

Acknowledgments

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Harvard University's commitment to Africa is at an all time high. With the newly established African Languages Program, Harvard recognizes that understanding indigenous languages is fundamental to an undergraduate concentration in African Studies. Moreover, through Harvard's African Initiative on Interfaculty Research and Collaboration on Africa, familiarity with African languages and cultures is seen as central to a paradigmatic shift that will encourage a research perspective internal to Africa.

It is hard to imagine the discipline of Linguistics without African languages. Indeed, research by Africanist scholars has had nothing short of an evolutionary impact in the field of general linguistics. Thanks to the work of generations of world famous linguists and language practitioners, such as Professor Will Leben at Stanford University, who has written the keynote address for this volume, enormous gains in understanding how language is constituted, acquired, and used have been realized from the study of African languages. While Africa may be marginal in some disciplines in the American academy, this is hardly the case with Linguistics.

That the 2004 Annual Conference on African Languages attracted more than one hundred and fifty papers of such extensive variety is indicative of how much the field has matured. The theme of ACAL 2004's *African Languages and Linguistics in Broad Perspective* was an open invitation to go beyond traditional linguistic theorizing and to discuss issues of greater sociolinguistic and cultural meaning, outside of Africa as well as on the continent. The *Selected* papers of this volume represent a broad range of papers selected for their significance, breadth of coverage, and depth of analysis—written by scholars from around the globe.

There are always 'hidden' people who make a volume possible. These people also labor to bring a project to fruition, but generally receive less recognition. The editors would like to thank the faculty, students, and staff of the Department of African and African American Studies for their support in this undertaking. The staff of the Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research deserves special thanks as well.

The editors hope that the *Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics* is as intellectually stimulating as the conference, which will be remembered both for the quality of its intellectual discourse and for its conviviality. We would like to thank the contributors for getting their papers in to us in a timely manner while not losing that conviviality so widely exhibited at the conference itself.

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