

University Of Ibadan @ 75

In its 75 years of existence, the university of Ibadan has become an epitome of excellence not only in Nigeria but all over the world. It has lived up to the vision of the founding fathers which was "To be a foremost institution of higher learning in Nigeria"

In Nigeria today, there are few universities that are as respected as the University of Ibadan.

The university stands out distinctively amongst universities in the world because it has carved a niche for itself as a citadel of knowledge known for high quality and standard.

The mention of the name UI anywhere evokes excellence in the minds of the people.

In this special edition to commemorate the 75th anniversary of this great citadel of knowledge, we are focusing principally on the University Alumni who have consistently made it proud in their chosen fields of endeavours.





Integrity, honesty, hard work and selflessness are part of UI culture

- Dr. Leke Oshunniyi

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It is natural for me to serve

Chief (Mrs). Teju Phillips

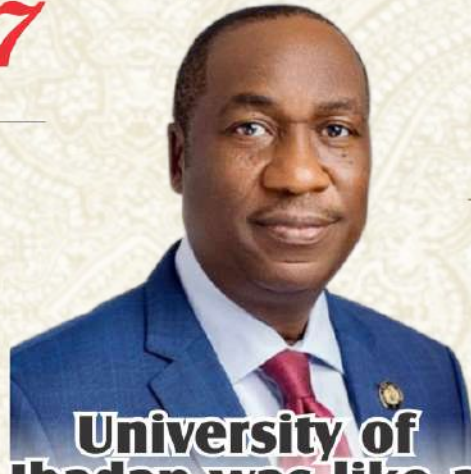
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Being a UI undergraduate was like being in the presidential villa

Omotunde Lawson

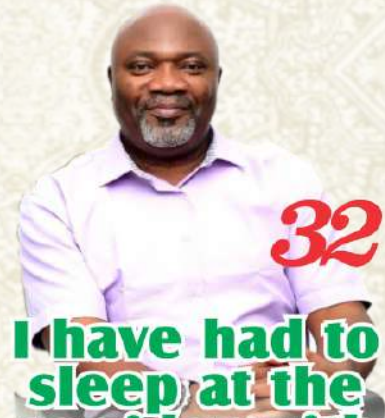
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THE ONLY OPTION FOR ME

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Publisher's Note

TAKING NIGERIA TO GREATER HEIGHTS

In its 75 years of existence, the university of Ibadan has become an epitome of excellence not only in Nigeria but all over the world. It has lived up to the vision of the founding fathers which was "To be a foremost institution of higher learning in Nigeria". In Nigeria today, there are few universities that are as respected as the university of Ibadan. The university stands out distinctively amongst universities in the world because it has carved a niche for itself as a citadel of knowledge known for high quality and standard.

The mention of the name UI anywhere evokes excellence in the minds of the people.



Lanre Olusunmade
Synochure international

To commemorate this 75th anniversary, we are bringing to your reading pleasure the university Alumni who have consistently made it proud in their chosen fields of endeavours.

Nigeria was destined to be great amongst nations of the world because it is not in want of the needed human or natural resources to be so. But whether or not this would be achieved depends in particular, on how well it put its human resources to use, as human race has come to realize that it is brains and not necessarily natural resources that makes nations to be great.

The human resources of any country constitute its greatest asset, but more importantly, its professionals are the bulwark on which any meaningful development can take place.

They are major ingredients in galvanizing a country from a poor status to an industrial power.

In this special edition, we are showcasing professionals of distinction who have displayed uncommon determination, resilience and never-say-die attitude to their professional callings.

Also, in our usual way of celebrating excellence, we have nominated an outstanding professional ENGR. (DR.) Charles Mbelede FPSN as our role model for the younger generation.



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UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN



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@ 75



Being a UI undergraduate was like being in the presidential villa

-Chief (Mrs). Omotunde Lawson

Most women are feminine in nature but there are very few of this gender (simply known as Feminine Miracles) who are masculine in nature and disposition – they are captains of organisations and clubs.



One of these Amazons is Chief (Mrs) Omotunde Lawson, an erudite scholar, articulate teacher, educationist par excellence, entrepreneur, a philanthropist and major donor to the Rotary Foundation. She is married to Francis Akingbade Lawson, a seasoned Banker – and she is a mother of three wonderful children.

Chief (Mrs). Omotunde Lawson is a passionate lover of organ music, plays table tennis and snooker, loves tourism especially boat cruises. Omotunde was born on June 3, 1957 in Ibadan, Oyo State. Her parents were the late Rev. Gabriel Ladokun Lasebikan (of SACOBA fame), a former teacher, headmaster, supervisor of schools and Education Secretary in the old Western Nigeria Education Board and late Mrs. Grace Jokotade Lasebikan who was also a teacher.

She had her primary education at St Luke's Demonstration School, Ibadan from 1963 to 1968; her secondary education at Yejide Girls Grammar School, Ibadan between 1969 and 1973 and her tertiary education at University of Ibadan where she graduated in 1979 with a Bachelor's degree in Teacher Education, Zoology and Botany (2nd Class, Upper Division).

She has a Master's degree in Educational Foundations from the University of Lagos (1991).

She started her career as a Biology teacher in Lagos State and retired after 35 years of meritorious service with the Lagos State Ministry of Education. She spent 23 of those years as a Principal in various secondary

schools in the state. She attended several local professional seminars and workshops as well as many international conferences across the globe while in the teaching service.

What can this woman of virtue say about UI and her choice of course. "I chose UI because it was the dream school of virtually all Ibadan youths in our time and my choice of education course was majorly inspired by my root. I came from a family of educationists. I have since a teenager developed interest to attend UI. Another important reason I attended the school was because of the calibre of society people I know that were alumni of the school."

"Being a UI undergraduate was like being in the presidential villa. We were treated like queens. Our clothes were laundered and the cafeteria system was awesome. Our feeding per day – from breakfast till dinner – was king size service, and our Sunday meals were a big feast."

"University of Ibadan is a different world entirely. It was a representation of the universe. We have people from different parts of the country and the world. We have white lecturers and students from different parts of Africa. UI was the best example of what a University should be."

In conclusion, Mrs. Lawson, an icon in Rotary Club said, "UI taught me everything I know and prepared me for today. It gifted me hard work, honesty and godly character."



Integrity, honesty, hard work and selflessness are part of UI culture

- Dr. Leke Oshunniyi

Life ebbs irrespectively, some are born great, some grow great whilst some have greatness tossed at them. Life of Leke Oshunniyi is like a roller coaster. As a boy, he knew what he wanted and went for it. Therefore, no loafer is permitted to envy his height and exploits – because why the loafers were sleeping, Leke was working.



Dr. Leke Oshunniyi is a distinguished Private Medical Practitioner and Health Administrator with an enviable wealth of experience and a strong commitment to health development and wellbeing. He has been serving as the Director of the Royal Cross Medical Centre in Ikoyi, Lagos, since 1990.

Dr. Oshunniyi is a member of the American College of Physician Executives and the National Association of Managed Care Physicians in the USA. His impressive track record includes an appointment as Deputy Managing Director of Multishield Ltd in June 2010, followed by his subsequent promotion to Managing Director in July 2012. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Health and Managed Care Association of Nigeria (HMCAN) and holds the prestigious title of Fellow of the Institute of Health Insurance and Managed Care of Nigeria (FIHIMN).

Dr. Oshunniyi graduated from the University of Ibadan Medical School in 1982. In addition to his medical qualifications, he holds a Diploma in Finance from the Harvard University, showcasing his multidisciplinary expertise. Why Ibadan and what was school life like as a medical student? Dr. Leke Oshunniyi answered, "As a medical student, I live in two different colleges of the university ... main campus and UCH. A student's performance in the early years determine how quickly he

moves to the University College Hospital and the popular Alexander Brown Hall where things are done differently. There is not much allowance for social life for a serious medical student – but that does not mean that medical students are all works and no play. We were sociable as well. We participated in campus activities, social clubbing, organised and attended events ... we had our own fair deal of life as students." It is a known fact that most medical students devote their time to studies, to clinical exercises and class work, to practical sessions and lectures because passing medical exams is tedious and demanding – but it's worth the while.

What are the memories UI infused in the brain of Dr. Leke Oshunniyi? He replied, "Stepping into the campus is like travelling out of this world – the road network will wow you and the structures will dazzle you – the lecture halls, residential halls, campus trees and natural vegetation, the zoological garden, the school ambience especially at night time are major magnetic field that attracted one to UI and keep them in the school."

"The meals are okay and pocket friendly. Our halls are exquisite just like hotel rooms. Our lecturers were phenomenal – they poured so much into us, and the University culture shaped us into what we are today. Integrity, honesty, hard work and selflessness are part of UI culture and you cannot leave UI with those values and not excel in life." Any teenager finding his footings

in life and opting for Medicine in the 70's, you would discover that 4 out of every 5 doctors were graduates of UCH – and that was enough to convince and jeer the interest of Dr. Leke Oshunniyi to attend UI.

"UI and UCH are not meant for lazy bones. The lecturers and the school curriculum do not permit laziness." Oshunniyi added.

Quite a number of medical students in the era of Dr. Oshunniyi were bookworms but there were some of who participated strongly in sports – and because all works and no play make Jack a dull boy, he also devise time to unwind, for sight seeing – and during one of those moments, he met his heartthrob."

