

**CITATION ON
PROFESSOR JULIUS A. OKOJIE, OON,
B.Sc. (Ibadan), M.F. (Yale), Ph.D. (Ibadan), D.SC, FAAS, FFAN, FASN, FSAN
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS CONFERMENT WITH EMERITUS PROFESSORSHIP OF
THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA. NIGERIA**

In the tradition of the Okojie family of Uromi, in Edo State, Julius Amioba Okojie who was born on 27th July, 1948, attended the Government School, Uromi. He had his Secondary School Education at Annunciation Catholic College (ACC), Irrua, and the Higher School Certificate (HSC), at the Federal Government School, Warri.

In 1969, he was admitted to the University of Ibadan, Ibadan to pursue a Degree Programme in Forestry. He graduated in 1972 in the Second Class Upper Division. A few years later he proceeded to the prestigious Yale University, New Haven Connecticut USA, for the Master's Degree in Forestry and he obtained distinction in Statistics and Mensuration. On his return to Nigeria, his quest for greater challenges in academics led him to enrol for the doctorate degree programme, at the University of Ibadan, in 1978. He was awarded the Ph.D. in Forest Resources Management, by the University, in 1981. Before proceeding for his Master's Degree in the USA, Julius Amioba Okojie had worked briefly between 1972 and 1974 as Research Officer at the Forestry Research Institute, Ibadan. In 1978 he joined the services of the University of Ibadan, as Lecturer II and was promoted Senior Lecturer in 1983. He was appointed Professor of Forest Resource Management, Federal Universities of Agriculture, Abeokuta, in 1990.

Professor Okojie has held many administrative positions at national and international levels. These include:

A. At the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

- i. Vice-Chancellor** - September 1996 –August 2001
 - As Vice-Chancellor, he Chaired some important Council Committees, including the Appointment and Promotions Committees. He also was the Chairman of Senate, and Works and Payments Management Committees.

During his tenure as Vice-Chancellor, the University achieved the following:

- Establishment of the University Farm, obtained approval from the NUC for the Veterinary Medicine and Engineering Colleges. Established the Quality Assurance Unit for the University.
- The University was ranked No 1 by NUC accreditation exercise, during his tenure. Universities now have the Quality Assurance Department based on FUNAAB model.
- Aggressive recruitment of academic and Administrative Staff.

- Final movement to the permanent site, Establishment of the research farm (cattle, sheep, goat, piggery, oil palm plantation).
- Establishment of the UNAAB Community Bank, Cooperative Society and UNAAB FOODS (Garri, Honey, Both Palm wine and Palm oil. UNAAB Garri was approved for the Strategic Grains Reserve).
- Establishment of 150 hectares of cashew plantation and cashew processing plant, supported by a Grant of ₦20 million, while Universities of Agriculture, Umudike and Makurdi received ₦90 million and ₦50 million, respectively.
- Development of a cowpea variety, engagement of contract farmers and collaboration with NESTLE. NESTLE established the Food Science Library for the University.
- Computerization of the Central and College libraries, Internet facilities (Use of V-SAT) for e-mail facilities, Subscription to TIN-LIB (Library in the BOX, Cornell University, USA).
- Furnished COLPLANT, COLNAS and built the multipurpose building, COLERM and COLANIM. The COLAMRUCS building was 60% completed. Expanded the University Clinic and the male and female Hostels. Improvement of the Transportation System for Staff and Students.
- The University purchased the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor Lodges at Ibara Housing Estate.

ii. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor (August 1994-December 1995)

- He Chaired the World Bank Project (Equipment Supply). He also Chaired the renegotiation of the ASUU/FG Agreement of the University.
- Chairman, Computer Management Committee (1994-1995)
- Chairman, Farm Development Board (1994-1995)
- Chairman, Budget Committee (1994-1995)

iii. As Dean, College of Environmental Resources Management, (October 1990-July 1994)

