



OBITUARY
PROFESSOR DAVID TINAKPOEVWAN OKPAKO, FAS
(22 November, 1936 – 07 September, 2020)

The Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Professor A. I Olayinka, FAS, announces with deep regret, the transition of Professor David Tinakpoevwan Okpako, a retired staff in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Ibadan. The event occurred on Monday, 07 September, 2020.

Late Professor David Tinakpoevwan Okpako was born in 22 November, 1936. He began elementary education in 1944 in a one-teacher institution at Owahwa, Delta State, Nigeria. He transferred to a more 'conducive' educational facility of Baptist Mission School at Oginibo where he completed elementary education in 1948. Late Professor Okpako was a pupil teacher until 1950 when he was admitted to the Baptist High School, Port-Harcourt but later transferred to the then newly established Urhobo College in Effurun, Delta State to complete his secondary education in 1955. He worked briefly as Laboratory Technician-in-training in Professor J. C. Edozien's Laboratory at the University College, Ibadan.

In 1956, Late Okpako gained Nigerian Scholarship to study at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan, and with another Federal Government Scholarship he proceeded to the University of Bradford, United Kingdom where he completed the Bachelor of Pharmacy Degree Programme with a distinction in Pharmacology in 1964. He completed PhD Degree in Pharmacology in December 1967 and returned to Nigeria in 1968. Late Professor Okpako worked at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos before settling down to a highly productive academic career at University of Ibadan in 1969 where he rose through the ranks to the grade of Professor of Pharmacology in 1977.

Late Professor Okpako was appointed Head of Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics in 1978, a position he held until July 1981. An erudite scholar, he was highly instrumental, probably *the main mover* (for), to the establishment of Pharmacy Degree Programme in the University of Ibadan in 1980. The programme was initially coordinated from the Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics where he was the Head. He later became the second Dean of the fledgling Faculty of Pharmacy for a period of four years. Years later, he repeated the same feat by founding the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State.

Late Professor Okpako was the **first Professorial Inaugural Lecturer from the Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medicine; the lecture titled: “Good drugs don’t grow on trees, or, do they?”** was delivered on Thursday, 05 May 1988. He delivered several seminal papers, published several books and tens of journal articles in many reputable journals within and outside the country.

Notable books published include:

- Principles of Pharmacology, A tropical Approach was published by the Cambridge Press in 1991
- Malaria and indigenous knowledge in Africa (Ibadan University Press, 2011)
- Science Interrogating Belief: Bridging the Old and the New Traditions of Medicine in Africa, 2015

Late Professor Okpako taught generations of Medical and Pharmacy Students including the current Head of the Department, Professor F. A. Fehintola and, successfully supervised and examined many MSc and PhD Dissertations/Thesis. Prizes in Pharmacology for Medical and Pharmacy Students have since been endowed in his honour in our University of Ibadan. He was Fellow, African Academy of Science, Fellow, Institute of Biology; **Fellow, The Nigerian Academy of Science, FAS** (since 1991), Fellow, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria; Founding President, Nigerian Institute of Biology (1990-1992); President, West African Society for Pharmacology (1987-90); Visiting Professor, University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa (1995-96); Visiting Fellow, Fitz Williams College, Cambridge, 1997-98.

Late Professor Okpako retired from services of University of Ibadan in 1990 but remained academically active as he subsequently lectured at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State and the Delta State University and continued to write scholarly publications as enumerated above.

He was unequivocally and unapologetically African of Urhobo extraction and he invested intellect, time and energy in elucidating aspects of African Traditional Medicine. He was a Distinguished Fellow of Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. He remained a staunch member of the Urhobo Progressive Union throughout his sojourn on earth.

Late Professor Okpako breathed his last on 7th September 2020. He is survived by his loving wife and friend of decades, Kathleen Okpako, and children, Edore and Branwen and three grandchildren.

He will be missed by the entire Staff and Students of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, the Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Medicine, indeed, the University of Ibadan Community, our country, Nigeria and the Academic World in general.

May his soul rest in peace. Amen

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