Speaking about a memorable time as an undergraduate, Oshunniyi travelled down the memory lane, "Every undergraduate of our time will never forget the effect and consequences of Ali Must Go Riot of 1978. It affected our studies and meal system – and it led to a drastic and dramatic change in the system of UI."

In conclusion, Dr. Leke Oshunniyi admitted that UI prepared him academically and psychologically – and he is who is today because of the school.





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University of Ibadan was like a mini Nigeria with people from every part of the country

-Obafemi Hamzat

The Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat is a political icon and son of a political juggernaut, HRM Mufutau Olatunji Hamzat of blessed memory.

He is a 1986 graduate of Agricultural Engineering at University of Ibadan. Speaking on UI, AbdulKadiri Obafemi Hamzat said, "I developed affection to attend UI since my days at Olivet Baptist High School, Oyo. I was wooed by its awesome architecture, beautiful environment and well-laid road network – and the high calibre of Nigerians I knew that attended the University. Interestingly, I had always wanted to study engineering but I was not sure of where to specialise until a fellow student chose Agricultural Engineering in his JAMB form and I felt mechanization of agriculture would improve the ability of people in farm management and other agric processes."

"I lived at Nnamdi Azikwe Hall (very close to Engineering Faculty) from my year one to the end. UI was like a mini Nigeria with people from every part of the country, including international students. Our feeding arrangement was fantastic – with a central cafeteria in the middle of the halls, and another one just outside of Zik Hall, where students of both Zik and Independence halls eat. The quality of the food was really nice."

"UI is a place where people could be well moulded. There was that culture of honesty then. We rioted and displayed youthful exuberance but in reality UI was a disciplined society; there were no crimes and the campus was the safest place in the society - you could walk around at 4 am without molestation or attack. There were fringe associations like the Pirate Confraternity and others but would not hurt anybody." Obafemi Hamzat was happy that Ibadan is still rated Number One university in Nigeria.





UI made good impact on my life and career

**-Dr. Adesola Adeduntan
GMD/CEO, First Bank Group**

Adesola Adeduntan, the CEO of the First Bank Group is like a resting lion that no animal could arouse. He is both enigmatic and charismatic. Speaking to our correspondents about his course and life on campus, Adesola who was admitted to study Veterinary Medicine at University of Ibadan in December 1986 said, "University of Ibadan was a natural choice for me. I am from Ibadan; my father was a UI catering department contractor. I was familiar with the school terrain and longed to be in the

school like my cousins – Sharafadeen and Mutairu who were in Law and Industrial Chemistry departments respectively."

"My father, though influenced me to study Veterinary Medicine because of its commercial values but my choice for boardroom activities was influenced by Professor G. A. T. Ogundipe who taught us Jurisprudence as it relates to veterinary medicine." On his social life on campus, Adeduntan added, "I was socially active despite my tight academic schedule. I was a member of Sigma Club and Chief for 1990/91. Under my leadership,

we organized a successful Havana Night with Sir Shina Peters and Alhaji Kollington Ayinla on the band stand. We introduced the Miss Havana Beauty Pageant, Sigma Club Guest Luncheon where great people like Otunba Michael Olasubomi Balogun of FCMB Group were inducted into Sigma Club Roll of Honour in 1991." "UI made good impact on my life and career; I passed through the school and it passed through me. I was once the Secretary General of the Association of Veterinary Medical Students and President of the Federation of Ibadan Students Union." He concluded.

UI gave me everything; high self-esteem, confidence, honesty, academic excellence, and service

Alhaji Biyi Bamgbose



Alhaji Biyi Bamgbose Olatunji is an honest man – tested and trusted in all ramifications – and like a gorilla in the company of apes, he stands out, big, strong and reliable in the oil industry.

Bamgbose entered the University of Ibadan to read political science in 1976 via direct entry and graduated in 1979. He returned for his Masters in 1982. He spoke on his sojourn and life at UI, "UI is an Ivy League institution among the five universities in Nigeria in our time a star attraction to every student. It was the university of my dream. "I lived at Mellamby Hall, popularly called the Gentlemen's

Hall or A9 as nicknamed by other students because of a male student in room A9 who ingested a sex enhancement herbal drug he purchased from a mallam at Sango market. We were treated as if in a bed and breakfast facility. Our rooms, bed spread, toilet and bathroom were cleaned by cleaners, and we had a telephone room where we could make calls. We had bourgeois section for the rich class in our cafeteria where you can order all kinds of foods and dessert with ice cream far more above the normal ticket cost. We also have 'A la carte' section mainly for foreign

students who don't eat our local foods. Our canteen was a top notch, a tourist attraction." On culture and academics, Bamgbose said, "UI gave me everything; high self-esteem, confidence, honesty, academic excellence, and service. Whenever important visitors, like American President, Jimmy Carter, came to Nigeria the first place they wanted to come was UI – and my department, the social sciences, usually hosted them."

In spite of my academic excellence, I was one of the two poorest students in Ibadan

-Chief Adeniyi Akintola, SAN
Principal Partner, Adeniyi Akintola SAN & Co



Adeniyi Olasinmade Michael Akintola is a man of dignity and power. His name is heavier than bride price when seeking a damsel's hand in marriage. Adeniyi Akintola was fully prepared for life on campus and matured before he entered University of Ibadan.

In his words, "I dropped my foreign name due to my radical nature of activism. I entered Ibadan in 1982 with A, B, A in both London Cambridge and HSC; most of my classmates were first degree holders. Meanwhile, I studied law by providence. I had neither a formal secondary school experience nor a career counsellor."

"I lived at Independence Hall nicknamed Katanga as a student and my experiences at the Law faculty was beautiful; we worked hard and enjoyed the benefit of

dedicated lecturers. After lectures, we often went to the chambers of senior lawyers like Afe Babalola, Ajibade, Oladosu, Akinjide and other notable ones in Ibadan for further studies."

Speaking on life on campus, Chief Adeniyi Akintola, SAN recollected indelible instances of his undergraduate days, "I will never forget the 1983 elections proceedings where law students were made observers of the gubernatorial election dispute in the famous case of Chief Bola Ige and Dr. Omololu Olunloyo. We were divided into two groups – Akinjide and Olowofoyeku. After the case was concluded, we jokingly named ourselves after the notable lawyers. I was named Akinjide, SAN – but despite my academic excellence, I was one of the two poorest students in Ibadan at the time. Other robust

experience of our time was the sense of value and respect we had for lecturers; we always met any lecturer approaching our classrooms to collect his bag and files."

He also mentioned a scenario that put an end to stealing food on campus in his days saying, "Most students keep their foodstuffs in the hall freezer because each floor had its own refrigerator used for preservation of edible foods – but stealing of foods was rampant in those days."



UI taught me that no two things are particularly identical

-Duke Osima

A versatile champion of all seasons, Duke Osima is a humble Nigerian resident in Maryland, USA. He is a 1976 graduate of Theatre Art at the University of Ibadan. He taught Dramatic Literature at University of Maiduguri before relocating to the USA where he holds an Associate Degree in Nursing.

He worked at Meharry Hubbard hospital in Natchbet NSE and University of Maryland. Now, he and his wife take care of paediatric patients.

Speaking of why he chose UI and what the school embedded in him, this one time Jos campus Student Leader who first resided at Independence Hall upon relocating to main campus, Duke Osima said, "University of Ibadan offered preliminary programme for those that do not have A' level. It is the oldest university in Nigeria, it ranked among the famous, best and recognised African universities. When I was in Jos campus, four of us were in a room and when we moved to the main campus, we were three in a room but the food was cheap, the system was pay as you eat."

"At Jos campus, the first lesson I learnt was work hard and excel

and become the idol of students, lecturers and administrators. I had the highest academic average in my first semester at Jos and that endeared me to my professors and mates. UI taught me that no two things are particularly identical; people are meant to be different but that doesn't translate to bitterness," added Duke Osima, a man whose father died when he was a university fresher, who rejected free meal from well-wishers and emerged the best student amidst financial challenges knowing fully well that life fine-tunes potentials through hard work and excellence.

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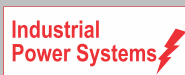
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...engineered to excel

I chose UI to experience a different terrain and atmosphere

-Senator (Dr.) George Akume
Secretary To The Federal Government of Nigeria

Senator George Akume is a Nigerian politician of Benue State origin. Like a stork among birds, he stands out among his peers. His strength and wisdom are the reasons he keeps flying higher than most of his contemporaries. He was admitted to study Sociology at University of Ibadan in 1975. He graduated in 1978.

His Excellency (Dr.) George Akume spoke on what and why as an undergraduate at UI, "I chose UI to experience a different terrain and atmosphere from what most Tiv graduates had at ABU and I never regretted my decision. It was a pleasant experience in both Tedder hall and the university. The hall had a common room where we gathered to hear news, read newspapers and so on. We bonded well like bosom friends and family. We used to eat in the café with tickets but towards the end of my final year, a central cafeteria, a beautiful edifice with modern facilities that include self-vending machines where a bottle of Coca-Cola drink could pop out by just pressing a button was built. The meals were fantastic and cheap – even lecturers patronised our cafeteria."