- He was Chairman Ceremonials Committee (1990-1994)
- Member, Project Monitoring Committee (1991-1994)
- Chairman, Joint Team on the Negotiations between the Management and UNAAB-ASUU - 1994
- Chairman, Committee on University Rules and Regulations (1994-1995)
- Chairman, Committee on Permanent Site Environmental Services Facilities (1993-1994)

B) At the University of Ibadan

i. University Boards/Committees, he served as;

- Member University Zoological Garden Management Board- (1984-1986). The Board was responsible for the development of the Zoological garden for teaching, research and recreation).
- Member, University Career's Board 1983/84
The Board was responsible for the examination of Career prospects for graduates of Nigerian Universities.

ii. Faculty Responsibilities

- Sub-Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, 1984/85 and 1985/86.
- Member, Consultancy Committee, 1984-1986
- Member, Farm Users Committee 1984-1986

iii. Departmental Responsibilities

- Postgraduate Coordinator, 1982-1984
- Member, Curriculum Development Committee 1982-1986
- Chairman, Practical Year Programme, 1982-1986
- Chairman, Consultancy Committee, 1984-1986, 1988-1990

C. At The National Universities Commission (2002-2005). He served as:

- Chairman, Standing Committee on Private Universities. During the period (2002-2005) the Committee was instrumental to the establishment of seventeen (17) Private Universities.

D. At Bells University of Technology, Ota. (2005/2006). He served as:

- Foundation Vice-Chancellor; established the Colleges and programmes. Developed the founding documents, Staff recruitments and Students admission, sourced for fund for the Central Library, Clinic and the Cafeteria System.

E. At the National Universities Commission (2006-2016).

As Executive Secretary. NUC

- NUC Conducted staff and students Audit for the first time ever in the Nigerian University System.
- Conducted programmes Audit and was involved in the reforms for the first time in the Nigerian University System.

- Supervised the development of Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Post-graduate programmes, 2011. Introduction of new programmes (Mechatronics, Gerontology). Reviewed the Medical Programme and established the Doctor of Pharmacy Programme (Pharm D.) and achieved System wide accreditation for new programmes. Developed New programmes in the Hospitality Industry.
- Establishment of the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN), for more Band-width provision, video and Teleconferencing. It was supported by a Grant of \$10 million from the World Bank.
- Establishment of twelve New Federal Universities in States that had no Federal Universities (He Chaired the committee).
- Establishment of more than 60 new Private Universities.
- National Universities Commission (NUC) secured \$70 million for ten Nigerian Universities including FUNAAB for ten of the 22 Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE). \$7 million was allocated to FUNAAB for ACE in Agricultural Development and Sustainable Environment. ACE is World Bank supported. NUC received \$1.5 million to supervise the ACE Programme.
- FUNAAB benefited from the 2008 white electronic Board Pilot Project to aid Teaching and Research activities. The ₦340 million project was initiated by NUC.
- NUC conducted NUTDAS (The Nigerian Universities Best Theses/ Supervisors Awards. The open Thesis defense was introduced in FUNAAB.
- As Executive Secretary, he represented the visitor (Mr President) at Convocation Ceremonies to install the New Chancellors in most of the Federal Universities.
- NUC Developed Entrepreneurship as a degree programme with support from the International Labour Organization.
- Introduced Institutional Accreditation and involved International monitors. NUC was strong on regulations.

F. He is a Fellow of many professional bodies and has had many awards and distinctions.

- a) Fellow, African Academy of Sciences (FAAS)
- b) Fellow, Forestry Association of Nigeria (FFAN)
- c) Fellow, Agricultural Society of Nigeria (FASN)
- d) Fellow, Science Association of Nigeria (FSAN)
- e) Laurie Prize in Forestry. Awarded to the best Student in Practicals/Silviculture in the final Year Degree Examination (June 1972)

G. His numerous Fellowship awards include:

i) The Royal Society (Nuffield Foundation) Fellowship:

For computer modeling of trees and stand growth of Native species; June 1987-February 1988. Department of Forestry and Wood Science, University College of North Wales, Bangor, U.K.

ii) Senior Fulbright Fellowship:

For research in growth and yield modeling of Native tropical species (Biodiversity Studies); September 1986- June 1987. University of Georgia, School of Forestry Resources, Athens Georgia, U.S.A. He was one of only five scientists throughout the world who received this Award for Biodiversity studies.

iii) United Nation University Fellowship:

For Statistics in Agriculture and Modeling Agro-forestry Systems; June-September 1986. Department of Applied Statistics, University of Reading, England.

iv) Federal Government Scholarship: for B.Sc. (Hons.) Forestry Degree Course (September 1969 - June 1972).

