

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UC Santa Barbara Historian Awarded Distinguished Professorship, Publishes Groundbreaking Book on Islamist Terrorism

Robert O. Collins, a leading scholar of the history and culture of the Sudan and of East Africa, has been awarded the prestigious Edward A. Dickson Emeriti Professorship at UC Santa Barbara for 2005-06.

A prolific scholar, Collins is co-author with J. Millard Burr of "Alms for Jihad: Charities and Terrorism in the Islamic World" (Cambridge University Press, 2005), which explores the world of Islamic charities and their funding links to terrorism.

This groundbreaking book, published this month, is the first to piece together the secret financial systems that support terror.

The Dickson professorship provides \$10,000 in funding for research-related activities.

Collins, a UCSB historian, said the award will enable him to travel to the Sudan and to the Sudan Archive at Durham University in England to conduct research for a book on the modern history of the Sudan.

The archive contains relevant new material on the Islamist government that rose to power in 1989.

"Given the current events in that part of the world, it is particularly timely that such an eminent expert should receive support to pursue his book on the modern history of the Sudan," said Gene Lucas, UCSB's executive vice chancellor. "The Dickson Emeriti Professorship is a wonderful opportunity to provide funding for our emeriti to pursue research, teaching, and public service.

I am delighted that Professor Robert Collins is this year's recipient."

In nominating Collins for the distinguished professorship, History Department Chair Patricia Cohen said, "Bob Collins's devoted daily efforts contribute to our understanding of some of the most pressing and important political questions of the day--terrorism, Islamicism, genocide, and African/Middle East politics.

His audience ranges from college students who read his course assignment books, to specialists in African history and politics, to the general reading public wanting to know more about Jihad and Bin Laden, to government and intelligence specialists in our own government."

The author of more than 30 books, Collins is a world-renowned scholar and prominent expert on the Sudan and the Nile.

He first went to the Sudan in 1956, a month after its independence, and has returned regularly to live, travel, and carry out his research in government and university archives, and in the field.

Since he became an emeritus professor in 1994, he has written seven books.

His most recent include the popular "The Nile" (Yale University Press, 2002), "Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989-2000" (Brill, 2003), and a collection of 19 essays on the Sudan, encompassing more than 40 years of research on this strategic northeast African country.

"Civil Wars and Revolution in the Sudan: Essays on the Sudan, Southern Sudan, and Darfur, 1962-2004"

(Tsehai Press, 2005) has been cited as "an impressive collection that has made an unsurpassed contribution to Sudan studies."

The Dickson Emeriti Professorship is named in honor of Edward Dickson, who served as a regent of the University of California from 1913-1946.

His vision is credited with helping to make the Los Angeles campus a reality.

The Dickson Emeriti Professorships, which exist at each of the UC campuses, were established by a philanthropic gift from Dickson, the longest-serving UC regent.

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