

### Eminent scholar of global African diaspora donates papers

The Herskovits Library of African Studies held a reception in May to honor renowned historian Joseph E. Harris, professor emeritus of history at Howard University and a 1965 Northwestern PhD, on the occasion of his donation of personal papers to University Libraries' archival collections.

Before the reception, librarian Gary Strawn interviewed Harris, who reminisced about choosing Northwestern for graduate study and becoming interested in African diaspora research.

Harris said that while studying at Howard in the early 1960s, he was encouraged by his MA adviser to transfer to Northwestern because of Melville J. Herskovits's work on Africa and African survivals in the US. At Northwestern, Harris completed his doctoral dissertation, "The Kingdom of Fouta Diallon," in 1965. He was the fourth student to write an African history dissertation; his Northwestern cohort included Hannah Abeodu Bowen Jones (1962) of Liberia, John E. Peterson (1963), Samuel Nwankwo Nwabara (1965) of Nigeria, and Isaria Kimambo (1967) of Tanzania—all of whom contributed to the growth of African studies. Harris then went to Dar es Salaam, where he attended the International Congress of African Historians, which marked the reorientation of African historiography from a colonial, Eurocentric approach to African-based methodologies and considerations. The conference brought together many rising African, European, and Soviet scholars—including J. F. Ade Ajayi, George Shepperson, and Terence Ranger—to discuss emerging themes in African history. Harris formed a lasting friendship with Shepperson, whose work on the intersections of African American and African ideas and organizations has influenced decades of scholarship.

Thereafter, Harris focused on the multidimensional study of the global African diaspora. Sociologist St. Clair Drake credits Harris with "almost single-handedly pulling together the African diaspora studies movement," largely due to his ability to navigate

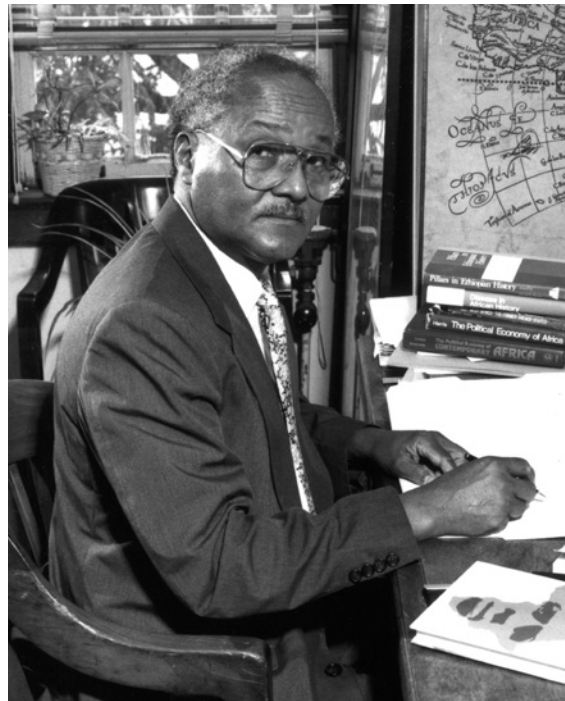


Photo courtesy of the Joseph E. Harris Papers, Northwestern University Archives

between academics and radical ideologues. Through conferences, monographs, articles, and edited collections, Harris expanded the concept of the diaspora beyond Europe and the Western hemisphere to include the Middle East and Asia. In 1977 he cofounded the *African Diaspora Studies Newsletter* with initial funding from UNESCO and the Ford Foundation.

Although Harris taught at several universities in the US and Africa, most of his teaching career was spent at Howard. In 2003 he received the African Studies Association Distinguished Africanist Award. Among his many publications are *The African Presence in Asia* (1971); *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941* (1994); *The African Diaspora in World History and Politics* (1994); and the edited volume *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (1982). The Herskovits Library and Northwestern University Archives are preparing Harris's professional archive for researchers.

