

Citation of the late Professor Abolade Ajani Awotedu



I write this citation as a long-term acquaintance, friend and colleague of the late Professor Abolade Ajani Awotedu, who passed into eternal glory of the Lord on Wednesday, the 26th of July, 2017 at the Donald Gordon Medical Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa (SA). It is a great honour for me to be asked to write this citation. I have known Bola since our younger days at the medical school of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. We completed our medical residency training programme at the University College Hospital (UCH) in Ibadan, Nigeria, together and spent our early consultant years in Ibadan. Years later, we were working colleagues at the Walter Sisulu University and the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital in Mthatha, SA.

Professor Bola Awotedu was born at Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria on the 24th of February in 1949 to parents who were from Ipara in Ogun State. He received his primary school education at the Methodist Primary School, Ibadan, Oyo State and his secondary school education at Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State from 1961 to 1965. Bola then went on to the Government College in Ibadan from 1966 to 1967 where he obtained the Higher School Certificate. In 1968, he taught at St Charles Secondary School, Osogbo, for 9 months before proceeding to the University of Ibadan to read for Medicine later that year. He qualified as a medical practitioner in June 1973. He had his internship at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan from July 1973 to June 1974.

Postgraduate residency (Internal medicine and pulmonology)

Bola completed his rotating residency in Internal Medicine at the Department of Medicine, UCH, Ibadan, from 1975 to 1978.

He was a clinical assistant at the respiratory units of New Cross Hospital, London and Guys Hospital, London from 1978 to 1980. Upon his return to Nigeria, he was a senior registrar at the Department of Medicine, UCH, Ibadan from 1980 to 1981.

Senior academic and professional positions

He was appointed lecturer I/consultant in the Department of Medicine, University of Ibadan and the UCH, Ibadan in 1981. He rose through to senior lecturer and readership to full professorial positions, which culminated in his last appointment as professor and head of the Department of Medicine in 1990.

International positions after an early retirement at Ibadan

To further his quest for excellence and international exposure for his career in medicine and medical education, Professor Awotedu accepted a number of international appointments:

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Zimbabwe and Consultant Physician, Parirenyatwa Hospital, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1990 to 1992.

Senior Consultant Physician, Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital, Francistown, Botswana from 1992 to May 1997.

Associate Professor and Head, Department of Pulmonology, University of Transkei, Mthatha, SA, May 1997 to 2004.

Acting Head of Internal Medicine, University of Transkei, Mthatha, SA from 2000 to 2003.

Professor and Head of Medicine, Walter Sisulu University, from January 2004 to June 2016.

Contract Professor, Walter Sisulu University from June 2016 to June 2017.

Professional certificates and diplomas

Prof Bola Awotedu's academic and professional attainments are highly distinguished:

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS), Ibadan - 1973
Fellow of the Nigerian Postgraduate Medical College of Physicians (FMCP) - 1980

Fellow of the West African College of Physicians (FWACP) - 1985

Fellow of the American College of Chest Physicians (FCCP) - 1988

Fellow of the College of Physicians of South Africa (FCP (SA)) - 2000

Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburg) (FRCP) - 2009

Fellow Royal College of Physicians (London) (FRCP) - 2012

Scholarships and prizes

Notable amongst his achievements in this regard are:

Federal Government of Nigeria Scholarship from 1968 to 1973.

French Government Scholarship for Research in 1985.

American College of Chest Physicians Governors Community Service Award Nominee in 2001. Topic of submission 'Building a Pulmonology Division to serve a large, poor and underserved population'

Membership of learned societies

Professor Bola Awotedu was a member of several professional bodies:

Nigerian Medical Association

South African Medical Association

Association of Physicians of Nigeria

Association of Physicians of West Africa

Nigerian Thoracic Society
 British Thoracic Society
 South African Thoracic Society
 American Thoracic Society

Honours

Professor Awotedu was a man of distinction. He received the following honours:

Recipient of the Nigerian achievement award in Medicine by the Nigerian High Commission. The award was presented by His excellency, President Goodluck Jonathan and the Speaker of the House of Parliament of SA, Mrs Baleka Mbete, in 2009.

Featured in the 2nd edition (February - March 2017) of the OMOLUABI, an e-magazine of the Association of Yorubas in Diaspora, SA, in an article titled 'Professor Abolade Ajani Awotedu: A Quintessential Personality'.

Service to the Community

While Head of Medicine at the University of Ibadan, he served in various Committees of the Senate and of the Faculty Board, including the Disciplinary Committee of the university. He was also the Hall Warden of the Clinical Students' Hostel (Alexander Brown Hall) from 1987 to 1990. This tenor was well-noted for discipline and fairness at the same time.

He served as external examiner to various universities in Nigeria, including the Universities of Lagos, Jos, Shagamu, as well as the Obafemi Awolowo University. Similarly, in SA, he served as external examiner to the universities of Kwazulu-Natal, Stellenbosch, Cape Town. He was also an external examiner for the National University of Rwanda in Kigali. He examined at both the Part I and the Part II examinations of the College of Physicians of SA.

Prof. Bola Awotedu served in the councils of both the South African Thoracic Society and the National Asthma Education Programme. He was a member of the Hamilton Naki Scholarship Board of South Africa, a body that awards scholarships to poor but deserving students. He was a council member of the College of Physicians of South Africa. He also served in the Consultancy of the NEPARD of the African Union on 'Harmonization of Policy on regulation and registration of drugs in Africa'.

As the principal investigator for a Medical Research Council of SA Flagship Research Project, he attracted funds totaling R18 million (\$1.5 million) to the Walter Sisulu University.

Prof. Bola Awotedu was a patron of the Association of Yorubas in Diaspora, SA (AYIDSA).

He was the longest-serving council member and a great pillar of selfless service at the Full Gospel House of Prayers Church at Mthatha, where we worshiped for 18 years.

Scientific publications

Prof. Bola Awotedu was widely published academically, and to his credit are:

Journal articles

He published over 50 articles in local and international scientific journals.

Professorial Inaugural Lecture, Walter Sisulu University, 2008, 'Breath of Life: Trends in the Pathogenesis and Management of Asthma.'

Books

Science, Technology and Innovation for Public Health in Africa, 2009. *Asthma in Africa*, 2012 (Co-edited and authored more than 50% of the chapters.)

Major conferences

He attended over 45 national and international conferences in his chosen field of pulmonology.

Hobbies

In his younger days in Ibadan, he played table tennis and had a passion for photography. Later in life, Bola had a keen interest in medical history, current affairs and world news, and was a football and cricket enthusiast.

Family life

Bola was family-orientated and showed remarkable dedication to the care of each and every member of his nuclear and extended families. It is remarkable that he bred a family of medical doctors: himself a physician; his wife a family physician with a doctorate in physiology; the first daughter is on the way to achieving a doctorate in law in a medically related subject. His second daughter is a paediatrician, his second son-in-law is an obstetrician and gynaecologist, and the third and last daughter is a dermatologist in training. What a gift to the medical confraternity. He was blessed with 7 lovely grandchildren.

I will summarise the gentleman, Bola Awotedu, as a distinguished physician, academic, researcher, and family man who was, above all, a child of God. In one of his epistles to the Corinthians, Saint Paul said, 'I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some' (cf. I Cor 9:19-22). Bola Awotedu was a faithful and dutiful child of God, a humane person who touched everyone that he met with a tremendous power of the love of God, through genuine interest in peoples' lives and a kind and generous helping hand.

Adieu my brother and friend, rest in perfect peace.

Professor Patrick Oluwole Oluboyo

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