MUGO SYMPOSIUM SERVES AS ‘HISTORICAL TEACHING MOMENT’

Micere Githae Mugo is used to taking center stage, literally and figuratively. But at no other time in her career has the glare of the spotlight been brighter than now—on the eve of her retirement from Syracuse University.

A faculty member in the Department of African American Studies (AAS) since 1993, Mugo is the focus of a spring symposium titled “The Tireless Pursuit.” Nearly 100 people from all over the world are expected to pay tribute, including Ghanaian playwright Ama Ata Aidoo; Congolese historian Jacques Depelchin; Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o; Kenya’s Chief Justice Willy Mutunga; and Kenyan envoy to the United States, the Honorable Robin Githae.

For Mugo, the daylong event on April 3 marks not so much the summation of a storied career, but the next chapter in an extraordinary life.

“I am honored and humbled to be celebrated in this way,” says Mugo, a Meredith Professor in AAS. “It’s my hope that the symposium will serve as a historical teaching moment by highlighting indigenous and other alternative sites of knowledge, in reaffirmation of the mission and values of a liberal arts education at Syracuse.”

Forced into exile from her native Kenya, Mugo moved to Zimbabwe and then the United States to teach. She is a leading scholar of orature (i.e., spoken word), as it relates to resistance art.
The year is off to an exciting start, isn’t it? Before you know it, members of the Class of 2015 will be marching across the floor of the Carrier Dome, proudly clutching their diplomas.

At Syracuse, time passes in the blink of an eye. I can hardly believe that two months have gone by since I was appointed dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Serving as your dean is a huge honor and responsibility, and it’s one I don’t take lightly.

There is a sense of urgency on campus—particularly in A&S—that’s almost palpable. Chancellor Kent Syverud’s bold vision and inspiring leadership are propelling us in new directions, while keeping us focused on our core values. Never, in my 21 years here at the University, have I witnessed such fortitude. It's exhilarating, and I'm proud to be part of it.

I am honored to work with all of you—students, faculty, staff, alumni—in realizing the Chancellor’s vision of an “unrivaled College of Arts and Sciences.” It’s hard work, but I’m confident that, with a clear strategic plan and steadfast commitment to academic excellence, we’ll prevail.

I’m particularly excited about what this means for alumni engagement. Just as small-business owners are the foundation of our national economy, alumni are the backbone of a liberal arts education. I hope you’ll take a moment to turn to the back of the newsletter, where you’ll see three easy ways to stay engaged with us. We always like hearing from you and are eager to celebrate your accomplishments in print and on the Web.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the College and for all you do to make us the heart and soul of Syracuse University. Your involvement is critical to our success.

Sincerely,

Karin Ruhlandt
Dean and Distinguished Professor of Chemistry
College of Arts and Sciences

Earlier this year, Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost Liz Liddy appointed Karin Ruhlandt dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Ruhlandt had been serving as interim dean since July 2014.

In her more than 20 years as a Syracuse professor, Ruhlandt has established herself as an academic and administrative visionary. She has served as chair of the Department of Chemistry, where she is a Distinguished Professor and a pioneering inorganic chemist; has helped revitalize the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) initiative, turning Syracuse’s REU program in chemistry into one of the biggest in the country; and has worked with numerous campus programs to promote the involvement of women and underrepresented minorities in the STEM fields.

As dean, Ruhlandt has already made several lasting contributions to the College, including the creation of an equitable funding structure for graduate and undergraduate research; the reorganization of the Syracuse University Humanities Center to enhance public programming and faculty scholarship; the strengthening of relationships with A&S’ sister schools and colleges, sparking academic collaborations on and off campus; and the implementation of an aggressive communications strategy to increase the College’s international profile.

Building an Unrivaled College: A 5-Part Strategy

- Attract and retain top-tier students, while improving the overall undergraduate experience;
- Provide world-class research opportunities to students and faculty in state-of-the-art facilities;
- Assess the outcomes of our students by providing the highest quality advising available (academic and professional), from the time they enroll in the College until well after graduation;
- Identify and leverage alumni of the College; and
- Drive awareness, increase visibility, and build a sense of camaraderie among students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
Stephanie Breed ’15, an art history major, is the founder of Books Are Food for Thought, which delivers books to children receiving free and reduced-cost meals at schools and community centers throughout Central New York. Since its inception in 2008, the program has delivered more than 20,000 books to thousands of kids.

