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Personalia

*In memoriam Harold Golden Marcus (~2003)*

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In memoriam Harold Golden Marcus (–2003)

We regret to note here the passing away of another distinguished historian of Ethiopia, Dr. Harold G. Marcus, and we express herewith our condolence to his wife, Cressida, his daughter, Emma Rose Drabik, and all his close relations and friends. He is said to have died of “cardiac arrest following complications from an ongoing heart condition,” at the age of 66 on 15 January 2003. Harold Marcus is well known to all students of Ethiopian history not only through his numerous and impeccable works, but also through his frequent participation in conferences and symposia as well as through his lively class and public lectures. In so far as we do not, however, possess reliable records on his life, we take the liberty to quote extensively from the germane obituary promptly issued to the “H-Africa LISTSERV” by Prof. Melpage of Michigan State University and edited by Prof. Jim McCann of Boston University, which will be followed by a short list of his publications compiled at random from some bibliographical works and footnotes.

“A graduate of Clark University, he [Harold] received his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1964 after studies with the anthropologist and historian, Daniel McCall. His dissertation research took him for the first time to Ethiopia, which became the focus of his academic interests for the rest of his life. He also studied and wrote more widely on African history, and on the development and decline of colonialism in Africa and worldwide.
“He was the author of many articles, editor of several books and collections of essays, and also editor of the journal Northeast Africa Studies. His biographies of Ethiopian Emperors Menilek II and Haile Selassie were not only well received in scholarly circles, but are also reprinted and widely read by the educated public in the Horn of Africa. His second volume of the Haile Selassie biography will be published posthumously by the University of California Press. And his History of Ethiopia is widely regarded as perhaps the best short history of the country.

“In addition to his purely scholarly work, Harold Marcus was founding editor of H-Africa, based at Michigan State University. Many journalists and government officials turned to him for understanding and guidance about a wide variety of matters concerning the Horn of Africa.

“Moreover, Harold believed that scholarship was nothing without commitment. He was active in what he believed were causes that served the people of northeastern Africa and their desire for better lives. He was an advocate for human rights for Ethiopians in the region and in the United States. And he was, despite a sometimes gruff exterior, truly a man of compassion and caring, as many of his students and colleagues can testify.

“He was deeply committed to teaching, first at Addis Ababa and Howard Universities, and then for 35 years at Michigan State University where he was Distinguished Professor of History. He was also a visiting professor at the University of Khartoum and Osaka Gaidai University and lectured at scores of colleges and universities around the world. Harold believed that his scholarly efforts also demanded that he share his knowledge directly with students. Thus, he leaves a legacy of many former students around the world who owe him both intellectual and very often personal debts and who are carrying on his vision of an ever-widening circle of scholarship about Africa.”

A Short List of Harold Golden Marcus’s publications

Books


Haile Sellasie I: the formative years, 1892–1936 (Berkely 1987).

A History of Ethiopia (Berkeley 1993).

Translations and/or Editions


Articles


The following entries have been published in *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*: 1–20. 1: Ethiopia–Ghana (New York 1977): Bafana; Haile Sellassie I; Menilek II.; Mikael; Tasamma Nadaw; Tsehai Negus; Walda Giyorgis Abboye; Wale Betul; Zawditu.


JOANNA MANTEL-NIECKO

Aleksander Ferenc was born in Chełm Wielki (today known as Chełm Śląski). He graduated from the Oświęcim High School in 1962 and thereafter pursued his studies at Warsaw University. He passed his entrance examinations with merit, and joined the Faculty of Semitics and Institute of Oriental Studies. Aleksander Ferenc was a student of Professor Stefan