

PROFESSOR WÁNDÉ ABÍMBÓLÁ

The Àwíṣẹ Awo Àgbáyé
President
Ifá Heritage Institute
Òyó, Òyó State
Nigeria

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Higher Institutions Attended:

1966-1969 University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria

1965-1966 Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

1959-1963 University College, Ibadan, Nigeria

Academic Qualifications:

1970 Ph.D. in Literature, University of Lagos

1966 M.A. in Linguistics, Northwestern University

1963 B.A. Honors in History, University College, Ibadan

Distinctions/Awards:

1959-1963 State Scholar, University College, Ibadan

WORK EXPERIENCE

Nov. 2005 – to Date President, Ifá Heritage Institute, Òyó, Nigeria.

2007 (April) Vernon L. Pack Distinguished Lecturer and Scholar-in-Residence, Otterbein College, Westerville, OH.

2003 – 2005 (July – July) Adviser to the President on Cultural Affairs and Traditional Matters, Presidency, Abuja, Nigeria.

2004 – 2005 (Aug. – Apr.) Distinguished Visiting Scholar in the Department of Liberal Studies, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY.

1999 (Sept. – Dec.) Professor of Humanities in the Department of English, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY.

1998 - 2003 Professor in the Department of Religion, Boston University, Boston, MA.

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- 1997 (Aug. – Dec.) Professor of the Humanities in Africana and Latin American Studies, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY.
- 1996 – 1997 Fellow, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute; Lecturer, Department of African American Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- 1994 – 1996 Extensive travels in the U.S., Cuba and Brazil teaching and researching Yoruba Religion.
- 1992 – 1993 Senate Majority Leader, Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
- 1992 (Jan. – June) Special Adviser to the Governor of Oyo State, Nigeria.
- 1990 – 1991 (Jan. – Dec.) Scholar-in-Residence and Visiting Professor of Black Studies, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.
- 1982 – 1989 Vice-Chancellor (President), Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
- 1981 – 1982 Head, Department of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- 1980 - 1981 Visiting Henry R. Luce Professor of Comparative Religious Ethics, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.
- 1979 – 1980 Head, Department of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- 1977 – 1979 Dean, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- 1976 – 1990 Professor of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- 1975 – 1977 Head, Department of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- 1973 (Jan. – Aug.) Associate Professor of Folklore, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- 1971 (Aug. –Dec.) Visiting Assistant Professor of Folklore, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- 1966 – 1972 Lecturer, School of African and Asian Studies,

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University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

1963 – 1965

Junior Research Fellow,
Institute of African Studies,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1970 – 1972

Editor, Lagos Notes and Records,
Bulletin of the Institute of African and Asian Studies,
University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

1972 – 1979

Editor, YORUBA, Journal of the Yoruba Studies Association of
Nigeria.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Yoruba Studies Association of Nigeria
International Society for Folk Narrative Research
International Americanist Congress
West African Linguistic Society
International Congress of Òrìṣà Tradition and Culture

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Books (Authored and Edited)

1. The Yoruba Diaspora (ed.), Forthcoming.
2. Louisville Lectures on Yoruba Religion and Thought, University Press Limited, Ibadan, 2011 (in print).
3. Òrìṣà World: Selections from Papers Presented at the International Congresses of Òrìṣà Tradition and Culture, 1981 – 2000 (ed.), Forthcoming.
4. Ifá Will Mend Our Broken World, Aim Books, Boston, 1997.
5. Ifá Divination Poetry, NOK Publishers, New York, 1977.
6. Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus, Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1977.
7. Àwọn Ojú Odù Mèrèrindínlógún, University Press Limited, Ibadan, 1977.
8. Sixteen Great Poems of Ifá, UNESCO, Niamey, 1975.
9. Yoruba Oral Tradition (ed.), University Press Limited, Ibadan, 1975.
10. Yoruba Idioms (ed.), Pilgrim Books, Lagos, 1969.

11. *Ijinle Ohun Enu Ifá, Apa Keji*, Collins, Glasgow, 1969; reprinted, University Press Limited, Ibadan, 1976 and 2006.
12. *Ijinle Ohun Enu Ifá, Apa Kini*, Collins, Glasgow, 1968; reprinted, University Press Limited, Ibadan, 2006.

