

E PLURIBUS UNUM

A Father of the Internet, **Philip Emeagwali**

By Margaret Aghadiuno @2003

Once a refugee standing on long lines awaiting his meal,
Sleeping in bombed-out shelters, willing himself to survive war,
From logarithms and slide rules to batches of punch cards,
Emeagwali learned the Fortran lingo at the speed of light;
Propelled by an ethereal sense of vocation and vision,
Demonstrating like a lion his proclivity to seek
and to conquer those challenges most abstruse and exacting,
With bold, daring, unprecedented and intrepid thinking;

Denied funds and easy access to research facilities,
Ostensibly because his research was not deemed "serious"
By those who failed to see his scintillating accomplishments,
He tapped deeply into the unmapped boundaries of science;
Treated less than an equal, working without pay or perquisite,
Doors were constantly shut by those surprised he was not white,
The tanned color of his skin condemned by peers as a stigma,
With belief in the putative ignorance of Africa;

He took the thorny path to dispel the myth of error,
Their aberration of a science genius from Africa;
Where others found a wall replete with obfuscating visions,
He unravelled an untapped vastness of possibilities;
With sedulous focus, perception and unique enterprise,
A lone, assiduous research into the matrix of science,
He beat the odds to break all the barriers of time, space and depth,
With only his wife Dale's unwavering belief in her Philip;

Building on Richardson's fantasy on human computers,
He simulated and surpassed the computational speed
of the elite supercomputers once placed out of his reach,
With revolutionary equations deemed "impossible";
He harnessed the power of 65,000 processors,
To perform the fastest computations ever known to man,
Billions and billions of calculations per second he solved,
For which feat Emeagwali received the Gordon Bell prize;

With genius unparalleled since Einstein, Newton, Equiano,
He extrapolated the mystery of constellations,
From observing the natural geometries and patterns,
In the efficient construction of bees' honeycombs;
He extended the barriers of interference and diffraction,
and expanded the vectorial form of Navier-Stokes equations,

Resolving heuristical arguments and algorithms,
Momentum equations, convective motions, Cray's polemic;

Like a soaring eagle he continues his path to glory;
Undeterred by bias, rejection or discrimination,
He developed the theory of a computer hyperball,
With his tessellated models for parallel computing,
And the counter-intuitive hypercube paradox,
Mass equations, helicity, chirality, duality-
He unified the laws of nature, physics and geology
Testament to a great mind that defies imagination;

A father of the internet, and a true son of the earth,
He's the apotheosis of modern African genius.

Margaret Aghadiuno is a linguist, poet and writer.

emeagwali.com
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