



International Center for Traditional Childbearing

www.ictcmidwives.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Noelene Jeffers, Chair, ICTC Board of Directors
Tel: (503) 460-9324; Cell: (971) 319-ICTC; noelene.jeffers@ictcmidwives.org

Shafia M. Monroe, Founder & CEO of first Black professional midwifery/doula organization, to retire on June 30

June 16, 2016; Portland, OR – Today the leadership of the International Center for Traditional Childbearing (ICTC) announced the June 30th retirement of the organization’s founder and CEO, Shafia M. Monroe. In a letter to ICTC stakeholders, Board Chair Noelene Jeffers announced the transition of its energetic and inspiring founder after twenty-five years of building a coalition of support for Black women and infants in Oregon, nationally, and in developing countries across the globe.

Shafia Monroe built ICTC from her dream of an organization that helps Black women through community-based, culturally competent services to gain more equitable experiences in the healthcare system and throughout the entire birth process. After several years of training for and serving as a practicing midwife in Boston, Shafia moved to Portland, Oregon in the early 1990s where she formally opened a community-embedded nonprofit that would focus holistically on infant mortality prevention, breastfeeding promotion, health disparities, midwife and doula training, and workforce diversity.

Board Chair Jeffers said, “Shafia has played a critical role in the development and success of this organization and can retire with pride in what she created, and knowledge that it will continue to have strong leadership and a focused mission. We cannot thank Shafia enough for the dedication, passion, and leadership she has given the ICTC. She will be greatly missed by the staff, board members, members of partnering organizations, and of course our ICTC families.”

During her many years of service, Monroe achieved significant accomplishments at ICTC, including establishing the organization globally; creating and delivering the culturally-specific ICTC Full Circle Doula program, and training and graduating over 1,600 ICTC doulas of color through that model; building a pipeline to increase the number of doulas and midwives of color; leading ICTC to become the first doula credentialing organization approved by the Oregon Health Authority; forming a coalition for legislative concept HB 3311 to investigate the use of doulas with vulnerable populations, leading to Oregon to become the first state to provide Medicaid reimbursement for doulas; and inaugurating ICTC’s participation in national coalitions, including Midwives and Mothers In Action (MAMA), Homebirth Summit, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the US Midwifery Education and Regulation Association (US MERA). She is also credited with creating and leading the International Black Midwives and Healers Conference, the first international Black professional midwifery convention; securing four time GRAMMY™ award winner, singer/songwriter Erykah Badu as the ICTC International Spokesperson; and developing and implementing research to better

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understand Black women's birth and breastfeeding experiences and sharing results with healthcare providers to improve the provision of maternity care.

Monroe said, "I'm proud of what ICTC stands for and the numerous ways that it impacts maternal, infant and child health. Together we've increased the number of midwives and doulas of color, and have empowered families and professionals to reduce infant and maternal mortality rates. ICTC is a beacon of hope for people who seek a culturally specific way to improve maternity care, and enter the doula and midwifery workforce. I am proud to be a forerunner in this work, and excited for ICTC's future. I am confident the Board will take the organization to the next level and secure an innovative CEO who will bring new ideas and expertise to the table. I thank the Board for their commitment, and will provide any support I can to ensure that the important work of ICTC continues."

Jeffers noted that succession planning is underway with several viable options being assessed. The Board expects to announce its new leadership and organizational plans in the fall, and will be reducing its program offerings during that period.

Jeffers added, "We're excited about growing the ICTC and continuing its important mission. Part of the planning period will include a determination of what type of focus is most needed now and in the future that will have the greatest impact on lowering infant mortality rates for Black babies and other babies of color, and ensuring equitable and respectful healthcare for all women and children."

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ABOUT ICTC

The International Center for Traditional Childbearing is an infant mortality prevention, breastfeeding promotion and midwife and doula training non-profit organization. ICTC's mission is to increase the number of midwives, doulas, and healers of color; and to empower families in order to reduce infant and maternal mortality. Established in 1997 and headquartered in Portland, Oregon, ICTC has members and chapters in the U.S. and around the globe to improve health outcomes.