Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record
That which they sent before
And that which they leave
Behind, and of all things
Have We taken account
In a clear Book.
Ali Al’Amin Mazrui was born on February 24, 1933 in Mombasa, Kenya. He lived in Uganda and England and traveled extensively before choosing the United States of America as his home more than forty years ago. Mazrui lived his life to the fullest—his way. He continues to be an inspiration to us all.

Mazrui was a globally-renowned intellectual who transformed how the world viewed Africa. He published over forty books; and produced the television series *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* which has been translated into numerous languages.

Mazrui was married to Molly Walker for twenty years. They had three children together: Jamal; Alamin; and Kim Abubakar. He was married to Pauline Uti Mazrui for twenty-three years until his passing. They have raised four children together: Farid; Harith; Little Ali (grandson); and Grace.

Mazrui was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, mentor, teacher, writer, author, orator, intellectual, world traveler, activist, protestor, helper, giver, poet, peacemaker, and friend. His professional work and personal deeds improved and uplifted the lives of countless people around the world. He will be sorely missed.

“The Qur’an is the most widely read book in its original language in history. The Bible is the most widely read book in translation.”

“In the second half of the 20th century C.E. four Muslim countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey and Indonesia) elected women to be President or Prime Minister long before the United States had a female President, or Italy a woman Premier, or France elected a woman President, or Germany elected a female Chancellor, or Russia had elected either a woman Head of State or Head of Government.”

“Development equals modernization minus dependency.”

“Civilizations are to be judged not merely by the heights of achievement to which they have ascended, but also by the depths of depravity to which they have sometimes descended. Muslims are often criticized for not producing the best, but they are seldom congratulated for having standards of behaviour which have averted the worst. There are no Muslim equivalents of systematic Nazi extermination camps, nor Muslim conquests by genocide in the bloody tradition of whites in the Americas, nor Muslim versions of South Africa’s apartheid sanctioned by the Dutch Reformed Church, nor Muslim versions of the Stalinist terror in the name of Five Year plans. Nor can Islam be blamed for the only World Wars in human history—those started in Europe.”

“An intellectual is a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas and who has acquired the skill to handle some of those ideas effectively.”

**Poem by Ali Al’Amin Mazrui**

>The blood of experience meanders on
>In the vast expanse of the valley of time
>He new is come and the old has gone
>And life abides a changing clime.
>Let the drums of war be silent;
>Let the bells of peace be eloquent;
>And let the song of justice be heard.
Quotes from Ali Al’Amin Mazrui

“Marx was right that ‘man had to eat in order to live’ (the origins of economics). But man had to know what to eat and what to avoid (the origins of culture). So culture is prior to economics. In the beginning was the Word, and the word was culture.”

“Once Apartheid ended in South Africa and it became a black ruled nation, it was pressured into signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. A decision by the big powers—that nuclear know-how is not for Black Africans and children under sixteen.”

“Wisdom is to know yourself. We are a people of the day before yesterday and a people of the day after tomorrow. . . Before our dispersal, our village in Africa was the World. We knew no other, but now we are scattered so widely that the sun never sets on the descendants of Africa. There are more than 100 million people of African ancestry in this hemisphere alone. One world from Zanzibar to Georgetown and beyond has now become our village and with the help of others committed to this CAUSE, we must make this global village more human between now and the day after tomorrow.”

“Now that Apartheid is over, blacks do indeed have the crown, but whites still have the jewels.”

“Beethoven could compose brilliant music without being able to hear a single note; John Milton could compose the long poem of genius Paradise Lost, without looking at a single line; and the Prophet Muhammad could bequeath the most oft quoted book in history without reading a single sura or verse with his own eyes. Never before in history has a book associated with an illiterate man exerted such influence on life and literature across the centuries.”

“There are seven functions of culture in society. Culture as lenses of perception, as a source of motivation, as a standard of judgment, as a criterion of stratification, as a basis of identity, as a means of communication, and as a framework of consumption and production.”

Eulogy

We gather to mourn, honor and celebrate the life of Ali Mazrui. His extraordinary scholarly accomplishments and professional achievements have been recounted in tributes around the globe. Today we are in Binghamton, where Mazrui taught and lived. It is thus fitting to take this opportunity to reflect on aspects of his teaching and personal character that are less well known to the world beyond.

