



# The Purpose and Histories of Multicultural Theme & Minority-cultural Lounges

## Why UHousing Uses the Term “Minority-cultural”

University Housing is aware that the University of Michigan has a diverse and multicultural student composition. This is reflected in the design of its residence hall lounges, each of which reflects some form of culture – be it American or otherwise. Philosophically speaking, UHousing believes that using the term “multicultural” to refer solely to its “minority-cultural” lounges diminishes the historical impetus associated with the founding of these lounges on the U-M campus. In keeping with the spirit by which these lounges were established, UHousing uses the term “minority-culture” or “minority-cultural” as a reference to federally recognized students of color: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic and Latino/a Americans and Native Americans. The term “minority-cultural” also helps to ensure that over time, students of color and their needs do not get lost within the “majority-culture” as a result of the broader use and interpretation of the term “multicultural.”

## Minority-cultural Lounges vs. Multicultural Theme Lounges

Minority-cultural lounges and multicultural theme lounges are unique from other residence hall lounges in that they actively recognize and celebrate diverse cultures, peoples and themes. Yet, these lounges differ fundamentally from one another in their overall function. Minority-cultural lounges are associated with the residence hall multicultural councils, University Housing’s Project Awareness Program, and the Minority Peer Advisor / Minority Peer Advisor Assistant Program (MPA/A). They also reflect the cultures of the four federally recognized students of color groups. UHousing’s multicultural theme lounges, on the other hand, are designed with unique cultural themes in mind. They do not include the same programmatic initiatives, as is the case with the minority-cultural lounges. As relatively new additions to UHousing, the multicultural theme lounges have become distinguished enhancements to the residence hall system.

## Lounge Purposes

### Havens for Support, Solidarity, and Sharing

U-M’s minority-cultural lounges are the central locations for activities and programs sponsored and developed by students of color groups, residence hall multicultural councils, and MPA/A resident staff. The programming and other activities of the lounges are directed toward federally recognized students of color living in the residence halls. These lounges were created to provide students of color the opportunity to interact with one another in a relaxed and open environment. They are havens for support, solidarity, and sharing among students of color and those interested in their concerns.

### A Place for Learning, Communing, and Understanding

It is the goal of University Housing to maintain these facilities as part of its overall effort to support the appreciation of diversity within human populations, stimulate intercultural interaction and understanding, and provide supportive environments for all students. From the dedication of the first minority-cultural lounges in the early 1970s until the present, University Housing has remained committed to preserving the two main functions of the lounges:

- To serve as a gathering place for students of color, which will assist with the enhancement of group and individual growth
- To serve as a place where other students may have an opportunity to participate in and develop an understanding and appreciation for the various cultures of students of color

Today, minority-cultural lounges and multicultural theme lounges are located in nearly all traditional residence halls, each with their own customs and traditions as demonstrated through unique social, educational and cultural events and celebrations. Each year brings new students and they, like students in the past, become part of the enduring history and traditions of the lounges through their participation and eagerness to learn about other cultures.

## Lounge Histories

### Alice Lloyd Hall Umoja Lounge



The Umoja Lounge, Alice Lloyd's minority cultural lounge, was formerly the Newcomb Lounge until 1991. Umoja is one of seven guiding principles that represent each day of the African American holiday known as Kwanzaa. The name was changed to reflect the goal of the organization - the promotion of unity among students of color. A recent addition to the lounge is a mural, representing the four federally recognized ethnic groups of color. Umoja (a Swahili word meaning "unity") is the principle celebrated on the first day of Kwanzaa, which is observed December 26 - January 1. On the first day, the importance of togetherness for family and community is stressed. Each of the remaining days are represented by one of the following principles: Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith). Overall, Kwanzaa is a celebration of traditional African values such as family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement. Kwanzaa, which means "first fruits of the harvest" in Swahili, has gained tremendous acceptance since its founding in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, of Detroit, MI. Today, it has come to be observed by more than 15 million people worldwide.

