

## IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR ADELOLA ADELOYE (1935 – 2021)

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This is a special edition of the Chronicles of Medical History in Memory of the great Medical Sage, Professor Adelola Adeloye. Professor Adeloye's achievements in Medicine, Neurosurgery, and Medical History are extraordinary and are globally recognized among the greatest contributions to medical literature. Professor Adeloye was born in Ilesa in Western Nigeria on July 18th, 1935, had his medical training at the world famous College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and postgraduate medical training in the United Kingdom. He returned to Nigeria in 1967 and through the years made significant contributions to the practice of Neurosurgery and wrote excellent books

on Medical History in Africa. He lived a very fulfilled and balanced life. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, he passed on after a brief illness. The two short articles featured in this edition of the Chronicles of Medical History (*Professor Adelola Adeloye (1935-2021) An Icon in the Annals of Medicine* and *PROFESSOR ADELOLA ADELOYE A Name among the World's Greatest Doctors*) are reproduced with the permission of the Author, Dr Abraham Ariyo MD, in honor of Professor Adelola Adeloye.

**Dr. Obaro S. Michael**

**Figure:** Staff of the Department of Surgery, University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1971.

**PROFESSOR ADELOLA ADELOYE  
(1935-2021)**  
**AN ICON IN THE ANNALS OF MEDICINE**

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Adeloye-Odeku Disease, a congenital disease of the brain, was first described by Adeloye A and Odeku EL in their landmark publication in 1971. They were Nigeria's second and first Neurosurgeons, respectively. The existence and nomenclature of this disease, which is self-named, is now established worldwide and has been fully engraved into the lexicon of the world's medical literature in perpetuity.

This week (Monday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> 2021), we celebrate the life of a great physician-surgeon, Adelola Adeloye, an Emeritus Professor of Neurosurgery at Nigeria's premier medical school, The College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, and retired Consultant Neurosurgeon, University College Hospital, Ibadan.

Adelola Adeloye was born in Ilesa in Western Nigeria on July 18th, 1935, and passed on April 6th, 2021. He was the first of 5 children born to Ebenezer Ajayi and Elizabeth Adeloye. His father, whom he personally described as a "Village genius," originally hails from Ikole-Ekiti, but worked in Ilesa as a mechanic. He invented a cassava grater, a double cassava grating machine, and a cotton wool spinner machine. Adelola



Professor Adelola Adeloye

attended primary school at St. Paul's CMS School in Ikole-Ekiti (1941-1946) and secondary at Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti (1947-1952). At Christ's School, he was the Government's academic Scholar (1949-1952), the School Prefect/President (1952) and the Football/Soccer captain (1952). He graduated in 1952 with Distinction in the Cambridge School Leaving Certificate Examinations.

The young Adeloye was looking into a career in mechanical engineering until he met his father's friend. This friend told him that his father had done everything with machines. He should do something else. Adeloye, who had never heard of medicine at the time, asked, "What else can I do?" The old man, who had just arrived from Ibadan where he saw white coated doctors at the hospital, told him Medicine. Adeloye later moved to Ibadan, only to find out that he needed physics and chemistry, classes he never took before, to enter Medicine. He had a word of encouragement that because of his performance in Additional Mathematics, he should not have difficulties with those subjects if he took them seriously. He took classes in these subjects, passed, and then took the entrance examination to the then University of London (now University of Ibadan) and passed.

Thus, he gained admission into the prestigious, University College Ibadan in 1953, to study Medicine. From here on, he blazed the trail on his long and remarkable surgical journey into the top Medical institutions in the world and into the lexicon of the

world's medical archives. He was among the first set of Nigerian students to complete their entire medical education in Ibadan, Nigeria, obtaining the MBBS (London) degree in 1960. Further, he was the youngest in his graduating class of 1960 and the best graduating student in Chemical Pathology.

Subsequently, he embarked on further training as a Postgraduate Fellow in Anatomy, General Surgery Resident at Hammersmith, London; Neurotrauma training at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford and Neurosurgery training at the North Staffordshire (1963 - 1964). Adeloye passed the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP Edinburgh) in Neurology that qualified him as a Neurologist in 1965, and the Royal College of Surgeons of England (FRCS) in 1966 that qualified him as a Neurosurgeon. As a result, he preferred to refer to himself as a Neurological Surgeon (a Neurophysician who operates on the Nervous System) rather than a Neurosurgeon.

In 1967, Professor Adeloye returned to UCH, Ibadan, Nigeria, to join the Department of Neurosurgery under the tutelage of the late distinguished and pioneering Prof. E.L. Odeku. He rose through the ranks and became Professor of Neurological Surgery in October 1972, and Head of Surgery (1974-77). He became Rockefeller Research Fellow in Experimental Teratology at the University of Cincinnati, USA, (1972 -73) and Ratanji Dalai Scholar of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (1973-74) for the study of CNS malformations (Spina Bifida Cystica). Further, he obtained a Masters degree in Surgery (MS) of the University of London in 1973, with a thesis on Neurosurgery.

In 1987, he worked as a Consultant Neurosurgeon at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and served as the Head of Neurosurgery at Al-Adan Government Hospital in Kuwait (1988 -1990). In 1991, he became the Foundation Professor and Head of Surgery at the University of Malawi, where he also served as the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Acting Principal of the College of Medicine, University of Malawi. He was also a representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Malawi.

