

## Professor Will Reno named Payson S. Wild Chair of Political Science



Will Reno was named the Payson S. Wild Chair of Political Science in an investiture ceremony held by the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences on November 2, 2023. Will Reno joined Northwestern's Political Science department as associate professor in 1999, became full professor in 2012, served as director of the Program of African Studies from 2012 to 2018, and as head of political science since 2019. His research focus is the politics of violence and state collapse in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. He has authored many articles and several books, including *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, 1995), *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge, 2011). His current work centers on the politics of foreign assistance to security forces in very weak states and how patronage-based regimes that are reluctant to rely on their own armed forces age counterinsurgency campaigns. His chair is named after Payson S. Wild, a scholar of government, international law, and international relations, who served as vice president and dean of faculties at Northwestern from 1949 to 1969 and provost from 1969 to 1973.

## PAS sponsors new Voice from Exile podcast

In December, alumnus Chernoh Bah (2023), founding editor of the Africanist Press, launched a new Voice from Exile podcast focusing on African issues. This podcast forms part of the commemoration of the 21st anniversary of the Africanist Press, marking a significant milestone in the press organization's ongoing effort to build an independent media agency dedicated to the promotion of democracy, accountability, and good governance across Africa. Bah has an active following among West Africa's youth population and is a critical voice among the emergent leadership generation in the region.

The Africanist Press is a nonprofit organization of investigative journalists and academics established in December 2002 to report on corruption, human rights, and democratic governance in Africa. Africanist Press journalists and researchers have documented and reported on corruption, graft, and human rights issues across many African countries, including in Cameroon, Kenya, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. Its recent work includes a multiyear investigation that produced more than 70 reports documenting large-scale financial crimes and corruption in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone investigation has had far-reaching consequences and attracted international attention to the issues of democratic governance and financial corruption in that West African country.

The Africanist Press podcast can be heard on Amazon, Apple, Castbox, iHeart Radio, Pocket Cast, Radio Public, Spotify, and other podcast platforms. Spotify accounts for about 55% of the followers in 75 countries, most of whom live in Sierra Leone, the US, and the UK. The WhatsApp platform accounts for a weekly distribution totaling 1.5 million people, including audiences in Sierra Leone, Guinea, The Gambia, Liberia, and Nigeria.

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## PAS participation at ASA San Francisco 2023

Many PAS faculty and alumni participated in the annual African Studies Association meeting in San Francisco at the end of November and early December 2023. The theme of the meeting was “African Presences: Envisioning Africa in Text and Deed,” which examined wide ranging manifestations of evolving contextualizations of African culture in everyday and national life on the continent and abroad.

Former PAS director Richard Joseph shared ASA’s annual Distinguished Africanist award with Ken Harrow of Michigan State University. The book, *Poverty and Wealth in East Africa: A Conceptual History*, by alumna Rhiannon Stephens (2007, Columbia University) book was a finalist for the Bethwell Ogot Prize in East African Studies.

Many faculty participated. Akinwumi Ogundiran (history) and David Schoenbrun (history) participated in the panel, Deep-Time Histories of Contemporary Politics and Belonging in Africa. In addition, Ogundiran also served on the roundtable “AfricaNow! Hot Button Issues in Africa: Implications for Regional Economies and Securities.” Dotun Ayobade (School of Communications) presented a paper, “Ken Saro-Wiwa: Flickering Visions of Oil and the International,” Ibrahim Gassama (Pritzker School of Law) served on the roundtable, “Remembering Randall Robinson: A Political Activist in the PanAfrican Pantheon,” and Adia Benton (anthropology) served as a discussant on the panel, “Reading Epidemics in Africa.” Marcia Tiede (Northwestern Library) presented a paper, “Memory Making”: Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the International Conference of Manding Studies (1972).

Faculty from the Northwestern University in Qatar also participated, including Zachary Wright who chaired the panel, “New Trends in the Study of Islam in Africa,” and presented a paper, “Umar Futi Tal’s Kitāb al-Rimāḥ De-Marginalized: Tariqa Formation in 19th Century West Africa.” Gerard Akindes copresented two papers, “The Journey of Francophone African Players to Elite Leagues in the Global North,” and “From Childhood to Young Adulthood: Paul Bonga Bonga’s Educational and Sporting Life in Late Colonial Congo.” Leila Tayeb presented a paper, “Building the Jamahiriya: Gaddafi’s Islamic Call in Africa.” Graduate student Fortunate Kelechi Ekwuruke presented a paper, “More Than a Home: Adolescent Perspectives on Slum Communities and Slum Evictions.”

In addition, many PAS alumni participated. Ato Onoma (2006, University of Toronto) presented a paper “Epidemics, Phobia, and Critiques of Globalization.” Moses Khisa (2016, North Carolina State University) copresented a paper, “Great Power Competition and Hedging: Africa and East Asia in Comparative Perspective, and chaired two roundtables, “Politics of Transition and Presidential Succession in Uganda,” and “Global Africa: Trends in Foreign Policy.” Aili Tripp (1990, University of Wisconsin-Madison) participated in the roundtable “Politics of Transition and Presidential Succession in Uganda.” Lynn Thomas (MA, University of Washington) chaired the panel, “Challenging Sexed and Sexual Expectations in Eastern and Southern Africa” and presented a paper, “Naming and Challenging Abortion Stigma in Multi-Party Kenya.” David Donkor (2008, Texas A&M University) presented a paper, “Out of Presidential Character”: The State of US-Africa Relations, the Stakes of Ceremony, and the Precarity of Performance in Clinton’s Ghana Visit.” Nana Akua Anyidoho (2005, University of Ghana) presented a paper, “[When] the 9-5 Is Not Friendly: Women Straddling Formal and Informal Work,” and cochaired two roundtables, “Publish That Article: Meet the Editors,” and “Countering Media Misrepresentation and Marginalization to Build a Sustainable African Future.” Lorelle Semley (2002, The Holy Cross University, editor of *History in Africa*) participated in the panel “Publish That Article: Meet the Editors) and chaired the roundtable, “Theory and Art of the Artifact.” Bright Gyamfi (2023, University of California, San Diego) served as discussant on the panel, “Ghanaian Intellectuals, the Academy, the Disciplines, and Public Culture. Catherine M. Cole (1996, University of Washington) chaired and served as discussant on the panel “New Research in Black Performance Studies: Direct Action, State Diplomacy, and Ancestral Logic,”

## Message from PAS Director Chris Abani

I have an uncle who always responded to a greeting with, “Here you meet me again.” Always with a wide smile and an occasional chuckle. “Here you meet me again.” That smile and that phrase became over the years a touchstone for constancy, as in, “I’m always here, the same as always and open to you.” For the commitment to a core belief in the idea of remaining steadfast and to ride all the storms of life with a smile. As a young person, I always admired his stoicism and his good humor, which in my mind equated to: I will remain the same always. I must not have noted the tiredness around his eyes or the weight loss or the other signs of wear and tear that come with weathering life. It is not that he was always the same, but that he adapted to whatever conditions he found himself dealing with, while remaining constant to an inner core, and inner commitment.

That is one of the ways I have grown to appreciate African studies at Northwestern. As the oldest program of its kind in the United States, it does feel like it has always been here, and there is some truth to that. What is not true though is that it has always been the same even if our human tendency to nostalgia can make us believe that. Maybe the illusion spun by nostalgia that we are prone to is a result of needing some constancy to sustain us through the many years between research, writing, and publishing.

One of the things about academia is the tension between maintaining the status quo and pushing for change and innovation. A friend of mine once said that universities are great at archiving things, sometimes more than they are at using those archives to push for the novel, for the radical. Whether this be in research, in new media, in thinking outside the box, or in this case, the field, or even in politics. It is a tense time all around, and it seems that while constancy is needed, that need not be in the sense of the immutable. Maybe constancy in ethics and a commitment to challenge complacency. Perhaps if we look to the way the weather in the Midwest plays with seasons: summer, the front verandah of hell; fall, the dreary; the fall into winter; winter; mid-winter; false spring; gotcha, spring; gotcha again; real spring; and then summer, We might learn how to be constant and not



immutable. Or maybe not. Either way, we must come to terms with the fact that changes must be made; and soon.

