

The Late Professor Magnus J A Cole Head Boy of (CMS) Grammar School 1953 (now the Sierra Leone Grammar School)



Professor Magnus J A Cole (in photo), a trailblazer who established a Science Curriculum Development Centre at Njala University of Sierra Leone and revered by both faculty and students, died on Friday, 30 November, 2012. He was 78.

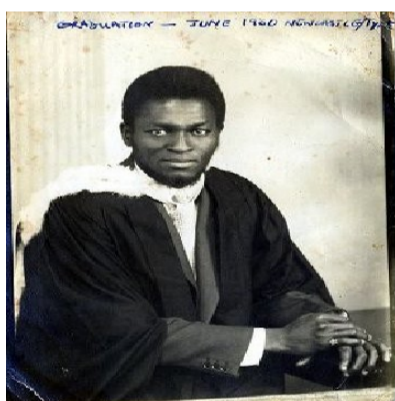
“At 9.21 p.m. the angels came to take Professor Magnus Jonathan Athanasius Cole to the higher realms. He shed his last tears as he left with his children at his bedside but it was time to leave... his work on earth was over,” recounted his son Freddy of his father’s last moments. Professor Cole, a simple, graceful, peaceful, quiet, dignified, intellectual and gentleman was born on 27th November 1934 in Freetown, Sierra Leone to Violet King and Magnus Cole Sr.

He attended the Holy Trinity Primary School and subsequently the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Grammar School (now the Sierra Leone Grammar School) from 1949 to 1953 where he became Head boy in his final year. Magnus, as he is fondly called by his family, friends and colleagues entered Fourah Bay College in 1954 as a science student studying chemistry, physics, botany and zoology. He completed the University of Durham Level 1 in 1957 and transferred to the United Kingdom to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Zoology studies at King’s College Durham University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in 1960. He earned a diploma in education in 1961. He married Amistinea Equah on 25th April, 1959. She was a trainee nurse at Newcastle General Hospital. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, he taught science at Jarrow Croft Terrace Secondary School, Jarrow-upon-Tyne, County Durham, UK from 1961-1962.

In 1962, he moved back to West Africa where he took up an appointment as a chemistry teacher at Accra Academy in Accra, Ghana. Two years later in 1964, he returned to Sierra Leone and joined the staff at Njala University as a research assistant. Based in Rokupr, Kambia in the Northern District of Sierra Leone he was the first African to take up a senior position at the University.

In 1966, he and his family relocated to the United States of America after he was awarded a USAID scholarship. From 1966 – 1970, he studied at the College of Education, University of Illinois, Champaign –Urbana campus for his Master of Science and PHD degrees in science education specializing in curriculum development. He became a Phi Delta Kappa in 1968.

After earning his Masters and Ph.D., in 1970, he returned to Njala University College where he taught science education, research methodology, curriculum development, material development, chemistry, culture, and history of science in Africa, indigenous and appropriate technology at both undergraduate and graduate levels respectively.



Professor Magnus J A Cole, graduation photo

At Njala, he held many positions including Associate Professor in science education in 1984, Director of the Science Curriculum Development Centre (SCDC) a post he held until 1985 and Acting Dean, Faculty of Education from 1991-1996.

Prof. Cole also served as a University of Sierra Leone (USL) Faculty representative, Board of Postgraduate Studies, a member of the Senate, Appropriate Technology Committee, and member of USL Senate Executive Committee. He was on the West African Examinations Council as USL representative and UNESCO Advisory Committee on Science and Technology Education in Africa.

Prof. Cole provided consultancy services in science education, science curriculum development and science teacher education to Sierra Leonean and international organizations. He worked with UNESCO, German Foundation for Development (DSE), the African Curriculum Organization (ACO), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Commonwealth Secretariat and the Science Education Programme for Africa (SEPA).

He wrote a number of journal articles and text books relating to indigenous technology, appropriate technology, local production of low cost science equipment in Sierra Leone and curriculum development. His text books were published by Evans Brothers Publishers (UK) and used to teach primary and secondary school pupils in West Africa.

He was also the subject of a biography in Marquis' Who is Who in the World, 1983 edition and Who is Who in Africa. He was a recipient of the Njala University College Silver Jubilee Awards – 1990 for 25 years service.

He spent the last years of his life in Maryland, USA with his son Freddy Cole. Though his health had deteriorated slightly he was still intellectually active and read many papers and journals daily. He was a keen sports enthusiast and followed the Washington Redskins. His many hobbies included gardening, chess and table tennis (which he taught his children to play).

“One of the fond memories I have of my dad is that he taught my brother and I how to play chess and table tennis” recalled his son Freddy. “We actually got quite good at both games and when his friends and colleagues would come and visit us he would send us to play table tennis matches against them. They would be shocked when we would beat them and my dad would just smile,” Freddy added.

He is survived by his wife Amistinea Equah Cole. Children: Margaret, Magnus, Freddy & Yolanda. Grandchildren: Siaka, Ashade, Majeb, Emeka, Nnamdi, Shaquira and great grandchild Alexa. Sister: Magnelia Cole & family. Cousins: Harriet Campbell & family of Maryland & Virginia, USA, Sammy Campbell & family, Freetown.

Numerous nieces and nephews: Alan Leku Lewis, Freetown, Yomi Lewis & family, Manchester, UK, Theodore Lewis and Benu Wilson of Atlanta, USA, Bodurie Cole & Casho Johnson of London, UK, Laura and Evelyn Faulkner of London and Virginia, USA and the King family of Freetown, USA and UK. Cousin-in-law: Amy Green & family and numerous friends including Rev and Mrs Joseph Tucker of Delaware, USA.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

Culled from sierraexpress website.