Published Journal Articles and Chapters in Books

1. “Religion, World Order and Peace: an Indigenous African Perspective”, in *Crosscurrents, Religion and the United Nations*, Vol. 60, Issue 3, 2010, (pp. 307-309).
2. “Mestre Didi, Alapini, and the Future of Afro-Atlantic Civilization”, in *Criatividade Amago Das Diversidades Culturais: A Estética Do Sagrado*, Juana Elbein Santos (ed.), Communitatis Mundi/SECNEB, Salvador, Bahia, 2010.
3. “The Bag of Wisdom: Osun and the Origins of Ifá Divination”, in *Osun Across the Waters*, J. Murphy and M. Sanford (ed.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 2001.
4. “The Contribution of Ancient Africa to Religious, Literary and Philosophical Thought: The Ifá Divination Corpus of West Africa as a Case Study”, Inaugural Lecture, Boston University, Boston, November 1997.
5. “Images of Women in the Ifá Literary Corpus”, in *Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses and Power: Case Studies In African Gender*, Flora E.S. Kaplan (ed.), Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 8, 1997, (pp. 401-413).
6. “Ifá: A West African Cosmological System”, *Religion in Africa: Experience and Expression*, Thomas D. Blakey, et. al. (eds.), James Currey, London and Heinemann, Portsmouth, Vol. 4, Monograph Series of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, 1994, (pp. 100-117).
7. “Lagbayi, the Itinerant Woodcarver of Ojowon,” *The Yoruba Artist*, Rowland Abiodun et. al. (eds.), Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London, 1994, (pp.137-142).
8. “Secrecy and Objectivity in the Methodology of Ifá Divination”, (with Barry Hallen), in *Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals*, Museum of African Art, New York, 1993.
9. “Decolonizing African Thought”, in *Tradition and Development in Africa Today, Introduction to African Culture*: 8, UNESCO, Paris, 1990, (pp. 15-22); reprinted 2004 and 2006.
10. “The Concept of Destiny in African Traditional Religion”, *Ogun State Public Service Forum*, Abeokuta, Nigeria, March 1988.

11. "Unification of the World's Religions: The African View Point", in *Essays in Honour of S. C. Kim*, Andrew Wilson (ed.), The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewinton and Queenston, U.S.A., 1987.
12. "An Appraisal of African Systems of Thought", *The Arts and Civilization of Black and African Peoples*, Vol. 2, Black Civilization and Philosophy, Third Press International, Lagos, Nigeria, 1986, (pp. 11-30).
13. "The Notion of Sacrifice in Yoruba Religion", in *Restoring the Kingdom*, Dean Williams Ferm (ed.), Paragon House, New York, 1984.
14. "The Contribution of Diaspora Blacks to the Development and Preservation of Traditional African Religion in the Americas", in *Cultures Africaines, Documents de la Reunion d'Experts sur les Apports Cultures des Noirs de La Diaspora a l'Afrique*, (UNESCO), 1983, (pp. 79-89).
15. "Notes on Collection, Transcription, Translation and Analysis of Yoruba Oral Literature", *Yoruba Language and Literature*, A. Afolayan (ed.), U.P.L., Ibadan, 1982.
16. "Two Lineages of Yoruba Wood Carvers: Evidence from Oral Literature on the Visual Arts of Africa", *The Role of Afro-American Folklore in the Teaching of the Arts and Humanities*, A. L. Seward (ed.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1978, (pp. 283-293).
17. "Yoruba Traditional Religion", *Contemplation and Action in World Religions*, Yusuf Ibish and Ileana Marculescu (ed.), University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1978, (pp. 218-243).
18. "The Study of Yoruba Literature", Inaugural lecture, Series 24, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, 1977.
19. "The Ifá Divination System", *Nigeria Magazine: Special Festac Edition*, Nos. 122-123, Lagos, 1977.
20. "The Yoruba Thought System", *The Theosophist*, Vol. 38, nos. 8-9, May and June 1977, Adyar Madras, India, (pp. 54-61, 83-90).
21. "Yoruba Traditional Religion in Brazil: Problems and Prospects", *Actes du Congress International Des Americanistes*, Paris, 1976, (pp. 620-639).
22. "Consonant Elision in Yoruba" (with Olasope Oyelaran), *African Language Studies* 16, 1975, (pp. 37-60).
23. "Iwapele: The Yoruba Concept of Good Character" in *Yoruba Oral Literature*, Wande Abimbola (ed.), University of Ibadan Press, Ibadan, 1975.

