Hans E. Panofsky (1926–2013)

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HERSKOVITS LIBRARY CURATOR FROM THE CURRENT CURATOR

by David L. Easterbrook

Hans E. Panofsky, curator emeritus of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, died in Madison, Wisconsin, on July 1. Appointed the Herskovits Library’s first curator in 1959, he retired in 1991, but his engagement with the library, PAS, and African studies worldwide continued. Until just a few years ago, Hans regularly attended PAS events and always visited the library whenever he was on campus.

Born in Berlin in 1926, Hans attended Mill Hill School in London from 1939 to 1943, followed by a year at the London School of Economics. He then served in the British military from 1944 until 1947. In 1951 he came to the United States to study at Columbia University, from which he received a BS (sociology) and an MS (library service). In 1952 he was appointed reference librarian at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. He remained in the position until 1958, also pursuing a master’s degree in labor economics. A copy of his master’s thesis, “The Significance of Labor Migration for the Economic Growth of Ghana,” is among the Herskovits Library’s holdings.

While at Cornell, Hans met Gianna Sommi. They were married in Parma, Italy, in 1958 and moved to Illinois the same year. They had two sons, John and David, and their Judson Avenue home in Evanston became a center of Africanist hospitality at Northwestern as important as PAS and the Herskovits Library.

When Hans arrived at Northwestern, he found collections that were far larger than the space allocated to hold them in 102 Deering, then the location of the Africana Library. One of his first duties, therefore, was to find alternative space to house the growing collections until the completion of an anticipated new library building. Space constraints never deterred Hans from his commitment to build and make accessible the most comprehensive collection of Africana research materials anywhere. He accomplished this by enlarging the staff and appointing people who shared this commitment, obtaining grants that enabled growth, establishing distinctive service programs to support research in the collections, and taking leadership roles in interinstitutional cooperation in area studies library development.

In 1959 the development of research collections in area studies was a new concept, and Hans was a leader through his participation in the African Studies Association and its Africana Librarians Council. He played a major role in the creation of the Cooperative Africana Microform Project of the Center for Research Libraries, which remains the model for interlibrary cooperation in...
preservation of and access to African studies research materials. He served as a member of the ASA’s board of directors from 1977 until 1980 and in 1985 received the organization’s Distinguished Service to African Studies Award. He also served on the board of the International African Institute from 1987 until 1995.

In addition to his work in the ASA, Hans represented African studies to the broader research library community through his leadership roles with the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. He moved seamlessly among all these organizations and more, all the while linking people with people, people with institutions, and institutions with institutions, building lasting relationships that continue to foster interinstitutional cooperation. At the same time he was active in a number of organizations in the Chicago area, such as Amnesty International and the Chicago Committee in Solidarity with Southern Africa. In these associations he encouraged use of the Herskovits Library’s collections, opening them to wider community access.

In honor of Hans’s 30 years of service to Northwestern and to African studies librarianship, the Africana Librarians Council presented him with a festschrift in 1989, *Africana Resources and Collections: Three Decades of Development and Achievement—A Festschrift in Honor of Hans Panofsky*, edited by Julian W. Witherell. This work contains two biographical chapters and a number of additional chapters focused on aspects of African studies librarianship related to inter-institutional efforts in which Hans played central roles.


I first met Hans through correspondence in 1972, when I was a library school student. I had already had two experiences living in Africa by that time and wanted to combine my interest in Africa with a library career. I raised the possibility of such a combination with one of my undergraduate advisers, who had a Northwestern PhD in African history. He replied, “Of course,” told me about the Herskovits Library, and said I needed to be in touch with Hans Panofsky for advice.

Hans responded enthusiastically to my letter, greatly encouraging my interests. When I attended the ASA annual meeting for the first time the following year, he welcomed me in person and began introducing me to people—librarians, scholars, publishers—almost everyone at the ASA, it seemed. In 1975, when I was appointed to my first position as an African studies librarian, he accepted me as an equal member of the Africana Librarians Council, not the beginner that I was. The warmth of his acceptance and the generosity with which he approached my learning curve were replicated throughout his life with innumerable other people. Beyond Hans’s outstanding professional achievements, it is because of the warmth of his hospitality, understanding, and friendship that he is remembered and mourned by so many.

A memorial service for Hans Panofsky will be held on Saturday, November 2, at 10 a.m. at Alice Millar Chapel, 1870 Sheridan Road, Evanston.

