PAN AFRICAN CONNECTIONS
A Symposium in Honor of the Retirement of Professor Locksley Edmondson
13-14 APRIL 2017
PROGRAM
PAN AFRICAN CONNECTIONS

THURSDAY, 13 APRIL 2017
4:30-7:00 PM
Welcome: Prof. Carole Boyce Davies (Cornell University) - Symposium Organizer
Context: Professor James Turner (Founding Director of Africana Studies & Research Center, Cornell University)
Opening Address: Prof. Micere Mugo (Syracuse University), "Locksley Edmondson as the Embodiment of Pan-Africanist Connectivity"
Reflections: Family, Friends, Colleagues, Former Students, including:
- Statement from Dr. Peter Phillips, PhD, MP (President of People's National Party, Jamaica & Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition)
- Statement from Dr. Anyang' Nyong'o, PhD (Senator of Kisumu County, Kenya)
- Frank Scruggs, Esq. (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida)
- Dr. Belinda Edmondson (Rutgers University - Newark)
- Prof. N'Dri Assie Lumumba (Cornell University)
Reception

FRIDAY, 14 APRIL 2017
9:00 AM
Panel I: Connections: From the Caribbean to Africa
Moderator: Prof. Anne Adams (Cornell University)
Prof. Kevin Gaines (Cornell University), "Pan-Africanism in the 1960s"
Prof. Edward Greene (UN Special Envoy for Global Health in the Caribbean), "Reflections on the African Diaspora Connections: Challenges and Triumphs"
Prof. James Mittelman (American University), "The Politics of 'We' and 'They': Locksley Edmondson and Transnational Race Relations"
Prof. Mukoma wa Ngugi (Cornell University), "Mapping Radical Pan Africanism in The Global South"

11:15 AM
Panel II: Teaching Pan African Connections
Moderator: Prof. N'Dri Assie Lumumba (Cornell University)
Prof. Paul Sawyer (Cornell University), "The Professor and the World: Locksley Edmondson as Teacher, Activist, and Inspiration"
Prof. Ayele Bekerie (Mekelle University), "The Establishment of Adwa University of Pan African Studies in Adwa"
Prof. Anne Adams (Cornell University), "Ghana's Du Bois Centre: A Functioning Symbol of Pan-Africanism in the 21st Century?"
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1:00 PM  Lunch

2:30 PM  Panel III: Pan Africanism and Women’s Rights

Moderator: Prof. Carole Boyce Davies (Cornell University)
Victoria Kioko (Cornell University), “On Beauty and the Possibilities of Feminist Pan-Africanism in Una Marson’s The Moth and the Star”
Nicole Mensa (Cornell University), “When Women Stand Up: The Stories of Yaa Asentawa and Leymah Gbowee”
Nadia Sasso (Cornell University), Film: “Am I: Too African to be American or Too American to be African?”

4:30 PM  Panel IV: Global Impact: Scholarship & Activism in Africa & the World

Moderator: Prof. Muna Ndulo (Cornell University)
Prof. Darryl Thomas (Pennsylvania State University), “Global Impacts: Locksley Edmondson’s Scholarship and Activism in Africa and the World”
Prof. Jonathan Jansen (University of Free State/Stanford University), “How Locksley Edmondson Fought Apartheid - Without Setting Foot in the Place”

6:15 PM  International Intellectual Formations: Locksley Edmondson

Reflections: Colleagues, Students, Family, Friends, including:
- Mwalimu Abdul Nanji (Columbia University)
- James H. Irish, Esq. (Hartsdale, New York)
- Prof. Norman Uphoff (Cornell University)
- Prof. Risa Lieberwitz (Cornell University)
- Statement from Prof. Horace Campbell (Syracuse University / University of Ghana)
- Others
Dr. Locksley Edmondson, Professor in the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University since 1983 (recently retired in January 2017), is a political scientist with specializations in international relations (especially concerning Africa and the Caribbean) and race relations (especially concerning the Black World).

Born in Jamaica, West Indies, he completed his undergraduate studies in England at the University of Birmingham in 1960 where he earned a Bachelor of Social Sciences Honors degree specializing in Economics, Political Science, and Sociology. He then earned Masters and Doctoral degrees in Political Science in Canada at Queen's University, at Kingston, Ontario. His extensive University teaching career includes four years at the University of Waterloo in Canada (1963-67); three years at Makerere University in Uganda, East Africa (1967-70); three years at Cornell (Department of Government) in the early 1970's; two semesters (1972-73) at the University of Denver (Graduate School of International Studies); seven years (1973-1980) at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus, Jamaica, and occasionally at the Institute of International Relations on the St. Augustine (Trinidad & Tobago) campus; and two years at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, prior to returning to Cornell (Africana Studies & Research Center) as a visiting professor in 1983, becoming a full professor in 1987.

