

Share Your Stories:

UNC Greensboro

As a part of our 10th Anniversary, Scholars at Risk is compiling stories from scholars who have been helped and campus leaders, administrators, faculty, students and friends who open their hearts and homes to them. Please share your stories with us! Send us emails, letters, pictures, audio, video or whatever you have about how you or your campus has been involved in protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom.



Dr. Jean-Marie Kamatali

For David Perrin threats to free inquiry are not limited to faraway parts of the world. His own brother, a professor of philosophy, was forced out of a U.S. university early in his career because his teachings on Marxism went against the political tide. Although his brother was able to move to a more receptive institution, Perrin's witnessing how intellectual repression happens, and how it affects individuals, families and communities, shaped his career.

As Provost of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Perrin has been a passionate supporter of the Scholars at Risk program at UNCG. Since joining the network in 2007, UNCG has invited two scholars to their campus. In 2008, UNCG invited a law professor from Rwanda, who came to campus as part of Scholars at Risk's Speaker Series. The SAR Speaker Series allows network members to invite at-risk scholars and other intellectuals hosted elsewhere in the network to visit their campus for a day or a week, to meet with students and faculty, visit classes and give public talks about their work and about attacks on scholars and universities. Dr. Jean-Marie Kamatali was forced to flee his home twice. The first time he fled the chaos of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Later, after he had returned and resumed teaching, he was persecuted for openly discussing the human rights abuses that occurred during that time. Eventually the threats grew worse and he and his family fled. Today, Dr. Kamatali is teaching at Ohio Northern University School of Law. He remains active in both U.S. and Rwandan human rights and legal organizations, and has served as a consultant for a number of UN agencies. At UNCG he shared this journey with students and other audiences, as well as his observations on the unique challenges facing post-conflict societies like Rwanda.

In 2009, UNCG invited to their campus a theater professor renowned for the social commentary within her work, which takes courage in her politically repressed country.* At UNCG she taught Masters-level seminars and undergraduate classes in non-western theater. The head of the theater department told Perrin that "he would not have been able to find a better, more engaging professor." Students loved her courses for expanding their understanding of what theater could do, as well as for the window she gave them into another world. "She really opened up her culture for us" said one student. Originally scheduled to visit for one year only, UNCG extended her stay an additional semester. When she shared news that her visit to UNCG was extended, the students broke into cheers. "It was like a football game."

For Perrin, being involved in Scholars at Risk is important not only as a means by which to support fellow academics like these, but also, as a way to expose students to the real-life examples of injustice that still occur in the U.S. and abroad. "It's an important dose of reality."

Perrin believes that more universities should look for creative ways to be involved with Scholars at Risk, including providing opportunities for at-risk scholars to visit their campuses, whether for a day, a week, a year or more. "I know that these are tough budgetary times for higher education all over the country," Perrin says, "but to have these individuals with us has been transformational." And that is what Scholars at Risk is all about: Transforming the lives of endangered scholars by helping them find safety; transforming the perspectives of students and campuses by introducing them to these courageous intellectuals; transforming the future by standing up for academic freedom and human rights. Thanks to David Perrin and his colleagues, UNCG is a part of this transformation. Together, they are helping make a difference one visit, one scholar, one story at a time.

To make a gift or learn more visit www.scholarsatrisk.org

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK



Support SAR's 10th Anniversary Campaign

Please help us meet the needs of at-risk scholars today, while reducing the number of scholars needing protection tomorrow.

- \$10** Finds a host for an at-risk scholar through SAR's "Scholar-of-the-Week" email bulletin
- \$100** Drives a global letter-writing campaign to free a wrongly imprisoned scholar
- \$1,000** Reunites a scholar separated from a spouse or child through an Emergency Fund travel grant
- \$10,000** Defeats intellectual repression by supporting safe haven for an at-risk scholar
- Other** At whatever level, your support helps save lives and protects the right to think, to question and to express ideas freely, without fear.

To make a gift to SAR's 10th Anniversary Campaign by credit card visit www.scholarsatrisk.org or mail a check payable to "NYU/Scholars at Risk" to: Scholars at Risk, 194 Mercer Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10012 USA. Scholars at Risk is hosted by the Office of the Provost at New York University, a 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*The scholar's name and country are withheld to facilitate the earliest safe return home.