The Professor Who Ran Away

By Professor ‘X’

How it started
I was a newly-minted Ph.D. Just prior to graduation I had accepted a job with a large federal agency; one which actually did very well, cutting-edge, research. As graduation approached I was simultaneously looking for housing at the new location, getting ready, and trying to secure my tenure-searching for a moving company…Upon graduation I used the short amount of downtime between my academic stint and my new role as public servant to locate and try to make the transition as smooth as possible. My selected agency was responsible for dealing with all aspects of air travel: ground operations, controller operations, in-flight, airport capacity…The division in which I would be working performed research into the measurement and understanding of wake-vortices. The phenomena of wake-vortices directly affects how closely spaced two aircraft can be when approaching the runway for landing. This spacing in turn directly affects airport capacity.

This was a very interesting and fulfilling job and one which I looked forward to every day.

Somewhere in the Middle
Eventually, I was given charge to develop and implement an experiment to instrument one of the runways at JFK International Airport in New York to measure jet-blast, another factor which can impact airport capacity. Looking to understand the measurement and instruments needed to get clearance to install a single experiment on an active runway is astronomical, and (3) the stacks of paper and meetings needed just to get clearance to install a single experiment. somewhere in all of this, I was asked to go represent the agency at a conference and to try to find some suitable engineering students who might be interested in employment at our agency. During one of my breaks from the agency’s booth, I was wandering around and saw a guy with a name tag which read ‘Dean - XYZ University’. My parents were increasing in my age and it wouldn’t hurt to live a bit longer; working at ‘XYZ University’ would enable that to happen. We talked a bit and a new arrangement was made. Eventually an offer did arrive for the upcoming Fall semester and I finally made my move – off to Aca-

DEMIA.

Things began smoothly enough: the class

Professor ‘X’, Continued on page 3

The Underrepresentation of Women Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Nelly P. Stromquist

Professor, International Education Policy, UMCP

In countries with substantially fewer girls than boys in education, there is often a cycle of gender disparity that is difficult to break: few girls in school means few women teachers; few women teachers means few girls in school. Increasing the presence of women teachers in such countries has been found to promote girls’ enrollment and permanence in school, as parents trust women teachers and girls’ students have a role model. Long considered a distant continent, Africa is receiving increased attention by policy makers and re-

searchers, and the mainstream press has not overlooked Africa’s election of a woman president (in Liberia) years before this may happen in the U.S. and the participation of African girls in education—critical as it is—shows large disparities compared to

that of boys. In sub-Saharan Africa, girls represent about 47% of primary school enrollment, but going into secondary their presence drops dra-

matically. It is estimated that 54% of girls of junior high school age are not attending school. Over the past 15 years, global policies with great vis-

ibility such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals have sought gender parity at both levels of education, but unfortunately, the goal was reached in only a few sub-Saharan African countries. The presence of women teachers is correspondingly low—about 25% of the teaching force at secondary school level for the region, with some well below this proportion.

Within this reality, over the past five years researchers in the Interna-

tional Education Policy Program in the College of Education have been exploring the factors and dynamics that account for the low propor-

tion of women teachers. This team comprises Professors Steven Kiees, and (4) I might actually die of old-age before the experiment doesn’t inadvertently kill them, (3) the stacks of paper and meetings needed just to get clearance to install a single experiment on an active runway is astronomical, and (4) I might actually die of old-age before I had gotten clearance to install even a single experiment.

Somewhere in all of this, I was asked to go represent the agency at a conference and to try to find some suitable engineering students who might be candidates for employment at our agency. During one of my breaks from the agency’s booth, I was wandering around and saw a guy with a name tag which read ‘Dean - XYZ University’. My parents were increasing in my age and it wouldn’t hurt to live a bit longer; working at ‘XYZ University’ would enable that to happen. We talked a bit and arranged a visit and an interview. Despite ev-

everyone’s best efforts, the first attempt didn’t work out, so I had to stay at ‘Agency X’ a bit longer than anticipated. Was this a message, a harbinger of things to come? I settled back into my agency job – which I actually did still enjoy – and waited patiently. Eventually an offer did arrive for the upcoming Fall semester and I finally made my move – off to Aca-

DEMIA.

