

# African Studies

## 1984-85 Alumni Newsletter

### Letter From the Director

In August 1984 I had the honor to succeed Charles Stewart as director of the African Studies Program. The program and I owe a great deal to Charles. He succeeded Victor Uchendu in 1980 and did much to consolidate Victor's legacy. Charles had an open administrative and leadership style. He had endless patience in educating a resistant advisory committee and a deep commitment to getting people to work together. He tried to integrate the program's regular teaching and special activities. He continued Victor's idea of an annual spring seminar and introduced a more informal round table in the fall. His leadership was respected well beyond the program. My own debt is too personal to recount in detail. The outline is that Charles brought me to Illinois in the first place and then worked hard to keep me here. He has been a model colleague; so it is a great pleasure to know that Charles will continue to serve the program as teacher, scholar, and sage.

My first year in office has been taken up with learning the job, much of which consists of seeing that things continue to run as well as they have in the past. Yet there is scope for new developments. I'd like to see B.A. and M.A. degrees in African studies. Secondly, we are in the midst of a wonderful infusion of new talent. That talent needs to be nurtured. Courses need to be developed that will do full justice to Africa's cultural riches and to its importance for contemporary social science. Finally, we need to do more collaborative research. The agenda is a long one; no doubt some of you have ideas of items to add to it. Why not let me hear those ideas?

Donald Crummey  
Director

### Major Developments

In spring 1985 the program was again successful in applying for funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Through Title VI of the Higher Education Act the department will fund ninety-two centers of international education. We will be one of ten centers concerned with Africa. Title VI funds make possible our special events, outreach activities, and a good bit of language teaching. They also will provide fellowships for seven students. The new funding cycle will run from August 1985 to August 1988. Success in this competition is avidly sought, not just for the dollars, but for the external stamp of approval which is only granted after a rigorous review process.

In September 1984 the program launched a drive to have its status upgraded to that of a "center." The change will be largely one in name but will place us a little more on a footing equivalent to that of a department. We have had the active support of the college and its dean and the approval of the Board of Trustees. Our proposal has now been sent to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which must give final approval. We hope that this will be complete by the beginning of the next academic year.

### Program Activities

*Symposium.* The spring symposium has become the major focus of our annual programming. In April 1985 we organized our twelfth symposium jointly with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and looked at the impact of international financial institutions on Third World economies. Two case studies were chosen: Brazil and the Ivory Coast. There were three sessions, and each had two papers: one from a Brazilian and one from an Ivorian. The Ivorian papers were presented by members of the Ivorian Center for Economic and Social Research (CIRES) of the University of Abidjan. Dr. Tchetché N'Guessan addressed the impact of the World Bank and the African development bank; Dr. Moussa Bamba explored the impact of the private



Director Crummey and former Director Stewart with Betty Ann Glende, administrative secretary



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foreign sector; and Dr. Kouadio Yao looked at the impact of the IMF. The symposium also benefited from the participation of the following Africanists: John Loxley, Illinois alumnus Wayne Nafziger, Amon Nikoi, Bonnie Campbell, and Richard Stryker. John Due provided the expert direction along with his Brazilian colleague Werner Baer. The symposium was a critical success.

**Round Table.** This event was initiated in 1980 and has since grown in stature. For fall 1984 Professor Bokamba put together a program which rivaled the symposium. About a dozen people came to campus in November to discuss "Language, Literacy and Communication in Africa." They were joined by an equal number of local people, graduate students prominent among them. Professor Abraham Demoz gave the keynote on "Language and Literacy in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia." There were four

working sessions distinguished by the attempt to consider the interaction of language, government policy, national development, and literacy. As with the symposium, the round table enjoyed the cosponsorship of some six different units and organizations.

**Outreach.** Outreach continues to be an important part of our activities, as it has been for almost twelve years. Outreach takes many forms and has many potential audiences. Our faculty and students make presentations to churches, colleges, community groups, and via the media. However, most of our energy goes into aid to teachers in primary and secondary schools, especially for development of curriculum materials. We have now amassed a large amount of such material and have just published a second, revised edition of the compendium *Curriculum Materials for Teachers*. This publication tries to

convey basic information on a wide variety of topics and to provide teachers with guidance on how to communicate the information. We sell this book for \$10.00 per copy. We have also published a catalogue, *Film and Video Resources about Africa*, which lists and annotates all the Africa-related resources (over 200 titles) in the University of Illinois Film Center, the largest university-affiliated film rental center in the country. All these titles are available for low rental charges from the film center, while the catalogue is free on request from University of Illinois Film Center, 1325 S. Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820. The film catalogue was compiled and edited by Louise Crane, our outreach coordinator, who joined us in 1980. Louise is also responsible for the African material in *Update*, a joint quarterly production of four Illinois area studies centers.

