

In this issue:

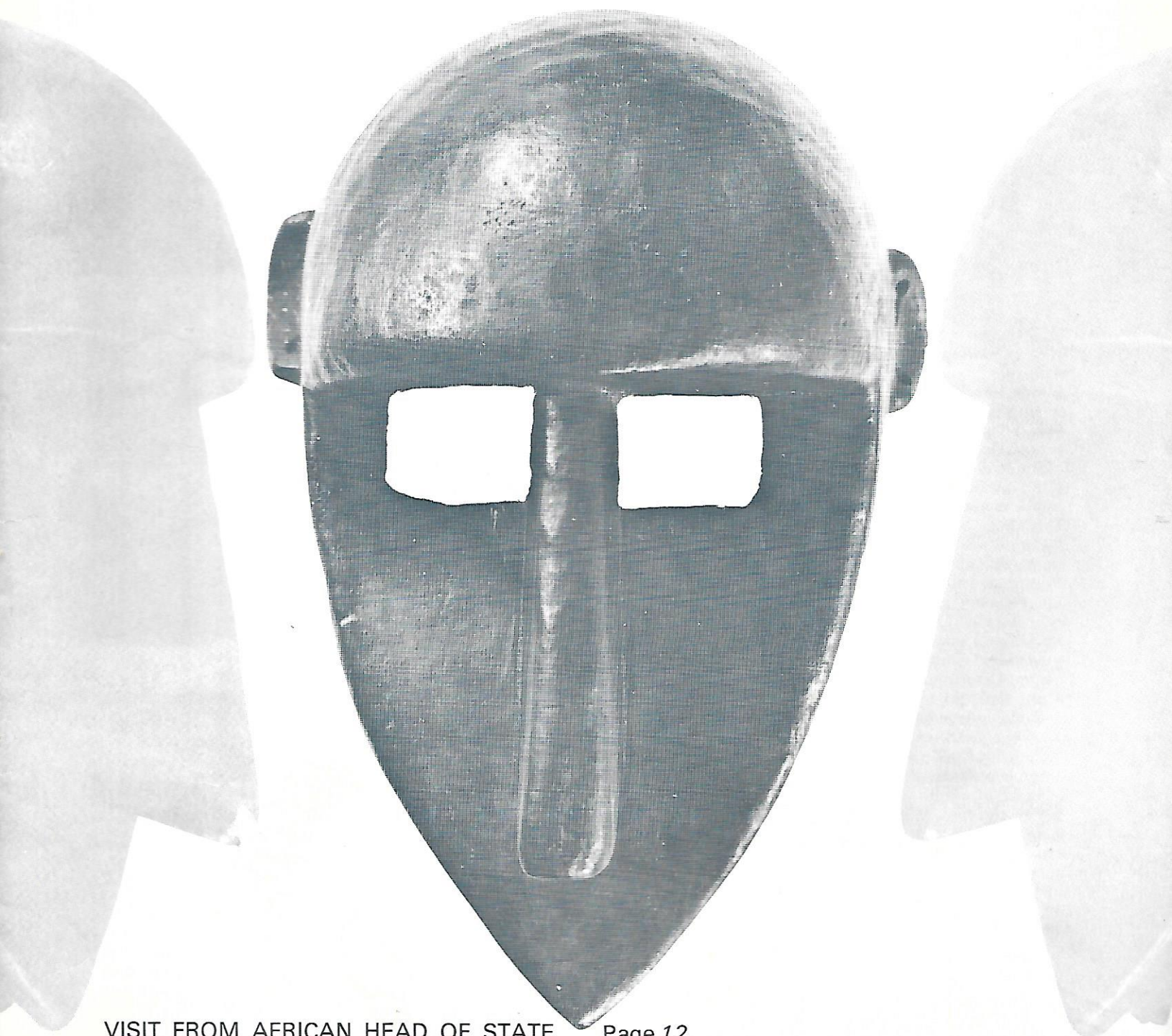
REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
VISIT FROM AFRICAN

HEAD OF STATE  
COMMENCEMENT, REUNION

COVERAGE  
DEDICATION TO BELLE GALLUP



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**VERMONT**  
alumni magazine  
August 1971







*President Senghor (center) greets Mrs. Deane C. Davis as Governor Davis (right) and President Andrews look on. At extreme left and right, back to camera, are Romance Languages Department Chairman Dr. Roy Julow and Mrs. Samba Ba, wife of Dr. Senghor's press attache.*

# LES LITTÉRATURES AFRICAINE ET CANADIENNE D'EXPRESSION FRANÇAISE: GENÈSE ET JEUNESSE

by Robert W. Chambers  
Writer-Editor

The President of the West African Republic of Senegal, Dr. Leopold Sedar Senghor, was honored by the University in mid-June at a convocation where he received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, and later opened a colloquium on French literature of Africa and Canada—"Les Littératures africaine et canadienne d'Expression française: Genèse et Jeunesse."