Over the years, with restructuring in colleges, with funding restrictions, with changes in personnel, 620 Library Place, our home, has like that favored uncle, remained constant. The ever welcoming, ever evolving, brilliant community of scholars, writers, chefs, staff, curators, librarians, and more, always more, ever more, has changed over the years.

When I took over the directorship of PAS, I immersed myself in the archives and was stunned to see the rich legacy over the years and the slow sad shrinking of what was the beating heart of the African humanities here in the United States. Still, PAS surged forward under the steadfast guidance of many gifted directors and staff, surviving every budget cut, every limitation.

When I took over, Covid was raging and everything we did had to go virtual. And what could have been the end of us became a new virtual life and the opportunity to attract ever new, ever more community. This retreat into the virtual world has given us the opportunity to create a new and unique research archive soon to be revealed. And speaking of constancy, one of the staff who has been directly and indirectly part of PAS for over twenty years recently suffered an accident. From her recuperation room, she urged me to finish this message for the newsletter. Constancy. PAS has changed and will continue to change and evolve long after I am gone. But the heart of the past, the present, and the future are here, virtually, and when the light is right, physically still, at 620 Library Place. Come by and we will open the door, smile, and say, “Here you meet me again.”

*Chris Abani*

## Introducing PAS visiting scholar Prof. Lwazi Lushaba

Lwazi Lushaba is a political scientist at the University of Cape Town. He has a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, an MA in philosophy from the University of Ibadan (Nigeria), and an MPhil from the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences and Culture, Kolkata (India). Before joining the University of Cape Town faculty, he taught at various universities in Nigeria and South Africa. His publications include a coedited book, *From National Liberation to Democratic Renaissance in Southern Africa* (2005), and a book, *Development as Modernity, Modernity as Development* (2009), both published by CODESRIA in Dakar.

Lushaba's interests include political philosophy (particularly German phenomenology and Enlightenment philosophy), subaltern studies (decolonial thought, the politics of representation, and postcolonial theory), the postcolonial African state, and radical African/Black traditions of

intellectual thought.

Lushaba has been a recipient of several international fellowships, including visiting fellowships at the African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands, and the Du Bois Institute, Harvard University.

He is currently working on a book tentatively titled "History of South African Social Sciences: A View from the Black Colonised."



## International symposium examines the Afrobeats phenomenon

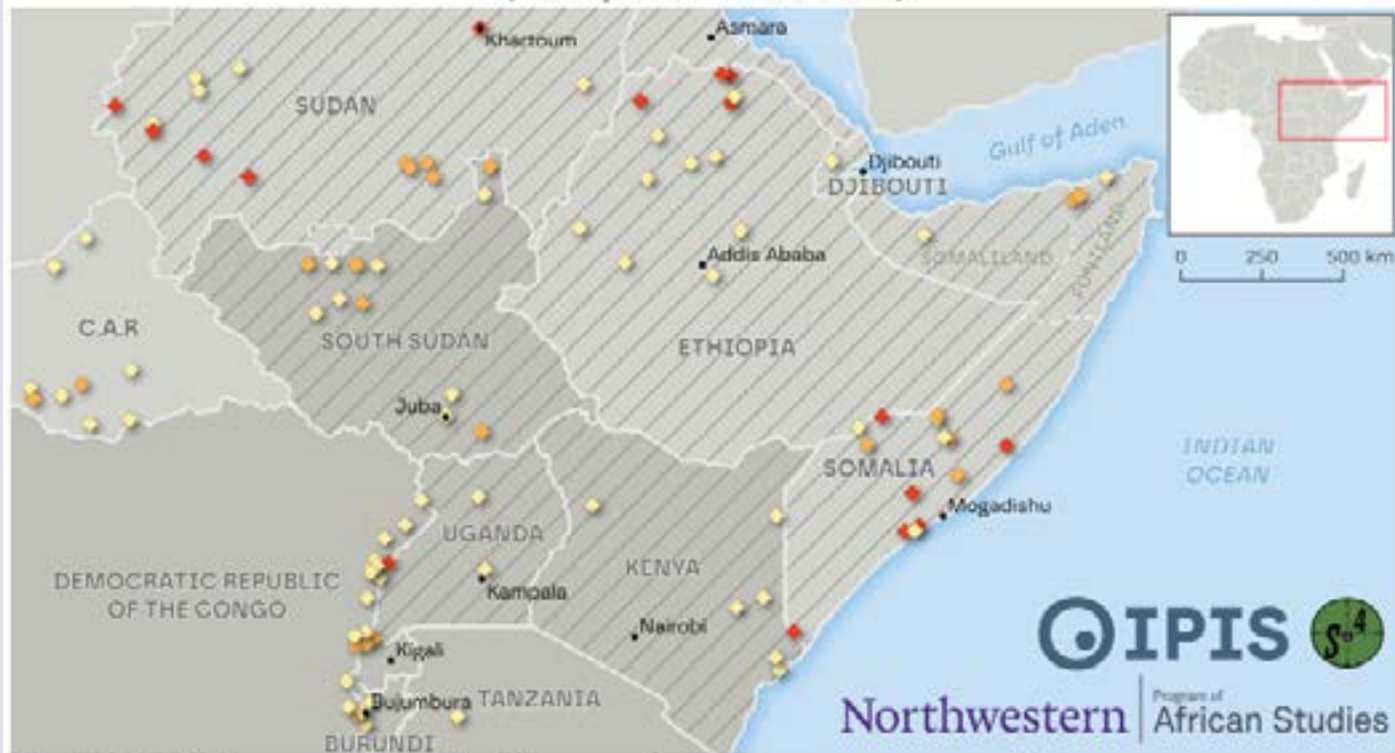
Last year in October, Professor Dotun Ayobade and graduate students Olabanke Goriola and Nnaemeka Ekwelum convened the international symposium, "Afrobeats: Lower Frequencies of Contemporary Sounds." Thirteen participants, in-person and virtual, from universities in the US, Italy, Germany, and South Africa explored various aspects of the contemporary Afrobeats dance music phenomenon that arose in West Africa and has spread throughout the diaspora and mainstream musical culture in the twenty-first century. Today, popular artists include Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Fireboy DML. In his opening remarks, Ayobade argued that exploring Afrobeats in an academic venue underscored how the genre reflected the intellectual side of contemporary African thought through the ways it is expressed in pop culture. Further, he contended that "artists are standing on histories and issues of cultural practice, histories and issues of music-making, and histories and issues of resistance and political organizing." An essential goal of the symposium was to explore the complexity and nuance of thought behind African popular culture, which often gets "flattened" when it

makes its way to the west.

A billion-dollar industry, Afrobeats is a global movement that demands analysis beyond the entertainment world. A corps of emerging and established artists produce effervescent dance music in the most unlikely of spaces, from sports events to Nollywood documentaries to late-night shows. The electronic sounds have created a worldwide fan base and shaped everyday soundscapes heard in street carnivals, private/public transport, nightclubs, social media, and playlists. Although the popularity of Afrobeats has outpaced the meager intellectual output on the subject, the symposium presentations examined the many dimensions of Afrobeats as a noteworthy musical, historical, and cultural event.

Renown Yale scholar Michael Veal, the biographer of Afrobeat musicians Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Tony Allen, capped the symposium with a keynote address that traced the evolution of Afrobeats to West African links with music in the Pan-African diaspora as aspects of political resistance, nation-building, and cultural innovation.

