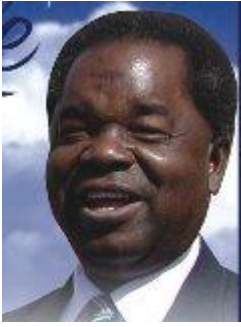


Nigeria Physiotherapy Network

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The Nigeria Physiotherapy Network regrets to announce news of the passing of one of the pioneers of physiotherapy practice in Nigeria, Dr. Bitrus Gani-Ikilama (OON, MCSP, FNSP) who went to be with his creator on Sunday, 20th February, 2011. He was aged 67.

Dr. Ikilama, Nigeria's first blind graduate of physiotherapy was the retired head of physiotherapy Department at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH) Zaria. His son, Andrew Gani Ikilama, who is the coordinator of the Hope for the Blind Foundation, co-founded by the deceased confirmed that he died in the early hours of Sunday in his sleep in Zaria, having been ill for some time.

According to news reaching the PhysioNews, among the early callers at his Wusasa, Zaria residence were Kaduna State governor, Sir Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa, and Professor Jerry Gana, former minister of information who both described the deceased as a patriotic Nigerian who despite his disability achieved success.

Bitrus Gani Ikilama who became blind at the age of five after contracting measles, was born on February 25, 1944 in the town of Donga, in Taraba State. He was the first blind child in Nigeria to be enrolled in primary school at the School for Blind Children in Gindiri, a mission station in Plateau State, in 1955, and also the first blind teenager to attend the Boys' Secondary School in Gindiri. He went on to attend the School of Physiotherapy, Royal National Institute for the Blind in the UK, from 1963 to 1967. He returned to Nigeria after completing his studies to begin his practice at Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital in 1967, becoming its Chief Physiotherapist, and the then Head of the Department of Physiotherapy. He encountered obstacles. Potential employers were not sure a blind man could work as a physiotherapist but he defied all odds. In 1976 he was instrumental in the formation of Tape Recording Services for the Blind. The initiative was successful and more and more blind people requested for the services. In 1979, the organisation expanded its services to provide Braille production, guidance and counseling, consultancy, and later on vocational training. With the expansion, the name was changed to Hope for the Blind Foundation.

Dr Bitrus Gani-Ikilama's accomplishments would be impressive even if he were not blind. A member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, and a honorary Fellow of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy. He has won numerous awards, including Nigeria's national honour of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) and the Nigerian government's Icon of Hope. He has over ten publications to his credit and has been on a working tour to France, Spain, Britain, Germany, the United States and many African countries.

Many Nigerian PTs around the world have been commiserating with the Gani-Ikilama family including Professor Joseph Balogun, College of Health Sciences' Dean at Chicago State University who wrote:

"The profession of physiotherapy in Nigeria has lost a rare gem. He will be missed. May his soul rest in peace."

He is survived by his wife, children and grand children. Funeral Arrangements are as follows:

- **Friday, February 25th, 2011, 5.00pm - Service of Songs** at the Family Residence: #1 Western Way Close, by Teejay Palace Hotel, GRA, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria
- **Saturday, February 26th, 2011, 10.00am - Funeral Service** at St. Bartholomew's Anglican Cathedral, Wusasa, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Interment thereafter will take place at the Wusasa Cemetery, Wusasa, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Condolence messages for the family can be left with:

Grace Gani-Ikilama: +234-803-592-0290

Margaret Gani-Ikilama: +234-803-612-4569, margo15ng@yahoo.com

Andrew Gani-Ikilama: +234-803-700-7190

We urge colleagues in the Kaduna, Zaria and nearby areas to please represent the profession by attending the funeral services in honour of this great Nigerian PT pioneer .

May the soul of Dr. Bitrus Gani-Ikilama rest in perfect peace.

Nigeria Physiotherapy Network.

[Download Funeral Flyer of Dr. Ikilama here:](#)

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