Following his excellent performance in previous administrative positions, the proprietors of Bells University of Technology, Ota, found Professor Julius Okojie worthy of appointment as pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the Institution in July, 2005.

Professor Okojie has, at different times, served as Chairman and member of various standing and ad-hoc committees, special panels as well as served as external examiner/assessor to a number of Nigerian and overseas Universities. A good number of professors and higher degree holders benefitted from the tutelage and diligence of Professor Okojie. As the most senior Vice-Chancellor, with amiable character and humility, he endeared himself to his fellow Vice-Chancellors who chose to elect him to the exalted position of Chairman, Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Federal Universities in 2001. He is reputed for his great listening ability and an open door policy.

A scholar of international repute, Professor Okojie has many published scholarly works in books, national and international journals, in the area of ecological modeling and on issues on higher education development. He supervised many Ph.D. and M.Sc. Students. Professor Julius A. Okojie has had the privilege of delivering the following Special Lectures in the Nigerian University System:

SPECIAL LECTURES

- i. Okojie, J.A. (1994): Once Upon a Forest: A masterpiece of creation. Inaugural Lecture, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) Inaugural Lecture Series No. 1: 20pp.
- ii. Okojie, J.A. (2018): A Servant is not Greater than His Master: Who Wants to Be a Vice- Chancellor. Valedictory Lecture, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) Valedictory Lecture Series No. 1: 57pp
- iii. Okojie, J.A. (2018): Education for Sustainable Development and Prosperity for Africa. Convocation Lecture, Bells University of Technology Ota, Nigeria, Convocation Lecture Series 38pp.
- iv. Okojie, J.A. (2018): A Robust Regulatory System: an Imperative for Quality Assurance in Nigerian Universities. Maiden Distinguished Lecture Series, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria, Maiden Lecture Series No. 1: 55pp.
- v. Okojie, J.A (2019): Delivering Quality Education through Open and Distance Learning in Private Universities. Convocation Lecture, SALEM University, Lokoja, Convocation Lecture 55pp.
- vi. Okojie, J.A. (2019): Indices for Re-Engineering a Faith-Based University for Excellence. Convocation Lecture, WESLEY University, Ondo, No 1: 32pp.

For his leadership quality, the general improvement in quality of and access to the Nigerian university system, the following universities honoured him with the Doctor of Science Degree, (D.Sc.) (*Honoris Causa*):

- ✓ Kwararafa University, Wukari, Taraba State, 2016
- ✓ Plateau State University, Bokkos, Plateau State, 2017
- ✓ Bells University of Technology, Ota, Ogun State, 2017
- ✓ Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State, 2018
- ✓ Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu State, 2019

The Professor of Forest Resources Management has remained an invaluable force in national development and an inspiration to both town and gown in and outside the shores of Nigeria. His consistent commitment to higher education has gained him national and international accolades. His unflinching concern for national and community development earned him, the following honours and recognitions:

- i) Officer of the Order of the Niger *OOON*, (2011) by His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan
- ii) Zik Leadership Award for outstanding performance in Professional Leadership (2010)
- iii) Aare Agbe of Egba land (conferred by the Alake of Egba land, Oba Oyabade Lipede (2002)

- iv) Omotadese of Owu land (conferred by the Olowu of Owu, Oba Dr. Adisa Odeleye, for service to the Community (2002).

Professor Julius Amioba Okojie is married to Erelu Oluremi Okojie, retired Principal of Mary Way Grammar School, St Theresa's College, and St. Louis Grammar School, all in Ibadan. They are blessed with children and grandchildren.