

IN MEMORIAM

## Folarin Shyllon (1940–2021)



It was with great sadness that we received news of the death of our friend, colleague, and Editorial Board and International Cultural Property Society member, Professor Folarin Shyllon in January 2021.

We were the beneficiaries of his intellectual rigor and curiosity, lengthy service to the law and protection of cultural heritage, and immense generosity.

The nature of Folarin's groundbreaking scholarship was set early with the publication of *Black Slaves in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1974). A reviewer found that his "revisionist account of the forces which coalesced to end slavery in Britain, and future students of the subject in its manifold ramifications will be indebted to him." He followed this with *Black People in Britain 1555–1833* (Oxford University Press, 1977) described as "a meticulously and painstakingly researched account of blacks in Britain which has demolished many a myth, written by a person with a passion against injustice."

Folarin's intellectual contribution continued through the decades until his death. Reflecting his dedication to the legal protection of cultural heritage, he authored chapters in the *Oxford Handbook on International Cultural Heritage Law* (Oxford University Press 2020) and was preparing a chapter for the forthcoming *Oxford Commentary on the 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions and the UNIDROIT Convention* anniversary publication.

Folarin was the foundation Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ibadan. The oldest degree awarding institution in Nigeria, its Law School was established only after independence from British colonial rule. His students have become attorneys-general,

justices of appellate courts, and judges of High Courts in different states, magistrates, senior advocates of Nigeria, and professors of law. He is remembered fondly as a mentor to many in Nigeria, Africa, and globally.

His dedication to the promotion of the protection of cultural heritage and its return to countries of origin was embodied in his tireless work in regional and international organizations. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization acknowledged his unflinching contribution to its work for decades and the progressive development of international cultural heritage law, and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law's Secretary-General Ignacio Tirado acknowledged that "we owe him a debt of gratitude."

When Folarin passed away, his dream of the return of African cultural objects seemed to becoming a reality following President Emmanuel Macron's 2017 speech in Ouagadougou on the repatriation of African treasures in museums outside of Africa.