Mazrui was a gifted teacher and orator. His passion, eloquence, and charisma filled his classes. His insightful analysis and moving oratory created standing-room only audiences at public speaking events. He was deeply dedicated to his students. One of the things he regretted most about his declining health was the inability to meet his teaching responsibilities. He was grateful to be able to video-record an apology to his students when he was unable to teach. He was adored and revered as a teacher and mentor that family and friends referred to him as “Mwalimu” (Swahili for teacher). Mazrui was loved for his character and personal qualities. His warmth was enveloping and his laughter was infectious. He was endlessly generous toward family, close and extended, and to people in less fortunate circumstances. He was gracious to all, including strangers and intellectual adversaries. The hospitality of Mazrui and his beloved wife, Pauline, drew hundreds of visitors to their home from across town and the world. He also kept in touch with relatives, friends and colleagues in far off places with a personal newsletter that he wrote annually for nearly forty years. He enjoyed learning from people from all walks of life and cultures. An egalitarian and humanitarian, he endeavored to treat all people with respect, dignity and fairness. At the same time, he valued spirited debate about political, economic and philosophical ideas. He embodied integrity and decency.

Mazrui’s personal interests included reading murder mysteries by Agatha Christie and Mary Higgins Clark. He enjoyed watching films with his family, especially Hollywood classics, James Bond, Alfred Hitchcock thrillers, and comedies, such as I Love Lucy, Airplane and Young Frankenstein. He also enjoyed television dramas, such as Upstairs, Downstairs and Mission Impossible. He was a fan of boxing great Muhammad Ali and Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum. An avid consumer of daily news through print, radio and television, he especially enjoyed the radio broadcasts of the BBC World Service and NPR’s Fresh Air with Terry Gross, as well as the PBS NewsHour and the Rachel Maddow shows on evening television.

A man of faith, Mazrui prayed to return Home. As his Mombasa family says, “We are from God and to Him we shall return.” He did return Home, his body to Mombasa and—Insha’ Allah—his soul to his Maker.
Program
Celebration of Life
Professor Ali Al’Amin Mazrui
Casadesus Music Hall — Fine Arts Building — Binghamton University
December 6, 2014 from 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Ricardo René Larémont—Master of Ceremonies
Professor, Political Science/Sociology, Binghamton University

Qur’an Recitation—Sura Ya Sin—v. 1–12
Eydid Ali, Muslim Student Association, Binghamton University

Opening Remarks
Michael West
Professor, African Studies/Sociology, Binghamton University
Anne McCall
Dean, Harpur College of Arts and Sciences, Binghamton University
Donald G. Nieman
Executive VP for Academic Affairs & Provost, Binghamton University

Ousseina Alidou
Professor, African American and African Studies, Rutgers University
N’dri Assie-Lumumba
Professor, Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University
Locksley Edmonson
Professor, Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University
Onyeka Obasi
President, Friends of Africa International (FAI)
Betty Wambui
Assistant Professor, Africana and Latino Studies, SUNY Oneonta
Samuel Quainoo
Professor and Chair, Political Science, East Stroudsburg University

Micere Mugo
Meredith Professor for Teaching Excellence, Syracuse University

John L. Esposito
Professor & Director, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim Christian Understanding (ACMCU)

Toyin Falola
Jacob & Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities, University of Texas

Abubaker al-Shingieti
Regional Director, International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)

Horace Campbell
Professor, Department of African American Studies, Syracuse University
Kassahun Checole
CEO, Africa World Press, Inc. & The Red Sea Press, Inc.
Seifudein Adem
Associate Director/Associate Research Professor, Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS), Binghamton University

Family
Jamal Ali Mazrui, son
Alamin Ali Mazrui, son
Kim Abubakar Ali Forde-Mazrui, son
Harith Ekenenchukwu Ali Mazrui, son
Farid Chinedu Ali Mazrui, son
Ali Alamin Mazrui, grandson

MAZRUI—RUMI AWARD SPEECH
Introduction by Dinesh Sharma
Associate Research Professor (Hon.), IGCS, Binghamton University

Reception following memorial
The Grand Corridor in The Anderson Center
(Sponsored by Provost Donald G. Nieman)