

DAY OF TRIBUTES: PROFESSOR ISAAC ADETAYO GRILLO

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SUMMARY

Professor Isaac Adetayo Grillo was born on January 15, 1931, in Lagos. He had both his elementary and secondary school education at Baptist Academy, Lagos. His autobiography recorded that he excelled brilliantly at the school. He earned the Doctor of Medicine at the University of Kansas in 1960. He completed his residency training in General Surgery and Cardiothoracic Surgery, passing the American Board of General Surgery and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery examinations in 1966 and 1967 respectively. He returned to Nigeria in 1968. Of particular note, Professor Grillo led a team that performed the first open heart surgery in Nigeria by a group of all Nigerian Doctors and Nurses in 1978. He lived an illustrious life. Always wanting to excel and do his very best, he became Nigeria's most famous Cardiothoracic Surgeon during his time. Professor Grillo passed on after a brief illness on the 4th of April, 2022.

PROFESSOR ISAAC ADETAYO GRILLO

(1931 - 2020): Prof. Grillo made significant contributions to Cardiothoracic Surgery in Nigeria. At the University College Hospital, Ibadan, he set a track record worthy of a man of talent and excellent training. He led the team that performed the first open heart surgery in Nigeria by a group of all Nigeria Doctors and Nurses. His publications include over 80 peer review articles, chapters in published books, and his autobiography titled "Great wonders from His Hands unto our hands" an account of his practice of Surgery.

In retirement, he spent his days at his quiet residence at the Ikolaba estate, Ibadan. He enjoyed moments with members of his family and colleagues who often paid him visits. At a time, August 1990 to November 2003, his Ikolaba home provided accommodation for a

Church (New Haven Baptist Church) and a place of prayer. Professor Grillo attended the Oritamefa Baptist Church, Ibadan, on Sundays where he played the violin as a member of the Choir. He made himself available as counselor on many matters, especially to young couples. A visit to his home always included his taking the visitor to his study stacked with books on surgery and other specialties of medicine. He meticulously kept the original prints of his publications in neatly stacked photograph film boxes. He spent time describing the many passions and moments that led to his publications, one after the other. I was fortunate to have had the privilege of spending some days with him in his study. During those days, I sat with great interest and quietly listened to him as he talked about his publications.



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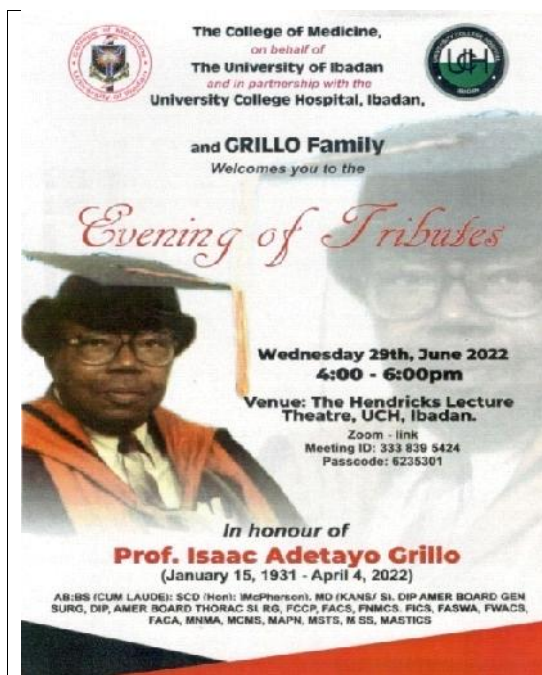
<https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwazobiareportersng.com> (accessed on 01 July 2022)

Professor Grillo's astute memory remained unchanged all through his last days. Every minute with him was a memorable experience. A man whose command of English was extraordinary, conversations with him were like sitting and watching movies laced with high quality imagery. His words flowed smoothly into very colorful scenes. A great man of academics, he had many words to describe the need for the revamping of higher institutions, medical schools, and teaching hospitals in Nigeria. He was a great surgeon, mentor, teacher, healer, friend, and parent. He loved music as much as he loved Cardiothoracic Surgery. Professor