He also has extensive experience in university administration. At Cornell he was Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center (1991-96) as well as Director of Cornell's National Resource Center in African Studies (1991-94) funded by the U.S. Department of Education; also serving on several University committees.

Previous administrative experience includes his position as Director of General Development Studies, an experimental all-University course he founded at Makerere University (1969-70); Acting Director of the Center on International Race Relations at the University of Denver (1972-73); Campus Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Mona (Jamaica) campus of the University of the West Indies (1976-78); University Dean of Social Sciences at the UWI (1978-80) with responsibility for academic programs in Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago and the Bahamas; and Coordinator of the Black American Studies Program at Southern Illinois University (1981-83).

He has attended numerous international professional conferences including participation by invitation in six UNESCO Meetings of Experts. He was elected Vice-President for two of these UNESCO meetings respectively on “The Study of the Cultural Contributions of Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean from the Beginning of the 19th Century” (Panama, 1979) and “The African Negro Cultural Presence in the Caribbean and in North and South America” (Barbados, 1980). He was also elected President for another two UNESCO Experts Meetings on “Social Science Needs and Priorities in the Caribbean” (Barbados, 1980) and “Working Group of Experts to plan a project for a General History of the Caribbean” (France, 1981).
In 1979, he delivered the keynote address at a symposium in Kingston, Jamaica on "Caribbean Supports for National African Liberation" cosponsored by the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid. At the invitation of the Ambassador of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, he participated in the opening panel discussion on the theme of "The Year of Peace and Security in Africa" at the May 2010 Special Commemoration of Africa Day in New York City.

For many years he has been involved with the Caribbean Studies Association, the leading professional association of Caribbeanists, as a founding member in 1974 and as President (1996-97). His involvement in other scholarly organizations includes current membership on the Executive Board of the New York African Studies Association, of which he was President (1997-98). He previously served on the General Board of the African Heritage Studies Association and from 1978-1991 he was an International Vice President and member of the Bureau of the International Congress of African Studies. He was President of the African Studies Association of the West Indies (1975-76).

Other professional organizational activities include his service (early 1980's to 2000) on the Board of Directors of Trans-Africa Forum in Washington, D.C. and being a founding member in 1993 of the TransAfrica Forum Scholars Council. He chaired the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA) Committee on Caribbean Resources, Interests and Needs in African Studies (1975-77); was a member of the Caribbean Conference of Churches Goodwill and Fact-Finding Mission to Haiti (August 1987); and has served on the Editorial Advisory Board of The CARICOM Bulletin (publication of the Caribbean Community Secretariat in Guyana). From 1986-1990 he was on the International Technical Committee charged with launching the Institute of the Black Peoples in Burkina Faso, culminating in his election to chair the IBP's Constituent Assembly's Commission set up to approve the Convention establishing the IBP in April 1990. He was a founding member and has served on the Board of Trustees and Overseers of ACDESS (African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies) established in Nigeria in 1991. He was a consultant for the launching and development of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI) established at the University of South Africa in 2012 with the mission of "Investing in Thought Leaders for Africa's Renewal."

Publications

TRIBUTES

Dr. Peter D. Phillips, PhD, MP
President People’s National Party, Jamaica & Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition
March 27, 2017

Locksley Edmondson is a remarkable man. For me, perhaps the most striking characteristic of the man has been his continuing willingness to nurture and support all young scholars and students with whom he came in contact and who were desirous of benefitting from his guidance and insight. In this regard, I can give personal testimony.

As a young graduate student in the Department of Government at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Locksley went far beyond the usual requirements of a Thesis Supervisor to nurture intellectual talents that were recognizable to him and of which I was however blissfully unaware. He engineered my attendance at scholarly conferences which brought me into contact with the wider international community of scholars in our field and he partnered with me in my first academic publication. Even after having encouraged and supported my pursuit of doctoral studies which culminated in my studying at Binghamton under the supervision of Immanuel Wallenstein, I was fortunate enough to have Locksley journey from nearby Ithaca to Binghamton to participate as external examiner in the final viva voce for my dissertation. His presence was both a comfort and an inspiration for a fledgling young Caribbean scholar and in the middle of a New York winter far away from the sunny Caribbean. I know for a fact that I was not unique in being a beneficiary of Locksley’s goodwill. I have heard enough similar testimony from many others, to convince me of this quality of selfless goodwill in the nurturing of the young has been a defining characteristic of the man.