"I still remember a time Zik Hall was playing Tedder hall in an inter-hall soccer competition final. *Zikites* constructed a coffin with RIP inscription on it. They chanted, "Come out of your holes, Tedder rats, we will finish and bury you in this coffin," but by the blast of the final whistle, we defeated them by 2 goals to 1. It was an interesting and engaging moment." He said of an unforgettable moment, as he also mentioned that UI taught every student both knowledge and good character.



I wouldn't have attended any other university apart from UI

-Professor Segun Ajiboye
Registrar, Teachers Registration Council



Professor Segun Ajiboye is a perfect description of the maxim, "Dress code is no true reflection of affluence and influence."

Professor Ajiboye looks simple but he is a man of timber and calibre. He was born in Lagbedu Orile in Ogbomosh, Oyo State. He entered University of Ibadan via Direct Entry to read Teacher Education/Political Science in 1985, graduating as the Best Student of the department with second class upper division in 1988.

While speaking to us on his observations and inferences of UI, Professor Ajiboye said, "As an undergraduate, I was the

secretary of my departmental association. University of Ibadan was my topmost choice; I wouldn't have attended any other university apart from UI that would only admit students on merit basis. My first time on UI campus was the day I went to check my result. That day, I saw the Executive Officer (EO) of the Faculty of Education, Mrs. Odelola who asked, 'Young man, what are you looking for?' I told her my intention and she asked, 'How are you sure you would be admitted?' I replied, 'I would, because a friend whose result was not as good as mine was admitted.' She checked the list and said, 'Congratulations, your name is number 5 on the list.' My decision to study education was based on the fact

that the only available job was teaching."

"As a fresher, I squatted at Zik Hall before I became a bonafide Zikite. The hall shaped me for activism and built in me the ability to stand and defend myself. Zikites may be linked to activism but not stealing; doors were never locked in that hall." "The hall impacted in us the spirit of trustworthiness, honesty, integrity and fairness and University of Ibadan shaped our lives in all ramifications, including academic excellence and integrity."



UI instilled in me the rudiments of legal practice, traits of honesty and dint of hard work

Adeyinka Moyosore Kotoye, SAN, FCTI

Need a man of policy? Meet Adeyinka Moyosore Kotoye SAN; you'll discover that an elephant is not a small load for two weightlifters. Talk to him and see a man who can cultivate a plantation that will take 1,000 men 10 years to plough.

Adeyinka Kotoye is a 1996 Law graduate of University of Ibadan. He was called to the Bar in February 1998. He served in the Chambers of Chief Afe Babalola, SAN & Co. in 1998 and started work in the Chambers of G.O.K. Ajayi, SAN & CO in 1999 till 2001. He joined the Chambers of

Mrs. Hairat Ade Balogun (Libra Law Office) as an associate and left in 2009 to start Pisces and Gemini Law Office (P.A.G.E). He was admitted to the inner bar as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in December 2021.

In this piece, Mr. Kotoye SAN spoke to our correspondents on his life as UI undergraduate; "My coming to UI was circumstantial. It was not one of my options but my father insisted I should attend UI or no school, and my decision to study Law was also incidental. I was influenced by the campaign posters of the immortal Awo which I saw everyday in my neighbourhood at Gbagura quarters, Abeokuta. My father wanted me to study either Medicine or Engineering but I

wanted nothing but Law.

Meanwhile, UI turned me into the man I am today; it prepared me academically and morally, and instilled in me the rudiments of legal practice, traits of honesty and dint of hard work."

Speaking further on life on campus, Adeyinka Kotoye SAN took us down the memory lane, "I lived in Sultan Bello Hall (the Hall of Noble Men) throughout. I was the Hall Mayor in my final year. I faced several challenges at the school. Electricity and water were major problems but we were able to resolve water issue by sinking a borehole at Sultan Bello Hall, the first of its kind but we were unable to resolve that of electricity, even when generators were donated, fuelling became an issue."

Sultan Bello Hall demonstrated over food only once in my three years as a student at UI

-Dr. Edmund Olu Ayoola

Former NNPC Group Executive Director (Exploration and Production)



Dr. Edmund Olu Ayoola is like a small rudder that controls a mighty ship in the ocean. He is ever confident and focused. He was born in 1948 in Ibadan city. He gained admission into the University of Ibadan to read Geology in 1968.

On his choice of university and course, Dr. Edmund said, "As at 1968, there were only five universities in Nigeria, and UI was

the oldest. Its age and location attracted me to the school. I did not set-out to read Geology but destiny led me into it. I lived in Sultan Bello Hall (the gentlemen hall) as students. We were called the *Bellites* or *Mallams*. In Sultan Bello Hall, undergraduate students were allocated a room apiece. We were treated like princes because we had sizable number of elderly residents called 'Asoso' meaning *Associate Degree Students* in our midst. We were well fed with hygienic meals as the caterers were aware that majority of the residents were married and blessed with children."

"Unlike other halls, Sultan Bello Hall demonstrated over food only once in my three years as a student at UI. I cannot recall the

amount charged per meal because our school fees covered accommodation, feeding and laundry. I recollect each student got half chicken for Sunday lunch, and refreshment of Queens' cake and vanilla ice cream at 4.00pm on Sundays."

"Once we paid our fees, each student got a booklet of meal tickets exchangeable for meal at the Cafeteria. The process was changed and later stopped after incessant abuse by resident students who refused to pay stipulated fees."

Dr. Edmund also believed that UI was an international college with more than ten per cent of its students' population being foreigners from African countries and Britain, and there were many foreign lecturers too.

I chose UI for its panache, quality, prestige, respect and dignity

-Olusade Adesola

Permanent Secretary, Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA)



Does the name Olusade Adesola ring a bell? It is only a blind man that considers an elephant a little animal. Olusade is a man of class and repute. He is the Permanent Secretary at the Federal Capital Development Authority, (FCTA). He gained a direct entry to University of Ibadan in 1983 to study Agricultural Economics, graduating in 1987. Olusade Adesola spoke to our correspondents on life on UI campus from his own perspective, "I chose UI for its panache, quality, prestige, respect and dignity. It is popular and peerless. I chose Agric Economics because I have been practising farming from

tender age and I believe the economics aspect of it would enable me relate with economics as a subject. I later discovered that agric economists are planners and managers of agric business."

"I was allocated to the best hall at UI, great Kuti Hall (*aka Kuti for Quality, not Quantity*). I did not meet the cafeteria system but there was the central cafeteria, which was last operated by the school authority in my first year before it was privatised. We didn't have good meals in our first year and there was a lot of riots due to food issues. Late Professor Olaide was the VC. Things were difficult for the university but the students thought he squandered our

money. Experimental animals in the faculty of agric were slaughtered to serve us in the first semester but by the second semester, the situation was so difficult to manage." He said about his experience as Kutite. "UI culture enabled me to manage my life affairs as I determined it to be. I also learnt how to drive automobile in two days during our practical." He said.

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The impact University of Ibadan has on my life and career is tremendous

-Dayo Apata, SAN

Solicitor-General of the Federation & Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice



Dayo Apata, an indigene of Ekiti State is a chip of an old block. He entered University of Ibadan in 1981 as the first set of Law students.

Speaking to our correspondents on his life as an undergraduate and lessons of being a UI alumnus, he said, "It is my pride to be one of the first 28 students admitted to study law at UI. I was passionate about studying Law and many people had told me about my systematic way of creating logics and winning arguments on any subject matter."

"I stayed at the great Mellamby Hall (aka Mellamby the Rock) as a student and the school culture

starting with its motto 'Recte Sapere Fons' – meaning 'to think straight is the fountain of knowledge' impacted my life greatly. I put my mind into whatever I do, thinking straight, having a vision and pursuing it with all vigour. You cannot excel in law profession if you cannot identify the kind of lawyer you wish to be ... and upon realising I didn't come from a rich background; I achieved my goals within three years allotted for my programme.' He added. In conclusion, Dr. Apata who enjoyed Ibadan social atmosphere loved his lecturers

and course mates. He would go back to UI if the hands of time could be turned back. "The impact University of Ibadan has on my life and career is tremendous. I am like a palm tree that has its roots very deep inside the ground, which no rain or storms can ever pull out."



The first time I entered UI campus, I saw it as London

-Victor Obichere

In 1950, in a town called Owerri in the present Imo State of Nigeria, Victor Obichere was born without a silver spoon in his mouth but through a dint of hard-work he built himself to a point where he can acquire as many silver spoons as he wishes. This alumnus of the great University of Ibadan started his sojourn as an undergraduate at UI Jos prelim-campus. Narrating his experience from 100 level to convocation, Victor said, "I was highly elated the first time I entered UI campus; I saw it as

London, coming from a war ravaged East. My becoming a student of the school was a fulfilled dream because I had vowed not to go to any other university except UI right from my secondary school days."

Speaking further, "I lived at Tedder Hall where mockers used to call us 'Tedder-rats' but we called ourselves 'Tedderites' or Gentlemen because only two people shared a room in our hall unlike other halls – and in our final year, it is a student to a room. I did Economics in my year one but changed to Political Science and joined the elitists' Sigma Club where I learnt different things about life. I was not a party-warts or naughty with

girls as an undergraduate." "My major challenge at UI was how to get money from home when I was low on cash, no easy transfer, mailing could take like a month or more and Eastern States did not give bursaries at that time but I later got a student loan and I used to travel to London during our long vacations to meet my brother – and there I used to work on two or three jobs to raise enough money for use in Ibadan." Said Victor Obichere, a soccer team captain whose most memorable event as a student was when John Nwodo, an Ibo guy became Students' Union President in a Yoruba dominated environment.

