True adulthood, or psychological maturity, has become an uncommon achievement in Western and Westernized societies, and genuine elderhood nearly non-existent. Interwoven with arrested personal development, and perhaps inseparable from it, our everyday lives have drifted vast distances from our species' original intimacy with the natural world and from our own uniquely individual natures, our souls.

The urgency of our time and space necessitates a fundamental shift in worldview and values in cultivating wholeness and community in a fragmented society and world.

Useni and I agree that enhanced human maturation through cultural development pathways and rites of passage is needed with all deliberate speed for raising healthy children; preparing adolescents for the initiatory adventure that opens the way to mature, authentic adulthood; and enhancing the cultural artistry and fulfillment of adult and elder lives.

It is an honor to partner with the Black Child Journal and co-publish the special edition of "Rites of Passage: Foundations and Practices" with Useni Perkins. The special edition will commemorate the National Rites of Passage Institute's, Summer, 2013, National and International Conference, Baltimore, Maryland. I am very excited that the Black Child Journal and National Rites of Passage Institute partnership has resulted in a variety of outstanding scholarly and pragmatic articles that will address the theory, practice, and research related to rites of passage including community building, youth development, education/socialization, faith and spirituality, restorative justice and evaluation.

The articles included in the special edition of "Rites of Passage" are dedicated to the memory and legacy of Dr. Anthony Mensah. His life, as well as those of other pioneers such as Dr. Useni Perkins, Hannibal Afrik, Gwen Gilyard and Darryl Kennon was dedicated to the practice of rites of passage as a paradigm for youth development and community building. The timeliness of the special edition of "Rites of Passage" corresponds to the desperate times and the need for "Sankofa" or going "Back to the Future" to fetch ways of thinking and doing that were in balance with nature and culture.
Two quotes that are appropriate for the times and the occasion are as follows:

We cannot escape our origin,
    However hard we try,
Those origins contain the key
    -Could we but find it-
To all that later come.
-James Baldwin Notes of a Native Son

Each generation must out of relative obscurity
discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.
-Frantz Fanon The Wretched of the Earth

It is our time! Seize it for the sake of the ancestors, living, and yet unborn!
paul hill, jr

cleveland, ohio
june 17, 2013