

Obituary: Victor R. Adebimpe / Psychiatrist who battled racial prejudice Nov. 6, 1945 - Nov. 15, 2005

Monday, November 21, 2005

By Tim Grant, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

While studying to become a general surgeon in Nigeria, Dr. Victor R. Adebimpe changed his career choice when he realized that people with mental illnesses did not have the basic tools to function in life.

The trailblazing psychiatrist who often spoke out against racial prejudice by mental health providers dealing with black clients died Tuesday after collapsing in his McCandless home from an apparent heart-related illness. He was 60.

Dr. Adebimpe practiced psychiatry at several local hospitals during the last 31 years. Most recently he worked at Mercy Providence Hospital until he went into semi-retirement in June.

"Victor was extremely brilliant and excelled in every academic endeavor," said Dr. Ned Adoki, a longtime friend. "He was also a very humble and kind person and he touched the lives of every one of us."

Dr. Adebimpe was well-known in the local psychiatric community, but his influence extended internationally. His most significant medical contribution was understanding the root of psychiatric problems in the immigrant and African-American population.

He contributed to an important medical book published in 1999 called "Ethnicity Immigration and Psychopathology." He also wrote several articles in peer review publications.

"While we were medical classmates at a time when most of us were immature, he stood out as a thinker, as a philosopher in our class," said Dr. Carey Andrew-Jaja, a Pittsburgh-area gynecologist.

"He was one of those rare people who had extraordinary talent as a pianist and drawing beautiful caricatures. I remember him in class reproducing the anatomy professor's face so well it could have gone in any magazine."

Dr. Adebimpe is survived by his wife, Sade, of McCandless; sons Seyi of Pittsburgh and Tunde of New York; and daughter Jumoke of Washington, D.C. (Tim Grant can be reached at tgrant@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1591.)