**Selected Attacks on Security Forces and Peace Operations Resulting in Diversion of Arms and Ammunition  
(January 2014 to December 2023)**



<p><b>Amount of materiel lost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10-49 weapons, and/or 1k-10k rounds of ammo, and/or 1-4 gun trucks (or armoured cars)</li> <li>● 50-99 weapons, and/or 10k-100k rounds of ammo, and/or 5-9 gun trucks (or armoured cars)</li> <li>● 100+ weapons, and/or 100k+ rounds of ammo, and/or 10+ gun trucks (or armoured cars)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital</li> <li>■ EAC member</li> <li>▨ IGAD member</li> <li>▭ Disputed border</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sources</b> Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Initiative dataset, as of December 2023.</p> <p><b>Map</b> Designed by IPIS (December 2023) using data from OpenStreetMap and National Earth.</p>	<p><b>Notes</b> Lethal materiel diverted in incidents recorded in northeast Somalia represent security forces of Puntland and Somaliland (which are not in IGAD).</p> <p>EAC = East African Community IGAD = Intergovernmental Authority on Development</p>
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For more information and maps on attacks and diversion elsewhere in Africa, please consult [www.s-4.org](http://www.s-4.org).

## Selected attacks on security forces and peace operations resulting in diversion of arms and ammunition, January 2014–December 2023

Eric Berman

Non-state armed groups (NSAGs) secure significant quantities of lethal materiel from the very governments that seek to defeat them—as well as from member states of intergovernmental organizations that sometimes send uniformed personnel to support the country or countries in question. The Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Initiative collated hundreds of attacks jihadists commonly known as Boko Haram launched against state security forces and the Multinational Joint Task Force across the Lake Chad Basin region, which has sustained those insurgents militarily for more than a decade. S4 subsequently published a map that identified similar attacks other NSAGs have undertaken against these armed state officials across those four riparian countries as well as much of West Africa.

This conflict dynamic is not limited to that region. A new map (see above), which S4 produced with assistance provided by two Northwestern student researchers and the Antwerp-based International Peace Information Service (IPIS), records 100 attacks such groups have committed across the Great Lakes, Horn of Africa, and environs. Incidents portrayed were selected primarily to show the geographic breadth of this challenge. Forces targeted include park rangers, police, prison guards, and soldiers, as well as Blue and Green Helmets serving with a half-dozen African Union and United Nations peace operations. As a result, these bodies have lost hundreds of light weapons and gun trucks (including armoured vehicles), thousands of small arms, and millions of rounds of ammunition.

S4, together with Northwestern’s Program of African Studies (PAS) and IPIS, is developing the S4 Data Set, its methodology for estimating losses, and working on updating existing—and producing new—interactive and static maps to inform policymakers, programmers, and implementing partners.

*Eric G. Berman, is the director, S4 Initiative; and visiting scholar at PAS. For more information, including possible research opportunities for Northwestern students, contact Eric at [director@s-4.org](mailto:director@s-4.org).*

## Remembering Jane Guyer

Caroline Bledsoe



Jane Isabel Guyer, who served as PAS Director and NU Professor of Anthropology from 1994–2001, died in Davis, California on January 17, 2024 from complications from dementia. Born on New Year's Eve in 1943, she had just turned 80. Jane is survived by her husband Bernie and their three children Sam, Nathan, and Kate; five grandchildren;

many other family members; and legions of friends and admirers throughout the world. A brilliant and accomplished academic, Jane taught at many universities, including Harvard, Boston University, and after leaving Northwestern at Johns Hopkins University from 2002 until her retirement in 2015. Here I describe some key aspects of Jane's career, especially in her roles at Northwestern as PAS director and cherished friend to so many.

Jane was born in Scotland, where her father was stationed in the Royal Navy during the World War II. She was the second of four children of Walter and Isabel Mason. She grew up near Liverpool, and trained in sociology at the London School of Economics, where she earned first class honors in 1965. After marrying Bernard Guyer, an American student, she moved to the US with him, and earned a PhD in anthropology in 1972 at the University of Rochester, where he had enrolled in medical school. Eventually she converted from her family's "low church" Anglicanism to Bernie's religion, Judaism, and attained dual citizenship.

For Jane's university-educated middle-class British parents, the devastation wreaked on European economies by the Great Depression and World War II had sharply curtailed their career chances. And yet, as was true for so many of that generation, these experiences seemed to intensify their determination that their children would not face the same restrictions they had endured. Both Jane and her older

brother Tim, a Marxist social historian of Nazi Germany at Oxford, went on to become distinguished university academics. By contrast, their no less talented younger sister Elizabeth converted to Catholicism and entered a Carmelite convent dedicated to prayer, silence, and solitude, where family members had to speak across a barrier when they visited.

Jane's main periods of fieldwork in Nigeria and Cameroon, inspired her lifelong interests in economic transformation in West and Equatorial Africa: farming, trade, the creation of wealth and currencies, the division of labor, the impact of devaluation and structural adjustment policies, and the interface between informal and formal economies. Her meticulously documented individual as well as collaborative works emphasized people's capacity for adaptation and invention in the face of economic challenge. Rather than extrapolate from given economic theories, she worked "upstream," looking for empirical patterns from which theory could be drawn, then pressing on toward further discovery, while keeping a close eye on inconsistencies and anomalies. Rejecting generalizations that had cast African practices as mired in farming and trading traditions, she insisted that attentive readings of historical sources pointed instead to African societies' constant engagement with novelty on every conceivable economic frontier. She also was careful to note the frequent centrality, in people's explanations, of the role of spiritualism in economic life: a combination she captured in an evocative phrase, "the mystiques and the modes of life" (from "Prophesy and the Near Future..." *American Ethnologist*, 2007)

Jane's "extraordinarily profound and extensive contributions" (J. Ferguson) have been hailed as among the most seminal contributions to all of Africanist scholarship as well as to economic and social anthropology in general. Her books themselves became the subjects of many special scholarly seminars and volumes: among them perhaps her most acclaimed book, *Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa* (2004), which she began at Northwestern.

Among her many formal honors and recognitions: Jane was elected to the US National Academy of Sciences (2008)

and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (2009). In 2012, the US African Studies Association named her its Distinguished Africanist of the year, in recognition of her lifetime of outstanding scholarship on and service to the field, and she was awarded an honorary chieftaincy by the town of Idere, where she had conducted much of her Nigerian field work. In addition, she was invited to serve on numerous advisory committees for national and international organizations. Among them: an NAS study group on *Adolescent Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1993), an advisory group to the World Bank and the Chad and Cameroon governments for the Chad Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project (2001–09), the board and executive committee of the African Studies Association (2006–09), and the NAS-sponsored Lost Crops of Africa (2006–2008). To all her these external roles, which she called “public service,” she invariably brought cheerful enthusiasm, the highest standards of scholarship, and insights that could fundamentally reshape an entire project.

### Jane as PAS director

By the early 1990s, Jane’s remarkable career had taken off. Both in African studies and in anthropology, she was becoming known as a wonderful teacher and mentor to students and young scholars, and a generous and supportive colleague. Then, in 1993, Northwestern asked her to consider becoming director of its Program of African Studies, with a faculty position in anthropology. Previously, in 1998–2000, she held a joint appointment anthropology and African American studies at Northwestern.

For Jane, the possibility of becoming the director of a program of such historical importance and invaluable library resources must have had a strong appeal. But it would involve no small sacrifice on the personal front. She would have to commute from the comfortable family home in Baltimore, where Bernie served in leadership at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and she would have to set aside her own work for long stretches of time. Everyone did their part to try to help persuade her—faculty, administrators, a wily real estate agent, and even, eventually, Bernie himself, who knew his wife had the capacity to be an extraordinary academic leader. But we all knew that the real question was more difficult: Why should such a bold, pathbreaking scholar risk step off her meteoric scholarly rise to take up a program management job—a move virtually guaranteeing endless days of budgets, proposals, and



*Jane in Yoruba dress, 1950s.*

committees?