24. "The Yoruba Concept of Human Personality", in *La Notion de Personne en Afrique Noir*, C.N.R.S., Paris, 1073, (pp. 41-62).
25. "The Literature of the Ifá Cult", *Sources of Yoruba History*, S. O. Biobaku (ed.), Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1973, (pp. 41-62).
26. "Ifá Divination Poems and the Coming of Islam to Yorubaland", *Pan-African Journal*, iv/4, New York, 1972.
27. "Stylistic Repetition in Ifá Divination Poetry", *Lagos Notes and Records*, 3/1, 1971, (pp. 38-53).
28. "Yoruba Oral Poetry", *Introduction to Nigerian Literature*, Bruce King (ed.), Evans, Ibadan, 1971, (pp. 12-23).
29. "Burial of the Dead Among the Yoruba", *Proceedings of the African Studies Staff Seminar*, University of Lagos, 1970, (pp. 98-144).
30. "A Chapter from the Second Odu of Ifá", *Black Orpheus*, 2/2, 1969, (pp.7-12).
31. "Ifá as a Body of Knowledge and As An Academic Discipline", *Lagos Notes and Records*, 2/2, 1968, (pp. 30-40).
32. "Ifá Divination Poems as Sources of Historical Evidence", *Lagos Notes and Records*, 1/1, June 1970, (pp. 11-20).
33. "The Ese of Ifá", *African Notes*, 2/3, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1965, (pp.12-17).
34. "The Place of Ifá in Yoruba Traditional Religion", *African Notes*, 2/2, January 1965.
35. "The Ruins of Oyo Division", *African Notes*, 2/1, October 1964.
36. "The Odu of Ifá", *African Notes*, 1/3, 1964, (pp.6-12).

CURRENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1. Collection, transcription, translation and interpretation of eighteen (18) volumes of Ifá literature. (A sub-project of UNESCO's Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humankind: Ifá Divination System.)
2. Extensive research on Ifá Literary Corpus since 1963 to date. Materials collected include many reels of long-play, seven-inch tapes available at the University of Lagos Library and also my own personal library.
3. Research on Yoruba Settlement legends.

4. I am currently working on a manuscript on Yoruba Religion and Thought.
5. Research on Yoruba Culture in the Diaspora.

PUBLIC SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

1. Member, Executive Committee, Association of Commonwealth Universities, 1988-1989.
2. Chairman, Governing Board, Oyo State College of Arts and Science, Ile-Ife, 1981-1989.
3. Chairman, Board of Governors, Oliver Baptist High School, Oyo, 1974-1984.
4. Chairman, Board of Directors, University of Ife Guest Houses Limited, 1978-1984.
5. Chairman, Oyo State Broadcasting Corporation, 1976-1978.
6. Chairman, Oyo Zonal Health Board and Member of the State Health Council, 1974-1976.
7. Chairman, Oyo State Tourist Committee, 1979.

CULTURAL MATTERS

1. Member, Council for the World's Religions, since 1995.
2. President, International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture since 1981.
3. Installed as Elemoso of Ketu (Benin Republic) in 1986.
4. Installed as Asiwaju Awo of Remo (Nigeria) in 1990.
5. Installed as Awise Awo Ni Agbaye (Spokesperson of Ifá Priests in the World) in 1981.
6. Consecrated as Babalawo (Ifá Priest) since 1971.

SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Teaching Experience

I taught courses in the areas of Oral Literature, Religion, African Thought (especially Ethics), Folklore and Linguistics in the Universities listed in my Curriculum Vitae. I taught "African Society, Politics and Power" for the Departments of Philosophy, Pan-African Studies and Humanities at the University of Louisville. I also delivered a series of more than 25 community lectures with the Louisville Africa Forum.

I taught the following three courses for the Department of Religion, and the African Studies Center at Boston University: (a)Indigenous Religions of West Africa; (b)Traditional African Religions in the Diaspora; and (c)Africa Today. Most of my writings have been concentrated on the areas of Literature, Religion and Thought.

University Administration

Head, Department of African Languages and Literatures, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 1975-1977, 1979-80, 1981-82. I was founder of the above-named department which is devoted to the teaching of African languages and literatures through the medium of African languages. The department has graduated many students with B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in Yoruba Language and Literature over the past thirty years.

Dean, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 1977-79. The Faculty of Arts at Ile-Ife comprises the following departments:

African Languages and Literatures

English Studies

Dramatic Arts

Modern European Languages

History

Religious Studies

Fine Arts

Music

Philosophy

Institute of Cultural Studies

I served as *Vice-Chancellor (President)*, University of Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) from 1982 to 1989. The position of Vice-Chancellor is equivalent to that of a President in an American university. A Vice-Chancellor is the Chief Executive of a University in Nigeria. A person can occupy the office only for a maximum of seven years. The process for the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor begins with a nomination by the University faculty members. A joint committee of Council and Senate of the University prepares a short list of three candidates for the President of the country who would then appoint one of the three candidates to the position of Vice-Chancellor. All universities in Nigeria are owned by government both at Federal and State levels.

