

TRIBUTE

Jonathan Chukwuemeka Azubuiké, Emeritus Professor, OFR, MD, FAAP, FRCP (Edin), FMCPaed., FWACP, Distinguished Paediatrician, PNMC

It is both easy and difficult to write a tribute to a man like Jonathan Chukwuemeka Azubuiké, OFR. It is easy because there is a wide assortment of aspects on which to dwell. On the other hand, it is difficult because there is a risk of not covering enough grounds to do him justice.

Yes, JC Azubuiké was a richly accomplished man in academic, professional and administrative circles. The evidence is there for all to see – academic qualifications from three continents, a Professor of Paediatrics at 41, Emeritus Professor in due course, a founding father of neonatology in Nigeria, Distinguished Paediatrician awardee of the Paediatric Association, a teacher and examiner of the highest standards, Deputy Provost of the College of Medicine, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Faculty Chairman of Paediatrics, Past President of the National Postgraduate College, Chairman of the Medical and Dental Council. We salute you Sir, for your litany of great achievements!

It is difficult to discountenance or forget achievements written down in book form. “Paediatrics and Child Health in a Tropical Region,” the most comprehensive textbook of its kind to come out of Africa was midwived by JC Azubuiké. He shepherded and coordinated the galaxy of intellectuals who authored chapters of the book, not just through one edition but a hat trick of editions! In doing so, he not only broke down barriers to knowledge, he announced to the world that Nigerian scholars were a force to be reckoned with. We, and generations of students who have read and will read that book are eternally grateful!

We honour the passing of a man who made a difference to the lives of others. He mentored many paediatricians who not only became professors but in turn mentored others to become professors. Sir, those who were privileged to learn from you at some point in life all have pleasant memories to recount. Some would say that you could name every student in the Paediatrics class – except maybe the truants. Some would delightfully repeat your trademark words like “Oh boy!” or “Let the history flow!” On behalf of them all, we doff our hats to you!

JCA was not all about academics and Medicine. He was a devoted family man and was very visible in social circles. We defer to family members to extol his domestic virtues but must hasten to state that he was filled with mirth and humour. He enjoyed his tennis and played an enviable role in the Rotary Club over which he presided in two separate tenures.

This tribute is clearly not exhaustive but it has to be truncated somewhere. Suffice it to say that The Paediatric Association of Nigeria remembers JC Azubuiké as an **ICON** and a **LEGEND**. We take solace in seeing his footprint so indelibly stamped in the sands of time. William Shakespeare must have had him in mind when he wrote, “~ *His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, “This was a man.”* ~

Adieu, great man!