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Special Release

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OBITUARY

PROFESSOR BENJAMIN AFOLABI OSO

(16 February, 1940 - 16 March, 2019)

Professor A. I Olayinka, FAS, announces with deep regret, the transition of Professor Benjamin Afolabi Oso, a staff in the then Department of Botany and Microbiology, Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan. The sad event occurred on Saturday, 16 March, 2019.

Late Professor Oso was born on 16 February, 1940 in Ado-Ekiti to Papa Gabriel Osamuwagun and Mama Elizabeth Famutola Oso. He attended Emmanuel Primary School, Ado-Ekiti from 1947 to 1954. Then, he attended the prestigious Christ's School Ado-Ekiti for his secondary school education passing out with Grade 1 in the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in 1959. The following year he worked briefly as a teacher at the Secondary Modern School, Iyin-Ekiti before gaining admission to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level. Usually a two year programme, young Benjamin Oso had to discontinue his studies at the end of the first year when the College was merged with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In May 1962, he transferred to the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan where he passed his A-Level papers in Botany, Zoology and Chemistry and obtained admission to the University College, Ibadan by Direct Entry in September 1962. The University College, Ibadan became autonomous on 1 October, 1962 as the University of Ibadan. Fortuitously, young Oso became a pioneer student of the University having been admitted to study Botany.

Late Professor Oso graduated from the University of Ibadan in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science Honours degree, Second Class Upper Division. His performance at the undergraduate degree examination earned him a Nigerian Federal Government Scholarship for postgraduate studies. He pursued his postgraduate study at the Birbeck College, University of London where he obtained his Ph.D. under the eminent Mycologist, Professor Cecil Terrace Ingold in June, 1968 in record time of two and half years.

He began his academic career at the University of Ibadan as a Temporary Lecturer in the Department of Botany on 19 June, 1968. He was appointed a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow on 8 November, 1969 and a Lecturer on 10 April, 1970. His appointment was confirmed on 19 June, 1971. Late Professor Oso was promoted Lecturer above the bar on 1 October, 1972, Senior Lecturer on 1 October, 1974 and Professor on 1 October, 1978. He delivered his inaugural Lecture entitled “Fungi and Mankind” on 4 June, 1981.

Late Professor Oso served the University in different capacities. He was first appointed Head of Department of Botany for a 4-year term on 1 August, 1983 and reappointed for a second term of 2 years on 1 August, 1987. He was appointed a Justice of Peace by Oyo State Government on 26 September, 1994. Also, he was a Visiting Senior Lecturer to the University of Calabar, Cross River State in the 1978/1979 academic session. He served as external examiner to various Universities in Nigeria.

Then, a Senior Lecturer, Late Professor went with Drs Akueshi, I. O. Fasidi and S.A. Odunfa to set up the Department of Botany, University of Ibadan (Jos Campus) on 12 October, 1974. While Dr Akueshi stayed back in Jos, the others returned with then Dr Oso to the University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Late Professor Oso was among the pioneer team of the University Consultancy Group i.e. Environmental Pollution Monitoring Group that carried out environmental studies in the Niger Delta in the 1980s.

He was also a consultant to the Federal Ministry of Environment on Water Hyacinth Management in Nigeria. He, in collaboration with his students, designed and operated the Water Hyacinth Sewage Treatment Facility as an Alternative Option in the University of Ibadan for Obafemi Awolowo Hall and Central Sewage Treatment. He supervised many Ph.D. students in

different areas of Microbiology and many of them are now successful academics in various Universities in Nigeria and administrators in Research Institutes.

Late Professor Oso was a co-founder, pioneer President and Fellow of the Mycological Society of Nigeria (MYCOSON). Furthermore, he was a member of the British Mycological Society.

An accomplished academic and scientist, he retired from the University of Ibadan on 30 September, 2005. He joined Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti (ABUAD) in 2006 and served as the Director of Research and Extension from 2010 till his demise.

Professor Oso is survived by his wife, Mrs Beatrice F. Oso, children and grandchildren.

May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

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