Leanna Matthews, a Ph.D. candidate in biology, is the recipient of a National Geographic Young Explorers’ Grant. She is using the award to study the acoustic communication behavior of male harbor seals along the Pacific coast.

Rose Tardiff ’15, a geography major, has been selected to participate in the National Geographic Geography Intern Program. She will spend 12 weeks acquiring professional learning experience at the organization’s headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Shuyuan Chen ’15, a dual major in religion and economics, is one of the founders of Intercontinental Scholars, which helps international students bridge the culture gap as they prepare for American collegiate life.

Elizabeth M. Droge-Young, a Ph.D. candidate in biology, is the winner of a dissertation fellowship from the American Association of University Women. The award supports her study of the reproductive habits of flour beetles.

Miani Giron ’16, a dual major in biology, and women’s and gender studies, is a Posse Los Angeles 1 Scholar, entitling her to a full-tuition scholarship. She is the co-founder of the Zeta Epsilon Chapter of Lambda Theta Alpha, the nation’s first Latina sorority.

Wendy Chen, a University Fellow in the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing, is one of “10 Young American Poets Changing the Face of Poetry,” according to theculturetrip.com.

Artie Costa ’16, a dual major in political science and international relations, is interning for New York Senator Charles E. Schumer. Costa is also establishing a campus chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America.

Carly Maldonado, a dual Au.D./Ph.D candidate in audiology, is a recipient of the Minority Student Leadership Program Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The award enables her to participate at ASHA’s annual convention in Orlando, Fla.

Emily Payne ’15, a psychology major, is a research assistant in Syracuse’s Center for Autism Research and Electrophysiology (CARE Lab), where she works under Natalie Russo, assistant professor of psychology.

Carvel Whyte ’15, a psychology major, recently served on the A&S Dean Search Committee. She also volunteers in the College’s admissions office.

Nine graduating seniors have been nominated as Syracuse University Scholars, the institution’s highest academic honor. They are:

- Brooke Baerman, art history/philosophy
- Brittany Beyer, international relations/history
- Elizabeth McMahon, biology/policy studies
- Natalie Rebeyev, biology/modern Judaic studies
- Alexander Sammartino, English and textual studies/philosophy
- Bo Stewart, economics/policy studies/political science/Spanish
- Luke Strauskulage, biotechnology
- Kristin Weeks, biology/sociology/political science
- Kewei Xu, chemistry

This spring, one icon will honor another, when Marvin Druger dedicates parts of historic Holden Observatory in memory of his late wife, Patricia G’74.

The Patricia Meyers Druger Astronomy Learning Center at Holden Observatory is named for the longtime A&S administrator who passed away last year at age 75.

After five months of interior reconstruction, the main floor of the limestone observatory has been transformed into an interactive learning space for the teaching of astronomy—a passion of Patricia’s.

“It will be a wonderful place to learn about the universe and to think about life on our planet,” says Marvin, professor emeritus of biology and science teaching. “After renovation is complete, students will study astronomy in a much more appropriate, exciting setting.”

The University’s second oldest building, Holden Observatory has been a campus icon since its opening in 1887. One of the high-water marks was 1939, when Mars passed close to Earth, and a line of people snaked around the building, hoping to peer at the red planet through the observatory’s enormous telescope.

Since then, the 320-ton building has undergone many modifications, including being moved in 1991—at the rate of four inches per hour—to its current location near Crouse College and, more recently, having its telescope restored.

Marvin was struck with the idea of doing something in memory of Patricia, when students on his campus tours began peppering him with questions about “that old gray building.”

“I made the donation because I love Pat dearly, and I want her memory to be preserved,” says the beloved professor. “I hope that, for the next hundred years, people will look at her photo on the wall of the center and say, ‘Wow! Isn’t she beautiful?’… And she was, in so many ways.”

Dedication of the Patricia Meyers Druger Astronomy Learning Center Saturday, March 28, 2015, 11 a.m. Hendricks Chapel
Syracuse University, Cornell University, and the University of Rochester—founders of the Central New York Humanities Corridor, a large-scale interdisciplinary project—have received grants totaling $3.55 million from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The awards will support the Humanities Corridor in perpetuity, while creating endowments at its founding institutions.

“Just Academic Spaces” is the theme of a three-year, $500,000 project, organized and presented by the Democratizing Knowledge Collective and funded by the Mellon Foundation.

