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African Studies Association Announces 2026 Finalists and Awardees

PISCATAWAY, New Jersey, – The African Studies Association is honored to announce its annual awards heralding some of the most prominent contributions to the field of African Studies. The ASA will announce the honors and winners during the organization's 69th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, December 3-6.

Each year, the African Studies Association presents the **Distinguished Africanist Award** to members who have made a lifetime of extraordinary contributions to the field. The 2026 ASA **Distinguished Africanist Award** will honor the lifework of **Edward Alpers** (University of California, Los Angeles) and **Claire Robertson** (Ohio State University).

Previous honorees include Ousmane Kane, Kenneth Harrow, Steve Howard, Frederick Cooper, and Pearl Robinson.

Each year, the African Studies Association presents the **ASA Outstanding Service Award** to a member who has distinguished themselves through their dedication to the ASA's mission by facilitating the production of knowledge about Africa and its diasporas; its dissemination within the academy or in civil society; or by establishing or supporting collaborations and exchanges between institutions in the global north and in Africa.

The ASA will present the 2026 **ASA Outstanding Service Award** to **Carolyn Brown** (Rutgers University).

Established in 2010, **ASA Presidential Fellowships** provide opportunities for Africa-based scholars and practitioners with an intellectual interest in Africa to attend the ASA Annual Meeting, visit US institutions of higher learning, engage with academics working on Africa-related issues, and explore opportunities for collaboration. The ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows Fund sponsors named Presidential Fellows in the humanities and social sciences annually. Established in 2024, the Fund was made possible by a generous gift from Allen and Barbara Isaacman.

The 2026 **ASA Samora & Graça Machel Presidential Fellows** are **George Gyasi Gyesaw** (J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives, University of Ghana), **Naeema Ahmad Ramadan Reis** (University of the Witwatersrand), and **Mbasughun Ukpi** (Makerere Institute of Social Research).

Established in 1965, the **ASA Best Book Prize** recognizes the most important scholarly work in African studies published in English and distributed in the United States during the preceding year.

Enhancing the Exchange of Information About Africa Since 1957



The finalists for the 2026 **ASA Best Book Prize** are: Brahim El Guabli, *Desert Imaginations: A History of Saharanism and Its Radical Consequences* (University of California Press, 2025); Toby Green, *The Heretic of Cacheu: Crispina Peres and the Struggle over Life in Seventeenth-Century West Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2025); Derek R. Peterson, *A Popular History of Idi Amin's Uganda* (Yale University Press, 2025); Nana Osei Quarshie, *African Pharmakon: The Asylum as Shrine from Slavery to the Return* (University of Chicago Press, 2025); and Delia Duong Ba Wendel, *Rwanda's Genocide Heritage: Between Justice and Sovereignty* (Duke University Press, 2025).

The ASA Best Book Prize winner will be announced during the annual Awards Ceremony.

The ASA's **Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize** recognizes the best book on East African studies published in the previous calendar year. Established in 2012, the award is named in honor of Prof. Bethwell A. Ogot, a leading Kenyan historian, public servant and public intellectual, made possible by a generous bequest from the estate of Prof. Kennell Jackson, Jr., of Stanford University.

The finalists for the 2026 **Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize** are: James De Lorenzi, *Feasting on History: Ethiopia and the Orientalists* (Columbia University Press, 2025); Corrie Decker, *The Age of Sex: Custom, Law, and Ritual in Twentieth-Century East Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2025); Aneeth Kaur Hundle, *Insecurities of Expulsion: Afro-Asian Entanglements in Transcontinental Uganda* (Duke University Press, 2025); and Bettina Ng'weno, *No Place Like Home in a New City: Anti-Urbanism and Life in Nairobi* (University of California Press, 2025).

The Bethwell A. Ogot Book Prize winner will be announced during the annual Awards Ceremony.

The **Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize** recognizes an outstanding work that prioritizes African women's experiences. Established in 2004 by the ASA Women's Caucus, the award is named in honor of celebrated Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo and founding director of UNIFEM Margaret Snyder. The prize was made possible by generous gifts from Drs. Margaret "Peg" Snyder, Judith Van Allen, Mary Osirim, Nwando Achebe, and Anita and Derrick Plummer.

The winner of the 2026 **Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize** is *The Creation of Half-Broken People* by Sipiwe Gloria Ndlovu (Picador Africa, 2024).

The ASA's **Sembène-Kelani Film Prize** is awarded annually to an outstanding film, whether fiction or documentary, made in the preceding two calendar years by an African filmmaker. Established in 2019, this prize was made possible by a generous gift from Kenneth W. and Elizabeth W. Harrow through the establishment of the Ken Harrow ASA Film Fund.

The winner of the 2026 **Sembène-Kelani Film Prize** is *Our Land, Our Freedom* directed by Zippy Kimundu and Meena Nanji (2024). The film will be screened at the ASA Annual Meeting on December 3 to be followed by a Q&A.

In 2026, the committee selected two Honorable Mentions: *Liti Liti* directed by Mamadou Kouma Gueye (2025) and *Diya* directed by Achille Ronaimou (2025).

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Established in 2001 by the ASA Board of Directors, the **Graduate Student Paper Prize** acknowledges an exceptional student scholarship presented at the previous year's ASA Annual Meeting.

The winner of the 2026 **Graduate Student Paper Prize** is **Yaru Yang**, (University of Manchester), "'You could just say local employee': Language policing and race negotiating in linguistic Chinese-Kenyan encounters."

In 2026, the committee selected two Honorable Mentions: Sarah Lewinger, (Boston University), "Strategic Ambiguity: Survival, Subversion, and the Politics of Scale," and ibrahim Anoba, (University of California, Davis), "War on "Juju" and the Invention of Witches in Southern Nigeria (1870-1910)."

The **Conover-Porter Award** is awarded in even years to the author of an outstanding published work in African bibliography and reference published during the preceding two years. Established in 1980, the prize is named in honor of Helen F. Conover and Dorothy B. Porter Wesley, two pioneers in African Studies bibliography.

The winner of the 2026 **Conover-Porter Award** is **SwahiliVerse**, founded in 2025 by Yinka Ajibola.