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## PAS hosts fourth cohort of Mandela Washington Fellows

by Tiffany Williams-Cobleigh

This past summer the Program of African Studies hosted its fourth cohort of 25 young African leaders taking part in the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) program, the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) launched by President Obama in 2010. Mandela Washington fellows are extraordinary women and men between the ages of 25 and 35 from sub-Saharan Africa who successfully applied to the YALI program, which has grown increasingly competitive; this year 1,000 fellows were chosen from over 64,000 applicants. Fellows participated in six-week academic and leadership institutes at various US colleges and universities, focusing on one of three tracks: business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public management. Northwestern's 25 fellows, coming from 17 countries, participated in the business and entrepreneurship track.

MWF institutes combine academic lectures and coursework with leadership development, professional site visits, cultural activities, networking opportunities, and local community service. PAS partnered with Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management for the academic portion of the 2017 institute. Fellows had the opportunity to learn business and entrepreneurship theory and practice from Kellogg faculty and area business owners. Classroom time was supplemented with field visits to sites such as mHub, World Business Chicago, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Rotary International, and Google. Fellows also engaged with notable politicians such as Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky. Schakowsky talked about her experience as a community organizer and how that led her to politics. She encouraged the fellows to work toward positive change in their own communities and emphasized the need for more women in politics.



For the community service portion of the institute, the fellows partnered with the Y.O.U. (Youth & Opportunity United) Youth Entrepreneurship Summer (YES!) Camp. Fellows mentored students as they conceptualized their business ideas and later pitched their concepts before a panel of judges—something the fellows themselves did in the final week of the institute.

Following their six weeks at Northwestern, at the end of July the fellows joined with the other 975 fellows for a final three-day summit in Washington, DC. Among the summit's speakers was Nigerian economist and philanthropist Tony Elumelu, who operates a foundation that fosters African entrepreneurship and leadership. A proponent of "Africapitalism," he urged the fellows to "fulfill the aspirations and dreams" that Nelson Mandela, after whom the program is named, had for the continent.

At the end of the summit most fellows boarded flights for home, but 100 were selected to stay in the US to complete an additional six-month internship. As one fellow stated, "This was an amazing experience—beyond my expectation and imagination. I can't wait to apply what I learned here back home."

*Tiffany Williams-Cobleigh is PAS program assistant and a coordinator of Northwestern's Mandela Washington Fellowship institute.*

## Chris Udry returns to Northwestern



The economics faculty welcomes back Professor Chris Udry, who had taught at Northwestern from 1990 to 1998 before taking a position at Yale University.

A leading scholar on African rural economies, he has conducted extensive field research in West Africa on technological change in agriculture;

the use of financial markets, asset accumulation, and gift exchange to cope with risk; and gender relations and the structure of household economies. At Yale he directed the Economic Growth Center and chaired the economics department.

At Northwestern, Udry plans to establish a center of transformative scholarship through a cluster-focused research approach for addressing issues of poverty and growth in developing countries—with the initial geographic research cluster in Ghana, where Udry has already

established a long-term data collection effort with the University of Ghana and the Ghana Office of Innovations for Poverty Action. His return is seen as advancing Northwestern as a major hub in an international research network on economic development.

Udry has a long career in African studies. He taught for two years in a northern Ghanaian secondary school and has been a visiting scholar at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, and at the University of Ghana in Legon. With Pranab Bardhan he coauthored *Development Microeconomics* (1999) and coedited the two-volume *Readings in Development Microeconomics* (2000). Udry's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the World Bank, the Institute for Policy Reform, and the Pew Charitable Trusts, among others. Among many honors, Udry is a fellow of the Econometric Society and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Earlier this year he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Ghana in recognition of his outstanding research and publications in development microeconomics, and especially for his dedicated support of faculty collaborative research at the University of Ghana.

## Art history department welcomes architectural historian



Ayala Levin joins the art history department as assistant professor and will begin teaching in winter 2018. An architectural historian who received her PhD from Columbia University, she specializes in architectural and urban planning in independent African states. Previously she taught at Pratt

Institute and Columbia and held a 2016–17 Princeton-Mellon Fellowship in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities

at Princeton University. She is a contributor to the “Systems and the South” project of the Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative and is project cochair in the Global History of Architecture Teaching Collaborative. Currently she is working on a book based on her dissertation, which analyzed the export of Israeli architectural and planning development models to Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Ethiopia in the 1960s and '70s. For another book project she is examining the influence of American regional planning and urban design in North and sub-Saharan Africa since the 1960s. Among her recent publications is the article “Haile Selassie's Imperial Modernity: Expatriate Architects and the Shaping of Addis Ababa,” in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 75 (2016): 447–68.

