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The biography of Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku: A Congolese true to his roots, looking beyond the world he lives in.

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Capstone: The biography of Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku:

A Congolese true to his roots, looking beyond the world he lives in

Capstone for the Master of Arts in Professional Writing

Kennesaw State University, May 2018

Presented by Zola Matingu

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Kennesaw State University
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PREFACE

Biographies are some of the most interesting and intriguing books I read. From Collin Powell's autobiography, to New York Central Park designer Frederic Law Olmsted, or Michel de Montaigne, there is always something that prompts a reader to want to know the personal details of life that impacted a biography subject. Those details point to significant events or accomplishments of an individual's life, and they can give a unique perspective of the life elements that impacted the subject as he or she is seen in history.

Writing a biography is not as easy as just telling a person's life story. I had initially considered other public figures to write about, but I chose to write about my father because I always felt that his path in life was unique as it relates to his philosophy about life, family, and career aspirations. He is firmly rooted in his identity, and that has enabled him to establish himself as an individual and connect with people with background different than his.

I still had to do research to understand the cultural, historical, and geographical contexts of my father's life to craft a narrative that can be a relatable story to readers. As he is in his seventies, my father's story is still relevant as identity, culture, and purpose are still concepts that people wrestle with today, especially for younger generations who don't have the same generational references. At the core they still have some of the same human issues that my father had throughout his life. I think many can find in this narrative some examples about navigating life challenges and making meaningful connections with others, in a world where people seem interconnected, but not necessarily knowing their neighbor.

Though this is the story of a Congolese man who made his mark wherever he lived, it will resonate to various degrees with anyone who had similar life experiences and anyone who is interested in learning about someone from another culture.

THE KIMPESE YEARS

The dry season was over, and Kimpese's red soil was about to get muddy with the rainy season approaching, as part of the city tropical humid climate. That's when Joseph Mbelolo arrived in Kimpese, a major missionary city in the Bas-Congo province to start high school in September 1955 at Ecole des Pasteurs et d'Instituteurs/ The School for Pastors and Teachers (EPI). Kimpese was a commercial city, but with a strong educational presence. Apart from EPI, there was also a nursing school connected to its main hospital called (Institut Médical Evangélique/ Evangelical Medical Institute (IME). Though the school and the institute were founded by missionaries from the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) from Great Britain, the American Baptist Society (ABS), and Swedish Missionaries from the Svenska Mission Forbundet, they operated as independent entities. Many people in the Bas-Congo province went to IME to get treatment. Sometimes people came from Matadi the main port in the country on the Atlantic Ocean, or from the capital city Léopoldville. One of the country's major rail tracks came through the city as well, it connected Léopoldville to Matadi and several cities in between, Kimpese being one of them. For Joseph, seeing the train and the train station was a novelty; for most of his life he had traveled by foot, bicycle, or by truck.

At that time, the fight for the freedom of Europe from Nazi Germany had awakened a fight for freedom from European colonial powers on the African continent as well. Many members of the colonies' armed forces played a significant role in fighting Hitler's forces, as countries like Belgium had their government in exile in London. This fight for independence grew and intensified in the 1950s, and Congo was about to embark on the fight for its independence too.ⁱ Joseph had a first-row seat to the events leading to the birth of one of the largest nations on the African continent.

Founded in 1908, EPI was part of the elite among Protestant schools in Congo, and an admission test was required to get in. There Joseph followed a general pedagogy major to become a teacher; it was far away from his village of Kimbimbi, where he was born on June 10, 1938, and the Protestant mission of Sundi-Lutete where he attended elementary school. His family was still in Kimbimbi; he was the only one out of nine children to have the opportunity to continue his education. His siblings did not go past an elementary school level education, being from a matriarchal system, and this contributed to them not pursuing further learning. In this matriarchal system, preference is given to caring for a man's nephews and nieces over his own children. What helped Joseph continue to strive to the highest level of learning was his intelligence, and the fact that he stood out as a student with potential. He always asked questions, and he took initiative to resolve issues between students, whenever they occurred. Teachers were always noticing him because of his knowledge and his desire to learn more. Joseph's memory of the first day in school is still vivid: "The school was very quiet and its vicinity really clean: Protestant missionaries made a point to offer a great environment conducive for learning. This was such an upper scale environment comparing to what I had seen in Kingoyi or Sundi-Lutete. "ii

Joseph's first course that day was French, taught by Mr. Berglund from Sweden. Mr. Berglund was well liked by the students: they could tell that he knew the French language, and that he really wanted the students to learn. He made them feel comfortable and valued as individuals. Some cultural adjustments took place: Joseph wore his very first pair of shoes that he purchased himself. He considered making this purchase a great achievement as he was moving towards a more refined life. This unique environment proved to be a natural step for Joseph to continue his goal of becoming a teacher. Joseph became the editor of the school paper *Notre Progrès* in which he published his first poems. Again, the teachers were very impressed with his learning abilities and gently encouraged him to pursue theology instead of teaching; they were even ready to recommend him for a theology school in Cameroon. Appreciative of those well intended wishes, Joseph maintained his focus becoming part of the education field, as this theme became the purpose of his life. Joseph's time in Kimpese also

coincided with the 50th anniversary of EPI, which received a lot of press coverage from Jean-Jacques Kande, a well-known reporter in Congo at the time. The school even had its choir sing at the Universal Exposition of Brussels.

Another significant event in the young man's life was a matter of the heart; Joseph had friends, among them were several ladies, but he considered them his sisters. One of them was Marguerite Luyindula Mayamona, who was also a student at EPI, six years his junior. They quickly became friends, and later a romance blossomed, culminating in marriage on July 15, 1967, in Liège, Belgium. The third of nine children, she was the daughter of a tailor and a home maker. In 1962, Joseph flew to Belgium to pursue higher education without telling Marguerite his intentions of asking for her hand. He thought she was beautiful and smart, and he liked the fact that she was educated, and from the same tribe. He also liked her calm demeanor, quite opposite to his. She secretly liked him too but didn't say anything and was hoping Joseph would make a move. So, when he did, writing from Belgium asking for her hand, she said yes.

In the late fifties, Congolese were getting increasingly involved in the fight for their country's independence, as more educated Congolese became aware of Belgium's intent to continue to first maintain control over Congo, and later gradually release its grip on the country to complete independence in 1980. This scenario didn't sit well with Congolese when other African countries like Ghana became independent in 1958. After several revolts and meetings with the Belgian government, Congo became independent on June 30, 1960, with Joseph Kasa-Vubu as president and Patrice Lumumba as prime minister. Both came from the two parties that had the most seats in the legislature, the Association des Bakongos/ The Bakongos Association (ABAKO) and the Mouvement National Congolais/ Congolese National Movement (MNC).ⁱⁱⁱ Congo's independence brought pride to Joseph, as finally, the Congolese people felt they became the masters of their destiny, again free to control their country and their resources, as it was the case before the arrival of the Belgians close to 100 years prior.

That same year, President Joseph Kasa-Vubu visited EPI. This was a significant event for all the students and faculty members as Joseph recalls it:

“This was the first time Congo had a black president, the first time that in our generation the leader of the country wasn’t from Belgium. The president was also Catholic, and the fact that he decided to come visit a Protestant school was very impressive in those days.”^{iv}

There had been tensions between Catholic and Protestant missionaries during colonization; the Protestants were accusing Catholics of being complicit with Belgian authorities in mistreating the Congolese people and those tensions continued for years after the country’s independence. The Catholic and Protestant Church leaders always found themselves on the side of the country’s leaders, or against those leaders at various periods in the history of Congo.

NIVELLES AND LIEGE

In 1961, Joseph Mbelolo graduated from high school and became a teacher at EPI along with his friend Joseph Kapita, replacing José Dianzungu who went on to pursue college in Belgium. A year later, Joseph flew to Belgium to study on a scholarship at Ecole Normale de Nivelles, to get a degree of Régent Littéraire in history and French to teach at the high school level. At the time, the Belgian education system didn’t have a degree for teaching high school. Most aspiring teachers were getting their teaching degree from a school like Ecole Normale de Nivelles, which offered a two-year degree. Joseph’s time in Nivelles brought a new challenge: one of the mandatory courses of the curriculum was Latin, and he didn’t have any knowledge of it at all. But with hard work and dedication, he finished top of his class to the amazement of his classmates who could not believe that someone from Congo with no prior learning of Latin could do so well. Mr. DeVillers, the school director also took notice, and recommended Joseph for Liège University, where he later enrolled to study for a bachelor’s degree in Roman Philology of French languages, cultures and civilizations with a scholarship from the Ecumenical Council.

During his time in Nivelles, Joseph had the opportunity to visit Sweden while on a school break as a guest of the Evangelical Youth from Sweden (Svenska Mission Forbundet), with two friends: José Dianzungu and Edouard Bungenia. In Stockholm, they were able to talk about Congo, and they performed a song with Joseph playing the Congolese drums for their audience, which gave them a warm welcome. Sweden had so many fascinating things for the three friends to encounter, one of them was the visit to the Swedish Lapland. The opportunity of being at the very top of the planet was quite an experience as Joseph recalls it: “To not see the sun set at all was amazing, but troubling at the same time. It surely disturbed our sleeping habits for a while.”^v They also visited a Viking boat in the city of Vara that had been submerged in the sea for centuries. A team of researchers had located the boat and had reconstructed it for visitors to see; this was a major event in Sweden at the time. Joseph was also able to reunite with the Andermon family, who were missionaries in the Congo in the 1950s. Marguerite had been the Andermon children’s nanny. Joseph and his friends stayed in Sweden for two months, and returned to Belgium with handmade Swedish ties as gifts from their hosts; Joseph still has his, a red one, to this day.

