

## Chinua Achebe, the Gentle Giant of African Literature Joins the Ancestors – March 22, 2013

Members of the African Literature Association (ALA) join the world's literary and academic communities to mourn the death of Professor Chinua Achebe. Professor Achebe is well known globally as the Father of African Literature. Generations of students worldwide are familiar with his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, a classic in African literature. This morning, the news of Achebe's death shook the ALA community whose members are attending their organization's 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference this week in Charleston, South Carolina. For this group, Achebe's legacy is immeasurable. As novelist, poet, short story writer, essayist, Achebe was a pathfinder whose works continue to inspire Africa's creative writers and literary critics. While Achebe's fictional creations focused on the Igbo's of Nigeria, his writing effectively brought Africa and Africans onto the stage of world literatures by creating images of Africa that the rest of the world was unfamiliar with; especially in 1958 when his first novel was published by the United Kingdom-based Heinemann Publishers. Achebe received a BA Honors (Classics) from University College Ibadan. He later worked as Director of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service and as a teacher in Nigeria. Achebe has taught at various universities, including University of Nigeria, Nsukka; University of Connecticut-Storrs; Bard College, Annandale on Hudson; and Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. As he becomes a member of Africa's ancestral lineages, he will be sorely missed. We, at the ALA will remember him as prominent among those African leaders who spent their lives making sure that Africa's past will be remembered as having a worthwhile and memorable history, and that the future will continue to be marked by the indomitable spirit of those for whom Achebe's leadership sparked their creativity and vision. We salute you, Eagle-on-Iroko! We salute you, Eminent Son of Africa! We will tell your name and courageous words and deeds to our children!

The ALA sends heartfelt condolences to Achebe's family. He is survived by his wife, four children and several grandchildren. Achebe was 82 years old. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

Submitted by,

Anthonia Kalu, ALA President

On Behalf of the African Literature Association (Charleston, SC March 22, 2013)