UIUC Conference Honors Famed Historian Terence Ranger

The University of Illinois hosted a conference focused on the historiography of Zimbabwe in October entitled: “Making History: Terence Ranger and African Studies”. The sessions focused largely on the work of famed historian of Zimbabwe, Professor Terence Ranger (in photo at left) who attended. More than a dozen scholars from as far away as Britain and Zimbabwe presented papers on a range of themes related to the issues which have concerned Ranger in over four decades of research: African agency, the invention of tradition and the broader politics of violence, liberation and democracy. The highlight of the week was the launching of Ranger’s most recent book, Bulawayo Burning, a dazzling social history of Zimbabwe’s second largest city, which combines Ranger’s penchant for rigorous archival research with more recent scholarship on urban history and space. During his time here Professor Ranger also spoke to high school teachers, presented a Millercomm lecture From Spirit to Body: Approaches to Violence and Memory in Zimbabwe, and generally delighted conference attendees with his poignant wit and flawless recollection of details. To get a taste of Professor Ranger’s insights and learn a bit more about the history and present of Zimbabwe, you can link to his interview on WILL at: http://will.illinois.edu/focus/interview/focus101013b/.

The event was sponsored by International Programs and Studies, the International Council, the Center for Advanced Study, and the Center for Historical Interpretation at UIUC. Additional support was provided by The Journal of Southern African Studies and the Program in African Studies of Northwestern University. The following UIUC units also contributed funds to the conference: the Center for African Studies, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Departments of Anthropology, African-American Studies, Dance, Landscape Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning, Spurlock Museum and the Programs in Gender and Women’s Studies and in Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security.