Back in Belgium, Joseph welcomed Marguerite who had received a scholarship from the Belgian Missionary Church to finish high school at l’Ecole Normale d’Argenteuil in 1964. Her father passed away that same year without giving her his blessing to marry Joseph, a big disappointment for her. Marguerite’s father, Mr. Matingu, was “concerned” that Joseph, an intellectual, would not be able to take care of his daughter. His first daughter, Thérèse, was married to a teacher and Mr. Matingu felt that his son-in-law had too much control over his daughter. According to Joseph, Mr. Matingu still wanted to manage his daughters’ lives, whether they were married or not: “He did ask Marguerite to give him her salary when she was teaching in Kingoyi. And with his daughter Thérèse, he had to back off as his son-in-law told him that his daughter was a married woman, and she had to live her life with her husband with no interference from her father.”^{vi}

Meanwhile, Liège University had been a challenging environment to adjust to the first two years: Joseph was one of six African students on campus; among them were three Congolese, two Rwandans, and one Burundian at the beginning of the academic year. But he soon became the only African student, as the others left the program on the pretext the courses were too difficult to follow. Racial prejudice was a prevalent issue: some of Joseph's classmates stopped talking to him after he outperformed them many times on tests. Some faculty members were not unbiased either. Joseph recalls:

“Many professors were not fond of Congolese in general, because Congo's independence meant that the Belgians couldn't control Congo and its resources anymore; they had a superiority complex. They preferred people who were from Katanga, and at times Congolese in Belgium would pass for Katangese who Belgians esteemed better. Katanga, one of the wealthiest provinces of Congo (with manganese, cobalt, copper, uranium, diamonds, etc.) was trying to secede from Congo, and its leader Moïse Tshombe was well acquainted with Belgian authorities. In the end, I was more acquainted with communist students who supported the causes of many African countries, and Portuguese students who had a tough time learning in French.”^{vii}

Despite those hurdles, Joseph lived an active life outside campus as well; he became a member of the Union Générale des Etudiants Congolais/ The Congolese Students General Union (UGEC), which was involved in many cultural, political, and social activities. He became the editor of *Le Réveil*, UGEC's newspaper. Another UGEC's paper called *Veillée Culturelle* had a focus on non-political issues. In this newspaper Joseph published an article entitled “A Critique of The Bantu Philosophy,” describing the way of thinking of several ethnic groups which were part of the Bantu group that encompasses tribes and languages from part of Nigeria to the North, Central and Eastern Africa, all the way to Southern Africa. Many African students were impressed with this article; Joseph's article was a critique of a book called *The Bantu Philosophy* by Reverend Placide Tempels, a Belgian Franciscan priest. The book argued that

there was a hierarchy in the vital forces in the Bantu group starting with God, the saints, and then people; this was based on Catholic beliefs. Joseph's article pointed out that this view was erroneous, since in the Bantu vision, God was above everything, and not included in the hierarchy with ancestors and the living. This type of analysis would be the first of many more Joseph would make, as he researched several themes, related to African and European cultures and philosophies.

During the sixties, Congo experienced several political challenges, and those challenges will have lasting impact on Joseph and other Congolese lives. Several events will determine the fate of the country for decades to come. In July 1960, Patrice Lumumba, the prime minister, didn't get along with President Joseph Kasa-Vubu. They had different views about solving the issue of the Katanga secession as the president favored an intervention from the United Nations. On the other hand, the prime minister wanted Congolese to resolve this conflict on their own. Failure to rally the country in this matter pushed Lumumba to consider asking the Soviet Union for help to maintain the unity of the country, when his initial request for help from the United States was denied.^{viii} Lumumba was then accused by Belgium and the United States of being a communist because of his nationalistic views. He wanted to lead Congo without any outside influences. He was arrested that same year and died on January 17, 1961, at the hands of Congolese army officers (some have suspected the involvement of the CIA and Belgian secret services). Several people headed the government after Lumumba's death, among them Joseph Ileo (a conservative) and Cyrille Adoula, but Congo's welfare after independence was still shaky. On November 24, 1965, President Kasa-Vubu was ousted by a coup d'état; Joseph Désiré Mobutu, a young army officer well connected with Western powers, took control of the country.^{ix}

Mobutu promised to govern Congo for only five years, the time required to reinstate order and peace in the country and organize general elections. But many started to see another plan being set up and Mobutu quickly reorganized the country's administration making the provinces were very dependent on the central government in Léopoldville, the capital. He also stripped the parliament of its power, and gradually erased the prime minister position, making himself the head of the executive branch. All these changes made their way to the Congolese students members of UGEC prompting protests. During

one of Mobutu's visits to Belgium in 1967, Joseph and other Congolese students complained to Belgian authorities about their willingness to receive Mobutu and treat him with all the reverence due to a head of state, while there was clear evidence that the state of democracy in Congo was in danger. The Belgian police tried to control UGEC members and asked Joseph and other Congolese students to promise not to create any disturbance during Mobutu's visit. Joseph remembers that time:

“The Police asked me to sign papers promising to not start any protest while Mobutu was there, ensuring his security. I refused to sign those papers citing the fact that I didn't see why I should sign documents stating what behavior I should have, when there was no proof whatsoever that I would behave that way. On top of that, how can a student or a group of students be held responsible for the security of a head of state? Mr. Lambert, the director of Belgian secret services, tried to have us sign those papers. The Belgian secret services knew they had to protect Mobutu, and I knew they were trying to trick me to do something. So, the police put me on house arrest for the duration of Mobutu's visit to make sure nothing happened.”^x

If the Belgian authorities intended to scare Congolese students, they failed as more protests took place years later.

After this intense episode, life got more exciting as Joseph and Marguerite married on Saturday July 15, 1967 in Liège under the auspices of Reverend Ntontolo. Many friends from Congo and Belgium were present for the occasion. Among the guests was a couple, the Malumalus, who were not close to the newlyweds, but as newcomers to the town of Liège and fellow Congolese were invited to the wedding on Mrs. Mananga's insistence, a friend of theirs. During the wedding party, Mrs. Malumalu, who was pregnant with her second child, started to feel contractions from the baby. She was rushed to the hospital where she gave birth to a little girl whom she and her husband named Natalie. Natalie was born two months premature, and she stayed three months in the hospital. Due to this unexpected turn of events, Henri and Antoinette Malumalu asked Joseph and Marguerite to be their daughter's godparents. The new couple accepted joyfully, and this was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the two couples. Joseph told his own children years later: “Your mother and I always consider Natalie as our ‘first born’

because she was born on our wedding day!”^{xi} And Natalie has assumed her role of “big sister” with a lot of enthusiasm.

WELLESLEY

Now a married man, Joseph graduated in 1969 from Liège University with a bachelor’s degree in philology. He immediately started to work on getting his PhD, but his thesis director, Mr. Albert Gérard, told him about a unique opportunity. Dr. Gérard’s daughter was teaching French courses at Wellesley College, a private women’s liberal arts college in the United States, and her contract was coming to an end. He told Joseph that this teaching position could give him a unique professional experience. Dr. Gérard strongly recommended Joseph to Wellesley College leadership, giving him his full support. The reason Wellesley College was actively recruiting minority faculty members at that time was that, after Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s death, black people wanted to see more black faculty members in colleges and universities. Joseph explained: “Though there was a push to recruit more black faculty members, there were not enough of them to fill the positions available. Schools had to turn to candidates from African countries to ensure more diversity on campuses.”^{xii} This diversity was also extended to students; Vicki Mistacco, a French department faculty member at Wellesley since 1968, says it didn’t work out as initially planned:

“Many students originally from rural areas were enrolled to give them an opportunity to get a great education and broaden their horizons. But the school had failed to provide a clear picture of what the expectations were to the students such as the amount of course work, or readings. Another issue was the fact that the school didn’t give the adequate support for these students to thrive academically and settle in this urban environment which was quite different from the rural areas they had lived their whole lives. Most of these students dropped out.”^{xiii}

This was a sign that more work was needed to have an effective diversity on college campuses.

Joseph accepted the instructor position vacated by Mr. Gérard's daughter and arrived with Marguerite in Boston in August 1970. Right after their arrival, US authorities asked him to sign papers promising that he will never join the communist party during his time in the United States. He signed those papers as all foreigners coming to the United States had to agree to that condition under the Communist Control Act of 1954, signed by President Dwight Eisenhower, to stay in the United States. This law states that the Communist party is outlawed in the United States of America. It criminalizes its members or those who support it.^{xiv} Joseph remembers that Wellesley College had some Communists on campus; he had found on more than one occasion a tract left on his office door. Capitalism being the de facto society model in the United the States, it is quite telling that some citizens adhered to the political views of the Soviet Union, the United States biggest adversary. Apparently, some Americans didn't long for the **American Dream** that many pursued.

