# Eulogy of Professor Ignatius Kakande

## (February 1, 1942 – February 18, 2025)

I have known Professor Ignatius Kakande since we met as school boys in 1958 at St Mary's College Kisubi (SMACK), one of the top schools in Uganda 68 years ago. We were the smallest boys in the class along with the late Professor Roy Mugerwa. His death came as a shock and a surprise to me. We had spoken on the phone two weeks before on the day that he was participating in the accreditation of Mengo Hospital as a training site for the College of Surgeons of East Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA). During the first week of December 2024, we had travelled on the same plane to Harare, Zimbabwe to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of this College. It was therefore quite devastating to wake up in the morning to learn that Ignatius had passed on during the previous night.

He is someone who is held in the highest esteem by the profession. He has a clean heart and means well for everyone. He has time to listen, to empathize and to help everyone who is in need. As an illustration, during 2024, I spent time working with him to help one of the postgraduate students to complete their course which had been interrupted by misunderstandings with the teachers.

He has had an illustrious career in medicine in the East, Central and Southern African countries as evidenced by the following engagements in reverse chronological order:

He has been Professor of Surgery at the Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi- Uganda from November 2010 to the present time· He was Academic Coordinator, Department of Surgery at the post graduate school based at Nsambya hospital, Uganda where he was also a practicing surgeon. Professor of Surgery at the National University of Rwanda from 2007 to 2010 · Head of Department of Surgery at Makerere University from 1992 to 1998.

He also served as Lecturer in Surgery at the University of Nairobi, Kenya from 1977 to 1982· This is the time when there was political upheavals and a mass exodus of Ugandan professionals and many ended up in Kenya and other African countries as highly respected practitioners. He also worked for a Faith Based hospital in Nyeri, Kenya before returning to Uganda.

He was always active in the affairs of the professional associations of surgeons. He was a key player in the launch of the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA). While I led the negotiations with the Council of Health Ministers of the East, Central and Southern African Health Community to establish the College for training surgeons, the

Francis Omaswa, Founding Executive Director for the African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (Kampala) and the Global Health Workforce Alliance WHO; and Publisher of Africa Health



***Prof. Kakande***

Ministers asked for a copy of the curriculum for this course. Prof. Kakande took his annual leave and spent this time writing up this curriculum which was presented to the Health Ministers and enabled them to give the clearance for COSECSA to be launched. A Task force of three of us including Professor Josephat Mulimba from Nairobi, Ignatius Kakande and myself coordinated the process for the launch of the COSECSA and I was elected as the first President.

Later, Prof. Kakande served for a very long time as the Editor of The East and Central African Journal of Surgery (ECAJS), which recently reflected on the remarkable contributions of Professor Ignatius Kakande, as the second editor-in-chief and a guiding force behind the journal's conception, birth and growth. Professor Kakande's legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of ECAJS and COSECSA, where his influence as a senior professor in surgery, a mentor, and fatherly figure has left an indelible mark on countless colleagues and students alike. His commitment to building a platform for African surgical voices has transformed ECAJS into a respected journal, showcasing the innovations, challenges, and triumphs of surgical practice across the continent. He received an award for this during the December 2024, COSECSA Conference in Harare.

At family level, he was married to Bridget with whom they have six children, all of whom are very bright and are successful professionals. Some of them are very close friends with our own children. I also got to know the wider family of Kakande. His first civil service job of was serving as a Medical Officer at Atutur hospital which is not too far from my family home in Eastern Uganda and at that time he paid a visit to my village home and got to meet and know my wider family.

Uganda, Africa and the world have lost a great pillar in Ignatius Kakande. It is my prayer that his legacy of caring, loving and being available to help will be emulated by generations to come. May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.