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### African Languages and the Microcomputer

The microcomputer has hit African Studies! We do have a word processor tucked away in the back of the office, but the main impact is a teaching one. With support from the U.S. Department of Education, Professor Bokamba is directing a project to produce introductory materials for Swahili and Wolof for microcomputer use. It sounds simple enough but is actually pretty complicated, since the program entails a full "sound track." Native speakers are writing all the lessons and doing all the talking, but they have to draw on technical experts for linguistic questions as well as for the actual computer, video, and sound production. We hope to use some of the programs in our courses next fall, and all along there has been a close interaction between the microcomputer project and our regular language courses. Swahili and Wolof are our most popular languages. Swahili needs no comment, but it may surprise some of you to learn of Wolof's popularity. We had sixty-one students enrolled for it at the introductory and intermediate levels in the spring of 1985! This is probably the largest single group of students anywhere in the United States studying one African language. Wolof is very widely spoken in Senegal and in Gambia. Eyamba and his coworkers are well aware of the limitations of this form of language-learning. No one could ever fully learn to speak and use a language without living interaction with speakers of that language, and we don't pretend to provide a substitute for that. But when the project is complete, it will allow students without access to native speakers to make a firm start in learning Swahili and Wolof.

### The Abidjan Connection

In 1983 the center obtained a three-year grant from the U.S. Information Agency to support an exchange of faculty between Illinois and the National University of the Ivory Coast in Abidjan. Why Abidjan? Center faculty and students are interested in practically all parts of the continent. Illinois has had active connections to a number of African institutions such as Njala University College in Sierra Leone, the University of Dakar, the University of Dar es Salaam, and the University of Benin in Nigeria. The Ivorian connection is built on a relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture in Abidjan and our College of Agriculture, which brought to campus a coterie of Ivorian students, impressive in both numbers and quality. The Ivorian Center for Economic and Social Research wanted to build on that relationship. By the time the grant is complete, the exchange will have drawn on faculty in a wide range of disciplines, although its core is in the humanities and social sciences. Ivorian visitors represent ethnosociology, mathematics, economics, and history; Illinois visitors to Abidjan represent outreach, art history, anthropology, geography, history, and economics. We have drawn on this grant to bolster such regular programming as the spring symposium and next fall's round table, which will examine the relations between the Ivory Coast and its neighbors through the movements of peoples and ideas. The value of this grant to our center has been greatly enhanced by the addition to our permanent core faculty of two specialists on the Ivory Coast, Professors Gottlieb and Bassett, who are highlighted below. They join Professor Anita Glaze in giving us a strong concentration of expertise on this country.



*Eyamba Bokamba, computer project director, and a group of project staff*

## Seminars and Lectures

One important role of the center is to encourage the exchange of information. Two key institutions for doing this are the Wednesday sack-lunch seminars and the occasional lecturers series. We held twenty-two sack lunch meetings this year. Faculty members made most of the presentations. Three newcomers spoke this year. Tom Bassett of geography is highlighted below. Kate Cloud of INTERPAKS (The International Program for Agricultural Knowledge Systems) told us about the impact of USAID-sponsored development projects on women in the West African Sahel. Alice Deck spoke about African women's autobiographies. Although freshly involved with the center, Alice came to campus several years ago and holds a joint appointment in the English Department and the Afro-American Studies and Research Program. Students also contributed substantially, as the following list reveals: Carla Heath of communications; Andi Dunn of linguistics; Carol Spindel of art history; and Bob Carlson and Margaret Fivawo of anthropology.

The center brought about a dozen visitors to campus for special lectures. Four examples will give you a flavor of the whole. In September, G. Niangoran-Bouah of the University of Abidjan spoke about oral history and drumology. In November, Ge Ji of the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, spoke about southern Africa. In February, Ilunga-Kabongo, the director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Political Studies and Documentation of the University of Kinshasa, spoke on the current situation in Zaire. And finally, in March, Edward Ako (Ph.D., 1982) of the University of Yaounde, Cameroon, gave the Fourth Annual Alumni Lecture on international trends in black literature.