Things began smoothly enough: the class

Professor ‘X’, Continued on page 3

African Women in the Past Five Decades

By Gloria Chuku

Professor of Africana Studies and Affiliate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies, and Language, Literacy and Culture Ph.D. Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Introduction

The past five decades have witnessed a dramatic expansion of studies and literature on African women’s history. There have equally been ongo-

ing critical debates on the connections between African women’s history and their current status in society, as well as on the issues of economic develop-

ment, aid and women’s agency, and on women’s political participation in differ-

erent African countries. Efforts are being made to correct and present more bal-
nanced and nuanced accounts of African women’s history against the typical por-

trayal that they totally lack in autonomy and are objects and victims of custom-

ary sub-jectivity and patriarchal control. This essay explores some of these

debates on African women’s roles and status since independence by focus-

ing on three key areas: formal education, political participation and economic development. What role have African women played in these three spheres and how have they been impacted by Western-style education and by political and economic policies pursued in their respective countries? What were the gains made, the challenges and linger-

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 6
By James Gachau

Dr. Muhliuddin Haider, Clinical Pro-

fessor in Global Health in the Uni-

versity of Maryland Institute for App-

lied Innovation earlier this year at the Horow-

itz Center for Health Literacy, was fea-
tured on the home page of UMD’s web-

site in the week prior to his work in global health. Dr. Haider poses a unique and rare combination of skills which enables him to design health programs, sell those programs to communities and assess the behavioral and health changes that occur. The featured story was about his Sep-

tember 2014 mission to Zimbabwe, where he helped build the capacity of health professionals for better health communication. The Faculty Voice caught up with him earlier this semester for a sit-down interview to discuss how he acquired his own cap-

ability for effective health communica-

tion.

Haider is originally from Bangladesh. His interest in health communication started in the late 1960s when over-
population was a big problem leading to the introduction of family planning in the country. As a graduate assistant, Haider did some work for the Family Planning Research and Evaluation Center in Dhaka, the Bangladeshi capital. This grew into wider and deeper interest in delivering effective communication about reproductive health. He started to ask such questions as, “Do people have the right information? Do they interpret it correctly? How do they use it?” He worked as a student volunteer with the agency then known as the United States Information Service, now functioning within the State Department and responsible for pub-

lic information and diplomacy. It was during this time that he attended a seminar led by the famed founder of modern mass communication theory, Daniel Lerner, at MIT that greatly influenced his own approaches.

Haider studied at Michigan State University, where he met Dr. Alfred E. Opobor, the first African profes-
sor to receive a Ph.D. in mass communi-
cation. Opobor was an expert in communication for development, who used mass media to lift formerly col-

onized nations from ignorance, poverty, and disease. He heavily influenced Dr. Haider’s future work at the United States Agency for International De-

velopment (USAID). Because 80% of diseases can be prevented through behavior change, the USAID allocates its budget to health communica-
tion.

In 2005, the Speaker’s Bureau of International Information Programs at USAID informed the State Department started the pro-
gram that sponsored his recent trip to Zimbabwe. He first went to Tajikistan and India, implementing successful programs for health communication. He later traveled to Africa. Zimbabwe, as reported by The Sunday News, a local newspaper, has an “HIV and AIDS prevalence rate standing at 14.2 percent,” which necessitates “behaviour change [be] taken as a serious preventative measure.” But how could this happen? According to The Sunday News, “Prof Haider said the most-at-risk populations need to be addressed on the importance of be-

haviour change through the most in-

fluential people that live among them.” This echoed what Dr. Haider said for The Faculty Voice underlies effective communication: while the content is important, the medium delivery is also key. The Zimbabwean Ministry of Health therefore has identified the need to build the capacity of journalist to mobilize their communities for behavior change. This is why Dr. Haider’s expertise comes in. He told The Faculty Voice that the country’s young journalists, through their membership in the Health Journalists Association, have expressed a keen interest in health journalism, and therefore intend to visit the country again sometime soon to carry on their work. His successful programs also have implications for some health problems in the United States.

“The author, originally from Ke-

nya, is a doctoral student in jour-

dnalism studies

Taking Health Communication to Zimbabwe

Bill Hanna, Social Activist, Humanitarian and Editor of The Faculty Voice

By Judith Hanna, Wife, Lover and Friend

William John Hanna (Bill), resident of Bethesda, Maryland, was born in Cleveland and later moved to Los An-
geles. He passed away from cancer and was buried in Hollywood Forever Cemetery near his parents’ graves. He did not want any funeral or memo-

rial service.

