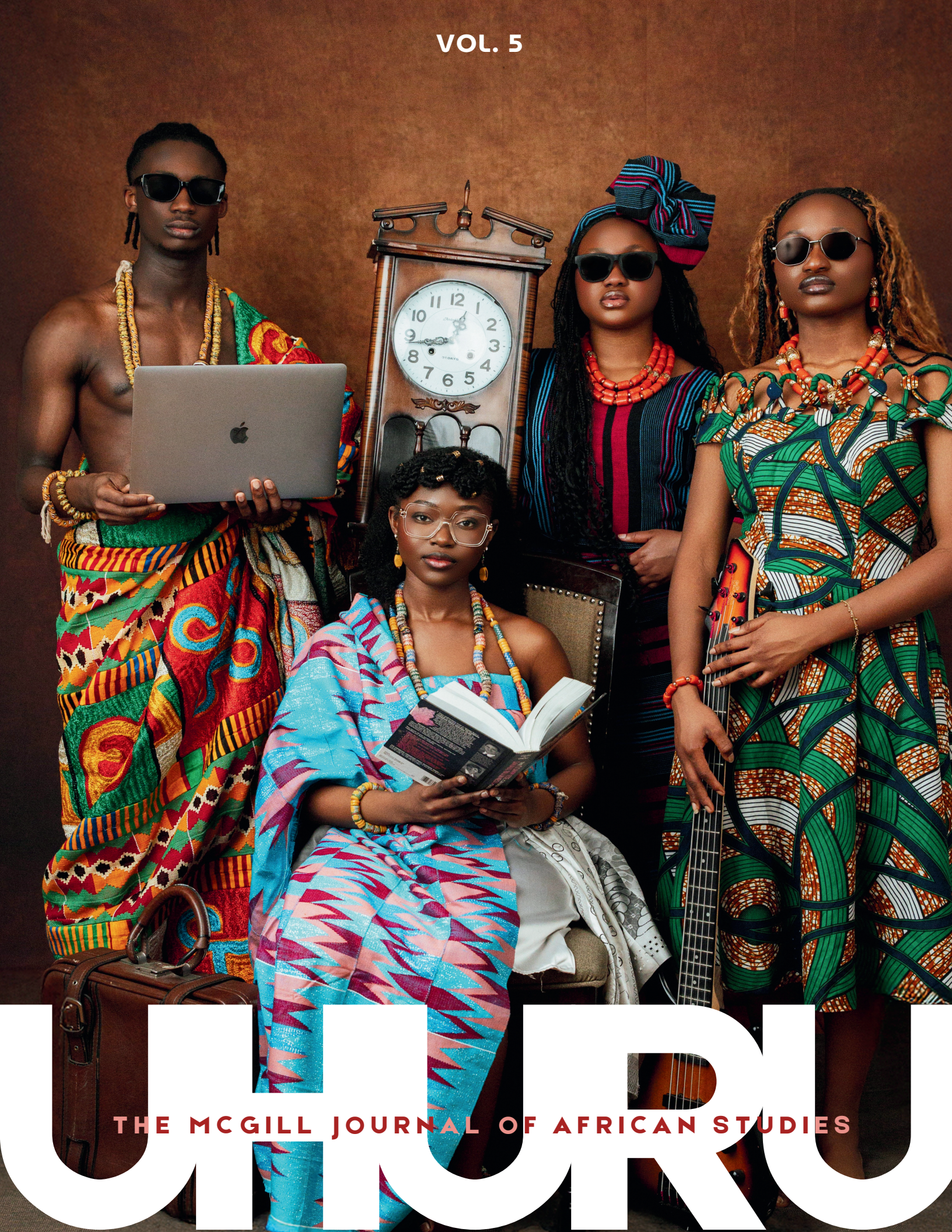


VOL. 5



UJURU

THE MCGILL JOURNAL OF AFRICAN STUDIES

letter from the cover artist

Figures stand and move in composed stillness, time no longer distant but brought into the same physical space, held, carried, and confronted. Clocks appear not as background objects, but as presences placed directly within reach, no longer abstract, but tangible.

Reclaiming Time began from a growing awareness of how often time, and by extension progress, is defined through external systems. In many contexts, development is measured through speed, productivity, and distance from tradition. These frameworks rarely account for lived experience, memory, or the ways people exist within time differently.

I became interested in what it would mean to interrupt that structure, to make time something that could be engaged with, rather than something that silently governs. The decision to bring clocks into direct relationship with the body emerged from this questioning. What happens when time is no longer something we move through, but something we hold?