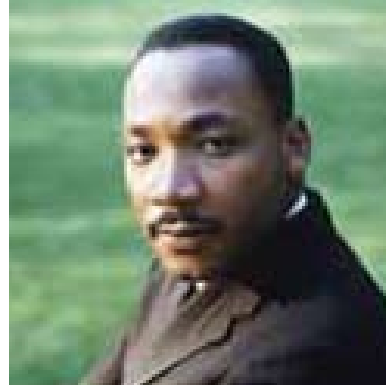
### Alice Lloyd Hall Vicky Barner Lounge



Vicky Barner was born in Alaska in 1919 to Native American parents. She was moved at a young age to be raised by an aunt in Ohio, where she later attended Ohio State and Western Reserve University. During World War II Vicky

enlisted in the army as a registered nurse. She married Leroy Barner when they both returned from service overseas. They settled in Pennsylvania and began raising a family. In 1965, a few years after the family had moved to Michigan, Vicky became dissatisfied with nursing and enrolled in art school at the University of Michigan. She graduated in 1969 with her B.F.A. Shortly thereafter she was involved in the creation of American Indians Unlimited. This student group put on the first pow-wow in Ann Arbor, a tradition that continues today. Vicky's activism on campus included protesting the presence of the senior honor society Michigamua, on the grounds that it showed disrespect for Native American traditions. Vicky went on to earn her master's degree in education from Eastern Michigan University, and became a recruiter of Native Americans for that school. She also formed a group called Women of American Native Tribes, which helped Native Americans find jobs. The Vicky Barner Multicultural Lounge in Alice Lloyd Hall was rededicated in Vicky's honor in 2000. The lounge features artwork on Native American themes and as well as examples of Native American crafts.

### Bursley Hall Martin Luther King, Jr. Lounge



The lounge in Bursley Hall is named after one of this nation's foremost civil rights leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia on January 15, 1929. He sometimes endangered his life as well as the lives of his family while

facing harassment, arrest and other hardships to fight for the equality of all minorities. Dr. King delivered some of the most powerful speeches of the 20th Century, including the most well-known "I have a Dream" speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963. He was killed by an assassin on April 4, 1968, while standing outside his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Every year the University of Michigan commemorates Dr. King's birthday with University Symposium activities, including lectures, community service projects cultural events and marches.

## Couzens Hall CAMEO Lounge



This lounge is named after the hall's own Multicultural Council, Couzens Active Minority Ethnic Organization (CAMEO). The council represents students of color in Couzens who share common interests and who seek to make residents aware

of multicultural concerns and issues of diversity. CAMEO serves as a peer support group for the multicultural student population and conducts cultural/race programs for the benefit of all residents.

## East Quadrangle Abeng Lounge



“Abeng” is an African word meaning conch shell. In the Caribbean and West Indies it was used as a horn, often

accompanied by a drum. Slaves in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean used it to call meetings and to otherwise communicate with one another. Abeng is also the name of East Quadrangle's minority cultural organization and lounge. The second of its kind at the University of Michigan, the Abeng organization and lounge were developed in 1971 as the result of the Black Action Movement (BAM). The movement, through protest, sought to attain for students of color equal access and equal opportunity at the University. The Abeng organization, which addresses and positively effects issues unique and important to people of color, meets on a regular basis in the Abeng Lounge.

## Markley Hall Angela Davis Lounge



The multicultural lounge in Markley was rededicated on October 17, 1991 and is named after the renowned and controversial political activist, Angela Davis. Ms. Davis was on the U-M campus that day delivering a major address,

and also attended the rededication ceremony at the namesake lounge in Markley. She was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1944. She received her Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Brandeis University where she was involved in organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and carried out her graduate work at the University of California, San Diego. Although Angela Davis is most often remembered for her strong political activism, she has been involved in other activities. She joined the communist party in 1968 and was its vice-presidential candidate in the 1980 presidential election. Her Communist views caused her to lose her first teaching job at UCLA in 1969. Although her dismissal was overturned by a court order, her contract was not renewed the following year. She went into hiding in 1970 after being charged with aiding in an attempted courtroom escape that resulted in the murder of four people. She was apprehended in 1972, tried and acquitted. Angela Davis remains politically active today.

## Markley Hall Arati Sharangpani Lounge



This multicultural lounge in Markley Hall honors the memory of Arati Sharangpani, a remarkable young woman

who studied at the University of Michigan from 1993 to 1997. Born in Baroda, India in 1975, Arati (which means “offering to

God”) moved to Holland, Michigan with her family when she was two years old. An active and outgoing person, she traveled to Germany as an exchange student during her senior year in high school. Inspired by the cultural diversity to which she was introduced in her travels to Germany as well as to her native India, Arati resolved to try to make the world a better place.

