

Professor James Hakim

Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde pays tribute to a colleague who will be fondly remembered by all who interacted with him

Professor James Hakim passed away on 26 January 2021. He is survived by a wife and four children. He was a first-class physician, top academic, teacher and mentor, evolutionary innovator, an epitome of humility and an avid health researcher, as described by Professor Midion Chidzondga, a colleague who worked with him for many years at the University of Zimbabwe.

Hakim was an eminent Professor of Medicine (specialised in Cardiology) and past Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences (now Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences), an adjunct Professor of Medicine at the University of Colorado Denver, a Director of the University of Zimbabwe Clinical Research Centre, Site Leader of the Milton Park Clinical Research Site, Principal Investigator of the Zimbabwe Medical Education Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and Junior Faculty Research Training awards, member of the AFREhealth Governing Council. He sat on several health boards in the university. At the African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST), he is remembered for his leadership of MEPI as part of the governing council. He always gave his opinion in a gentle and humble manner yet his comments were always filled with wisdom. ACHEST was the African Coordinating Centre for the MEPI project which was funded by PEPFAR for 13 medical schools in sub-Saharan Africa to improve medical education in the region. One of the schools was the University of Zimbabwe, where Hakim was the Principal Investigator. Many times, Professor Francis Omaswa, the Executive Director of ACHEST and other members of the team made site visits to University of Zimbabwe and were impressed by his work. Hakim was one of the founding members of the African Forum for Research and Education in Health (AFREhealth) which was birthed out of MEPI, and he contributed greatly to its growth. Through MEPI and subsequent sub-awards he transformed health professions education at the University of Zimbabwe through the establishment of the Research Support Centre, Department of Health Professions Education and Faculty Development programs. At the time of his death he was working towards introducing interprofessional education. One of his research grants culminated in the establishment of a stroke unit concept which is now being rolled out in the country. To date, results show an improved management and care for patients with stroke in Zimbabwe.

James Hakim studied medicine at Makerere University, Uganda and went on to specialise in internal

Dr Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde, Vice President, African Forum for Research and Education in Health (AFREhealth).



medicine at the University of Nairobi, Kenya and the Royal Colleges of Physicians, UK. He went on for further specialisation in Aachen, Germany; Newcastle, Australia and the University of Cape Town. He was an active clinician with interest in HIV/AIDS preventive and therapeutic research including co-infections. He was a member of the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections committee and was a committee member of the Glasgow HIV Therapy Conference, International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa and HIV Interest Conference. He was a member of the Governing Council of the International AIDS Society. He maintained successful collaborations with US, UK, Continental European and African partners in research and capacity development. He had more than 150 publications and international refereed journals.

He was a PI in several NIH research capacity building grants in which his mentorship skills remain much valued by both junior and senior faculty in the University of Zimbabwe. An excellent teacher at both undergraduate and postgraduate. He held a postgraduate diploma in health professions education from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Fare thee well James Hakim, you are dearly missed by all those you worked with in the different arenas of medicine.