



## **Aiah Fanday, FoSL Vice-President, Receives the Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award**

At the 2023 African and Caribbean International Leadership and Awards Gala, held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington, DC, FoSL Vice-President, Aiah Fanday was honored with the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award by the Caribbean and African Faith-Based Leadership Conference, (CAFBLC) on behalf of the President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden. CAFBLC is a Certifying Organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award and as such, is authorized by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to acknowledge volunteer service to the nation by giving out the Presidential Volunteer Service and Lifetime Achievement awards.



The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation founded the President's Volunteer Service Award in 2003 to recognize the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. This award honors individuals whose service positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action. The President's Lifetime Achievement Award is a special award that is given in recognition of lifetime individual volunteer service.



## **2024 Annual Meeting**

We hope to see you at our next Annual Meeting, which will be in Washington DC during the Summer of 2024. We will confirm the dates in the next couple of months and get that information out to you as soon as possible! The Annual Meeting will consist of 2-3 days of outings, museum visits, talks and, of course, our general meeting. As always, you will be able to connect virtually for some of the events.



# White Man's Grave by Richard Dooling with Michael O'Neill

We had a Zoom talk on Sunday, November 19th with **Richard Dooling** and **Michael O'Neill**. The Zoom was well attended! Richard visited Michael in Sierra Leone in September of 1981, while Michael was a Peace Corps Volunteer, and he stayed in-country until June of 1982. On the Zoom they had a lively discussion of their experiences together in Sierra Leone.



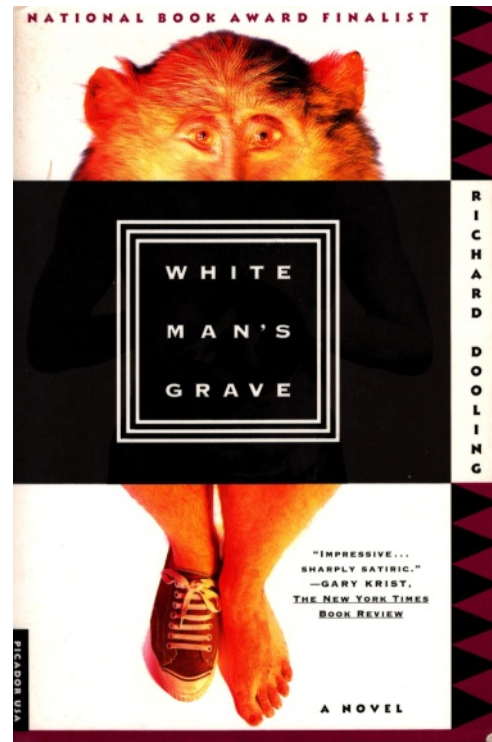
Those experiences led Richard to write the book, **White Man's Grave**, about someone named Michael getting captured. The story was entirely fictional and was written before Michael was actually captured. When he was captured, Richard held off getting the book published until after Michael was released and safe.

Richard said that he found his best research resources, at the time, at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He said now so much would be available on the

internet. He worked to document all that he wrote about with specific resources, listed at the back of the book.

The book cover here (there are a few others) represents the combination of a Bush Devil, Bamboo Man and a Peace Corps Volunteer. There is a bowl with 2 bones and a photo in the hands. Reading the book will help explain the significance of the cover.

As always, Richard and Michael's stories were fascinating, exciting, funny and moving! An enjoyable evening was had by all in attendance.



## President's Message - Summary of year's activity and appeal for funds

Hello FOSL members! As we finish this year, we reflect on what we've accomplished over the past 12 months as well as focus on what we want to achieve in the coming year. We have continued to grow as an organization, adding new members each month as well as many new followers on our social media platforms. We have increased our presence online, which has created insightful conversations as well as connected so many individuals that are drawn to the magic of Sierra Leone. Our organization consists of compassionate individuals with the same love of Salone. It is important for us to connect, tell stories, and share our experiences, as it may help future projects we support or help current Peace Corps Volunteers in Sierra Leone be as successful as possible. We have supported countless small projects, hosted multiple online lectures, organized a very successful Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, and added new, extraordinary

people to our FOSL Board and committees. Jamie Brown, our webmaster, has drastically improved our website and has provided help videos to guide our membership on how to edit their profiles as well as how to access our membership database, so that our members can connect with other members. Now, you can easily find members that you served with during your Peace Corps service. The main goal of this past year has been for us to help make connections; and, I think we succeed in that effort and we will continue to strive for more connections for years to come.