Despite the conundrum we all worried about, I believe that two factors had already been playing out for Jane in the background of the early 1990s, quite independently of us, that would lead her to accept the job and shape the kind of leader she became. One was her conviction about the importance of sustaining quality Africanist research and teaching in the face of national funding crises; the other was a specific theme from the African ethnography—“wealth-in-people” — with which much of her research at the time had been preoccupied.

Jane’s commitment to African studies can be seen throughout her writings, but nowhere more urgently than in a national report she had been commissioned to write by the Ford Foundation and the US African Studies Association, on the perilous state of African studies in the United States, when cold-war era federal support for area studies and foreign language training in general was suddenly in question, with potentially the



Left: Jane in the field, 1950s. Right: Jane at her cheftancy ceremony in Idere, Nigeria.

most devastating consequences falling on Africa. To address this question, Jane had visited numerous universities across the country, consulting with faculty, students, and administrators, and analyzing the reams of data and documents they gave her. In her report, *African Studies in the United States: A Perspective*, eventually published in 1996, she directed most of her criticism to the field of international economics. She argued that not only was Africa being sidelined—a “special case” of poverty and stagnation—in development planning; it was being cast as a threat to the rest of the world’s otherwise optimistic economic future. Not only, she charged, were such assessments wrong on empirical grounds, they failed to observe the robust inventiveness and “originalities” long documented in the African historical record for constructing credible models of science. These assessments also failed to recognize the vibrant prospects Africa held as a vigorous development partner for the future.

The attention that this visionary report gained dramatically increased Jane’s scholarly profile. At the same time, it heightened her sense of the potentials that wider institutional resources might hold for shaping revisionist research on Africa.

The second factor that I believe had been playing in the background before Jane was asked to consider the PAS directorship was an idea from the African ethnography that she and others were describing as “wealth in people.” Against

previous models of production in Africa that assumed efforts to produce similar skills and resources across rural economies, Jane and her Cameroonian colleague S. Eno Belinga argued, in their influential 1995 article, “Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge” (*Journal of African History*), that for Equatorial Africa, individual identities had long reflected diverse “configurations” or “repertoires” of skill, knowledge, and social connection, even within kin and community groups. These diversities were intentionally cultivated

among the young and trainees through the careful “composition” of education, nurture, and spiritual investment in each person. Whether the fruits of these efforts might benefit individuals or the collectives to which they belonged, each new achievement or relationship attained by this process became “catalytic,” capable of generating evermore wealth in the forms of capacities and connections.

While Jane’s work for the Ford/ASA report, then, allowed her to see new institutional possibilities for shaping support for learning about Africa, the primary model she kept describing for creating knowledge within institutions seemed to come from African ideals of cultivating “originalities” among their participants.

## “Federalism” at PAS

Once Jane agreed to come, it was her determination to build not on her own work as a world class scholar that others might be invited to join, but on what she saw as the potential “wealth” represented in the freshest and most experimental research of other PAS constituents. What, she asked, would other PAS member’s most compelling idea—the one they stayed awake at night thinking about—look like if it could be blown up to its greatest potential?

It was this model, what Jane called her “federalist” model of institution leadership, giving the initiative



to participants that most began to define her leadership. Knowing we all had worlds outside of Northwestern that made us unique, Jane's genius was to exploit the synergies that these ties could bring. She encouraged us to mine our individual scholarly worlds and bring them into PAS.

With support from the university and PAS staff (Akbar Virmani, LaRay Denzer, and others), Jane went into high "investment" gear, moving PAS resources and her own energies into position behind individual PAS members' most provocative new ideas, helping to intellectually frame them and obtain outside funding for them. Such efforts might include creating special classes or training workshops or inviting leading experts and promising young scholars for talks and seminars. A new idea that resulted from this process could itself be stretched into imaginative new work, resulting in yet more winning proposals, papers, and collaborations with Africa-based scholars and institutions.

Despite the apparent simplicity of this term, of course, the federalist model of intellectual production and career enhancement for participants that Jane pursued so enthusiastically meant enormous work for her. She spent hours reading and commenting on endless drafts of our papers, book chapters, grants, and dissertations—always with rigor and insight. Whether via comments or coauthorships, or in late night phone conversations, she "embedded" herself with us, helping to bring together a few of those fleeting moments when our most exciting ideas might suddenly come into view: a time when time, money, and our "dream team" colleagues could most optimally be brought into the picture, to allow this idea to emerge and define new scholarship.

In many instances, this "federalist" strategy of facilitating the efforts of individual researchers to innovate and expand in both African studies and their own disciplines led Jane herself to enter a project's picture as an idea generator and collaborator. This she did many times over during her directorship. With Karen Tranberg Hansen and Soyini Madison, she entered the debates at a conference they organized on startling new directions in contemporary African fashion. As for me, she and I spent literally hours on the phone, far into the night, wondering how to think about quantitative and qualitative data as the same thing, and how to wrest them into conversation in the same computer screen. Many of these substantive collaborations between Jane and PAS members are reflected in the authorships of the research papers, bibliographies, museum preparations, and debates reflected in many of PAS's Working Papers (<https://africanstudies.northwestern.edu/research/publications/>

papers.html). They can also be seen in the acknowledgement sections of subsequent books, papers, and dissertations of individuals who benefited from her help in shaping the work.

Needless to say, all these efforts to help cultivate individual potential allowed Africanist students, colleagues, and visitors to develop their best work to levels they could not have anticipated before. They also gave new directions to PAS itself, opening new doors for the program into new areas of research. Widely praised at the university and beyond, Jane's efforts drew scholars from across the university and

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*"For colleagues who were just starting their careers in Anthropology at Northwestern in the late 1990s, Jane she so enthusiastically deployed her own scholarly brilliance, her personal warmth, and her unwavering anchoring in African scholarship to enhance the lives and careers of others and the fields she loved made her a revered leader and collaborator." — Professor Robert Launay*

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the world. They also made fiercely committed "Jane" fans of us all.

The results were too numerous to list here. To take just a single slice in time: In its 2001(3) issue, when Jane's most intensive program efforts were beginning to bear fruit, the PAS Newsletter announced several major programs and activities funded by a Ford grant she had secured for the program. Among them: a major planned expansion of two programs begun by previous PAS director David William Cohen: the new African Humanities Institute, and the Program of International Corporation in Africa [PICA], in collaboration with the University of Ghana-Legon. Also described in this newsletter were new collaborations with African and African American scholars, most notably an invitation to renowned Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne—later hired by the philosophy department with vigorous PAS support—to teach courses on legal and philosophical thinking in the Islamic world. Appearing as well was a new collaboration

between PAS and the university's Multimedia Learning Center, "Global Mappings: Political Atlas of the African Diaspora," organized by political scientist Michael Hanchard, former PAS Interim Director Sandra Richards, and others, exploring linkages among transnational black politics, social movements, and world historical events in the 20th century. In addition, there was a mention of a recently concluded workshop organized by Caroline Bledsoe and Jane Guyer, on how Western medical science selectively remembers—and forgets—notions of the apparently universal "normal" body in its training, textbooks, and clinical practice (later published as PAS Working Paper no. 11).

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*"Jane's ability to come at questions with a new perspective and with a remarkable clarity of thought always struck me. She had such a brilliant, incisive mind, and combined it with warmth and humanity." — Alumna Rhiannon Stephens*

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But the big news in the 2001(3) newsletter was the announcement of the inception of the highly anticipated Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA): then, and now, the only research institute in North America specifically devoted to the study of Islam in Africa. Given the relevant faculty already in place at Northwestern, and the presence of one of the world's greatest library collections in the field, ideas for such an enterprise had long been discussed. But it was under Jane's leadership that the ideas, the proposals, and the funding finally came together to make it work. Since then, and under new leaders, ISITA has gone on to establish Northwestern as an international hub of research collaboration, publication, programming, and teaching in the field of Islam in Africa, facilitating intellectual exchange with Africa-based scholars, and bringing in a constant stream of visitors every year. To this day, ISITA connects a vibrant, constantly expanding international network of scholars with common interests in Islam and Africa.