Joseph and Marguerite settled in this new city and new country with much to discover and set residence at 8 Norfolk Terrace in Wellesley. Being among a small number of African immigrants, they were the object of the curiosity of many people. Dr. Vicki Mistacco served as their tour guide in the city. On a particular outing, Vicki, Joseph, and Marguerite were looking for *la farine de manioc*, cassava flour, which is used to make a dough that Congolese and people from other African countries eat with meat, fish, and vegetables. It is usually an alternative to rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, or plantains. They found the flour in North End, an Italian neighborhood in Boston in a store that specialized in selling tropical goods. Dr. Mistacco reflects on that day:

“It was quite a day. At the time Boston was a predominantly white city, and people were very curious to see a couple like Joseph and Marguerite as they were black but not African-Americans. At Wellesley, there were some surprises too. African-American students were out of sync with Joseph; they expected someone to have an African-American background, but instead they found out that Joseph had a European education with an African culture. I remember him

as a very delightful person; he was very open, not formal like this other faculty member from Martinique.”^{xv}

Joseph remembered those impressions as well:

“African-American students were very proud to have a black instructor, since there were not many at the time. They were inquiring about Africa, but couldn’t understand why I didn’t get as mad as many of them were at white people. During many conversations, I had to explain to them that though they had challenging circumstances, the main issue was more economic than racial. Many didn’t realize that poverty was the issue and that you could have white or black people in powerful positions who could prevent others from succeeding. With time, they understood better my point of view.”^{xvi}

These types of conversations are still taking place today, as African-Americans and Africans can sometimes have different experiences even as they can find themselves in the same environment.

Marguerite opted to just enjoy her time in Boston, though Joseph had encouraged her to further her studies. After finishing high school at l’Ecole Normale d’Argenteuil, she earned a bachelor’s degree at the same school. She was very good in biology and physics, her major courses there. So, Joseph let her decide what she wanted to do. While He was taking evening classes to improve his English, she took another route to learn the language of Shakespeare. She learned English through regular interactions with neighbors, friends, and Joseph’s students who invited them to eat on a regular basis. They both loved the city, especially in the fall. They had experienced the fall season in Belgium, but Boston’s leaves changing color were more vivid. This is one of the memories they later shared with their children through stories and photographs.

Another novelty to their life in the United States was learning to drive. Up to that point, they used public transportation while they were in Congo and in Belgium. Joseph took the course first, and then taught Marguerite the basics of driving. On the day of the test to get their licenses, Marguerite passed it with flying colors the first time around; Joseph failed twice!

After learning to drive, he purchased his first car, a Sunbeam acquired on his own salary.

Almost a year after settling in at Wellesley, something significant happened to Joseph and Marguerite: they welcomed a little girl whom they named Zola Matingu on a very hot June 4, 1971. The parents were overjoyed as they had tried to have children for several years. Right after Zola's birth, a misunderstanding between Leonard Morse Hospital staff and Joseph was blown out of proportion over his new baby girl's name: Joseph told the staff his daughter's name was Zola Kuanunga Matingu. The staff could not understand why he wouldn't name her Zola Mbelolo. Joseph explained that in his culture parents could name their children after themselves or someone else as it regards the last name. The hospital staff thought he was renouncing his parental rights; finally, the middle name Kuanunga was dropped in the confusion by the hospital staff, as it is not on the child's birth certificate. The hospital kept the rest of the name Joseph intended to give his daughter from the beginning. As new parents and still relatively newcomers to Wellesley, Joseph and Marguerite received many baby gifts from Joseph's colleagues in the Wellesley College French department to help care for their daughter. Dr. Mistacco recalls: "The whole department got together and got any baby item you could think of. I remember there was a crib for sure."^{xvii} Zola was very popular amongst Joseph's students and colleagues. Years later she would see proof of these memories through the many pictures of the family time in the United States.

Joseph taught three courses at Wellesley College:

1. Black Literature in French (its origin and development in France, Africa, and America)
2. Intermediate French (short stories, novels, and plays illustrating aspects of French culture),
3. Contemporary Life and Thought (analysis of selected modern texts: fiction, drama, poetry).^{xviii}

The atmosphere on campus was quite different from what Joseph had experienced in Congo and Belgium:

"I really liked the convivial ambiance of the school. Faculty members were very approachable.

Students didn't seem intimidated by professors and could ask for help when needed. I remember the first time some of my students invited me for dinner. I was surprised and at the beginning I would always go to those gatherings with my wife. It's later that I learned that this was a common practice on campus with no malicious intent behind it."^{xix}

Those interactions were so different from the ones with the University of Liège faculty members who are more formal with their students.

Jean Sadi Diazabakana, Joseph's nephew arrived in Boston in 1972 called upon by his uncle to further his education in the United States. Sadi, who most people called Jean, came with his wife Madeleine, and their daughter Sinda. Joseph and Sadi were very close in age (four years apart), Joseph's older sister, Rachel Kuzabidila, had her son only a few years after her brother's birth. In many ways, Joseph and Sadi had a big brother- younger brother relationship, and Joseph always did what he could to help his nephew move forward in several aspects of his life. The fact that Joseph had a close family member in the United States reinforced his resolve to help anyone in his family who was willing to study to fulfill his or her dream. Sadi's sister, Jacqueline was also called to study in the United States, but she refused to come because she was in a relationship and hoped to get married to her boyfriend at the time. Sadi, a very bright young man, enrolled at Salem State College, where he studied economics and accounting.

As Joseph was getting more comfortable with his teaching position in the French department at Wellesley College, he was asked to be a member of several school committees. He became very active in the Black Studies Reforms committee on a permanent basis as Black Studies courses were becoming increasingly popular in many schools. A commemorative magazine called *Africana Studies* mentions Joseph's participation in the Black Studies program through the Black literature course he taught.^{xx}

He was also part of a committee that ushered the election of the students' council president by the students themselves. Up to that point, student's council presidents were designated by faculty members.

Joseph also contributed to a committee that studied how to integrate male and female students at Wellesley College, as the school's student body was solely female. The committee came up with an exchange program with Harvard College (separate from Harvard University) where students were all male; the exchange program goal was to ease the transition the school was preparing to make to integrate male students on campus. Joseph remembers the process:

“It was interesting to work on the integration process and to make sure that there was no brusque change on campus. I remember telling the school president that I was surprised that Wellesley was still not gender integrated, since in Congo many schools already had male and female students studying side by side at the high school level.”^{xxi}

Today, Wellesley is still a women's liberal arts college, but the exchange programs with other schools remain. Because of Joseph's involvement in several committees at Wellesley College, he made many friends: Dr. Vicki Mistacco, Daniel Racine (from Haiti), Michelle Coquillat and Mrs. Skip (both French faculty members), also Maria Becks and Anne Johnson (two were students who stayed in touch with Joseph later). Dr. Mistacco also remembers that time: “The school viewed Joseph's involvement in these numerous committees as a good thing, in an effort to get more diversity in all the committees, and his contribution as a teacher was much appreciated.”^{xxii}

Wellesley College also offered Joseph many opportunities to do research; he was able to travel to Senegal on a scholarship and interview writers like Léopold Sédar Senghor, Birago Diop, and Sembene Ousmane, all well-known authors of Black literature in French. Léopold Sédar Senghor was also the president of Senegal from 1960 to 1980, and he was the founder of the Négritude concept, which valorizes distinctive African values, characteristics, and aesthetics. Joseph was an avid researcher of this concept. Harvard University invited him to speak at a conference on Négritude on one occasion. Joseph had some reservations at first because he wanted to take the opportunity to criticize Mobutu; he knew that the US government still backed Mobutu, and that some schools were being consulted on political matters. He opted to make a presentation on Négritude without alluding to the political aspect of it to avoid any problems. He also became a member of the Modern Language Association and participated in

several of its workshops.

As the seventies were underway, a major change was happening in Congo; Joseph Mobutu, the president, put in place a new cultural vision called the politics of Authenticity. It consisted of renouncing anything that had a European connotation in the Congolese culture. European (and Christian) first names were banned, women could only wear traditional Congolese outfits, and all the names of the country's cities were replaced with Congolese names: Léopoldville the capital became Kinshasa. The country's name changed from Congo to Zaïre. Joseph, though still not a fan of Mobutu, welcomed the changes related to people's names. He always felt that Congolese were losing their culture by subscribing to the cultural standards of Western societies. He dropped his first name Joseph, and from then on went by his middle and last name Mbelolo Ya Mpiku. He wrote Dr. Ruth Adams, Wellesley College president, a letter notifying her of this change. His friends and family still called him Joseph though. This is Joseph's take on this cultural shift in Zaïre:

“This is one of the few things Mobutu did right. He realized that there was value in the different cultures of our country, with all the tribes and languages we have. I also remember ‘s the speech Mobutu gave in 1973 at the United Nations. It was the first time that our country was center stage in the news media in the United States. The call he launched for all African artifacts that were in European museums to be returned to their country of origin was very impressive. In 1974, he organized the big fight between Mohammed Ali and George Foreman in Kinshasa that also gave our country great exposure, even though one can question Mobutu's motive for organizing the fight for his own public relations.”^{xxiii}

This fight is also known as “the rumble in the jungle.”

Many Zaireans were now coming to the United States to study in military academies, or regular colleges and universities. Sophie Lihau Kanza was one of them. She had come to Boston and was enrolled in a PhD program at Harvard University to study sociology. Her research focused on the effects of the colonial system in the Belgian-Congo. Joseph helped her understand the cultural background of Congo in rural areas, since Sophie had grown up in Léopoldville, the capital city. She was the first

Congolese woman to obtain a PhD, and she is recognized in Congo for this achievement. Many women of her generation didn't attain that level of education. Sophie and her husband Marcel Lihau became very good friends with Joseph and Marguerite; in fact, Sophie's youngest daughter was named Zola after Joseph's daughter.

