A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

GARTH MYERS

All I can say is this: I have made it to January! Fall 2007 was the busiest and most challenging semester I have experienced as a Director. I completed and submitted the annual reports for the FLAS and NRC grants, led the Mid-America Alliance for African Studies as its President while we hosted the meeting, attended the African Studies Association meetings, and played host for the impressive array of guests who came to KASC through the seminar series, the African Writers Series, and KU for Uganda – all in the leave of absence of administrative Associate Director Khalid El-Hassan. I could have done none of this without the support and capable assistance of Center staff and Executive Committee or African Studies Council members who have stepped forward in major ways to get us through the Fall and to get us ready for a busy Spring. I would like to spend some time thanking several of these people specifically. Emmanuel Birdling and Kelley McCarthy have worked tirelessly to keep the community informed of events and opportunities by the website and by email. They have worked with Craig Pearman to keep the logistics of various visits and events together, and they have promoted the Center at major outreach events in the region and in the country.

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Elizabeth Asiedu has helped KASC to secure the support of the Oswald Family Foundation for a pilot program of $12,000 toward fellowships for applied fieldwork in Africa on health and development policy issues for graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Glenn Adams has agreed to chair the committee to choose our winners of the new Oswald grants, with Sandra Gray and Elizabeth joining him. Folabo Ajayi-Soyinka has engineered the continuation of the new African Writers Series with the stirring visit of South African playwright and novelist Zakes Mda in December. She has also led the team now producing our KASC-CREES grant proposal to the SSRC on “Islam and Muslims in Global Contexts.” Mohamed El-Hodiri is assisting with this grant and is also extending the African Writers Series to Egyptian poetry. Phil Schrodt, Margaret Rausch, Hannah Britton, Liz MacGonagle, Elif Andac, Majid Hannoum, Beverly Mack,

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John Janzen, Raj Bhala, and others have assisted in grant development. Beverly has volunteered to serve as Language Coordinator for the calendar year 2008 in Naima Omar’s absence. Ebenezer Obadare led the great seminar series this Fall on “Leadership in Africa,” with the visits of John Quinn (Truman State), Staffan Lindberg (University of Florida), and former Cape Verdean President, His Excellency António Mascarenhas Monteiro alongside great talks by Ebenezer and Liz MacGonagle. Byron Caminero-Santangelo not only stepped up to host Zakes Mda but also to plan the March 2008 symposium on “Literary Studies and Environmental Studies in Africa.” Majid Hannoum has taken the lead in planning the exciting seminar series “Culture and Events in North Africa,” set for Spring 2008, and to invite the Spring 2008 Marwa lecturer, Martin Bernal, to speak in April. Shawn Alexander has already started planning the Fall 2008 seminar series on Africa and Diaspora issues. Ashford Njogu has helped me shape the new study abroad program for Zanzibar in Summer 2008. Aminu Gusau and Alassane Fall have joined Ashford and Emmanuel in various efforts to promote our language program. Shiferaw Assefa has helped us to develop a new two-year series of Amharic classes currently under consideration in the University system. Student assistants Ashley Depenbusch and Kyle Shermuk have worked long hours in creating an efficient, cleaner office space and effective filing systems. And probably more people than this have done their part. Thanks to you all, 2007 ends and 2008 begins with KASC in better shape than ever.

Sometimes people come forward in ways we don’t expect, and I also want to thank several people who made Fall 2007 that much better for the Center in this manner. Thanks to Environmental Studies Director Bill Woods, the Commons at Spooner Hall hosted an extraordinary photographic exhibit featuring the work of Depression-era pilot Mary Meader, stunning aerial photographs from her transect through Africa from Cape Town to Tunis 75 years ago. Dylan Bassett kept the KU African Drumming and Dance Ensemble so busy that I started to think KUADDE would need a major agent deal. Spencer Museum of Art Director Saralyn Reece-Hardy not only pulled off the remarkable and Africa-related Aaron Douglas exhibition and conference (with of course great help from many people, including but not limited to Maryemma Graham and Gitti Salami). She also directed the creation of the fascinating Place wall in the newly-remade 20/21 Gallery that in Fall 2007 was dominated by the Angola-based video installation, “Muxima”, and surrounding selections from the Spencer’s Chokwe anthropological collections, and found time in a busy schedule to meet with President Monteiro and with the amazing Angolan artist, Antonio Tomas Ana during his visit to the MAAAS conference. Museum of Natural History Director Leonard Krishtalka found time in a monstrously busy stretch to show President Monteiro through the Museum’s Africa collections. One of the hidden dimensions of what makes KU a great place for African studies lies in the interrelationships between African studies and countless units; we are greater as the sum of many parts than we are as separate pods in isolation.