At the same time, the work responds to the way cultural identity is often positioned in opposition to modernity. There is an underlying expectation that moving forward requires leaving something behind. Through this series, I wanted to resist that idea. The presence of cultural textiles, adornment, and gesture is not symbolic of the past, it exists fully within the present.

Rather than rejecting time, the work questions who defines it, and for whom it is measured. It reflects a desire to move through the world on self-determined terms, where the past is not abandoned, but carried forward, and where the future is shaped through that continuity.

Michel Assouka
Wildlenz

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What the Soil Holds: A Land Acknowledgement

McGill University is located on the unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation in Tio'tia:ke, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, also known as Mooniyaang (Anishnaabe), and today called Montréal. This territory was not a gift to colonial settlers: it was seized through violent dispossession, the genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and the systematic discrediting of their knowledge systems. Additionally, acknowledging that in 1847, the Canadian government issued a loan without consulting the Six Nations of the Grand River trust fund to salvage McGill University from bankruptcy.

Although we judge these misdeeds with the advantage of hindsight, they must still be named and confronted. As a settler, my capacity to fully know and appreciate this territory is just as limited today. In the presence of unresolved injustice, Indigenous Peoples in Turtle Island (North America) have been far from silent – emphasizing collective action, asserting self-determination, and forging paths to healing.

It is equally vital to recognize the experiences of Afro-descended peoples who endured enslavement, discrimination, and other forms of oppression on these lands. Black Canadians have shared oppression with other Black communities under colonial rule in Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean. They, too, have made notable efforts for justice and continue to do so, battling systemic issues.

Familiarity with land acknowledgements can diminish one's reverence and awareness of their gravity. I urge you not to exemplify this assumption. Viewing these moments as critical disruptions, forward momentum requires reflection before creating resolutions that will affect future generations.

In light of these disruptions, UHURU – the McGill Journal of African Studies

– commits to conscious world-building: restructuring and orienting conversations concerning the futures of Indigenous Peoples and Black communities (Sabah Quao). This present-tense agency is expressed through the work you are about to read, by presenting diverse ways of thinking and through its sharing with the McGill community as an available literary and creative source for reflection. Yet, this is far from complete. Complete agency engages shared authorship of futures. In this, the futures we want must remain open to revision, allowing any member of the community to pause and call for a needed rewrite at any point.

Subira Atieno Okundi, Junior Editor
UHURU Editorial Team

this volume's theme

AFROFUTURISM **envisioning the futures we create.**

Last year, UHURU journeyed beyond the single story, unraveling stereotypes and reclaiming Africa's multidimensional pasts and presents. This year, we look ahead.

Afrofuturism invites contributors to imagine the futures that emerge when African diasporic resilience, ingenuity, and hope converge. Across the continent and its global diasporas, Black and African communities have always been future-makers, dreaming and innovating to create worlds where liberation is not deferred, but lived. This volume asks: what does it mean to build futures on our own terms? How can our unique knowledge, art, technology, and youth movements shape the horizons we are reaching toward? It calls upon decolonial imagination to challenge who gets to define progress, innovation, and sustainability, and insists that African people are at the helm of their own realities. Africa is not a continent waiting to be developed; it is at the forefront of technological advancement, economic projection, and cultural transformation.

To that end, this volume unfolds across six interconnected conversations, each one a thread in the larger tapestry of an Afrofuturist vision.

Decolonial Imagination begins by inviting us to interrogate the very foundations of what we call "progress", to ask who gets to define advancement, and whose futures have been quietly erased in its name. From that unsettling of the familiar, we turn to the tools of creation. Technology & Innovation explores what becomes possible when artificial intelligence, digital media, engineering, and design are wrested from the hands of extraction and placed in the service of liberation. When technology stops being something done to African communities and becomes something built by and for them. But no future

