

# Karen Miles

## African Dance

Born and raised in Jersey City, NJ. Mrs. Karen's professional dancing career began in 1982 with the Suliman Dance Company. After college Karen felt a need to give back to her community, so she started teaching African dance to the Girl Scouts of America in Jersey City. She was so inspired from watching the youth learn and enjoy the art of their heritage that she founded her very own Zawadi School of African Dance which has been in existence for over 27 years and is still going strong.

Karen was a principal dancer with Maimouna Keita School of African dance, Umoja Dance Company, Message From our Ancestors and Universal Languages. She has free-lanced her dance talent with various other companies and organizations. Karen was the director of African dance for Sankofa Dance Theater by way of African Globe based out of Newark, NJ. She has performed throughout the United States and in July 2004 has had the pleasure of bringing her performing arts company to St. Croix, Virgin Island and Australia. Karen has appeared in Njinga, the Queen King and Color Girls who Committed Suicide. Karen has shared her gifted dancing skills with the Brooklyn's very own Brooklyn Academy of Music during Dance Africa, the teaching Artist Program at New Jersey Performing Art Center (NJPAC), InSpira and many other schools, colleges, retirement parties, weddings, funerals and scholarship ceremonies.

One of Karen's greatest aspiration is to enhance the souls and minds of the community through traditional African dance, song and history. She also endeavors to develop our youth into being culturally motivated and aware, respectful of themselves, others and most of all their elders.

Karen believes that she has found a way to honor our ancestors and dedicates all that she does in the African dance world to all of those who have left their mark in society.