Panofsky with Ungina Ndoma, who completed his PhD in linguistics at Northwestern in the mid-1970s
Muhammad Sani Umar returns to Nigeria

by Rebecca Shereikis

The faculty, staff, and students of the Program of African Studies and the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa will miss the lively intellect and warm personality of Muhammad Sani Umar, who is leaving Northwestern to take a position at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. The scholar of Islam in Africa has been associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies and director of ISITA since 2007.

Spanning more than two decades, Umar’s relationship with Northwestern began with a fortuitous encounter with the University’s Arabic manuscript scholar John Hunwick at Bayero University, Kano, in 1987. Umar was conducting research in Bayero’s Arabic manuscript collection for his MA in Islamic studies. At break time the two conversed. Hunwick wrote of their memorable encounter years later, “I was very impressed to discover that there was no topic in our discussion of Islamic matters that he was not familiar with.”

The conversation sparked Umar’s interest in applying to Northwestern’s PhD program. He received his PhD in the history and literature of religion from Northwestern in 1997. A faculty position at Arizona State University, Tempe, followed, but Umar continued to be involved with Northwestern. He returned in 2001–02 as preceptor for the newly formed ISITA, leading a yearlong program on Muslim responses to colonial rule, one of his specialties. When ISITA won a grant from the Mellon Foundation in 2005 to create an online catalog for the collection of Arabic manuscripts from West Africa in the Herskovits Library of African Studies, Umar spent a summer in the manuscript room, cataloging and editing existing entries for the project.

After becoming ISITA director, Umar secured new funding and launched innovative projects. He served as principal investigator on grants to ISITA from the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Mellon Foundation. A collaboration with Northwestern University Press in 2008 resulted in a “Global Encounters” grant from the Mellon Foundation to launch Islamic Africa—the only online English-language journal devoted to this field. Umar served as editor in chief during its start-up years and still serves on the editorial board. The journal is now in its fourth volume year. The Mellon grant also funded three postdoctoral fellowships for African scholars, who each spent nine months in residency at PAS revising their dissertations for possible publication by Northwestern University Press and teaching undergraduate courses in their areas of specialty.

Under Ford Foundation sponsorship, Umar is editing for publication an anthology of translated texts representing the variety of West African Muslim responses to colonial rule as expressed in poetry, legal opinions, and scholarly exchanges. The anthology will bring to light sources, including orally transmitted poetry, previously inaccessible to most Western academics.

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SSD conference draws from many fields
by Raevin Jimenez and Kofi Asante

Graduate students from nine US universities and two Ghanaian universities participated in the year’s capstone event of PAS’s State, Society, and Development Working Group in May. Fourteen disciplines—including African studies, anthropology, economics, gender and sexuality studies, political science, religious studies, history, and sociology—were represented, consistent with SSD’s mission to help students with widely ranging research concerns share their work and benefit from the expertise of Africanists in different fields.

On the first day the panel “Local and International Politics in Africa: Challenges and Achievements” heard papers from Moses Khisa (Northwestern) and Dong Zhang (Northwestern) on China-Africa economic relations; Valerie Freeland (Northwestern) on how countries on the global periphery negotiate reputation and power in global discourses on human rights, good governance, and international prosecution; and Kafui Tsekpo (University of Ghana, via Skype) on social and economic development discourses in political party manifestoes in Ghana. The second panel, “African States and Society in Historical Perspective,” heard from Waseem Bin Kaseem (Washington University in St. Louis) on the construction of urban space in colonial Nairobi; Nicholas Smith (Northwestern) on Red Sea piracy in the 19th century; and Kofi Asante (Northwestern) on state formation in the Gold Coast colony.

Four panels were presented the second day. “Contested Identities and Citizenship” featured papers by Nick Smith (University of Chicago) on the relations between vigilantism and citizenship in South Africa; Rebecca Sable (George Mason University) on identity issues among irregular migrants in Malta; and Dustin Gourdin (University of Chicago) on the political dimensions and operation of aid organizations in Namibia. “The African Quest for Economic Growth and Development” included papers by Marlous van Waijenburg (Northwestern) on the differences in poverty between British colonies in Africa and India; and Shelby Grossman (Harvard University) on market regulation in a weak state, with Nigeria as the example. “The Politics of Personhood” panel heard from Kwame Otu (Syracuse University) on same-sex visibility politics and the nation-state in the postcolony; Sakhile Matlhare (Northwestern) on the Batswana tourism industry’s appropriation of the traditional concept of Botho and its impact on interactions between tour guides and (obnoxious) foreign tourists; Eric Otchere (University of Cape Coast, via Skype) on the association between musical preference and emotional intelligence; and Daniel Fiaveh (University of Ghana, via Skype) on the politics of positions during sexual intercourse.

