

# Kwanzaa Celebration & Cultural Fundraiser

Presented by Sista Zock — December 28, 2025 | The Emporium Center | 100 Gay Street, Knoxville, TN

## A Celebration of Culture, Legacy, and Community Empowerment

I'm Zakiyyah Modeste, also known as Sista Zock — poet, performer, and community cultivator. For more than two decades, I've served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the Kuumba Festival, helping keep Knoxville's cultural pulse alive. From introducing Doug E. Fresh, the city's first major hip-hop headliner, to mentoring youth through arts and wellness, my mission has always been to uplift, educate, and unite through creative expression.

**This December 28th**, I'm producing the **Kwanzaa Celebration & Cultural Fundraiser** at The Emporium — a vibrant event that will honor the seven principles of Kwanzaa through music, storytelling, movement, and dialogue. The gathering supports **Drums Up, GunsDown**, a Knoxville-based initiative that empowers youth through rhythm, discipline, and peace. This event will be offered at low-to-no cost to the community, ensuring that families can celebrate together.

**Honoring the Jazz Legacy.** This year's theme bridges past and present — celebrating the enduring **Jazz Messengers** legacy and the social consciousness that defined their era. The evening reunites two **Messengers** alumni: legendary bassist Lonnie Plaxico and Knoxville's own Donald Brown, appearing as **Honorary Guest**. Together they'll explore how sound, story, and rhythm preserve our cultural identity while inspiring future generations.

### Featured Visual Artist: Jazzmine Curtis

Jazzmine Curtis is a ceramic artist whose work explores memory, spirituality, and Black cultural heritage through sculptural vessels and symbolic mark-making. Guided by intuition, dreams, and a deep sense of connection to ancestors and community, she creates forms that hold story, light, and presence. Her practice blends craftsmanship with reclamation, ritual, and reverence, allowing each piece to become a space for healing, curiosity, and unity.

Curtis lives and creates in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she is committed to celebrating Black creativity, honoring ancestral wisdom, and contributing to the cultural fabric of her community.

**How You Can Help** I'm seeking introductions to funders, donors, and community partners who believe in cultural preservation, youth engagement, and the transformative power of the arts. Your referral — whether it's an arts organization, business sponsor, or individual supporter — can help make this celebration possible.

- Youth and families can attend freely or at minimal cost.
- Local musicians, dancers, and chefs are compensated.
- Knoxville continues to honor its African-American creative heritage.

This is a tax-deductible contribution through the Sturns Foundation.

**PayPal:** [info@sturnsfoundation.org](mailto:info@sturnsfoundation.org)

**Phone:** 917-660-1324

Thank you for believing in the work of cultural continuity and community restoration. Let's celebrate Kwanzaa together — through art, sound, and unity.

### Zakiyyah Modeste (Sista Zock)

Cultural Curator | Community Cultivator | Performer