## Faculty News

The center boasts a core faculty of over thirty. It's too vigorous a group to allow for its activities to be recorded in detail, so only highlights will be recorded here.

In April we suffered the loss through death of **Morris Davis**, professor in the Department of Political Science. Morris had been associated with the center since its founding. He was interested in disasters and how governments and the international community respond to them. He wrote an important book on the Biafran war and on the role played in it by international relief agencies. He organized our 1981 round table on refugees. Morris succumbed to cancer after a battle of several years. A scholarship fund has been set up in his name in the department.

**John Due** of the Department of Economics retired at the end of the year. John, too, was a founding member of the center. He is an expert in public finance and consulted for a number of African governments, most recently the Sudan and Zambia. John had a hand in the training of a number of our Ph.D.s and was co-organizer of the 1985 spring symposium on Africa and the international financial order. We hope that John will continue to be associated with the center.

This year we enjoyed the presence of two visitors, **Tom Bassett** and **Alma Gottlieb**, both of whom accepted permanent appointments with effect from next academic year. Tom came to geography from the University of California at Berkeley, where he completed his Ph.D. in 1984 with a dissertation entitled "Food, Peasantry and the State in the Northern Ivory Coast, 1898-1982." Tom is interested in what impact the rapid development of the country as a whole has had on its northern region and particularly on the production of food there. He did fieldwork among the Senufo and Dyula people. He is teaching a general course on the geography of the Third World and is developing an advanced level survey of African geography. Alma actually joined us as a visitor in 1983, shortly after receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, where she had enjoyed the supervision of the late, distinguished Victor Turner. Alma is also an Ivorianist and did her fieldwork with the Beng people. Her interests are in the cultural and symbolic area, and she has already published a number of articles. Alma has taught our core course, AFRST 222, "An Introduction to Modern Africa" and a variety of courses in the Department of Anthropology.

Center faculty are very active internationally. **George Yu** of political science has been busy building contacts between American and Chinese Africanists. **Jean Due** of agricultural economics consults regularly in eastern Africa on a beans and cowpeas project. **Eyamba Bokamba** was one of twenty-seven African linguists and observers invited to attend a "Meeting of Linguistic Experts" convened by the Organization of African Unity Inter-African Bureau of Languages (OAU-BIL) at Kampala in June. The meeting, which Bokamba cochaired, wrote and approved a "Language Charter for Africa," along the lines of the "Cultural Charter for Africa," to be submitted to the July meeting of OAU ministers. The meeting also reviewed the OAU-BIL's activities and considered the establishment of a Pan-African Linguistic Association (PALA) to promote research on all aspects of African languages. **Donald Crumney** attended the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa in November and then spent another five weeks in the country doing historical research. Since returning he has made frequent presentations on the Ethiopian situation and on African drought and famine relief.

## Student Activities

Students are active in all dimensions of the center's activities. We have about 100 graduate students interested in Africa and award about twenty-five graduate degrees each year for African work. A handful of undergraduates concentrates on the continent, and hundreds touch on it. During 1984-85 nine graduate students held Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for African work. They studied agricultural economics, anthropology, history, law, linguistics, and political science. As a condition of their fellowship they also studied an African language: Afrikaans, Arabic, Mandinka, Portuguese, and Swahili.

The center encourages student research through a prize for the best paper produced during an academic year. The 1984-85 award went to Tony Olden from the Graduate School of Library Science for a paper on "Constraints on the Development of Public Library Service in Nigeria." However, keen competition came from Stephen Schmidt of political science with his paper on "Revolution in South Africa? A Preliminary Test of a Middle Range Theory."

The African Students Organization was very active this year under the leadership of Bernadette Dia (agricultural economics). The organization focused on famine and spawned the Ad Hoc Committee for African Famine Relief, which collected over \$5000. It brought speakers to campus and climaxed with an "Africa Week" in April. The African Women's Association was also active under the leadership of Cherub Antwi-Nsiah (geography). A highlight of their activities was the visit of the Nigerian novelist Flora Nwapa, who spoke about the role of the female writer in Africa today.