After being a world competition bridge player, he earned a Ph.D. at UCLA in political science. Bill and his anthropologist wife, Judith Lynne Hanna, conducted research on stu-

dents and politics and the relationship between urban areas and the national government in Nigeria and Uganda. His films and audio recordings for his wife’s research there and in Kenya are archived at the Library of Congress. He encouraged and supported Judith in becoming a widely published scholar-

ar/ writer.

Bill taught for 54 years at Michigan State University, the City University of New York, University of Texas at Dallas (where he was also a dean), and the University of Maryland, Col-

lege Park (UMD), from 1978 to 2013. At UMD he was in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, empha-

sizing the challenges of planning and policy-making when crossing cultures. He was devoted to his students, some of whom have remained family friends over the years. He took students to Mexico for summer field work. A stu-

dent field research project in Langley Park, a community near the university, led to Bill’s long-term involvement with the immigrants from Central America, Africa, and Asia.

Bill was an activist fighting injustice at the university and in the community. Not infrequently he went out in the middle of the night to help a student or immigrant find housing, food trucks, health, and small businesses. He took up the cause of neighborhood Salvadoran women street vendors who sold fruit & soft drinks and provided social settings and home-country cultural continuity. Bill founded the neighborhood non-

profit Action Langley Park in 1998 and organized annual health and job fairs and folkórico performances. He wrote the biweekly newsletter, Barrio de Langley Park. Bill gave many lectures on Latino health at the National Insti-
tute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. The TakomarLangley Crossroads De-

velopment Authority and the Maryland Metropolitan Capital Park and Planning Commission gave him awards for dis-

tinguished community service. In 2005 Bill became editor of the quarterly Faculty Voice (distributed to the 10,000+ faculty members on Mary-

land’s 13 campuses) and solicited articles, wrote articles, including occasional restaurant reviews, doing page layout and copyediting. Bill enjoyed discover-

ing faculty members in any discipline who did unique work. In inviting them to submit articles, he was continu-

ally expanding his horizons.

In the US Bill loved meeting people from different parts of the world and tasting their food. He traveled to Canada, Italy, France, UK, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, USSR, and Poland (place of our au pair daughters), Estonia, USSR, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, Mexico, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Ecuador (where he tried to learn Spanish). Ja-

pan, Korea, and China. Bill was so much in love with his soul and he was a theater buff. New opera and folk music were of special interest. He wrote poetry and created Photoshop art, work that appeared in his self-published book-

lets. Bill was a big sports enthusiast, played tennis, and followed bas-
ketball, soccer, tennis, and golf. He coached his sons’ soccer teams and when they went off to college, a girls’ team. As a semi-pro soccer player and optimist carried him through life.

Bill is survived by his wife of 53 3/4 years, Bill Hanna loved life and wanted to live to 120. He didn’t make it, but he experienced a rich and varied life. He touched the lives of many all over the world.
The Underrepresentation of Women Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa

Continued from page 1

Jing Lin, and Nelly Stromquist. We begin by describing how the national policies in Sub-Saharan Africa and their effects on teacher career. Policies related to teacher careers can have significant effects on the educational system in a country. A strong teacher career can lead to better quality in education, which can improve the country's overall development.

The study was designed so that information about teachers would be obtained from teachers in pre-service programs, i.e., those in teacher training schools, as well as from teachers already practicing in the field. This would allow us to assess effectiveness of policies that are aimed at improving teacher education. The study was designed to be descriptive and non-experimental in nature. The data was collected through interviews and questionnaires.

In the end, we found that the policies in place are not effective in improving the quality of education. The reason for this is that the policies are not well-designed or implemented properly. Teachers are not receiving the support they need to improve their teaching skills. As a result, the educational system in Sub-Saharan Africa is not as effective as it could be.