UI exposed me academically, socially and physically

-Sir Mike Okiro, Former Inspector General of Police

A tiny seed of chilli pepper is a master to a bulging eye. Though very small, the lion with a bold heart cannot put it in its eyes without dancing reggae and begging for survival. Sir Mike Okiro, a former Inspector General of Police, a businessman and one-time National Minister is a man of repute who cannot be pushed aside.

He spoke to our correspondent on UI and his days as an undergraduate: "My going to UI was dramatic and interesting; I got there by *educational odyssey* after my stints at colleges of education, science and technology. I started with Prelim at University of Ibadan, Jos campus. We were the first set of Ultes to be admitted with O' level results. I wanted a course that would make me an ambassador, so I opted for French. After prelim, the university authorities wanted to make Jos campus a full-fledged University but we wanted to go to Ibadan for our degrees and the school authority refused. We boycotted lectures for two weeks but they later concurred and hired long buses that took us to Ibadan."

"My hope of being a French graduate was shattered as the school had mandated every international language student to do a-year abroad before graduation but those of us who did prelim disagreed. The University was silent about our petition and we thought they had agreed that we should go ahead to Part 3 on return. After I got my passport and visa, the University authority announced that our request was not granted. I abandoned my luggage at the airport, returned home and immediately switched from French to English. Why should I do extra year because of French when some ambassadors didn't even speak French? I graduated in 1976 with BA (Hons.) in English." He added.

What were the contributions of Sir Okiro to life in UI and the school's impression on him? He replied, "I was involved in many activities. In politics, I was a student union leader/activist, member of SRC and member of Sultan Bello Hall executives. I led student demonstrations – and that helped me when I was Lagos CP. I edited our Hall magazine, *The Dome*. I was the associate editor of the English Department publication, *The Idoto*. I ran and edited 'The Bug' magazine. I wrote books and published journals. I still write for newspapers and magazines. I once bugged a lecturer in the English Department



who was having affairs with a female student. He was not caught but we got the information. He was riding a Peugeot 403 then. I cartooned him, spelt his name and car number backward. The lecturer reported us to the senate disciplinary committee and we were summoned. That particular day, I packed my belongings from the hostel because it was very obvious we would be rusticated. I first went to church to pray before going to the senate. On leaving the church, I ran into my English lecturer at Jos campus, Prof. Ayo Mamudu who said, 'Mbama, you looked disturbed.' I told him the story. He demanded for a copy of *The Bug* which I got for him. He pointed my attention to a caption on the magazine, 'All names and correspondence in this magazine are fictitious. Resemblances are highly regretted,' and said, 'That's our defence!' That statement nullified the complaint against me and my friends."

Former IG Mike Okiro was a captain and champion of UI chess players, award-winning dancer. "UI exposed me academically, socially and physically."



I was the first student in the history of UI to do faculties swap

-Ekpo Nta

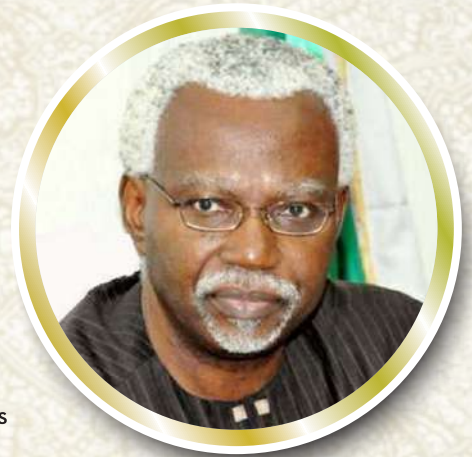
It will be an unacceptable proposal for the lion to become the storekeeper for every game tigers kill and deciding on when and how they feast. The bill will not fly in the Supreme Jungle Assembly. Ekpo Nta cannot be bent to obey foolish ideas. He is wise, intelligent, experienced and exposed.

Ekpo Nta passed his common entrance exams into UI Prelim Science in Zoology, Botany and Chemistry in 1972 but graduated with honours in Political Science in 1977.

What was the university environment like in the early 1970's when Ekpo entered and what were his impressions? He replied, "The image of UI ingrained in my mind as a child in 1963 was a strong allure for me to desire the premier institution. The beautiful structures and neat environment made UI's my idea of a university. My decision to study political science was dramatic. I was

losing interest in my science classes during the Prelim because I often attended and listened to discourses at public events organised by lecturers in political science. After my prelim, I was given Pharmacology but I requested a change of course to political science. The VC sent my request to the faculty of social sciences but I was refused. I was summoned to the Senate where I tendered my reasons for wanting to change. After deliberations, I won on the ground that UI Prelim was of a higher grade than the acclaimed A-level. I was the first student in the history of UI to do faculty's swap and I won university scholarship in my 100 level. My scholarship was highly celebrated at the faculty and Jimmy Adisa that took first position actually ended up with African Union."

On Ekpo Nta's campus experience: "I lived in the Independence Hall – Katanga Republic. It was the newest hall in UI at the time. We were treated excellently like kings; our clothes were



laundered and ironed along with our bed spreads and pillow cases. Our rooms cleaned and our beds laid by the school porters. We had our dining room in the hall premises with a recreational facility, the common room for relaxation and watching television. We had an underground reading room and a built in buttery. Incidentally, I was the one managing the buttery in the hall. I arranged with Coca-Cola for regular supply and we also sold alcohol. I employed a young lady as sales girl for the buttery and I went there on daily basis to check her accounts.



I am so proud of UI

Idris Olubola Musa

An elephant that has no point tussling with other animals but any animal that tussles with it will have itself to blame. Olubola must reign supreme because it is his heritage to rule.

In this piece, Alhaji Idris Olubola Musa who entered the University of Ibadan in September, 1976 told us about the tides and prides of his days as a student.

"In 1968, I accompanied my aunt, a trader, from Ilorin to Ibadan. As our vehicle passed UI gate, I said a prayer that day and God answered it. I never dreamt of any other university since that experience. I wanted to do Political Science so as to be like my

role-model, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, but I eventually read Geography. My first domain was Room E33, D Block, ZIK Hall with three other guys, and we were treated like hotel guests. They called us Zooites because we make a lot of noise. Zikites might just go out of the reading room at night during exam periods, barking like some animals in the zoo."

"The meal system was equally excellent; we had the Central Cafeteria with spick clean glass and one in the hall – and you can eat to your fill on 50 Kobo a day. The libraries were also good especially the postgraduate library which was fully air-conditioned."

In what way has UI impacted the life and career of Idris Musa? He replied, "Honestly, I am so proud of UI because it structured me to do things accordingly. It imparted knowledge in me and prepared me for taking over. It instilled in me confidence, spirit of punctuality, discipline and professionalism, culture of

responsibility and respect for elders, good and godly character traits, orderliness and politeness."

Honestly, I wouldn't say I had any challenges – but 'Ali Must Go' of April 1978 was quite challenging for all students as feeding was raised from 50 Kobo per day to N1:50k per day, and tuition fees raised to N90 – but despite those challenging moments, I enjoyed riding to school on my bike and the benefits of having scholarship to augment my needs. I can never forget watching the debates, seminars, symposia on the campus, and student representative council session, and inaugural lectures of intellectual presentation and discourse." Idris Olubola Musa said and admitted there were social clubs like Sigma and Club De Kapita for highest bidders, kegites for fun-lovers and pressure groups like the Buccaneers and Pirates confraternities in his time at UI.

I chose UI because of its academic excellence, popularity and proximity to Lagos State

Professor Noah Yusuf

Life ebbs irrespectively; some people are born great and some grow great to achieve greatness. Professor Noah Yusuf is an epitome of excellence, an icon of academic exploits and a portrait of moral uprightness.

Professor Noah Yusuf is an eminent academic and a highly respected figure in the field of education, currently serving as the Vice Chancellor of Al-Hikma University in Ilorin, Nigeria. With his exceptional leadership qualities and extensive experience, he has made significant contributions towards the growth and development of the institution. Professor Yusuf is widely recognized for his profound knowledge in the area of education, particularly in the realm of higher education administration. Having dedicated his career to the pursuit of academic excellence, he possesses an impressive academic background from the prestigious University of Ibadan.

It is not surprising that Professor Noah Yusuf has emerged as an academic giant and also authored numerous scholarly articles and publications in reputed international journals. This is because he crushingly grounded himself in the culture of excellence the university offered to serious minds. With his three degrees, all from the same University of Ibadan, he undoubtedly passed through the university, in all aspects, to become a thorough-bred UI

Alumnus of all time and a juggernaut in the field of education administration. Speaking about his experience as an undergraduate in the University of Ibadan, Professor Noah Yusuf recalled living in Nnamdi Azikiwe hall, nicknamed Zoo. He lived with four roommates – Femi in medicine, Tunde Thompson in Sciences and Jonathan in the same Social Sciences as himself. He said, "Zik Hall made the biggest noise in the campus but I never allowed it to sway me away from my academic goals. My family background did not allow me to be frivolous as most young men in my time did. I neither join any social club on campus nor attended any parties as an undergraduate."

