



Dr. Joseph Ugbodaga Igietseme

February 17, 1955 - May 30, 2022

On Wednesday, May 24th, 2022, Dr. Joseph Ugbodaga Igietseme passed away in Stone Mountain, GA at the age of 67. He was a passionate scientist, educator, and citizen; and a dedicated father to three adult children.

Dr. Joseph Igietseme was born on February 17th, 1955 to the late Igietseme Ugbodaga and Chief Adishetu Ugbodaga Igietseme in Egori Waterside in the Etsako East Local Government Area of Agenebode, Edo State, Nigeria. He attended St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Lokoja; St. Peter's College, Agenebode (West Africa School Certificate, 1974); and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (B.Sc Biochemistry, 1980). After completing his National Youth Service, he worked as a Medical Representative at R.T. Briscoe Pharmaceuticals (1981-83) before emigrating to the United States to attend Georgetown University. He matriculated with his Ph.D in Microbiology in 1987.

Dr. Igietseme's academic appointments started in 1989 at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. He moved his family to Atlanta, GA in 1996 when he was appointed as an Associate Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at Morehouse School of Medicine. There, he attained the rank of Full Professor of Immunology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology in 2002. He was appointed the Chief of the Molecular Pathogenesis Laboratory at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta, GA, in 2002. He also held a faculty appointment at Emory Medical School.

Dr. Igietseme's scientific research pursuits on infectious disease and immunology were guided by a profound understanding of and curiosity for microbiology and pathogenesis. His efforts yielded numerous grant awards through the National Institute of Health (NIH) and he was a prolific author of peer reviewed research publications, review articles, and presentations. His accolades, awards, and recognitions are innumerable, and include having received the Outstanding Georgia Citizenship award from the Secretary of State of GA, USA in 2001. Dr. Igietseme was also presented with the 2010 Charles C. Shepard Sciences Awards by the CDC Director and President Obama's White House Senior Advisor on Science and Technology for his 2009 article entitled The Role of Lymphocytes in the Pathogenesis of Chlamydia Disease.

Dr. JUI (as he was fondly called) had a well known passion for knowledge as well as family and national connectedness. While he was a proud naturalized U.S. Citizen, he was very conscious of the need to maintain ties and investments in his homeland. He supported diaspora community empowerment and advocacy for the purposes of the progress of Nigeria as a nation, particularly in biomedical education, research and development; and local and national governance. He was a committed member and leader of several Nigerian and African diaspora organizations, representing Afenmai, Etsako, Weppa Wano, and Usagbe peoples worldwide. Organizations such as the CDC African Public Health Professionals (OAPHP) and the African Initiatives Group also enjoyed the benefits of his leadership and mentorship. He recently led the development of the new Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO) South-Savannah chapter, which features an innovative media station that he envisioned for use of dialogue and discussion across and throughout the diaspora. In his free time, he enjoyed watching boxing, listening to music, and exploring native cuisines.

Dr. Joseph Igietseme is survived by his wife, Mrs. Grace Omoaka Igietseme; former wife, Ms. Veronica Emeke Igietseme (née Onwude) and their three children: Gabriel (36), Nene (35), and Jojackson (affectionately nicknamed JJ, 31). His surviving brothers and sisters include: Mrs. Victoria Egbeaduma, Mallam Musa Igietseme, Madam Theresa Okenyi, Pastor John Igietseme, Madam Ogena Hoste Duke, and Mr. ThankGod Igietseme. He touched many lives and his professional associates; friends and family, including former classmates, homeboys, and cousins; as well as nephews and nieces all mourn his sudden passing.

Tribute Wall

NA

“ My deepest condolences to his family. I knew Dr. Joe from professional groups & he always had a zest for life and mentoring others for success. His legacy shall forever live on through those like me that he inspired. Amen - Prof. Nkechi Agwu

Nkechi Madonna Agwu - June 30, 2023 at 02:49 AM

DG

So sorry to hear of the passing of my very good friend and brother, Dr. Joseph Igietseme. A supremely kind, gentle, honourable, decent, selfless and immelely personable and humble human being. Joe and I worked for decades trying to provide opportunities (mostly in STEM education and, consequently, socieconomics) for many of our citizens in Nigeria. For example, we worked together in setting up a platform for empowering (through provision of educational opportunities) millions of kids in Nigeria's north (aka ``almajirai") the chance to acquire quality education and, consequently, partake in the knowledge-based economy. We also worked together in designing a program to enable the Nigerian diaspora contribute more meaningfully to the Nigerian education system (through partnership with the NUC). Joe was a true Nigerian who spent a lifetime trying to promote everything that was great about our nation. Joe was full of energy and extremely kind even to people who were not kind to him. He was the most loyal friend I know. Even when he disagreed with you, Joe will also smile and find nice things to say about your position. Joe was always the voice of reason, unity, and quest for finding common ground (almost to a fault... he was ``too nice" as I always said to him). He was a rare breed. The news of his passing came to me as a complete shock. Nigeria has lost a great sould. A gem. A national treasure. Adieu, Joe.

Dr. Abba Gumel - December 02, 2024 at 08:00 PM

EF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family in this time of sorrow. May God comfort you through his word the Bible and the gift of prayer. Thinking of you all.

Evans family - August 11, 2022 at 05:24 AM