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Tribute to Bill Hanna

Brit Kirwan

Bill Hanna was a dear friend and valued colleague for over 30 years. I first met Bill when he served as Provost and Provost. From the moment of our initial meeting, he dedicated himself to building a stronger community both within and without the campus community. Over the ensuing years, I benefited enormously from his leadership, especially if they opposed his. He was a terrific professor and academic mentor. Joanna Margueritte Nurmis

Gaspar F. Colon

Dr. Hanna was a friend and colleague who passionately lived what he “preached” while it came to community development, human rights, government policy, gentrification issues, neighborhood safety, and the involvement of average citizens to voice their concerns in community forums. His untiring work with Action Langley Park was an inspiration to those of us who taught Urban Ministry at other universities. Since 2002 I have had the privilege of serving with Bill in Action Langley Park and other initiatives.

As professor of practical theology and director of the Center for Metropolitan Ministry at Columbia Union College (now Washington Adventist University), I have enjoyed challenges that I have faced with Bill’s enthusiasm, what, in some cases, I found to be his tendency community to strive and fight for the wellbeing of its citizens. Bill was willing to lead the change in correcting this that could only be voiced by the people in the community. His networking skills, his persistence, shamed many of us to wake up and participate in actions that would improve and defend the quality of life of the inhabitants of Langley Park (and Prince Georges County). That is why I had many of my own Urban Ministry students do their internships with Action Langley Park.

Those of us who worked with Bill will always remember his penchant for challenging the public to strive and fight for the wellbeing of its citizens. Bill was willing to lead the change in correcting this that could only be voiced by the people in the community. His networking skills, his persistence, shamed many of us to wake up and participate in actions that would improve and defend the quality of life of the inhabitants of Langley Park (and Prince Georges County). That is why I had many of my own Urban Ministry students do their internships with Action Langley Park.

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News and Notes

Chinese Students

A startling number of Chinese students are getting kicked out of American colleges. According to a white paper published by WholeRen, a Pittsburgh-based consultancy, an estimated 8,000 students from China were expelled from universities and colleges across the United States in 2013-4. The vast majority of these students—around 80 percent—were removed due to cheating or failing their classes. As long as universities have existed, students have found a way to get expelled from them. But the prevalence of expulsions of Chinese students should be a source of alarm for American university administrators. According to the Institute of International Education, 274,439 students from China attended school in the United States in 2013-4, a 16 percent jump from the year before. Chinese students represent 31 percent of all international students in the country and contributed an estimated $22 billion to the U.S. economy in 2014. “American universities are addicted to Chinese students.” (Source: The Atlantic, 30 May 2015)

The University of Maryland Children’s Hospital Tuesday unveiled a new expanded $30 million neonatal intensive care unit that will offer more specialty treatments. The Drs. Rouben and Violet Jji Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was opened in conjunction with the University of Maryland School of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics. The school’s division of neonatology will provide advanced treatments for premature babies, including nutritional management and surgical interventions for birth defects including congenital heart disease, abdominal wall defects, cleft lip/palate repair and brain malformations. (Balt. Sun)

UM virology institute to fight HIV/AIDS in Botswana with $24.5 million grant

The Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine has received a $24.5 million federal grant to combat AIDS in Botswana. The institute will use the funds from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to partner with the government of Botswana to create treatment programs. (Balt. Sun)

Kevin Kornegay, Morgan State

A Morgan State University research team has received a grant for nearly $1 million from the National Science Foundation. The funding will go to toward a project addressing security data issues in electronic devices. The research team — led by Morgan State electrical and computer engineering professor Kevin T. Kornegay — received a Research Infrastructure for Science and Engineering award, which targets historically black colleges and universities. (Balt. Sun)

Hopkins and UMD

Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland have opened one of the country’s largest computing centers. State support for the facility is $30 million. The joint supercomputing center is made up of 19,000 processors and 17 petabytes — or 17 million gigabytes — of storage capacity, officials said, and will provide digital processing power to researchers from both institutions. It is roughly the size of 100 refrigerators. The center is to be located near the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center campus in Baltimore but will also be accessible remotely to researchers. (Balt. Sun)

Patrick O’Shea, vice president for research at the University of Maryland, thinks that the center reflects a trend of data analytics. “Taking advantage of the revolutionary potential of research involving large data sets to transform knowledge and improve human lives requires expanding the computing resources available to researchers. This new joint supercomputing center will do just that.” (Source: Baltimore Sun 7 July 2015)

Tenure

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, a Republican candidate for president, faces criticism from higher education circles because his state budget makes significant cuts to the University of Wisconsin system and significantly reduces tenure protections for faculty.