Additionally, this year, we saw the United States Peace Corps add new volunteers throughout Sierra Leone, both in the Education sector as well as in Health, with their two-year service starting back in September 2023. We are so proud to see the Peace Corps thriving again in Sierra Leone and we are here to support and help where needed, including access to small project grant opportunities.

Moving forward, as we look towards 2024, we hope to continue our momentum and continue to provide support for Sierra Leoneans through projects as well as provide more opportunities for our members to connect. We will continue to host virtual lectures, support small projects in Salone and provide social media posts that will increase the online conversation about Sierra Leone. We also hope to host more in-person experiences, like a local meetup of members, with those living within certain geographical regions. More information to come on that and much more!

With the holiday season in the air, please consider donating to our small projects fund. All money donated goes directly to



# Saro Talk

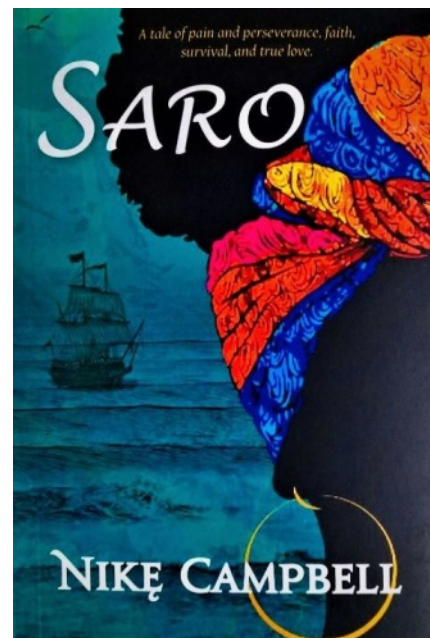
## by Nike Campbell



On Sunday, September 24th, FOSL hosted a Zoom talk with Nike Campbell as she discussed her 2022 historical fiction novel, *Saro*, which follows the journey of captured Nigerian natives as they arrive in the free land of Sierra Leone. *Saro* is a multigenerational take of betrayal and restitution, love and war, inspired by true events that will take the reader from the rocky terrain of Abeokuta and the burgeoning city of Lagos to the lion mountains of Freetown and Hastings, Sierra Leone from the 1830s to the 1850s. With an attendance of a little over dozen

participants, Nike outlined her ancestral connection to Sierra Leone. She explained why she wrote this book and how important it is for stories, like *Saro*, to be written. FOSL is proud to support African artists and writers; we believe it is critical for the

arts to be supported, especially women. During her talk, Nike highlighted her experiences while visiting Sierra Leone in preparation for this novel. If interested, you can still purchase the book on Amazon at <https://a.co/d/75o05Iv>



projects that we support. Your gift is extremely important for those struggling throughout Sierra Leone. In the past, your donations have supported health clinics, solar projects, school programs/construction, and more! Help us help those that need our support the most! You can donate at <https://fosalone.org/donate/>

Thank you for being a member and we are excited to stay connected with you for 2024! Be well and have a great holiday season! If you ever need anything, you can reach me directly at [info@fosalone.org](mailto:info@fosalone.org).

Michael Lee

President

Friends of Sierra Leone

An advertisement for Friends of Sierra Leone Small Project Grants. The background is light green with blue brushstrokes. The text reads: 'SERVING Sweet Salone', 'FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE', 'Small Project Grants', 'Friends of Sierra Leone offers small project grants to communities in Sierra Leone. The grants usually range from \$1,000 to \$3,000. We encourage you to share this information with your Salone community. The applications must come from community leaders via the Google Form or our PDF version. To access the grant application, go to: [fosalone.org/home/projFundApp.php](https://fosalone.org/home/projFundApp.php)'. There is a QR code and a call to action: 'Scan this QR code to access the small project grant application!'. Below the QR code is a 'CONTACT US' section with the following information: 'Address: P.O. Box 15875, Washington, DC 20003-0875', 'Contact: [info@fosalone.org](mailto:info@fosalone.org)', 'Website: [fosalone.org](https://fosalone.org)'. There are three photos: a group of women, a woman holding a baby, and a traditional house.

# Projects

## Jim Hanson, Committee Chair

Since a very successful annual meeting in Houston, where it was decided to select and fund projects monthly, rather than twice per year, our projects committee has stayed busy. With inflation running at 42% in Sierra Leone this year, many families, students, and communities are in need of help. Thanks to you, our donors, FoSL is able to provide assistance to many in need.

We have funded five projects since our July annual meeting, including continued funding of the **Daphne Sawyer-Dunn Memorial Scholarship Fund**. This fund provides \$250 each school year to assist needy students at the Paul School for the Blind in Bo.

In memory of long-time FoSL Board member Judy Figi, who passed away last year, a one-year scholarship of \$500 was donated to the **Ballanta Academy of Music** in Freetown. The Ballanta Academy provides training in classical, modern and indigenous music and the performing arts to students in the Freetown area. Memorials to FoSL at Judy's passing totalled nearly \$4000, and the Board voted to match this amount, which will be donated to the **Magic Penny** primary school addition, already under construction. Music and this school at Shenge, in Moyamba District, were two of Judy's passions.

Another scholarship fund was also established at Ballanta Academy by a friend of FoSL in memory of his late brother. The **Frank Scholarships**, in the amount of \$6000 per year for the next five years, will provide partial scholarships for needy students in the Freetown area. This will allow 24 students to pursue their dreams in music and performance.

The **Polio-Challenged Fund**, who's training centre is located in Grafton, in

the Western Area, was granted \$2775 for the purchase of blacksmithing and tin smithing tools and materials. This will offer 45 students at the centre the opportunity to support themselves and their families.

**Women for Women of Sierra Leone** received \$2000 to publish culturally-appropriate books for their preschool students in Yele, Tonkolilli District. This organization operates the only free preschool in the country. Since 2002, they have provided 3 to 5 year-olds with uniforms, materials, and food and clean drinking water, as well as training and paying the teachers. A rare opportunity indeed for families in the area!



We are also continuing to support the **Mamaka village Agriculture Project** in the Tokolilli District, located just outside Mile 91. They have received \$5600 this year in ear-marked donations. The project supports farmers through loans, mentoring and training. Their goal is to attain a middle-class income, some \$4000 per year, for its farmers. The 3-year program provides training in organic vegetable production, composting, and animal husbandry, as well as budgeting, calculating input costs, and net profits. Sixty farmers, 30 women and 30 men, are

currently enrolled in the program. First year results were very promising, with a large and profitable vegetable harvest and rice production at 2.5 tons per hectare. Plans for 2024 include adding 30 more farmers, an irrigation pump for twice a year vegetable crops and mechanization to bring a large boli land into production.

The total amount of projects funded this year is over \$29,000, with the possibility of more in December! As an all-volunteer organization, we can put all of your donations to work, excepting the small amount used to transfer those funds overseas. Thank you for your continued generous support and we wish you the happiest of holidays.



*Beginning of September 2023 School Year - 4 years old pupils at Women for Women of Sierra Leone Free Early Childhood School, Yele - Teacher Memunatu's Class.*



*Beginning of September 2023 School Year -5 years old plus some 6 and 7 years old who have never been to school and want a start. Women for Women of Sierra Leone Free Early Childhood School, Yele - Teacher Jane's class.*



*Beginning of September 2023 School Year - 3 years old pupils at Women for Women of Sierra Leone Free Early Childhood School, Yele - Teacher Haja's Class.*



*Women for Women of Sierra Leone Free Early Childhood School Building, Tower Hill, Yele*

**Check the date on your mailing label or subject line. Is it time to renew? If there is no date, or if the date is some time in the past, it's time to renew! Fill out and mail the form below with your check.**

**Or renew through our website:**

<https://fosalone.org/mbrship/>

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP FORM	
Name (include maiden) _____	FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest:  <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy  <input type="checkbox"/> Education  <input type="checkbox"/> Membership  <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/ Communications  <input type="checkbox"/> Projects  <input type="checkbox"/> Events  Would you be willing to be part of a network to receive information and contact your members of Congress at important times? (Please include your email address.)  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Home Phone _____ Email _____	
Day Phone _____ Occupation _____	
Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, etc.) _____	
Sierra Leone Home _____ Years _____ to _____	
Membership: \$25 per Individual \$ _____	
Donation to Projects: \$ _____	
FoSL Circle \$1000 and up Supporter \$500 to \$999 Sponsor \$100 to \$499 Friend \$50 - \$99	
Overseas Mail (add \$10) \$ _____	
Total Remitted \$ _____	
<p>Membership dues support operations for Friends of Sierra Leone, including meetings, newsletters, and the website. All other donations support FoSL projects in Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Dues and other contributions to Friends of Sierra Leone are fully tax-deductible.</p> <p><b>Thank you for your support! Please return this form with your check made payable to Friends of Sierra Leone to the address at the right.</b> →</p>	
<b>PO Box 15875 Washington, DC 20003-0875</b>	

**Friends of Sierra Leone**  
**P. O. Box 15875**  
**Washington, DC 20003-0875**

**Web: [fosalone.org](http://fosalone.org)**



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