

## Faculty travelers discover: "Ghana is Ghana"

During this past year two faculty members, John McDowell and Beverly Stoeltje, spent time at the University of Ghana. There they renewed acquaintances with folklore alumni Kofi Anyidoho, MA'83, Daniel Avorgbedor, PhD'86, Owusu Brempong, PhD'86, and Kwesi Yankah, PhD'85.

John was there from September 1987 until February 1988 on a Fulbright lectureship and writes of his experience in Ghana:

"I thoroughly enjoyed my classroom experiences at the University of Ghana in Legon. The highpoints of the oral literature course were those days when skilled verbal artists came to class to demonstrate their tradition and talk to the students about it. I remember in particular the visit of an influential traditional spokesman who performed a libation calling for the success of the class.

"With the help of Kwesi and Kofi and their wives, Victoria and Akusia, I was privileged to visit a number of villages in the Ga, Fanti, and Ewe areas. At a Ga fishing village not far from Accra, we walked in on a fetish ceremony with drumming and dancing. The fetish priestesses in all their ceremonial finery lined up for a formal photograph. At the Ewe town of Anloga we witnessed an extraordinary cult dance involving a mysterious handling of knives—the dancers appeared to cut themselves in their ecstasy but no blood or wounds could be found.

"My most vivid memories are of Agona Duakwa, Kwesi's village, where his family



*CULT DANCERS in Anloga perform a mysterious knife dance in which they appear to injure themselves.*

received us warmly. Every time we arrived there, something exciting was happening. On one occasion it was a wild funeral for a young man; on another, one of Kwesi's cousins, a fetish priestess, had just unmasked a witch and we witnessed a kind of exorcism. The next morning we observed her while she was in trance, speaking in tongues under the influence of one of her three deities. When she emerged from the trance, we interviewed her about her beliefs and practices.

"I will never forget a remarkable moment in Agona Kwanyako when the leader of the *asafo* (warrior) group danced right up to the chief under the pavilion and sat in his lap, signifying the need for harmony between the traditional leaders and the young people. As Kwesi had promised: 'Ghana is Ghana.'"

Beverly Stoeltje's visit took place in July 1988. While there, she explored possibilities for her projected research on Akan queen mothers and the establishment of arrangements for exchange projects between the University of Ghana and IU.

The University of Ghana is enthusiastic about such projects, which are supported there by the Institute of African Studies. The director of the Institute, Dr. Kwame Arhin, and the deputy director, Mary Esther Kropp Dakubu, were most cooperative and encouraging about these efforts.

Beverly also visited Kumasi with folklore alumnus Owusu Brempong and his son Kwame. She returned to Bloomington with a stylish Ghanaian dress in the Obuafaa Dadiefa pattern ("half stone, half knife"). She also brought news of the pathbreaking Conference on Oral Literature, organized by Kofi Anyidoho and Kwesi Yankah and scheduled for August 1988 in Legon. Beverly plans to do research in Ghana during her 1989-90 sabbatical leave.

It is hoped that with further consolidation of these Legon initiatives, some kind of affiliation or exchange can be worked out between the Folklore Institute and the University of Ghana.

*(More photos next page)*

Come to the  
**Folklore Institute  
AFS Reception**

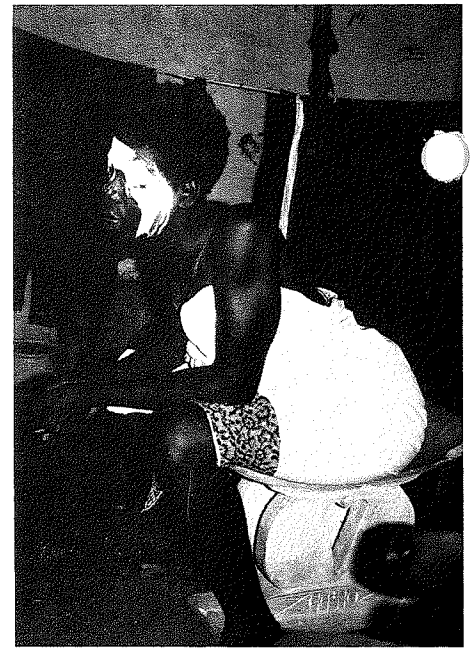
October 28, 8 – 10 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Cambridge  
Meet old buddies, make new ones, and  
welcome our German visitors.

