

The Independence Struggle and Rebuilding Mozambique

Eduardo Mondlane Remembered at Weekend Campus Conference

by Mavis Clark

The life and work of Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane '53, founder of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), was commemorated in October during a two-day campus conference. More than 150 classmates, family members, and admirers convened to share memories of the charismatic leader, to consider the future of the struggling African nation, and to set up a foundation to benefit its residents.

Mondlane, 49, was assassinated in 1969 when a letter-bomb exploded, leaving Janet Rae Mondlane, mother of their three young children, and the leadership of the freedom movement open to an uncertain future.



Attendees of the Commemorative Conference included (from left) daughter Chude Mondlane; friends William and Dorothy Anderson; son Eduardo Mondlane, Jr.; widow Janet Mondlane; and conference organizer and professor emeritus Albert J. McQueen '52.

"This conference was designed to raise awareness and understanding of the legacy of this little-known, heroic son of Oberlin who gave his life in the struggle for the freedom, rights, and dignity of the people of his country," said Professor Emeritus Albert J. McQueen '52, who, with Mondlane's close friends John and Anne Elder, both '53, led the event's planning,

Janet Mondlane and two of the couple's children, Chude and Eduardo, Jr., arrived on campus October 2 to meet with Oberlin's trustees, visitors from Mozambique, and other guests during a reception and dinner in Peters Hall. There, in the lobby, many first saw the engraved bronze plaque dedicated last May to honor Mondlane's remarkable achievements.

During the reception, President Nancy Dye announced the establishment of the Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane Scholarship for African students, and Chude Mondlane, a world-traveled pop singer then enrolled at Hunter College, performed her own moving composition, "Ban the Land Mines." (Since the Conference, Chude transferred to Oberlin College to begin studies this spring semester.) The family was delighted to receive a Book of Remembrances featuring letters and momentos from Mondlane's classmates and friends.

Dr. Leonardo Santos Simao, minister of foreign affairs and cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique, delivered a stirring keynote address emphasizing that lessons learned from

Mondlane about unifying and stabilizing the developing nation and its people remain important today. Writer and historian Herbert Shore, professor emeritus of the Center for Multiethnic and Transnational, shared a collection of his poems devoted to Eduardo Mondlane and his work, and announced his gift to Oberlin College: papers relating to the Mozambique experience documenting the last 50 years.

The weekend's events continued with a program of six Mozambique educators and activists-close associates of Mondlane's-including Oberlin alumnus Edward A. Hawley '53, former pastor for refugees at the Christian Council of Tanzania and retired executive editor of *Africa Today*. Moderator Prexy Nesbitt, dean of students at the Francis Parker School, reminisced about Mondlane's visions for an independent Mozambique and the twisted path he followed to achieve his goals.

Each of the panelists elaborately illustrated Mondlane's accessibility, unflappable good nature, and his remarkable ability to diffuse resistance.

Afternoon speakers examined the difficulties of rebuilding post-colonial Mozambique and the country's unrelenting poverty. Sonia Kruks, Oberlin's Danforth Professor of Politics, moderated as panelists discussed the rise and fall of Mozambican socialism and the challenges of national development in the 1990s.

Janet Mondlane, founder of the Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane Foundation, spoke about strengthening moral and community values and the importance of nurturing hope for Mozambicans living in abysmal poverty; her presentation captivated the attentive audience. The Mondlane conference ended with an evening discussion at Wilder Hall, where attendees reflected upon and debated the weekend's events and discussions.

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