Locksley has always been a man of tremendous passion; a passion for the underdog; and for the upliftment of those who have been left behind by the dynamics of history and society. This has led him into a lifelong quest to represent the cause of African peoples both those in Mother Africa and those in the wider Diaspora particularly in the Western Hemisphere throughout the turbulent and eventful years of the early 21st Century.

Having completed his own studies in Canada and begun his academic career, Locksley was drawn to both Africa and the Caribbean giving distinguished service at Makerere University and the University of the West Indies, Mona campus in Jamaica. The capstone of his very distinguished academic career was however to be his long sojourn at the Department of Africana Studies and Research Centre at Cornell University.

Nevertheless wherever he was, Locksley never departed from his central passion of ensuring that people of African descent were able to transcend deprivations heaped upon them by the cruel historical experiences of enslavement and colonization.
Now that he is formally retiring, he, as much as us may take comfort in the fact that throughout his amazing career he has sowed the seeds of his own passion sufficiently widely in the minds of this of other generations to be assured that the causes for which he fought and struggled will not languish, and victory will be assured.

What began for me as a chance encounter with an academic supervisor has blossomed into an enduring friendship which has lasted more than 40 years. It has been a friendship that has been based not so much on regular day-to-day or even month by month communication, but rather upon enduring mutuality of interests and concerns and a set of shared values and commitments. Throughout this friendship a particularly striking and appealing feature of Locksley’s personality has been his immense curiosity of mind which has been evident through all the years despite the passage of time and the vicissitudes of life. He never became so fixed in his views that he closed his mind to new ideas, new modes of thinking or new techniques.

While age may leave its mark on the body, his mind continues to reflect that timeless vibrancy which makes him an ideal partner for the young. There is no doubt that despite his retirement, he will continue to be a vital resource for the training and preparation of young minds who pass through Ithaca or who may contact him for whatever reason.

It is my privilege and pleasure to offer this tribute in salute of a great scholar, a great Caribbean man and a wonderful personal friend who has been an inspiration and a guide to me over many years.

“Edmondson’s class changed the way I think about my life and heritage.”

(Quotation from a former student)
Dr. Anyang' Nyong'o, PhD  
Senator of Kisumu County, Kenya  
March 23, 2017

In June 1968 I joined Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda, as a young undergraduate for my BA degree taking Political Science, Philosophy and Literature in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences. The department of Political Science was then headed by Professor Ali Mazrui, a young and vivacious scholar from Kenya who, having obtained his PhD from Nuffield College in Oxford University, rose quickly--but deservedly--through the ranks and dominated his field by a plethora of publications and numerous public lectures in Africa and across the globe. Mazrui was a scholar and a public intellectual par excellence.

Not to be outdone in this game of scholarly excellence and aggressive commentaries on public affairs was another young Afro-Caribbean scholar known particularly for his detailed quotations of Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell's book, "Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach", and the issues he took with some of the basic assumptions in that voluminous work. We took copious notes as Locksley Edmondson walked from left to right in front of the class, smoking his cigarettes and abandoning them halfway, always snorting as if to signal the nuisance value of the smoke. We always wondered why Locksley bothered to buy whole packets of cigarettes when he was going to enjoy only half of each stick. Perhaps "suffer" and not "enjoy" is the word.

In the department of Political Science Mazrui, Edmondson, Ahmed Mohiddin, Tony Gingnyera Pinca and the young Okello Oculi--our Tutorial Fellow--bit me with the bug of political science and introduced me firmly into that family. I could never leave after that. In Philosophy three Canadian scholars shaped my world view: Andre Gomby, Peter Russell and Storrs McCall. In literature the Malawian scholar and nationalist, David Rubadiri, made Alex La Guma's novel, "A Walk in the Night," a real eye opener to us on the evils of the apartheid regime in South Africa and how black people were "bound for a period of time to walk the night" --like the ghost of Hamlet's father--as long as that evil regime persisted.

Locksley Edmondson connected the African predicament on the continent with the African-American struggles in both the Americas and the islands in the Atlantic Ocean. He took us back to slavery and the slave trade, to the meaning of Eric Williams' "Capitalism and Slavery". We went through why the so-called Negro Spirituals were an external expression of the inward grace of men and women who were dehumanised but refused to let go their dignity, their worth, their sense of always belonging to the human race whether above the earth or deep down in their graves. Freedom is something the slave in the Southern cotton plantations or the Caribbean sugar estates always yearned for in the same manner that the black person in apartheid South Africa believed he could only walk the night "for a period of time." The spiritual was very specific: "Oh oh freedom! Oh oh freedom! Oh oh freedom over me, over me. And when I be a slave, al be buried in my grave, and go home to my Lord and be
FREEE." Later Martin Luther King, in his Freedom Speech that marked the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, would shout at the top of his voice: "Free at last! Almighty God we are free at last!"

