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Special Release

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OBITUARY

PROFESSOR (VENERABLE) OBARO IKIME (1936 – 2023)

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor K.O. Adebowale, mni, FAS, announces the transition of Professor (Venerable) Obaro Ikime, distinguished retired Professor of History of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan. The sad event occurred on Tuesday, 25 April, 2023. He was aged 86 years.

Late Professor Obaro Ikime was born in Anibeze in Arohwa clan in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State in 1936. He graduated from Government College Ughelli Delta State in 1955 where he emerged as the school prefect of his set. He subsequently proceeded to the University of Ibadan through Federal Government Scholarship in 1956 to study history and graduated with B.A.(Hons) History 2nd Class Upper of University of London in 1961. This was when the University of Ibadan was an affiliate of University of London. His intellectual astuteness during his undergraduate days earned him the prestigious University of Ibadan Scholarship, to run his Ph.D. programme from 1961-1965 and in 1965, he bagged a Ph.D. degree in history.

Late Professor Ikime started his professional career in the Department of History, University of Ibadan on 01 October, 1964 as an Assistant Lecturer and became Lecturer II on 01 of April, 1965. By October 1967, he became Lecture I and two years later, on 01 October, 1969, he became a Senior Lecturer in the Department. Four years later, he got to the peak of his career when he became a distinguished Professor of the famous Ibadan School of History in 1973.

Professor Ikime held different positions within the University. He was appointed as the Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan from July, 1975 to 14 September, 1976. His administrative acumen led to his appointment as the Head of Department in the first instance, from 1976-1979 and by 1979, he became the Dean, Faculty of Arts, the position he held till 1983. He was subsequently re-appointed as the Head of Department from 1987-1990.

Professor Obaro Ikime published so many articles and wrote many books that are known globally. One of his famous books is entitled: *The Fall of Nigeria* which was published in 1977. He also edited one of the best history books of our time *Groundwork of Nigerian*

History which was published in 1980, *History, Historian and the Nation: The Voice of a Nigerian Historian* published in 2006 and so many of his journal articles are known globally. His last book was a profound intellectual effort with the title: *Can Anything Good Come out of History?* The book was published in 2018.

His intellectual acumen earned him scholarship and prizes and this was due to his Spartan intellectual prowess. These included the University of Ibadan Senate Research Grant 1972/1973 to study the British Conquest of Nigeria and History of the Isoko people. The success of the 1972/73 research earned him the University of Ibadan Senate Research Grant 1980/1981 to produce a biography of the late Chief Jereton Mariere, first Civilian Governor of the old Bendel State. He also won scholarships, prizes and highly revered fellowships globally. He was a visiting Professor, University of California, Los Angeles, January-March 1975; Visiting Professor, University of California, Berkeley, April-June 1975; Visiting Professor, Harvard University Summer School, July-September, 1975; Visiting Professor, University of Benin, 01 October, 1981 - 30 September, 1982.

Professor Ikime also occupied various positions within the University community at Ibadan. He was Assistant Warden, Kuti Hall, University of Ibadan, 1964-1968. He later assumed the position of a warden from 1968-1973. He was also Hall Master, Kuti Hall, 1973-1976. He was Chairman of Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan to investigate the running of the Students' Union in May 1966 and 1969. He was a member, Committee of Masters and Wardens (Inter Students' Welfare Board), October 1968 - December 1976; Chairman, Budget Committee of Halls of Residence, 1969-1976; and Chairman, Sub-Committee on Staffing of Halls of Residence, 1968-1974.

As a sport icon, he was Honorary Coach, Volley Ball and Badminton, University of Ibadan; Deputy Chairman, Volley Ball Association of Western State of Nigeria; Member, University of Ibadan Sports Council, 1968 - February, 1979; Leader, University of Ibadan Sports Contingent to National and International Competitions, 1968 - February, 1979; Chairman, University Sports Council, October 1978 - 28 February, 1979; December 1979 - 31 July 1981; Chairman NUGA, 1974-1976; Leader of Nigerian Contingent to the First Federation of African University Sports (FASU) Games, Accra December, 1974; Vice Chairman NUGA, 1976-1978; and Vice President, Federal of African University Sports, 1974-1978.

The distinguished Professor also a member of various committees within the University community during his service years. He emerged as Congregation Representative on Senate from 1969-1973 and Professorial member from 1973 when he became a Professor to his retirement in 1990. He also served as Congregation Representative on the Governing Council of the University of Ibadan, 01 August, 1977 to 13 July, 1981.

He was a member of Council, Historical Society of Nigeria in 1968 before emerging as the President of the Historical Society of Nigeria in 1985. He was a member, Federal Commission on the History of Nigerian Civil War, 1968-1975. He was a member, National Library Board, 1971-1973; member, Midwest Library Board, 1972; and member, Midwest Tax Board, 1967-1971. Consequently, he was appointed as a member, Academic Planning

Group of the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), 1976. He was also a member, of the Babalakin Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of FEDECO from 01 October, 1979 - 30 December, 1983. His iconic personality as a foremost historian earned him a position as member, Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Administration of Sports in Nigeria, 1982. His uncommon historical scholarship earned him the positions of external examiner to the University Ghana, Legon, 1984 and member, Governing Council, University of Sokoto (now Usmanu Dan Fodio University), 1985.

As a profound scholar, Professor Ikime served as the Editor, *Tarikh*, Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria in 1968. He was also the General Editor, African Historical Biographies. His compulsory retirement by the federal military government in 1990 worsened the depleted staffing situation in the Department of History, University of Ibadan. Professor Ikime was among the retired senior historians who freely offered teaching services and supervision when the Department was in dire need of academic staff. He would be greatly missed by the Department of History at Ibadan and the entire University.

Professor Ikime was a family man. He was married to Mrs. Hannah Ikime and they had three children.

May his gentle soul rest in peace. Amen.

Lying in State: 8.00 a.m., Friday 19 May, 2023 in Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan.

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