

PORTSMOUTH

Nigerian dignitaries discuss past, future of country

Officials visit city as guests of NGO Rain for the Sahel and Sahara

PORTSMOUTH - NGO Rain for the Sahel and Sahara (RAIN) and the city of Portsmouth hosted "Niger: Yesterday and Today" this past Thursday at the Portsmouth Athenaeum to welcome special guests, Vice Sultan of Agadez Albachir Aboubacar and Niger Ambassador to the U.S. Hassana Alidou.

Mayor Robert Lister proudly presented a proclamation of the fourth annual West Africa Day in Portsmouth to commemorate this historic visit and the region's growing connection with West Africa. In turn, Lister

was presented with an Albaye, a staple of traditional nomadic Tuareg dress, by Vice Sultan Aboubacar.

Ambassador Alidou gave a presentation focusing on the challenges and opportunities Niger is facing on the world stage today, and presented RAIN founding director Bess Palmisciano with an artistic rendering of Niger featuring the Cross of Agadez, the most famous of nomadic emblems. Vice Sultan Aboubacar shared the significance of the recent designation of Agadez, a center of nomadic culture in northern Niger and part of his jurisdiction, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The vice sultan represents Sultan Oumarou bin Ibrahim Oumarou, the highest ranking official of traditional

Nigerian government.

Cynthia Becker, author and associate professor of African Art at Boston University, explored the cultural history of the Amazigh culture of Niger.

Earlier in the afternoon, David Moore of the city of Portsmouth gave a moving and illuminating private tour of the African Burying Ground to the guests of honor, RAIN board of directors and event sponsors.

Niger: Yesterday and Today was dedicated to the memory of Cape Neddick, Maine, resident and Portsmouth business owner Wendy Klodt, in honor of her generous bequest in support of RAIN's work in Niger.

Rain for the Sahel and Sahara partners with rural and nomadic desert people of West Africa to enable enduring

livelihoods through access to education. For information, visit www.rain4sahara.org to learn more.



NGO Rain for the Sahel and Sahara last week welcomed Nigerian dignitaries to Portsmouth. RAIN founding director Bess Palmisciano, center, with from, left, Elhadji Ibrahim Oumarou Mahamed, Niger Ambassador to the U.S. Hassana Alidou, Vice Sultan of Agadez Albachir Aboubacar, and Niger Embassy Counselor Boubacar Rilla. COURTESY PHOTO



Professor Hassana Alidou, Niger ambassador to the U.S., meets with Portsmouth's Assistant Community Development Director David Moore at the African Burying Ground Memorial Park. COURTESY PHOTO