Books

The Faculty Voice hopes to note the publication of books by faculty and staff members, so readers-authors are encouraged to send us the necessary information. In this issue, we note a book on the future of the arts.

Curtains?: The Future of the Arts in America

by Michael M. Kaiser, Chairman of the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland

Earlier this year, my book, Curtains? The Future of the Arts in America, was published by Brandeis University Press. The book reviews the history of arts institutions in this nation, examines the many factors that have been affecting these institutions in the past decade, and projects into future to ask: if prevailing trends continue, what will the arts ecology look like 20 years from now?

The picture is not a pretty one. The massive reduction of arts education in our public schools, the aging of our audiences, and the decline in the number of subscriptions sold by most arts institutions, the availability of alternative online sources of entertainment, and, especially, the online distribution of arts, all are conspire to make it increasingly difficult for mid-sized regional arts institutions and diverse, rural, and avant garde institutions to survive. These organizations were created, for the most part, in the second half of the last century and have increased the availability of arts to virtually all Americans.

But I was hoping to be more than a Cassandra in writing this book. I believe there are specific steps arts institutions and arts funders can take to prevent a substantial reduction in arts accessibility over the coming decades. We must encourage the development of exciting, transformative art projects. In too many instances, artists have become too conservative in their art-making; in fear of taking risks, they have become boring. Creating important, differentiated new art is the most method for preserving the health of our arts institutions in the face of online competition. Mounting these projects requires a longer-term, term-arterial plan that most institutions currently create.

We must also teach arts leaders and board members to do the sophisticated marketing required to build a unique institutional image. Marketing is far more than sending out brochures and emails; we must create a dynamic set of events that present a compelling case for participation.

And we must work to build the far larger families of supporters, audience members, and volunteers required to thrive in the future. In particular, we must focus on the potency of our boards and ensure that our boards change and evolve as our organizations grow and mature.

These steps are vital. People have been creating art for millennia and will continue to do so. But the institutions that support the delivery of art and that produce the art that requires ensemble (orchestras, dance companies, theater companies) are precious; losing them will diminish the quality of life for all of us.

Image courtesy of amazon.com

Senryu by Robert Deluty, UMBC/Psychology

linguists debating the worst surname for a nurse: Paine, Schott or Hertz

post-commencement . . .

young professor reading the student’s essay: Too kind to morons

young professor reading the student’s essay: Too kind to morons

fraz hazin . . .

forcing the Ole Miss freshman to read Beowulf

English teacher referring to the past tense as back talk

medical doctor desiring to remain focused despite shingles

a college senior explaining her absences: Parking’s tough

the professor hoping that, in heaven, he’ll be called Doctor

ESL student assuming see-sucker is pornographic

the scholar, drawing a blank, fearing Alzheimer’s

these Nobel winners sharing one small umbrella in rainy Stockholm, three young professors warning her right-wing Dad regarding Vassar and Smith as expensive cults

via e-mail a student asking which genes make you look fat?

a sophomore wondering what part of speech is Zup

post-commencement . . .

fraz hazin . . .

forcing the Ole Miss freshman to read Beowulf

English teacher referring to the past tense as back talk

medical doctor desiring to remain focused despite shingles

a college senior explaining her absences: Parking’s tough

the professor hoping that, in heaven, he’ll be called Doctor

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Women Teachers

express liking their profession and enjoy sharing their knowledge with children, women teachers face difficul-
ty in securing their professional status in the profes-
sional life as lacking in resources compounded by salaries that hardly match the rigorous demands of the job. Teachers in rural schools are often late forcing teach-
ers to obtain loans from relatives or friends to meet their children's needs. In some cases, the nearest (still usually distant) educa-
tional institutions are a signif-
ificant distance away, leading to also a slow process. The weak
sanitation infrastructure (water and sanitation) is a major issue that affects the attendance of adolescent girls during the menstrual periods. In a study in Africa, we found the lack of these facilities also affects women teach-
ers' attendance at school.

