

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Friends of Royal Oak Township Mourns the Passing of Founder Baba Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacké**

**Royal Oak Charter Township, MI — [September 4, 2025]** — Friends of Royal Oak Township, Inc. (FOROT) announces with deep sorrow the passing of **Founder Baba Cheikh Ahmadou Banba Mbacké**, a revered elder, educator, and Pan-African leader whose wisdom and dedication shaped the organization from its inception.

For more than 55 years, Baba Cheikh devoted his life to African-centered education, social justice, and community empowerment. A pioneer in youth services, mental health, criminal justice reform, and cultural preservation, he leaves behind a legacy of service that has touched lives across Detroit, Michigan, the nation, and the African Diaspora.

As a **founding member of FOROT**, Baba Cheikh gave immeasurable time, education, and vision to preserving the history and strengthening the cultural foundation of one of the oldest Black charter townships in the United States. His presence and leadership guided FOROT's mission of health and wellness, urban agriculture, cultural enrichment, and historical preservation.

Beyond FOROT, Baba Cheikh's impact was profound. He was a longtime leader in the National Association of Black Social Workers, the founder of Ujima Consortium International, and a co-founder of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network. He developed rites of passage programs for youth, launched the Southeast Michigan Pop Warner Football League — the first African American league in the state — and lent his voice to movements for justice at local, national, and international levels.

"Baba Cheikh was not just a founder, he was a cornerstone," said Brigitte R. Hall, Executive Director of FOROT. "His teachings, his service, and his unwavering belief in our people made FOROT what it is today. We will continue to carry his light forward."

Services and arrangements are forthcoming. FOROT will honor Baba Cheikh's legacy throughout its Centennial observances, ensuring that his vision and spirit remain at the heart of the work.

**About Friends of Royal Oak Township, Inc. (FOROT):**

Founded in 2010, FOROT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to health and wellness, urban agriculture, cultural enrichment, and historical preservation. Rooted in Royal Oak Charter Township's history, FOROT uplifts intergenerational stories and builds community-driven programs for the future.

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