## Afrisem conference reassesses methodologies and concepts

by Scott Newman and Delali Kumavie

PAS's graduate student seminar, known as Afrisem, held its third annual conference last April. Its theme, "RE...AFRICA: Archives, Knowledges, Approaches," was inspired by French-Algerian artist Kader Attia's exhibit *Reflecting Memory*, which ran simultaneously at Northwestern's Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art. The conference attracted graduate students from across the US, with one participant coming from the University of Ghana. In all, more than 60 people attended, including faculty and graduate students from Northwestern and the wider Chicago area.

Building on the ideas of trauma, repair, loss, and memory—both in the body and in society—as conveyed in Attia's works, the conference organizing committee had called for papers that critically rethink African objects, revisit archives, "re-fuse" prevailing historical concepts, reconceptualize structures of feeling, and reconsider methodologies in the study of African life, politics, and aesthetics. Proposals ranged from empirically rich political science papers to historically nuanced literary criticism, from rigorous gender analyses to a performance essay.

The diversity of the work by today's Africanist graduate students was represented in the conference's five panels: "Re-Pair the Pasts" examined alternative genealogies of intellectual histories and narratives; "Re-Dressing the Wound: (Post)Colonial Violence" centered around analysis of narratives about the African female body; "Re-Situating Sites of Power" examined historical and contemporary issues of state governance and law; "Re-Presenting Absence" considered archival silences and absences in literary, art history, and performance studies; and "Re-Imagining the Political" brought together empirical and discourse analyses of contemporary and 19th-century politics.

The question of interdisciplinary approaches arose in the keynote lecture by Cajetan Iheka (English, University of Alabama), "Naturalizing Africa: Re-Imagining African Studies in the Anthropocene." A specialist in African literature, Iheka drew on his research on ecocriticism and postcolonial studies to ask how today's human-influenced geological age requires rethinking the institutionalization of area studies. His lecture critiqued the function of environmentalism in Africanist discourse and interrogated current terms such as "posthuman," but he also called upon graduate students to think beyond disciplinarity in African studies. "RE...AFRICA" followed the strong tradition of African studies at Northwestern by facilitating conversations and creating communities for young scholars. The conference's resonance with the Block's Attia exhibition also spoke to the collaborative nature of the event.

Funding for the conference was provided by several schools and units at Northwestern, including the Graduate School, the Buffett Institute for Global Studies, and the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. The conference's success also reflects PAS's partnerships with the Herskovits Library of African Studies and the Block Museum.

*Scott Newman is a graduate student in comparative literary studies. Delali Kumavie, a graduate student in English, was an Afrisem coordinator in 2016-17.*

## Project takes high schoolers on virtual trip to South Africa

by Erik Ponder

PAS, Northwestern University Libraries, and the University's Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations teamed up with Evanston Township High School last spring to create a unique educational experience for 70 ETHS sophomores: The students virtually explored with me while I conducted a month of field research in Johannesburg.

The interactive project, "Johannesburg, the African City," used blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and live-streaming audio and video to enable ETHS's award-winning history teacher Aaron Becker to virtually transport three of his classes to South Africa. As students read the 2001 novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* by South African author Phaswane Mpe, I interacted with them by posting words and images from my visits to the same neighborhoods described in the book. It was a unique way to bolster their experience of a literary work with original scholarly content coming directly from the field.

Students had access to a blog where they could explore neighborhoods and historic points of interest through an online map of Johannesburg, read online South African news publications, listen to live-streaming radio stations, and search a bibliography on contemporary South African literary criticism.

The blog was frequently updated with audio interviews, photo essays, videos, and discussion topics. I encouraged students to post comments and upload their class assignments mapping the inner-city Hillbrow neighborhood and charting the relationships of the novel's main characters. They also video-chatted with me and South African guest speakers and had peer-to-peer discussions with young South Africans on topics spanning politics, culture, and society.



