Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus M. Crawford Young

Professor Emeritus M. Crawford Young, of the political science department, died on January 21, 2020, in Madison, WI.

He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 7 November 1931. He lived there until high school, when his family moved to Washington, DC, where his father was appointed to the Federal Reserve during the Eisenhower administration. His mother, Louise Young, an English professor at American University, had a strong influence on his interest in the study of politics, having written a book on the League of Women Voters and its vital post suffrage role.

He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1949. After completing his bachelor’s degree at the University of Michigan in 1953, he joined the army for two years, first in the infantry and then as the aide-de-camp of a major general. He then worked for two years with the International Students Association in Paris. There he met and married Rebecca (Becky) Young (1934-2008) on 17 August 1957. After completing his doctorate at Harvard, he joined the political science department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1963. Young was tenured only three years after being hired at a time when the tenure requirements were not as stringent as they are today. He became chair of the department in 1969, only six years after receiving his doctorate.

Young was also a visiting professor at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda (1965-66), Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Université Nationale du Zaire, Lubumbashi, (Democratic Republic of Congo, known then as Zaire) from 1973 to 1975 and visiting professor in the Faculty of Law at Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (Senegal), 1987-88, where he held a Fulbright Fellowship. He was also invited as a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), (1980-81), and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (1983-84).

At UW-Madison, Professor Young helped get the African Studies Program off the ground after its inception in 1961 and served as its chair from 1964-65 and 1966-68. He chaired the Department of Political Science (1969-72, 1984-87) and served as Associate Dean of the Graduate School (1968-71) and acting dean of the College of Letters & Science (1991-92). Over the years he served on a wide range of committees across campus, chairing the Search and Screen Committee for the Chancellor, which hired Donna Shalala, and chairing the Transportation Demand Management Committee, where his strong advocacy for greater bus use earned him the affectionate appellation from colleagues as “The Pol Pot of Parking.” This amused him to no end.

Beyond UW-Madison, he also served as President of the African Studies Association (1982-83) and won the ASA Distinguished Africanist Award (1990). He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 1998 and earned an Honorary Degree from Florida International University that same year.

Crawford Young’s productivity throughout his career and even after retirement was remarkable. He published numerous influential monographs, establishing himself as a leading scholar of African politics and the preeminent scholar of the African state. Crawford Young’s first book, Politics in the Congo (Princeton University Press, 1965), based on his PhD thesis, was a study in federalism in the context of ethnic politics. Ideology and Development in Africa (Yale University Press, 1982), identified three major ideological streams in Africa (Afromarxism, populist socialism and African capitalism) and looked at the different policy consequences of the various ideological preferences. The book was widely adopted by African politics classes until the breakup of the Soviet Union led to a decline in the Afromarxist orientation. His return to Zaire in 1973-75 allowed him to work on his manuscript with a former student, Thomas Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), which became the authoritative study of the Mobutu regime. The Politics of Cultural Pluralism (University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) won the Herskovits Prize (best book in African Studies, African Studies Association, 1977), and was co-winner of the Ralph Bunche Prize (best book in comparative ethnicity
over past five years, of the American Political Science Association, 1979).

Young’s ability to synthesize the work of others, led to two masterful, far reaching volumes, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (Yale University Press, 1994) and his tour de force, *The Postcolonial State in Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012). These volumes established Professor Young as the preeminent scholar of the African state. *The African Colonial State* explores the logic and pathologies of European colonialism in Africa the structural requirements of imperial domination. This book won him the Gregory Luebbert Prize, American Political Science Association 1995. In the second book, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Crawford Young provides a breathtakingly comprehensive overview of the fifty years following independence, drawing on the perspectives he obtained while working in Africa and his broad global points of reference. He identified three cycles of hope and disappointment, starting with the euphoria at the time of independence in the 1960s, followed by the emergence of single party autocracies and military rule. The second period was one of state expansion in the 1970s leading to state crisis and state collapse in the 1980s. And finally, there was the third wave of democratization, starting in the 1990s and the proliferation of civil wars. His nuanced magnum opus shows how the African states increasingly diverged from one another over the half century in ways that would have been difficult to predict from the outset of independence. This book won the African Politics Conference Group award as the best book on Africa in 2012. Throughout his career Young also contributed numerous articles to professional journals and anthology chapters arising from many conference volumes.

Professor Young’s oeuvre also includes numerous other books: notable among them is a 695-page history of the Department of Political Science at UW-Madison, *Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison: A Centennial History* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006) and his last labor of love, a self-published book honoring the pioneering efforts of his late wife as a prominent figure in Wisconsin politics, *Rebecca Young, a Life of Civic Engagement and Progressive Electoral Politics* (2019). She served in the Wisconsin State Assembly from 1985 to 1997. Young was devoted to his wife for their entire life together.

His outstanding reputation as a scholar of African politics naturally drew many PhD students to Madison to study with him. One of his students, Linda Thomas Greenfield, became Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and had a long and an illustrious career in the foreign service, including holding positions as Director General of the Foreign Service and Ambassador to Liberia. Another PhD student, Steven Morrison, is senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and director of its Global Health Policy Center. Young trained an entire generation of prominent Africa scholars, among them Michael Schatzberg, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, Catharine Newbury, Ed Keller, Gretchen Bauer, and Timothy Longman.

Professor Young retired from the university in 2001, remaining in Madison and living in a wing of Capitol Lakes, appropriately named “North Hall.” Young is preceded in death by his wife, Becky, and is survived by his daughters, Eva Young, Estelle Young, Emily Young, and Louise Young, who like her father, is a distinguished professor in the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

M. Crawford Young’s career was part of the rise of the Wisconsin political science department to national recognition. He will be dearly missed by those who knew him and those who benefited from his lifelong contributions.

Memorial Committee:
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