



4307

Special Release

19 June, 2020

## **OBITUARY**

**PROFESSOR EMERITUS OLADIPO OLUJIMI AKINKUGBE**  
CON, CFR, NNOM, MD, D.Phil, FRCP, FWACP, FAS, Hon DSc,  
(17 JULY, 1933- 15 JUNE, 2020)

On behalf of Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of the University of Ibadan, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Professor A. I Olayinka, FAS, announces with deep regret, the transition of Emeritus Professor Oladipo Olujimi Akinkugbe, a staff in the Department of Medicine, Faculty of the Clinical Sciences, University of Ibadan. The event occurred on Monday, 15 June, 2020.

Late Professor Akinkugbe was born on 17 July, 1933 to the family of Chief and Chief (Mrs) Akinkugbe in Ondo. He had his early education in Ondo and he later attended Government College, Ibadan for his secondary education.

His University undergraduate education began at University College, Ibadan and was completed, as was the practice then, at the London University where he took his medical degree in 1958. After residency training at the London Hospital and King's College Hospital, London, and obtaining the MRCP in 1961, he went on to Balliol College in Oxford University in 1962 for the D.Phil working under Sir George Pickering FRS, Regius Professor of Medicine. The thesis for the D.Phil, obtained in 1964, was "Angiotensin and the Kidney". He was later to get his MD from King's College, London for a thesis titled "Observations on High Blood Pressure in the West African" in 1968, the same year he earned the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP).

In the meantime, his academic career at Ibadan had started in 1965. He had a meteoric rise and was promoted to Professor of Medicine in 1968 at the age of 35. He served as the Dean of Medicine from 1970-1974 and Head, Department of Medicine briefly in 1972. He had the distinction of having been one of the few, not just in Nigeria but in the whole of academia, to have concurrently held the positions of Head of Medicine, Dean of Medicine and Acting Vice-Chancellor at some time. After the Deanship, he took a visiting Professorship at Harvard University, 1974-1975, and at this time his career took a major shift. He became the Foundation Principal and later Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, 1975-1978, and then Vice-Chancellor Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, 1978-1980.

After his Vice-Chancellor-ship, he returned, once again, to Oxford University in 1981 as Visiting Professor of Medicine and Fellow of Balliol College and then back to the University of Ibadan in 1982 where he remained until retirement in 1995 with various punctuations including visiting Professorship to the University of Cape Town in 1994. He had been emeritus Professor since 1997.

In later years he was to become the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Port-Harcourt, 1986-1990. He served as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo. With that he had occupied all the major positions in the university system, except for the position of Chancellor. This succession of positions underlined his thorough grounding in the university system as reflected in the excellent framework laid for the development of the University of Ilorin.

Professor Akinkugbe served in many other capacities in matters related to health, education and research. He served on many WHO expert committees including those on Cardiovascular Diseases, Health Manpower Development (1973-1980) and Global Advisory Committee on Health Research (1990-1995), OAU Scientific Panel on Health Management (1970-1980).

In the early nineties he led the National non-communicable diseases survey of the Federal Ministry of Health which produced its landmark report in 1997. He was the major initiator and founder of the Nigerian Association of Nephrology in 1987 and the Nigerian Hypertension

Society some years later becoming the foundation President in each case. He was for many years the Chairman of the Board of trustees of NAN and became the first Fellow of NAN. Well recognized as a capable administrator he had served government in numerous capacities including Chairman of JAMB, Chairman of the Planning Committees of the University of Abuja, Ondo State University, member of the Federal Government Committee on review of higher education, Chairman of its implementation committee, Chairman of the implementation committee for the rehabilitation of the teaching hospitals and Chairman of the Board of the University College Hospital, Ibadan.

He was a man of international stature. In addition to positions at the WHO, he held positions on the councils of the International Society of Hypertension, World Heart Foundation and served on the editorial boards of several journals including Kidney International, Journal of Hypertension, Journal of Human Hypertension.

He was a man of diverse attainments and great accomplishments. He received numerous awards, honours and distinctions. Professor Akinkugbe was a Foundation Fellow of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, Fellow West African College of Physicians, and Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Science (1980). He was recipient of the Nigerian National Order of Merit (1997), Searle Distinguished Research Award (1989), Boehringer Ingelheim Award of the International Society of Hypertension (2004), Commander of the order of the Niger (1979), Officer de l'Ordre National de la Republique de Cote d'Ivoire (1981), Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), Hon D. Sc from seven Universities including the Universities of Ibadan, Ilorin and Port-Harcourt, and Fellow of the University of Ibadan (1998). He was named in August 2019 as one of the Foundation Fellows of the Nigerian Academy of Medicine. More recently, he received the Pioneer Award from the International Society of Nephrology in February 2020.

Apart from the walls of the Ivory tower and hospital, he bagged four major traditional titles including the Atobase of Ile-Ife where he indeed had been the physician to the Royal household from 1969-1980, and also held high traditional titles in Ondo, Ijebu Igbo and Ibadan.

He attended over a hundred national and international conferences, scientific, educational and health conferences in almost 50 years in all the continents and made presentations in many of these with named invited guest lectures. Well known and respected in his field, he chaired scientific sessions on hypertension at many international conferences. A prolific writer, he authored, co-authored or edited over 10 books and many more chapters in books. Notable among these are High Blood Pressure in the African (1972), A Compendium of Clinical Medicine co-authored with Prof. A. O. Falase, a renowned cardiologist and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, and then very recently, his autobiography “Footprints and Footnotes’.

Amidst all these, he devoted time to his family. He was married to Folasade Akinkugbe, herself a Professor of Child Health and they have two loving and very successful children.

Professor Akinkugbe found time to socialize in the dining clubs to which he belonged and listed a number of hobbies including gardening, bird watching, and collecting clocks. He lived with his wife, at the Little Summit, Ibadan.

May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

-END-