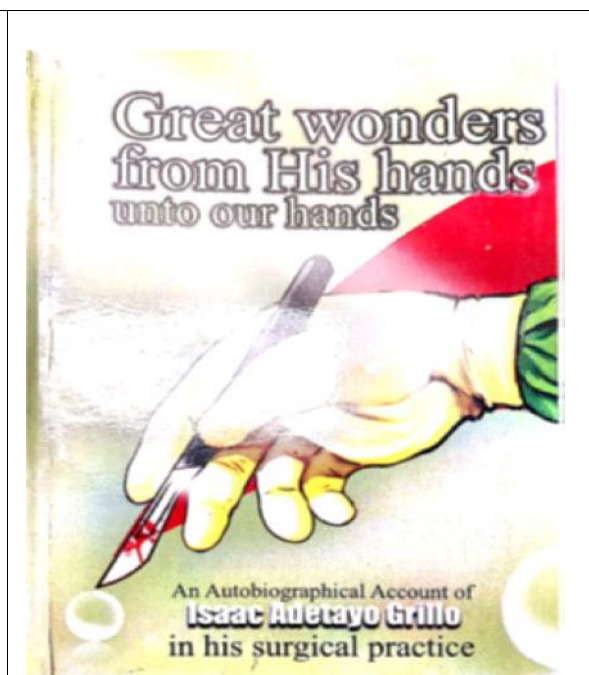
Grillo passed on quietly after a brief illness on the 4th of April, 2022.

At the evening of tributes in his honor, held on Wednesday 29 June, 2022 at the Paul Hendrickse Lecture theatre, the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, the following citation and tributes were read.

By Prof. S.O. Ogunlade, Head of Department, Department of Surgery, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan.



College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, invitation card to the evening of Tributes in Honour of Prof. Adetayo Grillo, on Wednesday, 29th June, 2022



Autobiography of Professor Grillo published in 2011 by Positive Press, Iwo Road, Ibadan, Nigeria. ISBN 978-978-50115-0

CITATION OF PROFESSOR ISAAC ADETAYO GRILLO

By: Prof. S.O. Ogunlade, Head of Department, Department of Surgery, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Professor Isaac Adetayo Grillo was born on January 15, 1931, in Lagos. He had both his elementary and secondary schools' education at Baptist Academy, Lagos. His autobiography recorded that he excelled brilliantly in the school.

He later travelled to United States of America by divine providence.

He attended McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas, USA from 1952 – 1955, University of Kansas, USA 1955 – 1956 where he bagged Bachelor of Science (Biology), Com Laude. In the college, he distinguished

himself on campus as a student of great ability by taking each semester more hours than normal, taking enough hours for not only a major in Chemistry, but enough hours for a major in Biology.

Professor Grillo went on to Medical School at the University of Kansas getting his MD in 1960. He continued in Medicine by obtaining his four-year degree in Surgery at the Homer G. Phillips Hospital at St. Louis Missouri, in 1965.

Professor Grillo had his residency training in Cardiothoracic Surgery in Olive View Hospital, Olive California in 1966, Highland General Hospital, Oakland, California in 1967 and Veterans Administration Hospital, Livermore, California in 1967. He was Board certified by both the American

Board of General Surgery and American Board of Thoracic Surgery.

Professor I.A. Grillo was appointed Lecturer in the Department of Surgery on November 2, 1968. He rose through the ranks and was promoted Professor of Surgery on October 1, 1978. Professor Grillo was awarded foreign students scholarship; McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas and a Research Fellow, University of Kansas. The Japanese Government granted him “Overseas Technical Cooperative Agency Fellowship in Clinical Oncology and Flexible Bronchofiberscopy in 1971. He was a Fulbright – Hayes Scholar, United States Government Fellowship in Cardiovascular Surgery, Pacific Medical Center, San Francisco, California in 1977.

Professor Grillo was a Fellow of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria and Fellow of West Africa College of Surgeon. McPherson College, his alma mater honoured him with the award if Honorary Doctor of Science (h.c) degree on October 9, 1987, in U.S.A.

He was an external examiner to most medical schools of the first generation, Universities in Nigeria.

He was the Head of Department of Surgery from 1985 to 1988. During his headship, he improved on the curricular for the teaching of students and was instrumental in increasing the number of resident doctors in Surgery. He was warmth to interact with and a father to the student and residents while a friend to his colleague.

Prof. Isaac A. Grillo published widely. He contributed 6 chapters in various texts including companion to Surgery in Africa and had 83 journals in various Medical Journals in America.

Prof. Isaac Adetayo Grillo was an astute Cardiothoracic Surgeon. He pioneered Open Heart Surgery in University College Hospital in the 80s. He was happily married and survived by many children. He died in the early hours of Monday, April 4, 2022. May his soul rest in peace.