Alongside with her work with individuals' intellectual projects, Jane used PAS resources toward inspired reworkings of the PAS past. In 1998, Jane, together with David Easterbrook, then curator of the Africana Library, returned

to print, with a new introduction, the classic 1958 volume *Dahomean Narrative: A Cross-Cultural Analysis* (1998), by Melville Herskovits and his wife and collaborator Frances from their work in Dahomey [now the Republic of Benin]. In April 1998, she and Deborah Mack organized a major public exhibition in Northwestern's Block Museum of Art, highlighting the 50th anniversary of PAS: "Living Tradition in Africa and the Americas: The Legacy of Melville J. and Frances S. Herskovits" <https://africanstudies.northwestern.edu/docs/publications-research/working-papers/guyer-mack-1998.pdf>. And in her last major project with the program, Jane, with African historian LaRay Denzer, held a conference involving distinguished participants from Africa and the US that celebrated the program's connection to Northwestern's first African PhD, economist Pius Okigbo (1956), and re-engaged with some of his prescient challenges to economic development theory. (Later published as a collection: *Vision and Policy in Nigerian Economics: The Legacy of Pius Okigbo*, 2005).

How, then, can I best sum up Jane's tenure as PAS director and friend? One was the extraordinary extent to which she went to promote a huge spectrum of the best of Africanist scholarship, both at Northwestern and in the world, whether from her own anchors lay in the social sciences, or in the humanities. But the contributions for which she was most appreciated here were her efforts to build PAS by investing so much of her time and insights in the careers of its constituents, turning all of us into eager collaborators in the quest for new understandings of Africa. Her scholarly brilliance was so big, it lifted our work far beyond its original moorings, and set it into worlds of significance we had never envisioned. In fact, the results of most of Jane's efforts here, whether measured in time or in direct personal engagement, arguably did not appear on her own CV. Rather, they appeared on those of others, where they continue to multiply.

And yet—despite what we know were Jane's extraordinary sacrifices of time and energy, and all the ideas she freely shared with us—it somehow seemed that the appreciation was mutual. After Jane died, her husband Bernie was unambiguous about how she had valued her time at Northwestern: It was her favorite job, he declared.

*Caroline Bledsoe is professor emerita of anthropology at Northwestern University.*

## ISITA-CSMC workshop emphasizes multidisciplinary approaches to manuscript studies

*Rebecca Shereikis*

A November 16–18, 2023 workshop at the University of Hamburg marked another stage in the ongoing collaboration between ISITA, the Herskovits Library of African Studies, and the “Cluster of Excellence, Understanding Written Artefacts” based at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg. The collaboration aims to advance understanding of the written heritage of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts from Africa by strategically connecting the scholarly, library, and laboratory resources of Northwestern and the University of Hamburg.

The workshop, titled “Touching, Seeing, Hearing, Reading: Voyage into Islamic Manuscripts of West Africa,” approached the study of manuscripts from a holistic perspective as both containers and content, artefacts, and texts. Hamburg-based organizers Dmitry Bondarev, Darya Ogorodnikova, and Mauro Nobili brought together scholars from three continents who specialized in various aspects of manuscript studies.

In the first session, “Manuscripts as Objects,” scholars offered new perspectives on the material aspects of West African manuscripts. Topics included the following: copying as a generative, rather than derivative, practice (Susana Molins Lliteras); the connection between Italian paper production and African paper usage through the trans-Saharan trade (Michaëlle Biddle); the function of certain codicological features of West African Islamic manuscripts (Dmitry Bondarev); a proposed new taxonomy and periodization of West African script styles (Mauro Nobili); and a reconsideration of a nineteenth-century corpus of commercial letters from Timbuktu as a relatively recent innovation, rather than surviving fragments of an older practice (Bruce Hall).

The second session, “Content of Manuscripts,” included presentations on the methodology and findings emerging from the large-scale cataloging of West African manuscripts underway at the Hill Museum in Minnesota (Ali

Diakite); manuscripts on logic from the southwestern Sahara and the intellectual contributions of Ghadīja Mint al-‘Aqil al-Daymāniya, an important nineteenth-century female logician (David K. Owen); debates between scholars on the permissibility of practicing the “sciences of the unseen” (Ariela Marcus-Sells); and the legal? commercial? agreements of Ibadi communities in Mzab, Algeria (Yacine Daddi Addoun).

The third session, “Languages of Manuscripts,” explored the many facets and functions of Ajami (the phenomenon of writing of African languages in Arabic script), reflecting the CSMC’s ongoing, pioneering research in this area. A team of Malian scholars presented findings from research in Timbuktu and Djenné on the relationship between Ajami types, languages, and topics across multiple collections (Ismaila Zangou Barazi, Hamadou Boly, Sambī Khalil Magassouba, Aguibou Sako, Misbaho Traoré, and Abdulkarim Touré). Additional papers explored how Ajami— in this case, “Old Kanembu”— functioned as a teaching tool to impart the meaning of the Qur’an in ancient Kanem (Dmitry Bondarev); how manuscripts containing Songhay Ajami help us understand how the language’s sound has changed over time (Lamin Souag); and the potential and challenges of translating Ajami texts into English for a broad audience (Mustapha Hashim Kurfi).

An exemplar of the interdisciplinary, holistic approach to manuscript studies was the case study presented by Jannis Kostelnik, Darya Ogorodnikova, and Khaoula Trad (all of University of Hamburg). These scholars analyzed one manuscript from the University of Hamburg’s library (Cod. in Scrin. 227a): a nineteenth-century manuscript from Futa Jallon. Written in Arabic and local languages, it contains one family’s collection of prayers and healing and protective recipes. Study of the colophons yielded a wealth of details on the manuscript’s owners, origin, contexts and circumstances of production and use. This case study demonstrated how examining both content and paracontent of a single written artefact can offer fascinating insights into the manuscript tradition, healing and talismanic practices, and multilingualism (extending to the realm of writing) in a given context.

A highlight of the workshop was the session featuring analysis of a manuscript from Northwestern University’s Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies: Paden 417, a copy of the “Mukhtasar” of Khalil b. Ishaq b. Musa al-Jundi, a fourteenth-century handbook of Maliki legal principles,

copies of which are commonly found in West African libraries. Herskovits Curator Esmeralda Kale brought the manuscript to Hamburg for analysis at the Center's laboratory because it presented a research question with the potential to be advanced through interdisciplinary methods. This manuscript contains paper with a 1551 watermark. It also has annotations in Hausa. The earliest known writing in Hausa Ajami, however, dates to the early nineteenth century and the question thus arises: Could the manuscript be a much earlier example of writing in Hausa Ajami? What can, and material analysis of the manuscript's ink, combined with contextual knowledge of writing and pedagogical practices, along with linguistic analysis, reveal about when the Hausa annotations were written on this manuscript? While the Center's laboratory team presented preliminary findings at the workshop from a series of nondestructive tests involving infrared, x-ray, and chemical analysis, sharing of the full findings awaits completion of data analysis.

The keynote lecture by Charles Stewart (emeritus, University of Illinois and former ISITA director of programming) was a rare opportunity to hear a senior scholar reflect candidly on the past and future of the academic field he helped build. Titled "If 2023 Were 1963: Mapping My Research Agenda. Reflections on Manuscripts and Arabic Script Writing in Africa," Stewart identified promising avenues for research emerging from the quantitative analysis now possible through

the West African Arabic Manuscript Database (<https://waamd.lib.berkeley.edu>). By revisiting the "Core Curriculum" concept (first articulated in a 2011 essay co-authored with Bruce Hall) with a much-expanded dataset, Stewart has identified the 317 titles and 201 authors at the core of West Africa's manuscript culture. This robust literary tradition was "locally generated, ministering to diverse individual and community needs" and emerged in the nineteenth century. Stewart urged the next generation of scholars to articulate research questions centered on this nineteenth century tradition, which in fact is comprised of several interlocked manuscript cultures (geographic, chronological, and thematic). It is here, he argued, rather than in revisiting the overly romanticized Timbuktu manuscripts in search of a much earlier classical tradition, that the future of the field lies.

