

PROFESSOR SAMUEL OMOKHODION: NIGERIA'S ICON OF PAEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY

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SUMMARY

Samuel Omokhodion was born to Pa Jacob Avblimen and Madam Victoria Edewede Omokhodion of Emuhi Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government of Edo State on 9th March 1953, in Ondo state while his father was working in the Civil Service of the old Western Region of Nigeria. Samuel Omokhodion attained the illustrious age of 70 years in December 2022. This edition of chronicles examines his biography - early life, career in paediatric cardiology, number of publications, professional affiliations, and priestly calling.

Early Life

Samuel Omokhodion was born to Pa Jacob Avblimen and Madam Victoria Edewede Omokhodion of Emuhi Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government of Edo State on 9th March 1953, in Ondo while his father was working in the Civil Service of the old Western Region of Nigeria. Edo State is the 22nd largest State by landmass in Nigeria. The state's capital and city, Benin City, is the fourth largest city in Nigeria, and the center of the country's rubber industry. Created in 1991 from the former Bendel State, is also known as the heartbeat of the nation. Edo State borders Kogi State to the northeast, Anambra State to the east, Delta State to the southeast and South-South and Ondo State to the west.

Samuel Omokhodion's family later moved from Ondo State to Ibadan, Oyo State where he attended Alafia Institute, Mokola for his primary school education. After his primary education, his family moved back to Benin, Edo State, in 1964. Between the period of

1964-1970 he completed secondary school education. Samuel Omokhodion gained admission to the University of Ibadan in 1971 where he studied Medicine. He obtained the prestigious MBBS degree in 1977.

Professional Career in Paediatric Cardiology

Upon graduation from medical school, Samuel proceeded to internship at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. The University College Hospital, (UCH) Ibadan was established by an August 1952 Act of Parliament in response to the need for the training of medical personnel and other healthcare professionals for the country and the West African Sub-Region. The University College Hospital, Ibadan was initially commissioned with 500-bed spaces. Currently, the hospital has 1,000 bed spaces and 200 examination couches with occupancy rates ranging from 65 to 70%. Samuel Omokhodion sharpened his clinical skills during his internship at the University College Hospital,



Edo State Nigeria
(Location 6°30'N 6°00'E, image source https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edo_State)



Professor Samuel Omokhodion



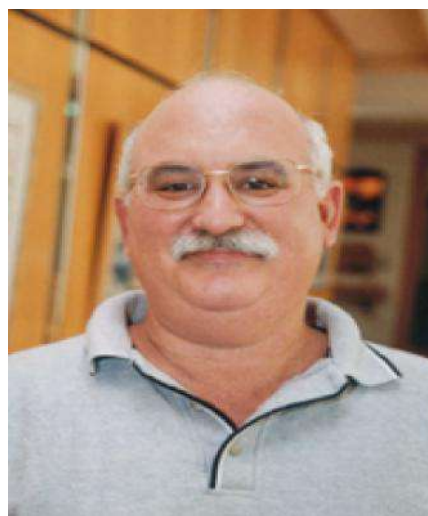
Professor Samuel Omokhodion and wife

Ibadan. At completion of internship, he moved to General Hospital, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria, for the one yearlong National Youth Service (NYSC). He returned from Pankshin to start the residency programme in Pediatrics at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, in 1979. On 19th January 1980, Samuel Omokhodion got married to Folashade Akinyede whom he met in medical school in 1975. The union is blessed with 3 children Osahon, Ofure, Osagie.

He completed his training with certification from the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria and the West African College of Physicians. The National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria was established on September 24, 1979, under the National Postgraduate Medical College decree No. 67 now Cap N59 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. The College is a tertiary institution at the apex of medical education in Nigeria, producing medical, surgical, and dental specialists/sub-specialists who are capable of providing world-class research, teaching and healthcare. After obtaining the postgraduate certification of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, Samuel Omokhodion went on the year abroad programme and worked at the Guy's Hospital, London (a huge NHS hospital in the London Borough of Southwark, one of the tallest hospital buildings in the world, standing at 142.6m, with 34 floors) and later transferred to the Academic Medical Centre of the University of Amsterdam where he obtained certification in Paediatric Cardiology (Interventional Cardiology). On return to Ibadan, he was appointed Lecturer1/Consultant Paediatrician in 1987 and rose through the ranks to become professor of Paediatric Cardiology in 2006.

