

**Leon Dash - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign**

Leon Dash is Swanlund Professor of Journalism and Afro-American studies. Before joining the Illinois faculty in 1998, Dash spent 34 years at the *Washington Post*. He is recognized as the pioneer of "immersion journalism" where a reporter lives among the story subjects and gathers the story over a period of years. Leon Dash began his prolific journalism career in 1966 as a reporter for *The Washington Post*. From 1979 to 1984 he served as the newspaper's West African Bureau Chief, before joining the Investigative Desk. Dash is the author of several books, including *When Children Want Children: The Urban Crisis of Teenage Childbearing* (1989) and *The Shame of the Prisons* (co-authored with Ben Bagdikian, 1972). In 1995, he won the Pulitzer Prize for a series on living in poverty and a book based on this, *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America* (1996), has earned Dash much recognition, including first prize in the Best Book contest of the Harry Chapin Media Awards.

**Howard French – *The New York Times***

Howard French is a senior writer for *The New York Times*, and has reported for the newspaper since 1986 from Central America, the Caribbean, West and Central Africa, Japan, Korea, and now China. In 1997, his coverage of the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko won the Overseas Press Club of Americas award for best newspaper interpretation of foreign affairs. Author of *Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*, French is currently Shanghai Bureau Chief for *The New York Times*.

**Robert McChesney - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign**

Robert W. McChesney is Research Professor in the Institute of Communications Research and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science. He is the Executive Director of the Illinois Fellowships in Media and Communication Policy Program. McChesney is the President and co-founder of Free Press, a national media reform organization. He also hosts the "Media Matters" weekly radio program every Sunday afternoon on the NPR affiliate, WILL-AM. McChesney is a frequent contributor to *The Nation* and has published widely. His book *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* is considered a seminal text in the study of the political economy of media.

**Murray Oliver - Canadian TV – Kampala**

Murray Oliver is currently the Bureau Chief for Africa and correspondent in Kampala for CTV Television News. He has also been the general manager for *Monitor FM*, a radio station in Kampala as well as a reporter for *The Monitor*, Kampala's most respected daily newspaper. Prior to moving to Africa, Oliver was a reporter for CBC Television in Toronto and Saskatchewan. He is best known for his coverage of the war between Rwandan and Ugandan armies.

**Emira Woods - Foreign Policy in Focus, Washington D.C.**

Emira Woods, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, is an expert on international development issues especially related to Africa. Through many years of work with Interaction, Oxfam America and the World Bank, she has developed extensive knowledge about international financial and development institutions, gender issues and social justice movements. A Liberian by birth, Ms. Woods has an intimate knowledge of the economic and political situation in several African countries.

Center for African Studies  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Annual Media Symposium

**REPRESENTING  
CONFLICT**  
Challenges to fair & adequate coverage  
of the African continent in U.S. media

May 5, 2005  
3rd Floor  
Levis Faculty Center  
919 W. Illinois Street  
Urbana, IL

**Co-Sponsors:**  
**U.S. Department of Education**  
**College of Communications**  
with generous support from Leon Dash  
**Center for International Business Education and Research**



**10 a.m. — 10:15 a.m.**

Welcoming Remarks by Jean Allman  
Director, Center for African Studies, UIUC



**10:15 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Roundtable discussion**

*Nancy Benson*

*Boatema Boateng*

*Charles Cobb*

*Dan Connell*

*Leon Dash*

*Robert McChesney*

*Murray Oliver*

*Emira Woods*



**12:45 p.m. — 2:00 p.m. Lunch**

Second Floor, Levis Faculty Center



**2 p.m. Keynote**

Howard French

Author of *Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa*

Senior Writer and Bureau Chief, *The New York Times*



**3: 30 p.m. Closing Reception**

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## Biographical Information

### **Nancy Benson - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign**

Nancy Benson is an associate professor of journalism. She has nearly 30 years of experience as a broadcast journalist, including 10 years spent anchoring and reporting the news at WMAQ Radio in Chicago. She has been awarded a Benton Fellowship for Broadcast Journalists at the University of Chicago (1984), and Knight International Press Fellowship (2000) by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) in Washington, D.C. She is currently consulting with the University of Illinois Human Rights Law Clinic to develop a series of human rights radio programs for broadcast in Kenya.

### **Boatema Boateng – University of California, San Diego**

Boatema Boateng is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at UCSD. Boateng focuses her research on issues of power as they are manifested in institutional structures and in practices around the production and consumption of cultural products including information, knowledge and material objects. More specifically she is interested in the politics of global cultural flows, the history of African communications policymaking, popular uses of media technology in Africa, globalization and culture in feminist politics.

### **Charles Cobb – allAfrica.com**

Charles Cobb Jr. is senior writer and diplomatic correspondent for allAfrica.com and visiting professor at Brown University. Cobb is the coauthor (with Robert Moses) of *Radical Equations, Math Literacy and Civil Rights* (2001). Cobb originated the "Freedom School" idea and proposal that became a crucial part of the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project. In 1973, he was a staff member of the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa. A founding member of the National Association of Black Journalists, Cobb began his journalism career in 1974. In 1995, a two-part series on Eritrea, produced by Cobb, won the Harry Chapin Award for best radio broadcasting about a developing nation. He is currently at work on a new book: *Down Freedom's Main Line: A Southern Civil Rights Trail*.

### **Dan Connell – Simmons College**

Dan Connell is a lecturer in journalism and African politics at Simmons College in Boston. His reports and commentary on Africa and the Middle East have been carried by the BBC, Voice of America, AP, Reuters, *The Boston Globe*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Foreign Affairs* and other North American and European media, and he has consulted for numerous aid agencies and human rights organizations. A two-time MacArthur Foundation grantee, he is the author of six books, including *Against All Odds: A Chronicle of the Eritrean Revolution* (1997); *Rethinking Revolution* (2002); and a two-volume *Collected Articles on the Eritrean Revolution* (2003, 2004). His latest book, *Conversations with Eritrean Political Prisoners*, a collection of interviews with five leading Eritrean dissidents shortly before they were imprisoned in 2001, appeared in late 2004. In the 1980s, Connell founded and directed the Boston-based development agency Grassroots International, on whose board he now sits.