

Obituary: Professor Amos Boul Riak

Remembering one of the best

When a group of young South Sudanese medical students in Khartoum met Professor Amos Boul Riak, he was visibly elated to see a generation of doctors who looked like him coming through the College of Medicine. Dr. Stanley Mogga, one of his early students in the College of Medicine, University of Juba, remembered their first encounter at the Khartoum Eye Hospital in January 1986.

“We were introduced to him, and he introduced himself. His heart melted with happiness at seeing fellow South Sudanese studying medicine. He was humble, soft spoken and had admirable qualities during presentations and delivery of knowledge. He was like a black star in the middle of the Northern Sudanese at the time. We were so proud of him.”

Professor Amos was born in 1943 in Wun Yach village in Jonglei State. After completing his secondary school in 1970, he was sent on a government scholarship to Kiev in the former Soviet Union State of Ukraine to study medicine. Upon his graduation in 1977, Prof Amos returned to the Sudan where he started his working life. Professor Amos joined the University of Juba, College of Medicine in 1983 as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Ophthalmology. Upon completion of his training, he became a lecturer in the department in 1985 and a full professor in 2009.

Professor Amos has many accomplishments to his name. On top of his teaching responsibilities in the University of Juba and seeing patients at the Khartoum Eye Hospital, Professor Amos led research teams working on River Blindness (onchocerciasis) and trachoma, which took him to Wau, Terekeka and many parts of Northern Sudan.

Through the Sudan Federal Ministry of Health, he worked with the World Health Organization in the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control in the 1990's and 2000's.

Professor Amos has tutored hundreds of students in ophthalmology, worked tirelessly to treat his patients, and through the years had earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues in the medical fraternity both in Sudan and South Sudan. He will be greatly missed by all of them. Professor Amos died on September 27th 2016 aged 73 years from complications of diabetes mellitus, which he had for many years. He is survived by his wife and six children.

As one of his former students has said, *“South Sudan has lost one of its very best”*.

