

A great tree has fallen.
Akan proverb

Today we mourn the loss of an extraordinary man. Professor Christopher Damon Roy passed away early on the morning of Sunday, February 10 in Iowa City, surrounded by his immediate family. Chris was born September 30, 1947, in Ogdensburg, New York, to Margaret Adam Snow and George Robert Roy. He and his wife, Nora Leonard Roy, were married at the Hôtel de Ville, Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, on September 26, 1970. He leaves his beloved wife, Nora, Iowa City, Iowa; his son, Nicholas Spencer Roy (Jill Scott), Centennial, Colorado; his daughter, Megan Deirdre Roy (John Dolci), and granddaughter, Sylvia Elizabeth Dolci, Chicago, Illinois; his sister, Robin Roy Katz (Michael Katz), New York, NY, and nephew Teddy Katz; his brother, Matthew Roy (Caroline Darlington Roy), Lake Placid, NY, nieces Katelin and Emily, and nephews Robby and Chris. Those close to him will remember him well for his sincere warmth, delightful wit, and a bold sense of humor. His robust energy and fascination with the world was contagious. For forty-one years at the University of Iowa, his love for teaching art history and working with the Stanley Museum of Art was unquestionable.

The depth and scope of his contributions to the field of African art history are impressive. His career-long focus on the arts of Burkina Faso is matched by the nearly encyclopedic power of *Art & Life in Africa* (ALA), which he published as a CD-ROM in 1997 and redeveloped as a website in 2014. His impact as a teacher was no less remarkable, and every fall semester, twice a week, nearly 300 students packed the largest lecture hall at UI's Art Building West to attend his lectures on African art. High enrollment was common for his all courses, and his long history of work with the Stanley Museum supported an object-oriented approach complemented by a social history of art that captivated and inspired students for decades. Scholars reviewed his exhibitions for the museum positively for the way in which artistic quality drove his motivations for selection and display, and for the way in which he treated attribution carefully.

As a leader in his field, Roy founded the Project for Advanced Study of Art and Life in Africa (PASALA), which provided scholarships for graduate course work and research in Africa, as well as conferences and publications on African art. Between 1985 and 2000, he served as a main editor for the four part series, *Iowa Studies in African Art*, where many Africanists published research on objects from the Stanley Collection of African art and elsewhere. In addition to publications on the Stanley Collection and the Bareiss Family Collection, and Roy will be remembered equally in relation to the Thomas G.B. Wheelock Collection of art from Burkina Faso, for which he devoted specific scholarship in 2007. *Mossi*, which he published for the *Visions of Africa* series in 2015, will remain a standard art historical text on the subject along with his *Art of the Upper Volta Rivers* (1987).

Beyond his courses, scholarship, guest lectures, ALA, and exhibitions, Roy's YouTube videos on art and life in Africa have reached perhaps the widest audience, with more than 10,000 subscribers and over four million viewers worldwide. It is encouraging to think that the world is a better place because of Chris and all of those touched by his warmth and brilliance.

- By Cory Gundlach, curator of the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas