IU’s history in Africa spans a wide range of academic, cultural, and legal activities. In 1986 the South African Council on Higher Education (SACHED) formed Khanya College to assist talented black students who wished to pursue a university education, but, due to their disadvantages, were having difficulty obtaining entrance to South Africa’s leading universities.

That same year, IU became involved in Khanya, joining forces with SACHED to provide preparatory first-year university courses for black South Africans who demonstrated potential for pursuing an undergraduate degree. Working with faculty and tutors from South Africa, IU faculty developed undergrad courses—modeled after the university’s successful Independent Study Program—in economics, history, literature, mathematics, physics, psychology, and sociology. IU faculty graded the South African students’ major assignments and final exams, and students who successfully completed the courses received an IU transcript. That IU transcript enabled them to gain admission to the top universities in South Africa, such as the University of Cape Town and Witwatersrand University (Wits).

According to IU Emeritus Vice President Patrick O’Meara, a native South African who directed IU’s African Studies Program at the time, at various points more than 100 Khanya students were enrolled in these courses each year. In the first three years alone, more than 400 students completed the IU course of study. In addition, John Samuel, the head of Khanya College, visited IU on different occasions. Former IU President Thomas Ehrlich went to Khanya College in 1990, and IU faculty members...
and a number of Khanya faculty and administrators also made reciprocal site visits.

Almost immediately after the end of apartheid, IU and Wits launched an initiative to improve the retention of Wits’s black South African students. As part of the initiative, which was funded for three years (1992–94) by the U.S. Information Agency’s University Affiliations Program, IU made available opportunities and programs for South African professionals in such areas as counseling, guidance, and skills learning.

Helping to address a great need in South Africa for skilled professionals with experience in writing laws, IU spearheaded the creation of the Legislative Drafting Program for South Africa, in partnership with the University of Pretoria, which the IU delegation visited in an effort to reignite collaborative efforts between the two institutions. The project helped train more than 70 mid-level professionals over a three-year program that included service-learning training in South Africa; internships in the U.S.; video-conferencing technology for lectures and consultations; professional visits to Washington, D.C., for South African trainers involved in the certificate program; and the establishment of a consulting network of Indiana academic and legislative professionals.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, IU developed a regional internship program that brought two dozen mid-career professionals to the U.S. from the countries of Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Malawi for eight-week internships. In a separate program, IU placed more than 200 professionals from South Africa in arts, business, education, government, law, media, public health, and social service internships in cities all across the U.S.

The Nadine Gordimer collection in the IU Lilly Library consists of the papers of the acclaimed South African writer and winner of the 1991 Nobel Prize in Literature. The collection of 6,700 items includes correspondence with her colleagues, literary agents, and publishers, and with magazines in which many of her short stories first appeared. It also features draft and final versions of her stories, articles, book reviews, novels, short story collections, speeches, and story ideas, as well as a diary Gordimer kept when she was 11. Additionally, the Lilly Library houses a collection of 1,200 items relating to the distinguished South African playwright Athol Fugard.

IU’s Black Film Center/Archive features much of the life’s work of Peter Davis, including his unique film records of South Africa before the end of apartheid. Among the nearly 2,000 reels and 40 boxes of notes, research, photographs, and outtake stills are materials related to White Laager, a film on the history of the Afrikaner people, Generations of Resistance, a film on African nationalism, and two documentaries on Nelson and Winnie Mandela.
An important aspect of the presidential delegations abroad is the opportunity to meet with alumni and learn more about what IU graduates are doing around the world. Alumni meetings were held in each country, and the delegation officially inaugurated three alumni chapters during this visit.

South Africa
IU’s first alumni chapter in South Africa is led by founding chapter president Nolutho Diko, who spoke movingly in Johannesburg about what the university has meant to her and her family.

Ghana (right)
Abdulai Salifu Asuro receives the charter of the Ghana Chapter of the IU Alumni Association. Asuro, president of the chapter, earned his IU Ph.D. in folklore with minors in linguistics and African studies. He is rector of the Tamale Polytechnic in Northern Ghana.

Kenya (above)
At a lunchtime meeting President McRobbie presented the charter for the new IU Kenya Alumni Chapter to Eunice Kamaara, first president of the group.

Kenya (left)
At the alumni gathering, Laurie Burns McRobbie talks about political leadership with Dr. Susan Chebet, formerly of Moi University, but now a representative in Parliament.