

Editorial

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants, We Move Forward: Honoring Professor Ignatius Kakande

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Abstract

In this issue of The East and Central African Journal of Surgery (ECAJS), we reflect on the remarkable contributions of Professor Ignatius Kakande, our second editor-in-chief and a guiding force behind the journal's conception, birth and growth. Professor Kakande's legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of ECAJS and COSECSA, where his influence as a senior professor in surgery, a mentor, and fatherly figure has left an indelible mark on countless colleagues and students alike. His commitment to building a platform for African surgical voices has transformed ECAJS into a respected journal, showcasing the innovations, challenges, and triumphs of surgical practice across the continent.

In this issue of *The East and Central African Journal of Surgery* (ECAJS), we reflect on the remarkable contributions of **Professor Ignatius Kakande**, our second editor-in-chief and a guiding force behind the journal's conception, birth and growth. **Professor Kakande's** legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of ECAJS and COSECSA, where his influence as a senior professor in surgery, a mentor, and fatherly figure has left an indelible mark on countless colleagues and students alike. His commitment to building a platform for African surgical voices has transformed ECAJS into a respected journal, showcasing the innovations, challenges, and triumphs of surgical practice across the continent.

To probably get a good picture of his significant input in steering the journal to where it is today, it is imperative that we start from understanding the roots of the ECAJS. On a certain Friday in Moshi, something short of five decades back on the 10th of March 1975, the then Hon. Secretary for the Association of Surgeons of East Africa (ASEA), Prof. John Jellis proposed the need to have the association publish its proceedings. Prior to this, dissemination was limited to an annual newsletter containing outstanding abstracts presented in the ASEA meetings.¹ With approval

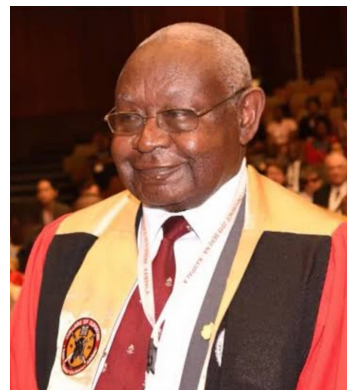


Figure 1. Professor Ignatius Kakande, Second Editor-in-Chief of the East and Central African Journal of Surgery (ECAJS)

from the ASEA council leadership, Prof. Jellis took the reigns as the first editor-in-chief with the first volume being released in 1978, running a course of 15 volumes until the year 1992. The period between 1993 and 1995 was marked with a transition in the journal name from “The Proceedings of the Association of Surgeons of East Africa” to the



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“East and Central African Journal of Surgery” as the journal adopted the ‘peer-review’ umbrella and opened submissions from beyond the association. The first volume in this new title was released in 1995 and has culminated a total of 29 volumes in 2024 with consistent publication each year. Initially the ECAJS ran on a bi-annual publication frequency up until 2020 when the journal started publishing issues on a quarterly basis.² Just after the establishment of the College of Surgeons of East, Central, and Southern Africa (COSECSA), the current publisher for the ECAJS, Prof. Jellis handed over the reigns to Prof. Ignatius Kakande. In his exit editorial, domiciled in ECAJS Volume 5, Number 2, Prof. Jellis narrates the beautiful story of how the journal came to be, the journey across different eras of technology and the transition from season to season as the journal evolved to his point of editorship handover. He goes on to describe Prof. Kakande as an experienced and prolific scientific writer, exuding such confidence in his capacity to steer the journal into success and widespread recognition.³ What follows thereafter is a narrative of journal growth, improved visibility and impact in the region and beyond under the leadership of Prof. Kakande.

When Professor Kakande took over the editorship in 2000, he was entrusted with a vision to enhance and expand the journal’s reach. Despite initial uncertainties, he embraced the role with optimism, steering ECAJS passionately for nearly two decades.⁴ Under his leadership, ECAJS evolved from a biannual print publication into an internationally accessible journal, advancing to online distribution and indexing, thanks to partnerships with Bioline International and African Journals Online. His work extended beyond publication; he actively mentored emerging surgeons, encouraged young authors, and emphasized the importance of rigorous scientific standards, significantly enhancing the journal’s reputation and scholarly quality.⁴

As we honor Professor Kakande’s legacy at COSECSA and the journal, it is clear that his impact extends beyond his role as editor. His dedication to COSECSA and his belief in the power of credible scientific publication have inspired

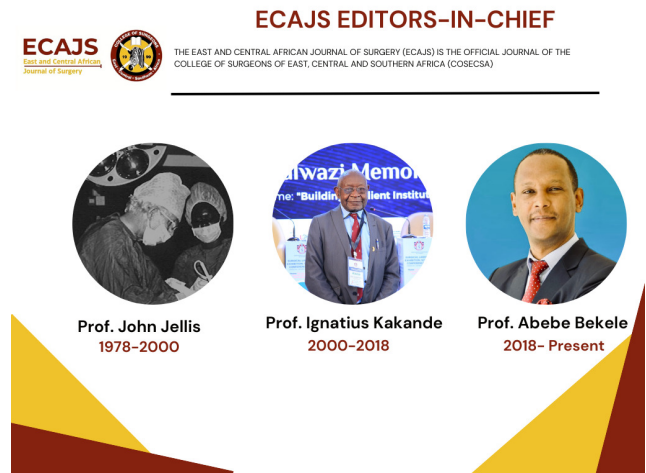


Figure 2. The East and Central African Journal of Surgery (ECAJS) Editors-in-Chief

a generation of surgeons committed to improving surgical care in Africa. Today, ECAJS stands as a testament to his unwavering dedication and vision. His efforts in ensuring an expanded readership and widespread submissions to the ECAJS is further evidenced by the diversity of papers published in this issue stemming from Ethiopia,⁵ Tanzania,⁶ Uganda,⁷ Zambia,⁸ Malawi,⁹ and Kenya,¹⁰ as well as featuring support to one of COSECSA’s siter colleges, The East, Central, and Southern Africa College of Nursing and Midwifery. As we build on his foundation, we carry his legacy with gratitude and a commitment to advancing surgical excellence across East, Central, and Southern Africa and the world beyond!

Standing on the shoulders of giants like Professor Kakande, we are inspired to further his mission and continue his work for years to come.

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