

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**2023 AGGREY-FRASER-GUGGISBERG MEMORIAL LECTURE
DAY 1**

ADDRESS BY:

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO
VICE - CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



Chairperson of the University Council, Her Ladyship Justice Sophia A.B. Akuffo,

Members of the University Council,

Our distinguished lecturer for the 2023 Aggrey Fraser Guggisberg Memorial Lecture, Her Ladyship Justice Professor Henrietta JAN Mensa-Bonsu,

Justices of the Supreme Court, Appeals Court, and High Courts,

Judges of Circuit Courts and Magistrates of District Courts,

Pro Vice-Chancellors,

Registrar,

Provost, Deans, Directors, Heads of Department and other Senior Officers of the University,

Members of Convocation,

Members of the Diplomatic Corp,

Esteem Traditional Authorities,

Former Senior Officers of the University,

Staff, Students, Alumni and Friends of the University

Invited Guests,

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. I welcome you all warmly to the 2023 Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial (AFGM) lectures. This lecture series features prominently on the University's academic calendar and has since its inception in 1957, provided the opportunity to illustrious individuals across the globe who have distinguished themselves in various fields of endeavour to share valuable perspectives and insights on topical issues of global and nation concern.

The Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial lectures immortalizes the contributions of those after whom it was named, for their efforts towards the promotion of education in Ghana. These individuals are also known as founding fathers of Achimota School (and for those who may not know, the University of Ghana actually started from the Achimota School campus). They are:

- Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: One of the early Ghanaian scholars known for his famous quote *“If you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation”*.
- Rev. Alexander Garden Fraser: A far-sighted Scottish educationist who strongly advocated for education in the then Gold Coast in the days of scepticism about the educational potential of the African.
- Brigadier-General Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg: A Canadian born, British colonial administrator (Governor of the Gold Coast from 1919 — 1927) who invested significantly into Ghana’s Education and Health sectors.

As the premier university in the country, University of Ghana is proud to have upheld academic excellence for the past 75 years which has resulted in nurturing great minds for national and global development.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the 2023 AFG Memorial Lectures which is the 41st since its commencement will be delivered by Her Ladyship Justice Professor Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu - a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana, an eminent jurist who has served on high-level national and international assignments, a Professor of Law at the University of Ghana School of Law, an accomplished academic with over three decades of experience in teaching and research and former President of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. (*I will reserve the other accolades for her introduction after my brief remarks*).

The theme for this year's lectures "**Resilience, Technology and Humanism**" takes direct inspiration from the theme of the University's 75th Anniversary – "*Nurturing Resilience, Adopting Technology, Embracing Humanism*". For today, our lecturer will focus her presentation on the topic: "*We are Watchers of a Beacon, Whose Light Must Never Die*" - *Contemporary Musings on the March from the Ghana we have, to the Ghana we Desire*".

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, recent developments in our country has occasioned the need for a critical assessment of the state of affairs from a pragmatic point of view, devoid of political gimmicks as has often characterized the periodic State of the Nation Addresses.

As a nation, we have a very good sense of the Ghana we desire to have and live in but, we are confronted with threats which have the tendency of

derailing our modest gains as a country and distract us from our desired destination.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war may have had some impact on the country's economy; however, this evening's lecture will start looking from within to identify internal factors that threaten our very survival as a nation, making us more susceptible to these external shocks.

Not too long ago, Mr. Manasseh Azure Awuni, Editor-in-chief of the Fourth Estate and an ace investigative journalist delivered a lecture on the topic "*Our Ghana – Reflections on Integrity and Resilience*" as part of activities marking the University of Ghana's 75th Anniversary celebration. In that lecture, he highlighted some deep-rooted issues which are decaying the very fabric of our beloved country. Despite the bountiful blessings of natural resource with the rich blend of incredibly knowledgeable human resources we have been blessed with, we appear to be far from being self-sufficient, which is evident in the nation's recent woes.

Our lecturer for today will move the conversation a notch higher - it is overdue for us to take decisive steps towards the Ghana we desire. Justice Professor Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu after a careful diagnosis of Ghana's current 'State of Affairs' will explore how to leverage on technology as a catalyst to development. Finally, she will proffer some recommendations for urgent action to salvage our nation and propel us towards a prosperous Ghana.

This 2-day lecture series will dovetail into a special congregation, which is part of our 75th anniversary celebration. On Friday, we will confer Honorary Doctorate Degrees to 18 deserving personalities whose contribution to their

respective areas of specialization and to humanity generally has been exemplary.

