



Sarah Culberson

Philanthropist/Dancer/Actress/Author/Educator

Sarah Culberson was born in Morgantown, West Virginia to an African father and a white mother. As an infant she was given up to foster care and adopted by a loving white family in West Virginia. She grew up contemplating and dealing with questions about her identity and her biracial roots.

She fell in love with theatre in early childhood and later won an acting scholarship to attend West Virginia University. She earned her MFA at The American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and joined the Los Angeles acting community.

Sarah has been acting on stage as well as in films and TV; some of her appearances include *Strong Medicine*, *All of Us*, *Boston Legal*, *The Secret Life of the American Teenager*, and the film *American Dreamz*. She also guest dances with a professional Urban Latin Dance Theater company *Contra-Tiempo*. However, her biggest role so far came when she decided to locate her biological parents. After learning that her biological mother had died when she was just 11, she discovered her father lived in a village in Sierra Leone, West Africa. She learned that she is from a royal family, a Mahaloi, the granddaughter of a Paramount Chief, with the status of a Princess. She also learned of the difficulties and privations of the people in Sierra Leone resulting from a brutal eleven-year Civil War that ended in 2002.

The discovery of her unique heritage and her response to this new information changed her life forever. Now, as co-founder and president of The Kposowa Foundation (www.bumpefund.org) in Los Angeles, she and many others work toward the goals of improving education for young people, bringing clean drinking water to the community, and providing sustainable opportunities for the people of Sierra Leone. Sarah's story has been featured nationally and internationally in the *Singapore News*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, BBC radio, NPR, Oprah and Friends radio show, and in magazines such as *Reader's Digest*, *Newsweek*, *People*, and *Glamour*. She has also appeared on *Good Morning America*, *CNN*, *Inside Edition*, and more. Sarah's book "A Princess Found", co-written with Tracy Trivas and published by St. Martins Press, was released in Barnes and Noble, and other bookstores in 2009 and is being used at Pepperdine University, in the ethnic identity class.

In addition to raising awareness about Sierra Leone, Sarah is the Director of Service-Learning at the Oakwood School in Los Angeles. She takes groups to Sierra Leone to stay with her family and work together on different service-learning projects. The groups work on projects with the Bumpe community and learn about the people and the culture of Sierra Leone after a brutal eleven year civil war. Sarah speaks nationally and internationally and shares the inspirational quest that led her to her birth father in a war torn country. This country that is now rebuilding and moving forward.