

# AFRICAN BURYING GROUND



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Joanne Connolly, far left, directs the 100 singers of Con Tutti during Wednesday night's candlelight memorial for the African Burying Ground on Chestnut Street in Portsmouth.

## Facing city's slavery past

■ *Event celebrates ancestry, remembers hundreds entombed under Chestnut St.*

BY DEBORAH MCDERMOTT  
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**P**ORTSMOUTH — It was a night deep-rooted in Africa, as hundreds of Seacoast residents Wednesday joined to listen

to one African American's journey back to his ancestral homeland and later celebrated the city's own efforts to acknowledge its slave past.

The connection between past and present was evident, as playwright Carlyle Brown

took to the stage at The Music Hall to present his one-man show "The Fula from America," about his journey back to West Africa. And later, the audience proceeded by

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# N.H. African Americans to gather at city summit

PORTSMOUTH — African Americans and other people of color from throughout the state will gather in the city Saturday to discuss and find possible solutions to challenges facing them.

The New Hampshire People of Color Leadership Summit is a collaborative venture of statewide organizations. These include the Ujima Collective, which helps recently arrived Africans; the N.H. Black Women's Health Project; Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail; and the Gran-

ite State Organizing Project/Youth Organizers United, which works with high school students.

Organizers said the summit is intended to strengthen the racial justice movement in New Hampshire and to respond to ongoing issues experienced by people of color within the institutional structures of New Hampshire. Brenda Lett, executive director of the Black Women's Health Project and a summit organizer, said members of many of the groups talk at

meetings about shared problems, "and we said, 'OK, talk is nice, but just talk, talk, talk. We want to see some action.'"

Lett said the summit is an effort to mobilize people of color and groups representing them across the state. She said many people of color feel the sting of discrimination, but often "don't want to talk about it because they don't want to lose their jobs or impact their children. The fact is, we're all equal under the eyes of the law."

Lett said it's important for

people to get to know their state legislator so he or she can be better informed about issues that affect them. The summit, the first of several that will be held around the state, is being held in Portsmouth because of its unique history, Lett said.

"When you think about black history in the state of New Hampshire, you must go to Portsmouth," she said.

The summit is being held on Feb. 23, the birthday of African American activist and scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, co-

## GO & DO

**N.H. People of Color Leadership Summit**

**When:** From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23

**Where:** Portsmouth Discovery Center, 10 Middle St.

**To register:** Visit [nhpocsummit.eventbrite.com](http://nhpocsummit.eventbrite.com). For information, e-mail [peopleofcolorsummit@gmail.com](mailto:peopleofcolorsummit@gmail.com).

founder of the NAACP.

The day will consist of several action planning workshops and a walking tour of the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.