

## **Honouring Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah's enduring legacy in African Scholarship and social justice**

Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah, a distinguished scholar, anthropologist and sociologist, and advocate for African development, will be conferred with an Honorary Doctorate from Rhodes University in recognition of his immense contributions to academia, social justice, and the advancement of African languages. His dedication to fostering African identity, education, and intellectual discourse has left a lasting impact on global scholarship.

Born in 1942 in Kumasi, Ghana, Professor Prah has had an illustrious career spanning multiple continents, playing a pivotal role in the intellectual and cultural development of Africa. His academic journey began at Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam, where he earned his PhD. His leadership was most prominently displayed as the Founder and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) in Cape Town, a hub for African intellectual thought and linguistic research, which he donated to the University of the Western Cape in 2018.

Professor Prah has held teaching and research positions across the world, including at Makerere University (Uganda), University of Zambia, University of Botswana and Swaziland, University of Juba (Sudan), University of Namibia, National University of Lesotho, and the University of the Western Cape (South Africa), among many others. He has served as a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University's Centre for African Studies and contributed extensively to the development of African sociological and anthropological studies.

Professor Prah is a leading advocate for the use of African languages in education, governance, and scientific development. His work emphasises the necessity of linguistic inclusivity in knowledge production, ensuring that African people can be educated in their native languages. His advocacy extends to pan-Africanism, social justice, and decolonial discourse, challenging historical narratives that marginalise African contributions to global civilisation. Professor Prah was the convenor of the 8<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Congress in 2014 in Johannesburg.

As the Director of CASAS, Professor Prah led pioneering research on African languages, proposing harmonisation and standardisation models to bridge linguistic diversity across the continent. In the 23 years he was Director of CASAS, the Centre harmonised the orthographic conventions of 85% of languages across the African continent plus nine dictionaries and glossaries. His leadership at various academic institutions and international advisory boards has shaped the discourse on African identity, education, and governance.

Professor Prah is a prolific writer and public intellectual, having authored and edited more than 50 books, including *African Languages for the Mass Education of Africans*

(1995), *Mother Tongue for Scientific and Technological Development in Africa* (2000), *The Challenge of Decolonizing Education* (2018) and *The African Nation: The State of the Nation* (2006). His academic writings and public addresses continue to influence African studies, sociolinguistics, and development policy.

Throughout his career, Professor Prah has been deeply committed to mentorship and intellectual collaboration. His colleagues and students admire his unwavering dedication to African-centred knowledge production, his generosity in sharing insights, and his role as a transformative thinker in African social sciences. His speeches and writings often highlight the importance of self-reliance, cultural integrity, and intellectual sovereignty for Africa's future.

Rhodes University is honoured to recognise his extraordinary impact with an honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) degree at its graduation award ceremony on 3 April 2025 at 09:30, where Professor Prah will deliver an address reflecting on language and the future of Africa.