BUFI’s STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF DR. CONRAD WORRILL

CHICAGO…The Black United Fund of Illinois (BUFI), along with many across the globe are remembering and celebrating the life of prominent historian and international scholar, Dr. Conrad Walter Worrill.

“Dr. Worrill was an esteemed, international scholar who loved Black people and helping people. A historian with a recall beyond a million elephants combined. I will always be beholding for his confidence, leadership, mentoring and support of my elevation from a board member to the Executive Director of the Black United Fund of Illinois,” shared Carolyn Day, executive director of BUFI.

On Tuesday, June 3, 2020, Dr. Worrill lost his battle against cancer.

Iris Dunmore, a revered confidante of Dr. Worrill’s, expressed, “Conrad was my longtime friend and confidante. His knowledge was vast, and he never wavered on his love for Black people. He was never self-serving, but always willing to serve. I will miss him tremendously. May your soul Rest in Peace and your spirit live on. Ase.”

After 40 years of service, in 2016, Dr. Worrill retired from Northeastern Illinois University where he worked as a professor in Inner City Studies, was the department chair of Inner City Studies, and academic program coordinator for Inner City Studies. He served as director of the historic Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies for over 12 years.

Dr. Worrill’s activism was defined by his leadership in organizations and activities that have been at the forefront of social and racial justice, African-centered education, African liberation, and self-determination for people of African descent. He served on BUFI’s board of directors for 30 years.

BUFI board member Diane Dinkins Carr remembered Dr. Worrill as “a dear and priceless friend that will be missed, but not forgotten. He touched and taught so many. I’m honored to have sat on the Black United Fund of Illinois [board] with my dear friend.”

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For 26 years, Dr. Worrill served as the chairman of the National Black United Front/NBUF and was its chairman emeritus. He was also the special consultant for field operations for the historic Million Man March; a lifetime member for the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America/N’COBRA; a street organizer for Harold Washington’s mayoral campaign; and a member of the Kemetic Institute, the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations and the Association of African Historians, among other memberships.

Day reflected, “We talked about how building and maintaining institutions required discipline, accountability and governance. He encouraged leading with professionalism, passion, coupled with pedagogy and faith, which gives hope to Black people to believe in greater opportunities.”

One of Dr. Worrill’s greatest passions was the relationship of athletics to academic achievement.

A former athlete and sports enthusiast, Dr. Worrill worked with the Friends of Track and Field to revitalize track and field as an alternative athletic activity for young people in the Chicago Public Schools. His work resulted in the creation of the Track and Field Center at Gately Park. He also chronicled the history and origin of the game of basketball and the historical and evolutionary role Black people have contributed to the development of the game.

“He had an endearing use of colorful inflammatory words, which was immediately jarring to most astute academics. My experience with Dr. Conrad wasn’t only about the movement. It was about his life, family and the social and emotional impact of the ‘Mis-education vs. Trained Negro,’” stated Day.

Dr. Worrill advanced causes, such as educational restructuring, human rights, reparations and political and economic empowerment for the Black community.

“Conrad’s contribution to BUFI and the world is difficult to sum up in a soundbyte. His reach was vast, and he challenged everyone around him to keep up with his progressive vision for change for people of African descent. Conrad will be missed immensely. He was instrumental in advancing BUFI’s mission to improve the quality of life for African Americans through local engagement. We will continue the fight in his honor,” shared Dafina Dunmore, BUFI board member.

Day added, “He was a shujaa na mpiganaji warrior and fighter. I will miss his energy in our caucus meetings. He is now organizing with all of our ancestors.”

For more information or to view additional tributes, contact Carolyn Day, executivedirector@bufi.org, 773.324.0494 or www.bufi.org.

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About the Black United Fund of Illinois
The Black United Fund of Illinois (BUFI) raises and utilizes funds to support the growth, development and empowerment of the African American community. BUFI advocates volunteerism, mutual aid and self-help, which is viewed as one way to help break the chronic cycle of economic dependency and social powerlessness that have characterized African American organizations and communities.