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Special Release

05 February, 2026

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR SETH SUNDAY AJAYI (1943 - 2026)

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor K. O. Adebowale, mni, FAS, fspsp, announces with deep regret the transition of Professor Seth Sunday Ajayi, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, University of Ibadan, who passed away on 05 January, 2026 at the age of 82 years.

Professor Ajayi was born on 16 May, 1943 at Mopa, Mopamuro Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.

He attended Sudan Interior Mission Day School, Mopa from 1950-1957 for his elementary education; and Titcombe College, Egbe from 1958-1962 for his secondary education. He obtained a Higher School Certificate from Boys High School, Gindiri, Jos in 1965 and was at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Nigeria for a B.Sc. (Hons. Zoology) from October 1965 - July 1968. Professor Ajayi attended the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom from October 1969 - July 1971 to obtain an M.Sc (Wildlife and Range Management); College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka, Tanzania (Certificate in Wildlife Management) from July - December, 1971; and the University of Ibadan, Ibadan for a Ph.D. (Wildlife Management) from 1972-1974.

He was initially appointed as a Temporary Assistant Training Fellow in the Department of Forestry, University of Ibadan in January 1969; but rose through the ranks to become the first Professor of Wildlife in Africa on 01 October, 1980. After an unbroken service of 40 years, 8 months and 10 days, he retired from the services of the University of Ibadan on 30 September, 2009.

At the time of his appointment in 1969, Wildlife and Fisheries were non-existent on the curriculum of Forestry Department in the then Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, he introduced and developed the two programmes of Wildlife and Fisheries Management to full-fledged academic programmes in 1976. In 1981, on his request, the two programmes were granted the status of a Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management in the University; he was the pioneer head of that Department from August 1981-1988. He, thus, created the first African Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management with full separate degree programmes in Wildlife and Fisheries Management. Indeed his pioneering role in the development of wildlife and fisheries management education in other countries in Africa, i.e. Liberia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana e.t.c was immense. He was eventually appointed an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan in 2012.

He served the University of Ibadan in many other capacities, such as:

- (i) Chairman, University of Ibadan Zoological Garden - 1981.
- (ii) Pioneer Director, Centre for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources from 1999-2009.
- (iii) Chairman, Environmental Task Force from 2000 - 2009.
- (iv) Chairman, University of Ibadan Biodiversity Committee from 1997 - 1999.
- (v) Chairman, Committee on the preparation of a "Proposal for the Establishment of the Centre for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources" from 1998 - 2000.
- (vi) Member of the committee that prepared the proposal for a MacArthur Foundation Grant of \$3 million in 2004.
- (vii) Chairman, University of Ibadan Ad-hoc Senate Committee for the preparation of a report on "A case for Special Funding" submitted to the Visitation Panel on University of Ibadan, August 1999.
- (viii) Pioneer Chairman, University Mission Research Project on the Processing and Management of Wastes for Agricultural and Industrial Development - "Turning Wastes to Wealth".

He served in other spheres nationally and internationally as follows:

- (i) Visiting Professor and Technical Adviser, Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja since June, 2010.
- (ii) Pioneer Dean, College of Environmental Resources Management, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria from November 1988 - January 1990.
- (iii) Member of Governing Council, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, November 1988 - January 1990.
- (iv) Member, Board of Directors of Kwara State Agricultural Development Corporation, Nigeria from 1978 - 1979.
- (v) Chairman, Publicity Sub Committee of the National Wildlife Conservation Committee, Nigeria from 1972 - 1981.
- (vi) Project Leader, National Science and Technology Development Agency research project on studies on the domestication and control of wildlife species of importance in food production and public health from 1978 - 1982.
- (vii) Chief Consultant/Team Leader, Development of a Master Plan for Kainji Lake National Park, Federal Department of Forestry in 1983.
- (viii) He was commissioned by the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria to produce the proposal for the establishment of the College of African Wildlife, New Bussa in 1974.
- (ix) Member of a team that created the Natural Resources Conservation Council (NARESCON) which was later merged with FEPA to become the Federal Ministry of Environment (1989 - 1992).
- (x) Member, Presidential Advisory Committee on Natural Resources Conservation (1989 - 1994).
- (xi) Member of the Governing Board, Nigeria Institute of Fresh Water Fisheries Research, Ministry of Science and Technology (1988 - 1999).
- (xii) Vice President, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) from 1997 - 2000.

Professor Ajayi was involved/engaged either as Chief Consultant/Consultant/Team Leader etc. in over 45 other different national and international - UN, FAO, UNDP etc assignments in the course of his working career.

In his specialised fields of Wildlife Ecology and Management, Wildlife Domestication, and Ecology and Ecological Surveys of Protected Areas, Professor Ajayi had about 105 publications in books, learned journals, reports, commissioned studies and other referenced materials either as a single author or in collaboration with others.

His membership of professional bodies included:

- (i) Fellow of the Zoological Society of London (F.Z.S.).
- (ii) Member of the Institute of Biology, London (M.I.Biol.).

(iii) Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (F.R.Z.S.S.).

(iv) Fellow of the Linean Society, London (F.L.S.)

(v) He was honoured with a Fellowship of the Strategic Institute for Natural Resources and Human Development (SINRHD).

Emeritus Professor Ajayi was awarded the National Honour of the Member, Order of the Niger (MON), by the Federal Government, Federal Republic of Nigeria, in December 2013.

He was married to Mrs. Olajumoke Ajayi and survived by 8 children.

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Burial Arrangements:

Thursday 12 February, 2026

- Lying-in-State in Trenchard Hall at 8.00 a.m.
- Funeral service - Chapel of the Resurrection at 10.00 am.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

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