Stewart concluded by observing that his generation, in their enthusiasm for substantiating that West Africa had written traditions, looked at West Africa's manuscript culture in isolation from the oral societies from which it grew. Contemplating how the primarily oral culture of West Africa has influenced how Arabic and Ajami literacy developed, Stewart laid several promising dissertation topics on the table. The torch was passed to the next generation.

*Rebecca Shereikis is the associate director of ISITA.*

## Collaboration with Boston University on Ajami in West Africa comes to fruition

From 2019 to 2022, ISITA's associate director Rebecca Shereikis and Northwestern University Libraries collaborated with a team led by Fallou Ngom and Daivi Rodima-Taylor at Boston University on the project "Ajami Literature and the Expansion of Literacy and Islam: The Case of West Africa," funded by a Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project aims to advance understanding of Ajami (the phenomenon of writing languages other than Arabic using modified Arabic script) by exploring the Ajami literatures of four main "Islamic languages" of West Africa: Hausa, Mandinka, Fula, and Wolof

The result, an open access web gallery, contains digitized images of twenty manuscripts from each language, alongside transcriptions into Latin script, translations into English and French, and video-recorded recitations or readings of many of the manuscripts. The web gallery can be accessed at <https://sites.bu.edu/nehajami/>.

Seventeen of the Hausa Ajami manuscripts in the gallery are from the Herskovits Library of African Studies' collection of Arabic Manuscripts from West Africa and were digitized by Northwestern University Libraries' Digital Collections team.

The project team also produced a special issue of the journal *Islamic Africa* (vols. 14.2 and 15.1), titled "Ajami Literacies of Africa: The Wolof, Mandinka, Hausa, and Fula Traditions." The contributions to the double special issue situate African Ajami studies within participatory multimedia and digital archiving approaches and analyze the role of Ajami literacy in mediating grassroots communities. They enable unique comparative perspectives on Ajami use in four major West African languages, contributing to the interpretive and contextual analysis of Ajami literacies and their social role.



*Workshop attendees with Mohameden Ahmedou.*

## Visiting calligrapher instructs and inspires

From October 13–20, ISITA hosted visiting artist and scholar Mohameden Ahmedou. A professional calligrapher and historian of the Arabic script based in Noukachott, Mauritania, Ahmedou also helps oversee his family’s collection of manuscripts in Trarza, Mauritania. He has completed several decorated copies of the Holy Qur’an, including the Mauritanian Mushaf (the first Mauritanian printed copy of Qur’an), with a cover and extensive decorations inventively adapted from Mauritania wall art.

On October 18, Ahmedou delivered a talk at the Program of African Studies, drawing from his recent book (in Arabic), *Calligraphy and Manuscripts in “Bilad Shinqit” (Mauritania): From the Origins to the Late 20th Century* (Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Ministry of Culture, 2020). Ahmedou communicated his deep understanding of the history and importance of calligraphic arts in this region, gained through decades of experience as a practitioner, researcher, and manuscript custodian.

Through partnership with the Middle East and North African Languages Program, Ahmedou’s visit was integrated into an Arabic language class taught by Ragy Mikhaeel: “Reading Classical Arabic Texts: Manuscripts” (Arabic 316-2), which introduces students with advanced Arabic skills to reading and studying Arabic manuscripts in seven different script styles. Ahmedou visited the class twice, providing students with a historical overview of different script styles as well as hands-on instruction in calligraphy.

Ahmedou’s productive visit capped by a calligraphy workshop on October 19, open to the Northwestern community. Over twenty people, including students, faculty, and staff, took up calligraphy pens and tried their hand at replicating the letters. Most found that it was more difficult than they expected to create uniformly graceful shapes, curves, and lines, but they enjoyed the opportunity to learn from a master and to gain exposure to Arabic calligraphic traditions from outside of the Middle East.

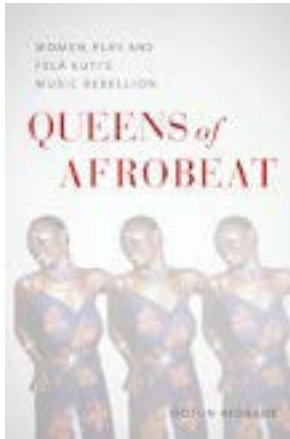
## Calligraphy: a bridge between the visual and the linguistic

Arabic calligraphy has been a fascinating activity to participate in, revealing unforeseen dimensions of learning that extend far beyond the conventional bounds of language study. Calligraphy necessitates a keen focus on the details of each letter’s structure. This heightened attention necessarily facilitates a deeper understanding of the distinct shapes and configurations of Arabic letters as well as their connections and positioning. Every stroke and curve required a level of attentiveness I hadn’t initially anticipated. The level of precision required for many of the calligraphy styles was shocking, and attempting to replicate them put into perspective how the manuscripts we studied with Ustadh Ragy were not just historical documents, but works of art.

Moreover, while I think that calligraphy is clearly artistic, its communicative value cannot be understated. Exploring different styles added a cultural dimension to my learning, broadening my appreciation for the language’s roots. It was fascinating to see how the use of calligraphy can emphasize and mute certain concepts, or how certain characteristics were more prominent during different eras. The benefit of having Ustadh Muhammad visit our class was significant. Calligraphy suddenly became a tangible, communicative act, a bridge that connects the visual and linguistic elements of the Arabic language. I would highly recommend the class to anyone interested in visual arts, calligraphy, or MENA culture.

*Reem Khalid, WCAS student*

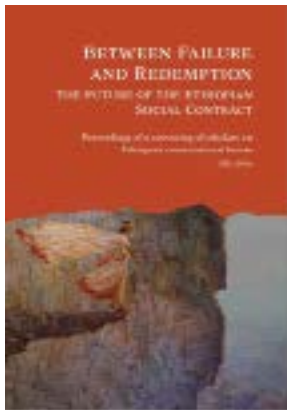




**Queens of Afrobeat: Women, Play, and Fela Kuti's Music Rebellion** (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2024).

**Professor Dotun Ayobade** (performance studies) highlights the role of Fela's queens in this study, examining the multifaceted role of the women performers involved in Fela's music and household. His study draws on wide-ranging interviews with surviving queens, ethnographic narratives, newspaper archives, and close readings of album covers, photographs, and promotional materials to understand the women who surrounded Fela Kuti on stage and in everyday life.

Not only were these artists crucial performers and backup singers for Kuti's most important compositions, but they also played central roles in his activism and campaigns of social protest against the Nigerian government from the 1970s to his death in 1997. *Queens of Afrobeat* weaves together an intricate narrative of women's participation in West African popular music. The stories of these remarkable women transform and uniquely personalize our understanding of the politics and performance of one of the major modern musical traditions in Africa.



**Between Failure and Redemption: The Future of the Ethiopian Social Contract: Proceedings of a Convening of Scholars on Ethiopia's Constitutional Future, Addis Ababa** (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Libraries in cooperation with the Northwestern Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, 2022).

This book contains papers, essays, and transcribed speeches that capture the perspectives of Ethiopian scholars from a wide variety of fields, including constitutional law, federalism, history, and political science. It addresses the social and political challenges faced by the Ethiopian state, especially the strengths and weaknesses of its constitutional structures and ways of building a resilient polity. The book resulted from a collaboration between Addis Ababa University's College of Law and Governance Studies, Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program, Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law, and the Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. This conference was held in Addis Ababa in May 2022 during a ceasefire. The participants described the country's situation variously as "a state of war," "a political unsettlement," "a revolutionary situation," "an inflection point," "a transitional moment," and "a state nearing failure." Hostilities resumed in August until another ceasefire in November 2022 that led to a peace agreement negotiated in South Africa; however, the political situation remains precarious.



