

**MUKASA 'WILLE RICKS' DADA TO SPEAK
AT LAUNCH OF THE KWAME TURE MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES**

Ricks Also Scheduled to Make Symbolic Pilgrimage to the Former Home of Kwame Ture in Belmont

June 5, 2009 - Civil rights veteran and 'fiery orator,' Willie Ricks, also known as Mukasa Dada, is to be the featured speaker at the launch of the Kwame Ture Memorial Lecture Series, which will be held on Thursday June 11, 2009 at 5:00 pm at the Lion's Cultural Centre, Port of Spain. He will speak on the topic, 'Seize the Time: Black Power and Pan Africanism as Forces of Change.' The public is invited to join the Emancipation Support Committee for what is bound to be an eye-opening and enlightening event.

While in Trinidad, Brother Mukasa, will also pay a visit to the former home of fellow activist in the Civil Rights movement, Kwame Ture, aka, Stokley Carmichael, in Belmont on Tuesday June 9, at 11:00 am. As young men, the two worked side by side in the fight for equality in the turbulent 60's. Indeed, Mukasa Dada and Kwame Ture have both been credited with popularizing the phrase, 'Black Power,' working side by side and speaking out about the injustices of the Jim Crow policies of Southern United States.

Mukasa Dada is, to a large extent, one of the unsung heroes of the Civil Rights movement, but his contribution to Pan Africanism and the fight for justice and equality cannot be underestimated and continues to today. Indeed, he has been described as one of the greatest of all activists produced by the Civil Rights Movement. Mukasa was introduced to the Civil Rights Movement in 1960 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at the age of 17. For two years he was active in Chattanooga while working with the local NAACP chapter in the sit-in movement. In 1961, he was contacted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to help voter registration in Chattanooga. Speaking the language of the rural African American community, he became one of the South's most powerful organizers.

Mukasa continued organizing in Chattanooga until he was asked to come to Georgia by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1962. As the Field Secretary for the SNCC, he organized countless sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, and boycotts — all of which were instrumental in destroying the overt forms of Jim Crow and racial oppression. Mukasa also travelled extensively and spoke in the same platforms with Kwame Ture wherever he

spoke. In fact, when Ture stepped down as the Chairman of SNCC, Mukasa was the leading candidate to replace him but chose to work more quietly in the background.

Today, Mukasa continues to speak out to empower African people everywhere. Chairman of the ESC, commenting on the visit of Brother Mukasa Dada, said: "It is indeed a privilege to have someone of his stature and background in our midst. The visit of Brother Mukasa Dada is certainly an opportunity for us to learn about the Civil Rights Movement from the unique vantage point of someone who lived through it and was such a great influence. We have no doubt that Brother Mukasa's talk will be instructive, particularly for our young people who were not yet born and have such limited understanding of the struggles that were endured to secure justice and equality not only in the United States, but also around the world. We encourage everyone to join us for this event."

About the Kwame Ture Memorial Public Lecture Series

The Emancipation Support Committee's Kwame Ture Memorial Public Lecture Series aims to perpetuate Ture's watchwords by promoting a culture of knowledge and education for African people in Trinidad and Tobago. Each lecture is a free, easily accessible opportunity for the general public to learn about the history of African people, the critical issues that we face today, and the long-term goals for the advancement of the African Diaspora.

For more information about the Kwame Ture Memorial Lecture Series, please contact the Emancipation Support Committee at 628-5008.