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for Physical Therapy

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NEWS FROM NIGERIA

NIGERIA MARKS 50 YEARS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY DEGREE TRAINING

UAC Okafor, Ph.D, PT and Olumide Dada, Ph.D, PT

The department of Physiotherapy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria has attained 50 Golden years in training Physiotherapists. Physiotherapists from the premier University in Nigeria are today spread across the globe and are champions in various aspects and specialties in Physiotherapy. In commemoration of this landmark achievement, the Department organized a 3-day event which held between the 28th and 30th of March, 2016 where it played host to all Nigeria-trained (particularly the University of Ibadan-trained) physiotherapists.

The programme opened with a reception cocktail at the College of Medicine Foyer, while the main events held on the second day including a distinguished Physiotherapy Alumni Lecture and Unveiling of Physiotherapy Hall of Fame. The third day began with a Scientific Workshop titled Appraisal of 50 years of Physiotherapy training held at the Paul Hendrickse Lecture Theatre and ended with a dinner which held at the Trenchard Hall of the University.

NIGERIA SET TO COMMENCE POSTGRAGUATE PHYSIOTHERAPY COLLEGE (As Legislature Holds Public Hearing)

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The stage is set for the establishment of a bill seeking to establish the National Postgraduate Physiotherapy College of Nigeria which shall be a formal start for the long awaited Residency training in Physiotherapy in Nigeria. Nigeria's low chamber of the National Assembly (the House of Representative) through its house Committee on Heath Institutions invited the general public and stakeholders to a public hearing on medical related bills. It therefore called on all Interest Groups in the Health Sector to submit memoranda towards a Public Hearing on this proposed Bill.

The Public Hearing which held on Monday April 29th at the Federal Legislature in Abuja was well attended by physiotherapists and other stake holders in the Health sector, Regulatory bodies, professional bodies and pressure groups as well as the Federal Ministry of Health. The physiotherapy Bill attracted the highest number of Memoranda compared to other Bills in the health sector which were also called up on the same day. It was even more noteworthy that most of the Memoranda (including from stakeholders and patients of physiotherapy were sent in favour of the passage of the Bill.

Specific favourable memoranda were received from the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT), WCPT Africa and the West Africa Physiotherapy Union (WAPU), the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board of Nigeria and the Joint Health Sector Union, among others.

Following this commendable presentation at the Federal House of Representatives, the proposed Bill which has earlier passed through the second Reading at the Senate is now going through further Debates on the floor of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

RENOWNED NIGERIAN PHYSIOTHERAPIS TDR. (MRS.) BRIDGET BIRABI PASSES ON

*(Edited by **UAC Okafor, Ph.D, PT** and **Olumide Dada, Ph.D, PT**)*

The President and Governing Council of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) with heavy hearts, but with submission to the will of the Almighty God has formally announced the demise of a former President of the Society Dr. (Mrs.) Bridget Nwanne Birabi (BSc [PT], P.G.D., M. Ed., Ph. D., FNSP) who passed on in Lagos on the 29th of April, 2016 at the age of 63 years.



Dr Bridget Birabi was renowned for the dynamic leadership and direction she provided for the profession of Physiotherapy in Nigeria and beyond. She graduated with BSc Physiotherapy Degree from the prestigious University of Ibadan in 1977. She obtained a Masters' Degree in 1987 and a PhD Degree both in Exercise Physiology from the same University. She also obtained a postgraduate Certificate in Health Planning and Management at the University of Ilorin in 1991.

A seasoned professional, he had her carrier as Head of Physiotherapy Department, General Hospital, Portharcourt in 1983 and also rose through the ranks at the University of Portharcourt Teaching Hospital between 1983-1994. Since her voluntary retirement from service in 1994, she served as Consultant/visiting lecturer to many physiotherapy facilities and training schools including the University of Maiduguri and the University of Nigeria. She also served as a member of the Rivers State Hospitals Management Board and the Medical Rehabilitation Therapists Board of Nigeria. She was Consultant physiotherapist to the Shell clinic and also set up and operated EZELTHERAPY clinic, her private practice in Portharcourt.

As first female and two-term president of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (2004-2008), her leadership recorded several landmark achievements including: Formal recognition and formation of physiotherapy specialty groups; leading a strong NSP

delegation to Tanzania in 2006 to successfully solicit for the hosting rights of the WCPT-Africa Congress; paying off all financial obligations of NSP to both WCPT and WCPT-Africa; successful hosting of the most attended WCPT-Africa Congress held at the International Conference Centre Abuja in 2008; historic hosting of the 2005 NSP conference at the famous Ladi Kwali Hall of the Sheraton hotel, Abuja; leading the NSP Executive in 3 fruitful meetings with the then Hon Minister of Health within 4 years of her tenure; NSP's historic condolence visit to the Presidency, Aso Rock Villa, Abuja during the lying in-state of the wife of a Nigeria's former president; creating and sustaining strong representation of physiotherapy in the Healthcare Providers' Association of Nigeria (HCPAN) among others. By these and more, Dr Birabi created an unprecedented visibility and media popularity for physiotherapy profession therefore raising its profile in Nigeria and beyond.

She belonged to several professional bodies including: Member, British Health Professional Council, UK; Member, International Council for Health Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance, USA; Member, National Association of Sports Science and Medicine, Nigeria; Member and former President (2004-2008) Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy; Fellow of Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (Awarded 2001). She also served on the Management Board of some Government institutions including the Rivers State Hospital Management Board (1995-96); University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital Enugu (1993-94) and the Medical Rehabilitation Therapist Board of Nigeria (2004-08). A member of the WCPT Pre and Post Congress Courses Review Committee (2015) and the WCPT Awards Committee, she was an erudite scholar with numerous award winning publications in peer reviewed journals and research papers presented at National and International conferences.

In the words of the NSP President, Taiwo Oyewumi "She was a mentor, pragmatic leader, strategist, educator, researcher, clinician par excellence and an intellectual giant. The WCPT-Africa through the Chairperson Jonathan Quartey expressed a great shock at the sad news and eulogised the great Amazon for her great passion for physiotherapy in Nigeria and abroad. He further extended his condolences on behalf of the WCPTA Executive and entire members to her immediate family, the NSP and physiotherapy world at large. May her soul rest in peace, Amen.