

In Memoriam - Professor Ensermu Kelbessa

We sadly and suddenly lost one of the Associate Editors of the Ethiopian Journal of Biological Sciences (EJBS) more than a year and half ago on August 14th, 2016. He died after being hospitalized for a stroke which he suffered unexpectedly just after a few days from the field. Prof. Ensermu was a great enthusiast and connoisseur of field research. That is where he could feel nature close to collect plants for his taxonomic study. He was a passionate taxonomic expert on many Ethiopian plants, but especially on the Family Acanthacea. He and his colleagues in the Department of Plant Biology and Biodiversity Management, AAU, supported with generous funding from Sida-Sarec, succeeded in the collection, curation, cataloguing and publication of more than 6 000 plants in 6 large volumes of “Flora of Ethiopia and Eritrea”. The contribution of Prof. Ensermu in the write-up of several plant families and in the administrative execution of the project was invaluable and second to none. The final compendium of the study was published as a special supplementary issue of Volume 13 of the Ethiopian Journal of Biological Sciences in 2014.

Prof. Ensermu served as the Associate Editor for EJBS for more than 7 years and towards the end, he requested resignation, but other members of the Editorial Board were adamant to approve the request because we felt that there was no one capable of replacing the expertise of Prof. Ensermu and we didn't want to risk the problems that will ensue after his absence. Despite being over-worked and exhausted, Prof. Ensermu finally agreed (grudgingly) to continue serving the journal until the time of his death. The EB and the journal secretariat are profoundly grateful to Prof. Ensermu for his unselfish and professional dedication to the journal's continued quest for high standards, of which he was a foremost bearer.

Prof. Ensermu worked a lot to raise the visibility of AAU and our journal at both national and international levels. He was intimately involved in the establishment of the African Plants Initiative (API) in 2003 which resulted in the JSTOR Global Plants database. He published more than 100 articles in both national and international journals and served as constant reviewer of manuscripts submitted by young academics. He went to great length to improve manuscripts to acceptable levels rather than outright rejecting substandard papers. His international experience with the Kew Botanical Gardens was for sure the genesis for his tireless efforts and final success in the establishment of the Gulele Botanical Garden near Addis Ababa. Surely,

the life of Prof. Ensermu is crowned with many achievements and he would have added more, was he not cut short by an unexpected stroke. May his soul rest in peace and let his successors continue the good work he started.

Seyoum Mengistou (Prof.)

Editor-in-Chief, EJBS