



Arch. Bas. App. Med. 8 (2020) 61 - 62

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Editorial

Olufunso Olabode Olorunsogo: Celebrating an Icon at Retirement

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Professor O. O. Olorunsogo

*Let the Drums be rolled out
Let the streets of Ibadan celebrate
Olorunsogo is seventy
Olorunsogo retires
From Igbajo to Osogbo
Let the dancing begin*

On, Sunday, July 12, 2020, he founding editor of *Archives of Basic and Applied Medicine*, Prof. Olufunso Olabode Olorunsogo, one of University of Ibadan's silent achievers, attained the age of formal retirement. We congratulate him as he takes a bow out of the Ivory tower after forty-seven peaceful, meritorious and scandal-less services to this University.

Prof. Olorunsogo came to UI in 1969, not as a faculty, but as a first year Science student. He had his first degree in 1973 and a Ph.D in 1976 (a feat only shared with very few people till date). Since then, he remained in the University, safe for few years of

academic developments in other institutions in Cambridge (United Kingdom, 1977), Basel (Switzerland, 1982), Nairobi (Kenya, 1975, 1992), Sydney (Australia, 1991), Toronto (Canada, 1979), Michigan (USA ,1979), Brussels (Belgium, 1980), Tokyo (Japan, 1982), Blantyre (Malawi, 2006) among several other visiting positions he had during his career. After traversing the globe for laboratory research experience, he settled down to contribute his quota to the administrative development of the University of Ibadan.

Prominent among several administrative positions held by Prof. Olorunsogo was his membership of Faculty Curriculum sub-committee and Faculty Promotions panel from 1983. He became Director, Bio-membrane Research Laboratories, Biochemistry Department, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan in 1988. He became Dean, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, in 1993, first serving out the term of his predecessor who did not finish his tenure as Dean and thereafter served a four-year term that ended in 1998. It is therefore on record that Prof Olorunsogo is the longest serving Dean of the Faculty of Basic medical Sciences to date. As Dean of Basic Medical Sciences and in the absence of a substantive Director, Prof Olorunsogo was Acting Director, Postgraduate Institute for Medical Research and Training, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria between 1993 and 1995. He was Chairman, Sub-Committee on Examinations Misconduct (a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Provost and Deans) between 1994 and 1998. In 1996 He was made Chairman, Board of Trustees, Unified Staff Pensions and Gratuity Scheme. University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The list is endless.

Olorunsogo was elected Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) in 1998 and served meritoriously in that capacity until his appointment as Acting Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a position he occupied between March 25 and September 24, 2000). He returned to the laboratory thereafter as Director, Laboratories for Bio-membrane Research and Biotechnology, Biochemistry Department, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. In addition to

all these, he was head of Nigeria's pioneer Biochemistry Department between 2002 and 2005 and later 2012 – 2016. His wealth of experience was instrumental to the establishment of the flagship academic Journal of the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences- Archives of Basic and Applied Medicine, which has consistently been produced under his watch for seven years without interruption.

From his first publication in 1976 on Biochemical lesion in rat liver mitochondria induced by glyphosate (which he co-authored with the late Profs Olumbe Bassir and Enitan Bababunmi, Olufunso Olorunsogo did not leave anyone in doubt that he was cut-out for a very rewarding academic career. With over one hundred and fifty publications in high impact and highly recognized Biochemistry Journals, Prof Olorunsogo's work has largely centered on Assessment and characterization of the inhibitory and inductive effects of bioactive agents of certain local medicinal herbs, with great promise for drug development especially in cancer chemotherapy and tissue wastage. He has also been focusing on design of a plasma membrane calcium pump antagonist with the aim of identifying a naturally occurring non polypeptide substance that will inhibit a protein pump found in virtually all cells including heart and blood vessels, causing a buildup of resting calcium levels in those cells.

As he bows out, Prof Olorunsogo has left a culture and legacy of academic discipline and excellence in the University of Ibadan. The Department of Biochemistry has remained a very reliable example of an active center of scientific excellence due to the tradition passed down by the founding fathers of the department. This legacy

continues even as Olorunsogo retires. It is on record that both staff and students are ever present in all laboratories in Biochemistry department. From Membrane research laboratories to Cancer Research section, Drug metabolism and Toxicology and more recently, the Drosophilla laboratory (which serves the whole of West Africa), the department continues to remain active and productive. We appreciate Prof Olorunsogo for successfully passing the baton to those taking over the leadership of Biochemistry.

I must not end this piece without touching an attribute that has endeared Prof Olorunsogo to many- his ability to calm frayed nerves. My first encounter with him was as a postgraduate student in 1991 in need of an ultracentrifuge that was (at that time) available only in his laboratory. After introducing myself to him and giving him a note from my supervisor, he softly spoke in a way that attracted me to him. I was forced to be comparing him with certain professors who made themselves so difficult to approach for any help and would give you palpitations even before you met them for anything. He made himself approachable to all. As Dean of my faculty, I run to him for counsel on several issues and to date his wisdom and administrative experience remains unquestionable. Under Professor Olorunsogo, students thrived and through his leadership as Faculty Dean and later as head of Biochemistry, younger Faculty members made great educational and professional strides.

Please join me in celebrating a gentleman, a peace lover, an administrator, a hard-working scientist, a teacher of teachers- Prof Olufunso Olabode Olorunsogo.