Through "Johannesburg, the African City," PAS and Northwestern had the opportunity to engage the local community and enrich the classroom experience of students as they engage with curriculum on Africa. The project was made possible with support and funding from Northwestern University Libraries, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and Title VI funding via PAS. Special thanks to PAS outreach coordinator Amy Settergren and Neighborhood and Community Relations executive director Alan Anderson for their efforts.

*Erik Ponder, a library assistant at Northwestern University Libraries, is interested in political and cultural issues of South Africa, a country he has visited many times since 1994.*

## PAS continues to expand outreach to K–12 classrooms

by Amy Settergren

The appointment of African studies librarian and outreach specialist Florence Mugambi (pictured) has increased PAS’s cooperation with the Herskovits Library to encourage local



K–12 teachers and students to use Northwestern’s resources. Mugambi curated an exhibit of books and material objects in conjunction with Black History Month events at Evanston’s Dawes Elementary School last February.

PAS also hosted two school groups on field trips to the Herskovits Library.

Sixty Evanston Township High School students visited the library in March to kick off a South Africa project with Northwestern librarian Erik Ponder (see story on page 5). In May, Village Leadership Academy, an independent Chicago school, brought 30 teachers, students, and parents to the library in preparation for a summer trip to Ghana. Mugambi created an exhibit from the collection’s holdings on Ghana, and I gave a presentation on the country’s history.

Also in May, PAS and the library cohosted a one-day teacher workshop on Africa. Seven teachers attended four sessions that provided content and resources to integrate African studies into teaching. Swahili instructor Michael Wairungu gave a presentation on African languages, and Prexy Nesbitt (Columbia College) presented on ties between the US civil rights movement and antiapartheid activism in South Africa.

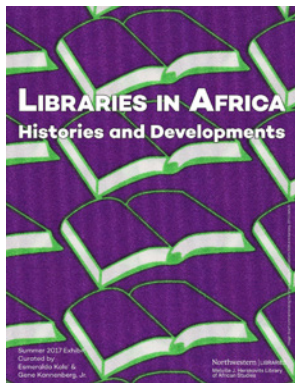
Earlier in the year, I gave the presentation “Introducing Africa: Busting Stereotypes and Integrating African Studies into Your Classrooms” at the Illinois Council for the Social Studies’ annual spring conference in March.

PAS’s robust Title VI partnerships with the Newberry Library and Northeastern Illinois University continue. Rachel Riedl (political science) held a February seminar on contemporary African politics for 25 teachers at the Newberry. Using Newberry resources, history graduate student Nate Mathews completed a Digital Collections for the Classroom project titled “Imperialism and Abolition in East Africa, 1845–1893” (available at [dcc.newberry.org/collections](http://dcc.newberry.org/collections)). And for the third year, PAS collaborated with NEIU’s three-week Africa Summer Institute for Teachers, during which Northwestern Africanists gave five lectures and led a field trip to the Herskovits Library.

PAS will take the lead in organizing the African Studies Association Outreach Council’s Teacher Workshop, to be held in Chicago during the November 16–18 ASA annual meeting. Registration is available on the ASA’s website.

*Amy Settergren is PAS outreach coordinator.*

## Herskovits Library news



### Exhibit highlights African libraries

This past summer the Herskovits Library exhibit *Libraries in Africa: Histories and Developments* highlighted libraries across Africa in all their variety—from the fabled Library of Alexandria (past and present) to the donkey-drawn

mobile libraries of Zimbabwe, from Muslim research institutions in Algeria to conference proceedings from Lesotho. The exhibit coincided with the American Library Association's June conference in Chicago and was curated by Esmeralda Kale and Gene Kannenberg Jr.

### McKay photos on view on 5 East

Reproductions of photographs from the Herskovits Library's Vernon McKay Collection are currently displayed on the wall leading to the library on 5 East. Vernon McKay (1912–1988) was a specialist on French colonialism in Tunisia. He taught for a time at Syracuse University, worked as a Foreign Policy Association research associate, and in 1945 joined the US State Department, where he became chief of the political section of the African Research Bureau and later deputy director of the Dependent Area Affairs office. McKay resigned from government in 1956 to take a position as professor of African studies and director of the African studies program at the School of Advanced International Relations at Johns Hopkins University. The photos on display were taken during his travels in Africa.