SOME INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ATTENDED

1. Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Justice and Peace in the World, Assisi, Rome, the Vatican, Italy, forthcoming October 2011. Honored participant.
2. 3rd Odu'a Distinguished Lecture, Odu'a Investment Company Limited, Ibadan, November 2010. Distinguished Lecture: "Strategies for the Preservation and Promotion of Yoruba Religion, Language and Cultural Values".
3. Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne, Australia, December 2009. Keynote speaker, panelist, and Committee on Indigenous Issues.
4. Sacred Knowledge, Sacred Power and Performance: Ifá Divination in West Africa and the African Diaspora, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 2008. Keynote speaker and Honoree. "*We feel inspired to dedicate "Sacred Knowledge" to the enduring scholarly legacies of Wándé Abímbólá and William Bascom, whose pioneering work in the study of Ifá will continue to influence generations of scholars.*"—quote from conference program

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5. Universal Forum of Cultures/Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, Monterrey, Mexico, September 2007. Keynote speaker and panelist.
6. II Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, July 2006. Paper Presented: "The Future of Indigenous African Religions in Africa and the Diaspora".
7. World Council of Churches, Lariano Velletri/Rome, Italy, May 2006. Paper Presented: "Interreligious Reflection on Conversion: Assessing the Reality".
8. Ninth International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 2005.
9. World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2005. Plenary Address: "Assessing Dialogue: Embargoed Against Delivery".
10. Parliament of the World's Religions, Barcelona, Spain, July 2004. Keynote speaker.
11. Global Diversity Coalition on the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, Valdosta, Georgia, January 2005. Keynote speaker and moderator.
12. Eighth International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Havana, Cuba, July 2003.
13. Seventh International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, August 2001.
14. Sixth International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Port of Spain, Trinidad, August 1999.
15. Fifth international Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, San Francisco, August 1997.
16. African Divination Systems, Amherst College, Massachusetts, November 1996.
17. International Conference on Yoruba Religion and Culture, Havana Cuba, 1994. Paper Presented: "Cuba: Our Second Home".
18. The Yoruba Artist, Museum Reitberg, Zurich, January 1992.
19. Second Assembly of World's Religions, San Francisco, California, 1990.
20. Fourth International Congress of Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Sao Paulo, Brazil 1989.
21. Assembly of the World's Religions, McAfee, New York, November 1985. Plenary Address on Primal Religions.
22. Third World Congress on Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 1986.
23. Second World Congress on Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Salvador, Brazil, 1983. Paper Presented: "Ifá: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".
24. First World Congress on Òriṣà Tradition and Culture, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 1981. Paper presented: "The Òriṣà Tradition: A World View".
25. International Conference of the Association for the Study of the History of Religions, Winnipeg, Canada, September 1981. Paper presented: "Sacrifice in the Yoruba Religion".
26. African Studies Association of America, Philadelphia, 1980. Paper Presented: Secrecy and Objectivity in the Methodology of Ifá" (with Barry Hallen).
27. African Studies Association of America, Baltimore, December 1978.
28. International Americanist Congress, Paris, August 1976. Paper Presented: "Yoruba Religion in Brazil".
29. Second Annual Ibadan Literature Conference on Oral Poetry in Africa, University of Ibadan, July 1977. Paper Presented: Two Lineages of Yoruba Wood Carvers".
30. Secretary-General, First Congress of Negro Culture in the Americas, Cali, Colombia, September 1977.
31. Chairman, Local Organizing Committee, West African Linguistic Society Meeting, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, March 1976.
32. U.N.O. Population Conference, Bucharest, Romania, August 1974.

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33. Chairman, Organizing Committee, Seminar on Yoruba oral Literature, January 1974.
34. Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, September 1973. Paper Presented: “Olodumare: Premus inter pares”.
35. Rothko Chapel Colloquium on Contemplation and Action in World Religions, Houston, Texas, January 1973.
36. Yoruba Studies Seminar, Institute of African Studies, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, August 1970. Paper Presented: “Eto Ijoba Ni Ile Yoruba” (The Yoruba Traditional Political System).
37. Weekend Seminar in Yoruba, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, 1972. Paper Presented: “Yoruba Oral Literature”.
38. International Conference on the Notion of person in Black Africa, C.N.R.S., Paris, October 1971. Paper Presented: “The Yoruba Concept of Human Personality”.
39. International Conference on Cultural Diversity and National understanding, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, 1969. Paper Presented: “Cooperation Between Peoples of Different Religious Persuasions”.
40. American Folklore Society, Washington, D.C., November 1971.
41. African Studies Association of America, Denver, Colorado, November 1971. Paper Presented: “Ifá Divination and the Coming of Islam into Yorubaland”.
42. Consultation of West African Language Policies, Organized Jointly by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana and the Ford Foundation, Legon, Ghana, 1972.
43. Presenter at various West African Linguistic Society conferences: Lagos (1967); Freetown (1969); Legon (1972), etc.