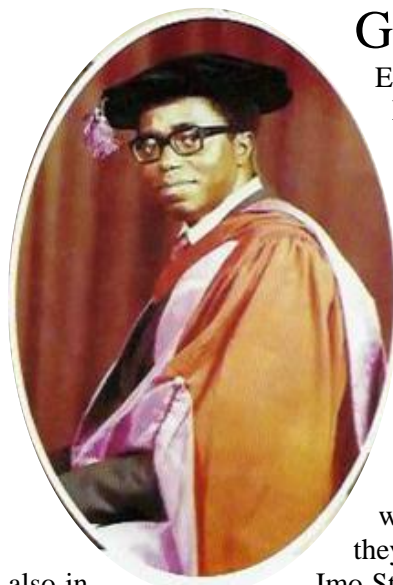


Professor Gabriel Chukwujekwu Ezeilo

MBBS (Lond), DTM&H (Liverpool), MSc (Roch. N.Y), MD (Lond), FRCP (Glas), FRCP (Edin)

(1934 – 2011)



Gabriel Chukwujekwu Ezeilo was born on November 3, 1934, the last of four boys. His father, Josiah Ezeilo was a catechist, and his mother, Janet was a trader. His early education was at the Central Primary School, Mbieri, Imo State, where Josiah worked. At the time, they lived at Umunjam,

also in Imo State. Through a lot of devotion and hardwork, he gained admission into the prestigious schools, Kings college Lagos and Dennis Memorial grammar School Onitsha (DMGS). However, his father preferred to have his last born son nearer home, so he opted for DMGS, Onitsha. He went to DMGS on a scholarship.

His time at DMGS was quite memorable as he often spoke about it, especially about the joy he had in playing the organ they had over there. From Onitsha, Gabriel went to the Nigerian College of Science and Technology in Zaria, where he got his 'A' levels in Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology.

From Zaria, he went to the University of Ibadan, to pursue a career in Medicine. He qualified as a Medical Doctor from the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan. In 1962, he went to Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Yaba Lagos.

In 1963, Dr Gabriel Ezeilo went to the School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool. He finished his Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (DTM&H) in 1964. Next was a couple of memberships of the Royal College of Physicians, one from Glasgow (MRCP, 1965) and one from Edinburgh (MRCP, 1966). He also worked at the Royal Edinburgh hospital during this period.

In 1963, just before leaving Nigeria, he performed traditional marriage to Bernice Onuzulike, of Ifite Nanka. They were married in 1965 in St. Silas Church, Glasgow on February 6, 1965.

In 1967, his relentless hard work paid off when he earned a Masters' degree in Physiology from the University of Rochester, New York.

From the US, he went to the University of Zambia, Lusaka, where he was employed as a lecturer of Physiology. By the year 1972, he was promoted to the rank of Professor of Physiology. He was there till he returned to Nigeria in 1975.

While teaching in the University of Nigeria, Enugu campus, from 1975 to 1989, he held many administrative positions including Head of department, and Dean of Faculty. 'Prof' as many called him did not rest on his laurels, while preoccupied with the teaching job, he conducted research and wrote a thesis submitted to the University of London. He subsequently completed the academic cycle when he became a Doctor of Medicine from the University of London in 1977. In 1978, Professor Gabriel Ezeilo became a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh (FRCP). He teamed up with other colleagues to form the Physiological Society of Nigeria (PSN) that year and later became the second President of the Society.

His next job was to help set up the teaching hospital at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nnewi and was appointed the first Provost of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Teaching Hospital (1989-1991), he returned to the University of Nigeria Enugu campus, where he worked from 1991 to 1994.

In 1994, Professor Ezeilo went to the other side of the planet, to the University of Papua, New Guinea, where he worked till 2002, when he went to the University of Malawi. In 2004, he returned to Nigeria and worked as a contract staff of the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Professor G C Ezeilo is known for his publications in Physiology, including the popular chapter on tropical medicine in the 1978 edition of the textbook "An Introduction to Human Physiology" by J H Green. He dedicated over 3 years of his time developing a comprehensive textbook on Physiology, which was published in 2004 by the Oxford University Press. He was among the eleven Nigerians honoured with fellowship of the Physiological Society of Nigeria in 2010.

Prof Gab Ezeilo was a member of the Nanka Patriotic Union, Enugu branch from 1975 to 1994, when he left the country again. His love for the organ

or piano knew no bounds. He took this passion to the level of recording a full length musical performance in 1979 on NTA programme, 'for your delight'. This performance featured his wife, Bernice, an accomplished soprano singer. The public demanded more of such performances, so they recorded another one on Anambra State television, Enugu. He has played piano and organ numerous times in churches he attended.

On November 22, 2011, Professor Gabriel Chukwujekwu Ezeilo slept in the Lord in a UK

hospital after a prolonged battle with cancer. In accordance to his wishes, he was laid to rest at the Allum lane cemetery, Borehamwood on the 15th of December, 2011.

He is survived by his wife Prof (Mrs) Bernice Ezeilo, and Children, Dr Ikenna Ezeilo, Engr. Chuks Ezeilo, Dr Nkem Thompson and Mr Obinna Ezeilo. He is also survived by a Grandson, David, elder brother, Prof J. O. C Ezeilo and numerous in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews.