

EXPLORER



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"Mother of Humanity" a sixteen foot statue created by sculptor Nijel Binns as a symbol of peace and righteousness.

Photo courtesy Nijel Binns

"Mother of Humanity" Our Symbol of Peace

By **Gloria Zuurveen**
Editor-in-Chief

While strolling through the Watts Labor Community Action Committee 2nd Annual Civil Rights Festival in Watts,

listening to the live blues band and looking at the merchandise of the vendors, I decided to go inside what appeared to be an abandoned warehouse on the grounds of Watts Labor

Community Action Committee. To my surprise there was a gigantic statue of a beautiful woman with full features from

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her head to her toes. She stood on top of the world.

The poise and grace were unbelievable. I was mesmerized at the sight of such a magnificent display of hope. The sculptor, Nijel Binns, spoke with a quiet spirit to the many onlookers as they stared in amazement at the statue of beauty which stood sixteen feet tall.

Mother of Humanity

"Mother of Humanity", an idea of Nijel that came from the ruins of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellions, is a peace memorial showing a Korean and a black woman in harmony. He said that he recognized the common bond between the African and Asian Community. He created a symbol which quickly became more global in scope. A memorial for "Latasha Harlins" soon became "The Greater Los Angeles Goodwill Monument." A monument whose face bears the marks of every race.

Initial support for the project came from noted political leaders such as former Mayor Tom Bradley, retired L.A. County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, Senator Diane Watson, current Supervisor Yvonne Braitwaite Burke, and others.

However, it was the legacy of the Watkins family left by

their father Ted Watkins Sr. that has provided a stable home for the "Mother of Humanity."

Moses of Watts

Ted Watkins Sr. the founder of WLCAC and civil rights leader was like the Moses of Watts. After the 1965 riots, he and other powerful civil rights leaders such as, Roland Betts and James Orange worked to lead the citizens of Watts in finding jobs, finding houses,

keeping kids busy and giving rides to doctor offices.

Watkin's tradition has been kept by his family to improve and inspire people like Nijel Binns to continue his message of reaching the promise land of opportunity and hope in the creation of another soon to be Watts international monument, "Mother of Humanity" which will be completed and is scheduled for unveiling in March of 1996.

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