

## **Hanif Shabazz**

### **HHPC CAB**

During his 11-year tenure with the HHPC CAB, Mr. Shabazz made many important contributions to the center's work. In 2008 he produced the youth-focused video about emergency contraception, "My Life, My Decision," which went on to win numerous awards, including the Aesculapius Award from the Health Improvement Institute for excellence in health communications. The film also received recognition at the Teen Health and Wellness Film Festival at the Teen Health & Wellness Film Festival at the Tribeca Cinemas in March 2010.

In addition to "My Life, My Decision," Mr. Shabazz worked with HHPC Director, Dr. Alwyn Cohall, and Dr. Bruce Armstrong to film a training video which will be used to educate health providers about strategies to assess, educate and counsel youth. "An Empowerment Approach to Working with Youth At-risk for Sexually-Transmitted Infection" was funded by the Region II STD/HIV Prevention Training Center. The film is in the final stages of being edited and will be showcased by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at an upcoming conference.

Further, Mr. Shabazz was instrumental in filming a video about the work of the HHPC and the contributions made by Community Advisory Board members. The video not only illustrates Mr. Shabazz's technical skills as a film-maker, but also features his distinctive, silky-smooth voice as a narrator. (Click here to see the [video](#))

All of Mr. Shabazz's projects were expressions of his desire to leave a positive mark on the world, particularly his beloved community of Harlem.

### **Career**

In the early 1960s, after an honorable discharge from the Navy, Mr. Shabazz took a photography course in Connecticut and became a staff journalist for *Newsday*. Two years later he became a staff writer for the *New York Times*, where he remained for many years. Also at this time, Mr. Shabazz joined the Nation of Islam. In 1971, when Black exploitation films were in vogue, Minister Farrakhan required the makers of these films to give something back to the communities they featured. This resulted in 30 men being hired to learn various aspects of

movie making. Twenty-nine dropped out, but Mr. Shabazz prevailed, and by 1980 he had received his union card from the DGA. After turning down an offer from Francis Ford Coppola to complete his journeymanhood in California, Shabazz set up a video production institute in Harlem funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which developed more than 90 Black filmmakers, including [Jesse Maple](#) and [Leroy Patton](#). Mr. Shabazz was instrumental in developing the Pan African Cinematic Society, a network of more than 40 cinematographers from over 40 nations. He worked in the production management of more than 20 major motion pictures, produced and directed documentary films, and won multiple awards, including the 1977 Broadcast Journalist Award for producing *Transition of a Nation*. He also worked with leading filmmakers and actors such as Sydney Lumet, Gordon Parks Sr., Sir Richard Attenborough, Spike Lee, Francis Ford Coppola, Robert DeNiro, Paul Newman, Meryl Streep and Martin Scorsese.

Mr. Shabazz was an amazing individual who contributed to his community throughout his life, and he will be truly missed.