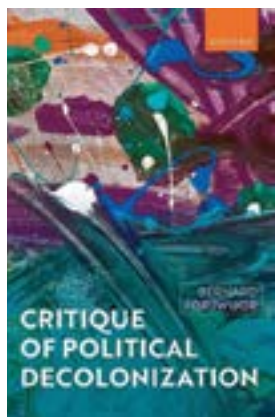
**Black Existential Freedom** (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2022).

**Alumna Nathalie Etoke** (2006) contends that Blackness is not inherently synonymous with victimhood but that it is inextricable from existential freedom and the struggle for political liberation. Her book presents an existential analysis of continental and diasporic African experiences through critical interpretations of music, film, and fiction that portray what it means to be human— to persevere in the tension between life and physical, psychological, and social death—for the sake of freedom. Rooted in transdisciplinary perspectives and convergence of Africana existential philosophy, this book is not concerned with disciplinary boundaries or certain appropriations of European metaphysics that are committed to a reading of black “non-being.” *Black Existential Freedom* delves into the continuities and discontinuities of Black existence and the manifestations and meanings of Blackness within different countries, time periods, and sociopolitical contexts.



**Zanzibar Was a Country: Exile and Citizenship Between East Africa and the Gulf** (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2023).

**Alumnus Nathaniel Mathews** (2016) investigates the impact of the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 through the historical memory of its exile community in Oman. They represent a significant example of a contemporary Afro-Arab community with a living connection to Africa in diaspora. Known as “Zanzibaris” in Oman, they speak Swahili, sustain communal bonds formed initially in Africa, and still remember Zanzibar as an independent East African country. Although they come from all over East Africa, many are postrevolution exiles and emigrés from Zanzibar. Their life histories provide a framework for understanding the broader transregional entanglements of decolonization in Africa and the Arabian Gulf. Mathews maintains that the traumatic memories of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution are significant to nation-building on both sides of the Indian Ocean.



**Africa and Urban Anthropology: Theoretical and Methodological Contributions from Contemporary Fieldwork** (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis, 2023).

**Alumna Deborah Pellow** (1974) and coeditor **Suzanne Scheld** have put together a collection of scholarly chapters by anthropologists who specialize on the study African urbanization. Africa is currently one of the most rapidly growing regions. This volume offers valuable anthropological insight into urban Africa.

Consideration is given to the structures, social formations, and rhythms that constitute the definition of an African city, town, or urban space, and to current concepts for thinking about African cities in the twenty-first century. The contributors examine topics including notions of belonging, the effects of globalization, colonialism, and transnationalism on African urban life, the cultural dimensions of infrastructure and public resources, mobility, labor issues, spatial organization, language, and popular culture trends, among other theme. The book reflects on how the ethnography of urban Africa fits within anthropology and urban studies, and on new theoretical concepts and methodologies that can be created through anthropological fieldwork in African cities.

## African queens regnant

*Esmeralda Kale, LaRay Denzer, Gene Kannenberg, Jr*

From the very beginning of African history, many women have acted as queens, assuming roles of power and authority. In ancient times women were often corulers with men, but sometimes became the sole ruler. Besides Egypt, queens also appear in centers of female authority, like Nubia/Meroe, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Northern Nigeria, Angola/Congo, Senegal, and some Yoruba kingdoms in Nigeria.

Queens have also acted as protectors of their kingdoms where they have led armies against invasion. Some of this heroism has become part of popular culture. Nationalist movements continue to use these women as symbols of resistance, e.g. Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba and the legendary Queen Amina of Zazzu. Even today, their stories are being rounded out by academics and other scholars. Since the Roman invasion of North Africa, these queens have been at the forefront of anti-imperialist resistance. These leaders serve as symbols of endurance and excellence for young women today.

### **HATSHEPSUT, c.1479 BCE–c.1458 BCE:**

The second confirmed Egyptian woman pharaoh proved women could be powerful rulers. Considered one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs—man or woman—she reigned in her own right and attained unprecedented power for a woman, obtaining the throne from her stepson, adopting the full titles and regalia of a pharaoh.

Hatshepsut brought great wealth and artistry to her land. She sponsored one of Egypt's most successful trading expeditions, bringing back gold, ebony, and incense from Punt. She secured her legacy by building structures that still stand today. She added two-hundred-foot-tall obelisks at the great temple complex at Karnak, one still intact. And she built the mortuary Temple of Deir el Bahri, a structure with several floors of columns in front, where she would eventually be buried.

Hatshepsut was usually depicted as a man, complete with muscles and a beard, as was the artistic tradition for pharaohs. But historians know the truth: She always made sure the art included a reference to being a woman, such as "Daughter of Re" or "His Majesty, Herself." When she died in 1458 B.C., Egypt would not see as powerful a female ruler for another 1,400 years, when Cleopatra VII came to the throne.



### **AMINA OF ZAZZAU (ZARIA), 1576–1610**

Queen Amina was a warrior queen of the Zazzau kingdom, an ancient kingdom that is now part of present-day Nigeria. A skilled marksman and horse rider, Queen Amina led her army of 20,000-foot soldiers and 1,000 cavalry troops into battle. For more than thirty-four years she waged war on her neighbors in her quest to expand her kingdom.

She also worked to improve her kingdom's infrastructure, building walls and ramparts around cities to protect against invaders. These walls have survived in parts of present-day Zaria and are known as "*ganuwar Amina*" [Amina's walls].

Legend has it that she took a new lover in every town she marched through, each of whom was said to meet the same unfortunate fate in the morning: "her brief bridegroom was beheaded so that none should live to tell the tale."

Under Queen Amina's rule, Zazzau became the center of both the prosperous North-South Saharan and the East-West Sudan trades.







## **NZINGA ANA DE SOUSA NZINGHA MBANDE (c.1583-1663)**

Nzinga ruled as queen of the Ambundu Kingdoms of Ndongo (1624–1663) and Matamba (1631–1663), located in present-day northern Angola. Her father, Ngola Kilombo Kia Kasenda, was the king of Ndongo. The military and political training she received as a child made her a formidable opponent against the Portuguese empire. In 1624, she assumed power over Ndongo after the suicide of her brother Mbandi, and she fended off the slave trade and war with the Portuguese.

In 1631, she conquered the Kingdom of Matamba, and then skillfully formed an alliance with the Dutch East India Company in 1641. Subsequently she married the warlord Kasanje to strengthen her position against the Portuguese. Nzinga continued to fight the Portuguese until she negotiated a peace treaty in 1656.

Long after her death, she inspired the successful 20th century armed resistance against the Portuguese that resulted in an independent Angola in 1975.

## **QUEEN RANAVALONA I OF MADAGASCAR (1778–1861).**

During her 33-year reign, Queen Ranavalona created Madagascar as an independent state. She defied the encroachment of European colonialism, protecting her borders from Britain and France and eliminating the influence of the Church Missionary Society within Madagascar.

She implemented forced labor to develop infrastructure. Prisoners could prove their innocence or guilt by ingesting the poisonous nut from the Tangena shrub. While often seen by historians as harsh, Ranavalona's rule maintained the cultural and political sovereignty of her nation.



## **TAITU OF ETHIOPIA (1883–1913)**

Taitu, Ethiopia's strong queen (1883–1889) and empress (1889–1913), was an adept diplomat who played a significant role in stopping Italian imperialist plans for Ethiopia. She was a key player in the conflict over the Treaty of Wuchale with Italy. Discovering that the treaty's Italian language version made Ethiopia an Italian protectorate (a significant clause left out of the Amharic language version), she tore up this "agreement."

When Italy invaded from its Eritrean colony in 1896, Taitu marched north with the emperor and the imperial army, commanding a force of cannons.

