

DETROIT

Women of Courage

By Minister Gloria G. Lee
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Hello, my name is Michelle Abd 'Elazia. My phone number is 248-219-9879. I became the spokesperson for the Black Women and Breast Campaign after talking with Minister Lee. She is the host of the Women of Courage Show 88.1FM every Friday and Sunday and on TV 15.2 every Tuesday. She told me she was upset by the number of Black women dying of breast cancer and their children being left behind to be placed in foster care to be later raped, murdered or turned into prostitutes with the male children ending up in prison. She told me before she died, she was going to do something about this problem. She told me she wanted to get this story out to every Black woman living in this country. She gave me a packet of information in a green folder to read. She said it was going to be rough reading but when I finished reading, I would fully understand breast cancer and its consequences. We discussed the problem of reaching Black Women. She said there are 2 places one can always find Black women, in church and at the beautician. Therefore, we needed the help of the church and Michigan's Black beauticians and barbers to get the word out. Oh yes, Minister Lee said barbers. She said men need to understand their role regarding breast cancer in Black women. She said many will want to help rather than see their sisters, cousins, mothers and grandmothers die needlessly. She gave me the task of contacting black beauticians and barbers all over the state to get the beauticians to help us. She said putting an article in the newspaper would be a good start. Since beauticians read, surely some will read the Detroit Native Sun and contact me regarding our campaign. She told me to seek out buildings where there were a large number of beauticians working. So, I can introduce myself and explain how they can help us stop Black women from breast cancer. She told me to hold steadfast and control my face when Black women tell me they hold campaigns for breast cancer in October. My retort should be Black women can't wait until October. Breast Cancer is killing us now. I need to tell these women Black women are out of time. Below is an excerpt from a letter minister Lee wrote to an area sorority.

"My name is Gloria G. Lee. I am writing to ask that you help me with two projects the fight against cancer in Black women and keeping Black men out of prison. Cancers are not the same. The cancer that is killing Black women is not the cancer that is killing White women. When Black women get cancer, it is normally the deadliest kind, and it is normally diagnosed too late for the doctors to give effective treatment. The death of Black women is wreaking havoc in our communities. Our children are being turned over to foster care where many are being destroyed - males end up in prison and girls end up as prostitute. We can stop the flow of Black men in prison. We must have courage and we must stop thinking we can make it on our own. Black women need to realize our only salvation is a strong Black male. When you are being raped in a field or your head is being bashed in by a robber, you are going to call for help; and the only person that will help you is a Black man. Think about it. Holler help then look around you. You are only going to see a Black face. If that Black face is not strong you shall die at your assailant's feet. I just finished researching the murders of 20,000 women. I am the only person in the world who has accomplished this feat. My research has led me to this juncture Black women must stand up and make the necessary corrections in our lives and communities in order to save our children. Many of you may have a lot to say about the conduct of the Black male. He should do this or he should do that, but the Black female needs to correct her behavior and one behavior she needs to correct is to stop acting against other Black females, sleeping with your best girlfriend's husband because you are jealous of her. Don't look shocked you have been sleeping with her husband for years. It makes you feel good. Stop destroying families by dating married men for money. Stop augmenting your breast and buttock to attract a male. You may get more than you bargain for. It is easy to criticize the Black male but who raised him. 80% of Black males are being raised by single Black women, so who taught the Black male to think as he does. And Black females need to stop talking so much. Black women are losing their jobs, their children are being murdered or are going to prison or becoming prostitutes because Black women talk too much. I can prove this statement." Your talking so much is leading to your destruction.

I would like you to do four things. First read "The Black Woman and Breast Cancer," a free 522-page booklet that can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/>

[1RkCIX0HlHCgHUUKQ8yBjK1JixyHF93DN/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RkCIX0HlHCgHUUKQ8yBjK1JixyHF93DN/view?usp=sharing)

"You need to expose your mind to this information. It will help you make some hard choices yet necessary choices. Cancer can happen to you. We face death every day so we might as well face it with courage. Secondly, I would like for you to email five Black women a copy or link to this booklet. Asking the women to read the booklet then forward it to another Black woman. I can reach a million Black women in a matter of days if this is done correctly, and no one breaks the chain. Third I would like you and several of your friends to invite me to speak. We shall discuss what is killing us and how we can prevent our premature deaths from the rape and murder of Black women, HIV/Aids and breast cancer. Did you know Black women are often raped and killed by lots of 10 and 20 by one male? I am loaded with information ladies use me. Four, I would like for you to recommend me for speaking engagements. Become involved, this will not take up too much of your time. I know many of you are working two jobs. I did so when I was a working parent. But we must now work together smarter and wiser to reduce the burden of eeking out a living. I want you to remember this statement if a Black male does not learn to read by the 4th grade there is a great probability he shall end up in prison." Here is the link to the Black Woman and Breast Cancer databank, <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XoUHL3UYD11-Z1504r17sQKslip5z1fwW?usp=sharing>

There are several articles written by Minister Lee discussing her fight with breast cancer.