Co-directed by Linda Carty, associate professor of African American studies (AAS) (above) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Distinguished Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS), the project fosters a model of exchange between community- and scholar-activists, in hopes of creating a more just academy.

The Syracuse University Humanities Center is in the middle of one of its most ambitious Spring Symposia to date. This year’s lineup features such luminaries as South African playwright John Kani, Canadian filmmaker Dorit Naaman, and Dutch philosopher Rosi Braidotti, along with Syracuse’s own graduate and faculty fellows.

Six professors in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics have been elected to top positions in their field:

Tej Bhatia, professor of linguistics, is the new vice president and president-elect of the International Association for World Englishes.

Jaklin Kornfilt, professor of linguistics, is an advisory member of the Linguistic Society of America’s Committee for Linguistic Institutes and Fellowships, as well as a member of the advisory board of the Encyclopedia of Turkic Language and Linguistics (Brill Publishers).

Stephanie Fetta (assistant professor of Spanish), Stefano Giannini (associate professor of Italian), Maria Emma Ticio Quesada (assistant professor of Spanish linguistics), and Alicia Ríos (associate professor of Spanish) are executive committee members of the Modern Language Association.

Mark Nerenhausen, professor of practice and founding director of the Janklow Arts Leadership Program, has teamed up with Syracuse’s Goldring Arts Journalism Program and the Broward Cultural Division in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for a series of workshops on arts journalism and leadership. The yearlong project is the brainchild of Broward’s James Shermer G’98 and is supported by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Gustav Niebuhr, associate professor in religion and the media, and Gareth Fisher, assistant professor of religion, are celebrating the publication of new books. Niebuhr is the author of Lincoln’s Bishop: A President, a Priest, and the Fate of 300 Dakota Sioux Warriors (HarperOne, 2014); and Fisher, From Comrades to Bodhisattvas: Moral Dimensions of Lay Buddhist Practice in Contemporary China (University of Hawaii Press, 2014).

Vivian May, associate professor and chair of WGS, is president of the National Women’s Studies Association. Her latest book is Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries (Routledge, 2015).

Amanda Eubanks Winkler, associate professor of music history and cultures, recently led a two-day workshop on Restoration Shakespeare at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. The workshop came on the heels of her article in the Cambridge Opera Journal (Cambridge University Press, 2014) about the critical response to Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “The Phantom of the Opera.” She also is vice president of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music.

Dana Olwan, assistant professor of WGS, is the winner of both a Palestinian American Research Council fellowship and a Lillian Robinson Scholar Award, the latter of which is bestowed by the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University in Quebec (Canada).

Bruce Smith, professor of English and a faculty member of the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing, has been awarded a Rome Prize by the American Academy in Rome. The award enables him to travel to Italy to focus on studying and writing poetry.

Sascha Scott and Luis Castaíeda, assistant professors of art history, have made their authorial debuts with A Strange Mixture: The Art and Politics of Painting Pueblo Indians (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014) and Spectacular Mexico: Design, Propaganda, and the 1968 Olympics (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), respectively.

Sascha Scott also teaches a popular course on Cowboys and Indians with Scott Manning Stevens, associate professor and director of Native American studies and co-author of Art of the American West: The Haub Family Collection at Tacoma Art Museum (Yale University Press, 2014).


James Gordon Williams, assistant professor of AAS, recently published the article “Crossing Cinematic and Sonic Bar Lines: T-Pain’s ‘Can’t Believe It’” in Ethnomusicology Review (University of California, Los Angeles, 2014).
Paul Souder, professor of physics, is using a $1.2 million grant award from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to explore spin-dependent phenomena. The DOE has been supporting his work since 1984.

Liviu Movileanu, associate professor of physics, is using a $1.17 million grant award from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences to create nanobiosensors. These materials will be used to detect and analyze protein-protein interactions, thus speeding up the molecular prognosis and diagnosis of cancers at stages much earlier than before.

Joseph Ditre, assistant professor of psychology, is the recipient of a $412,000 grant award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. His research aims to help older adults with HIV and chronic pain quit smoking and curtail their misuse of prescription painkiller medications.

Steven Blusk, professor of physics, is the lead contributor to the discovery of two never-before-seen baryonic particles. His discovery is part of ongoing work at the Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) experiment at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland. His findings were published in Physical Review Letters (American Physical Society, 2014).