Men teachers can resort to out-
side activities to supplement their income, such as offering tuition, classes after school hours; in con-
trast, women teachers face difficul-
ty in raising additional income given their roles as care providers at home. Men can more easily live
away from their families, so deploy-
ment abroad is an easy way for them to do so. Women teachers, who are often small for men, teaching remains a desirable occupation because in many parts of Africa there is a small formal economy by enter-
ing the civil service and thus crowns women teachers.

Monitoring and evaluation. The African Women's Education Network (AFWEN) was established in 1994 to monitor the implementation of policies for women's education in the region. The network has developed a monitoring framework that tracks progress in women's education. Data collected through this framework are used to inform policy makers and stakeholders about the progress made in women's education in the region. The network has also published several reports and papers on the status of women's education in Africa, which are available on their website. The AFWEN is a key actor in promoting the rights of women and girls in education, and has been instrumental in advocating for their inclusion in national policies and programs. The organization continues to play an essential role in the promotion of gender equity in education across Africa.
employment opportunities for them and the loss of their contribution to the natal household upon marriage, personal aspirations, governmental policies and attitudes of employers to women’s occupational mobility. It is imperative to close the gender gap in education and its corollary, economic security, because an educated female population is a necessary human capital that can be tapped for positive transformation of society and advancement of new frontiers for Africa’s development and competitiveness in the global community. In addition to assessing conditions under which women and girls receive education in their respective African countries and the utility of the credentials received, the educational levels for girls and women must meet international standards to enable them to fully participate in all arenas.

**Political Arena**

Many African nations and territories prior to European colonial rule, women occupied high political offices and had specific avenues to express their political will and wield political influence. But women’s power diminished as colonial officials ignored them and indigenous institutions that guaranteed their authority and influence prior to colonial domination, and appointed African men as chiefs and local administrative agents. Since independence, women have enjoyed a variety of avenues through which they accessed and wielded authority and influence in their respective societies and countries. Different models of women’s leadership roles in Africa demonstrate their ability to negotiate for power and authority in both lineage-based parallel sex systems and the complex state-based political structures. The wave of democratization processes; the dramatic changes in social policies; and through active and autonomous movement’s movements across the continent since the late 1980s; the impact of gender-sensitive international campaigns and norms championed by global women’s movements and the United Nations, especially the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985), have precipitated conferences on women; postconflict constitutional reforms among other factors have added some momentum to women’s political engagements in different African countries. African women since the 1990s have made significant strides in occupying high positions in ministerial and other governmental structures as well as in legislative representation. Women’s legislative representation increased from 0.94% in 1970 to 7.8% in 1990 and 17.4% in 2007.

A number of individual African countries have witnessed increased representation in the election of women to local, provincial, state or national office in more than 40 countries, which have adopted different forms of electoral and institutional gender-based policies such as quota systems in favor of women. Adoption of constitutional electoral quotas in Rwanda and Uganda and political party quotas in South Africa and Mozambique have resulted in increased number of women parliamentarians in these countries. Rwanda led the world with 48.8%; Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Uganda, Burundi, Senegal, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe had a range of 47% to 31% between 2003 and 2012. Senegal, for example, has passed a law requiring political parties to ensure that half of their candidates for local and national elections were women. The result is that in 2013, women made up nearly half of the legislative body in Senegal with a woman as the prime minister. African women have also occupied national political positions as speakers of national assemblies as in the cases of Baleka Mbete of South Africa, Rebeca Kadaga of Uganda, and Nkosi Motsamai of Lesotho; vice and interim presidents as in the cases of Carmen Pereira of Guinea-Bissau, Sylvie Kinigi of Burundi, Specioza W. Kazibwe of Uganda, Rose F. Rogombe of Gabon, Monique Ohsan-Bellepee of Mauritius; and prime ministers such as Agathe Uwilingyimana of Rwanda, Maria das Neves and Maria do Carmo Silveira of Sao Tome and Principe, Luisa Diogo of Mozambique, Cécile Mano- rohantsoa of Madagascar, Cézane Mariani K. Sibidé of Mali, and Aminata Toure of Senegal; Joyce Hilda Banda of Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza of Central African Republic have served as presidents of their respective countries. In 2005, African women and others celebrated the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the first female executive president of Liberia and the first woman to be elected president in the continent. African women have demonstrated resilient viability in the face of civil and inter-state wars and genocides, especially in Nigeria, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Central African Republic and recently, South Sudan. They have served in peace negotiations and prevention of violence.