Professor Adeloye was an Honorary Fellow, The American College of Surgeons (2009); Foundation member and President, Pan-African Association of Neurological Sciences (PAANS) (1972, 2000-2002); President, Neurosurgery section, Nigerian Society of Neurological Sciences (NSNS) (1988); President, Surgical Association of Malawi (1998-2000); Foundation President, Neurosurgical Society of East

and Central Africa (1999). He was elected as Honorary President for Life of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS) in September 2001, becoming the first Black African to be so honoured by that world body. He was also Honorary President for Life of the PAANS, the Nigerian Society of Neurological Sciences (NSNS), and the Nigerian Academy of Neurological Surgeons (NANS).

Professor Adeloye was a prolific writer and author. He published extensively on Neuro-Surgery and the history of West African Medicine. Further, he has written books about his loved ones like his father (Village genius) and his late wife (The biography of Codanda Kamala Kalappa Adeloye). He had authored over 400 published manuscripts and contributed to Textbook of Medicine and Surgery, including self-named description of a novel disease in the annals of world's medical archives. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the Nigerian Medical Journal (1980-1990); Sub-Editor, East and Central African Journal of Surgery, and Member, Editorial Board of multiple scientific journals that include (Neurosurgery, African Journal of Neurological Sciences, Paraplegia, Child's Nervous System, Brazilian Journal of Neurosurgery, African Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences, Dokita, etc).`

Prof Adeloye was married to the late Dr. Kamala Codanda Kappala Adeloye, a medical graduate of Madras University in India (1967) and a Pediatrician. She was also the Head of the Employee Health Center (Jaja Clinic), at the University of Ibadan campus. They had three children and six grand-children. The city of Madras in India is now referred to as Chennai.

Professor Adeloye, you were simply a person that possessed lifetime humanistic qualities of brilliance, compassion, dedication, and optimism. In our hearts, you will forever remain our teacher of teachers, and professor of professors. While on earth, you had ensured that your name Adeloye is fully engraved in the lexicon of the world's medical literature, we pray that the good Lord engraves your name among His greatest servants and grant you glory, everlasting peace and eternal life in Heaven.

Today, we celebrate you, Professor Adeloye, rest in peace.

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## **PROFESSOR ADELOLA ADELOYE** **A Star among the World's Greatest Doctors**

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### **SUMMARY**

*As we mourn the passage of a great icon in the history of medical practice in Nigeria, this short essay examines the place of the unforgettable case report, the Adeloye-Odeku Disease, which gained world acclaim. Professor Adeloye, whose life we celebrate today, remains in the company of the world's most exclusive club of medical geniuses whose names have been eponymously engraved with self-named disease descriptions in the annals of world's medical literature.*

Adeloye Adelola of the 'Adeloye-Odeku Disease' passed on to glory this week (April 6, 2021). He was an Emeritus Professor of Neurosurgery at Nigeria's premier medical school, The College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, and retired Consultant Neurosurgeon, University College Hospital, Ibadan. He will be remembered as one of the world's greatest physician-surgeons that ever lived.

Since the existence of methodical documentation in the archives of medical literature, only a handful of practitioners have contributed immensely enough such that a disease was eponymously named after them. To achieve this feat, first, a practitioner must have a mastery of all the existing diseases in the entire annals of medicine to recognize a new disease. Second, he must have an astute insight to be able to recognize the eureka moment of discovery. Third, he must have a conducive environment, vis-à-vis, an excellent medical citadel where medical geniuses aggregate and can help polish the gem to describe a novel disease. Professor Adelola Adeloye was and achieved all these.

Professor Adeloye was a master in medical knowledge and a gifted surgeon. He was astute enough to have identified a new disease while under the tutelage of the pioneering world's First Black Neurosurgeon, Professor Odeku. Both were working during a truly golden era of African Medicine in the 1970s at the University College Hospital, (UCH) Ibadan. In the last century, there were close similarities between the medical occurrences in the 1970s at UCH and occurrences in the 1930-40s at Harvard Medical School Hospitals in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.



Bust of Professor E. Latunde Odeku at the Medical Library of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

As a Fellow at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School in the 1990s, in addition to the rigorous medical learning regimen and friendly colleagues, there was this constant presence of medical history all around me. One of the common stories that floated around at the time goes like this. A young fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital named Dr. Harry Klinefelter was clerking a patient, but noticed that this patient's clinical features were unusual and did not conform to the existing diseases in the medical

annals. He was perplexed and reached out to his Chief, Dr. Fuller Albright. After the two still could not figure out this new clinical constellation, they reached across the street for Dr. Harvey Cushing, the Neurosurgeon and Surgeon in Chief, at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital (now Brigham and Women's Hospital) for consultation.

It is interesting to note that, the young fellow, Harry Klinefelter ended up describing the patient in medical literature. This disease became *Klinefelter syndrome*. He lent his name to a disease like his supervisor, Fuller Albright of *Albright syndrome* and of course, the great Harvey Cushing of *Cushing syndrome*.

Thus, our Professor Adeloye, whose life we celebrate today, remains in the company of the world's most exclusive club of medical geniuses whose names have been eponymously engraved with self-named disease descriptions in the annals of world's medical literature. He, along with the late Professor Odeku as in *Adeloye-Odeku Disease*, Harry Klinefelter as in *Klinefelter syndrome*, Fuller Albright as in *Albright syndrome*, and Harvey Cushing as in *Cushing syndrome* were all unique. They were some of the world's greatest, and Professor Adeloye is among these greatest physician-surgeons of all time.

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