At the Siege of Mek'ele, the empress had her men cut off the water supply to a fortress full of Italians, who surrendered ten days later. It is said that Empress Taytu's battalion included female warriors— each escorted by men bearing red parasols to shield the women warriors from the sun.

A month later at the Battle of Adwa, she and her husband each led their own battalion on the front lines and the Italian forces were decisively defeated. This victory was the most significant of any African army battling European colonialism. Menelik II and Taytu Betul were temporarily in possession of 4,000 prisoners of war.



*Esmeralda Kale, the George & Mary LeCron Foster Curator of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies; LaRay Denzer, editor-in-chief of PAS newsletter, and Gene Kannenberg, Jr, research and media assistant of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies.*

## Celebrating diversity: Swahili students shine at campus festivals

*Zainab Momany*

Amidst the vibrant cultural exchange and celebration on our campus, I had the privilege of preparing the Swahili students for the various festivals that were on our calendar. With dedication and enthusiasm, I ensured that they were ready to showcase the beauty and richness of the Swahili culture. They exceeded all expectations, filling our hearts with pride and joy. Let's have a look!



### **Jabulani Festival: Winter quarter**

The African Students Association hosted the annual Jabulani Festival. Swahili students took center stage, delighting the audience with their performance of two songs, "Jambo Bwana" and "Wageni wako wapi?" Applause filled the air as their voices harmonized, echoing the spirit of unity and celebration. But it wasn't just the music that stole the show; the aroma of tantalizing African delicacies wafted through the Black House, representing the rich cultures across the continent, from different Nigerian and other African stews, to the famous injera from Ethiopia.

### **Festival of Language and Cultures: Spring Quarter**

Swahili students took the stage once more to share the beauty of the language and culture. With graceful movements and infectious energy, they danced to the melodious "Pete yangu" tunes by renowned Kenyan artists Nadia Mukami and Bahati. Choreographed by the talented Mwalimu Zainab, their performance captivated the audience, leaving them in awe of the student's talent and passion. One thing that became clear during this festival is that the spirit of unity and joy lives in the hearts of Swahili students, enriching the campus with their warmth.



### **Cooking Kenyan food: Spring quarter**

Swahili students showcased their culinary prowess by preparing a sumptuous Kenyan feast. This included the staple ugali and sukumawiki and the kachumbari salad, each dish a testament to the flavors of Kenya. Using Kenyan spices such as roycro mchuzi mix, they crafted succulent beef and chicken stews that left taste buds tingling with delight. Amidst the sizzle of pans and the fragrant spices, the aroma of home filled the air. Behind our culinary masterpiece was the skillful hand of Professor Mwangi, who wowed the crowd with his authentic Kenyan tea brewed with "Fahari ya Kenya" leaves and aromatic masala.

*Zainab Momanyi is the 2023/24 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) for Swahili.*

## Student reflections on learning Swahili



*Lauren Gomez*

Without a doubt, embarking on my journey to learn Swahili has been one of my most enriching experiences at Northwestern. It has been a gateway to connecting with a passionate community of educators as well as understanding a diverse and vibrant culture, and after almost two years of studying the language, I can confidently say that my Northwestern experience would feel incomplete without it.

Swahili as a language, with its melodious flow, challenging noun classes, and rich vocabulary has captivated me. However, my Swahili journey has also transcended the conventional bounds of a typical classroom. Every day that I step into Professor Mwangi's classroom, I not only leave with a new set of linguistic skills, but I leave inspired. It is an environment where language lessons are intertwined with cultural education through music, dance, and storytelling. This immersive environment fosters cultural and interpersonal

connections that encourage me to disseminate my passion and knowledge to a broader community.

Furthermore, engaging with the PAS community has been a cornerstone of my learning experience. Language tables, cultural festivals, and cooking classes have deepened my understanding of East African society as well as allowed me to practice my linguistic abilities in a live setting. I have met other students with diverse backgrounds and experiences where the unity of Swahili allows us to connect, learn, and explore. Such experiences have demonstrated to me that the Swahili classroom is certainly not confined to four walls; it extends to wherever there is a community to converse with and experiences to be had.

Reflecting, the phrase "*Haraka haraka haina baraka*" (hurry, hurry has no blessing) echoes the nature of my Swahili learning experience: to proceed thoughtfully and embrace each moment of connection and cultural discovery.

*Lauren Gomez is an undergraduate at Northwestern University.*



*Elianna Phillips*

On June 2nd, 2004, I was born in the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. Does that mean you're Kenyan? Unfortunately not. In Kenya, one can only receive citizenship by birth if one of their parents holds citizenship. And neither my Canadian mother nor my American father did— so I received citizenship for Canada and the USA, but not for Kenya.

At the time, my mother had been living in Kenya for 6 years and my father for 4. They had initially planned to raise me there, but when job opportunities were presented abroad, our family of three departed Kenya after just 6 months of my infant life.

I was raised in New York City and did not return to Nairobi until nearly 20 years later — so I don't have any memories from there. Ever since leaving, my parents have reminisced: "we have to take you back, you have to see where you were born!". They have decorated our home with mudcloth, maps, carvings and photos, and raised me with children's

books like *Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book*. The love my parents hold for Kenya and my natal connection to the country inspired me to pursue Swahili at Northwestern.

Having now studied it for over a year, learning Swahili has been an incredible experience, and I have become more proficient in the language than I had ever expected to. Professor Mwangi has also contributed hugely to my love of learning Swahili through his enthusiasm and support. Swahili is not only one of my favorite classes at Northwestern, but a way for me to feel more connected to my country of birth.

This past December, I had the opportunity to finally return to Kenya and travel there with my parents, as they have talked about doing for so many years. From swimming in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Watamu, to seeing lions attack a buffalo while on safari in Maasai Mara, to revisiting the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi, the trip was beautiful, memorable, and eye-opening. Plus, I got to practice my Swahili! *Jambo! Habari za asubuhi?*

*Elianna Phillips is an undergraduate at Northwestern University.*

## Community News

Congratulations to former PAS interim director **Wendy Griswold** (emerita sociology), who was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2023.

Congratulations to **Lamin Keita** (political science), who earned his PhD, which is titled “The Politics of Community Resilience to Armed Jihadism in West Africa.” His supervisor is Will Reno.

**Akinwumi Ogundiran** (history) has been elected to the Fellow of Antiquaries of London and Fellow of the Archaeological Association of Nigeria. He delivered the Distinguished African and African Diaspora Studies Lecture at New York University, titled “Critics of the Oyo Empire and Atlantic Modernity in the Age of Revolution: Rethinking Black Atlantic Historiography with Archaeology and Òrìṣà Archives.” December 4, 2023.

PAS says a fond farewell to **Florence Mugambi** who has left Northwestern Library for position in the Library of Congress. We wish her the best of luck in her new position.

Alumnus **Chernoh Bah** (2023) has accepted a position as a postdoctoral research associate at the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

In November, visiting scholar **Eric Berman** presented findings of the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Initiative at the Forum on Digital Law and Governance as part of the 10th World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China. He focused on how civil society has used the Internet and public data to enhance governance in the reality of peace and security and the promotion of law and order.

Alumnus **Moses Khisa** (2016) coauthored “The Deepening Politics of Fragmentation in Uganda: Understanding Violence in the Rwenzori Region,” **African Studies Review** 65(4), 2022: 939-964.

**Amanda Logan** (anthropology) copublished with graduate student Eli Kuto (anthropology) an article, “The Hand-pump Flotation System in Africa: A Low Cost, Energy, and Water Efficient Plant Recovery Option,” in *Nyame Akuma: Bulletin of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists*, vol. 99, 2023.

**Peter Mwangi** (Swahili) presented a paper, “Transforming Language Instruction Project: Swahili Test and Curriculum Development,” at the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) annual conference at Indiana University in April.

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