At the continental and international levels, a number of African women have occupied important leadership positions such as South African Nkosazana D. Zuma, head of the African Union Commission; Navanethen Pillay of South Africa as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Ngujilia Kokonjo-Iweala, managing director of World Bank; and South African Mamphele Ramphela, managing director of the World Bank and Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. Others have been recognized internationally for their outstanding leadership roles in helping to improve lives and advance humanity. Among them were South African Nadené Gordimer (1923-2014), who received the Nobel Peace in Literature in 1991 for her literary prowess and political activism; Kenyan Wangari Maathai (1940-2011), who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her promotion of environmental conservation and economic empowerment of women through her Green Belt Movement; and two Liberian presidents: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for her leadership in peace-building and national unity; and Leymah Gbowee, who was recognized for her peace movement and rehabilitation of child soldiers in her country. Despite the samples of progress shown above, records from many African countries show a history of unequal participation and representation of women in politics and decision-making. Women from many African countries still struggle to navigate socioeconomic, political and cultural barriers that prevent their inclusion in both customary and democratic governance. The entrenched patriarchal sensibilities that have been reinforced by religious ideologies, in which family control and participation in governance and decision-making processes are entrusted to men and women’s primary roles as wives and mothers, constitute fundamental reasons why African women have been politically marginalized. Women’s domestic and familial responsibilities, including childbearing, are detrimental to their participation in politics especially where sustained effort and time for party engagement is required to achieve leadership positions. Due to financial constraints, African female politicians are often required to secure the consent and support of their husbands before they could venture into party politics. Women are also discouraged from participating in aggressive political commitment, which is usually resource-intensive and unhealthy. They are also intimidated by harassment and electoral violence. All over the world, women elections are expensive endeavors. Due to financial constraints, African female politicians always trail behind their male counterparts in political party formation, party membership mobilization, effective campaign strategies, administrative expenses, and in participation in governance and decision-making. In all democracies of the world, access to political power, leadership and decision-making typically starts at the political party level. Unfortunately, the structure of the political parties in Africa has privileged men who founded them more than women. Often, women belonged to “Women’s Wings” of such parties and were rewarded with token appointments. In view of the above barriers, it is important that gender-sensitive national and regional initiatives are rigorously pursued by African countries in order to increase the participation of women in the political institutions and mechanisms and their representation in governance and decision-making. Increasing women’s number in leadership positions is vital to democratic development and sustainability in Africa. Some have suggested the “virtuous circle of representation” in which women’s political participation and mobilization will increase the number of women in decision-making office, and consequently, enable them to influence decision-making regarding national budgets, policy priorities and ideological underpinnings of governance. The participation of African women in national decision-making may not necessarily translate to representation of women and advancing their interests, it has been demonstrated that those with a significant number of women legislators have seen some positive changes in family laws, land rights, women’s health and education policies and perceptions of women’s roles in society. It is believed that having more women in government is likely to increase government effectiveness and alleviate social problems. It is important for women to work in partnership to build trust and achieve consensus, the political will and commitment of government leaders are essential.

*Part 2 of this article will appear in the next edition of The Faculty Voice.*

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**Two Poems**

By Bill Hanna

**The Waiting Room**

Nine old men
Waiting for the doc
And one of those old men
Is me!

Maybe some day soon
There will be only eight
One by one we’ll disappear
We must obey our fate.

**What am I to do?**

My body feels like ninety,
My brain’s like thirty-two.
When one outlives the other,
What am I to do?
Remembering Bill Hanna

Bill and Judy, Retirement

Bill at Hollywood Professional School

Bill and Judy in Nigeria, 1962

Bill fooling around, 2014

Bill and Judy, dancing at a wedding

At one of the community fairs Bill organized

Bill at Barnes and Noble

Action Langley Park is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in and around Langley Park, Maryland. Our efforts include information exchange, advocacy, and the organization of health services - primarily with “Health Check” in the Fall and the health fair that is part of Langley Park Day in the Spring. Barrio de Langley Park is published by Action Langley Park with support from the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland. For information about Action Langley Park and/or its biweekly newsletter, Barrio de Langley Park, write to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.