



Son of Two Rivers

2019, Acrylic on wood
39" l x 5" w x 20^{1/4}" h

Collaborative team: Paul Beshah, David Feinberg, Beth Andrews, Kimchi Hoang, Jennifer Barnett-Hensel, J. Wren Supak, Michelle Englund, Sima Shahriar, Olivia Nortwen Miki Schumacher. Sara Feinberg, video. Benay McNamara, Stefanie Suhon, writers.

Paul left Ethiopia in secret as a young adult during the Ethiopian Revolution because of war. He knew he was being watched and targeted, and he knew he needed to flee. He arrived at the Ethiopia border checkpoint disguised as a shepherd with a group of farmers. A guard knew he was fleeing, but let him pass the checkpoint anyway. As he was travelling to Sudan, he met a farmer that told him how to avoid frontline soldiers. But, Paul was still seen, and the border soldiers opened fire. It took him 45 minutes to cross into Sudan.

When he arrived in Sudan, Paul was placed in detention for 2 months. After this, he stayed at a guesthouse for 1 month before travelling to Khartoum by himself with a plan to get to the United States. However, he was unable to get a visa from the US embassy because of so many unprocessed refugees. People told him to go to the US embassy in Rome, but he was denied papers again at the Italian embassy in Khartoum. He then met an Ethiopian man that knew the Italian ambassador, who was able to get him a 1 day, nonrenewable visa for Italy. Paul immediately boarded a flight headed to Rome.

Paul was 21 when he finally arrived in Rome. Two of Paul's close friends that left Ethiopia before him coincidentally found him in Rome. They stayed together for one year, and then Paul left Rome for New York City. He travelled to the United States in 1979, and he kissed the ground when he arrived. Paul was sponsored by Catholic charities through the embassy, and he was put on a flight to Pensacola to live with the family that sponsored him. Paul bonded quickly with the father of the family, but decided to move after 6 months. Throughout his entire journey, Paul said that he saw guardian angels watching over him. Currently, Paul lives in Minneapolis. He is in the process of publishing a book on the constitution, and he is also running for the U.S. Senate.