

Sayed El Gindi

Legendary Neurosurgeon; Prof. Dr. Sayed El Gindi Dear Colleagues It is with deep sorrow that I write this obituary for a great Professor, neurosurgeon and human being. Dr sayed El Gindi passed away on March 18, 2013, in Cairo. Professor Dr Sayed Awad El Gindi, was Born in 1931 in Zefta, Gharbiah, Egypt. He received his medical education in the Faculty of Medicine , Cairo University and obtained the MBChB in 1956. Although he began his residency training in the department of urology, he was attracted to neurosurgery, and so switched his residency and training to the department of Neurosurgery, Cairo University. In 1959 he travelled to the U.K. for advanced training in Neurosurgery at the Middlesex Hospital under the supervision of Mr. John Andrew. In 1963, he became a Fellow of The Royal College of Surgeons. Dr. El Gindi returned to Egypt and worked in Maadi Military Hospital to establish a new Department of Neurosurgery. Within a few years he had established one of the best departments of neurosurgery in Egypt. He was the first non staff member to be appointed to supervise the doctorate of University staff. The first doctorate he supervised was the MD of Professor Adel Hakim. During his long career, he performed more than 10000 operations covering all types of neurosurgical problems. He trained many neurosurgeons from Egypt, and other Arab and African countries. He was especially interested in head and spine trauma and conducted several research projects on the subject. He published nearly 100 articles in international and national journals. He was a member of the editorial board of Neurosurgery for years. Dr El Gindi, shared in establishing the Egyptian Neurosurgical Society, Pan Arab Neurosurgical Society and African neurosurgical society. He organized and conducted several neurosurgical courses in Egypt, and some African countries. He served actively on different committees of WFNS and he was elected to be honorary president of WFNS. He was also elected to be the honorary president of the Pan African neurosurgical society in 2002. At the time of his death he was an honorary president of the Egyptian neurosurgical Society. Dr. Sayed El Gindi was a great friend and teacher. He was highly appreciated and respected by all Egyptians. He was a good friend of President and Mrs. Sadat, and when in 1998 the president was fatally shot, it was Dr. El Gindi who attempted to save his life. He loved painting and music. He had a high respect for humanity and science and he was committed to good values. Dr El Gindi was Member of Heliopolis Sporting Club, Automobile Club of Egypt, Alexandria Yachting Club and Alexandria Club. Both the Egyptian and Moroccan governments honored Dr. El Gindi for his achievement and contribution to neurosurgery in Egypt and Africa. Dr. El Gindi will remain with in spirit to inspire us to follow his steps. Dr. Sayed El Gindi during WFNS course, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, October 2007 Ahmed Ammar, General Secretary of Pan Arab Neurosurgical Society (PANS) Professor of Neurosurgery, Dammam University KFHU, Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia Ali Kotb , Professor of neurosurgery, Ain Shams University Cairo, Egypt Adel Hakim, Professor of Neurosurgery, Ain Shams University Cairo, Egypt

The serious practitioners of neurosurgery (brain and spinal cord surgery) in Africa are never put off by adversity. However, the news that came out of Heliopolis, Cairo this week was particularly tough to handle. Professor Sayed El Gindi, the revered African neurosurgeon, had passed on.

Prof. Sayed El Gindi came of age when the anti-colonial struggle was gathering strength on the African continent; he completed his undergraduate medical degree from Cairo University in 1956. In the ensuing years, as many African states gained the right to self-determination, he pursued post graduate training in neurosurgery- both in Cairo and the UK and gained the FRCS in 1963.

Fully compatible with the ethos at the time, Sayed El Gindi returned to Egypt and established a Neurosurgical Department at the Maadi Military Hospital and powered it into one of the best specialist units in the country. He later went on to assist in the establishment of Neurosurgery Departments in

Alexandria, Mansoura and Luxor.

The pan-Africanist fervor of the times was not lost on El Gindi. He embraced it with zeal and proceeded to train many neurosurgeons from Africa and the Arab world. His first trainee was Adel El Hakim, a life-long El Gindi loyalist- and an excellent neurosurgeon who rose to become Professor and Head of the Neurosurgery Department of Ains Shams University and later the Nasser Institute. El Gindi was an untiring advocate- no, protagonist for progress in African neurosurgery. He was particularly moved by the absence of personnel and resources for treating head injuries in Africa. On account of this, he travelled extensively throughout Africa to train surgeons and establish facilities for the management of head injuries.

In the academic arena, El Gindi was on the Editorial Board of the flagship scientific journal- "Neurosurgery" and he published over 100 peer-reviewed articles in international scientific journals- all of which have helped to provide knowledge and improve patient outcomes. He became an iconic figure in world neurosurgery; an honorary President of the World Federation of Neurological Surgeons (WFNS), the African Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (AFNS), the Pan African Association of Neurological Sciences (PAANS), the Pan-Arab Neurosurgical Society and the Egyptian Neurosurgical Society. But more importantly he was debonair, a consummate gentleman and a humanist.

Whether it was on a boat on the Shire River as the hippopotami saluted us with their glistening sabres; or at a beach side restaurant in Cotounu; or navigating the market stalls in Blantyre and Aswan or standing together and watching the sunset over the west bank of the Sakumono Lagoon- for me he was a quiet re-assuring presence, rooted and confident in his African and Arab heritage- a renaissance man; a true citizen of the world.

I still remember poignantly, the tightness of his jaw and the gleam in his eyes when he stood at Kwame Nkrumah's grave in silent tribute on that Sunday morning barely a few hours after arriving in Accra for the first time; El Gindi never abandoned the Pan-African spirit.

As cognoscenti of the arts, he and his life-long partner- Mrs. Samia El Gindi, had an extensive collection of paintings, illuminated manuscripts and objets d'art at their lovely Heliopolis apartment to uplift the human spirit; and their hospitality was always the most gracious. Our thoughts at this difficult time are with Mrs. El Gindi, his daughters and family.

If we are to honor this gentle giant of a man and titan, then we must perpetuate his legacy of live long service and humanism - always bringing living water to a thirsty land.

Nii B. ANDREWS, MD Chief of Neurosurgery and Vice-President, neuroGHANA.

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