The American political process was of great interest to Joseph while he lived in the United States. When he arrived in Boston, Richard Nixon had been in the White House for two years, and he witnessed Richard Nixon's reelection in 1972. This was the first time he had seen the democratic process in full motion with the campaigns and debates; it was a very different picture from what was happening in Zaire at the time. This exposure to the democratic system had reinforced Joseph's conviction that people in any country should have the right to determine their own destiny; in 1990, Zaire started to ease itself in a democratic rule. But at the time, these ideals of real freedom and liberty were just that, ideals. Mobutu tried to reach out to Joseph and asked him to join the government back in Zaire, but Joseph refused. Mobutu used this tactic several times to get his opponents to join him to corrupt them and control them. It didn't work with Joseph, even when years later he decided to go back to his country after getting his PhD.

As Zaïre was not a democratic nation under a one-party rule similar to that of a socialist country, Richard Nixon was one of the US presidents who was known to have a great relationship with Mobutu. That relationship was part of the Nixon administration's goal for the global development with the Nixon Doctrine, under which the United States would transfer some of the military responsibilities for containing the communist threat to appropriate allies such as the apartheid regime in South Africa, Zaïre in Central Africa, Japan in the Pacific, and the Iranian Shah in the Mideast. Such lesser areas of concern were delegated to America's less than superpower allies.^{xxiv} It was a way the cold war played out between the United States and the Soviet Union using secondary actors based on geopolitics.

While living in Wellesley, Joseph was also working at the same time on his PhD thesis; he was sending portions of his work to Mr. Gérard, his thesis director in Liège on a regular basis. He was determined to go back to Belgium to finish his PhD. Years later when one of his children asked why he didn't do his PhD in the United States, he replied that the focus of his thesis was French philology and he didn't see how he could defend his work in an English-speaking country. Though Wellesley was a friendly work environment, some tensions arose in the French department about Joseph's performance as an instructor. Mr. Galland, the head of the French department, said that Joseph wasn't up to par as an instructor for the French language. Mr. Galland wrote the dean a negative report about Joseph asking for his contract to be terminated. Joseph was unaware of all this, but other faculty members heard about it and informed him of Mr. Galland's scheme. Mr. Galland's letter was published in the school journal, before the dean's investigation cleared Joseph's name.

The dean told Joseph that he could respond to Mr. Galland's letter; Joseph did just that with an article entitled *Peace of Mind*. Joseph had an idea for the reason of Galland's behavior: "He did this out of pure jealousy. He didn't like the fact that I had a good working relationship with other faculty members and that students liked me as well."^{xxv} Years later after this incident, Joseph received letters from his colleagues and students to let him know that the person who replaced him wasn't as nice as he was and was not doing a good job.

Joseph's time in Wellesley turned out to be one of the best life experiences he had. It influenced future academic work he took on. He says that the American university system is one of the best in the world. He liked the fact that faculty members are encouraged to do research and publish articles. There is access to libraries, Wellesley had a great one, but he also visited Harvard's and Boston University's libraries on many occasions. Summer courses were a great idea he thought, as they allowed students to take more classes to catch up if they were behind, or to finish their studies in a shorter amount of time, taking into account a student's intellectual capacities. Joseph wasn't too fond of the grading system though because he felt that students were evaluated based on essays, and that essays were not sufficient a means to evaluate the students' progress.

Sad news arrived in Wellesley in 1973, Joseph's father died, and his family back in Zaire didn't inform him right away. His father was already buried when he got the news, so he never got the chance to attend the funeral. He never understood why no one told him that his father had been sick for a while. He visited his father's tomb years later when he went to Zaire on a family visit.

Now as a well-rounded Boston resident, Joseph found himself helping newcomer Congolese getting established in the United States, as more were coming to further their education. One of them was Mr. Fukien who came with his family for that purpose. His wife, Mrs. Adolphine Mukwamu, knew Joseph since the 1950s. She recalls the first time they met in Congo:

“I was coming from the city of Matadi visiting my father, and I was heading back to see my future husband. We were supposed to take a boat to cross over the Congo River. The boat available at the time was out of commission, so some people told us to cross the river with a canoe. I didn't like the idea, but Joseph was there, and he said we could do it. I was so afraid, but somehow, he convinced me to go with him. The wind started to pick up strongly while we were in the canoe, I was holding to Joseph as onto dear life. We finally made it to the other side of the Congo River, but we had lost some of our luggage during the river crossing. It was a scary experience.”^{xxvi}

After that episode, she met Joseph again while she was a nursing student in Kimpese, and they became close as family members because they were both from the same clan, the Basundi clan. In Congolese cultures, being a member of a clan is an identity marker to help people to identify other people who have a common ancestor. When one meets another person from the same clan, they share that connection, and they help and assist each other. Because of that connection, Joseph attended Adolphine's wedding years later. In 1974, Joseph welcomed Adolphine with her family in Boston; he and Marguerite hosted them for three months, before they settled down on their own. Adolphine has only good things to say about Joseph: “He likes politics; he loves God, and his country. He has a passion for our traditions, and he wants to make sure that those traditions and our culture are not forgotten. Along with that, he loves the Kikongo language and wants to preserve it. He is very friendly, has a good heart

and he is also very neat!”^{xxvii}

As Adolphine’s family started their American journey, Joseph and Marguerite’s time at Wellesley was coming to an end. His contract was ending, and though Wellesley College had offered to renew it, he and Marguerite got ready to head back to Belgium with Zola. America had been such a life changing experience for Joseph and Marguerite. They met new people, I and became immersed in a different culture, and a way of life different from life in Belgium and in Congo with a different sense of freedom. Those experiences had a lasting impact on their personal and professional lives, and they gave them a renewed sense of urgency and inspiration to make a difference in their own country.

BACK TO BELGIUM

On August 20, 1974, Joseph, Marguerite, and Zola flew on a charter plane from Boston to Amsterdam before finishing their transatlantic trip in Brussels. Their plane landed in the Netherlands because it was more economical than flying directly into Brussels; Amsterdam and Brussels are 120 miles apart, a distance that the family traveled by train.

They arrived in the municipality of Watermael-Boitsfort at the house of a Congolese man, Mr. Mavakala, married to a Belgian woman; Joseph was introduced to him by a mutual friend, Thomas Kanza, who recommended Joseph as someone of trust to host. Joseph and his family were the Mavakalas’ guest for a year. A little over a month after their arrival, Joseph and his wife welcomed their second child, Kimpa on September 25, 1974. Traveling before the birth of their second child could seem unsafe, but the couple proceeded after receiving assurance from Marguerite’s doctor in Boston that the baby would be born at full term after the trip. Kimpa’s birth was anticipated with excitement, as the couple had struggled to start a family even before the birth of their first child. A year later another girl,

Bweso, and five years later the only boy, Tadio, joined and complete the family.

As Joseph and the family settled down in Brussels, the country had a new prime minister, Leo Tindemans, a Christian democrat and federalist, who is well known for a report he wrote on the political unity of Europe. At the time, there were great tensions between the Flemish living in the northern part of the country and the Walloons who were established in the South. The University of Liège is in the eastern part of the country, close to the Belgium- Germany border, insulated from the tensions happening in Brussels and in major cities in the rest of Belgium. Though he went to school there, Joseph established the family in Brussels, since most of the libraries he attended to conduct his research were in the capital city. He then travelled every two weeks to Liège to meet with his thesis director to discuss the progress of his work.

It was in this new climate that Joseph worked on his PhD with a scholarship from the Agence de Fonds de Coopération au Développement/ the Belgian Agency Funds for Development Cooperation (AGCD), a fund from the Belgian government. As part of his scholarship, Joseph worked as a facilitator for the agency. He helped newly arrived students from developing nations who had received a scholarship from the agency to pursue their PhDs in Belgium to settle down. He obtained the position because of his knowledge of the English language, as many students came from English speaking countries in Africa and in Asia. His main tasks were to help these students get acclimated with student life in Belgium, and to engage them in thinking about the role of science in their respective countries. Joseph stayed in contact with students from Sri Lanka and Morocco, but he lost touch with them years later when he lost his address book with their contact information, while getting ready to move back to Zaïre.

Many Zairean students who enrolled in various fields of study also benefited from Joseph's insight, as they had opportunities to further their education at the highest level. Along with Zairean students, Joseph also connected with Angolan students, who had grown up in Zaïre and considered themselves Zairean, at least culturally. His work with African students also led to his involvement with the Federation of African Students of Belgium. This organization had the militant

mantra of helping the remaining African countries under colonial rule like Angola and Cape Verde, both colonized by Portugal at the time, gain their independence. “The goal was to bring awareness to public opinion across Europe of the fate of these countries still under colonial rule; Brussels is not only Belgium’s capital, it is also the capital of the Common Market, now known as the European Union.” Joseph recalls^{xxviii}. The African students’ action was like one an earlier generation of African students conducted in the sixties, this time to demand Algeria’s independence from France. The federation’s efforts coincided with the fall of the monarchy in Portugal and the rise of a socialist government led by Antonio de Spínola, leading to Angola’s independence.

One friend Joseph reunited with in Belgium is Pierre Kwete; they had been very close as undergraduate students in Liège in the sixties. Pierre had returned to Zaire after getting his bachelor’s degree, and like Joseph, after working for few years he came back to Belgium to get his PhD in Business Administration at the University of Liège.

“It was great to see Joseph again as both our families have grown. I also told him about the situation of the people back in Zaire. I told him that we had to go back at some point to make a difference, and he agreed that this was something he was thinking about as well.” Pierre remembers.^{xxix}

Michelle Coquillat was another friend Joseph reconnected with during a visit in Paris. They had worked together in the French department at Wellesley College, and Michelle had returned to France to pursue her PhD at the Université de Paris III. Michelle was one of many of Joseph’s peers who were on a similar path to attain their academic goals; this gave them a sense of community where they could share their experiences in reaching their objectives.

