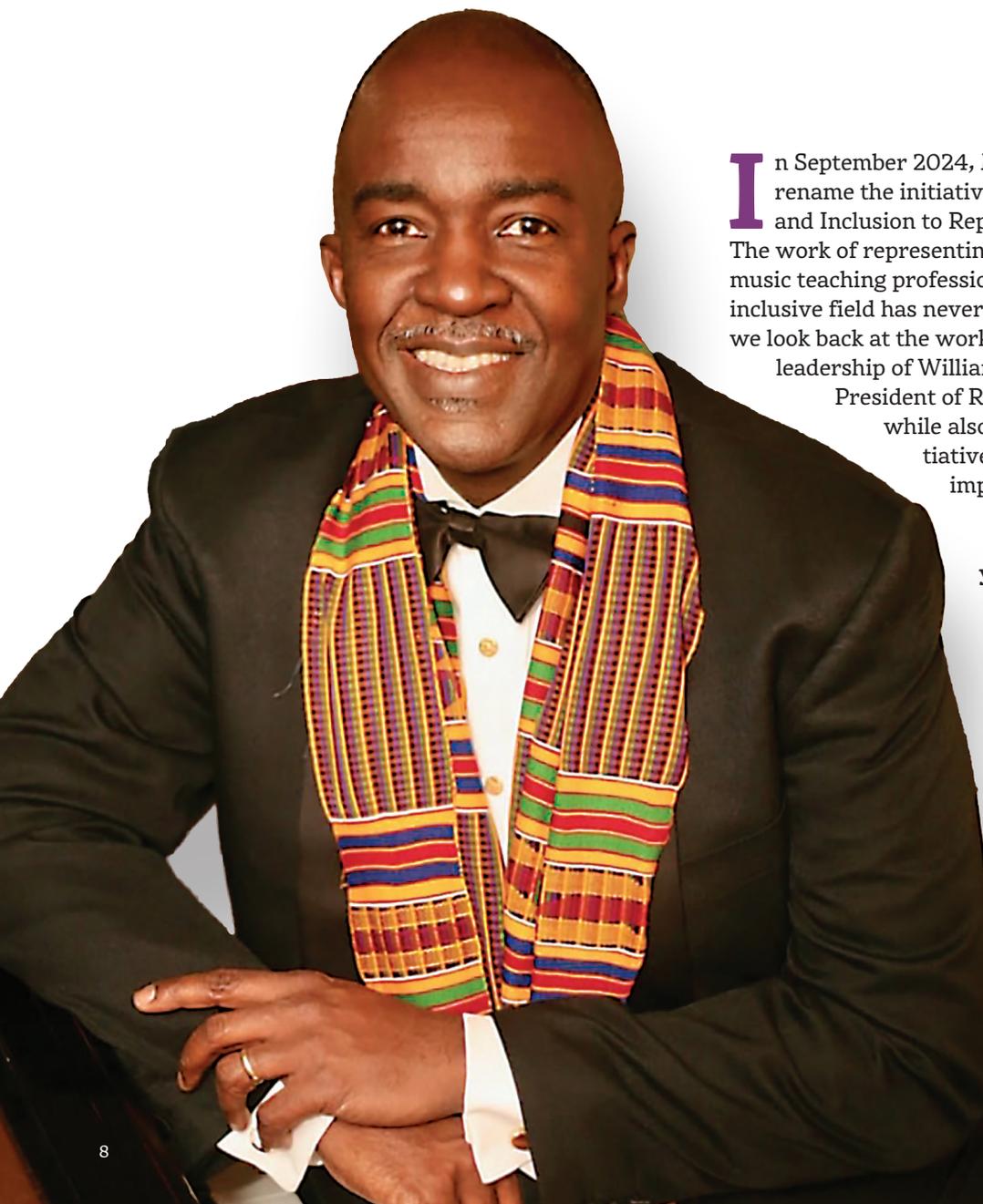


REPRESENTATION AND *ADVOCACY*

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Representation and Advocacy at MTNA

By Leah Claiborne



In September 2024, MTNA's leadership voted to rename the initiatives related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to Representation and Advocacy. The work of representing the beautiful diversity of our music teaching profession and advocating for a more inclusive field has never been stronger. In this article, we look back at the work that has been done under the leadership of William Chapman Nyaho, NCTM, Vice President of Representation and Advocacy, while also looking ahead at the new initiatives that will have a meaningful impact in MTNA and beyond.

Leah Claiborne: What was your overall feeling about the energy of the 2024 Summit for MTNA Leadership as it relates to Representation and Advocacy?

William Chapman Nyaho: The energy was just buzzing! It was really exciting. I feel like unlike past years, where the information was pretty much flowing more in a unilateral direction, the leadership, including state presidents, were offering ideas. Everyone was so engaged. It was so exciting.

You could see that more and more states were discussing the great work they

have done in DEI. They not only came with good information, but they were offering their findings as well to other leaders. I felt in general an even fuller embrace for representation and advocacy.

LC: Can you share what you are most looking forward to this year under your leadership in Representation and Advocacy?

WCN: *huge laughter* There is just so much! Well, this is not in any order. I am looking forward to recognizing Althea Waites and Dr. Wilfred Delphin.

Althea Waites is an extraordinary pianist who was one of those who pioneered the way in recordings by bringing even better awareness of composers like Florence Price and Margaret Bonds. I grew up on her recordings and to this day, she is still premiering works by Black composers as well as contemporary composers such as Jeremy Siskind.

Wilfred Delphin is a giant force as a pianist and duo pianist who performed at Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center and the White House in the '60s and '70s. Dr. Delphin has had works that were premiered for two piano by Black composers such as Hale Smith. Delphin and Romain was the name of their duo team where they had reviews in the New York Times. I am excited to have the remaining survivor of the team honored for their contribution.

I'm also really excited about the upcoming conference. We are hoping that the Minneapolis conference is going to be extra special for the work that we are doing with the Native American populations in Minnesota and the surrounding states. It is our hope that the organization will start looking more into fee structures to allow more opportunities for music teachers to experience this dynamic conference. We hope to invite students from primarily Native American colleges to

participate, in the same way that we offered a free invitation to [students from] Historically Black Colleges and Universities to the national conference in Atlanta.

LC: Is there something you can share that you are most proud of?

WCN: I am most proud of seeing the attendance of MTNA become more representative of the teaching that is going on in the U.S. and beyond. I am most proud of seeing just a real interest in exploring music that is not only Western, such as Southeast Asian, Korean, African, African American, etc., and more research/presentations that are expanding our experience of music that we previously have not known. It has been wonderful seeing younger professionals being involved. From Raphaelita Justice doing a presentation on her work for veterans, to Ben Raznick's leadership in representation in his state—it's been amazing to witness.

LC: In 20 years, what vision do you hope MTNA will carry out in the area of Representation and Advocacy?

WCN: My hope is that MTNA will keep being an organization with a cutting edge on teaching practices that can be implemented globally and an organization that embraces all cultures and musical styles. There will be a global exchange of information and pedagogy. ■

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