

## **A brief profile of Professor Adebayo Williams**

Variously described by leading authorities as the greatest essayist to have come out of Africa, Nigeria's five-star writer and a master of arresting and scintillating prose, Professor Williams is easily one of Nigeria's most respected and authoritative public intellectuals. In a career spanning almost fifty years, Williams has come to dominate public discourse in Nigeria with his brilliant display of erudition, his sharp wit and penetrating intellect.

Although he originally specialised in *Theory of Literature*, he has since successfully branched out to other fields including Political Theory, Postcolonial Studies, Philosophy and Cultural Production. Professor Adebayo Williams is one of Nigeria's best known scholars and globally recognised academics with over a thousand publications including six books to his credit.

As a polyvalent intellectual and multi-disciplinary scholar, his books and scholarly articles span several fields, namely: **Theory of Literature, Political Theory, Theory of Governance and Democratisation, Cultural Production, Post-Colonial Theory and Creative Writing**. Several articles have been written on Professor Williams attesting to his exceptional brilliance as an academic and his capacity to generate ideas in several fields of human endeavour.

As a journalist, Professor Williams has served as columnist for several national and international magazines and newspapers. He was a columnist for *Newswatch*, 1985- 1990, *African Concord* 1990-1992; *Tempo/The News* 1993-1995; *The Nation* 2007 till date and *Africa Today* as columnist and editor at large, 1995 till date. Before going to the then University of Ife in 1971, Professor Williams worked with the *Nigeria Tribune*, reaching the position of sub-editor.

In 1981/ 82 session while still a visiting graduate student, Professor Williams was appointed *Honorary Visiting Lecturer*, Department of English, University of Sheffield, England. In that capacity, he gave lectures and led seminars in the new area of *Theory of African Literature*. In 1986, barely three years after being awarded a doctorate degree in *Theory of African Literature*, Williams became a

Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literature in English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Since returning to Nigeria in 2006 after serving as a Professor in various universities in America and Europe, Professor Adebayo Williams has served as **Chairman, Lagos State Electoral Reform Panel, 2008-2010**; member Board of Trustees **Obafemi Awolowo Institute for Governance and Public Policy** 2009-till date and **Chairman, Lagos State Gubernatorial Advisory Committee**, 2010-2018 under Governors Babatunde Fashola and Akinwunmi Ambode.

In 1995, Professor Williams was appointed the Director General of **Africa Policy Group**, a London based Think-tank which addresses issues of governance crucial to Africa. Earlier in 1991 while still teaching at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Professor Williams was made a Director of the **USAID**-sponsored project on **Governance and Democratization in Africa**.

In 1997, Professor Williams returned to the Centre of African Studies, University of Birmingham as Visiting Lecturer and Honorary Research Fellow, a position he held till 2006. He had earlier served in the same department as Leverhulme Fellow between 1988-1990.

In November, 1998, Professor Williams became a fellow of African Studies Centre, University of Leiden, Holland and Professor of Liberal Arts, Savannah College of Arts and Design, Georgia, USA. In January, 2004, Professor Williams assumed duty as the Amy Freeman Lee Distinguished Chair of Humanities and Fine Arts, University of The Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas USA. He has also served as jury/professor at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in France.

In the course of a distinguished career spanning almost forty years, Professor Williams has won many laurels in scholarship, journalism and Creative writing including winning twice both *The Association of Nigerian Authors* prize in 1988 and 1995 and the Odunewu prize for Informed Commentary in 1993 and 2000. In addition, he has served as mentor and iconic source of inspiration for many generations of Nigerians who look up to him as a source of guidance and political compass.

Professor Williams is married with children.