

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY 73RD GRADUATION CEREMONY

Citation for the Award of an Honorary Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) to Prof. Christopher Curtis Whalen

Dr. Christopher Whalen is the Karen and Jim Holbrook Professor of Global Health and Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Georgia where he is the director of the Global Health Institute in the College of Public Health. Dr. Whalen received his Bachelor's degree in English from Stanford University, his Doctorate of Medicine and his Master's degree in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Whalen was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Medical School at Case Western Reserve University in 1990 where he rose through the ranks to become professor of Medicine, with a sub-specialty of Infectious Diseases. He then moved to the University of Georgia in 2008 to help develop the new College of Public Health and expand his research portfolio to include population science.

He is a physician-scientist who has devoted his career to the control of infectious diseases in low- and middle-income countries, especially tuberculosis and HIV infection in Uganda. Professor Whalen first began working in Uganda in 1991 as a junior member of the Uganda-Case Western Reserve Research Collaboration where he worked with his Ugandan colleagues at Makerere University to develop a multi-disciplinary scientific agenda for research on HIV and tuberculosis in Uganda. From his early studies on the treatment and prevention of HIV/TB, he expanded the scope of his research over time to study *M. tuberculosis* transmission as the underlying reason why tuberculosis persists in sub-Saharan Africa today. Across his 30-year partnership with Makerere University, he has helped to garner approximately \$90 million for research in Uganda, with most of it through Makerere University. His research productivity is exceptional, with most of his publications including one or more scientists from Makerere University. The impact of this collaborative research is evident by the thousands of citations his work has received, his invited lectures, and plenary talks at major meetings. But more important, his research has influenced global policy regarding the care and treatment of tuberculosis, especially in HIV infection.

Professor Whalen is fond of saying that 'Research is Development'. While he is widely known and respected for his research contributions in Uganda, these accomplishments only tell a part of his story. The other part is how he collaborated with faculty at Makerere University and the Ugandan Ministry of Health to help rebuild capacity for research in the University and country. Following this first visit to Uganda in 1990, Professor Whalen made a personal and professional commitment to the country, and has kept that commitment for over 30 years now. Throughout most of his career he has been the director of four training programs sponsored by the Fogarty International Center. Through these training programs he helped to rebuild the academic and public health infrastructure in Uganda by training Ugandan scientists and health professionals. Over his career, he has contributed to the training of 73 graduate students who earned either Master's or Doctoral degrees at Case Western Reserve University, University of Georgia, and Makerere University.

For Professor Whalen, the award of a graduate degree has not been the final step in the training pathway. Instead, he worked closely with each trainee to develop and implement re-entry strategies that helped the trainees engage in the academic workforce at Makerere University, and other government and non-government positions, upon return. Because of his commitment to re-entry, over 95% graduate trainees returned to Uganda to become leaders in their respective fields and disciplines. Indeed, the list of his former trainees includes past and current Deans, department heads, productive faculty members, public health leaders, and a member of Parliament. A lasting contribution has been his support of former students to start and maintain the Ugandan Society for Health Scientists, which today is an inspiring training ground for future scientists. This extraordinary level of personal commitment to rebuild the academic and educational programs at Makerere University is truly unique among foreign collaborators.

He has the international stature as a scientist, an educator, and leader, and has shown unwavering dedication to Makerere University through his many and sustained efforts at capacity building and promoting excellence. He has been a consummate partner and collaborator with many Ugandan faculty and leaders, in both research and education. While it is evident that Professor Whalen is a superb researcher, an influential academic leader and a highly productive educator of new scientists in Africa and the US, he also should be recognized for his faith in humanity and his determination to improve the well-being of Ugandan men, women, and children.

Read by: Prof. Moses Joloba, Dean-School of Biomedical Science, College of Health Sciences