ANNOUNCEMENT

Pius Adesanmi Memorial Award for Excellence in African Writing

African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA)

Professor Pius Adesanmi, was a Nigerian-born, Canada-based scholar who passed away tragically in the Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crash on 10 March 2019. His passing has been a monumental loss to the global African Studies community. It is in his honour that the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) has established this award.

The award honours an outstanding single-authored book focused on Africa and/or the global African world biennially, submitted by or on behalf of a scholar, activist, and/or artist. The award committee considered books that cover any historical period and come from any discipline or combination of disciplines, published in English, French, Portuguese, or an African language. The award committee is particularly interested in books that are theoretically, conceptually, and/or methodologically innovative and demonstrate excellence in African writing.

2019
It is a singular privilege for us as judges of the 2019 Pius Adesanmi Memorial Award for Excellence in African Writing, to present to you the final results of our deliberations which are the outcome of our independent and unanimous decisions. As well as selecting a clear winner, **Kagiso Lesego Molope**, for her book *Such a Lonely, Lovely Road*, (fiction), Mawenzi House (2018), we also present to you highly commended first and second runner up books (fiction), *Youth of God*, by Hassan Ghedi Santur (Mawenzi House, 2019), and in third-place, *Silence is My Mother Tongue* by Sulaiman Addonia (Indigo Press), 2018. We also commend the publishers Mawenzi House for producing our top two winning books, and Indigo Press for our third book. Additionally, we extend our appreciation to all the publishers who submitted works for the prize.

We are proud to share this exciting news with you, our peers and the world, to encourage all of us not only to work hard in producing and disseminating African knowledge, research, creativity and excellence, but in the memory and honour of our fallen colleague Professor Pius Adesanmi. He died in the fatal plane crash in Ethiopia on 10 March 2019, which took the lives of all on board, leaving their families and the world devastated. Through this award, we also remember all those who lost their loved ones and colleagues on that flight. A scholar, satirist, columnist, husband, father, peer and beloved friend to many. We hope that this modest inaugural award serves as an encouragement and reminder of what he stood for: teaching, research and writing excellence, courage, outspokenness, and rigour.
Kagiso Lesego Molope is an exciting voice. She was born and educated in South Africa and has been gaining recognition since her first novel, *Dancing in the Dust*, which received commendation in the IBBY Honour List of 2006. Her second 2002 novel, *The Mending Season* was selected for the South African School Curriculum. Additionally, *This Book Always Betrays my Brother* (2009) was awarded the Percy Fitzpatrick Prize by the English Academy of South Africa where it was published. Kagiso lives in Ottawa and knew and worked with Professor Adesanmi, which for the judges came as a pleasant surprise at the end of the judging process. The judges had this to say about the book:

“It was an exquisite book, sensitively and cleverly crafted, and one that was hard to put down. A highly gifted writer to watch.”
Our Top Six Selected Books in Order


Criteria

The judges were looking for a range of elements in our criteria as follows:

2. Focused on Africa and/or the global African world
3. Any historical period
4. Any discipline or combination of disciplines,
5. Published in English, French, Portuguese, or an African language.
6. Representation and inclusivity (gender, youth, disability, theme, region etc.
7. Demonstrate Excellence in quality writing on Africa.
8. Creativity
9. Writing style
10. Language use
11. Innovation and novelty
12. Applicability to the African world and its diaspora
13. Inclusion
14. Youth resonance
Our Judges

Chair: Dr. Wangui wa Goro (Translator, Writer, Editor and Critic)

A writer and translator, she has served as an academic and scholar for several years. She is a critic, public intellectual, translator, editor, writer, social and cultural catalyst, advocate, researcher and campaigner for human and cultural rights. She continues to break new ground for African literary translation practice and scholarship and their applications, from and into her mother tongue over nearly forty years in scholarship, advocacy and practice, and this remains her first passion. She has worked extensively in the service of literature in general and African literature and translation in particular, in Africa, Europe and the USA. She is the translator of award-winning authors between French, Italian, English and Gikuyu. She is the founder of Sidensi Translations, and Africa in Translation (AiT) series, and has served on several international literary and academic bodies and journals.