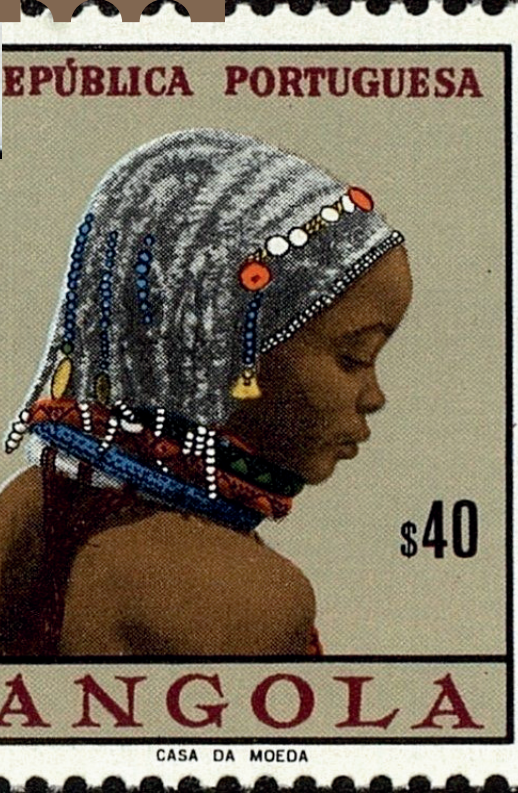
is sustainable without roots. Sustainable Ecological Futures grounds this vision in indigenous knowledge, land stewardship, and climate justice, asking how diasporic communities might build lives in genuine harmony with the Earth. And running through all of this is youth: the restless, insistent energy of a generation that refuses to wait. Youth Agency & Advocacy uplifts those who are already mobilizing, resisting, and rewriting what liberation can look like in their lifetimes. These visions, of course, do not flourish in isolation. Regional Multilateralism and Good Governance imagines political futures in which cooperation and transparency are architectures for delivering justice and accountability. And at the heart of it all are Black women. Women Empowerment centers the artists, leaders, thinkers, and activists whose visions have always stretched across generations, insisting that gender justice is not a footnote to liberation but its very core. Finally, this volume holds space for the beautiful, complex plurality that defines Africa and its global diasporas. Ethnic and Religious Solidarity dares to imagine futures where linguistic, ethnic, and religious differences are not wounds to be tended to, but sources of extraordinary strength, where solidarity is the choice to build together in spite of our differences.

Together, these threads form a living, breathing vision of what it means to create the futures we create — on our own terms, in our own voices, and rooted in our own power.

Henry Maidoh, Director of the UHURU Journal & Vice-President of Academics
The African Studies Students' Association



DECOLONIAL IMAGINATION





**TECHNOLOGY
& INNOVATION**

SUSTAINABLE &
ECOLOGICAL FUTURES





**YOUTH AGENCY
& ADVOCACY**

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS SOLIDARITY



REGIONAL MULTILATERALISM AND GOOD GOVERNANCE





opening statement

As the Chair of the African Studies Program at McGill University, it is my great honor to once again introduce readers to Uhuru: The McGill Undergraduate Journal of African Studies. Uhuru, now in its fifth volume, is one of the very first undergraduate journals of its kind. In the following pages readers will be treated to, and rewarded with, peer reviewed articles on a wide range of topics. Grounded in this year's theme of Africanfuturism, this issue centers on the diverse visions of African futures, whether these be in the form of exploring the intersection of technology and African traditions and myths or speculative narratives expertly deployed as a formidable decolonial tool upending Eurocentric linear temporalities. Eschewing false and divisive narratives associated with "Afro-Pessimism," the contributions in this volume break new ground: they do so by directing our attention towards a more optimistic and hopeful focus; challenging readers to imagine sustainable global possibilities rooted in, what the editors and authors insist, are African rooted futures wherein Africanfuturism generatively compliments rather than contradicts works of Afrofuturism and that genre's understandable focus on the African diaspora. These rigorously researched and edited submissions include works on the relationship between digital media and new forms of racial oppression in ways that "imagine different futures related to race and technology;" a deeply researched analysis that explains African authoritarianism as rooted in colonialism presented here so as to encourage a new decolonial imagination based on "Afrofuturist sentiment;" an essay calling on African youth to reject imposed notions of victimhood and transform the "brain drain" into an avenue of social responsibility and collection action; and a compelling account of what constitutes the "Perfect Africanfuturist Manifesto" for contemporary and future generations. Taken together these works celebrate a wide range of African accomplishments reflecting the truly inter-disciplinary thrust and contributions of African Studies worldwide

The idea for the aptly named Uhuru (Freedom in Swahili) originated from the initiative, intellectual talent, and perseverance of the African Studies Students Association (ASSA) and the many students here at McGill that, over the years, have been steadfast in promoting rigorous academic research on topics related to Africa and the African diaspora. Indeed, Uhuru speaks poignantly to advancements in the scholarship on Africa (including African cultural and artistic production) in ways that would have defied expectations only a few years ago. A product of the tireless efforts of its editorial team, headed ably by Henry Maidoh, the Journal takes seriously issues associated with the historical (mis)representation of Africa, the importance of working towards decolonizing scholarship and art on the continent, the vital importance of including (and centering) research produced by student authors from Africa and those of African descent, and the encouragement of any and all contributions that address African topics from a critical analytical lens.

