

OBITUARY: EKHAGUOSA AISIEN, FRCS (ED), FWACS, AUGUST 31, 1930 - SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

Dr. Ekhaguosa Aisien, a renowned physician, surgeon, soldier, historian, custodian of the culture of the Benin people, and a legendary source of Benin history, died on 19 September 2021. He was born in Egboha, near Benin City on August 31st, 1930, had his early Education in Benin City, and attended the oldest Grammar school in Nigeria, CMS Grammar school in Lagos, (1946 – 1951). He bagged an Inter B.Sc. Degree in Agricultural Sciences. at the University of Ibadan, (1952 -1954) and proceeded after to teach Science at his alma mater. In 1957, he won a government scholarship to study Medicine at the King's College, London, and obtained his medical degree in 1962 before returning to Nigeria to serve as a Medical Officer in various government hospitals. During the Nigeria civil war (1967-1970), he not surprisingly served both the Biafran forces (during the Biafran occupation of the Midwest) and the Nigerian army after the liberation from Biafran occupation. In appreciation, he was honoured with a field commission and became a Major in the Nigerian Army. He subsequently proceeded to Edinburgh, Scotland, to specialize in General Surgery and returned home to his civil service employment, and retired as a senior Consultant General Surgeon in government service in 1978. He later founded Azuwa Hospital, the pioneer multi-specialist Hospital in Benin City, and ran the Hospital for decades until he retired from medical practice.

His retirement from government services became a springboard for his contributions to the historiography of Benin. Using the oral traditions of Benin, many of which he learnt from his father and many of the old people in Benin city, and other sources of history and his medical knowledge, he authored as many as thirteen books, amongst which are: *Iwu, the body markings of the edo people*, 1986; *Erediauwa, Prince of Benin*, 1992; *Benin City, the edo state capital* 1994, *Benin-City Pilgrimage Stations*, 2001, *Christianity and Benin City*, 2002; *The Edo Man of the 20th century* 2002; *Ewuare the Oba of Benin* 2012; *Order of observance of Benin Traditional Marriage Ceremony*, 2014; *Aisien, son of Erhunmwusee and the British/Benin War*, 2013; *Elegbe, Prince of Benin and Orhiomwon Territories*, 2015; *Ughoton*, 2015

Dr. Aisien was also a brilliant writer and historian, focusing his works primarily on Benin history and anthropology. He was an outstanding voice in the history and culture of the Edo people at the time of his passing. His pioneering work titled *Iwu: the body Markings of the Edo People*” was an adjunct to the “Iwu dress,” which he designed and is today seen as the primary dress for the identity of the Benin People.

He was a man of simplicity, candor, grace, and love. He left an indelible mark on Benin Studies with his many publications which constitute a rich mine of information on Benin history and culture. For his contribution, he was honoured by scholars in the field with a festschrift titled *Benin Studies under the Scalpel: Essays in honour of Dr. Ekhaguosa Aisien* edited by Uyilawa Usuanlele to mark his 90th Birthday in 2020.

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