Tina Adomako (Publicist & Journalist)

A journalist based in Dusseldorf. She left Ghana after winning a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, to continue her studies at the prestigious Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, where she obtained a Masters’ Degree in German and Romance languages. Tina Adomako went on to work internationally as an editor and publicist including in trade magazines and book publishing with Herman Bauer Publishers in Germany and Birkhäuser Publishers in Switzerland, and as a journalist. She honed her publicist skills working for the Kirch Media Group in Munich, and as press editor for RTL Television, Germany’s most popular broadcasting company. She currently serves on the board of the Neue deutsche Medienmacher, (New German Media Makers). Adomako also works for the Eine Welt Netz NRW (One World Network NRW) an NGO in North Rhine-Westphalia committed to sustainable development and global responsibility in accordance with the SDGs. Her articles have been published in several German newspapers and magazines as well as online publications. These include Rheinische Post, NRZ, African Courier Magazine, Africa Positive Magazine, Die Zeit, TAZ, and parenting magazines. She also works as an editor for civil society and government organisations including ministries and state departments.

Professor Wangari Mwai (United States International University - Africa, USIU-A)

Currently, Professor Mwai is the Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor- student Affairs at United States International University –Africa (USIU-A). Prof. Mwai is a Full Professor of Literature and also an administrator, researcher, lecturer and trainer of trainers and facilitators who has worked in various universities in Kenya including Nairobi, Maseno, Kenyatta and the United States International University. She enjoys leading teams through research processes up to and beyond, dissemination to the uptake of research findings as evidence-based solutions to emerging challenges. Professor Mwai has authored several books, journal articles and chapters in books. She has a bias in teaching and research in oral poetry from a gender perspective. She also teaches, carries out research and supervises students in diverse areas of literary studies. An internationally certified Trainer of Trainers and Facilitators in Gender and Leadership, she also serves as a Regional Gender Consultant. She has worked with international organizations including UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNWOMEN, USAID and the World Bank within the ESARO region.
Professor Akinola Odebunmi

Professor Akin Odebunmi is, in the main, a specialist in Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. He is specifically interested in Medical Pragmatics, Linguistic Pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Literary Pragmatics. He has to his credit about 84 academic publications in local and international outlets in all the continents of the world. Professor Odebunmi won the prestigious German Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship Award for Experienced Researchers between 2010 and 2017. He is currently a research collaborator with Professor Dr. Karin Birkner of Bayreuth University and Professor Sigurd D’hondt of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He has been an official external examiner and a PhD external examiner/adjudicator to universities in Nigeria, India and Ghana. He has supervised about 16 PhD theses at the University of Ibadan, and has served as a consultant to the United Nations, under the direction of the International Labour Organisation on academic and research-based projects. He is currently the director of the University of Ibadan Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. He is also the pioneer president of the Pragmatics Association of Nigeria. His late wife Mrs Funmilola Janet Odebunmi left us during this process. We share our deep condolences with him and his family and community, and greatly appreciate that he was able to remain with this process despite his loss. May her soul rest in peace. Their marriage is blessed with three children: Ayotomiwa, Gloria and Olamiposi.

Peter Wasamba Professor of African Literature at the University of Nairobi

He is a Professor of African Literature at the University of Nairobi and also serves as a lecturer of International Law. He has over 19 years of university teaching experience, with 11 years in management as Chairman of the Department of Literature, as Associate Dean, and as Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Professor Wasamba holds BA, MA and PhD degrees in Literature. He is an international scholar with collaborators in Africa, Germany, Japan, Korea, Europe and America. Wasamba’s specialization is Research in African Oral Literature and Human Rights Law. Wasamba has published several articles in refereed law, literature and language journals. He is also an author of a number of books in African Oral Literature.

Wangui wa Goro (PhD)
On behalf of the award
10 October 2019