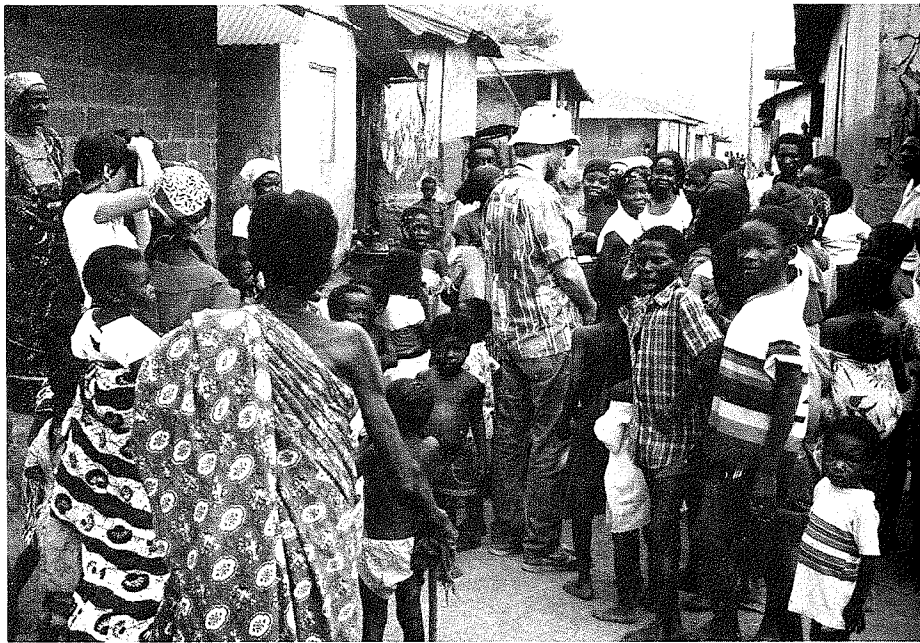
## "Ghana is Ghana"



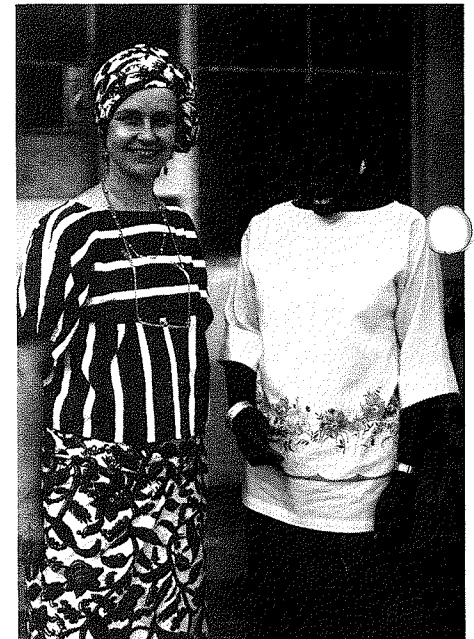
FETISH PRIESTESSES in a Ga fishing village display their finery during a ceremony.



A FETISH PRIESTESS SPEAKS in tongues while in a trance.



JOHN MCDOWELL RECORDS a Ghanaian dirge at the funeral of a young man.



AS A FRIEND LOOKS ON, Beverly Stoeltje models her "half stone, half knife" Ghanaian costume.

## Hispanic folk poetry study nets Colombian anniversary grant

When they set sail from Spain to the New World in the wake of Columbus' explorations, the soldiers, mariners, priests, artisans, and other agents of empire carried with them not only the cross and the sword, but also a vigorous poetic tradition. During 1988-89, Richard Bauman, John H. McDowell, and Ronald R. Smith of the Folklore Institute will team up with anthropologist Judith Seeger (currently in Washington, D.C.) and theater specialist

Pamela Ritch (Illinois State University) to investigate the continued appeal and social use of this Colombian legacy.

Concentrating on the *romance* in Brazil, the *décima* in Panama, and the *corrido* and *pastorela* in Mexico, the researchers will offer a necessary corrective to existing historical and text-centered scholarship by examining these genres as flexible communicative resources. The major product will be an edited volume on Hispanic folk

poetry in performance.

Two eminent Hispanic scholars, Merle Simmons of Indiana University and Américo Paredes of the University of Texas, are project consultants.

The work is supported by a grant to the Folklore Institute from the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of an international initiative to observe the five-hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage of discovery.