He was also not naughty when it comes to love affairs with female colleagues. That is to say, he was a quiet student on campus and studious one.

Professor Noah Yusuf, who has strong commitment to fostering academic innovation and transformation said, "University of Ibadan remained the best because of its culture of academic excellence since its establishment. I chose the school because of its academic excellence, popularity and proximity to Lagos State where I



lived."

Professor Noah Yusuf observed that, even with the downward trend of education in the country, he will always praise University of Ibadan for spearheading various research initiatives and educational programs that add values to student lives and the country.

In conclusion, Professor Yusuf said, "It was the University of Ibadan that led me to the height of my academic career and I will forever be grateful to all the lecturers that prepared me for the large haul."

He also wished he university a happy 75th anniversary and pray for continue advancement in academic excellence and quality education.



University of Ibadan moulded my academic foundation

-Major General (Dr.) Shina Ogunbiyi, mni,

It is not a mistake that the Lion was made the king of the jungle ... the fact is that it will neither bow nor tuck tail and run from any other beast. It is not a mistake that peacock is respected among birds ... its robe of honour comes from the Almighty God. Who will dare a king – even if he is a child? Whosoever does will have his head lifted off his shoulder. Here we give salutes of honour to

Major General Shina Ogunbiyi, mni. He was matriculated to study Medicine at University of Ibadan in 1977 through direct entry.

Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Shina Ogunbiyi spoke to our correspondents on why he chose University of Ibadan, Medicine and his experience on campus thus; "I had always wanted to attend UI, the first amongst its equals in terms of teaching – especially Medicine and excellence. I wanted to do Medicine because of my passion for the course. I was commissioned into the Nigerian Army as a 2nd

Lieutenant while still a student of UI, through the University Cadetship Scheme after our second MB examination.

"University of Ibadan moulded my academic foundation and developed my interpersonal relationships with people. I went to UI and it went through me. I stayed at Independence Hall, made a lot of friends. I was part and parcel of the "Ali Must Go" protest of 1978, a member of the Students Representatives Council in 1980 after the protest." He added.

The academics of UI impacted and prepared its students to compete with students from any part of the world

*-Abayomi Ali,
Regional Director (Operations) Coca-cola*



A Chemistry graduate of University of Ibadan, Abayomi Ali is a man of immense experience, having worked in Aerofoam Nigeria Limited, Nigerian Breweries, Heineken Breweries SC, Ethiopia and now Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company. He is truly a leader of leaders – a trailblazer.

Speaking about his days at UI, he said, "Attending UI was a fulfilled dream; my secondary school was adjacent to the university. I have always admired the campus – its wonderful buildings, roads networks and students. My brothers, cousin and Havana Dance were my other attractions.

"My decision to study chemistry was

purely by fate despite being the subject's best student in secondary school. I lived at Katanga Hall (popularly called Independence Hall) as a student."

He spoke further about UI's culture and social activities that turned him into a masterpiece, "I imbibed every UI culture thoroughly. I was a member of Sigma Club and General Secretary of Students' Chemical Society of Nigeria, UI branch. I blended all social activities – especially musical concerts with my academics."

"The academics of UI impacted and prepared its students to compete with students from any part of the world. UI also teaches character; our practical classes in the laboratories

taught us diligence, honesty and integrity. You also learnt to work independently and in a team."

"My first three years as a student of University of Ibadan were dotted with some nasty experiences – water shortage and electricity blackout. However, there were memorable events I enjoyed especially the Sigma Club Havana musical concert of 1986 in which in about 24-hours to the programme, we hadn't got the money to pay musicians because our patrons and sponsors failed to redeem their pledges – but we got the money by a miracle and everything was sorted out."

UI is one of the oldest universities in Nigeria that maintains a very high standard



**-Barrister Ben Umeano,
Board Member, Code of Conduct Bureau**

Barrister Ben Umeano is a principled and cultured gentleman that transformed himself into an icon of reckoning when most of his age mates were crying no opportunity by creating one and seizing the moment.

Ben Umeano studied Psychology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and proceeded to University of Ibadan where he read Law, graduating in 1991. After Law School in 1992, he started his legal practice in Lagos. In January 20, 2021, he was appointed into the board of the Code of Conduct Bureau representing the South-East.

Speaking to our correspondent on why he chose to study Law at UI, Barr. Ben Umeano said, "I chose University of Ibadan firstly because of its unique programme for matured students with first degrees in related disciplines and it was one of the oldest universities in Nigeria that maintains its high standard. I chose to read Law because it was a living course on which everything in life is based. Every society or organisation runs on the system of Law. There will be chaos without the fear of Law or codes of conduct."

He also spoke about his experience as an undergraduate; "The first time I went to University of Ibadan, I felt elated, so happy to be identified with the premier university in the country. I was very happy when I entered its gate, I went down to the Central Hall and they referred me to where I could stay till next morning and

register for my course, get accommodation and the rest. I stayed at ZIK Hall for one year and then Tedder Hall where I stayed for the remaining two years of my programme. The *Zikites* were called '*Animals*' due to the closeness of the hall to the zoological garden."

"We had two types of feeding system; some cooked at the balcony but Law students didn't have that much time and we would go to *Black Market* to eat. Some people would go to the cafeteria but I preferred black market because they have assorted foods. I can have good meal with 50 kobo. In a day, that would be 1 naira, 50 kobo. By then, my school fee was 45 naira." He added.

Speaking on the university culture, lessons learnt and memorable events, Barr. Ben said, "The school taught me some level of decency and decorum. As Law students, we were taught basic conducts of a lawyer, how to attend dinner and cocktail parties *plus* high degree of decency and decorum. We were not carried away by social environment but helped by the likes of Gani Fawehinmi and Rotimi Williams who lectured us from time to time, giving us idea on what it means to read and practise Law. All those things gingered us and built our interests in litigation because being a lawyer without practising Law does not make sense."

"The challenges I faced were normal. I was hit with a terrible pneumonia and was admitted for thorough treatment at the medical centre. My schooling was sponsored by my relations; my uncle paid my school fees; I never enjoyed any scholarship, free education or bursary – and my social life was wrapped around social functions organised by Law Faculty." He added.

Ben was politically conscious; he was one of the kingmakers that determine the leadership of Law Students Society.





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UI is known for hard work, promptness, and punctuality

Prof. Adeniyi Gbadegesin



It is only a blind man that will assume an elephant is as tiny as a rat. Its size is enough to scare life out of domestic animals. Who will dare the personality of Professor Adeniyi Gbadegesin – except the one who does not recognise the difference between the fire and firefly? Prof. Adeniyi Gbadegesin is a native of Oyo town in Oyo State. He gained admission to the University of Ibadan to read Geography (combined with Pure Sciences) in 1976, and graduated with First class. He returned to Ibadan for his Master's, PhD and as a lecturer. Why did Prof. Gbadegesin choose

UI and Geography? He replied, "My initial intention was to read Geology but unfortunately, I didn't do physics in secondary school, and due to its proximity to Oyo where my parents lived, and their social class. "On entering the campus for the first time. I came in via Agbowo, I was just like, 'So, me the son of Alhaji Gbadegesin will be in a university?' I proceeded to my allocated hall, the great Independence Hall (aka New Women Hall), with ease. I was in Room A23, second floor. The school was resume on Monday but I was there by Sunday – so, I went for lunch. That was the first

time I took half-chicken in my life."

"I was given Cocoa Scholarship of the Western Region – and that helped me in no small way because UI was known for hard work, promptness, and punctuality. In our time, lectures start by 8am and by 5 to 6pm, all faculty activities are over. Said Professor Gbadegesin who was gravely challenge during the 'Ali Must Go' saga.



The achievements and pedigree of UI speak volume in Nigeria and diaspora

Sen. Jonathan Zwingina

Senator Jonathan Silas Zwingina is like water that quenches thirst and makes meal digestible. His importance cannot be down-play in political circle and national issues. Senator Zwingina spoke to us about his experience at the University of Ibadan, "UI is a university that its products are proud of ... the achievements and pedigree of UI speak volume in Nigeria and diaspora. Its products are lecturers, VCs, registrars that formed the bedrock of other tertiary institutions, and stronghold of industries and professional careers. "UI is multi-cultural, truly Nigerian. I came from a northern state and

was not discriminated upon. I never found people spoke Yoruba to deride others, and when it comes to school politics, non-Yoruba students were winning elections easily. I won election into the parliament, to represent Azikiwe Hall at SRC and Nwodo won the student union election against a Yoruba candidate." "My first day on campus was for sight-seeing; the attractive aesthetic nature of the environment, the nice flowers, well-laid roads, beautiful lecture and residence halls, the light, bookshop – and many others including the senate building. I was fascinated by what I saw on the huge expanse of land." Added Jonathan Zwingina whose friend influenced his decision to study Political Science as against his choice to read law from childhood.