Students made a major impact on the anti-apartheid scene. The Student Government Association took up the cause of university divestment from companies involved in South Africa. Following an SGA presentation to the Board of Trustees in November, Trustee Albert Logan commissioned a study from the university administration looking at the legal and financial implications of divestment. Trustee Logan then moved that the university fully divest itself within two years and was supported by Trustee Smith. They failed to persuade the other board members, seven of whom voted against the motion and in favor of a counter-proposal which firmed up the current policy of investing in companies which adhere to the Sullivan Principles of affirmative action. It is probable that students will continue to be very active on this issue.

## Alumni News

**Adekunle Adsanya** (VOTEC 1984) is teaching at the Federal Polytechnic Institute, Ilaro, Nigeria; **Saad Noah Ahmed** (comp. lit. 1983) is teaching at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois; **Edward Ako** (comp. lit. 1982) spent 1984-85 as a visiting Fulbright professor in the Comparative Literature Program at Penn State University; **Dorothea Bedigian** (agronomy 1985) has accepted a postdoctoral position at Washington University, St. Louis; **Dierdre Birmingham** (agronomy 1984) is working with Farming Systems Kenya, an agricultural development project; **Maurice Chishimba** (linguistics 1984) is teaching in the Department of Education at the University of Zambia; **Sanza Clark** (educational policy studies 1985) is teaching in the Black Studies Department at Ohio State University; **Joshua Cleone** (education 1983) is teaching at the University of Liberia; **Ginny Danielson** (musicology) is working with Save the Children Fund in Egypt; **Felix Eburouh** (AHCE 1980) is serving on the Imo State, Nigeria, Schools Management Board; **Winnie Emoungu** is an officer with the U.S. Information Agency in Washington. **Rachel Friedlander** (library 1983) is working at the Illinois Geological Survey Library; **Mathurin Gbetibouo** (agricultural economics 1983) is a cocoa marketing economist for the World Bank; **Tom Gillard-Byers** (agricultural economics 1984) is working on the Western Sudan Agricultural Research Project at Kadugli in Kordofan; **Christine Guyonneau** (library 1984) is working at the University of Virginia Alderman Library; **Janice Jake** (linguistics 1983) is teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; **Ben Magura** (linguistics 1984) is taking up an appointment in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare; **Nick and Tendai Makura** are now in residence in the Diplomatic Eclave in New Delhi where Nick is Zimbabwe's High Commissioner to India; **Cephas Msipa** (agricultural engineering 1984) is working with the Department of Agriculture in the Sudan; **John Ndulue** (anthropology 1985) is teaching at the University of Cincinnati; **Maxwell Nkajimeje** (VOTEC ED 1984) is now teaching at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; **Linus Ogene** (VOTEC 1984) is teaching in the Department of Industrial Technology, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro; **Jerome Okereke** (library science 1984) is working in the library of the University of Ife, Nigeria; **Anthony Omo-Osagie** (physical education 1978) is sports director of Benin University, Bendel State, Nigeria; **Mukishi Pyndji** (plant pathology 1985) is working for the National Institute for Agricultural Research in Zaire; **Gabriel Rotimi** (biological and general sciences 1984) is teaching at Kwana State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria; **Geoffery Rugege** (linguistics 1984) is teaching at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina; **Lawrence Rupley** (economics 1969) is moving to Burkina Faso where he will be country representative for the Mennonite Central Committee; **Joseph Semboja** (economics 1983) is working for the Economic Research Bureau in Dar es Salaam; **Lawrence Shirley** (masters in comparative education 1973) received his Ph.D. in education from Ahmadu Bello University for a thesis on school mathematics curriculum implementation in northern Nigeria; **Teserach Ketema** (sociology 1985) is teaching demography at Texas Southern University in Houston; **Teshome Wondafrash** (food science 1982) is teaching at Texas A and M University; **Joseph Uduehi** (fine and applied arts 1984) is in the Department of Fine Art, University of Benin, Nigeria; **John Uko** (business administration 1983) is teaching in Ikot, Ikpene, Nigeria; **John Wembah-Rashid** (anthropology 1983) is working at the National Museum of Tanzania; **Anna Williams** (French 1984) is Senior French Master, St. Joseph's High School, Banjul, The Gambia; **Papp Williams** (health and safety education 1985) is National Health Planner for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in The Gambia.