Here is the link to a website where you can read the first chapter of helpful books <https://touchedbythelight.us/> You need to read this book. Take your time. Read the book at work during your lunch hour. Reading is relaxing. And please email this link to friends and family everywhere. Make certain your brother gets a copy. There is a persistent mortality gap between Black women and white women. While breast cancer incidence rates among Black and white women are close, mortality rates are markedly different, with Black women having a 40 percent higher death rate from breast cancer. Among women under 50, the disparity is even greater: While young women have a higher incidence of aggressive cancers, young Black women have double the mortality rate of young white women. Advances in early detection and treatment have dramatically reduced breast cancer's ability to take lives overall, but it's clear that these breakthroughs haven't benefitted all groups equally—and this disparity has remained unchanged for more than a decade. Black women are statistically more likely to have diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, and are less likely to breastfeed after childbirth—all of which are risk factors for breast cancer. They are more likely than white women to have inadequate health insurance or access to health care facilities, which may affect screening, follow-up care, and completion of therapy. Black women are disproportionately affected by more aggressive subtypes, such as **triple-negative breast cancer** (TNBC) and inflammatory breast cancer, and they are more likely to be diagnosed at younger ages and at more advanced stages of the disease. **For the women close to us - our mothers, sisters, and friends who have breast cancer, they face an ugly reality they have to wake up to every day. They live with the pain they have to adapt to, hoping and wishing that they will recover and resume a normal life. While some beat the monster that the breast cancer is and live to tell the story, some lose their breasts - an essential symbol of womanhood, and others lose their lives. Yet, we dedicate only a single month out of twelve to creating awareness about this monster that robs us of the joy and privilege of being a woman.** I submit that much has been done to create awareness about breast cancer. However, I am persuaded that there is still much more to do to create more awareness and take actionable steps to help affected women know they are not alone. This is a call for us women to help one another and for woman be more watchful over their health. We do not have to wait for the suffering women to tell their stories so we can support them. We need to commit not just one month in a year to breast cancer but every day of our lives to sharing information about breast cancer with other women. Join us in our Black Women and Breast Cancer campaign because we are stronger beyond our knowledge when we are united. Spokesperson, Black Women and Breast Campaign, Michelle Abd 'Elazia, 248-219-9879

Minister Gloria G. Lee, is Host of The Women of Courage Show WHPS-TV 15.2 Tuesday 9 to 10 am Thursday 10 to 11am - Radio 88.1FM Friday 3 to 4 pm and Sunday 8 to 9 am.

NATIVE SUN

The DeMarco Project Speaks: Celebrating a phenomenal veteran, mother and community partner Major (Retired) Laverne Santangelo, MA, LPC

By Kim J. Clark Aka Expanding Love
SUN COLUMNIST



It is indeed an honor to have had the opportunity to interview Major Laverne Santangelo (Ret.). Major Santangelo (Ret.) served in the Michigan Army National Guard from 1987 - 2009. She served two types of missions at the State and Federal levels. Her stellar military career includes three times

mobilized active duty, served as support to Bosnia in 1995, activated twice after 9/11, and served in Washington, D.C. and Michigan supporting Guantanamo Bay. While serving our nation, Laverne was also the wife of a supportive husband and the mother of two sons.

Laverne decided to become involved with the military via the Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC) while attending college. She and a friend joined on a whim because they did not have summer jobs and needed money. The pay was decent, \$600 for six weeks at summer camp. So, off to Fort Knox, they went. Laverne had no idea this decision would lead to a 23-year military career. Although she enjoyed the experience, it was not a cakewalk. She endured racism; however, the training and camaraderie outshined racist incidents.

Laverne had the good fortune to marry her high school sweetheart, Jim Santangelo, who stayed by her side throughout her military career. At times, her career took a toll on Laverne and her husband. For example, Laverne was deployed to Germany for one year, eight months after giving birth to her youngest son. During the last five years of service, there was constant upheaval in her personal life, as well as an uptick in military assignments due to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, the benefits outweighed the downside. Serving in the military allowed Laverne to send her sons to private schools. She strategically worked her way up the ranks, solidified her family's financial future, and secured her son's education.

In 1989, Laverne was commissioned as Second Lieutenant. Her commanding officer saw something in her and helped her develop a plan for a successful military career. He advised her to become a Military Police Officer (MP) to get promoted to a command position within the MP. As previously stated, over time, her military duties became a strain on Laverne and her family. When Major Santangelo was called to active duty to serve in Iraq in 2007, due to personal and military issues, the decision was made that it would not be in her best interest as she was dealing with PTSD (now known as PTS for military-related post-traumatic stress).

Having capitalized on the educational opportunities available to military personnel in

1992, Laverne earned a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications with a minor in Military History & Broadcasting from Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan. In 2010, shortly after she exited the military, she completed a Master of Arts in Community Agency Counseling specializing in Substance abuse from Oakland University, Rochester Hills, Michigan., where she earned the distinction of becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor because of her desire to serve the community.

Having worked through military service mental health trauma and working as a volunteer at the Problem Pregnancy Center, she realized that mental health care is as critical as physical health care. Laverne has an extensive background working with substance abuse and mental health. In addition, she understands the value and importance of addressing the "whole person." [Laverne Santangelo, LLC, Licensed Professional Counselor, Shelby Township, MI, 48317 | Psychology Today.](https://www.lavernesantangelo.com/) She has the following certifications: Grief Therapist, Grief Yoga



Specialist, Yoga Teacher (200hrs.), and Whole Life Healing Life Coach. Visit her website to learn more about client services at <https://www.lavernesantangelo.com/>.

When asked what advice she would give the community, she responded, "Be demanding about your self-care. Put your mental health first." At The DeMarco Project, we proudly recognize and celebrate Major Laverne Santangelo (Ret.), a Phenomenal Veteran, Mother, and Community Partner.

Kim is the mother of a Veteran who loved his country and was willing to lay his life down for the freedoms he believed in. She is the Founder and Executive Director of The DeMarco Project, a non-profit organization. Her mission is to save Veteran lives and improve the quality of life for traumatized military service persons. If you want to support her in this work, please donate via the website www.TheDeMarcoProject.org. Please like us on Facebook and Instagram at The DeMarco Project 4 Vets.

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