Fully immersed in academic and research work, the opportunity to meet Belgian intellectuals like Raul Vaneghen and Guy Debord was meaningful experience for Joseph. Vaneghen’s book *Traité du Savoir Vivre Aux Futures Générations* analyzed the way people lived their lives not based on their own thinking but based on ideas spread in the media. Debord’s book *La Société du Spectacle*, described a similar theme but with an emphasis on consumerism, painting people just as consumers, not taking any initiative to become producers and create something on their own. These two authors’ ideas peaked

Joseph's interest because he felt that the Zairean society was, on many levels, a concrete depiction of these concepts. People lost the entrepreneurial spirit they had before colonial times: many relied on the government to care and provide for their needs. This is a concern Joseph had, and he focused on bringing solutions to rekindle people's desire to be self-sufficient, an aspiration many share around the world.

The relationship between Zaire and Belgium was good in the seventies, as Mobutu, the president of Zaire and Baudouin the king of Belgium got along very well. Most of the people in the Belgian government used to work in Congo during colonial times, and that helped maintain strong ties between the two countries and their leaders. Later, after that generation left power in Belgium, a new generation of political leaders emerged that openly criticized Mobutu's regime for his dictatorial rule and the many ills the Zairean people suffered. While working on his thesis, Joseph got another job as the Director of the Zairean Cultural Center in Brussels. The Zairean Higher Education Ministry oversaw the center: this was unusual as many countries have such entities under their foreign affairs department's umbrella. As Joseph recalls it, one of his high school friends helped him getting the position:

“It may seem strange that I could work for the center, knowing that I wasn't in the good graces of the Zairean government at the time. But My friend George Itela oversaw cultural affairs for higher education at home and abroad. He knew my views of the government back home, but since this position was apolitical, he helped me get it. The Zairean ambassador at the time, Léon Kengo Wa Dondo, was a veteran and defender of the regime, but as an intellectual he always loved to have conversations about philosophy, culture, and the arts. These were the kind of conversations I had with him, though he knew my dislike of the regime back in Zaïre.”^{xxx}

Joseph's relationship with his friend George is one of many friendships that stayed intact despite the fact that George worked for the Zairean government at the time. Several of his friends were not necessarily politically aligned with the regime, though many worked in the administration of the country. These relationships helped him when at times his friends would warn him about some things or

people he should avoid to not get in trouble with the Zairean government. Having those close friendships taught him that it is important to not burn bridges with the people in your life, as you don't know when you might need their help.

As the director of the Zairean Cultural Center, Joseph had many opportunities to promote and showcase the arts and cultures of his country; many informational workshops and art exhibits were held in Brussels. The center also participated at the 1980 Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany, the largest book fair in the world to this day; the center had a very popular stand at the fair with a display of books by Zairean authors, catalogs of pictures from various aspects of life in Zaire, and many brochures with tourism information. Some brochures gave detailed information on the intellectual and cultural arts of the country. Joseph has fond memories of that time; as he was able to give a large platform to many Zairean artists who were not necessarily known beyond their homeland.

In addition to these cultural activities, Joseph was also actively interacting with Zairean students who had just arrived in Belgium to pursue a graduate degree: Bernard Ntoto, Phillipe Noki (Joseph taught him briefly in the sixties in Kimpese), Augustin-Romain Kioni, and Hubert Kuzondisa became part of his inner circle. He attended the oral defenses of many students to show support for their accomplishments. Their children became very close friends and still are to this day, though the parents lost touch especially when many went back to Zaire after completing their studies, settling down in their new careers.

Tragedy struck in 1980. Joseph's sister, Rachel, died during a truck accident. She was Sadi's mother. Joseph was devastated by his sister's death. She was one of his siblings he was the closest to and with whom he spent many vacations as a child; as an adult, he solved many family matters with her, relying on her knowledge and wisdom. A major influence in his life, her death deeply affected him. He didn't have the same kind of relationship with his other siblings.

Eight years after returning to Belgium, Joseph finally completed his thesis on "La poésie Sénégalaise de langue Française, de 1924-1980" (Senegalese Poetry in the French language from 1924-1980); his thesis had a focus on the poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor, a well-known

Senegalese poet, who was also the president of Senegal from its independence until 1980. Joseph received his PhD with the mention “Great Distinction” and a standing ovation from the audience. One of his friends, Robert Yudi, a UNESCO official, was in attendance. He was the big brother of Phillipe Noki who was also defending his thesis the same day. “My friend Yudi”, Joseph recalls, “thought he could first attend my defense and then go support his brother, but my defense took too long and Yudi couldn’t make it to Brussels on time to support his brother.”^{xxxii} As this chapter closed, a new one was about to begin, with new challenges and experiences that the whole family was about to embark on: the return to Zaire for Joseph and Marguerite and for their children, the discovery of the land their parents came from.

RETURN TO ZAIRE

When someone has lived outside his country for several years, there is an anticipation to reconnect with the values and cultural elements that an individual first learned. The individual also brings with him the knowledge and the references from his host country to his homeland. Sometimes, the reinsertion into the home country is seamless. At other times, the transition can be challenging, especially when the life experiences acquired in the host country reshape a person’s mindset. In essence, it is a reversal of what a person experiences when arriving for the first time in another country. After returning to his homeland, he has the knowledge and understanding of two cultures, and the one he is coming back to may be different from the one he left. These were the thoughts in Joseph’s mind when he arrived in the city of Matadi in Zaire by boat on August 15, 1982. After a two weeks trip from Antwerp, Belgium’s main port, he finally returned to his homeland for good after living abroad for twenty years. Marguerite and the children followed him on a charter flight on September 17, 1982.

Excitement and anxiety were running high for Joseph. He was eager to contribute his knowledge and skills to the Zairean people. At the same time, settling in this environment so familiar and yet so estranged proved to be a little challenging for the whole family, coming from Belgium where public

administration services are more accessible. First, the children had to be enrolled in school.

The Flamboyants, a private school, was the institution Joseph chose for his children with the help of one of his friends, Sammy Makumbu. The children were two weeks behind schedule of the school year, so they had to catch up quickly in their classes to avoid falling further behind once they arrived. The Zairean school system, though modeled after the Belgian one since colonial times, had its own uniqueness. In all the schools, whether public or private (except for consular schools), the students wear uniforms. The Flamboyants had light brown uniforms for its students; other schools had white and blue colors. The school week extends to Saturday and the daily school hours were from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. This was not a drastic change from the children's school experience in Belgium in a sense, but there was still an unfamiliar environment and culture to adjust to.

Learning new games, the Lingala language which is spoken in the capital city (French is the official language for education and the administration), and the country's history and geography were all part of the children's new life experiences. Through his network of friends, Joseph found a house to rent in a comfortable neighborhood, not too far from the children's school. Initially, the Zairean government was supposed to pay for the house's rent, but the government never paid, and Joseph had to take care of that expense on his own. This type of scenario would not have occurred in Belgium or in the United States, something Joseph would mention more than once.

Joseph's work situation was not stable in the beginning. He initially applied for a job at the University of Lubumbashi in the Shaba region (former Katanga) in the southeast of Zaïre. His friends advised him not to take the position for security reasons: Mobutu's regime had many people working on its behalf on that campus. Most of Joseph's friends and family members were in the capital city, which was more convenient in case of an emergency. A full-time faculty position opened at the Institute of Sciences of Communication (IFASIC); Joseph took the position though he wouldn't be paid for an entire year. He also taught part-time at the University of Kinshasa and at the Protestant University of Zaïre teaching Texts Analysis of European and African French speaking authors and Literary Criticism.

The period of acclimation to life in Zaïre went on without major hindrance. The children were getting used to their new environment at home and at school. Though they were taught several things about their culture, it was the first time that they lived immersed in the culture they heard about growing up in Belgium. At first Joseph was worried that the children wouldn't adapt to their new living conditions (especially eating non-Western foods). Will they like their new environment? How will they react to life in a different country, with a culture completely different than the one they knew up to that point? Will they be able to make new friends? Many families who had returned to Zaire had bad experiences in settling into their new lives. Some marriages didn't survive the challenges that those families encountered. Joseph's children never went to Zaïre until the whole family left Belgium; the children's upbringing had some elements of the Zairean culture, but it was essentially a mix of French and Belgian cultures.

To Joseph's relief, the children gradually adapted to their new environment and to the Zairean culture; however, some practices like the constant disruption of family life by caring for extended family members are not something the children approve of to this day. Joseph introduced his children to family members they never met on both his side and Marguerite's side of the family. The children finally met the aunts, uncles, and cousins they had seen on home videos Joseph and some of his friends had captured on previous trips they took back to Zaïre.

Although large classes sizes were not ideal for faculty members to focus properly on the students, and the buildings were old and in need of a makeover, working at IFASIC, Joseph found himself at an advantage as he was the only one with his background. Joseph could provide a decent living for his family as the country's currency was strong. Navigating the country's public administration could be difficult. Many people didn't have and still don't have time management skills. When you have an appointment with someone at a set time, a lot of Zairean people are notorious for arriving late, without considering how the delay affects the rest of daily activities. This way of thinking put Joseph at odds in his interactions with people, especially at work; at times it was challenging to finish tasks on time and keep up with a schedule. This is known as the "Zairean time" or now "Congolese time". When

returning to Zaïre after living and working elsewhere, the lack of a sense of urgency can be frustrating.

As for Marguerite, she became a teacher at a technical arts and trade high school, the Lycée Technique de La Gombe. The school was under the umbrella of the Catholic Church which provided faculty and staff the resources needed to work effectively. Other public schools didn't provide the benefit of such management and resources, and this had an impact on the quality of learning at these schools.

