

OBITUARY

J. Gus Liebenow, May 4, 1925-June 21, 1993

J. Gus Liebenow was born in Berwyn, Illinois. In a career of more than 40 years, he established a reputation as one of the leading authorities on African societies and politics and was a driving force in the evolution and establishment of the field of African Studies in the US.

Even before completing his PhD at Northwestern University, Gus had begun his understanding of foreign cultures through service in the US Army medical corps in World War II, both in Western Europe and the Philippines, and later in a project for basic education and rural development sponsored by UNESCO and the American Friends Service Committee in Mexico. After World War II, he returned to Illinois and graduated with highest honors from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in 1949 and a master's in 1950. Gus was a Goodwin Fellow from 1951-1952 at Harvard University and returned to the mid-west to earn his PhD in political science at Northwestern University in 1955. He taught for two years at the University of Texas, before joining the Department of Government faculty at Indiana University in 1958. He founded the African Studies Program in 1961 and directed the program for its first 11 years.

Gus played a formative role in the careers of generations of graduate students who have subsequently distinguished themselves as teachers, scholars and politicians. His students remain grateful to him for going the extra mile, both intellectually and in his personal support for them. Gus also helped to recruit a distinguished Africanist faculty at IU, representing more than a dozen academic disciplines. He served as Dean for Research and Advanced Studies from 1970-1972 and was Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs on the Bloomington campus from 1972-1974. In all of his administrative duties and obligations, Gus exhibited great vision and integrity. Indeed, his colleagues in administration frequently noted that even as Vice President and Dean he was a great teacher. After leaving the university administration, Gus served as head of both the IU Bloomington Faculty Council and the university system-wide council, 1976-1977. He was also president of the IU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, 1979-1980.

Gus was a prolific writer on African politics, education, history, agriculture and urbanization. In 1956 his article concerning Africa in the *American Political Science Review* was only the second concerning Africa to appear in the prestigious journal. From then onward he was an active contributor to scholarship. As an innovative scholar in the development of political theory related to the continent, Gus made lasting contributions to both political science and African studies with such works as *Liberia: The Evolu-*

tion of Privilege (Cornell University Press, 1969); *Colonial Rule and Political Development in Tanzania: The Case of the Makonde* (Northwestern University Press, 1971) which was published on three continents; and two award-winning books published by Indiana University Press, *African Politics: Crises and Challenges* (1986), and *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy* (1987).

Through his writings, speeches and teaching, Gus shaped the way decision makers, academics and world leaders looked at Africa; his influence was far-reaching. Gus lectured throughout the US for the University Field Staff International. He also testified as an expert on Liberia before several US Senate and House of Representative committees. In 1987 he was named Rudy Professor Political Science at Indiana University in recognition of his local, national and international contributions.

He was a founding member of the African Studies Association, and served as president during 1977 and 1978. This was a most difficult time in the organization's history, when it needed the courageous and innovative leadership that he provided. He also served on the African Advisory Committee of the US Department of State and was a member of the executive council of the International African Institute in London.

After his retirement in 1990, Gus was selected for the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Liberian Studies Association. It was the first such award in the 23-year history of the association, which includes several hundred scholars and others from the US, West Africa, Europe and Asia. Gus dedicated his life to Africa, to scholarship, and to those values that make universities centers of civility and exciting venues for the free exchange of ideas.

Survivors include his wife Beverly (Bellis) Liebenow; two daughters, Diane Liebenow Gray of Chicago, Illinois, and Debra Liebenow Daly of Tampa, Florida; two sons, Jay Stanton Liebenow of Washington, DC, and John Stuart Liebenow of Columbus, Indiana; two sisters, Miki Montgomery and Gladys Sturnfield, and one brother, Gil Liebenow, all of Illinois; and eight grandchildren.

Patrick O'Meara, Indiana University
N. Brian Winchester, Indiana University

ukupangila insofu: kano uli na ifumo

threatening an elephant: unless you have a spear

ChiBemba Zambian proverb submitted by Debra Spitulnik,
Emory University