### South African news source available

The Historical Resources section of the library's online *Africana News Sources* page now includes a link to *Rand Daily Mail*, a searchable repository of that newspaper's reporting on South Africa from the Boer Wars to the apartheid era. Its content spans 1922–85, with 1902–21 to come.



## Former Ghanaian president speaks at Kellogg

Last April, John Dramani Mahama, former president of Ghana, addressed the Africa Business Club of Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management on the theme "Africa Rising." He responded to audience questions about investment in Africa, the diaspora's role in development, and evolving democracy. He observed that while the US remains a major investment partner, Ghana receives significant investment from China, India, Brazil, and other countries. Especially important, he noted, is the Ghanaian diaspora's boom in business ventures—what he calls a "brain gain" as opposed to the "brain drain" of previous decades. On democracy, Mahama said there was no "one size fits all" system to be superimposed on African or Middle Eastern countries, but rather systems must evolve according to indigenous ideas and institutions.

Mahama entered Ghanaian politics in 1996 and served in various parliamentary offices for the next dozen years. In 2009 he became vice president of Ghana, then took over as president in July 2012 when President John Atta Mills died in office. Mahama won the December 2012 general election as the first Ghanaian head of state born after the country became independent in 1957. In 2016 he lost his bid for reelection but won worldwide praise for his graceful acceptance of defeat. In his concession speech he underscored his commitment to democracy, stating that a peaceful transition to power should be the norm.



## Spotlight on Femi Odugbemi

by Paul Ugor

Femi Odugbemi, the director and producer whose work will be highlighted in a mini film festival on campus in October, is a key figure in Nollywood’s dynamic film industry.

Born in Fadeyi, Lagos, Nigeria, in 1963, Odugbemi grew up in a young nation optimistic about independence and the future. His father, the chief accountant at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, had hoped his only son would take after him; but the bustling popular culture of Lagos in the 1970s had a strong pull on Odugbemi’s imagination. Surreptitiously watching Chinese and Indian films in the cinema house behind his school, Odugbemi learned how imagery, sound, and composition could be used as tools for telling stories and constructing social meaning. He also read books on film and cinema wherever he could find them, including the United States Information Service office in Ikoyi, Lagos.

On a visit to USIS, Odugbemi picked up a brochure describing Montana State University’s program in broadcast communication with a specialization in film, radio, and television production. He applied for admission—without his father’s knowledge but with help from his mother and a maternal uncle—and was accepted. He arrived in Bozeman,



Montana, in 1979, at the age of 16, the only black student in his program. The department chair was one of the founders of Bozeman’s flagship PBS station, KUSM-TV; Odugbemi interned at the station during his student years, honing his production skills and gaining experience behind the camera.

Odugbemi returned to Nigeria in 1985 and completed his compulsory National Youth Service Corps year, serving as a production assistant at the Nigerian Television Authority in Kaduna. There he learned how to stretch modest resources—a hallmark of Nollywood filmmaking. In contrast to the full

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### “NIGERIA IN SELF-CONVERSATION: THE FILMS OF FEMI ODUGBEMI”

In collaboration with PAS, the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art will present an October 26–27 mini film festival highlighting the work of Femi Odugbemi. Films will be shown at the Block Museum and followed by Q&As with the filmmaker. Admission is free and open to the public.

“Nigeria in Self-Conversation” opens at 7 p.m. on October 26 with three short documentaries: *Makoko: Futures Afloat* (2016) looks at the educational initiatives under

way in a sprawling, neglected fishing community floating on the waste of Lagos; *Bariga Boy* (2009) profiles the leader of the Crown Troupe, a dance-theatre group that combines street culture with the biting satire of traditional Nigerian theatre; and *Oui Voodoo* (2005) depicts the dilemma of a non-spiritual Beninese man who is told he must appease his ancestors’ gods.