“Self-Determination and Electoral Tensions” heard from Tarnjeet Kang (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) on community self-determination in South Sudan; Elise Dufief (Northwestern) on European Union observer missions in Ethiopia;
Erik Cleven (Purdue University) on electoral violence in Kenya and the role of “violence specialists”; and Justin Scott (Yale University) on protests in Nigeria following the removal of fuel subsidies.

The keynote address by DePaul University political scientist Clement Adibe on categorizing contemporary African politics as “a disaster” sparked a spirited exchange.

Asante, van Waijenburg, Khisa, and Raevin Jimenez organized the SSD group and, with the incoming graduate student coordinators of Afrisem, hope to organize a second conference in 2014.

**Speaker reflects on 50 years of independence in Africa**

In a May lecture at Northwestern, Crawford Young, former president of the African Studies Association and professor emeritus of political science at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, surveyed three cycles that Africa’s 53 states have experienced in the 50 years since independence.

The first cycle in the 1960s that began with the euphoria surrounding the achievement of independence was followed by disillusionment with a lapse into single-party or military rule. The second cycle saw the rebirth of optimism and renewed confidence, widespread radicalization, and ambitious state expansion in the 1970s, swiftly followed by state decline, crisis, and even failure during the disastrous 1980s. The 1990s imitated the third cycle with the dramatic sweep of democratization but with widely divergent outcomes, from statelessness in countries like Somalia to the state reform and liberalization in Ghana and other countries.

Young taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1963 to 2001. He was also a visiting professor in Congo-Kinshasa, Uganda, and Senegal. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Scholars’ Council at the Library of Congress. His most recent publication is *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

**Africa Plus website fosters dialogue**

The new website *Africa Plus* aims to provide a forum for scholars, analysts, policy makers, and others to debate contemporary issues of African democracy, governance, economic growth, and security. It also seeks to connect more scholars with University Library’s acclaimed Africana collection.

Erik Johnson (communication studies) won the National Communication Association’s Benson-Campbell award for his dissertation, “Ghana at Midnight: Mass Address, Postcolonial Statecraft, and the Making of an African Public Sphere.”

Moses Khisa (political science graduate student) has an article, “The Making of the ‘Informal State’ in Uganda,” in CODESRIA’s flagship journal, Africa Development (vol. 38, no. 1). Khisa has also become a weekly columnist for The Observer, a leading English-language newspaper in Uganda.


Alex Thurston (religious studies) published “Shaykh Muhammad al-Hasan al-Dedew (b. 1963), a Salafi Scholar in Contemporary Mauritania” in the Annual Review of Islam in Africa.

ISITA hosts first Chinese visitor

This fall the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa welcomes its first visitor from China, Weijian Li, for a 12-month residency at Northwestern funded by the China Scholarship Council.

An associate research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of World Religions, Li earned his PhD in Islamic studies there in 2007. His dissertation focused on Islamic jihad movements in 19th-century West Africa. He is the author of A Historical Study of Islam in West Africa and coauthor of A Survey on Chinese-Style Sufi Orders in Linxia of Gansu Province. Both were published in 2011 by China Social Sciences Press and are in Chinese.

Li will use his residency to plan, research, and write the first Chinese-language historical monograph on Islam in Africa. He will draw on the resources of the Herskovits Library and the expertise of faculty such as Robert Launay (anthropology) and Charles Stewart (ISITA visiting scholar).

Li notes that although the field of African studies is well developed in China, the subject of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa is neglected by Chinese Islamic scholars. In fact, he describes himself as the only scholar in mainland China who studies Islam in Africa.

Li chose Northwestern as his host institution because of its reputation for producing “renowned scholars of Islamic studies of Africa . . . [whose] influential studies still lead the field.” He also plans to study Swahili during his residency.
OCTOBER EVENTS

4 3–5 p.m.
PAS open house

9 noon
“Historicizing Food Insecurity in Africa’s Past and Present through Archaeology.” Amanda Logan (anthropology, Northwestern).

10 12:30–2 p.m.

14 7 p.m.
Paul Collier (Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford University). Title of talk to be announced.

