

REMARKS AT THE LAUNCH OF A LIFE IN EDUCATION: A MEMOIR

BY ALEXANDER ADUM KWAPONG

BY

JUSTICE S K DATE-BAH, CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, PRO VICE-CHANCELLORS, PROVOSTS, REGISTRAR, MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION, MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, MEMBERS OF THE KWAPONG FAMILY, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, NANANOM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I am exceedingly glad to have been asked to launch this book of Professor Alexander Adum Kwapong, a lifelong role model of mine. I was brought up in my most formative years before Secondary School and during my Secondary School days at his hometown, Akropong-Akwapim. My father knew and was a friend of his father and I was, from an early age, encouraged to dream of emulating the great man. Later I had the singular good fortune of being taught Latin by Prof Kwapong in Sixth Form at Achimota School.

He had an amazing mind and we should all be grateful that he applied it, in retirement, to recounting the events of his life and times in the book I am about to launch. One would expect this account to be a treasure trove of material on the social history of our country from the colonial days to contemporary times and to throw light particularly on the development of education in Ghana. Professor Kwapong does not disappoint. His narrative style is gripping. Once one starts to read the book, it becomes very difficult to put it down. It is in the style of a *raconteur* whose skills have been honed through the study of Classics.

He etches out vivid word pictures of episodes in his early life in the 1930s at Koforidua and Akropong which are very evocative for me because some twenty years later these towns also featured in my life and I therefore recognise his depictions. He gives a fascinating

account of his seven years in Achimota College, described by him as among his happiest, which followed his early life at Koforidua, Akropong and Anyinam.

After an intriguing narrative of his sea passage to Liverpool from Takoradi, Professor Kwapong shares with us his experiences at Cambridge University during the five years he spent there. His experiences are recounted in fascinating detail, thus providing an illustration of the life of colonial students in the UK at the time. After outstanding academic achievements there, he returned home to the Gold Coast in 1953.

Professor Kwapong's celebrity status, in the eyes of most Ghanaians, was acquired at Legon. Thus, his account of his Legon years, contained in Chapters 3 and 4 of the book, entitled respectively: "The University of Ghana Years Phase One: 1953 – 1965" and "The University of Ghana Years Phase Two: Vice-Chancellorship 1966 – 1975", is of great public interest. These two chapters constitute the core of his memoirs and I invite you to drink deep of them when you purchase a copy of the book. They contain invaluable material on the history and evolution of the University of Ghana. As a bonus, Professor Kwapong adds an Epilogue which tells the story of his international service as Vice-Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo, as Chair in Development Studies at Dalhousie University in Canada and as a Director at the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada. The Epilogue also includes recollections and reflections on his retirement years in Ghana, including his spell as Chairman of the Council of State under the Kuffour Presidency.

There is no doubt that this book of memoirs is a fabulous read and I thank God that he allowed Professor Kwapong enough time on earth to complete it. My sadness is in the fact that he is not with us today to celebrate this launch.

Vice-Chancellor, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to launch: A LIFE IN EDUCATION: A MEMOIR. I commend it to all of you.