The lack of infrastructure in the educational system and in other sectors of the country was a stark contrast with what Joseph and his family had seen in Belgium and the United States. There was a difference between that reality and the possibilities of what could be if all the resources were available. Now both Marguerite and Joseph worked, and life routines were more defined with the children in school, learning house chores. There were many visits and vacations with family members in and in the Bas-Zaïre province, and learning to negotiate the price of an item at the market (something new for the children) to name a few.

The Zairean government had a mandatory workshop for faculty members to ensure that they were qualified to teach students. Joseph attended one of those workshops; he appreciated them as they helped maintain a high standard for the quality of teaching at the higher education level. Teaching at IFASIC, Joseph was finally able to do what he felt was his calling. Having the knowledge and experience of working abroad, there was so much he could give the current youth to help the country move forward. The potential was there, but the way of thinking people acquired since the sixties was challenging. There was a cynicism that people expressed when someone would challenge the status quo. "Who do you think you are to make a difference? This country is already lost and there is nothing you can do about it." people would say. It was easy to present innovative ideas and concepts, but it was challenging to put them into practice. This can be an obstacle in any society, but it is certainly prevalent in developing nations. Despite those limitations, IFASIC was still an institution with a great reputation spreading beyond Zaïre's borders. Students from Senegal, Rwanda, Burundi, Togo, Angola and Cameroon came to study there. Many of its alumni went on to pursue masters or PhD

degrees in Europe and the Americas. Among the students, Joseph has a reputation of being very accessible till this day; he is seen as a father figure: students call him Papa Mbelolo. This is the way Léon Mukoko who was a journalism major at IFASIC remembers him:

“He has this fatherly way of interacting with students, and he really wants the students to do well. On many occasions he loaned books from his personal library to students who had a need. He is very rigorous in his work and he doesn’t tolerate any mistakes. I know that was a key factor for him to accept being my capstone advisor. If his name was on it, it had to be excellent.”^{xxxii}

Beyond this aspect of his teaching style, others noticed his way of approaching or describing a concept. Jean-Jacques Nduita, another IFASIC alumnae, says that the man has a distinctive way of doing things:

“Dr. Mbelolo is very methodical and meticulous in the way he explains concepts. He takes the time to break them down, so anyone can understand them. He respects language rules and he is very dedicated to semantics. There is no half-baked learning with him: either you teach it right or you don’t. A true purist in a way. He really is cheering his students even after they have graduated, and they are doing well in society. Teaching is almost like an apostolic mission for him.”^{xxxiii}

Most societies consider teaching as a noble profession, always associated with a calling. But not everyone in the education field takes this viewpoint to heart. Joseph noticed that many of his colleagues who graduated in France and in Belgium didn’t stay abreast of the new innovations in their field. That was a chronic issue in many universities around the country. Most universities are public: they don’t receive the funds they need for research and conferences for faculty members. Faculty members must gain new insights about innovation or ideas on their own dime, and this is not something that all of them are willing to do. Their counterparts in a developed country don’t have those worries. This shows that the reality of people working in the same field is not necessarily the same depending on the environment where they live. Maybe some of Joseph’s colleagues were content in doing their job

at the bare minimum, maybe they were so disillusioned with the reality of their careers that they stopped to go above and beyond. Only they know the reason for their lack of motivation.

Ten years after leaving the United States, Joseph returned to the country as a Fulbright scholar at Princeton University, invited by the U.S. government. He and other African scholars participated in the Crossroads of Africa Program which focused on themes “Democracy and Development” and “Relationships between Africa and the United States”. Joseph was at Princeton for a month participating in several workshops with African and American academics. For the four remaining weeks of his time with the program, he visited several cities. He went to Boston to visit Wellesley College. Unfortunately, he couldn’t meet most of his former colleagues who were on summer vacation at the time. But he reunited with Dr. Vicki Mistacco in Washington D.C., the first Wellesley faculty member who welcomed him in Boston a decade prior. He also reunited by chance with Ann Johnson, one of his former Wellesley students who recognized him while he was walking in the streets of the Big Apple. What were the odds of such a meeting! This trip was a great occasion to reconnect with friends and to meet new people. It also provided respite from a sometimes-challenging academic environment back home.

Alongside his academic career, Joseph is very involved in his local church, the Evangelical Community of Zaïre; his involvement led church leaders to ask him to take on the leadership of the church’s credit union. Joseph was enthusiastic to serve the church in that capacity, as he saw an opportunity to help church members and other credit union members become financially independent. “Pastor Luhindu was very instrumental in getting me a scholarship to go study in Belgium as an undergraduate student.” Joseph says. “Working for the credit union was also a way for me to pay back what the church had invested in me.”^{xxxiv} This is a recurring theme in Joseph’s life: looking to make a contribution to the society he lives in whether abroad or at home. As the credit union director, Joseph was able to restore the trust that many of its members had lost by maintaining a cash flow and securing treasure bonds as a financial cushion for the credit union’s operations. The credit union employees signed up new members on a regular basis, and eventually people who had small shops were

able to grow their businesses to the next level. Joseph explains:

“There were women who had small businesses selling at a market. After getting a loan from the credit union, their businesses grew to the point that they could travel outside the country to Nigeria, for example. They brought back goods that they sold in stores in the capital city and in the provinces. We were also trying to replicate this model in the rural areas where the infrastructures were not as good as in the cities. In rural areas, people cultivate crops and it is sometimes challenging for them to sell those crops for a profit and plan an expansion of their activities.”^{xxxv}

It was the beginning of economic expansion for those small business owners with great possibilities to gain market shares in the local economy, and even in neighboring countries like Congo- Brazzaville and Angola.

Other credit unions were also becoming successful during that time, but it all came to an end when Faustin Birindwa became prime minister of the country. He initiated a system that required all credit unions and small banks to have two bank accounts with the large banks. Credit unions and small banks had their funds split among these two types of accounts, and they were only allowed to retrieve money from the accounts with the smallest funds. This prohibited credit unions and small banks from accessing all their funds and impeded their normal operations. Over time, the achievements of the credit unions were ruined because of those new financial rules and the loss of their members trust. Joseph suspected that it was a way for the regime to have access to people’s funds and basically defraud them.

The interference of those in power in people’s personal business was and still is quite frequent; this creates a non-business friendly environment and affects the economy. The country’s economic situation had deteriorated for a while and people started to do transactions with the US dollar, which was a stable currency, versus the Zaire which depreciated rapidly because of the failing economy. Instead of going to the bank to get foreign currency, people were doing those transactions in the streets, as some had become

traders of foreign currency. This practice is still going on today. This tension was the fertile ground for significant outside events to spark the rebirth of the Zairean people's quest for freedom and economic opportunities.

On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall was destroyed by protesters in East Germany. That event had a worldwide impact. It led several Eastern European countries to leave the Communist block led by the Soviet Union and inspired many people in African countries to fight for their own freedom from dictatorships. Zaïre was one of those countries; its people saw an opportunity to reset the country in all aspects of society and finally gain the ability to share a prosperous future. Joseph and his whole family were about to have a front row seat to this new chapter in the country's history.

ANOTHER SHOT AT DEMOCRACY

As Eastern Europe was swept by the winds of the perestroika and glasnost policies after the fall of the Berlin wall, the African continent was also embarking on a new journey to freedom and democracy after the fights for independence twenty years earlier. People in several countries were tired of deteriorating living conditions, corruption, and the lack of freedom to express themselves without repercussions. Politics are often at the core of the start of a revolt, but an unstable economy can also lead to the same effect. Sometimes it's a combination of both. Many African leaders conceded people their rights to self-determine again, and the national conferences were the main vehicle used to address the mounting problems those nations faced. Countries like Mali, Togo, and Benin were the first on the continent to have such conferences. As many Zairians were following those conferences through international news media, they pushed for their country to have its own conference.

The day the government announced the national conference could take place, shouts of joy and excitement erupted all over Kinshasa, the capital city. People were shouting "Democracy, we have democracy now!" Students in schools were jumping for joy as somehow, the news made it to

them during school recess. The younger generation, though not a witness to the country's better days as recounted by their parents, had a sense that their future was at stake if the state of the country didn't change.

August 1st, 1991 was the day the Sovereign National Conference (Conférence Nationale Souveraine) started in Zaïre in the People's Palace, an edifice in the 70's to host big events. A big fervor was palpable in the country as the civil society, the branches of government, and the military were about to examine the country's situation in all aspects of life. Leaders accused of corruption and mismanagement were held accountable. Every session was broadcasted live on the state-run public television network (Office Zaïrois de Radio et de Télévision); many new private television networks broadcasted the sessions as well.

Joseph got involved as a member of the civil society, representing the credit unions in the country. Joseph's reason for his involvement was his personal convictions that Zaïre still had a chance to develop and become a great country in Africa. Included in the civil society were also doctors, lawyers, teachers, farmers, not-for-profit organizations, artists (musicians, singers, painters, sculptors), and representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, and Kimbanguiste Churches. The conference was like a reset button after twenty-one years of independence, bad governance, and lack of development for the country. People finally had the opportunity to criticize the ideology and the actions of the Popular Movement of the Revolution (Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution), the only recognized political party in the country up to that point. Other political parties, operating underground prior to the conference, became legal at that point.