# German folklorists to convene in Cambridge, Bloomington

Following up on discussion begun some years back by Linda Dégh and Hermann Bausinger about the need to better acquaint German and American folklorists with each other's research interests and methodologies, the Folklore Institute will host a series of activities from October 25 through November 4.

Our German guests will arrive in time to attend the Centennial AFS meeting in Cambridge, Mass., where they will get a concrete sense of current American scholarship. We hope many of our alumni will greet them at the annual Folklore Institute reception. (See announcement in this issue.)

From November 1 to 3, fourteen American folklorists will join the twelve Ger-

mans in Bloomington for a conference on folklore and social transformation. Participants will explore the processes by which folklore and its study have been influenced by—and have influenced—social, economic, and political changes in both countries during the last two centuries. The invited guests, selected in consultation with Klaus Roth during his visit to IU in 1986, represent scholars of outstanding reputation.

The ten-day visit will conclude with a field trip to southern Indiana, where a concentration of Germans has settled.

We are grateful to the Goethe Institute in Chicago and the Max Kade Foundation in New York City for grants in support of these activities.

## Henry Glassie joins the Folklore Institute

We are pleased to announce that Henry Glassie has returned to Indiana University as College Professor of Folklore. This fall he will teach a graduate proseminar in folklore. His teaching plans include the undergraduate Introduction to Folklore and a course on Turkish material culture.

Henry's latest book, on the concept of folk art, will be published by Abrahams in the spring of 1989. His current research interest is Turkish folk art, notably weaving and pottery, but also other areas such as calligraphy. He is working on an exhibit

of Turkish folk art to be held at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe.

Another project that is occupying Henry's attention is the Bangla Academy in Bangladesh, where he is helping to train people in fieldwork techniques with the assistance of Lauri Honko and J. L. Handoo.

We welcome Henry and his wife, Kathy, to Bloomington and look forward to a long, productive, and happy relationship.

## Dorson Awards presented

This past spring, the second annual Richard M. Dorson Dissertation Awards for Fieldwork were presented to two folklore students. We are pleased that the generosity of contributors to the Dorson Memorial Fund has made it possible to increase the award to \$1,000 and that matching funds from IU have allowed us

to offer two awards each year.

Lee Irwin will pursue his analysis of the role of dreams in the formation of the religious world view of native North Americans. Thomasina Neely will investigate the relationship of music and altered states of consciousness in black Pentecostal churches.

## Special issue, special price offered by JFR

A special double issue on contemporary arts in Africa is currently in press as part of Volume 25 of the *Journal of Folklore Research*. Edited by Ruth M. Stone, the publication approaches its topic from a range of disciplinary perspectives: theater, anthropology, art, ethnomusicology, and folklore. The five papers were selected from those first presented during an NEH-sponsored African Studies seminar and a working conference hosted by the

Johnson Foundation at its Wingspread Center in Racine, Wis.

In order to provide graduate students with an inexpensive way to become acquainted with the *Journal*, the editorial board is offering a special multi-year rate. Students who subscribe for three years will be billed only for two.

So far the response to this offer, which expires December 31, 1988, has been excellent.



DICK BAUMAN CONGRATULATES Ruth Aten and Syd Grant.

## Aten and Grant graduate

Wishing to improve on their already well-established office skills, Ruth Aten and Sydelle Grant participated in a year-long series of lectures and workshops in the Excellence in Training for Clericals program, sponsored by IU's Personnel Division.

Both benefited from the classes centering on office skills but found that the camaraderie that developed among their classmates was even more valuable personally. On May 17, 1988, Ruth and Syd received Certificates of Completion, which are now prominently displayed in their offices.

## Alumni notes

Laurie Sommers, PhD'86, is folklife specialist with the Michigan traditional arts program, Michigan State University Museum. Marjorie Steiner, PhD'88, had her 1985 article, "Living Together: Conflict, Community and Expressive Culture in Newtownbutler," republished by the University of Delaware Press in *Uses of the Past: Essays in Irish Culture*. Mervyn Williams, MA'85, is the director for cultural research for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Bruce Harrah-Conforth, PhD'88, is presently the University archivist at the IU Archives. Kwesi Yankah, PhD'85, and Kofi Anyidoho, PhD'83, have been promoted to senior lecturer at the University of Ghana, Legon. Kwesi will be a scholar-in-residence at the Stanford Humanities Center this academic year.

## Richard Reuss Bequest

Folklore librarian Polly Grimshaw reports that Dick Reuss, PhD'71, arranged in his will to leave his comprehensive folksong revival collection to the IU Library Folklore Collection. In 1987 we received his generous gift and added the appropriate titles to the collection. His personal papers have been transferred to the IU Archives. This collection has enhanced the research value of the IU collection considerably, and we are very thankful for this valuable bequest.

## Faculty in the news

Last summer **Ronald R. Smith** and **Ruth M. Stone** received administrative appointments within the IU community. Smith was appointed associate dean in the Graduate School, where he will serve as director of the Minorities Fellowships Program for the Big Ten Universities Consortium-CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) and director of the CIC International Studies Fellows Program. He also directs an undergraduate summer research opportunity program (SROP) that is designed to increase the enrollment of minorities in graduate education.

Stone is the director of the Archives of Traditional Music. Over the next three years, new activities under her direction will include coordinating biennial research conferences, awarding a prize for outstanding research, advising archives and training archivists from diverse areas, and producing sound recordings and related publications based on the archives' holdings.

**Martha E. Davis** joins the faculty for the academic year 1988-89 as a visiting associate professor. She will teach World Folk Music, as well as two graduate courses for the anthropology department. A fellow of the Bunting Institute at Harvard/Radcliffe College, Davis has done many years of fieldwork in the Dominican Republic. She is the author of *La otra ciencia: El vodú dominicano como religión y medicina populares* [The Other Science: Dominican Voodoo as Folk Religion and Medicine], which won the national Non-fiction Award of the Dominican Republic in 1984-85.

**Polly Grimshaw**, subject specialist for folklore, anthropology, sociology, and women's studies, is this year's recipient of the Indiana University Bloomington Libraries' Jenkins Award in recognition of outstanding contributions to the IU libraries or to the library profession in general.



BRUCE HARRAH-CONFORTH, buries the Folklore time capsule in the Institute's lawn during the Spring 1988 Awards Ceremony.

**William Wiggins** has received a Guggenheim Fellowship for 1988-89 for his project, "Joe Lewis: Afro-American and American Folk Hero." He will travel to Washington, D.C., Detroit, Chicago, and Lafayette, Ala., (Lewis' hometown), for his research. His new book, *O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations*, has recently been published by the University of Tennessee Press (1987).

The Folklore Institute and ethnomusicology programs mourn the untimely death of **Selwyn Ahyoung**, MA'81, on July 19, 1988. Selwyn completed his masters degree in 1981 and was pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Florida School of Music, Tallahassee. He is survived by his wife, Olivia, one child, and his family in Trinidad. We will all miss him.

## ... of student awards, activities

Three rousing cheers for the following students on their recent accomplishments. **Paul Tyler**, MA'82, is curator of collections and exhibitions at Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago. He has published "Lonesome Homesteader": *Old Time Fiddling in Wyoming*, a booklet with two accompanying cassette tapes. **Hanna Griff**, MA'85, co-authored *Academic Memories: Retired Faculty Members Recall the Past at Indiana University*, published under the sponsorship of the dean of the faculties office, IU. In June, **Melanie LaBorwit-Cohen**, MA'86, became folk arts/folklife coordinator for the State Historical Preservation Center in Vermillion, S. Dak. **Nancy Cassell McEntire**, MA'70, received an Andrew W. Mellon grant-in-aid award to complete her doctoral dissertation on the Findlater Family Songs and the Orkney Islands. **Katherine Borland** has been selected to participate in the teaching assistant exchange program between the University of Seville and IU for the 1988-89 academic year. She also won the 1988

Folklore Student Paper Prize for her paper, "The Negotiation of Meaning in Women's Verbal Art." **Robert Walls**, MA'87, will conduct a first survey of folk architecture under a grant received from the Washington State Folklife Council. **Eren Girg**, MA'80, presently at the Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, received a National Endowment for the Humanities translation grant through the Association for the Publication of African Historical Sources for her project on Jula oral narratives from Bobo-Dioulasso. This will involve follow-up fieldwork in Burkina Faso. **Sean Galvin** and **Patricia Sawin** received grants-in-aid of research from the Graduate School. **Linda Williams** and **Hakim A. Rahsul** have been awarded IU's educational opportunity fellowships. **Nina Fales** is the recipient of an IIE grant for dissertation research in Burundi, Africa. **Carol Brown** teaches elementary general music in the public schools of McAllen, Tex.

## Traditions

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