While pursuing a double major in German and Organizational Studies, Arati became involved in many other activities during her years at U-M. In addition to working as a resident advisor at Markley Hall for two years, she actively participated in the Indian American Students Association and served as its vice president in 1995 and 1996. Arati also became a facilitator for University’s 21st Century Program and served as a graduate assistant for the American Culture Department. Despite her hectic academic and extracurricular schedule, Arati managed to find time to volunteer for a number of local community organizations.

On January 9, 1997, en-route from a successful job interview with Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio, Arati was killed when the plane in which she was traveling crashed during a snowstorm near Monroe, Michigan. She was posthumously awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees in both German and Organizational Studies by the University of Michigan. In 1998, the former Concourse Lounge in Markley Hall was dedicated to celebrating the life and spirit of one of the Hall’s most vibrant young residents. The lounge was rededicated in 2003 with new artwork and a display specifically in honor of Arati.

### Mosher Jordan Hall Nikki Giovanni Lounge



The poet, writer, and lecturer Nikki Giovanni was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1943. She received her college education at Fisk University. She also holds many Honorary Degrees from Institutions all over the country. She is the author

of numerous books of poetry such as *Black Feeling* and *Those Who Ride the Night Winds*. Ms. Giovanni has taught at many Universities including Rutgers University, Ohio State University, and Queens College (City University of New York). She

visited the University of Michigan campus in January to speak at the 1999 Martin Luther King Day Symposium. While in Ann Arbor, she also spoke to a group of students in the lounge that bears her name. Ms. Giovanni is currently a Professor of English at Virginia Tech.

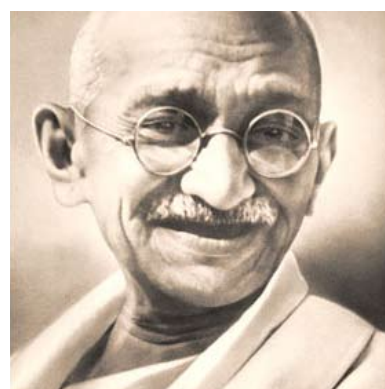
### Mosher Jordan Hall César Chávez Lounge



César Chávez was born of Mexican heritage in Yuma, Arizona in 1927. He founded and led the National Farm Worker’s Association (NFWA), the first successful farm worker’s union, later known as the United Farm Workers

(UFW). During the 1950s and 1960s, Chávez worked for a self-help group, the Community Service Organization (CSO). He became a full-time organizer for the group, organizing new chapters across California and Arizona. After serving as National Director of CSO, Chávez resigned his position to follow his dream and create his own organization to help farm workers. The UFW held boycotts and fasts to protest the treatment of farm workers worldwide. César Chávez said, “If you’re outraged at conditions, then you can’t possibly be free or happy until you devote all your time to changing them and do nothing but that”. He died in 1993, at the age of 66.

### Oxford Housing Mahatma Gandhi Lounge



Oxford Hall’s minority cultural lounge is dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, a civil rights pioneer who initiated the practice of non-violent protest for achieving social and political change. Born at Porbandar, Kathiawad, India on

October 2, 1869, Gandhi devoted his life to achieving equality for all people and self-rule for India. After studying law in India and England, Gandhi first became involved in human rights

activities after experiencing color and race discrimination and harassment in South Africa while on a legal assignment there. Establishing a method of passive resistance known as Satyagraha, he used protest marches and hunger strikes to achieve his humanitarian and political objectives in South Africa and, later, in India.

Despite his peaceful approach to change, Gandhi's work incited outrage in both the establishment and the population. After enduring 2,338 days in prison, numerous hunger strikes and years of attempts on his life, in January 1948 Gandhi was assassinated in Delhi, India at the age of 78. American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was strongly influenced by Gandhi and patterned his own political and social activism after Gandhi's methods.

