

# Prof gives gift of fabric

By ELIZABETH BEARD  
The Coloradan

A local professor has bequeathed a collection of African textiles, including examples of work from the renowned Maridadi Silk-screen studio in Nairobi, Kenya, to Colorado State University.

The valuable pieces, which number more than 100 and exhibit a variety of hand-crafted and silk-screen fabrics, were donated by Rob Udall, professor emeritus in the College of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, from the collection of his late wife, Dorothy Udall. This is the inaugural gift for the African component of the collection named Maridadi.

"These pieces should not be referred to as primitive, but old, ancient and traditional," said Linda Carlson, curator of the Historical Costume and Textile Collection. "All the designs and fabrics were handcrafted by traditional Africans in Kenya using age-old techniques. They show amazing creativity."

Dorothy Udall began her interest in and collection of textiles while she and her husband were living in Kenya, Carlson said. Dorothy worked with the women to learn their trade. In notebooks, she detailed where, when and how some of the donated pieces were made.

"We want to go through all of Dorothy's notes and really get the history of these fabrics written down," Carlson said. "Not only are these valuable examples of fabrics from Africa, they go beyond that and give us an example of something they have taken the time to create."

Carlson and her colleagues hope to get other donations to add to the collection so they can assemble an exhibit called "Textiles Around the World" next year.

Until then, classes such as creative textile design and historic textiles will use the pieces as examples of fabrics that fit into a multicultural design genre.

"All of the pieces have different symbolic meanings and values," Carlson said.

"It is not the monetary value of these items that is important to us. More important is to see how unbelievably creative these people are. Their inspiration comes from the simple things in life like buildings or grass huts, but they turn them into beautiful designs. That is valuable in itself."



Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradan

**SHOW AND TELL:** Linda Carlson of Colorado State University's Department of Design, Merchandising and Consumer Sciences holds a khangas and talks about its design at CSU's Gifford building. The material was among about 100 textiles donated recently.