

**OBITUARY**



**Dr. G. G. Y. Mgomezulu  
(1948-2009)**

Gadi Godfrey Yobe Mgomezulu, Malawi's first archaeologist, died on Wednesday May 20, 2009 in Richmond, Virginia (USA) where he was visiting and attending his daughters' graduations. The cause was cancer, which he had been battling for several months.

Gadi Mgomezulu was born on October 3, 1948 in Kasungu district, Malawi. He was educated in Malawi and in the United States of America. He received his BA from the University of Malawi's Chancellor College in 1972. The following year he was admitted to the graduate program at the University of California, Berkeley. He received his PhD in Anthropology in 1978 with a specialization in African archaeology. He was the first Malawian and indeed, the first indigenous African in southern Africa, to obtain such a high qualification in anthropology.

His professional career began upon his graduation from the University of Malawi. He was immediately recruited by the Malawi Department of Antiquities. In the one year that he worked in the Department of Antiquities before going to graduate school, he joined Professor Desmond Clark's team in excavating Chencherere Rockshelter in Dedza district, central Malawi. Gadi was very intelligent and hard working. He did his MA and PhD degrees in a record five year period; a performance which must have encouraged Desmond Clark to bring in more

Malawians, and other students from various African countries to study anthropology at Berkeley.

The area in which Chencherere Rockshelter is located must have impressed Gadi because he returned there in 1975 to do his PhD dissertation research. The title of his dissertation was: *Food Production: The Beginnings in the Linthipe/Changoni Area of Dedza District, Malawi*. When he obtained his PhD, he returned to Malawi where he eventually became the first Malawian Director of the Malawi Department of Antiquities. As director of that department, Gadi initiated a process that expanded archaeological and other areas of cultural heritage research, including the conservation of Malawi's cultural and natural heritage. He encouraged the Malawi Government to establish a larger government department under which all departments that were involved in cultural heritage management would operate. Eventually the Malawi Government established the Division of Culture and appointed Gadi its first Director with the title of Commissioner for Culture. The directors of the departments of Antiquities, the National Museums of Malawi, the National Archives, Arts and Crafts and the Malawi Censorship Board reported to him. His new elevated position was highly visible, and it did not take long before senior Government officials noticed his abilities and promoted him in quick succession to the positions of Principal Secretary and Senior Principle Secretary. In 1996 he was appointed Malawi's Deputy Ambassador to France.

It was his vast experience in archaeology and preservation of cultural heritage however, that encouraged UNESCO to hire him as its Director of Cultural Heritage in 2004. Gadi was now in a position to make worldwide contributions to cultural heritage. He retired from that job shortly before his death.

Gadi will be remembered among Africanist archaeologists as one of the earliest of Professor Desmond Clark's African students. Indigenous African archaeologists in particular will remember him as a pioneer in the field. I worked with him for many years, often taking over his previous position whenever he got promoted to a higher position, and in the process I learned a great deal from him.

Gadi is survived by his wife Mzondwase, his children Khanyiwe, Mpama, Daniso, Lomuthi, and Hlekiwe, and one grandchild Mhlawa Dumbo.

*-Submitted by Yusuf M. Juwayeyi*