

## Ivan Murambiwa and the international archival community

By James Lowry

Ivan Murambiwa made important contributions to the international archival community, and his death is a sad loss to those who knew him and to the profession generally. I first met Ivan in 2010 at the International Council on Archives meeting in Oslo, and came to know his dedication to Zimbabwe's national collection, his sagacity and diplomacy in international forums and his wonderful sense of humour. My reflections will focus on Ivan's international involvement, which was extensive.

The Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM) made Ivan an honorary fellow in recognition of his leadership under very difficult conditions in Zimbabwe, including the economic crises of 2000-2008 and 2019, when his staff could often not afford to travel to the archives as a result of hyper-inflation, which also saw frequent power outages and repository shelving being stripped for the scrap metal market. Though Zimbabwe was suspended from and later left the Commonwealth, ACARM continued to welcome Zimbabwean members, particularly as an ACARM without Ivan's warm presence was unthinkable to us. ACARM closed in 2019, but Ivan will be remembered by a network of archivists from across the Commonwealth for his collegiality and integrity.

Ivan was also an executive board member of the International Council on Archives (ICA), a past President of the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the ICA (ESARBICA), and a member of the ICA's Programme Commission, which sets the professional agenda for the association. Ivan hosted the 2015 ESARBICA conference in Victoria Falls, which saw the birth of one of the ICA's major successes – the Africa Programme – which fostered a new network of trained professionals across the continent. Ivan was a trustee of the ICA's Fund for the International Development of Archives (FIDA), which has sponsored many significant projects, and Ivan is remembered fondly by his FIDA colleagues as source of good advice. Ivan was not one to accept positions on high profile boards without participating in their work. Instead, he took his commitments very seriously, approaching them with an enthusiasm that contributed to his reputation for intellectual generosity.

Beyond ACARM and the ICA, Ivan's international achievements included overseeing the inscription of the Nehanda and Kaguvi docket on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, and negotiating the return of certain archives displaced to South Africa. Ivan was keenly aware of cultural heritage issues, having studied heritage management at Cambridge, and of the technical skills and knowledge needed to manage public sector records, which led

him to support the establishment of archival education at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). Ivan's legacy will live on in the generations of archivists he taught at NUST, and those he mentored at the National Archives. He encouraged younger colleagues to participate in professional networks locally and internationally, and some of his former mentees are now publishing in archival studies journals, pursuing doctoral studies and teaching record-keeping courses in Zimbabwe and abroad. Those who knew Ivan in professional contexts will no doubt remember him as affectionately as I do, and many coming into the profession now and into the future will benefit from initiatives he led or contributed to over his illustrious career.