An internationally-known author and poet, as well as an architect of modern Africa, Dr. Senghor had been invited by the University Board of Trustees a year earlier at the suggestion of the Department of Romance Languages.

He arrived in Vermont Saturday, June 12 via chartered plane from Montreal, at the start of a U.S. tour that would take him to the University of California at Los Angeles and to Harvard University for further honors, and to Washington, D.C., for conferences with President Nixon and government officials.

He was greeted on his arrival by State and University officials, led by Gov. Deane C. Davis, and after full military honors went by motorcade to Englesby House where he was the guest of President and Mrs. Andrews throughout his four-day visit.

The following morning began with a





*Escorted by Maj. Robert F. Batchelder, Honor Guard Commander (extreme left), President Senghor takes the Honor Guard salute at the Vermont Air Guard facility in South Burlington.*



*Departure from the airfield: President Senghor with President Andrews, Governor Davis, Dr. Geno (in dark glasses) and (right foreground) the Hon. Cheikh Ibrahima Fall, Senegalese Ambassador to the United States.*

Mass in his honor at St. Francis Xavier Church in Winooski, which had invited him in recognition of the French heritage shared by that city and Senegal.

He later presided at a formal opening in Billings Center of an exhibit of art and books prepared by the Fleming Museum, the University Store, and with the participation of museums and art collectors in Quebec.

At the convocation Sunday in Ira Allen Chapel Dr. Senghor was presented for his degree by Governor Davis, who said Dr. Senghor "has spoken to the world of cultural values; the common heritage of black people; of humanistic socialism; of the enrichment of cultures, races, and religions; of a profound belief in human quality; and of a conception of life and the universe. In so doing he brings fervent hope of peace and progress and prosperity for all of mankind."

Dr. Andrews conferred the degree, saying Dr. Senghor "has provided the world with a goal for the confrontation of cultures, that is, the complementary mingling of interests and purpose in the service of civilization—of our highest desires."

Following the degree conferral, Dr. Senghor was inducted as the first non-

American member of the Black Academy of Arts and Letters of New York City by its President, Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, after presentation by Dr. Lawrence Reddick on behalf of the Academy Credentials Committee.

"It is fitting and proper," said Dr. Lincoln, "that in the initial outreach to black people everywhere that the Black Academy of Arts and Letters should recognize the remarkable contributions of Leopold Sedar Senghor, poet, philosopher, scholar, and a distinguished father of Negritude, and to say to the listening world, 'he and we are one; the black experience is one experience.'"

On Monday morning Dr. Senghor opened the colloquium, which had attracted several hundred scholars of French literature from throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In his opening speech he discussed the cultural, and especially the linguistic, development of France's former African colonies of which Senegal was one, and the place of French culture in Africa in view of reawakened interest in indigenous language and culture.

He predicted an eventual synthesis of cultures incorporating the most useful elements of both European and African cultures, and the retention of both the

French language and African languages in multilingual states.

Dr. Senghor made his predictions within the context of "Negritude," a concept of "the whole complex of civilized values which characterize the black peoples," and a concept which he had been largely responsible for developing during his teaching career in French universities before World War II.

For the remainder of his visit to the University, Dr. Senghor attended sessions of the colloquium, and visited local points of interest including the Shelburne Museum.

On Monday evening he was entertained at a formal state dinner at the Shelburne Inn, where he presented African works of art to Governor Davis and President Andrews. In return, he received a large coffee table of native "verde antique" marble, made especially for the occasion by the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor.

Shortly after his departure, Dr. Thomas H. Geno of the Romance Languages faculty, who coordinated all arrangements for the convention and colloquium, was notified by the U.S. Secretary of State that he had been named honorary consul general of Senegal to the State of Vermont by Dr. Senghor.



Leopold Sedar Senghor has been President of the Republic of Senegal since its inception in 1960. Prior to that he was President of the Federal Assembly of the short-lived Mali Federation, of which Senegal was a part.

He was educated in French mission schools and in France where, in 1935, he became the first African "agregé," a title granted on competitive examination and somewhat equivalent to a doctorate.

His teaching in French universities was interrupted by World War II, and after one year on the European battlefield he was sent to a German prison camp. Upon his release in 1942 for reasons of health, he returned to teaching and took part in the French underground resistance movement.

His political and literary careers were both begun during 1945-46, when he published his first collection of poems—"Chants d'ombre"—and was elected deputy for Senegal to the French Constituent Assembly.

In 1957 he formed the inter-African Convention Africaine, in order to counter the feared Balkanization of Africa.

In 1958 he worked successfully for Senegalese acceptance of continued membership in the French Community under General de Gaulle, and in 1960 became President of the Mali Federation's Federal Assembly.

