

OBITUARY

Prof. Gboyega Ogunbanjo



The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) learned with great shock and sadness of the passing away of its second Vice-President and Immediate Past President of the College of Family Physicians of South Africa, Prof. Gboyega Ogunbanjo, on Saturday 17 August 2019.

Gboyega Ogunbanjo, or Prof. O as he would come to be fondly known to many, was born on 24 June 1958 in Lagos, Nigeria, to Alice and the late Adolphus Ogunbanjo. He married Priscilla Effa (Director: Assessments and Examinations at the National Department of Basic Education, South Africa) on 10 November 1990 in Calabar, Nigeria. They were blessed with two children, Olusegun, aged 27 years, and Oluseyi, aged 17 years.

The young Gboyega completed his primary school education at Ladi-Lak Institute Primary School, Yaba, Lagos, and attended the famous Igbobi College, Yaba, Lagos from 1971 to 1976. He graduated from the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, in 1982 and completed his training in family medicine at the Medical University of Southern Africa (now Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU)), Pretoria, in 1996.

Prof. O was well respected and a giant of our medical fraternity, whose span of work reached far and beyond the shores of our continent. Known for his passion for serving the most vulnerable of our society through his chosen specialty of family medicine, he held Fellowships of the College of the Family Physicians of South Africa, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, the Australasian College of Tropical Medicine,

the South African Academy of Family Practice, the West African College of Physicians and the College of Primary Care Physicians of Zimbabwe.

Prof. O was a full Professor and Chief Specialist in the Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care at SMU, of which he was head; an Honorary Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health at Walter Sisulu University; an adjunct Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Botswana; and a Professor in the Dept. de Medicine de Famille Université Protestante au Congo, Kinshasa, DRC. He was also Vice-President of the South African Academy of Family Physicians, Honorary Registrar: Examinations and Credentials Committee of the CMSA from 2016 to 2019, and a Faculty member of Advancing Research Ethics Training in Southern Africa (ARESA).

In terms of research activities, Prof. O had 187 publications in local and international peer-reviewed medical journals, including book chapters. He supervised research dissertations of over 90 postgraduate students, of whom 80 have completed their master's degrees in family medicine. He served as an external examiner for 96 master's research dissertations from Health Sciences faculties in South Africa, Malaysia, Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Rwanda and Ghana. In addition, he was an external examiner for the departments of Family Medicine at the universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Pretoria, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State and Walter Sisulu and Stellenbosch universities in South Africa; Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda; Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya; Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; the National University of Rwanda; the Protestant University of the Congo, DRC; the University of Botswana and the University of Ghana. He was the recipient of the SMU Senate Awards for Research Excellence from 2002 to 2005 for the 'best research output' (clinical) and from 2006 to 2008 as an 'established researcher' in the School of Medicine.

Prof. O was a co-researcher on the Coping Strategies of Health Personnel Project in collaboration with the Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium (1996 - 1998); project co-director: South Africa/Australia Joint

Links Project 402:2000 (AusAid) - JCU Australia, Medunsa and DoH, Mpumalanga (2000 - 2001); principal investigator on the SPEEDEL Study on Type 2 Diabetes and Diabetic Nephropathy (October 2005 - December 2006); 2007 Fellow of the Foundation for the Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER), Philadelphia, USA; and principal sub-investigator on the CREOLE Study: Comparison of Three Combination Therapies in Lowering Blood Pressure in Black Africans, GSK Open Lab Phase 4, March 2017 - March 2020.

He was an editor-in-chief of the *South African Family Practice Journal*, editor of *Transactions*, the journal of the CMSA, overseas editorial adviser for the *Nigerian Postgraduate Medical Journal*, an editorial board member for the *Southern African Journal of Infectious Diseases*, an editorial board member for *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, and an international advisory board member for the *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, to mention a few.

Prof. O was invited as a plenary speaker to many national, African and global conferences on various topics in the field of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare. He presented 47 papers and 34 posters at over 80 conferences spanning a period of over 22 years in countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, China, Australia, Malaysia, Austria, the UK, Slovenia, the USA, Belgium and Singapore.

Prof. O was a pillar of strength in the CMSA, serving our organisation for several years in various capacities with great tenacity and dedication. He also brought a lot of fun to the CMSA, with his traditional bet collection for guessing the correct duration of the guest speech at our Admission Ceremonies.

It is rare in life to work with people who are consummate professionals, but most of all who have heart. Prof. O had both these in abundance.

To young health professionals he was a colleague, a friend, a father, a sounding board, a solid rock - but most of all he was kindness and heart personified. We are gutted at his passing, as he leaves a great void and big shoes to fill.

His towering legacy will not only be in his academic excellence and the tireless work

he did for our country, our continent and the globe – it will be in each heart that he touched with his kindness and generosity. He will be sadly missed by the whole CMSA family.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Ogunbanjo family and friends. We mourn

with you as we bid a great son of the soil farewell.

Dr Flavia Senkubuge

President: Colleges of Medicine of South Africa

Prof. Derek Hellenberg

President: College of Family Physicians, South Africa

Dr Robert Oyedipe

On behalf of the Ogunbanjo family