Odugbemi’s most recent feature film, *Gidi Blues*, will be

shown at 7 p.m. on October 27. In this buoyant romantic comedy set against the diverse metropolis of Lagos, a wealthy playboy’s life is altered when he retrieves the stolen purse of a community volunteer in the impoverished village of Makoko. She offers him a glimpse of a different life, but can he become a man worthy of her? Odugbemi deftly weaves class difference into the film, fulfilling his mission “to entertain within a context.”



complement of studio cameras, mics, and other gadgets at his disposal at KUSM-TV, at NTA Kaduna there were just three cameras.

After national service Odugbemi returned to Lagos and began a 15-year career in advertising, first at Lintas Advertising and later at STB-McCann and Audio Visual First. In 2004 he formed an independent media production company, DVWORX Studios, and started plowing the company's profits back into his documentary and feature film budgets. By relying on self-financing, not only was he able to make films on topics that mattered to him, he insulated himself from the cabal of powerful local producers who typically finance Nollywood films.

The result has been 10 documentaries and 8 feature films since 2004, including *Bar Beach Blues* (2004), *Maroko* (2006), *Bariga Boy* (2009), *Ibadan: Cradle of Literati* (2011), *Femi Kuti@50* (2012), *Oriki* (2014), *Makoko: Futures Afloat* (2016), and *Gidi Blues* (2016). Odugbemi has also produced and directed the award-winning TV serials *Tinsel* and *Battleground* and is the cofounder and executive director of the iRepresent International Film Festival in Lagos, sub-Saharan Africa's only documentary film festival.

Odugbemi sees his filmmaking as a contract to document social history. On a mission "to entertain within a context," he seeks to use the power of film to jolt people into seeing the paradoxes of their lives. Cinema ought "to permeate the mind," he insists; it should be never be for entertainment alone.

*Paul Ugor is assistant professor of English at Illinois State University and author of Nollywood: Popular Culture and Narratives of Youth Struggles in Nigeria (Carolina Academic Press, 2016).*

## PAS congratulates student award winners

Students who received awards last spring included Panofsky Award recipients, who traveled to Africa for summer predissertation research; Goodman Award winners, who are pursuing intensive study of African languages in 2017-18; an African Leadership Research winner, who has received funding to complete a research project; and Guyer-Virmani Awardees, who will receive funds in support of travel to scholarly conferences. Other students received Foreign Language and Area Studies Awards, conferred by the FLAS Fellowship Program.

### **Hans E. Panofsky Predissertation Research Awards**

(Rita) Dela Kuma  
Jahara Matisek  
Caitlin Monroe  
Bennie Niles  
Salih Nur  
Andrea Rosengarten  
Moussa Seck  
Gorgui Ibrahima Tall  
Mlondoloji Zondi

### **Morris Goodman Language Awards**

Caitlin Monroe  
Scott Newman  
Dilpreet Singh  
Gorgui Ibrahima Tall  
Vanessa Watters

### **African Leadership Research Award**

Kathleen Nganga

### **Guyer-Virmani Awards**

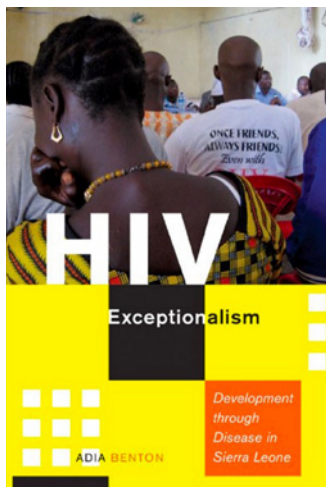
Marco Bocchese  
Amy Swanson

### **Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Awards**

Anisha Bhat  
Macon Bianucci  
Colin Bos  
Sean Lee  
Imane Ridouh  
Moussa Seck  
Leila Tayeb  
Vanessa Watters

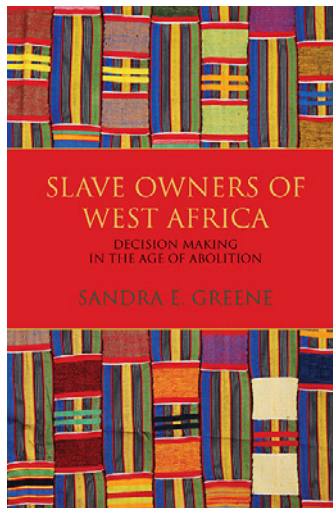
## Community news

**Teju Adesida** (PhD performance studies '13), artistic director of Chicago's Fehinty African Theatre Ensemble, and actors from the ensemble were interviewed in May on WBEZ's *Worldview* radio show about their Prop Theatre production of *Wrecked*, a drama about a Sudanese cab driver.



