SUDANCASA

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NIARA SUDARKASA, PH.D. Professor of Anthropology and Director, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109, U.S.A.

Professor Niara Sudarkasa (nee: Gloria A. Marshall) received her undergraduate training in English and Anthropology at Fisk University and Oberlin College, under a four-year Ford Foundation Scholarship for Early Entrance to College. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1957 at the age of eighteen, and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Anthropology from Columbia University in 1959 and 1964, respectively.

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After receiving the Ph.D., Professor Sudarkasa was appointed Assistant Professor of Anthropology at New York University, where she taught three years. While in New York, she also taught in the Anthropology Department at Columbia University. Professor Sudarkasa joined the U-M faculty as Assistant Professor of Anthropology in 1967, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1970 and Full Professor in 1976. Throughout her tenure at the University, she has been associated with the Center for Research on Economic Development, and, since its inception in 1970, with the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS). She served as Associate Director of CAAS in the early years of its existence and again from 1978 to 1981, under the directorship of Professor Ali Mazrui.

Professor Sudarkasa's first field research was conducted in Nigeria in 1961 and 1962, on the role of Yoruba women in the internal marketing system and the impact of women's trade activities on their domestic roles in the family and wider kin groups. Subsequently, Professor Sudarkasa studied the role of Yoruba migrants in the economy of Ghana, and more generally, in intra-regional trade in West Africa. This research on women, trade, and the family among the Yoruba of West Africa has led, in recent years, to more general interests in research on African women and development, the Yoruba diaspora in the Americas, and the development of Afro-American family structure from its roots in West African kinship organization.

Among Professor Sudarkasa's publications is a monograph on Yoruba women traders, entitled Where Women Work, numerous articles on her West African research, and several articles on African and Afro-American family organization. The breadth of her early research is indicated by the fact that she was invited to write the article on "Marriage: Comparative Analysis" for the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, and authored a well-known article on "Racial Classifications: Popular and Scientific" in the volume Science and the Concept of Race, edited by Margaret Mead and Theodore Dobzhansky, et.al. Professor Sudarkasa regularly presents papers at scientific meetings and has been an invited participant in international conferences in Africa, Europe, and Asia.