Dan Zacharia, professor of mathematics, is the inaugural Douglas R. Anderson Faculty Scholar. Named for the professor emeritus of mathematics, the appointment enables Zacharia to study representations of algebras, attend conferences around the world, and invite colleagues to campus for teaching and research.

The Forensic and National Security Sciences Institute (FNSSI) has several new offerings, including an M.S. Program in Medicolegal Death Investigation (MDI), graduate and undergraduate certificate programs in MDI, and a graduate certificate program in forensic firearms analysis.

Aesoon Park, assistant professor of psychology, is the recipient of a $400,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. Her project aims to identify protective and risk factors associated with African American teenagers’ health outcomes. Study findings will guide the development of culturally sensitive prevention strategies to reduce health disparities among ethnic minorities.

Zunli Lu, assistant professor of Earth sciences, is pairing chemical analyses with micropaleontology to better understand how global marine life was affected by a rapid warming event 55 million years ago. The result was an article in Palaeoceanography (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), revealing that prehistoric oceans were warmer and had less oxygen.
Devashish Mitra, the Gerald B. and Daphna Cramer Professor of Global Affairs and professor of economics, has been recognized by India Today magazine as a leading commentator on Indian economic policies. “To accelerate reduction of poverty, India has to switch to more efficient ways of redistribution and social protection,” Mitra has been quoted as saying.

Yüksel Sezgin, assistant professor of political science, has been appointed director of the Middle Eastern Studies Program. He succeeds Mehrzad Boroujerdi, professor of political science, who has led the program for the past 11 years.

Douglas Armstrong, Maxwell Professor of Teaching Excellence and Meredith Professor of Anthropology, is overseeing the creation of the Harriet Tubman National Historic Park in Cayuga County. The first national park to recognize an African American woman, it acknowledges the contributions of Tubman, the famous abolitionist who lived more than 50 years in Central New York.

Mary Lovely, professor of economics and chair of international relations, recently organized a series of campuswide events, marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Among them was a reenactment of the building and tearing down of the wall, outside Maxwell Hall.

Cecilia Van Hollen, associate professor of anthropology, has returned from Kathmandu, Nepal, where she spoke at the “South Asia Consultation on Maternal Health: Regional Dialogue and Way Forward” conference, sponsored by Oxfam India. She joined other academics, experts from development organizations and NGOs, and prominent medical practitioners for a discussion about maternal health issues in South Asia.

Gretchen Purser, assistant professor of sociology, is the winner of the International Book Award from the California Series in Public Anthropology (University of California Press) for her manuscript Labor on Demand: Dispatching the Urban Poor.

Thomas Keck, associate professor of political science and the Sawyer Chair of Constitutional Law and Politics, is the author of Judicial Politics in Polarized Times (The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Kathy Hochul ’80, a former U.S. congresswoman who represented New York’s 26th congressional district from 2011 to 2013, has been elected lieutenant governor of New York State. She assumed office on January 1, 2015. Hochul was head of government and strategic relations for M&T Bank at the time of her lieutenant governor nomination.

The Maxwell School’s presence in Washington, D.C., has been significantly strengthened, thanks to a new partnership with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a leading nonprofit think tank. All of Maxwell’s graduate and undergraduate classes formerly held at the Greenberg House have moved to CSIS’s new headquarters in Dupont Circle, resulting in deeper engagement for students in the development of strategic insights.

Maxwell’s International Relations Program recently joined forces with the University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families and the Syracuse Veterans Administration Medical Center to celebrate International Women’s Day, focusing on women who serve in combat and post-combat zones. The two-day program featured remarks by Brig. Gen. Linda Singh, the 29th adjutant general of the Maryland Military Department; Deborah Alexander G’82, G’95, a Washington, D.C.-based social scientist and international affairs consultant; Alexandra Wise ’02, associate director of Shuraako, an NGO operating throughout Somalia; Mindy Grewal, the women’s health medical director at the Syracuse VA Medical Center; and Lamis Sleiman G’10, a monitoring and evaluation specialist for Management Systems International in Beirut, Lebanon.

Syracuse’s South Asia Center—directed by Susan Wadley, Ford Maxwell Professor of South Asian Studies and professor of anthropology—has been awarded a $1.3 million grant award from the U.S. Department of Education. The award provides funding for graduate and undergraduate students, course development, Hindi language training, conference planning and travel, and outreach to high schools and community colleges. Based in Maxwell’s Moyhnan Institute of Global Affairs, the South Asia Center is part of a consortium with Cornell University.

