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Special Release

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OBITUARY

EMERITUS PROFESSOR LADIPO AYODEJI BANJO, *FNAL* (1934 – 2024)

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor K. O. Adebowale, mni, FAS, announces the transition of Emeritus Professor Ladipo Ayodeji Banjo, *FNAL*, a distinguished retired Professor of English of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan. He was aged 90 years.

The late Emeritus Professor Ladipo Ayodeji Banjo, *FNAL*, CON was born on 02 May, 1934 in Oyo town, Oyo State into the family of the late Pa. Reverend Samuel Ayodele Banjo, who was a graduate, educationist and teacher at St. Andrew Primary School, Oyo. Professor Ayodeji Banjo commenced his education at St. Andrew Anglican Primary School. Consequent upon the transfer of his father to Christ Cathedral Primary School in Lagos, the young Ladipo Ayodeji had to also relocate to Lagos where he completed his Standard Four (4) and Five (5) at Aroloya, Christ Cathedral Primary Schools. He attended Igbobi College, Lagos between 1947 and 1952. Upon nomination that was informed by his enviable academic background and superb performance at 'A' Level Class at the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan, Professor Ayodeji Banjo won the British Council Scholarship in 1959 to study Master of Arts (MA) in English Language at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Thereafter, he did Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies at University of Leeds in England and came out with flying colours. In 1966, the American State Department offered him scholarship to study Master of Arts (MA) in Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles, United State of America. In 1969, Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo bagged a PhD in English Language at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo served as Education Officer and was promoted to the post of Senior Education Officer, Western Nigeria from 1960 – 1966.

He joined the services of the University of Ibadan as a Lecturer grade II in 1966 and rose through the ranks to the post of Professor of English Language in 1975.

Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo served the University of Ibadan in many capacities, including:

- Ag. Head of Department (HOD), Dept. of English from 1971 – 73.

- Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, 1977 – 1979.
- Chairman, Committee of Deans, 1978 – 1979.
- Head of Department, Department of English, 1980 – 1981.
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, 1981 – 1983.
- Acting Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, 1983 – 1984.
- Substantive Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, 1984 – 1991.
- Chairman, Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, 1989 – 1990.

As of today, the late Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo remains the longest serving Vice-Chancellor in the history of the University of Ibadan!

Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo never waned in relevance as he served in diverse capacities outside the University of Ibadan; such as:

- Pro-Chancellor, University of Port-Harcourt, 2000-2004
- Pro-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, 2005-2007
- Chairman, Committee of Pro-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, 2000-2004
- Pro-Chancellor, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, 2005-2014
- Chairman, Visitation Panel to Ahmadu Bello University, 2012
- Chairman, Visitation Panel to Lead City University, 2012
- Chairman, National Universities Commission Board, 2018-2021

He was a Visiting Professor to University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, Barbados, 1980 – 1981. Visiting Fellow, University of Cambridge, England, 1993 – 1994. Visiting Professor, Agder College, Kristiansand, Norway, 1993 – 1994. External examiner in various universities in Nigeria and overseas such as Swaziland, Sierra-Leone, and Botswana. During summer, he regularly travelled to the Oxford University Press, England, where he worked on English Course Books and Oxford Dictionaries at primary and secondary levels. He was committed to this until 1981 when he was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan.

Furthermore, Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo was a man of many preferment and was honoured with recognitions and awards, including:

- Justice of Peace, Oyo State, 1984
- Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON), 2001
- Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, 2000
- President of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, 2000 – 2004
- Chairman, Sigma Foundation, 2005 – 2010
- D. Litt. Honoris Causa (Port Harcourt), 2005
- Fellow of the Nigeria English Studies Association, 2006
- Chairman, National Selection Committee, Ford Foundation Teaching Innovation Awards Programme (FF – TIAP), 2008
- Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM), 2009

As an avid scholar, Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo had over 60 publications which cover such areas as contrastive studies of the syntax of English and Yoruba, sociolinguistics, styles of Nigerian literature in English, and issues concerning language policy, with specific emphasis on the place of English in such a policy in the Nigerian context.

In 1981, Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo delivered his inaugural lecture titled “*The Grammar and the Grammarian*”. Professor Ayodeji Banjo, through diligence and complete dedication to his “call” as an academic, produced many PhD holders and professors in Nigeria and beyond. He was a pacesetter, a prescient scholar and administrator.

Upon the successful completion of his term as the Vice-Chancellor in 1991, Professor Ayo Banjo humbly returned to the classroom to resume teaching. When he became 60 years old in 1994, Professor Ayodeji Banjo retired from the services of the University of Ibadan. However, owing to his quintessential relevance, the University Management officially entreated him to consider staying back in service considering the fact that the Federal Government just extended the retirement age of academic staff in Federal universities to 65 years. Nevertheless, Professor Ayo Banjo remained resolute and decided to bow out when the ovation was loudest.

In recognition of his priceless, immeasurable and enormous contributions to the positive development of the University of Ibadan and humanity, Prof. Ayo Banjo was made Emeritus Professor in 1994, which is the highest title in the academics. Thus, until his death on May 24, 2024, Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo occupied his office, Room 67 in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, playing fatherly, hortatory roles to the Department, higher institutions of learning and humanity.

In retirement and old age Emeritus Prof. Ayo Banjo’s legacy was and is felt in both gown and town. Indeed, his penchant for English studies in the Nigerian context and his unwavering commitment to raising younger ones left an indelible mark on all who had contact with him. He was an astute university administrator, passionate academic, dedicated mentor and academic discipler whose life had given semantics to many lives through his influential scholarliness.

Without mincing words, Prof. Banjo's life was very uniquely characterised by virtue, decency, gentlemanliness, kindheartedness and generosity. He often approached every interaction with sense of cordiality and sincerity.

Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo was married to Mrs. Alice Banjo, who was a matron at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan and the marriage was blessed with children.

Emeritus Professor Ayodeji Banjo was a great scholar, teacher, mentor and father!

Funeral arrangements for Emeritus Professor Ladipo Ayodeji Banjo, CON, FNAI, NNOM, JP:

➤ **Special Senate**

Date: Thursday, 08 August, 2024

Time: 12:00 noon

➤ **Christian Wake**

Date: Thursday, 08 August, 2024

Venue: Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan

Time: 5:00 p.m.

➤ **Lying in State at his residence 'Villayo'**

Date: Friday, 09 August, 2024

Venue: 12 Oluga Street, New Bodija, Ibadan

Time: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

➤ **Lying in State**

Venue: Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

➤ **Funeral Service**

Venue: Chapel of The Resurrection, University of Ibadan

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Interment follows immediately after

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