**Adia Benton** (anthropology) won the Society for Social Studies of Science's 2017 Rachel Carson Prize for her book *HIV Exceptionalism: Development through Disease in Sierra Leone* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015). The book highlights the effects of global health policy on the lives of those who are its nominal beneficiaries.

**Godfred Boateng** (postdoctoral fellow, anthropology) won first place in the American Society for Nutrition's Emerging Leaders Poster Competition for his work on "Food Insecurity and HIV Exposure Are Deleterious to Infant Cognitive Development in Kenya: A Longitudinal Study."



**Sandra E. Greene** (PhD history '81), the Stephen and Madeline Anbinder Professor of African History at Cornell University, has a new book out from Indiana University Press. *Slave Owners of West Africa: Decision Making in the Age of Abolition* examines the lives of three prominent late-19th-century Ghanaian slave owners whose biographies reveal how Western abolition and European incursion impacted their political, religious, and social choices.

**Karen Tranberg Hansen** (professor emerita, anthropology) presented "From Family Business to International 'Empire': Organizational Changes in Secondhand Clothing Commerce" at an international colloquium held in April at Aix Marseille Université. Her article "From Grandmother's Dress to the Fashion Runway: Chitenge Styles in Zambia" is featured in the publication that accompanies the 2017 Fowler Museum exhibition *African-Print Fashion Now! A Story of Taste, Globalization, and Style*.

**Amanda Logan** (anthropology) received the American Anthropological Association's 2017 Gordon R. Willey Prize for her paper "Why Can't People Feed Themselves? Archaeology as Alternative Archive of Food Security in Banda, Ghana." The Willey Prize recognizes the best archaeology paper published in the *American Anthropologist* over a period of three years.

**Godwin Murunga** (PhD history '06) was appointed the seventh executive secretary of the Dakar-based Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, one of Africa's premier research organizations and think tanks. He also writes a column for the influential Kenyan *Daily Nation* newspaper.



Photo by Dagan Rossini, African Peacebuilding Network

The March 9 edition of Kenya's *Daily Nation* newspaper featured **Mshai Mwangola** (PhD performance studies '09) as its personality of the week. Currently she is a research and communication officer at the African Peacebuilding Network hub at the Aga Khan University Nairobi campus.

**Will Reno** (PAS director and political science) took part in a May roundtable discussion about his research at the conference “Quel avenir pour la résolution des conflits en Afrique de l’Ouest?” at Université du Québec, Montréal. He also presented two papers, one on nationalist populism in Africa and its implications in global politics at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston; and another on electoral violence in Africa at a workshop sponsored by the Neubauer Collegium at the University of Chicago. In June he was a faculty coordinator for a Social Science Research Council-sponsored dissertation proposal workshop in Pittsburgh in which 12 Northwestern students participated.

**Susanna Sacks** (graduate student, English) received a 2017–18 Franke Graduate Fellowship to Northwestern’s Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities in connection with her dissertation project, “Viral Verses: Poetic Movements and Social Media in Southeastern Africa.” Her project traces the intersection between poetry and community formation on social media, postulating poetic discourse as the link between web-based activism and grounded action in Malawi, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

**David Schoenbrun** (history) published two articles: “Jan Vansina (1929–2017): A Founder Figure in the Study of Africa’s Past, Early and Recent” in *Azania* 52 (2017): 267–270; and “Oral Traditions” in *Field Manual for Archaeology in Africa*, an online publication of the Belgium-based Royal Museum for Central Africa.

Send your news updates to [laray.denzer@northwestern.edu](mailto:laray.denzer@northwestern.edu) so that PAS can share word with the Africanist community at Northwestern and beyond.

