah McCoy  
Taylar Mills  
Jaylee Rodriguez  
Jeremiah Rodriguez  
Josiah Rodriguez  
Messiah Sprolling  
Aurora Villard

## **Alumni Watoto**

Onyae Hill  
Jalen Oates

## **Interns**

Nathaniel Aroian, UCONN  
Jakara Fulton, University of Saint Joseph  
Fernanda Rodrigues, Sacred Heart University  
Theo Tomatis, Sacred Heart University  
Dazira Fulton, Sacred Heart University  
Siobhan Trotman, Field Supervisor

## **Crew**

Ashley Beltron  
Alvin B. Carter, Jr.  
Dillyn Caruso  
Jamie Dickson  
Michelle Gross  
Jedda La Rue  
Tora Medlin  
Ray Rodriguez  
Jasmine Rose  
Lillian Spada

## **Vendors**

Randall Womack Aka Bulldogg apparel  
Jackie's Designs  
That's My Bag  
Launch Clothing  
Design by Amanda



Thanks to Ben Jordan–Photography  
Simmons Cruise Planners–Assistance with Livestream

## **Board of Directors**

Alison Johnson, President  
Tracy Nixon-Moore, VP  
Ron Sheffer, Secretary  
Kesia Berry, Treasurer  
Julia Green  
Onyae Hill  
Donna Morris  
Norma Jean Olsen-Bartley  
Valerie (Gail) Williams

## **Staff**

Dayna R. Snell, LCSW - Executive Director  
Jinelle Hooker - Assistant Executive Director  
Julie Aroian Operations Manager  
Tre Tucker - Program Facilitator  
Chanel Wright - Watoto/Grownish Program Facilitator  
Yateena Young - Program Facilitator  
Chloe Ellison - Fiscal Coordinator and Grant Writer  
Katie Jurkiewicz - Marketing & Website



QANC embraces all cultures,  
encourages and empowers  
our youth through the arts.

Please consider a donation to support  
youth programming in your community.



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QANC is a 501(c)3 non-profit  
organization. All donations  
are tax deductible.

## Thanks to our Sponsors

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# ***Lift Every Voice and Sing***

By James Weldon Johnson

1 Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,  
ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies,  
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
let us march on till victory is won.

2 Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,  
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet  
come to the place for which our people sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;  
we have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered,  
out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

3 God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
thou who hast, by thy might, led us into the light,  
keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee,  
lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;  
shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand,  
true to our God, true to our native land.



a Proud Supporter of  
**QUEEN ANN NZINGA CENTER, Inc.**

*Best Wishes for a Successful  
15th Annual*

**Constance "Connie" Renee Wilson Collins  
Exceptional Women Concert 2024**

*Congratulations to our very own  
**Christine Bryant**  
And to all of the 2024 Honorees!*

*Join us at 10a for worship on Sundays  
Historic Trinity-on-Main  
69 Main Street, New Britain*

*Congratulations  
Mallory!*



Mayor Erin E. Stewart, an Exceptional Woman Honoree from 2018, wishes to congratulate Mallory for being named as an Exceptional Woman Honoree for the 2024 Queen Ann Nzinga Center's Constance "Connie" Renee Wilson Collins Exceptional Women Concert! The positive impact Mallory has on the New Britain community through her work in the City's Community Services Department is truly remarkable.

