

## Biography – Gbenga J. Abiodun, PhD.

Gbenga Abiodun was born in Akure, in western Nigeria on September 5, 1982. He spent his formative years in the city with his Christian parent (late Pa Solomon Abiodun and Alice Abiodun). He completed his high school at Federal Government College Idoani in 1998. Coming from a humble background, he could not afford to enroll in any of the private or state universities but got admission on merit to study industrial mathematics at the Federal University of Technology Akure – one of the leading universities in Nigeria. He was highly motivated by his elder brother Prof Babatunde Abiodun to study mathematics and introduced him to programming at early age.

Gbenga headed to South Africa in 2011 for his masters in mathematics after completing his first degree in 2008. At this time he had develop so much interest in coding and research while he completed the MSc program at the University of the Western Cape in 18 months with two publications in mathematical biology and epidemiology. With undiluted passion for research, he proceeded immediately for his PhD (mathematics) at the same institute in 2013. During the PhD studies, he was selected as the only African for the 2014 Young Scientist Summer Program (YSSP 2014) research training at International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Austria. He was also invited for research visits and collaborations in some international research centres like the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Italy and Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) in Japan. He actively participated in the Japan and South Africa joint project on infectious Diseases Early-Warning System (iDEWS) between 2013 and 2016. He completed his PhD in 2017 with six additional publications and was offered a year postdoctoral fellowship of the University of California Global Health Institute (UCGHI) through Foundation for Professional Development in South Africa in 2017 through 2018.

Dr Abiodun later moved to the US with his family as a self-petitioned Alien of Extraordinary Ability (EB-2) for his contributions to the field of mathematical biology and epidemiology. In the fall of 2019, he joined the mathematics department of Southern Methodist University as an Adjunct Professor. From his arrival till date, Gbenga has successfully taught significant number of courses in the department and added more than 12 research papers to his profile, making around 30 in total. Working closely with Math Department Professor Alejandro Aceves and other colleagues in Africa, several works have been done and published in peer-reviewed journals on infectious diseases such as malaria and COVID-19 both on Africa and the US. Using predictive models, one of the recent investigates the impact of the lockdown on COVID-19 across the states in the US.

Gbenga spends his spare time reading, playing with his family (wife – Rita and kids), watching movie and playing chess.