At this juncture, ladies and gentle, it is my pleasure and singular honour to introduce our distinguished lecturer for the 2023 Aggrey Fraser Guggisberg Memorial Lecture.

Profile of Lecturer

Her Ladyship Justice Professor Henrietta Joy Abena Nyarko Mensa-Bonsu, is a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana. Before her appointment to the Bench in May 2020, she was a Professor of Law at the University of Ghana School of Law and served as Director of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (2012-2018), being the first female to do so. She is a Past President of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, having been elected to Fellowship in 2003.

She has had a distinguished academic career spanning more than three decades at the University of Ghana since joining the University of Ghana as a Lecturer in 1985. She rose through the ranks to attain the rank of Professor of Law in 2002. Justice Professor Mensa-Bonsu has researched and published extensively on Criminal Law and Criminal Justice (particularly Juvenile Justice), Family Law; Children's Rights; and International Affairs. She has also served on a large number of academic Committees of the University of Ghana, as well as chaired many Committees of Enquiry at the University of Ghana. She has served on the Hall Councils of Volta Hall and Akuafo Hall and was the first female Senior Tutor of Akuafo Hall. At the time of her separation from the University of Ghana, in 2020, she was Member of the

Appointments and Promotions Committee of the College of Humanities and Alternate Assessor for the Appointments and Promotions Board of the University.

She has undertaken a number of high-level national and international assignments. Her national assignments include membership of the National Reconciliation Commission (2002-2004); Police Council; and the Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry into Electoral violence (2019). In 2017, she was Ghana's candidate for a seat on the International Criminal Court. She has served on a number of Boards of Corporations, both public and private, such as the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and New Times Corporation; and was a non-executive Director of Standard Chartered Bank.

Among the high-profile international assignments, she has undertaken are the OAU's Committee of Eminent Jurists on the Lockerbie Case; (2001-2002); and the AU's Committee of Eminent Jurists on the Hissene Habre Case (2006). In 2007- 2011, she was appointed the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Rule of Law (DSRSG RoL) in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with the rank of Assistant-Secretary-General. For four years, she had the privilege of leading the United Nations on efforts to reconstruct the Rule of Law sector of post-conflict Liberia. In 2015, she was appointed by the UN Secretary-General to the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO).

She has, since 2012, served as a Civilian Mentor to the ECOWAS Senior Mission Leadership Courses; United Nations' Senior Mission Leadership Courses; and the UN Police Commanders Courses, all of which prepare

principal leaders of peacekeeping missions for service in the field. She has also presented a number of papers at conferences focusing on UN Peace Operations, in Geneva, Montreal, Berlin and Addis Ababa; and currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Division of Peace of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Church, Ghana; and the Law and Polity Committee.

Professor Mensa-Bonsu has been a Visiting Lecturer at a number of reputable Universities in Europe and North America and was the 2014 Diplomat-in-Residence at the School of Public and International Affairs of the North Carolina State University. She was the University of Ghana Alumni Association Lecturer for 2014 and the speaker of the S.H. Amissah Lectures of the Lay Movement of Methodist Church, Ghana in 2013.

Justice Prof. Mensa-Bonsu has earned a number of academic awards including MaCallien Prize for Best Graduating Student in Volta Hall (1980); McDougal Fellowship (Yale 1984); Junior Fulbright Fellowship (1991); and ACU/UNITWIN Fellowship for Women (1995). Her non-academic awards and citations include: University of Ghana Award for Meritorious Service (joint recipient 1999); the Association of Lions Clubs International Presidents' Excellence Award (1998); Ghana Women of Excellence Awards 2019; West African Peace Fellow, WANEP, 2019; and NUGS Prestige Award for Peace, Advocacy, Academic Excellence & Institutional Advancement. (2019).

Justice Prof. Mensa-Bonsu was educated at Wesley Girls High School; University of Ghana where she was one of the first two women to graduate

with First Class in Law (LL.B); and Yale University, USA where she read for a Masters Degree in Law (LLM) and was called to the Ghana Bar in 1982.

She is married with children and grandchildren.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Her Ladyship Justice Professor Henrietta Joy Abena Nyarko Mensa-Bonsu, lecturer for the 2023 Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial Lecture. She will mount the podium after the seperewa appellation.

I am excited to chair today's lecture which promises to be thought-provoking and exciting.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

26th April, 2023