

A Tribute To Arthur Davey Omope Wright (4580) GCOR

By Dr John .Songo - Williams(4596)

Bible says, "In All Things we must give thanks". We are today celebrating 79 years of excellence in the life of Arthur Davey Omope Wright GCOR who changed time for eternity on the 26/07/2017 whose



memorial we are observing.

Dave as he is known to his friends and a group of other small boys joined the Sierra Leone Grammar School in January 1951 at the east end of Freetown(Not the west as the school song goes). That establishment had its peculiar character under the Principal C.D.C. Clarke and later Frank B. Woode. The camaraderie between Teachers and Pupils at that time encouraged most of us to have a long and

productive association with the school after we had left.

After leaving school Dave proceeded to Germany to study Medicine while I pursued a course of Pure Science at Fourah Bay College. He graduated and worked in Germany and Denmark before returning home in the mid sixties to work in the Ministry of Health in Freetown and the provinces.

We were reunited in 1969 when I returned from Australia at which time he was preparing to proceed to Edinburgh for postgraduate studies in E.N.T. Surgery. He arrived in Edinburgh in 1970. I joined him in 1972 after he had persuaded me to pursue a surgical fellowship in ENT. While in Edinburgh he took an active interest in tutoring myself and the late Ivan Johnston-Taylor for the Primary Fellowship Examinations with success.

Dave had acquitted himself so well in Edinburgh that it was relatively easy for me to follow in his footsteps in the Residency Training Programme and jobs that he had gone through.

As a Registrar at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh he distinguished himself with such proficiency and forthrightness that he gained the respect of all that he worked with.

He returned home as the first E.N.T. Surgeon in Sierra Leone in 1975. The Establishment at the time did not quite know how to place him in the Medical Services so he was asked to do General Surgery and a bit of E.N.T. which did not meet with his approval. In his dogged style he persevered through much difficulty until he established the first E.N.T. Clinic at the Connaught Hospital and Sierra Leone in general.

I joined him in 1976 as the second E.N.T. Surgeon and between us we expanded the Speciality with him serving the Western Area and the North and I was responsible for the South and East.

With our specialized training in Head and Neck Surgery we were able to relieve the established General Surgeons of such cases that would rather not be tied down with.

Dave was an excellent Specialist who spared nothing while giving dedicated and committed service to his patients. He was a perfectionist. He could be quite uncompromising when it came to diminished standards and doing things the only way (the right way). This unique quality often put him at loggerheads with those who would rather compromise standards at the expense of patients welfare.

One of his most coveted desires was the legacy of establishing a viable Postgraduate Specialist Training in Sierra Leone. This he pursued assiduously until his demise. I am however sure that his name will be written in gold in the annals of our fledgling Postgraduate Colleges of Health Science Specialities.

Dave was a foundation member of staff of the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences where he ran the E.N.T. training programme until his retirement.

He was also a foundation member of the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Council and served as President of Council for a few years

Shortly after returning home from Edinburgh in 1975, Dave was positively influenced by the late doyen of Surgery (Mr A.E.Olu-Williams) to be involved in the activities of the West African College of Surgeons (WACS) at which time Mr Olu-Williams was being elected to the Presidency of the College. He was elected a Fellow of the WACS in 1978. His impressive participation in the development of the Oto-Rhino-Laryngology (ORL) programme soon led to his elevation to the Faculty Board and subsequently to the Board of Examiners. He was later elected to the Council of the WACS and finally elevated by election to the Presidency of WACS in which position he served with distinction for two years. As a Past President he remained in Council until his death.

Dave was a man of many parts.

He was a dedicated Family man who always gave singular dedication and devotion to his family.

As a socialite he enjoyed with all around him the best things of life and we shall miss his generosity that we have come to know over many

Decades. He was a regular member of the Aqua Sports Club where he became the Commodore and enjoyed sailing and fishing.

As a philanthropist he was a member of the Rotary Club of Freetown for many years and he contributed significantly to the activities of that Service Club.

Dave was a dedicated Churchman. His services to the Cathedral of St George was rewarded with his being appointed as Lay Canon of the Anglican Church in Sierra Leone

Dave was decorated with the Grand Commander of The Order of The Rokel for his dedicated and meritorious service in Health to the Government and People of Sierra Leone on his retirement. He could not have deserved any lesser recognition.

Dave settled in Private Practice in Freetown and gave exemplary service to the people of Sierra Leone and beyond. Sadly his health began to decline in the last two years necessitating his referral to the USA for further management where he died on the 26th July 2017.

William Shakespeare reminds us that the world is a stage and we are but players. We come on, perform and leave. Dave has performed by serving humanity admirably and with unwavering commitment and fervour. He is now called to higher service by his maker. He has left footprints in the sands of time that are worthy of emulation. We shall miss him. I shall miss him in a special way also.

In morning his loss let us not forget to celebrate his life and the privilege we nurture for knowing and working with him. Dave I know that you are now resting in a place prepared for you by your maker where you shall have no more pain or suffering. Our hearts go out to his wife Pamela and the entire family and his numerous friends and associates at home and abroad for their irreparable loss.

RIP

John A. Songo-Williams.