

## **Theresa Guzman Stokes**

Theresa Guzman Stokes is President of the 1696 Heritage Group and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society. Ms. Stokes has a professional background that includes magazine editor and published writer with a focus on ethnic American history.

Ms. Stokes has participated in and supervised dozens of historic preservation, genealogical and cultural resource investigations throughout New England and Virginia, with an expertise in African American, Latin American and Jewish history and genealogy. She also has years of experience in the design and creation of web sites and social media promotions tailored around historic, genealogical, and creative (Arts, Literature & Music) presentations.

Ms. Stokes has received numerous awards for her web design and genealogical work, including the Women Webmasters Award for Excellence and the Ancestry Connections Genealogy Award. Theresa and her husband Keith are the 2006 recipients of the RI Council for the Humanities Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities. Her current professional memberships include the National Genealogical Society, the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Historical Writer of America, and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs.

## **Keith W. Stokes**

Mr. Stokes has a long and distinguished career in business and community development, with degrees from Cornell University and University of Chicago. His past professional positions have included Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Executive Director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Stokes has managed successful economic development initiatives on behalf of government authorities, private clients and trade organizations in the areas of economic planning, government relations, community development, grant writing, and workforce development. One of his current projects is managing the Rhode Island Offshore Wind Energy Career Pathway System entitled WindWinRI.

Mr. Stokes has also been an Advisor for Rhode Island with the National Trust for Historic Preservation along with serving on numerous regional and national historic preservation boards including Chairman of the Touro Synagogue Foundation, Vice President & Trustee of the Preservation Society for Newport County, and Newport Historical Society. Mr. Stokes is a frequent national, state and local lecturer in community & regional planning, historic preservation and interpretation with an expertise in early African and Jewish American history. Mr. Stokes frequently appears on national historical programs including C-SPAN, Fox News Legends & Lies, and Ted Talk.

He has been the recipient of numerous local, state and national awards including the United State Small Business Administration - Rhode Island Small Business Advocate of the Year Award, American Sail Training Association Leadership Award, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society's Fredrick Williamson Award Historic Preservation Award and along with his wife, is the recipient of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities.

## Valerie Tutson

*"Storytellers are going to change the world!"* DR. HUGH MORGAN HILL, AKA "BROTHER BLUE"

Valerie Tutson was graduated from Brown University with a self-designed major, Storytelling As a Communication's Art, and a Masters in Theatre. Valerie travels the country and world teaching storytelling and gathering and sharing stories and songs. She has been a featured performer on national and international stages since 1991. In addition to telling stories herself, Valerie is committed to providing opportunities for others tell their stories. For 12 years she hosted *Cultural Tapestry*, an award-winning show for COX Television, celebrating the diverse cultures of Rhode Island. Valerie is a founding member and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Black Storytellers, and director of *FUNDA FEST: An Annual Celebration of Black Storytelling*. Valerie has received numerous awards and recognitions for her work. In 2013 she received the Legacy Award from Big Brothers and Sisters of the Ocean State, in 2014 she received a community service award from Oasis International, and an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Rhode Island College, where she was also the Commencement Speaker. In 2017 Valerie received the Public Humanities Scholar Award from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities for her work to promote storytelling. Valerie was a 2018/19 Intercultural Leadership Institute Fellow, and recipient of the 2019 Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts from Trinity Repertory Company.