Readers of Uhuru will immediately recognize the Journal's overall sentiment of "Sharing?" That is, the ways in which cross-disciplinary work on Africa and the African diaspora contributes to our understanding of some of the most pressing issues not only in Africa but throughout the globe. Consequently, and taken together, the contributions to this volume not only center work on and about Africa in new, novel and critical ways; they foreground the avenues through which scholarship on Africa and the African diaspora paves the way for academics, students and the wider community alike to understand that efforts at combating misrepresentations of Africans and African descendant communities worldwide are crucially and foundationally determined by how we imagine, research and write about the continent of Africa.

Khalid Mustafa Medani, PhD
Associate Professor of Political Science and Islamic Studies
Chair, African Studies Program
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a word from
ASSA
African Studies Student Association

The African Studies Students' Association is proud to present the fifth edition of the African Studies Program's esteemed academic journal, UHURU. This edition is tangible proof of the talent, resilience, and hard work of the editorial team, the McGill student body, and our larger community.

As an Association, we could not be prouder of the dedication and creative vision shown by our editorial team, whose passion ensures that this journal remains true to what we stand for and emboldens our mission of fostering thoughtful discourse and representation. They have worked tirelessly, navigating time constraints and overcoming obstacles, to craft a publication that embodies the spirit of UHURU: a space for nuanced perspectives, rich storytelling, and critical scholarship.

This edition would not have been possible without the mobilization, participation, and engagement of the McGill community. We extend our sincerest gratitude to its students, contributors, faculty advisors, and mentors, for without them, this volume would never have left the drawing board. Thank you for contributing to the vitality of our community.

It is your commitment to fostering dialogue and amplifying voices too often left at the margins that has shaped UHURU into a site of resistance, imagination, and collective action. The McGill African Studies Students' Association is proud to carry forward the legacy of those who came before us — not only by amplifying critical and thought-provoking perspectives on Africa and its diasporas, but by reimagining the futures they make possible.



We hope that UHURU resonates deeply; that it makes you feel seen, heard, and connected. More than a publication, it is a call to reflect, to question, and to dream beyond imposed limits. Rooted in the spirit of Afrofuturism, we move between memory and possibility, honoring the voices, histories, and futures that continue to shape Africa and its global diasporas.

In solidarity,

Zahra Hassan Doualeh, President
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letter from the editors

This volume was not built in a straight line.

It came together through conversations — some deliberate, others unfolding quietly — about how ideas emerge, how they travel, and how they find form.

What you hold here is not a single voice. It is a symphony.

Pieces that move differently, think differently, speak in their own rhythms. Some are precise, analytical; others reflective, creative. All of them, in their own way, reach toward something; questioning, exploring, insisting on being said.

Afrofuturism weaves through this issue as a thread.

A way of thinking, imagining, and positioning oneself in relation to time, possibility and creation. It appears differently in each piece, shaped by each voice, each perspective, each approach.

Our role as editors was not to narrow that movement, but to hold it.

To listen closely. To shape without flattening.

To work alongside each author so that their voice remained intact, while the work itself became sharper, clearer, more intentional.

The journal above all, is a process made visible.

Behind every page is an exchange: between drafts and revisions, questions and responses, and what was imagined and what was realized. It is in those spaces between versions that something collective began to take form.

We invite you to read not just for what each individual piece says, but for how they sit beside one another.

Where they align. Where they diverge.

Where a thought lingers a little longer than expected.

What emerges here is a collection of works in dialogue, a conversation still in motion.

Shanna Coulanges, Editor-In-Chief

The Editorial Team 2025 - 2026

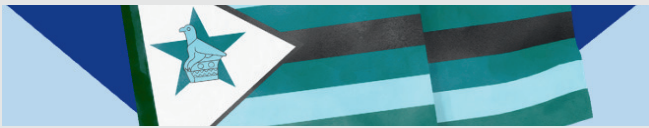
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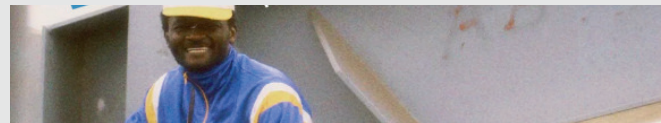
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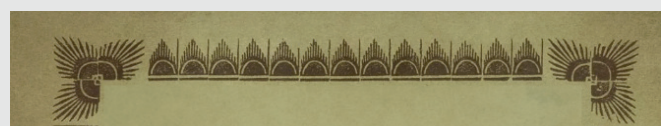
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