Resolution on the Retirement of Daniel Brown,
Associate Professor of German & Swahili
May 18, 2016

Daniel Brown, or Danny, as we know him, came to Tufts in 1975 as Assistant Professor of German. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1981. In addition to teaching German language and developing courses in English on German literature, especially drama, and a course on Martin Luther, Danny also began developing a program in Swahili, where he was the main instructor and taught all levels. Over the years he built up contacts to universities and colleagues in Tanzania and collaborated with them, most notably with the University of Dar Es Salaam.

Prof. Brown did his dissertation on the translations of Afro-American authors into German and followed up with articles on their reception in Germany. He also translated interviews the Moravian missionary Oldendorp's did with African Slaves in the Danish West Indies and did a number of talks and a much reprinted article on Oldendorp and his account. More recently he concentrated on materials and issues to do with the teaching of Swahili.

Over the course of his forty-one years teaching at Tufts, Danny received a number of prizes for his participation the African American community, such as the Tufts University Diversity Grant, the Gill Service Award, the Tufts Black Alumni Award, and the Distinguished Service Citation. He was loved by students and kept his office door open for them. And in every capacity as a member of the department, he has been an absolute model of collegiality, a found of perennial good cheer and sage counsel.

Yet Danny’s contributions to the university extend far beyond the classroom and the department’s halls. The minute that he stepped foot on the campus as an Assistant Professor of German in 1975, he immediately became a voice of conscience for the faculty. The next year, Tufts found itself with a new President, and at the induction of Jean Mayer, there was Dan Brown, vulnerable, untenured, only one year into his Tufts career, handing out leaflets at the inauguration ceremony. First he offered congratulations: “At Tufts University, there is a woman as Provost [Kathryn McCarthy], an African-American as Dean of the Arts and Sciences faculty [Bernard Harleston], and now an immigrant as President. I have one burning question: in the year of the largest enrollment in Tufts history, why is it that the African-American enrollment dropped by 50%?” If Danny ever had an issue of conscience, he had to express himself. That is likely what drew him to Martin Luther, who also could do nothing else but speak his mind; and like Luther, he inspired his students: to study abroad, to see the world and make comparisons, to learn more about America by learning about other peoples. Bob Asch, the long-time Director of the Tufts-in-Tuebingen Program, often said that Dan’s students arrived in Germany more ready than others to follow in the footsteps of the Protestant Reformation.

Besides being a beloved teacher and genial colleague, Daniel Brown had a most active life outside of Tufts. He is a dedicated husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather and does much community service, especially in the context of his faith. Throughout his life he dedicated considerable time to religious study and even served as Bishop in his denomination. As his CV indicates his community service not only focused on his home town Providence, but extended all the way to Kenya.
Prof. Brown has represented Tufts well and reached out to groups of people who know little about the University, and he has brought his varied background and interests to the students, including—it must be emphasized—his profound love for motorcycles. May he continue to do wheelies long into the future.

Submitted on behalf of the Department of German, Russian and Asian Languages and Literatures,

Professors Christiane Romero and Gregory Carleton