MAAAS 2007 participants at the University of Kansas
This coming Spring marks a turning point in one more important way. We are offering the AAAS 680 course, Introduction to Africa, as the core course of our new Graduate Certificate in African Studies. No sooner had the word gone out than the class filled. It is now pushing 20 in enrollment and we had to move to a larger seminar room. If anyone in your presence doubts that KU has room for a new Graduate Certificate in African Studies or a new Masters program in African and African-American Studies, I suggest you invite them to consider how many other KU graduate seminars have twenty people in them and have to turn students away the first time they are offered!

We are gearing up for an exciting Spring term. I encourage you all to take stock of the news from the Fall in this newsletter, but also of the schedule of events to come. When I get overwhelmed by the rush of tasks and busy-work that confront me every day that I’m sitting in the cramped-until-bursting near-basement suite of Center offices at 10 Bailey Hall, I remind myself of the “anthropology of events” (if I can borrow the phrase for a moment from you, Majid) - the unforgettable people-moments that are made possible because we do these tasks and accomplish the busy-work. This is truly what the Center is about, and I am glad to have all you helping to make these people-moments a mind-blowing reality every term.

From left: KASC Director Garth Myers, President Monteiro, Visiting Professor from Senegal Fatou Diop

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FORMER AFRICAN PRESIDENT VISITS KU

Emmanuel Birdling and Kelley McCarthy

As part of the fall 2007 African Studies Seminar Series, “The Question of Leadership in Africa,” the Kansas African Studies Center invited former President António Mascarenhas Monteiro to discuss his experiences as the first democratically elected president of Cape Verde – a republic located on a string of islands off the western coast of Africa. Monteiro served as president from 1991 to 2001, allowing for a smooth democratic transition when he left office. He now devotes time to conflict resolution and prevention, good governance and representative democracy. The former Cape Verdean president was nominated and served as the 2007 L.G. Balfour African President-in-Residence for the African Presidential Archives and Research Center at Boston University. The President-in-Residence program focuses on allowing former African presidents to share their experiences and unique perspectives with academic communities throughout the United States. President Monteiro visited the KU campus November 8-9, accompanied by the Balfour African President-in-Residence Attaché Joseph Phommasith. Both toured KU museums and libraries, guest lectured in various classes, met with students and faculty, and attended a reception held in the president’s honor by Chancellor Robert Hemenway.

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KU students and faculty at lunch with Former President of Cape Verde António Monteiro (back row, 3rd from left)

For the seminar series, Monteiro presented the topic, “Leadership: Cape Verdean Presidential Style.” The purpose of the fall seminar series was to peer into the historical, social, and political aspects of African leadership. Other outside presenters in the seminar series included Staffan Lindberg of the University of Florida, who presented on the topic, “The Power of Elections and Elites in Africa,” and John Quinn from Truman State University on “Rwandan Genocide Leading to Mobutu’s Overthrow in the Congo.” KU professors Ebenezer Obadare and Elizabeth MacGonagle also presented in the series, and Professor Obadare served as its organizer.

KU HOSTS 2007 MAAAS CONFERENCE

Emmanuel Birdling & Kelley McCarthy

The Mid-America Alliance for African Studies (MAAAS) was founded here at the University of Kansas in 1995. MAAAS creates a forum to encourage scholarship and teaching in African studies regionally and sub-regionally through conferences, seminars, workshops, consortia, faculty and student exchanges, cooperative relations between libraries, and promotion of African language teaching. September 2007 marked the third time Kansas University has hosted the conference. This particular year’s theme was “Africa in Motion,” focusing on the consequences of migration and movement of African goods, ideas, and people within the continent as well as around the world. This year’s conference proved to be quite successful as it attracted 150 scholars and graduate students from around the midwest region, as well as students and scholars from African countries including Angola and Zambia.