Joseph became the spokesperson for the civil society at the conference; he reported on all the debates, objectives, and propositions that each branch of the civil society reached after a thorough review of the situation in their sector since the country's independence. He was quickly noticed for his pronunciation of names: Zaïre has four national languages Kikongo, Lingala, Tshiluba, and Swahili. Each has a very distinctive accent and when Joseph read people's names, he was able to do so with the correct tone for each language; some people mistook him from being from their tribes when

they heard him speak. His knowledge of philology certainly had something to do with that.

Setting the tone for open discussions among the conference participants during an open debate, Joseph used a Kongo proverb. The proverb states “In a society there are disciplined and non-disciplined children. Just because the non-disciplined children are causing chaos, that does not mean that society shouldn’t listen to what they have to say. It’s an opportunity for society to maybe reevaluate its rules.” This was a diplomatic way to get people to allow some of the former and current regime leaders to express themselves at the conference, despite their negative image in public opinion.

In the civil society, Joseph met many people who were also passionate about changing the institutions to improve the lives of the Zairean people. He was impressed with Mr. Kinkela, a prominent lawyer; Christophe Lutundula a youth leader, Dr. Sonji; Marcel Lihau a constitutional lawyer (whom he met initially while he was living in Boston), and Laurent Monsengwo, a Catholic archbishop who presided over the conference. *Inspiring* is the word many had in mind, as they saw people boldly expressing themselves without fear, something people are accustomed to in democratic societies.

Resistance to inquiry complicated efforts to ensure a brighter future for the people. Many politicians didn’t really want change to take place, as they wouldn’t be able to continue to steal and dilapidate the country’s resources. People made promises to change things for the better, and they did not honor their words when the time came to act. This climate almost brought the conference to a halt, as the prime minister Jean Nguza Karl-i- Bond sent the military one day to sequester the conference participants inside the People’s Palace. In Joseph’s recollection, intimidation was at its peak:

“For three days, we were blocked inside the palace. No one could get in and no one could get out. There was pressure to do everything for the conference to be disbanded, but people were determined to not let the authorities stop the process of exposing all the corruption that was taking place at all levels of government. Marguerite had to bring me home cooked food, since there was no food sold inside the palace and even if there was food for purchase, you couldn’t trust to eat it. The very fact that soldiers were blocking all access was proof enough that anything could happen.”^{xxxvi}

After those three days, the conference resumed after people marched in the streets of Kinshasa on the second day to demand its reopening.

Several resolutions came out of the conference to get the country back on track with its development. People who stole government funds when they held public office positions had to pay them all back to the public treasury, along with some properties that were taken away from their rightful owners by force by government cabinet members and well-connected citizens. A public debate was supposed to take place to expose in detail anyone who had spoiled the country's resources. Archbishop Monsengwo decided at the last minute to not allow the debate to take place for fear of adding tensions in the country.

After two years, the conference ended on March 13, 1993 with the election of Etienne Tshisekedi, the opposition leader to Mobutu's regime, as prime minister to lead the transition government.

To implement the conference resolutions, a transitioned parliament called the Republic High Council-Transitional Parliament (Haut Conseil de la République-Parlement de Transition) was established. Its members were the national conference participants representing the region they came from. Joseph became a member of parliament (MP) representing the civil society in Kinshasa. In that role, he also had the opportunity to visit several cities and villages in rural areas and to listen to the concerns of the people living there. The city of Muanda, in the Bas-Zaïre region, was especially on his radar. He had visited this major country port on the Atlantic Ocean many times. Two major oil companies were operating there on the Zairean shores: Gulf from the United States and Fina from Belgium. Both companies were extracting oil from the Zairean coast in Muanda, and they were not operating under a valid contract with the government.

As a result, no one knew how many barrels of oil were extracted from Zairean shores; there was no official record of the revenues going into the public treasury, with no accountability for these companies and government officials for the exploitation of Zaïre's oil. In Joseph words:

“I went to see both companies' leaders to get more information about their operations.

I met with Fina officials and they gave me a tour of their installations. We went to their

platforms and I saw how the oil was taken out of the ground under water, before they put it on a large boat for an unknown destination.”^{xxxvii}

Gulf Oil leaders on the other hand, after initially agreeing to meet Joseph, decided not to meet him with no explanation. Joseph tried to get a sense of what the two companies were doing, as many people living in the city complained that they were taking resources from Zairean shores without contributing to the development of the area. This is the plight of many cities and regions in African countries: bad leadership coupled with multinational companies operating as they see fit, and the native populations not benefiting from their own resources. Joseph didn't get answers to his questions, and the investigation died down.

Life continued its course and things seemed hopeful, but then when something tragic happened unexpectedly. Marguerite was home with the children, and she was not feeling very well. She had started a treatment for malaria as it is a common ailment in a tropical city like Kinshasa. Joseph had just come back from an out-of-town trip and found her resting. Three days before, she had been fine working and running errands with Zola to get things for the house. But now her condition wasn't improving. A friend of the family, who was a nurse, came to give her a proper treatment, and few hours later Marguerite felt better. Later that night though, the children woke up to Joseph screaming their names to come out of their rooms. Marguerite wasn't moving. The children managed to get her dressed, and they drove her to the hospital as fast as they could. A few minutes after arriving to the hospital, Marguerite was pronounced dead by the doctor on call. There was no autopsy.

Joseph's world came crashing down. His wife, best friend, and adviser was no longer there, leaving him and the children completely crushed. One minute you interact with someone, the next minute the person is gone. After the funeral, Joseph went through a deep depression; between his grief and taking care of his children in their grief, that load was too heavy to bear. He became sick and was hospitalized for the first time in his life. He thought about sending all his children overseas living as a recluse. How do you go on when such a tragic event happened in such a sudden way, Joseph and his children wondered. Marguerite's siblings took turns helping with

household chores for a couple of months before the children took them on fully on their own. Their mother had trained them for those tasks, but it was strange to execute them without her guidance. Marguerite, though quieter than Joseph, made a significant impact in Joseph's life not just as his wife, but also as his life partner. She was the one who encouraged him to finish his PhD when he felt discouraged and wanted to quit. She was the one who typed his thesis three volumes at a time when personal computers were not common as they are now.

She also had an impact on her colleagues and students at the high school where she taught. They all came to console the family. Hundreds of people came to the funeral, and friends in other countries called or came to visit later on. Marguerite and Joseph's marriage was a testament to a life committed to each other with many personal ups and downs intertwined with the aspirations they had for themselves and others wherever they lived. She was a woman who shared similar ideals with her husband, and she was very involved in her own way to make a difference in her community and her country, something her peers were not necessarily doing. Years went by before everyone in the family felt they could function in this new normal, which did not feel normal at all. For Joseph, this was a new journey into the unknown without the person who had been by his side for twenty-seven years.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY

In the fight for freedom, reaching a tipping point is always a catalyst for change.

When people are getting frustrated with their living conditions and struggling to make ends meet, they become very vocal in expressing their anger. Zaïre's currency, the Zaïre, was highly devaluated as the country's minerals exports (cobalt, coltan, manganese etc.) were no longer substantial. Many consumer goods like soaps or cooking oil were imported since they were no longer produced in the country.

People preferred to do big business transactions with US dollars, a stable currency. Many of the government employees had not been paid their salaries for several months; people had to find

additional streams of income selling recycled goods to survive. It was in this climate that on May 17th, 1997, Mobutu's regime ended when he fled first to his home province of Equateur and later to Morocco after thirty-two years in power.

A rebellion led by Laurent Desire Kabila took over the capital city after taking over major cities in the eastern part of Zaïre. No one could believe Mobutu's regime was gone, not the Zairean people, and not those who had benefited from Mobutu's largesse at the expense of the country's citizens. Though people were excited to see key figures from the old regime flee, there was some uncertainty about what the country's new leaders would be doing after taking over the political power. Also, there was the fear that former leaders of the old regime might come back to try to take the power back.

Right after their arrival, the new leaders dissolved the Republic High Council- Transitional Parliament. The MPs launched a lawsuit against the new authorities for unpaid wages because the new government wanted to form a new parliament without addressing the issues their predecessors left unresolved. The country's name was changed back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and some of the provinces' names were switched to names they had originally in the sixties before Mobutu's authenticity revolution.

As the new leaders were taking the reins of the country, they searched for new leaders for public institutions as they had promised to eradicate corruption. In the higher education sector, they search for individuals to appoint as university leaders. They interviewed faculty members and students to get a sense of potential individuals to appoint to leadership roles. Joseph was someone faculty members and students mentioned to the new authorities as a person they held in high esteem because of the way he interacts with everyone. In July 1998, Joseph was appointed as President of the Institute of Sciences of Information and Communication. It was quite an incredible career development for him. While some of his peers at other universities were appointed ad interim in similar positions, his appointment was permanent for the duration he was to lead the institute.

In a position to implement changes long overdue at the institute, Joseph focused first on the buildings housing the institute. They were rented at the time, and the institute owned a large piece of land near the National Public Radio and Television compound. Decades prior, drawings and even a scale model of a new campus were commissioned for the erection of the institute's own campus. Joseph retrieved the plans and focused on getting the construction started; it proved to be a challenge to get any work off the ground. Some influential people pressured Joseph to sell the land, so they could use it for their own purpose, even though he had all the paperwork proving the land belonged to the institute. This tug of war went on well after Joseph no longer lead the institute. Today, the institute's land has been illegally taken away, and new residences have been built on it.

Despite this project being sidetracked, Joseph worked to get the institute more connected and up- to- date with international trends and other institutions of higher education. During a trip to France and Belgium, he visited several institute alumni who were working on their PhDs; he tried to convince them to return to Congo once they completed their theses, but they were not interested in doing so. Joseph explains, "I was very concerned about the next generation of faculty members. I wanted them to be ready to teach the knowledge they acquired to Congolese students, so students could benefit from up to date courses."^{xxxviii}

This was a real dilemma with seemingly no answer to solve it.