Senator Jonathan also spoke on unforgettable moments as UI student, "Every experience in Ibadan was remarkable. I was always looking forward to the symposia and seminars, inaugural lectures, faculty debate, interdisciplinary and inter-faculty debates, debates between our school lecturers and renowned people from outside the campus. You could also go to Theatre Arts, listen to Wole Soyinka ... no dull moments in Ibadan." "My major challenge as a student was basically finances but the university had a tolerant policy for people who are on scholarship. I also did not have parental visitation like others because my parents lived in far North – uneducated and unfamiliar with Ibadan.

UI imbibed in me the spirit of friendship and oneness

-Dr. Emmanuel Attah



Dr. Emmanuel Attah is from a little village located between Nigeria and Cameroun border, Agbokim Waterfalls in Etung Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Early in his life, Emmanuel discovered he was not created to crawl, he dusted himself from the mud, spread his wings and flew upward, soared beyond the reach of ordinary mist.

He attended pre-tertiary schools between 1958 and 1974 and gained entrance into university of Ibadan in 1975.

What influenced his decision to study at University of Ibadan, and what were the benefits of studying at the Premier College? Dr. Emmanuel Attah replied, "In my village, nobody had gone to university before I applied and I wanted to explore what a policeman in my father's house said about UI and Ibadan city because if you see Yoruba trained native doctors in those days, they had all the customers. I also decided to study Geography because I was more comfortable with the subject than Biology or Economics. UI brought me this far. Throughout my studies, I was on the left (Marxist movement) and I stayed there till date. The school gave me an opportunity to meet many people from different parts of Nigeria especially the West and impacted on my political life. After graduation, I was involved in social clubs to see how we can help our people, move our community forward, requesting from the government what is meant for our people – and because of activism, I was appointed a member of Area Planning Committee in Ikom LGA in 1982/83. In 1985, I was appointed a Councillor for education in my local government. I also contested for the post of a LG Chairman in 1987 and lost but I built people for political offices – State House of Assemblies, House of Representatives and the Senate."

On the culture of the university that has positively impacted his life to date, Dr. Emmanuel Attah said, "UI imbibed in me the spirit of friendship and oneness. One of us could volunteer to pay for those who couldn't afford a meal and those with

N400 scholarship could pay their brothers' school fees – and that was how I learnt to impact lives positively.

"I also had fond memories of good lecturers who could miss a wedding party so that I could put my thesis right, and wonderful course-mates (Cameroonians, Igbos and Yorubas) who sacrificed everything to ensure I passed Mathematics and I'll never forget a funny experience I had at Balewa hall when postgraduate students told us that undergraduates were not permitted to eat in their cafeteria. We told them that as long as the canteen was on UI soil, we must eat here. We blocked the entrance from 6pm till the VC came to appease us around 9pm, declaring that the canteen was for every student of UI." He mentioned some of the experiences he can never forget in his life.

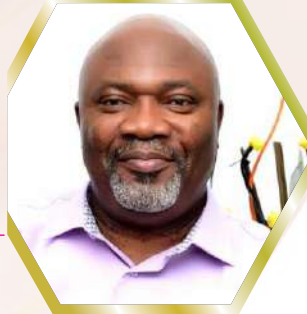
"I resided at Independence Hall; the meals were cheap. Meal ticket was 10 kobo for breakfast (tea, Quaker oats, fried plantain and eggs), 20 kobo for lunch (garri, pounded yam, amala and good stew) and 20 kobo for dinner but we normally bought extra ticket on Sunday in order to have two rounds of chickens." Dr. Emmanuel Attah indirectly participated in school politics and associated with palm wine drinkers just for merry making.



PROFESSIONALS OF DISTINCTION:

A special Report

Nigeria, a poor country definitely cannot be said to possess enough professionals. Yet, it is one country that is acknowledged all over the world by the feat of those it has so far produced. Name any professional callings, you will find a Nigerian rubbing shoulder with the best in the world. These geniuses who have displayed uncommon determination, resilience and never-say-die attitude to their professional callings are the people we set to recognise in this special edition.



Engr. (Dr.) Ademola Adedapo: A Technocrat with Midas Touch

Tortoise will grow-up in the desert full of dangerous snakes and scorpions and while snakes and scorpions can only live for a few years, tortoise will live for centuries, surviving many unpleasant weather conditions. Engr. Dr. Ademola Adedapo has grown from strength to strength, rose from grass to grace *despite all odds* and when many people are saying impossible, he keeps breaking records. Ademola Adedapo is a civil engineer popularly called Engineer Dee by his colleagues and friends. He is an engineer of international repute and standards.

Adedapo has not only done well for himself; he is also a blessing to those who cross his path, an inspiration and mentor to younger generation of engineers, and a great asset and pride to Osun State.

Born on Tuesday March 21st, 1972 to Prince Haleem and Mrs. Halilat Adedapo of Isale Oba Iwo, Adedapo is a seasoned Chartered Civil Engineer, a businessman par excellence, and a shrewd investor. He started his early education at AUD Primary School, Akinfenwa, Iwo, between 1978 and 1984; and his secondary education at Baptist High School, Iwo, between 1984 and 1989. He later proceeded to Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, where he successfully completed a National Diploma programme in Building and Quantity Surveying and won the departmental prize as the best student.

While in year two at the Polytechnic, he secured admission to the University of Ilorin but refused to abandon the diploma programme. He pursued both simultaneously. He confounded his colleagues with the rare feat of successfully graduating from the Polytechnic and bagging a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Civil Engineering. Adedapo also earned a Diploma in Computer Operations and Programming from Citadel Computer College, Ibadan in August 1999.

His quest for more knowledge led him to complete a lesson in Oracle 9i from the NIIT in Abuja. He holds a Masters Certificate in Project Management from the George Washington University (GWU), USA. In recognition of his immense contribution to the field of Engineering, The Prowess University in Delaware, USA, honoured him

with a PhD Degree in Engineering (Honoris Causa) in October, 2019. Ademola is an Executive Graduate of the prestigious Harvard Kennedy School of the Harvard University in Boston, USA having completed an Executive Education in Infrastructure in Market Economy (PPP in an Emerging Market) in July 2016. He began his career in Engineering as a Trainee Engineer with a construction company named ITB in Abuja. He was responsible for planning, site organization, and coordination; design interpretation, advise management on cost and quality control, and general supervision of the Senate Chamber of the National Assembly Complex, Abuja between February 1997 and September 1997. He later worked in Osun State Ministry of Works/World Bank-Assisted Project as a pupil Engineer where he was saddled with the responsibility of planning, coordination of all activities at the earthwork section between February 1999 and October 1999. He did his one-year mandatory National Youth Service Corps with the Federal Ministry of Works between 1999 and 2000. After his NYSC, due to his exemplary conduct and conscientiousness, he was employed in February 2001 by the Federal Ministry of Works as a Highway Engineer. He worked alongside other colleagues as a Contract Administrator and Project Engineer on several road infrastructures across the country. Between year 2006 and 2009, he worked as a Special Assistant, Technical, (SA Tech) to two directors of Federal Highways. By May 2009, Ademola felt his potentials were not being fully utilised and called it quits with the Federal Civil Service May 31, 2009 to venture into private business. He secured a contract appointment as an



Individual Consultant designated as Senior Project Engineer on performance-based basis on a World Bank project named Federal Roads Development Project (FRDP). Co-funding this project are the African Development Bank, and the China Exim Bank.

A versatile entrepreneur, Adedapo's business interests span road construction, engineering consultancy, hospitality, and importation of building materials, among others. Through his Aenon Foundation, a non-governmental organization, Adedapo engages in philanthropic activities as a way of giving back to society and has greatly impacted the lives of youths in particular.

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A river can be as silent and harmless as a stream – but do not be fooled, it can sweep away a whole city and do not be deceived by the noiselessness of a crawling snake, its venom can kill. Prof. Oluwatoyin Ashiru may look calm but he is definitely not a fool to be trampled upon.

Erudite scholar, Prof. Toyin Ashiru is a distinguished Materials and Metallurgical Engineer with a career of about 40 years that spans through Nigeria, UK, USA, Canada, Trinidad, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Far East, and Asia. He has utilized his diverse experiences in the academia, consulting, finance/investment entrepreneurship, and project management to provide for the enhancement of corporate productivity.

He has served as expert consultant to NNPC, SHELL, CHEVRON, EXXONMOBIL, ADDAX, SAUDI ARAMCO, SABIC, SAMAREC, QATAR OIL, etc. He has also served on various technology advancement committees of the UNIDO, UNESCO and the WORLD BANK.

Prof. Toyin Ashiru is a graduate of the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK where he obtained BSc in Materials Science and Engineering. He completed his PhD at the University of Birmingham, UK in Industrial Metallurgy in 1983. He began his career as a lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at the Universities of Lagos and Ibadan respectively before serving as Nigerian Senior Research Fellow at the International Tin Research Institute in the UK. Before his advent into the oil and gas industries in 1998, he was a professor/senior research fellow at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia.

He is the inventor of the first known instrument for in situ detection of steel cracking in sour petroleum production operations. This sophisticated microprobe device is now fully commercialized and used worldwide in the oil industries. He holds patents in the USA, UK,

Brazil, Japan and of the World Intellectual Property Organization for several other inventions. He developed electroplated tin-zinc alloy coating system (USA Patent # 5,378,346, January 3, 1995). He developed a comprehensive paint and coating standard and specification system. This one-of-the-kind package includes expert software systems for specifying of protective coating applications and preventive maintenance planning in industrial plants. He is a Technical Advisor to the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), where he developed several innovative solutions for petrochemical, chemical processing and fertilizer plants.

