



**National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.  
Mourns the Passing of the Chair of the Board of Directors  
Barbara Joseph  
October 8, 1946 – March 29, 2020**

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With broken hearts, the members of the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc. (Network) announce the passing of our beloved sister and fearless leader, Ms. Barbara Joseph. A woman of courage and self-determination Barbara completed her life-walk on March 29, 2020.

A devoted sister, mother, grandmother, friend, and a faithful steward of God's grace, Barbara used her gifts of compassion and determination to serve others. As a woman living with HIV Barbara committed countless hours advocating for Black women with and at risk of HIV for more than two decades. Throughout her journey, Barbara focused her attention on the particular health care needs of HIV-positive Black women who like herself struggle with the challenges of managing their overall health and wellbeing.

As Chair of the Board and a founding member of the Network, Barbara lent her wisdom and years of experience to direct our course and ensure that our work towards reducing the burden of morbidity, mortality and stigma of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities associated with gender, social, and economic inequities among Black women and girls never wavered.

"A proud and caring woman, Barbara was an inspiration to us all. I will forever treasure her humor and deep passion for making a difference in the lives of Black women and girls with and at risk of HIV. Our world is a little dimmer without her." – Dr. Ivy Turnbull, Vice-Chair, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.

One of the "*Mothers of the Movement*," Barbara was pure dignity and Black Girl Magic all wrapped up into one blessed human being.

"I was blessed to have had Barbara by my side as I served as the founding Chair of the Network in the early days. Knowing that we were fighting for the "Barbaras" of the world gave purpose and meaning to a unique group of Black women who were both HIV-positive and negative, because the struggle for us is always at its base the same, we do for others and for our own. I will miss the calls, the laughter, and the strategy sessions but most of all, I will miss pointing to Barbara as the true essence of raw dignity, pride and having an iron fist in a silk glove. My Barbara was the fierce epitome of a Black woman we should all strive to be. Job well done my sister. I will love you always," – Debra Fraser Howze, Founding Chair, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network; Founder of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS and Retired Senior Vice President of OraSure Technologies, Inc.

Barbara's career in HIV began in 1993. Notably, some of those highlights include:

Her many years of committed service as Vice-Chair and then as Chair of the Thomas Street Clinic Council.

Her work toward the establishment of Houston's first community-based non-profit clinic which provided HIV primary medical care including services for Black women followed by the Joseph-Hines Medical Clinic in 2001, named in her honor.

Her five years of service as the Vice-Chair of the Houston Ryan White Planning Council in 1994, as the Principle Investigator for Project RARE in 2002, and her dedicated service as Community Co-Chair of UCHAPS: Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services.

As the founder and Executive Director of Positive Efforts, Barbara worked tirelessly to ensure that the residents of Houston's communities of color highly impacted by HIV received the dedicated HIV prevention, counseling, testing and referral services they desperately needed.

"Rev. Boss Lady. I cannot thank you enough for your mentorship over the years. You have been such an integral part of my life. I hope to inspire others as you have inspired me. I'll always hear you say *remember the people whose boots are on the ground.*" – Deborah Levine, Board Secretary, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.

Barbara has been recognized for her efforts against the fight of HIV/AIDS by her City, State, and Congressional elected officials. However, her proudest moment was meeting President Barack Obama prior to his remarks made at the White House on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy in 2010.

"Knowledge about life is one thing; having an effective vocation and occupation in life, with all of its dynamic currents passing through your being is another thing....Barbara Joseph possessed all of these. She was and will always be A Wise Woman Warrior...my Strong Dedicated Sistah Friend! I'll never forget you!" – Reverend Debra Hickman, Board Member, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.

We will be comforted by our memories and our love for Barbara which is very much alive.

"I was blessed in recent days to speak with Barbara and reminisce about our time together as sisters" and our mutual journey with the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network. We spoke personally about historic and new challenges Black women face daily within the ever-changing landscape of HIV and Ending the Epidemic. Barbara and I reflected for some time about our organizational and individual achievements, yet wondering what the future is for other Black women in HIV leadership. I am convinced more than ever that Barbara's passing must become more than her transition to a final resting place. It is now our greatest opportunity and responsibility to reflect on her legacy as the Founder of Positive Efforts and create a national conversation around how the United States invests in HIV/STD organizations historically created and led by black women. Certainly, her contributions and "footprints" should never be forgotten."- Dr, Bambi Gaddist, Treasurer, National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.

In her honor, the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network will plan a tribute to Barbara's life and work. An announcement regarding the tribute will be forthcoming. If you would like to send a message to be included in the tribute please forward it to Deborah Levine at [nbwhan@nbhwan.org](mailto:nbwhan@nbhwan.org).

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**About the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.,** The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (Network) is organized to provide leadership and expertise in the prevention and spread of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities that affect black women and girls nationally and internationally. The mission of the Network is to reduce the burden of morbidity, mortality and stigma of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities associated with gender, social, and economic inequities among Black women and girls.