In an epiphany, Joseph decided to create a PhD program in Sciences of Communication at the institute. It was more practical to recruit teaching assistants and students already in the institute to encourage them to pursue their education to the highest level. That's something he had learn from his own experiences in Belgian and American universities. The opportunity to implement some of the concepts and ideas he had seen and used in those environments was too good to overlook.

He appointed his colleague Dr. Jean Ekambo as the head of the PhD program. It has so far eleven alumni including three women, one of whom is Dr. Badidila, who later became the institute's General Academic Secretary. Those alumni teach at the University of Kinshasa and at the Catholic Faculty of Kinshasa.

This legacy is ongoing as more students enroll in the program; the program summarizes Joseph's passion not just to teach but also to transmit knowledge to the next generation with the vision to continue the work to develop and improve society.

Many times, younger generations are not mentored and prepared to take on and continue the work started by those who came before them. Joseph sought out to make sure this wasn't the case for the institute. He was able to establish partnerships with other Congolese universities and technical colleges, as their leaders met through the Association of Universities and Colleges Presidents. The group met to exchange ideas and information about making improvements to the curricula and the management of these higher education institutions.

Joseph also established relationships with universities outside of the country to facilitate academic research and exchange programs to get the institute up-to-date with the current trends and ideas in academia. The Université Libre de Bruxelles and his alma mater University of Liège were schools with which the institute had cultural exchanges and scientific research partnerships. Joseph recommended some students to pursue their PhDs at these two universities as part of that partnership. With the help of the French Cooperation, a branch of the French Foreign Ministry, Joseph secured the building of the institute's broadcast studio and the school connection to the internet. Other partnerships with the German Embassy and Cultural Center led to published publications sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The Belgian Cooperation, a department of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, helped fund research and cultural activities.

As president of the institute, Joseph's relationships with his colleagues were cordial and one of them, Dr. Jean-Pierre Mulumba, has great memories of Joseph's tenure at the helms of the institute. They first met in Brussels in 1979 while he was getting his PhD in economics at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Université Libre de Bruxelles); both were also members of the Congolese PhD Candidates Association. He shares his thoughts on Joseph:

“We usually had conversations about our future careers and the political situation of our country. Joseph Mbelolo is a level-headed and wise individual. After meeting him in

Belgium, we met again in Congo in 1987. Initially, I had started to teach economics at the University of Kinshasa when the president of ISTI at the time, Dr. Malembe Tamandiak, asked me to teach in his institution. I accepted the position and that's how Mbelolo and I reconnected again. When Mbelolo became the institute president, he really worked to improve the working conditions of faculty members, getting them paid on time.” xxxix

He also has deep appreciation of Joseph on a personal level:

“I will be indebted to him because he helped me to take a sabbatical to take care of my health. I had a heart condition that required me to have a special treatment in the United States. Mbelolo made sure all the paperwork for my leave was processed and that my salary and pension would not be compromised. He also helped me to obtain an authorization to travel from the Higher Education Ministry because of the type of passport I had, which is not a regular passport. I was able to travel and get the treatment I needed, and when I was ready to return to Congo, Mbelolo was no longer at the helm of the institute. His successor didn't uphold the agreement of my sabbatical, so I decided to stay in the United States, as my retirement in Congo was uncertain. I will never forget what he did for me; I wouldn't be alive today if it were not for him.”^{x1}

The relationship between the two men has matured in mutual respect over the years.

In 2002, Joseph's term as the leader of the Institute of Sciences of Communication came to an end; as he passed the baton to Dr. Jean-Chrétien Ekambo, he left with a sense of great accomplishment. From the start of his tenure in 1997 until his departure, many good things happened. New partnerships were forged with universities in Congo and abroad, and the institute's publications were again available for readers in academia and beyond.

The institute was in good shape; the question was would it continue on the path of development and find its place as a leading school in the twenty-first century. There are people who always subscribe to the status quo in any nation or culture. This is something that has permeated all the aspects of society in Congo since the sixties. It takes sometimes another generation to see a change in a course of action to

see progress firmly taking root; the changes at the institute were welcomed and long overdue.

But sustaining those changes would be a factor in measuring meaningful progress. It seems that the fight for change is an ongoing one, until change takes place completely.

From his time as a student to leading a higher education institution, Joseph was always able to learn something new and make it his own as he stayed true to his identity. Identity is a constant in an individual's life; without it, it can be difficult to pursue goals and purpose in life. Joseph's life experiences can certainly offer a path for those who seek to make an impact in their community and beyond their own culture. A culture doesn't serve solely the interests of the people it originated from, as there are billions of people in the world from many cultures, speaking thousands of languages and dialects. As Joseph's life experiences demonstrate, there is much to be gained interacting with people from different cultures and exchanging ideas and philosophies.

It would be a missed opportunity for people to not interact with one another, connecting can help them to understand one another, even solve some problems that transcend the human experience. Wherever he lived, Joseph's culture enables him to thrive and make new connections like during his time in Boston, but it also sustained him when he faced challenges such as the ones he encountered as a new college student in Belgium. At times, an individual can be challenged by his own culture, something Joseph experienced when he returned to his homeland. To be effective, people must know who they are and bring that identity to anything they tackle. And as they are true to their identity, they must also be intentional to connect with others.

Joseph has lived in three countries, on three different continents, immersed in three distinct cultures. That experience solidified his love for his culture, and it helped him appreciate and love other cultures, all shaping his world view. Every time cultures come in contact, a transaction takes place, it can be a negative or a positive experience depending on the background and the attitude one has when such encounters take place. Whenever the experience is positive, everyone involved feels enriched by new things they have learned, and they also feel valued for who they are. Joseph made numerous cultural transactions with others; those transactions became a *modus vivendi* that will lead him in his next

endeavor.

NOTES

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2 ⁱ Gondola, CH., Didier, The History of the Congo, In Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations, WestPoint, CT, Greenwood Press, 2002, e-book, p.98

3 ⁱⁱ Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with author, March 16, 2013

4 ⁱⁱⁱ Gondola, CH., Didier, The History of Congo, In Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations, WestPoint, CT, Greenwood Press, 2002, e-book, p.104

5 ^{iv} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with author, March 16, 2013

NIVELLES AND LIEGE

6 ^v Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with author, March 30, 2013

6 ^{vi} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with author, April 21, 2013

7 ^{vii} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with author, April 13, 2013

8 ^{viii} Gondola, CH., Didier, The History of Congo, In Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations, WestPoint, CT, Greenwood Press, 2002, e-book, p. 124

8 ^{ix} Ibidem, p.125

9 ^x Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 20, 2013

9 ^{xi} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 20, 2013

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10 ^{xii} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 20, 2013

- 10 ^{xiii} Dr. Vicki Mistacco, telephone interview with the author, April 9, 2013
- 11 ^{xiv} United States Code: Internal Security, 50 U.S.C. 781-844 (Suppl.21952). Library of Congress <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/ll/uscode/uscode1952-00805/uscode1952-008050023/uscode1952-008050023.pdf>, pp. 5-7 (accessed March 26, 2018)
- 11 ^{xv} Dr. Vicki Mistacco, telephone interview with the author, April 9, 2013
- 12 ^{xvi} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, May 4, 2013
- 13 ^{xvii} Dr. Vicki Mistacco, telephone interview with the author, April 6, 2013
- 13 ^{xviii} The Wellesley College catalogs from Wellesley College Archives <http://repository.wellesley.edu/catalogs/index.2.html>
- 13 ^{xix} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 20, 2013
- 14 ^{xx} Africana Studies Department Commemorative Magazine <http://www.tonymartin.net.tt/Afr-Newsletter-Sept28.pdf>
- 15 ^{xxi} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 27, 2013
- 15 ^{xxii} Dr. Vicki Mistacco, telephone interview with the author, April 6, 2013
- 16 ^{xxiii} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 20, 2013
- 17 ^{xxiv} Brinkley, Douglas, American Heritage: History of the United States, New York City, New Word City, Inc., 2015, e-book, chap. 20, Détente par.
- 18 ^{xxv} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, April 27, 2013
- 19 ^{xxvi} Mrs. Adolphine Mukuamu, telephone interview with the author, April 21, 2013
- 19 ^{xxvii} Idem

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- 21 ^{xxviii} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, August 11, 2017
- 22 ^{xxix} Dr. Pierre Kwete, telephone interview with the author, October 28th, 2017
- 23 ^{xxx} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, August 11th, 2017
- 25 ^{xxxi} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, August 11th, 2017

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- 29 ^{xxxii} Léon Mukoko, telephone interview with the author, September 10, 2017
- 29 ^{xxxiii} Jean-Jacques Nduita, telephone interview with the author, September 9, 2017
- 31 ^{xxxiv} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo, telephone interview with the author, October 21, 2017
- 31 ^{xxxv} Dr. Joseph Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, October 21, 2017

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- 35 ^{xxxvi} Dr. Melolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, October 21st, 2017
- 36 ^{xxxvii} Dr. Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, October 22nd, 2017
- 40 ^{xxxviii} Dr. Mbelolo Ya Mpiku, telephone interview with the author, October 22nd, 2017
- 41 ^{xxxix} Dr. Jean-Pierre Mulumba, telephone interview with the author, October 22nd, 2017
- 42 ^{xl} Dr. Jean-Pierre Mulumba, telephone interview with the author, August 10th, 2017

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