He had an additional certification in Paediatric Cardiology (Interventional Cardiology) while on sabbatical leave in Israel at the Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem. While in Israel he met Dr. Amram Cohen a cardiac surgeon who offered to treat Nigeria

patients free of charge if they could be flown to Israel. Amram "Ami" Cohen was born in 1954 in Washington and lived in Israel for his early childhood before returning stateside to Maryland in the 1960s. He was an Israeli surgeon and teacher who in 1995 established the Save a Child's Heart foundation, which helped bring poor children to Israel for life-saving surgery. Dr. Cohen was a 1972 graduate of John F. Kennedy High School in Silver Spring, a 1976 graduate of Johns Hopkins University and a 1980 graduate of the University of Virginia's medical school. He served a surgery internship and residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, a cardiothoracic surgery residency at Brooke Army Medical Center Hospital in Texas and a pediatric cardiac surgery residency at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Save a child's heart (SACH) came into being in 1995 when an Ethiopian doctor contacted Dr. Cohen after being referred to him by a mutual friend. The doctor asked for Dr. Cohen's help with two children in desperate need of heart surgery. Dr. Cohen said yes and organized flights approval from the hospital and accommodated the children in his home during recovery. Dr. Cohen died on Aug. 16 in Tanzania after a heart attack.



Dr. Amram Cohen

Upon Omokhodion's returned to Nigeria, he initiated a Non-Governmental Organization Save a Child's Heart, Nigeria through which agency 713 children were surgically treated in Israel and later in India, the United Kingdom and Ghana. He thereafter attracted several Cardiac Mission teams from United States, United Kingdom, Italy and India to undertake definitive surgical interventions at the University College Hospital. Omokhodion became a Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Ibadan in 2006. He has been the head of the UCH Cardiac team since 2006 up onto his retirement from active service of the University in 2023. He anchored the development and building of

the Institute of Cardiological Sciences, University of Ibadan. The building nearing completion, is remarkable for its size and glowing architectural design.

Publications

Professor Samuel Omokhodion's academic interests centered on Pediatric Cardiology focusing on heart failure in children. He has supervised and monitored 20 paediatric cardiologists, and several paediatricians many of whom are now professors and eminent scholars in the field. He has over 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals. An exploration of his publications on paediatric surgery are the focus of another edition of the Chronicles of Medical History.

Professional affiliations

Samuel Omokhodion has held many academic and professional positions and memberships since he became a cardiologist. He is a member of many learned and professional associations including the Nigerian Medical Association, Paediatric Association of Nigeria, Nigerian Cardiac Society where he served as Secretary General from 2002-2006 and Pan African Society of Cardiology (PASCAR) where he served as Secretary General for nine years. He also served as a member of Governing Council of that body and as Chairman of the Pan African Network of Paediatric Cardiologists. He currently serves as the pioneer President of the Nigerian Society of Paediatric Cardiology (NISOPAC), and he is a member of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) as well as European Society on Heart Failure. The ESC, founded in 1950, is an independent non-profit, non-governmental professional association that works to advance the prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases of the heart and blood vessels, and improve scientific understanding of the heart and vascular system. Most of the ESC members are cardiologists, cardiovascular nurses and allied professionals wishing to increase their knowledge and update their skills. The association adheres to the Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe Code of Conduct. A Fellow of the European Society of Cardiology is a cardiologist considered to be a person who has had a significant experience in the field and who has distinguished themselves individually in clinical, educational, investigational, organizational or professional aspects of cardiology. Like the ESC, the Pan African Society of Cardiology (PASCAR) has scholars who have made significant contributions to the field of cardiology. In 1979, the then president of the Nigerian Cardiac Society, Professor Ayodele Falase, created the Pan-African Congress of Cardiology, which would become PASCAR. The first PASCAR conference was held in Badagry, Nigeria, in 1981. The four primary goals of PASCAR are to prevent and treat

cardiovascular disease in Africa, educate and train African healthcare professionals about cardiovascular disease, educate lay persons about heart disease, and invest in cardiovascular research.

