

We Need POC Trans Speakers At The 2011 TDOR's

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Abstract

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But one of the things I'm most proud of is being asked to be a keynote speaker at three Transgender Day of Remembrance events.

It happened for me twice (2002-2003) in Louisville and I was honored to participate in one that takes place in Long Island, NY in 2009.

As you guessed, I'm passionate about it and I attend TDOR's when my schedule permits. I made sure when I returned home I attended the 2010 TDOR event held at the University of Houston's AD Bruce Religion Center.



It was a well organized, well attended event and I have much love for the Houston Transgender Unity Committee that plans it. But one of the things that glaringly stood out for me and many of the POC trans people in attendance that night and we discussed for days afterward was erasure.

I know one of the persons on the HTUC, and while erasure probably wasn't the intent, it still happened.

The names of the fallen trans people we were memorializing were predominately African American and Latina. The people on stage that night speaking and doing the reading of the names with the exception of council-member Jolanda Jones weren't.

I'm broaching this subject because November 20 will be here soon, and the planning for 2011 TDOR events is either well underway in some locales or just getting started. So I must ask this question.

Would it kill y'all to have POC transpeople in a major speaking role or you ensure that POC transpeople are taking part in the TDOR events you plan?



If we continue to assert that the trans community is a diverse one, then it is incumbent upon us to showcase that diverse trans community at our events. TDOR's also get media coverage, and that makes it even more important that we show our diverse trans face to the world.

As I pointed out in a post I wrote in March directed at the Houston trans community but is definitely applicable elsewhere, you can say all you want that a group or organization doesn't discriminate, it has a charter and rules that express that, but if all you present to the world is a predominately white face, that undercuts all of the non discrimination messaging you verbalize, put out there in the media or put on paper.



It also says to the group not represented that 'you aren't wanted'.

I know that's not the intended message, but in order to get more POC trans participation you have to include POC trans people in the first place.

I helped plan TDOR's when I lived in Louisville, and yes, in some cases that means you're probably going to have to work harder in the initial planning phases to get that POC trans participation.

But you will reap the rewards if you are willing to do so and follow through on it.

Let's not forget there are trans POC people all over this country who are more than capable of eloquently speaking at a TDOR event or want to participate in them, and if their schedules permit it, wouldn't mind doing so. But you have to respectfully ask us.

So yes, with November 20th approaching, it would be nice to see at 2011 TDOR events the people participating in the events to memorialize our fallen trans people be just as diverse as the list of people we are memorializing.

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