

IN MEMORIAM

William A. Brown

Gretchen Walsh

WILLIAM A. BROWN

William Allen Brown, PhD, age 73, passed away at home on Tuesday, August 28, 2007. William was born on January 29, 1934 in Beauford, North Carolina, where he attended DeWitt Clinton High School prior to joining the Air Force. On leaving the Air Force, he enrolled in Kentucky State University, where he majored in History, Government, French Language and Literature; graduating with highest distinction as valedictorian in 1959. He was then awarded a Fulbright grant to attend the Université de Sorbonne in Paris, where he again led his class.

Upon completing his studies in France, he entered the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study African history and Islamic studies. At Wisconsin, he was awarded a number of fellowships, including: a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, National Defense Foreign Language Fellowship in Arabic, and a Foreign Area Fellowship for Africa. He conducted research in Mali from 1965-66 for his doctoral dissertation, "The Caliphate of Humdullahi, ca. 1818-64: A Study in African History and Tradition," which he submitted to Wisconsin in 1969 and remains the authoritative study of the area.

Professor Brown started his teaching career at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria and subsequently held positions at Yale University, Harvard University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, from which he retired as Emeritus Professor in 2006. He received

research grants from the Ford Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, The American Council of Learned Societies, The American Philosophical Society, and he published "Toward a Chronology for the Caliphate of Hamdullah," *Cahiers D' etudes Africanines*; "A New Bio-bibliographical Aid; 'The Izalat Al-Rayb' of Muhammad Boul Araf" and "Nasiwal Asudan: A Guide to Legal History in Mali," both in the Research bulletin Center of Arabic Documentation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and *Great Rulers of the African Past*. Professor Brown also organized the first conference on Black Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1967 that resulted in the publication of S. Henderson and M. Cook (eds.), *The Militant Black Writer in the U.S. and Africa*.

William Brown is preceded in death by parents, Mildred and William Brown, a nephew, Stacy Mumford, and his youngest sister, Mildred Denise Brown. He is survived by two sisters, Patricia Lessner and Marsha Brown; two nephews, Mark and Myles; two nieces, April and Robin; four grand nephews, Shabar, Mark Jr., Amir and Jaden; two great nieces, Jaquel and Shanel; and his brother-in-law Fred Philpot Jr.

Submitted by Thomas Spear, U of Wisconsin-Madison, September 10, 2007.

GRETCHEN WALSH

Gretchen Walsh, thirty year Head Librarian of Boston University's African Studies Library, died of an aortic aneurysm 10 June 2007 while camping along the Green River in Utah on a rafting trip. She was 65 years old. Since 1995 she had experienced a profound love of the Western outdoors, and joyfully traveled

there often, fully intending to relocate from Quincy, Massachusetts upon her anticipated retirement to live in the West with her husband Dan.

Robert Hudson, Director of Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library, where she built

one of the country's most prestigious African collections, termed Gretchen a "tireless advocate of African Studies and Africana Librarianship." Indeed she was an indefatigable, inimitable presence not only at BU, but also in the Africana Librarian Council (ALC), and in the African Studies Association (ASA), as well. Gretchen served as two terms as Chair of the ALC, 1983-84 and 2003-04. She was elected to the ASA Board of Directors, serving from 1991-94, and as Chair of its Development Committee through 1996.

At an ALC memorial in New York City, we remembered Gretchen's inclusive gift of bringing her friends and colleagues to work together, often via humor, and her quirky humor eased our sadness. As we celebrated her life and the many projects she initiated, completed, or facilitated, she enabled us to laugh together. Ruby Bell-Gam recalled Gretchen's saying: "My grandmother used to say 'there is more than one way to skin a cat' - but why would anyone want to skin a cat?" Most in the group recalled their having benefited from Gretchen's generous mentoring. Greg Finnegan of Harvard recalled: "Gretchen Walsh not only had vision; she turned that vision into reality. If she had an idea, it went somewhere!" Those ideas included facilitating bibliographic access to essentially all materials relevant to the study of Africa; among them were materials produced by Diasporan populations including Cape Verdeans in Massachusetts.

From the late 1980s she was a leader in addressing Africa's Book Famine. Through the work of ALC's Book Donation Task Force which became the Book Donation Committee (both of which she helped to found, and its Book Donations Handbook, which she authored), she publicized and helped alleviate the paucity of books and periodicals held by African libraries. Other well-respected publications included *The Media in*

Africa and Africa in the Media: An Annotated Bibliography, 1996, "Library Instruction and Reference for Undergraduate Research on Africa: Opening a Faculty/Library Partnership," *In Africanist Librarianship in an Era of Change*, 2005. She co-edited with Deborah LaFond *Research Reference Service and Resources for the Study of Africa*, which contains her "Can We Get There from Here? Negotiating the Washouts, Cave-ins, Dead Ends, and Other Hazards on the Road to Research on Africa," 2004. From 1977-82, she edited the *Africana Librarians Newsletter* 1977-82, and from 1996-02 she was Book Review Editor for *H-Africa*, the electronic discussion group on humanities in Africa.

Colleagues around the globe have joined us in mourning Gretchen Walsh. John McIlwaine, Professor Emeritus University College, London, wrote: "May I add another TransAtlantic tribute to Gretchen Walsh? U.K. Africanists had all come to have deep respect for her knowledge, commitment and clear-headed and trenchant commitment to debate. Only some two hours before reading the sad news on the ALC list I had completed an article in which I had quoted her several times and in which the very last paragraph contained the phrase "as so often, I feel that Gretchen Walsh has made the most sensible comments ... (on Wikipedia). We will greatly miss her contributions."

Rosemary Armato wrote: "Gretchen will be best remembered and least forgotten for her caring ways. ...[She] brought out the best in everything that she touched." Members of the ALC join in saying "Thank you, Gretchen."

Submitted by Phyllis B. Bischof, Africana Librarian Emerita, U of California-Berkeley, November 29, 2007.