Professor Samuel Omokhodion has also made his mark in his teaching career, having been voted by clinical students at the College of Medicine as the best lecturer on several successive academic sessions. He recorded similar recognition at the Faculty of Paediatrics of the National Medical College of Nigeria and the West African College of Physicians. He serves both Colleges as a Resource Person and is a member of their Court of Examiners. He was the Chairman of the curriculum development committee for subspecialty training in Paediatric Cardiology for both Colleges. He served as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Nigerian Journal of Cardiology and served / still serves as a peer reviewer for several local and international journals.

Samuel Omokhodion served his Department, Faculty and University in many capacities. He was Acting Head of the Department of Paediatric (1998-2000), Head of the Department (2011-2015), Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee for the acquisition and utilization of the Otunba Tuwase National Paediatric Hospital, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria, constituted by the Academic Board of the College of Medicine. He was the Chairman of the Distinguished Alumni Award Committee of the Academic Board and the member of the Faculty of Clinical Sciences Committee on the NUC proposal on possession of a PhD. by medically qualified lecturer as a pre-requisite for various academic roles. Samuel Omokhodion has also served as External Examiner in several Universities across Nigeria. He is the current Chair of the Medical and Dental Consultants' Association Committee of Elders, at the University College Hospital, Ibadan.

Priestly Calling

Professor Omokhodion's Priestly calling began in the UK in the 80's, while attending Kensington Temple, London where he was mentored by the Rev. Wynne Lewis. As pastor of Kensington Temple, the church experienced astounding growth of about 500 people to over 9,000. Reverend Wynne Lewis later went on to head the Elim pentecostal churches, a movement of growing congregational churches in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Following his training in the United Kingdom, Samuel Omokhodion moved to Israel.

During the sojourn of Samuel Omokhodion in Israel, he attended King of Kings Assembly Theology College in Jerusalem while on a sabbatical and leave

of absence from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He met Aril Edvardsen of the Evidence of Faith Ministry of Norway while in Israel. Aril Snorre Edvardsen (15 November 1938–06 September 2008) was a Norwegian evangelical preacher and missionary. In 1965 Aril founded the *Organisation Troens Bevis* (Evidence of Faith), an organization that would grow to support around over a thousand native missionaries around the world. The organization includes a multi-media venture, with daily television broadcasts reaching hundreds of different nations. His relationship with Aril Edvardsen helped to start an arm of the ministry in Nigeria through media output – a regular TV series called ‘Miracle’ which ran for 13 years on NTA Ibadan, Nigeria. This association led to his ordination by Aril in 1999 at Christ Chapel, UCH.

dedicate it. That prophesy was fulfilled when he returned in 2003 to open and dedicate the newly completed Christ Chapel. Samuel was appointed Chaplain to University College Hospital and Chairman of the Chaplaincy committee of the hospital in 2005.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the sources of information used in this write up were obtained from the following websites: Edo state (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edo_State), Amran Cohen (<https://nmajmh.org/education/individual-profiles/amram-cohen/>), save a child foundation (<https://saveachildsheart.org/our-history>), Pan African Society of Cardiology (<https://www.pascar.org/content/page/history-of-pascar>), European Society of Cardiology (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aril_Edvardsen), Tribute to



Christ Chapel, University College Hospital, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria



Aril Edvardsen

In 1986, Samuel Omokhodion succeeded Rev. Ernest Ukaejiofo as the Chairman of the Central Committee of the UCH Chapel (later renamed Christ's Chapel) with responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The position of Pastor was created which he occupied from 1992- 2021. He organized the Greater of Ibadan crusade in 1987 for which he invited Pastor Kumuyi and Rev. Wynne Lewis, his Pastor and mentor at the Kensington Temple, London. The crusade was held at the uncompleted building site and Rev. Lewis spoke prophetically that this was not the definite site for the Chapel and that whenever the chapel was built in the definitive site within the main hospital premises, he would be glad to return and

Wynne Lewis - A Prince and Great man (<https://bolaoged.com/?p=779>). Elim Pentecostal (<https://www.elim.org.uk/>). All the web pages were accessed in the month of publication of the article. I wish to acknowledge Dr. (Mrs.) Bosede Adebayo for providing the biography and citation of Professor Samuel Omokhodion, the document formed the core of the biography. I acknowledge my dear wife, Afie for her support and encouragement. I thank the Board of AIPM and the Publishers of the Journal (ARD-UCH) for sustaining the Chronicles of Medical History. I thank God above all.