



OBITUARY

PROFESSOR SAMUEL TUNDE BAJAH

24 APRIL 1934 - 23 FEBRUARY 2008

It is with deep regret, but with great gratitude to God, that the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Olufemi A. Bamiro, *FNSE, FAS*, announces the transition on 23 February, 2008, of Prof. Samuel Tunde Bajah, a retired science educator, renowned author and great community leader.

Professor Samuel Tunde Bajah was a graduate of this University, having obtained his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1962, and later proceeded to the University of Oxford for his Diploma in Education which he completed in 1964. He served as a secondary school teacher in Science in Hussey College, Warri from 1962, rising to the position in 1965 of Director of Science of that School, the position which he held until 1967 when he had to leave the School. As the most senior Science educator in his area, and by now fully in charge of all arms of the A' Level classes, he had become well known for his vast knowledge in his discipline. Naturally, in an era when Science educators were a rarity, several institutions made overtures to him to join their staff. For some time, he turned them down, ... until the civil war decided for him. With the civil war ravaging the whole of the present day Delta State by 1967, he finally yielded to the overtures being made to him by the International School, University of Ibadan, consequently he joined the School on 3 May, 1967.

As a staff of the International School, right from 1967, he started making his mark. So sterling were his qualities and capabilities that the School supported his bid for further education in the United States in 1969. There he was, till 1972 when he returned home with his masters and doctoral degrees. He was thus more relevant in the Institute of Education than in the International School, and so it was to the Institute that he moved. This explains why, on his retirement in 1999, his services to the University were calculated to be 27 years 1 month and 6 days.

Right from his days in the International School, he started to blossom as a versatile writer of Science books for students. His books either singly authored or jointly written with some others quickly became renowned among students. One of them, the one on Chemistry for Secondary Schools, was so widely accepted that it finally got translated into six languages to include French and Spanish.

In the Institute of Education, he rose from the rank of Research Fellow II in 1972 to that of a Professor of Science Education and Evaluation in 1984. In the process of his services to the University, he was widely travelled. He featured either as a participant or consultant in conferences and workshops in at least four continents: Africa, Europe, America and Australia. In many cases, he was a key player in Science and Evaluation projects in many African countries.

He was the Acting Director of the Institute of Education from 1983 to 1985, and in 1989 he was elected the Dean of the Faculty of Education, at a time when the Institute and the Faculty were still one organic unit. He functioned fully as the Director of the Institute from 1996, leaving office a few days before his 65 birthday.

In all the positions he held, he was known for his thoroughness and forthrightness. His stand was always clearly well known that his colleagues as Deans and others in the Senate soon learnt to rely on him. Indeed, this was the basis for the then Vice-Chancellor delegating so many vital functions to him, including some that entailed standing in as the Vice-Chancellor at crucial public functions. He was for instance the University Orator from 1997 to 1999.

On his retirement, he was still very much in academic. He handled several research projects for national and international bodies such as the NERDC, UNICEF, the UNESCO, the UBE, the NTI, etc. Most students till now would remember him more for his books which had helped them make a success of their Science careers, and thus was why his initials, S. T. were often interpreted as Science Teacher, rather than as Samuel Tunde, especially during the years for which he was the President of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria. He was a Science educator to the core.

To the end, he remained a devoted Catholic, a committed alumnus, and an unswerving loyalist to the cause of humanity.

He is survived by a wife, many children and grand children. Funeral rites are scheduled for March 12-14, 2008 part of which is the lying-in-state in the Trenchard Hall on Thursday, 13 March, 2008 between 8.00 and 9.00.am. Members of the University Community are invited to honour this distinguished alumnus, teacher, author, researcher, orator, and administrator.

May his gentle soul rest in peace. Amen.

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