17 noon
Dikgang Moseneke (deputy chief justice of the Republic of South Africa). Title of talk to be announced.

18 noon
“Thoughts on Backlash: Africa’s International Courts.” Karen Alter (political science, Northwestern). Buffett Center, 1902 Sheridan Road, Evanston.

20 noon
“A Life In and Out of Anthropology: Interviews with Jack Sargent Harris.” Kevin Yelvington (anthropology, University of South Florida); Keith Shear and Insa Nolte (African studies and anthropology, University of Birmingham).

21 4 p.m.

22 4 p.m.

25 4 p.m.

29 4 p.m.
PAS/University of Chicago Red Lion Lecture. Sasha Newell (sociology and anthropology, North Carolina State University). DePaul University, Arts and Letters Hall, Room 410, 2325 North Kenmore Avenue, Chicago. Lecture title to be announced.

30 noon
“All events are open to the public and take place at PAS, 620 Library Place, Evanston, unless otherwise noted. Lunch is provided at events that start at noon. Cosponsors for several events include the Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies, the Center for Global Culture and Communication, the Center for Global Engagement, the School of Law, ISITA, and the Political Parties Working Group. See the PAS website (www.northwestern.edu/african-studies) for further details and updates, or call 847-491-7323.”

NOVEMBER EVENTS

1 noon

4 4 p.m.

12 12:30–2 p.m.
“Electoral Violence in Democratizing States.” Leonardo Arriola (political science, University of California, Berkeley).

15 3 p.m.

18 4 p.m.
“Thoughts on Backlash: Africa’s International Courts.” Karen Alter (political science, Northwestern). Buffett Center, 1902 Sheridan Road, Evanston.

20 noon
“A Life In and Out of Anthropology: Interviews with Jack Sargent Harris.” Kevin Yelvington (anthropology, University of South Florida); Keith Shear and Insa Nolte (African studies and anthropology, University of Birmingham).

25 4 p.m.
Presentation by Jacqueline Knorr, Maarten Bedert, and Anaïs Ménard of the Research Group on Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.
Muhammad Sani Umar, continued from page 3

Umar worked diligently as ISITA director to bridge the gap between scholarship produced in Africa and that produced in Western academic circles. Indeed, making the research of Africa-based scholars more widely available was the goal of the Mellon “Global Encounters” grant that sponsored *Islamic Africa* and the postdoctoral fellowships for dissertation revision. Personally, Umar provided a bridge between academic worlds by mentoring countless early-career scholars from Africa at PAS. Met with a warm “You are welcome”—whether in English, Arabic, or Hausa—at Umar’s office door, visiting scholars would then settle in for lively and thought-provoking exchanges. Excursions to Chicago’s African food shops and academic bookstores often followed to ensure that visitors were well nourished in body and mind.

As preceptor for the first cohort of ISITA junior fellows in 2002, Umar mentored five young scholars, each of whom went on to a successful academic career. Abdulai Iddrisu, a member of that cohort and currently assistant professor of history at St. Olaf College, credits Umar with “opening my eyes to the work that I am now doing” and recalls how Umar “took our hands as traditional African fathers do to the young, guiding us through the debates and scholarship on African Muslims and the colonial state. Yet, recognizing our bewilderment in an alien environment, he served as a bridge: he invited us to his home for dinners, took us to downtown Chicago on several occasions, and made us feel at home.”

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A glance at Umar’s CV reveals his impressive scholarly range, apparent whenever he commented at seminars and conferences. In addition to the monograph *Islam and Colonialism: The Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule* (Brill, 2005), he has published on Islamic liberalism, Islamic education, Sufism and reform, gender and Islamic law, and Islam and democracy and has translated and analyzed Arabic texts and Hausa poetry. He engages closely with West Africa’s Islamic intellectual traditions as expressed in manuscripts and texts, while linking these to broader contemporary debates and contexts. Umar’s interest in exploring how classical traditions of Islamic learning are invoked to support pragmatic solutions to problems of contemporary Muslim societies earned him a Carnegie Scholar Award in 2008 to study the writings of Nigerian scholar al-Shaykh Ibrahim Saleh. Other honors include a fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2006–07) and a Global Studies Fellowship at UCLA’s International Institute (2003–04).

For all that he has contributed to the ISITA and PAS communities, Umar will be missed. But even as this chapter of his relationship with Northwestern comes to a close, we look forward to starting a new chapter of collaborative work with him from his new base in Nigeria.