

Prof SNC Wemabu, 1938-2009

Professor Simon Nkeadinma Chukwunwinke Wemabu was born at Asaba in November, 1938 to Mr. and Mrs. Obi Okocha Wemabu . He attended the St. Joseph's Catholic School, Asaba and proceeded to the prestigious Government College, Ibadan where he obtained Cambridge School Certificate in 1958 and General Certificate of Education for Advance level in science subjects in 1959.

He entered the Tubingen Medical School in 1960 where he did his thesis under a renowned pathologist the late Prof. Erich Letterer. He obtained the MB. BS. degree in 1966 and was awarded Dr. of medicine in 1967. In October 1967, he went to London on Wellcome Foundation Grant to work on leprosy immunology. There with his colleagues demonstrated for the first time ever to medical world that leprosy has an immunological basis, this was the fore-runner for the present day vaccine research. He passed the diploma of bacteriology of London University and returned to Nigeria in 1973.

Prof. Wemabu started his professional carrier as a Senior Registrar in Medical Microbiology at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital in November, 1973 where he pioneered the establishment of the routine laboratory services to its present standard.

He began his academic career as a lecturer 1 at the College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin in 1973. He was promoted Senior Lecturer in 1976, Associate Professor in 1984 and full Professor in 1990. An astute researcher Prof. SNC Wemabu had numerous publications in reputable medical journals worldwide including the esteemed Lancet and has presented numerous papers in both local and international conferences. A brilliant scholar, Prof Wemabu had to his credit numerous scholarships and academic distinctions such as:

- Brilliant students' scholarship in the University of Tubingen 1960-1966
- Catholic foreign students' scholarship 1962-66
- Midwest Government post graduate award for diploma in bacteriology 1972-73, among several others.

Prof Wemabu's research acumen was again recognized by the National University Commission(NUC) when his inaugural lecture titled 'leprosy scourge of ages whither do you go?' was among the series of inaugural lectures selected for publication by the NUC in 2001.

A dedicated teacher, Prof. Wemabu has trained numerous doctors and pathologists including 14 consultants in laboratory medicine at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital. He has at various times head the department of microbiology of UBTH and University of Benin and was also coordinator of the entire Pathology Division on several occasions. He also served as external examiner to university of Port Harcourt, Ilorin and Zaria medical schools. He was an examiner for the Post graduate Medical College and the West African Post Graduate Medical College.

Prof. SNC Wemabu was member of several professional bodiessuch as Nigeria Medical Association, Nigeria society for immunology, Nigeria society for bacteriology, Association of Pathologists of Nigeria, British society for of immunology, International leprosy association, Fellow of the medical college of pathologists and Fellow of the West African college of Physicians.

Obituaries

Aside from his medical skills, Prof. SNC Wemabu had a flare for languages as his proficiency in English language, Latin, German, Yoruba and Igbo languages could attest. His hobbies included swimming, reading and singing. A devout Catholic, he was married and blessed with children. He is a loving husband and a caring father. Prof. Wemabu voluntarily retired from service in November, 2003.

He was on contract appointment with the University of Benin till November 2009.

His sojourn on this side of the divide ended on March 8 2009.

May his gentle soul rest in peace

Dr A. O. Awodu

University of Benin, Benin- City, Nigeria