TRIBUTES IN HONOR OF PROFESSOR ISAAC GRILLO

By: Professor Olayinka O. Omigbodun, Provost, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan

I stand before you this evening, on behalf of all staff, students and indeed all alumni of the College of

Medicine, University of Ibadan who are spread across the globe. No doubt that many of our staff and alumni benefited from the wealth of knowledge of the man we are all gathered here this evening not to mourn, but to celebrate, Prof. Isaac Adetayo Grillo. Indeed, Professor Grillo can be described using diverse appellations, all depending on the relationships that each one of us had with him. From the point of view of the College of Medicine Administration, we can aptly describe Professor Grillo as a teacher of teachers, a mentor of mentors, and a Field Marshall in the field of Surgery. He was a great Cardiothoracic Surgeon who pioneered Open Heart Surgery in the University College Hospital in the 1980s. He served meritoriously as the Head of Surgery in CoMUI between 1985 and 1988. “I have very fond memories of sitting in his class during Surgery II posting as he took us through several radiological images depicting various condition. He was by all standards a great teacher”.

Several other students who had the rare privilege of training under this seasoned academic and clinician equally had fond memories about him. In the words of Major General (Dr.) Shina Ogunbiyi (Rtd.), MNI, a member of the 1982 Class, “Late Prof. Isaac Grillo was an astute Cardiothoracic Surgeon and a great teacher who simplified the art and science of cardiothoracic surgery to his students with awe-inspiring images and analogies. His legacies live on after him. May his soul rest in perfect peace. Amen”.

Also, Dr. Abraham Ariyo of the Class of 1988, who is also the incoming President of ICOMAA, North America wrote: “in 1985, when we were just new to UCH, we watched his ward rounds as they moved along the corridor. His rounds with his colleagues (Professor Adebo, Professor Brimmo and Professor Osinowo) were special. We called them ‘The Lions club’ and we used to feel sorry for their interns. I learned later what a privilege it was to be his intern! He showed discipline and love. He inspired us to be cardiovascular specialists. This is the passing of a giant. May the Good Lord rest his soul in everlasting peace”. There are several other alumni of the College who have spoken so highly Professor Grillo.

To the immediate and extended family of Professor Grillo, the Department of Surgery and all his professional colleagues and mentees across the globe, I commiserate with you all as we pray for the repose of the soul of our great teacher, mentor and benefactor Professor Isaac Adetayo Grillo. Rest on dear Sir.



Professor S.O. Ogunlade, reading the Citation of Professor Isaac Adetayo Grillo at the Evening of tributes held on Wednesday 29th June, 2022, at the Paul Hendricks Lecture theatre, UCH, Ibadan, Nigeria

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR ISAAC ADETAYO GRILLO

By: Professor Jesse Abiodun Otegbayo, Chief Medical Director, University College Hospital, Ibadan,

To teach is to touch a life forever and Professor Grillo was indeed an iconic lecturer. It is with a heart of gratitude that I write this tribute to an iconic professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Prof. Isaac Adetayo Grillo who died on the early hours of Monday the 4th of April, 2022.

PROFESSOR ISAAC ADETAYO GRILLO was born in the Lafiaji Quarters, Lagos Island, Lagos on January 15, 1931. Prof. Grillo obtained his M.D. from Kansas University in 1960. From 1965 through 1966, Prof. Grillo trained in Cardiothoracic Surgery. He later moved to California and became one of the first Thoracic Surgeons at Highland Hospital, Oakland. Prof. Grillo took and passed, in his first attempt, the General Surgery Board Exams in 1966 and the Thoracic Surgery Board Exams in 1967. From 1967 to 1968, Prof. Grillo worked as a physician at the San Leandro Tuberculosis Hospital while teaching thoracic surgery to residents at Highland Hospital.

Though he studied abroad, his love for his country, Nigeria made him bring home his vast knowledge in 1968 and UCH is extremely glad and fortunate to have housed such an erudite professor. For approximately twenty years, from 1968 to 1988, he was successfully,

a Lecturer, Professor and Head of the Department of Surgery at the Nigeria's Premier Medical School in Ibadan, Nigeria. During this time, he was the only thoracic surgeon in Nigeria. Prof. Grillo was a man who stood out with his teachings and outstanding surgeries in the cardiothoracic arm of the surgery department.

Isaac Grillo led a group of exclusively indigenous Nigerian cardiothoracic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pump technician and theatre (operating room) nurses, in the first Open-Heart Surgery in Nigeria which took place in UCH, Ibadan. Without the assistance or presence of a foreign medical personnel. UCH trained these team members in the US and ensured they were proficient before embarking on this innovative procedure.

My most vivid memory of this wonderful human being and scholar was in 1988 when he was the Head of Department of Surgery, University of Ibadan. His kind, caring demeanor and leadership were unparalleled in all my school experience. He was a true mentor and was loved by all.

Our hearts are with his loved ones and I admonish all to strive to be the best they can be at any point in life.

May the soul of Professor Adetayo Grillo continue to rest peacefully in the bosom of His maker, amen.