In 1963 Dr. Senghor was instrumental in creating the Organization of African Unity at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1965 he saw his dream of African unity foreshadowed in the creation of the Organisation des Etats du Fleuve Senegal among Guinea, Mauritania, Mali and Senegal, for regional coordination of development in the Senegal River Basin.

During his political career Dr. Senghor has continued to write poetry and essays, drawing upon his African heritage and French education to present black culture to the European world.

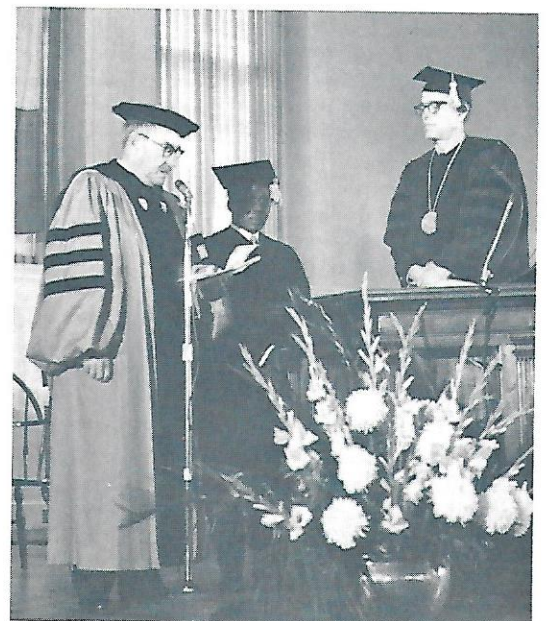
His many honors include Allied and French decorations for his wartime activity, literary prizes, and honorary degrees from 15 universities ranging from the University of Vermont and Harvard University to the University of Laval, Quebec, Fordham and Howard Universities, and others in France, Africa, South America, North Africa and Europe.



*At Billings Center exhibit opening, Dr. Senghor chats with Dr. Geno and Dr. Irene Debbs Jackson, chairman of the Modern Languages Department at North Carolina Central University and a Colloquium participant. At extreme right is Dr. Leon Damas, a colleague of Dr. Senghor in the development of the philosophy of "Negritude."*



*African students at American and Canadian universities were among the many who attended the events surrounding Dr. Senghor's visit; here two Senegalese students, one in native dress, arrive at Billings Center.*



*Governor Davis, presenting President Senghor for honorary degree to be conferred by President Andrews at Ira Allen Chapel convocation, cites the poet, "Honored on five continents," for his convictions which have "given new meaning to concepts of dignity, of both individual identity and brotherhood, of diversity and togetherness."*

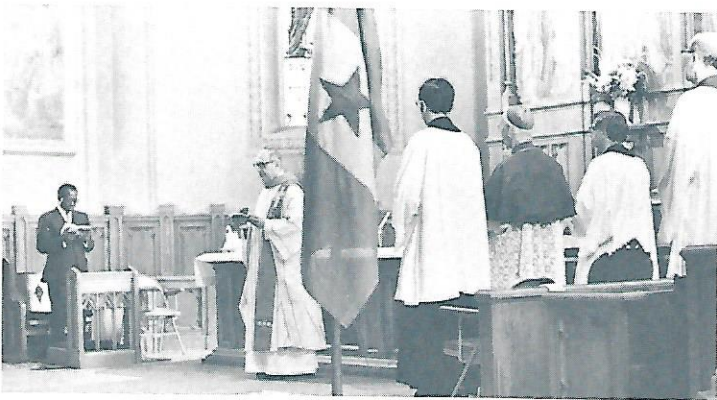




*Inducted at the convocation as the first non-American member of the Black Academy of Arts and Letters, Dr. Senghor is presented to Academy President Dr. C. Eric Lincoln (right) by Dr. Lawrence Reddick for the Academy's credentials committee.*



*Accompanied by President Andrews, Dr. Senghor is introduced to Winooski City Officials by the Rev. Msgr. Charles Marcoux (in cassock) on the steps of St. Francis Xavier Church in Winooski Sunday morning.*



*Monsignor Marcoux, pastor of St. Francis Xavier, celebrates Mass in honor of Dr. Senghor. Following the Mass, Winooski Mayor Dominique Casavant presented a commemorative plaque to the honored guest. Winooski had invited Dr. Senghor to attend Mass there in recognition of the French heritage shared by the city and the Republic of Senegal. Presiding at the Mass was the (center right) Rev. Robert F. Joyce, '17, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington.*



*Entertainer Loretta Pauker recites English translations of poems by Dr. Senghor at one of several dinners in his honor.*



*Dr. Geno interviews President Senghor for Vermont Educational Television. Several special broadcasts by ETV included full coverage of the convocation, and the interview, conducted in French with simultaneous English translation.*