Locksley was always at his best when he was teaching us about the Civil Rights Movement. He narrated stories as if they happened yesterday. We got to know about the Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the reactionary side of Booker Washington’s black capitalism as a version of “liberation”, Marcus Garvey and the "back to Africa" option that led to founding Liberia. Much later in life, I visited Liberia after Master Samuel Kenyon Doe established his military dictatorship there in 1979. I was not impressed. I wrote an essay, which later became a chapter in my book "Popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa" (London: Zed Books, 1989). The essay was called “Soldiers and Counter-Revolution in Liberia." It was published in “The Journal of African Marxists.” I should have dedicated that essay to Locksley.

When Liberia was founded the motto of the freed slaves was “The Love of Freedom Brought Us Here.” Several decades after the True Whig Party ruled that mineral rich country, a good number of the offsprings of the first settlers could not see or feel the value of that freedom. They were as poor as their fellow Africans living in the tenements in District Six in Cape Town where the main characters in Alex la Guma's "A Walk in the Night" lived. The slogan among the poor in Liberia after being disappointed by the short lived euphoria following Doe's coup was: "the love of freedom brought us here from the US; but the love of money will take us back!"

I do not think, in retrospect, that Locksley Edmondson was a Marxist when he taught me, or whether that mattered at all. What I know is that he cared deeply for humanity, he knew how important struggles for national and human liberation were and why social phenomena could only be understood by going beyond their appearances. In that regard he was a Marxist, no doubt believing that philosophers have, up to now, only analysed and described the world: the point, however, is to change it. At that point Locksley joined hands with his other colleague then teaching at the University College, Dar es Salaam, the late Walter Rodney.

In 1969 the Apollo Milton Obote Uganda People’s Congress Government decided "to move to the left", i.e. To steer the nation progressively towards a socialist path of development much as Julius Nyerere was doing in Tanzania. We were all excited. I was then president of the Makerere Students’ Guild. The University was requested to orient students to this new way of thinking, to make them aware of what was going on in the country so that they could think through and understand the needed changes. Locksley was given the task of conceptualising and designing a course that ALL students would take so as to embrace the whole problematic of development in the context of a socialist transformation. Believing in development from below, Locksley organised a series of discussions with staff and students, from the Medical School to the Agriculture Faculty, from the physics department to the department of
geography on what needed to be done. In the end, having smoked a thousand and one
cigarettes, Locksley designed what came to be known as "General Development Studies"
(GDS). It was a worthy experience with delightful moments in our lives. Almond and Powell
jumped off the shelves and had to help us confront real lived experience in Uganda: how do
you transform a neo-colonial economy into a socialist society in our life time? The jury is still
out to this very day.

Finally, when I was going to graduate school in Chicago in September 1971, I stopped in New
York and crossed over to Ithaca where Locksley had then moved to Cornell University
following Idi Amin’s coup in Uganda in January that year. My first visit to a US university was
at the invitation of Locksley. I was en route to joining him in the teaching of political science
but I almost perished in the air flying in rough weather from New York to Ithaca. We had to
abandon the small plane in Elmira and come by road to Ithaca. But Locksley was there at the
airport, patiently waiting: smoking of course.

“Professor Edmondson was very much interested in the subject, so it was easy
to follow his example and gain interest.”

(Quotation from a former student)
Prof. John Meisel  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Political Studies  
Queen’s University  
April 11, 2017

Re: my soul mate, Eddie, i.e. Locksley

Occasionally, but rarely, a teacher or professor connects with a student because they are made of the same clay, so to speak. They see and respond in similar rhythms and particularly FEEL the world in similar cadences.

It has been my great joy to find such a partner in Locksley.

I admired him from the start and particularly after he decided to teach in the West Indies. Although he, in the end, had to abandon that venture, he made a definite, admirable statement.

If I had to design the perfect academic citizen, I would fashion someone like Locksley. His life has enriched mine and continues to do so. My gratitude, consequently, is boundless. I wish I could be present at the festivities, but at 92 find travel prohibitive.

But my love and respect reach out to you, Eddie. And my mind expands because of the journals.

Keep it up, my dear, dear friend and continue to shine and flourish.

As ever,  
John

“The lectures Professor Edmondson gave touched my heart.”  

(Quotation from a former student)
Symposium Organizing Committee:

Prof. Carole Boyce Davies (Symposium Organizer), Professor of Africana Studies and English, Cornell University
Prof. N'Dri Assie Lumumba, Professor of Africana Studies, Cornell University
Mr. Eric Acree, Director, John Henrik Clarke Africana Library at Cornell University
Mrs. Elizabeth Edmondson, Office Manager & Fulbright Administrator, Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell University