

OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Elizabeth Alice Widenmann on 6 September 1992 in New York City. Betsy, as she was affectionately known to her many friends and colleagues in the academic and scholarly communities in which she worked, was an active, consistent, and notably effective catalyst. It was her particular gift to encourage people to work together on common issues requiring resolution and policy definition. Her work has resulted in a heightened attention to Africana, its acquisition, and its accessibility in academic and research libraries throughout this country.

A graduate of Radcliffe College in 1957 with a BA *cum laude* in political science, Betsy continued study in this field, earning a MA in 1958 from the London School of Economics. Subsequently she earned a MLS in 1969 and completed a certificate in African Studies in 1970, both at Columbia University. She was further attracted to African Studies by her work as a research assistant to John T. McKelzey on his book *Man Against Tsetse*, 1973.

In 1970, Betsy joined the staff of Columbia Libraries, Columbia University in New York City, where for 22 years she served as African Bibliographer and Original Monographs Cataloger. In her work she forged strong links with faculty, students, and Africana librarian colleagues as well as with other academic librarians. She visited Africa twice on acquisitions trips in 1978 and 1986.

Betsy was an active member of the American Library Association and the African Studies Association and served on many important committees in both organizations. She was a dedicated and indefatigable member of the Africana Librarians Council (formerly Archives-Libraries Committee), serving as Chair from 1979-1980, as Member-at-Large from 1984-1986 and 1989-1991, and as the first chair of the Subcommittee on Cataloging and Classification from 1975-1978. She was also active in CAMP, the Cooperative Africana Microform Project. She played a prominent role in establishing the Conover-Porter Award for excellence in Africana reference works. Her publications include book reviews and "Recent Developments in Africana Cataloging in the United States," in *Africana Resources and Collections*, ed., by Julian W. Witherell, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989.

A memorial service was held during ASA's Annual Meeting in Seattle on Saturday, 21 November 1992. Colleagues planned "A Gathering of Friends and Colleagues of Elizabeth Widenmann," described as a party, on Thursday 7 January 1993 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm in Calder Lounge of Urgis Hall, Columbia University.

The Area Studies Department of Columbia Libraries has

established the Elizabeth Widenmann Memorial Fund for African Studies, which will be used to purchase books and journals for Columbia's Africana collections, bookplated with the name of the memorial fund. Checks may be made payable to Columbia University, listing the name of the fund in the memo section of the check. Checks may be sent to Daniel King, Columbia University Libraries Director of Development, 314B Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027. Memorial gifts may also be made to the African Studies Association Endowment Fund. Betsy herself contributed to this fund as a Benefactor. Checks should be payable to the African Studies Association, with "Endowment Fund-Elizabeth A. Widenman" mentioned in the memo section of the check. Send to African Studies Association, Credit Union Building, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322.

Betsy is sorely missed. We miss her wry wit, her judgment, her graciousness, her encouragement, and her deeply caring spirit.

Phyllis B. Bischof
University of California, Berkeley