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OBSEQUIES – LATE PROF. EZEKIEL ABAYOMI SOFOWORA

With gratitude to God for a life well spent, the African Journal of Traditional Complementary and Alternative Medicines (AJTCAM), announces the passing of a distinguished African Scientist and renowned Natural Products and Herbal Medicine Research Scientist whose death occurred at age 73. Before his demise, Prof. Sofowora was a member and chaired many reputable national and international organizations as an erudite scholar. A few of which are; WHO, OAU, UNDP, UNIDO, ECA, TCDC, where he has served as consultant among other international organizations on the development of traditional medicine and medicinal plants. His research interests in ethno-botanical surveys took him to several countries across the globe with Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana, Swaziland and Mozambique being a few of such places he visited.

Prof. Sofowora had many scientific publications to his credit and was instrumental to the compilation of the first edition of the African Pharmacopeia. As Director, Drug Research Unit from 1972-1979, his contributions assisted the eventual transition of the Unit into a full-fledged autonomous Department in the Faculty of Pharmacy, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife. A mentor of mentors, an accomplished scholar and perfect gentleman, the late Professor of Pharmacognosy is survived by wife, and four children. We pray the Almighty to grant his gentle soul eternal rest, and comfort to all he left behind.

PROFILE OF LATE PROFESSOR EZEKIEL ABAYOMI SOFOWORA

On the 16th of May 1941, a young couple gave birth to a male child naming him Abayomi; little did they know a colossus in the field of Pharmacognosy was living right in their domain. Really this boy of yesteryears became a national and international figure in the field of medicinal plant research. With the commencement of an academic career in Methodist Boys' High School, Lagos in 1954-1958, he proceeded to Blackburn Technical College, England in 1959 where he won the first prize in Pharmacy in 1961. At Nottingham University England he obtained a *B. Pharm.* and Ph. D respectively in 1964 and 1967. In 1977, he became a drug analyst in Nigeria, a fellow of the West African Postgraduate college of Pharmacy in 1991 and fellow of the pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria in 2000. Other distinctions and awards to his credit are Western Nigeria Government Postgraduate Scholarship in 1967, Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship in 1969, London Tropical Institute Senior Fellowship In 1971/72, DAAD Fellowship in 1976, African Inter- University Exchange Programme Award in 1985, Swiss Academy of Science Fellowship in 1988, Fellowship of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Sickle Cell Association of Nigeria in 1997. He was appointed Lecturer II in the Dept. of Pharmacognosy University of Ife in 1967. All these assisted him in rising quickly in his chosen career. Rising through the ranks, he became a Professor of Pharmacognosy in 1979. He was head of Department of Pharmacognosy from 1976-1982, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy 1982-1985 and Director, Drug Research Unit, 1972-1979. He attended more than 30 international conferences/ Symposia in which he participated actively either to present a paper, represent a committee, serve as chairman or rapporteur, a resource person, keynote address or symposium speaker. Widely read and widely travelled, he has published many articles on various subjects including traditional medicine and medicinal plants. He was a specialist in Pharmacognosy with a special emphasis on Phytochemistry, specification of standards for medicinal plants and ethno-botanical surveys on which he authored many scientific papers and books. He had to his credit before his departure, 85 scientific publications; 42 before becoming a professor and 43 after.

Prof. Abayomi Sofowora was a leader of leaders who spent and was spent for the subject of Pharmacognosy nationally and internationally. He was instrumental to the establishment of Drug Research Unit as an autonomous department becoming the acting head in 1972 which metamorphosed to the DRPU. He served on the various committees of the University and it's Council with commendation by same in writing. He was Dean, Faculty of pharmacy for 5 years and Head, Department of Pharmacognosy for 10 years. His impact was not only felt at the university but also nationally and internationally He founded the Nigeria Society of Pharmacognosy and was foundation president. He played a major role in the establishment of NPRID, Abuja and was Chairman of NAFDAC in 1997 and at that time formulated a procedure to classify and control the use of medicinal plants. He was on the panel that accredited the University of Ibadan, Faculty of Pharmacy.

Internationally, he has served as consultant to WHO, OAU, UNDP, UNIDO, ECA, TCDC and other international organizations on the development of traditional medicine and medicinal plants. His researches on ethno-botanical surveys made him to be widely travelled especially to Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana, Swaziland and Mozambique. . He was instrumental to the compilation of the first edition of the African Pharmacopeia. His book, 'Traditional Medicine and Medicinal Plants in Africa' is widely used for teaching undergraduate students all over Africa.

An indefatigable leader, Abayomi Sofowora continued to serve Pharmacognosy in other Universities even after retiring. All your works follow you and amonument for others to follow. The colossus, researcher, mentor, leader, teacher of teachers, professor of professors, extremely focused researcher, a father of the Faculty of Pharmacy, the builder of the Pharmacognosy department, Faculty of Pharmacy, OAU, the discoverer of the plan for the management of Sickle cell, the champion of Traditional medicine and the efficacy of African Medicinal plants is gone. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

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