Mark Monmonier, Distinguished Professor of Geography, has published Adventures in Academic Cartography: A Memoir (Bar Scale Press, 2014).

Mehrzad Boroujerdi, associate professor of the Middle Eastern Studies Program. He succeeds Douglas Armstrong, Maxwell Professor of Teaching Excellence and Meredith Professor of Anthropology, is overseeing the creation of the Harriet Tubman National Historic Park in Cayuga County. The first national park to recognize an African American woman, it acknowledges the contributions of Tubman, the famous abolitionist who lived more than 50 years in Central New York.

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2000s
Stephen Barton ’12 is a speechwriter for New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman. Barton delivered the student address at Syracuse’s 158th Commencement.

Christine Begley G’02 is vice president for development at the American Academy in Rome, following a 17-year tenure at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Erin Carhart ’14 is the national campus organizer for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Elliott DeLine ’12 has self-published Show Trans (2014), which The Advocate has named one of the year’s best transgender nonfiction books.

Katharine James ’12 is an associate at the Catharine Clark Gallery, a leader in the presentation of new media art in San Francisco.

Daniel Kitchen ’14, a digital marketing and communications intern at the Fiesta Bowl organization in Scottsdale, Ariz., recently worked on the 2015 TicketCity Cactus Bowl and 2014 VIZIO Fiesta Bowl.

Cheryl Strayed G’02 is celebrating the film adaptation of her memoir, Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest (Knopf, 2012). The movie stars Reese Witherspoon.

1970s
Judy Douglas ’77, G’81, a client industry executive at HP Enterprise Services, is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

Elsa Reichmanis ’72, G’75, professor of chemical and biochemical engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, is planning the International Chemical Congress of Pacific Basin Societies, taking place later this year in Hawaii.

1960s
Elaine Freed Lindenblatt ’62 is the author of Stop at the Red Apple (SUNY Press, 2014), about the famous roadside eatery on New York State Route 17.

Pierre Ramond G’69, Distinguished Professor of Physics at the University of Florida, is the winner of the 2015 Dannie Heineman Prize for Mathematical Physics.

1950s
Harry Rosenfeld ’52, a key figure in the breaking of the Watergate scandal that ended the Nixon presidency, is the author of From Kristallnacht to Watergate: Memoirs of a Newspaperman (SUNY Press, 2014). He is a former editor at The Washington Post and New York Herald Tribune.

Sylvia Wassertheil-Smoller ’53, G’55 is the Distinguished University Professor Emerita of Epidemiology and Population Health at Yeshiva University in New York City. She is overseeing the Women’s Health Initiative, a longitudinal study of more than 160,000 postmenopausal women.

1940s
Albert Maysles ’49 (Gimme Shelter, Grey Gardens) is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from DOC NYC, the country’s largest documentary film festival.

1930s
Don Waful ’37, G’39 is one of the University’s oldest surviving military veterans. In addition to never having missed a football game in the Carrier Dome, he has missed only three home football games since 1946.

IN MEMORIAM
Faith Seidenberg ’44, L’54, an attorney and activist known for her civil rights and civil liberties work, died January 16, 2015. She was one of two women in her graduating class at Syracuse’s College of Law.

WORLD-CLASS SCHOLARS
The College has six Fulbright Scholars teaching English all over the world. They are:

Fotini Gan ’12 (international relations), the recipient of a Fulbright English Teaching Award (ETA), based in Taiwan;

Rebecca Ierardo ’13 (international relations/anthropology), a Fulbright ETA Scholar in Malaysia;

Alexis Lian ’11 (political science/policy studies), winner of a Fulbright French Government Teaching Assistantship, working in France;

Leann Miles ’13 (biochemistry), a Fulbright ETA Scholar in Vietnam;

Christine Oh ’12 (psychology/Spanish/public relations), a Fulbright ETA Scholar in South Korea; and

Emily Pompelia ’13 (policy studies/German/newspaper and online journalism), a Fulbright ETA Scholar in Germany.

More information is available at nationalscholarships.syr.edu.
From Syracuse, New York, to Syracuse, Nebraska, Arts and Sciences alumni are everywhere. And we want to hear from you. Let us know what you’re doing—at home, work, or play—and don’t forget to attach a photo. We’ll promptly post your information to the Web or to one of our social media sites.

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