**Noelle Sullivan** (anthropology) published several articles: “Multiple Accountabilities: Development Cooperation, Transparency, and the Politics of Unknowing in Tanzania’s Health Sector” in *Critical Public Health* 27, no. 2 (2017): 193–204; “Neoliberalism Is Killing Us: Economic Stress as a Driver of Global Depression and Suicide” in *Truthout* ([www.truthout.org/opinion](http://www.truthout.org/opinion)) on April 2; and “The Right Way to Give” in *US News & World Report* on April 19. She also was a keynote speaker at the University of Minnesota’s June symposium “The Ethics of Help: Creating Global Ambassadors for Patient Safety.” Her talk was titled “International Medical Volunteering: Perspectives and Practices from the Ground.”

A 2012 paper, “Structural Impediments to African Growth? New Evidence from Real Wages in British Africa, 1880–1965,” coauthored by history graduate student **Marlous van Waijenburg**, was the most cited paper that the *Journal of Economic History* had published in the past five years.

## Congratulations to new PhDs

PAS congratulates the following students who successfully defended their PhD dissertations last spring:

**Abdeta Dribssa Beyene** (political science), “Sovereignty Preservation Attenuating It Elsewhere: The Political and Security Dimensions of Buffer Zones,” Will Reno, adviser

**Sakhile Matlhare** (sociology), “‘Africanness’ as a Professional Trading Chip: Contemporary African Artists as Producers and Secondary Arbiters in the Gatekeeping Process,” Wendy Griswold, adviser

**Rachel Sweet** (political science), “State-Rebel Relations during Civil War: Institutional Change behind Frontlines,” Will Reno, adviser

## Events calendar

*Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at PAS, 620 Library Place, Evanston.  
Check the PAS website—[www.northwestern.edu/african-studies](http://www.northwestern.edu/african-studies)—for updates.*

### SEPTEMBER

27 4–6 p.m.

PAS open house.

### OCTOBER

4 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Access to Health from the Ground Up: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Health and Human Rights in Lagos,” **Juliet Sorensen** (Bluhm Legal Clinic) and **Elise Meyer** (Public International Law and Policy Group, Washington, DC).

11 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Food and Water Insecurity in East Africa: What We Know, What We Don’t, and Why It Matters,” **Sera Young** (anthropology).

18 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Investigating New Models of Civil-Military Relations in Africa: Evidence from the Field,” **Will Reno** (PAS director and political science).

25 noon–1:15 p.m.

“A Conversation about Film Making in Nigeria” with **Femi Odugbemi**.

26 7–9 p.m.

“Nigeria in Self-Conversation” mini film festival: *Makoko: Futures Afloat* (2016), *Bariga Boy* (2009), and *Oui Voodoo* (2005). Block Museum, 40 Arts Circle Drive.

27 7–9 p.m.

“Nigeria in Self-Conversation” mini film festival: *Gidi Blues* (2016). Block Museum, 40 Arts Circle Drive.

### NOVEMBER

1 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Caravans of Gold: Making an Exhibition about Medieval Trans-Saharan Exchange,” **Kathleen Bickford Berzock** (Block Museum).

8 noon–1:15 p.m.

“*Niko Cool Still, Na Bado NimeChill*: Language, Identity, and Power in Kenyan Schools,” **Michael Wairungu** (Swahili).

15 noon–1:15 p.m.

“New Muslim-Christian (Mis)expression of Piety and Secularism in Nigeria: Interaction or Counteraction?” **Amidu O. Sanni** (Arabic, Lagos State University).

### Swahili Corner

When instructor Michael Wairungu asked his Swahili I students for feedback on the course, undergraduate Richard Yu had this to say: “My Swahili experience has been one of the most rewarding in my time at Northwestern. Unlike big, impersonal language classes, you learn Swahili in a small, genuine Swahili-speaking environment. I quickly learned that there was more to Swahili than a *Lion King* reference here or a safari there. There is so much culture out there waiting to be explored—we simply have to take the courageous leap and reach for it. I feel blessed that after a short year, I am able to converse in Swahili and have more knowledge of African culture. More than that, I am privileged to call my classmates *rafiki zangu* (my friends).”

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