Papers were presented on various topics from Ghanaian politics to population displacement in Zambia. The newly founded Ken Lohrentz Graduate Student Paper Award was given to three graduate students for papers they presented at the conference. They include: Hassan Sachedina, visiting student from Oxford University; Angela Gray, KU graduate student in geography; and Kitty Johnson, graduate student from Indiana University.

From left: Garth Myers; visiting student from Oxford Hassan Sachedina; Kitty Johnson, graduate student from Indiana University; KU graduate student Angela Gray; and Ken Lohrentz, former KU Africana bibliographer.
ZAKES MDA

Kelley McCarthy

On December 7th, the University of Kansas was privileged in having one of South Africa’s most prominent black novelists visit campus. Zakes Mda, originally from Herschel, South Africa, is a novelist, poet, and playwright. He came to KU while on tour to promote his new publication, *Cion*, a story following a professional mourner through his experiences in America. Mda read from various works, giving insight on his reasons and way of writing. Mda is currently a professor at Ohio University, teaching English. He also is a grassroots activist, devoting his time to improving literacy among HIV-positive people in South Africa.

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

GLENN ADAMS helped edit the book *Commemorating Brown: The social psychology of racism and discrimination*, and wrote two chapters in the book, including: “Commemorating Brown: Psychology as a force of liberation,” and “Beyond prejudice: Toward a sociocultural psychology of racism and oppression.” He also presented research at the Mid-America Alliance for African Studies with students including: *Genital-shrinking panic in Ghana: A case of belief-in-motion, When belief and reality collide: Explaining negative outcomes of attractive Ghanians* (co-presented with S.L. Anderson), and *Suspicion is contagious: A socio-cultural account of polio vaccination resistance in Nigeria* (co-presented with P.S. Salter).

KENNETH AIKENS, PhD student in the Department of Political Science, presented a paper at the 2007 Mid-America Alliance for African Studies conference entitled, *Straddling Two Political Worlds in the Midst of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of the Northern Region of Ghana*, focusing on the two political worlds of Ghana and what implications it has on the migration of people in the traditional world.

ELIZABETH ASIEDU has helped KASC receive fellowships for applied fieldwork in Africa on health and development provided by the Oswald Family Foundation. For more information, visit the KASC website.

EMMANUEL BIRDLING, graduate student in International Studies, presented his paper entitled, *Analysis of the Forces that Caged Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, analyzing the relationship between colonial development in Sub-Saharan Africa and the development that international financial institutions see fit for the region, at the 2007 Mid-America Alliance for African Studies conference.

MOHAMED EL-HODIRI received the Chancellors Club Career Teaching Award, and was honored by Chancellor Robert Hemenway and others on November 2nd. El-Hodiri has been at the University of Kansas for forty years as a professor in economics.

FATOU DIOP, Visiting Professor from Universite Gaston Berger de Saint Louis, Senegal, presented the topic *Religion Impacting Gender Roles in African Studies: Case Studies for KASC’s African Studies Seminar Series on*
October 15th. Dr. Diop focused on the history of women in African societies, how religion changed the gender roles, and the problems currently faced by female citizens in African countries. She stressed that throughout the history of African societies, women have been revered as scholars and spiritual leaders. These roles changed as a result of Islam and/or Christianity’s influence on Africa, and male dominance in European and Middle East culture.

ANGELA GRAY, PhD Candidate in geography, presented a paper at the 2007 Mid-America Alliance for African Studies entitled, *Displacement in Motion: Refugee-hosting and development in Ukwimi, Zambia*. She also received the Ken Lohrentz Graduate Student Paper Award at the conference.

JOHN M. JANZEN, Professor of Anthropology, participated in and chaired a session at the African Studies Association in New York in October entitled *Voices from the Margins: Constructing Power and Authority* and gave a paper entitled *Power of the Margins and Subaltern Authority in Historic North Kongo Polities*. He also produced a DVD entitled *New African Immigrants in Kansas* that summarizes the project by this title that was carried out by KASC from 2005-6, with the support of the Kansas Humanities Council. KASC has copies of the DVD for anyone who is interested. Interviews from the project are posted on the KASC website and other materials will be available at the Kansas Collections of Spencer Research Library.