Prof. Ashiru is responsible for the introduction of Sponge-Jet, an environment- friendly low-dust blasting technology to Nigerian industries. He provides expert-led solutions that support private and public sector organizations to develop and actively implement their strategies to achieve measurable change, transformation and/or improved performance. His current engagements include Strategy Development and Execution, Performance Improvement, Turnaround, Process and Human Capital Alignment and Change Management.

He runs CSR initiatives dedicated to the empowering of women and youths in underserved communities with marketable hand and mind craft skills to enable them carry out successful economic activities

He also advises corporate organizations, private individuals and governments on high impact activities to reach out to and



empower local communities nationwide.

Toyin Ashiru has received many merit awards and citations worldwide in recognition of his work, including an acknowledgment in the USA as a "Professional with Extraordinary Ability" and listings in Who is Who in the World and the Dictionary of International Biography; the highly esteemed Corrosion Odyssey 2001 Award in England; Distinguished Alumni Award University of Sussex, UK in 2009; Dalic's Very Imperial Plater Award, Vitre, France in 2010; Honoree of the African Engineering Education (AEEA). He is a recipient of the prestigious Distinguished Innovator Award of the Association of Tin Producing Countries (ATPC). The honour was in appreciation of his inventions of the first known industrially viable tin-zinc alloy coating system. He was the recipient of the Special Presidential Merit Award for Distinguished Engineering Practice of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE). More recently, he was a runner-up of Lagos State Man of the Year 2021 Award.



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Chief (Mrs). Teju Phillips

Tested and trusted Chief (Mrs) Maria Olateju Phillips (Née Fernandez) is a descendant of the Olumegbon Family in Isale-Eko Area of Lagos Island, Lagos State. She is the daughter of Late Ambassador Chief Antonio 'Dehinde Fernandez (His Imperial Highness, Garsan Fulani) and Princess Ibilola Lipede of the Royal Ruling House in Abeokuta, Ogun State.



She is happily married to Engr. Olanrewaju Phillips and are blessed with four children. Chief (Mrs) Teju Phillips is a successful Chartered Accountant who holds an ACCA from England and Wales. She speaks Yoruba, English and French fluently. She has sat on several boards including Keystone Bank, Lagos State Lottery Board, Alma Beach Estate Ltd (a subsidiary of Rims Merchant Bank Ltd) and Maridot Ventures Ltd. She was Honourable Commissioner for Special Duties & Inter-Governmental Relations in Lagos State, a renowned Management/Financial Consultant to many companies and was at a time, the Divisional Commercial Manager of Kingsway Stores, a division of the United African Company (UAC) of Nig. Plc. Her other appointments include but not limited to the following: Chairman, Organizing Committee of the Institute of Directors (IoD) Nigeria; Council Member, Bank Directors Association of Nigeria; Board Member, Women In Boardroom; Member, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) Presidential Committee; Member, ICAN Annual Conference Committee; Member of 100 Eminent Persons Group set-up by the Federal Government of Nigeria for the 'Nigeria 2010 World Cup Bid'; Board Member, State Primary Education Board, Ogun State; Chairman, Accommodation Committee FIFA 1999, Junior World Cup Championship held in

Lagos; Chairman, Accommodation Committee of IMO '98 Federal Annual Sports Festival, held in Imo State; Chairman, Accommodation Committee, 1st African Women Championships, Ogun State. Speaking on her political career, Mrs. Phillips said, "I've always been a people's person. I am nice to my classmates, relatives and people around me. So, it is natural for me to serve because it's a continuation of nature. My flair for service prompted me into politics. My father encouraged me to come into politics and expose my talents and virtues." She gave politics her all but she did not realise how dirty politics can be. "Having schooled abroad and worked in multinational companies where things are done prim and proper, I underestimated the filthiness of political players. I only came in naïvely to serve; unknown to me that my professional drill, exposure, training, and moral virtues would be shaken by the torrent of political storm – but I survived the challenges, though tough." One begins to wonder why Chief (Mrs). Phillips has tagged along with Progressive since inception – not switching carpets like other politicians – despite the brouhaha and sometimes, disappointments from party leaders and followers. "I'm a very resilient person. I believe in the ideals and ideologies and the perception of the group. I don't waiver or change. As Lagos Commissioner of

Commerce, Teju Phillips contributed to trade missions and developed the commercial relationships, and Special Duties Commissioner, she worked with many ministries and governmental agencies. "That inter-governmental post was the best for my personality. It exposed my true nature. I met presidents of nations, dined and wined with them, exchanged ideas and views. I enjoyed every bit of it." She added. Chief (Mrs). Phillips had vied for governorship of Lagos State and senatorial seats but never given a nod due to party structure and system. "Professional career is one side of the coin and political career is another – but they are intertwined; professional expertise can be useful in political administration and political ideologies can boost professional career. For example, I'm using my abilities and knowledge as an accountant to manage LASACO for Lagos State." Said Teju Phillips who believes that accountancy is one career that connects and manages all aspects of life.



I have had to sleep at the corridor with dirty clothes

-Dr Fredrick Okpaje

Dr. Frederick Okpaje who believes that no man is perfect until God declares him to be is like an oak tree that holds its fort as an acorn. Which tree will compare with oak in size and girth?

Dr. Frederick Okpaje, despite being born in a village and losing his mother at three-and-a-half years old has grown in life, career and business through focus, resiliency, diligence and determination. Frederick, raised by his aunt studied Electrical Engineering at University of Benin, worked in an oil company before jetting out of Nigeria. He returned after a while to start a business before establishing himself in real estate business.

Speaking about his exploits in real estate, Dr. Frederick said, "I had a nagging for real estate because of some of the investments I had done during my work days. Some of the properties we bought that were selling for 20,000 Naira turned out to be something else. That really was intriguing to me. I think that is the major motivating factor. Then again, providence. God has a way of doing things and making things happen. When I was coming to Nigeria, a lot of people who know me said that when I had the determination to do something, I would go all out for it – but then they were sceptical." Frederick Okpaje believed that if

nothing is done to recreate and redirect the focus of the youths through parenting and disciplined upbringing, Nigeria might be treading on irreparable path. "I came into real estate to make a difference. My journey through life was mapped out in my destiny by God. Growing-up, I encountered a lot of difficulties – sickness at nine knocked me down for about two and a half years to the extent that my foster mom was advised to bury me because my body wasn't moving. When I received my first salary of 75,000 naira at the oil company, I cried to the admin department, begging them not to sack me. I thought they were paying me off. I spread the money on my bed, whipping it with belt because I have really suffered in life. So, my counsel to the people is, as long as you are still breathing, there is a solution ... work hard and wait for your expectation to manifest." He said while narrating some of his experiences with poverty. Why did Dr. Frederick choose Uniben and Engineering? he replied, "Uniben was the closest school to my area and one of the topmost universities at the time but I chose Engineering because I love doing things with my hands. I actually did one year as a medical student but I left due to fear of blood. I also switched from oil and gas into real estate because I

suffered for not having a proper house as a child. I changed houses more than 10 times, living with different people. I would sometimes return from the farm hungry and tired, and there would be no access because the owner of the house had locked the door. I have had to sleep at the corridor with dirty clothes and many more. If I was in the oil and gas sector, I'd be waiting for clients or customers to come but in this group, we have well over 400,000 people we are empowering on a daily basis. My involvement in real estate has also solved the problems of duping and manipulation I know some of the people abroad encountered – I know a friend living in Canada who was swindled by his own father."

I started a business, brought some white people for partnership – but it failed. I went into farming. I also imported leather sheets before real estate hit the jackpot. I feel the hand of God, His grace coupled with determination and focus." He added.

Dr. Frederick ventured into estate agency and later delved into estate development. In his portfolio are the Haven Residence, Royal Haven, Crystal Haven and other properties in Lagos, Uyo, Owerri, Warri and Asaba.

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I never felt like leaving the insurance industry for one day

-Dr. Ben Ujoatuonu
MD UNIVERSAL INSURANCE

Enigmatic Dr. Benedict Ugochukwu Ujoatuonu is a thoroughbred insurance professional and guru with many years of enviable experience in the industry. He was born and bred in a village in Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State. He studied Insurance at IMT, Enugu.

What inspired Dr. Ben Ujoatuonu into studying Insurance, he replied, "There was nothing like JAMB at the time, you just pick form and apply into any school of your choice. There was a man from my place who was a Dean of the School of Business at IMT my father contacted for my admission – and that was how I got to hear about the course for the first time. I took the course grudgingly but today, I'm grateful to that man for his advice and the path he placed me." Ben did his IT at Niger Insurance, Onitsha where his eyes were opened to the prospects in the insurance business, service in Lagos at AllCO Insurance. He has also worked with Regency Insurance Company Limited (now Regency Alliance), Capital Insurance (now Veritas Capital), Global Commerce and General Insurance, Coral International Insurance Company Limited and Crown Insurance Brokers before docking at Universal Insurance

PLC as Head of Technical AGM. He also lectured at Essential Tutors in Oshodi preparing students for insurance professional exams for more than 10 years.