## Stockwell Hall Rosa Parks Lounge

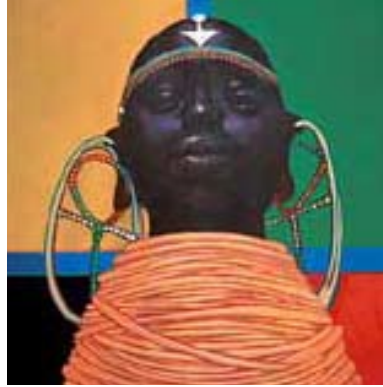


Rosa Parks, for whom one of the lounges in Stockwell Hall is named, was born in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1913. In 1955, the tired seamstress refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, as was required by city

ordinance at that time. This action started a bus boycott that lasted over a year and inspired civil rights protests nationwide. The Supreme Court ruled such segregation unconstitutional in 1956. Mrs. Parks was once the secretary to the NAACP President and remained active with the organization. In 1996, the civil rights pioneer received the President's Medal of Freedom. Mrs. Parks passed away in Detroit on October 25, 2005 and was the second woman and first African American to lie in state in the US Capitol Building Rotunda.

## South Quadrangle Afro-American Lounge

Established in 1972 following the initial Black Action Movement (BAM) on the University of Michigan campus, the Afro-American Lounge was one of the first University of Michigan residence hall lounges to be decorated with art and artifacts reflecting African American culture and history. Of the seven murals in the lounge, two reflect the struggle of the African



American community in America. When the lounge was designed, no other cultural group had asked for meeting or living spaces, which reflected their culture and history. A major issue for the BAM participants was the absence of African

American meeting and living spaces at the University and within the residence halls.

In developing this Housing-funded lounge -- a place where students of color would feel welcome and comfortable -- members of the African American community actively participated in its layout and overall design. At its inception, *Ambatana* (a Swahili verb meaning, "stick together") was the name of South Quadrangle's African American student organization - a group that addressed African American students' issues only. Around the same time, Minority Peer Advisors (MPAs), paraprofessional student staff hired by Housing to work with the African American student organizations, were focused primarily on African American student issues. Over time, the focus of the MPA job expanded along with the role of *Ambatana* to include all federally recognized students of color: Native American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino/a American, and African American residents. Today, *Ambatana* is an organization for any and all South Quadrangle residents who wish to participate in activities oriented towards students of color. *Ambatana* organization meetings usually take place in the Afro-American Lounge; often referred to as the *Ambatana Lounge*.

## South Quadrangle Yuri Kochiyama Lounge

Yuri Kochiyama was born in San Pedro, California in 1922. After being held in World War II Japanese internment camps, she became involved in the civil rights movement. She moved to Harlem, New York with her husband and became a strong political activist and speaker. She supports black liberation, Japanese-American redress for the internment and other social justice. Yuri Kochiyama was a close friend of Malcolm X, and a member of the Organization for Afro-American Unity as well as many other organizations. She is most famous for the photo of her holding the nation of Islam leader after he was



shot at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem in 1965. Although she no longer accepts offers for speaking engagements, she continues as an active human rights activist and still resides in Harlem. The lounge was dedicated to Yuri Kochiyama on April 17, 1999. She visited South Quadrangle before the interior design of the lounge was completed.

## West Quadrangle Asubuhi Lounge

The Asubuhi (a Swahili word meaning, “morning”) Council was formed in the fall of 1981 to serve as the resident council for students of color in West Quadrangle, as well as Betsy Barbour and Helen Newberry Houses. Until that point, no organized resident forum for students of color existed in



these residence halls; consequently, no vehicle through which social, recreational, and educational activities directed to that population could take place.

One of the main projects of the Asubuhi Council, in cooperation with a series of Minority Peer Advisors and the director of the building, was to develop plans to remodel the existing minority cultural lounge. It was the decision of two Councils over successive years, along with other building staff, not to name the lounge in honor or memory of a specific individual, as had been done in a number of other Housing minority cultural lounges. Instead, the Council decided to name the facility the Asubuhi Cultural Center and Lounge. There were several design goals for the lounge: First, it was to serve as a pleasant and effective lounge for the activities of students of color -- including discussion sessions, small group seminars, meetings and social functions. Second, it was to serve as a storytelling educational gallery and an African society-inspired media

presentation that would challenge residents and visitors.

The renovated lounge was dedicated on February 5, 1985. Jon Onye Lockard, a University of Michigan faculty artist, worked closely with lounge designers. Since the early 1970's, Lockard has been involved with the design of several minority cultural lounges throughout the Housing system. More information is available about Jon Onye Lockard by visiting the Center for Afro American and African Studies' at [www.umich.edu/~iinet/caas/](http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/caas/).