

## Paul Newman

Paul Newman is one of the most influential African linguists of his generation. He is the world's authority on the Hausa language and the acknowledged doyen of Chadic, a family of some 140 languages spoken in the Sahel region of West Africa.

Paul received his B.A. (philosophy) and M.A (anthropology) from the University of Pennsylvania. His lifelong involvement with Africa began in 1961 when he joined the first Peace Corps group to go to Nigeria, where he began research on a small, previously undescribed Chadic language. After Peace Corps, he went to UCLA to pursue a Ph.D. in linguistics. It was there that he met his future wife, Roxana Ma Newman. While still graduate students, they published a seminal paper on comparative Chadic which set the foundation for all subsequent work on the classification and reconstruction of that family.

His first position in 1966 was in the Department of Anthropology at Yale, which proved to be a formative experience. There he had the good fortune to come to know the eminent linguist Joseph Greenberg, who remained his lifelong friend and intellectual mentor.

In 1972 Paul took up an appointment in Kano, Nigeria, as the first director of the Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages at Bayero University. There he immersed himself in the linguistic study of Hausa. An important product of this period was the *Modern Hausa-English Dictionary*, a work that has gone through five printings. As director, Paul attracted a dozen young scholars, Nigerian as well as expatriate, to the university, thereby contributing to the formation of the next generation of Africanist linguists.

In 1975 Paul moved to the University of Leiden, where he was honored with a personal chair in African linguistics bestowed by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. Because of his close association with European colleagues, Paul's scholarship combines the best of American and European scientific traditions and intellectual approaches. While at Leiden, he founded the *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics*, which remains the leading journal in the field to this day.

In 1983 Paul joined the Department of Linguistics at Indiana University, eventually serving two terms as department chair. He views the excellence and especially the diversity of the department's faculty as his legacy. Paul also holds appointments as adjunct professor of anthropology, adjunct professor of law, and director of the West African Languages Institute. In 2002 he was honored by being named Distinguished Professor.

Paul's international standing is reflected in the many honors he has received and visiting appointments he has held. He was a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford; a visiting researcher on the IU-Hamburg faculty exchange program; a consultant and honorary member for the African Languages Project at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; a professor at the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Summer Institute; a research fellow at the Centre for Linguistic Typology at Australian National University; and a plenary speaker at the Second World Congress of African Linguistics in Leipzig. Paul served on the National Linguistics Panel of the CIES Fulbright Program and was a member of the LSA Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation.

At IU, Paul has a reputation as a versatile and stimulating teacher. His courses have ranged from historical linguistics, African linguistics, field methods (in which a dozen different African languages were analyzed), and more recently, language and law, freedom of speech, and a basic course on contracts. He is demanding of his students and is known to be a tough-minded though very supportive dissertation supervisor. The appreciation of former students on three continents is reflected in remarks they wrote in *Chadic and Hausa Linguistics: Selected Papers of Paul Newman with Commentaries*, published to honor him on his sixty-fifth birthday.

Paul's work has been supported by major grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Department of Education. He is a prolific scholar, with 16 books and monographs and more than 100 other publications to his credit. His magnum opus, *The Hausa Language: An Encyclopedic Reference Grammar*, published by Yale University Press, is a monumental reference work and a milestone in Hausa and African linguistics.

Paul has made significant contributions to comparative linguistics, phonological and morphological theory, linguistic fieldwork, African oral history, and ethnomusicology (of Appalachia as well as Nigeria). He is admired for his elegant and original analyses, and his lucid and accessible style. Paul is committed to the openness of science, and has always been generous about sharing his field materials, bibliographic compilations, and accumulated knowledge with colleagues and students around the world.

Paul has had a lifelong interest in law and a deep personal commitment to civil liberties and civil rights. Within IU, he is well-known for being outspoken and combative when matters of principle are concerned. He successfully challenged the university's mandatory retirement policy for administrators as being an

anachronistic vestige of ageism. Outside the university, he has been active in the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, where he currently serves as a member of the state board and as president of the Bloomington chapter. A few years ago Paul embarked on the study of law, graduating from IU Bloomington in 2003 with a J.D. degree summa cum laude.

On the lighter side, Paul appreciates good wine, supports the live jazz scene in Bloomington, and is known among a small circle of friends for his ready wit and offbeat sense of humor.