



Artist Gerald Duane Coleman - Brazil '99

Milwaukee born artist : **Gerald Duane Coleman** carrying statue in the " **Our Lady Of Good Death** " festival. Cachoeira, Bahia-Brazil, August 15, 1999. The " *Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte* " festival, is the oldest African-female Sisterhood in the western hemisphere.

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### **Barbara Brown Lee :**

Two-hundred and twenty-three years ago, a woman of African ancestry pledged eternal devotion to the Virgin Mary if she could get out of Slavery in Bahia-Brazil. The emancipated slave woman purchased other slaves, and ex-slave women purchased and help others out of slavery. Their traditions live today in the City of Cachoeira, Bahia-Brazil. Every August the Black-Sisterhood gives a large festival to called: " *Our Lady Of The Death.*" Besides the festival's outward expressions of joy and revelry, the Sisterhood of the Good Death maintains the indivisible mark of the Catholic Saints, and the African Orixas, characteristic of African-Brazilian syncretism, guarded in secrecy and taboos.

Barbara. . . I have witnessed, participated in, and viewed many African/and African-American festivals all my life. In this particular photo. I am wearing a beautiful, white-straw-Stetson-hat- from Milwaukee. My size, style, and beautiful hat drew lots of photographers from: *Brazil, Europe, Japan, and the United States---* to take my pictures. I probably drew more attention then the **Boa Morte** nuns, or the Catholic priest in the procession. The sedan chair, statue, and flowers are very heavy. Gerald Duane Coleman carried the statue, the full distance around the city of Cachoeira-Bahia-Brazil.

On Saturday a dead Virgin is carried around the City. On Saturday a standing Virgin is carried around the City as a symbol of **Liberation from African-Brazilian Slavery**. From Carnival/Mardi Gras, to *African-Condomble* ceremonies, to related festivals; I have participated in them all.

*Gerald Duane Coleman*

Wednesday, September 29, 1999