ELIZABETH MACGONAGLE, Assistant Professor in History and African & African-American Studies, was awarded the 2007 ING Excellence in Teaching Award on September 15 at Memorial Stadium. Congratulations, Liz!

GARTH MYERS presented papers at the Institute of British Geographers, Mid-America Alliance for African Studies, and African Studies Association annual meetings, and submitted his work to Blackwell’s new online journal, *Geography Compass*, for 2008 publication. Dr. Myers also co-authored other writings. With Francis Owusu, he submitted the final version of a chapter on *Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa* for the 4th edition of the textbook, *Cities of the World*. With Mohamed Dosi and Leonce Rushubirwa, he published an article on the Tanzanian community of Wichita in *Social and Cultural Geography*. With Richard Harris, he also published an article on hybrid housing forms in colonial Zanzibar in the December 2007 issue of the *Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians*.

BILL TUTTLE, Professor of American Studies at KU, served as the John Adams Distinguished Fulbright Chair in American History, Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands for spring 2007. He spoke at several universities in the Netherlands, presenting topics including: *America’s Red Summers: Racial Violence and Civil Rights in 20th Century America*.

LINDA WILEY presented *The “Manichean mindset” as exemplified/countered in some examples of film and literature* at MAAAS 2007. Her paper aimed to understand how characters within literature exemplify the Manichean mindset (the conflict between light and darkness, white versus black), and expose important factors of identity.

THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN AFRICAN STUDIES is now in existence at KU! KASC’s central objective in this certificate program is to formally recognize the expertise of students in a range of disciplines already obtained in African Studies. The Certificate in African Studies enables graduate students to formally claim expertise in an area of the field of African Studies, through completion of 12 hours of graduate coursework. More information can be found on the KASC website.
SPRING 2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GO TO WWW.KASC.KU.EDU FOR MORE EVENT INFORMATION

January 18, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
“Multicultural, Multifault Alliance Against Al-Qaeda Terrorism,”
In Honor of Babacar Ndiaye
Centennial Room, Kansas Union

January 18, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
KASC Holiday Open House
Food & refreshments!
Bailey Hall basement, Room 10

January 28, 3:30-5 p.m.
“How North Africa as a Geo-Political Entity, or How North Africa is Africa,”
African Studies Seminar Series;
Majid Hannoum, Prof. of Anthropology, KU
International Room, Kansas Union

February 7, 3:30-5 p.m.
“Defending Culture: The Cultural Defense and the Law’s Theory of Culture,”
African Studies Seminar Series;
Lawrence Rosen, Princeton University
Cosponsored by AAAS & Anthropology
Pine Room, Kansas Union

February 13, 11:30-1:00 p.m.**
“The Transformation of Islamic Architecture in Somalia,” Ujamaa Brownbag;
Osman Nur, KU Student
Alcove E, Kansas Union

February 27, 11:30-1:00 p.m.**
“Using Student Organizations to Affect Change in Africa,” Ujamaa Brownbag;
Briana Saunders, KU Student
Alcove C, Kansas Union

March 28-29, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
“Literary Studies and Environmental Studies in Africa” Symposium
Malott Room, Kansas Union

April 10, 3:30-5 p.m.
“The Sahara as a Contested Space: Two Cases from Libyan History,” African Studies Seminar Series;
Ali Ben Hmida,
University of New England
Pine Room, Kansas Union

April 14, 7 p.m.
Marwa Africana Lecture: “Black Athena: The Reaction to Her.”
Martin Bernal, author of Black Athena: the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization
Kansas Union

April 21, 1:00-2:30 p.m.
“Performing the Festive Sacred in Morocco: Sufi Tourism and The Promise of Sonic Translation,”
African Studies Seminar Series;
Deborah Kapchan, New York University
International Room, Kansas Union

May 2, 3:30-5 p.m.
Spring African Studies Council Meeting
109 Bailey Hall

**Brownbag Sessions: 11:30-noon for socializing & eating; lecture
KANSAS AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER STAFF

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Faculty Associate Director: Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka
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