

**Executive Board Candidate Statement**  
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I am new to ASWAD. It was curiosity that brought me to my first meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, in November 2015. Curiosity, because I had heard so much about what an incredibly progressive association ASWAD was. I had also heard that ASWAD had fewer members whose research focus was on Africa. I thus decided, not to present a research paper, but to join two other journal editors in a roundtable discussion about publishing. My experience of that first ASWAD, was in one word, remarkable. As a twenty-two-year veteran of the African Studies Association (ASA), I was frankly unprepared for the holistic and supportive environment that I witnessed at ASWAD. On panel after panel, I observed senior scholars provide critical feedback to early career scholars in supportive and compassionate ways. This was the first time I had witnessed such nurture at a professional conference; and I liked what I saw.

Thus, when I was invited to stand for election to the ASWAD board, even though I had promised myself that I would not take on any additional service requests, I found that I could not say no. For me, being a member of ASWAD's executive board means: an opportunity to give back; to pass forward that which was given me, namely, mentorship and support. It means helping create, for early career scholars, a safe place for intellectual curiosity and advancement. I would like to walk with these scholars on their intellectual journeys, in the hopes that they too find in ASWAD a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment for growth.

I am an award-winning historian, and the Jack and Margaret Sweet Endowed Professor of History at Michigan State University. I am also founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of West African History*; member of the ASA Board of Directors, and past co-convenor of ASA's Women's Caucus. I received my Ph.D. from UCLA in 2000. In 1996 and 1998, I served as a Ford Foundation and Fulbright-Hays Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. I was also a 2000 Woodrow Wilson Women's Studies Fellow. My research interests involve the use of oral history in the study of women, gender, and sexuality in Nigeria. My first book, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900-1960* was published in 2005 (Heinemann). My second book, *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Indiana University Press, 2011), winner of three book awards—The Aidoo-Snyder Book Award, The Barbara “Penny” Kanner Book Award, and The Gita Chaudhuri Book Award—is a full-length critical biography on the only *female* warrant chief and king in colonial Nigeria, and arguably British Africa. Two co-edited books, *Blackwell Companion to African History* (Blackwell Press), and *Changing Perspectives on African Women and Gender* (University of Wisconsin Press), are forthcoming in early 2018, and I have received prestigious grants from Rockefeller Foundation, Wenner-Gren, Woodrow Wilson, Fulbright-Hays, Ford Foundation, World Health Organization, and National Endowment for the Humanities.