

Life Time Pioneering Medical Care Provision & Health Care Professionals Development Award – Dr. Hailu Kefene



Born in Ambo in January 1942 and after his primary education in his birth area, he joined the prestigious General Wingate Secondary School where he completed his high school studies in 1960. He was then chosen by the imperial government to train as an officer cadet in the Ethiopian Ground Forces and joined the Harar Military Academy in October 1960. Only two years into his military training, Dr. Hailu was sent on scholarship to study medicine at Belgrade University, Yugoslavia, and received his MD degree in 1968. Following a year of internship in Addis Ababa and a two-year stint as a General practitioner in the 3rd Division Army Hospital in Harar, Dr. Hailu left for the US in 1972 for specialty training. He completed his internship in internal medicine in Saint Louis, MO, followed by residency training at The Cumberland Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. He then completed fellowship training in Gastroenterology at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio.

Upon his return from the US in Dec. 1977, Dr. Hailu started working in the Armed Forces General Hospital (AFGH) where he served in different capacities including as an internist & gastroenterologist, head of the department of internal medicine, and Medical Director & Commanding Officer of the hospital until his retirement in 1995. During his tenure at AFGH, he built an excellent academic department and hospital that was affiliated to the School of Medicine of Addis Ababa University. He had an adjunct position in the Department of Internal Medicine of the School of Medicine of Addis Ababa University for many years and was a Clinical Associate Professor upon his retirement from public service. His GI Unit was probably the second unit in the country after Tikur Anbessa Hospital's GI Unit to do diagnostic procedures like Upper GI endoscopy and colonoscopy. Dr. Hailu excelled as a clinician, academician and researcher and his ward rounds and bedside sessions were among the best sought after by medical students and house staff. He was recognized as the Best Teacher in the School of Medicine in 1989 and was dubbed 'The Walking Harrison' by medical students for his encyclopedic knowledge of internal medicine.

Dr. Hailu was also an outstanding researcher and contributed immensely to the understanding of the epidemiology of Hepatitis B infection through the studies he conducted among thousands of members of the Ethiopian armed forces. His publications were in a wide range of subjects from gastroenterology to infectious diseases. Dr. Hailu was among the first senior health professionals in the country to be involved in the care and the study of patients with HIV infection and he and his group have several publications and presentations at international conferences on the HIV epidemic at its beginnings in Ethiopia. For several years, Dr. Hailu chaired the National HIV/AIDS Advisory Council of the Ministry of Health and contributed to the successful national fight to curb the epidemic.

Young Rising Star Award - Getahun Mekuria Kuma, Dr.-Ing



Dr. Getahun Mekuria is a young and energetic Ethiopian who achieved impressive, meaningful and practical solutions on the leadership positions that he has been in the last decade. He completed B.Sc in Electrical Engineering and M.Sc in Communication Engineering in 1999 both from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. He later finished his PhD in Electrical Engineering from Universitate Duisburg-Essen, Duisburg, Germany.

Dr. Getahun is a leader with exceptional qualities and he belongs to the generation of leaders who are taking tremendous steps towards transforming our nation.

He has the vision and a staunch believe that our nation's transformation could only be made possible through appropriate nurturance of science and technology. He is now leading one of the most vibrant ministry's in the nation.

Among many of his achievement is the development of the first Electronic Medical recording system called *iCare* which is now successfully deployed at the Tikur Anbessa Hospital. This program was developed by young Ethiopian Engineers in country. This is just one example of many initiatives where he is fostering the development of young talent in the country. Recently, Dr. Getahun Mekuria is promoted to lead the Minister of Innovation and Technology.

Community Service Award - Mrs. Yetnebersh Nigussie, JD



Yetnebersh Nigussie is a lawyer and disability rights activist who has been a vocal advocate for disenfranchised and marginalized citizens all her adult life. Finding opportunity amid adversity, Yetnebersh took loss of her eyesight at the age of 5 in stride, and tackled life with zest and sense of purpose. She was active in social causes starting from high school and chaired an Anti-AIDS movement in college and founded a Female Students Association at Addis Ababa University. A lawyer and social worker by training, Yetnebersh has devoted her entire adult life in diverse causes with a focus on inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Yetnebersh's activism and advocacy for social justice has been widely recognized and she is a recipient of numerous awards and accolades. She received the Amanitare award for her work in promoting girls' education, recognition for her work in HIV/AIDS prevention and control in Ethiopia, World of Difference 100 Award from the International Alliance of Women, and most recently, the prestigious Right Livelihood Award for her work in promoting the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. This year, she was the recipient of the Spirit of Helen Keller Award.

Yetnebersh founded a local organization called Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD) with the objectives of empowering people with disabilities and advancing their causes both socially and economically. She has also volunteered in more than 20 civic and support organizations in various positions of leadership. Yetnebersh is currently a senior inclusion advisor at Light For The World, an Austria based global disability and development organization.

Posthumous Award – Widad Kidane Mariam, M.D.



Dr. Widad Kidane-Mariam was born to an Ethiopian émigré family in Palestine during the Italian Occupation. Her father served in the Ethiopian Legation in Jerusalem. Her brother Yohanis Kidane-Mariam studied political science at the American University of Beirut.

Dr. Widad studied medicine at the American University of Beirut and also served in the Ministry of Public Health for many years. She was the “first female” medical practitioner and physician administrator in charge of medical services division in the Ministry of Health in 1960s-1970s. Beside her official duties, she served as one of the founders of the first Ethiopian Family Planning Association; a founder of the Not-for-Profit Maternal and Child Care, as well as a physician who provided free health care in Addis Ababa and practiced as one of the first Ethiopian female gynecologists. She generated hundreds of thousands of grants from the Swedish Save the Children Fund project in Addis Ababa. She died in her prime at the age of 55 while still one of the most notable pioneers in medical and public health services in 1960s.