"I have always been blessed with good superiors who were interested in my growth right from the time I started my IT, Youth Service, and career proper. I subjected myself to learning from the best people in the industry to move up the ladder. I enjoyed the flow – and I never felt like leaving the industry for one day." He said about his career.

Speaking about his own contributions to upgrading insurance industry in Nigeria, Dr. Ben said, "I've trained so many insurance professionals; there is certainly no company you will enter where you won't see somebody who has passed through my tutelage and they are all doing wonderfully well. I am very fulfilled as an insurer. As a superior, I have positive impact on my subordinates. I don't have all the money but I'm satisfied. I thank God for all the privileges I have. While fielding question on insurance orientation, Dr. Ben said, "I do not believe that there is no insurance awareness. What we don't have is insurance education. Many people have heard about insurance but extremely few know

what insurance will benefit them. It is about being educated and internalising the need for insurance. Now, the Chartered Insurance Institute is running a programme in collaboration with various insurance companies and the Nigerian Insurance Association, taking insurance to the grassroots – to primary and secondary schools, introducing insurance as a subject and donating books so that young folks can get acquainted with insurance. The National Insurance Commission has also set up publicity committees to create awareness on the radio. This is different from individual companies' advertising their products, but talking about the issues and importance of insurance, I have gone to schools, some secondary schools here in Lagos, with my team. I have gone to even my own alma mater, talking on insurance benefits." Said Dr. Ben who under his leadership management, Universal Insurance has come to the forefront – and as the end of 2022 accounting year, the company made 5.6 Billion Naira and over 630 million Naira in profit. At the end of the 3rd Quarter of 2023, the company made 6.3 billion Naira.

God gave me a dream and a mission, and the grace to fulfil my life's purpose

-Idoreyen Eneng, President NIMN

The man Idoreyen Eneng is like water. It is useful for drinking, cooking, bathing and other valuable use. His type is so scarce due to importance and quality. He is a blessing to every venture and association he belongs.

Iadoreyen Eneng was born on the 27th day of May 1966 at the Lagos Island Maternity. He studied Economics at Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt. His work as a civil servant commenced as Level 6 officer at the Ministry of Defence. He did his youth service at Elf, Rivers State. He rented a space at the Port Harcourt Orientation Camp and collaborated with his colleague to set-up a joint cafeteria called 'The Hive,' with inscriptions like, *Welcome to The Hive ... Come to The Hive ... Stay Alive ... Listen to the Vibes.* We hired a lady from the College of Education, Lumanweni as chef. She cooked only fried rice we were selling. We had games like scrabble and drinks to keep the boys cool as the fried rice attracted the girls. We later added goat meat pepper soup. "I worked as Marketer at Nigerian Breweries for seven years. I launched Satzenbrau and it was a huge success. I supported the launch of Malta Guinness as Brand Manager. I moved from there to Coca-Cola where I spent 11 years. I managed Fanta, Krest, other brands. In my early 30s, I became the Country Marketing Manager for Kenya. I became a General Manager before I left Coke."

He moved to Cadbury as Commercial Director, spent three years there before joining Samsung as Managing Director. "I helped in building the Samsung brand for the years I was there. We moved the revenue from USD88 million to USD286 million." He took a year break – and returned to spend 30 months on the field with L'Oreal, the beauty giant as MD. "In between all these, God gave me a dream and a mission, and the grace to fulfil my life's purpose. I set up my own social enterprise, *Corporate Shape Ups* in 2009 to teach, guide and motivate individuals, businesses and organizations. That social enterprise became the kernel for my radio programme, *Navigate with I.D.* in 2009. I was spending N236,000 every month for media and time before I gained the support of Chris Obosi who allowed me to run my materials on Beat FM free-of-charge and Larry Izamoje, my destiny partner." He said further. Today, he is a business and leadership coach, imparting knowledge on individuals and corporate organisations. "As a coach, I help individuals move from point A to B. I help businesses see what they don't see because I've seen it and done it, to be honest. I've been CEO of



Fortune 100 Business Organisations. At L'Oreal, I was the most senior black man across the world. Samsung, I was the first local MD/CEO Samsung had anywhere in the world, the next guy is a South African." He was World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) President in 2011, WFA houses 85% of the world's advertisers. He also served on the Council of APCOM and he is currently serving as President of National Institute of Marketing. He has gained spiritual guidance and mentorship from Pastor Tunde Bakare and his father. "I am extremely fulfilled as a marketer because I don't think I would have done better in any other profession – even in banking where I initially placed my dream. All I can say is that God ordered my steps. When I was walking away from L'Oreal, my salary was in seven digits. My wife didn't believe it. Faith and patience are two sides of the same coin but God has always come through for me." Idoreyen wants to be remembered as that man who was able to turn around lives.



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Advertising came natural and easy for me

-Tunde Shobanjo

A patient dog, they say, eats the fattest bone. While some people fish for tilapia in the ocean, the smart ones look for whales and sharks – big and rare creatures, larger than what a dragnet can catch. Tunde Shobanjo is a diligent, versatile and patient mankind with tangible results to show for his years of hard work.

He is the son of Media Mogul, Biodun Shobanjo of Insight

Communications. Babatunde Shobanjo was born in Lagos, Nigeria. He studied Business Administration at Middlesex University in London, UK and Wilberforce University in Ohio, the United States of America. He lived and worked in the USA for 11 years before returning to Nigeria.

Why did he choose Business Administration as course of study at the university and settled for advertising? Tunde replied, "I chose Business Administration as guided by my father. My initial intention was to be an advertiser. I didn't know much. But as I got into the university, I was encouraged to study Business because it opens up the mind and creates more avenues for opportunities. I'm not just pigeonholed into one direction, and that choice helped my take-off as a stockbroker. I worked for some of the biggest investment firms including Goldman Sachs

before joining De-Mayo and Company where I cut my teeth in advertising. I got into advertising a little late – in my late 20s. So I had to catch-up. Advertising came natural and easy for me because I'm good with people." "Nigeria business terrain is quite different from the USA. When you work in the States, you enjoy freedom of expression and the culture is different. In Nigeria, you need to assimilate the normal culture of being around the people and dealing with them but I found a way to fit in quickly, a way to be grounded. The moment I landed in Nigeria, the hot sun removed everything foreign in me – and whenever I travel these days, I want to return home after two or three days. This country is destined for greatness, and I'm gonna be a part of it."

Tunde Shobanjo spoke on the challenges of running an advertising agency and managing clients' brands hinting on peculiarity of products, services and companies involved as well as targeted audience/users.

"Every account has its own peculiar challenges; some experiences will test your resolve as a person, some will test your patience while some will

challenge your mental capacity to get out of trouble and deliver – and that's one peculiar factor in Nigeria, you will be trained on how to interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds on one account. It's about rallying the people and delivering for your clients. Every client, every account has its peculiarity – depending on the season and the campaign you're running."

I still have a lot to do as a professional, a lot to learn. This industry keeps evolving at unimaginable speed and one has to be on his toes in order to catch up. Gone are the days when TV, radio and billboards are enough for running your ad but today, digital world has taken over and it keeps improving on a daily basis with Gen Zs, the millennials and Gen Alphas. In this industry, we are probably two steps behind the Western world."

In conclusion, Tunde wants the wrong mindset of today's youths corrected. They should see the world as a global village where social media has come to stay and they can positively harness its opportunities without burning out their values.

The Soaring Profile of Pharm Moses Olurotimi Oluwalade

(B.Pharm, MSc, MBA, FPSN)

Honour is meant for those who deserve it. It is only a foolish man that looks down on a noble... because a king is saddled with authority whether he exercises it or not, and that is why whoever dares the king will pay dearly for it.

Pharm. Moses Oluwalade is a king of a designed domain where he exercises authority as a husband, father and professional.



He was born in the Sunshine State of Ondo and there he completed his primary and secondary education before proceeding to Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife for his bachelor's degree in Pharmacy in 1990. After his internship at the Specialist Hospital, Ado Ekiti and mandatory service year at the Specialist Hospital, Bauchi, Pharm. Moses Oluwalade worked in the field as a Medical Sales Representative – and in a bid to climb higher on the career ladder and cut an edge over his colleagues, he decided to gain more knowledge by enrolling for MBA in Marketing at the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso in 2002 and a Master's in Pharmaceutical Chemistry from University of Lagos in 2003.

Moses Oluwalade joined Taylek Drug Company in 1995 as a Medical Sales Representative and rose through the ranks to become

the Area Manager due to his relentless diligence, unparalleled productivity and focus.

He left Taylek Drugs Company in 2005 to establish Miraflash Nigeria Limited, a Manufacturing Company that specializes in the production of Beta-Lactam Antibiotics and their derivatives – growing Miraflash, through grit and hard work, to an enviable position, as a pharmaceutical company known for high quality products all over the country, and established brand presence in the six-geopolitical zones in the country.

Though a Managing Director of a popular company, he is yet to relent in his search for knowledge. He keeps undergoing training to upscale his skills and abilities to become a better manager who is able to expand the company to global standard.

He participated in the intensive Stanford Seed Transformation Programme which is specially designed to provide management training to

entrepreneurs and management staff. He has also bagged multiple awards and recognitions across the country and from different organisations. Some of these awards and recognitions include the Distinguished Personality Award from Ekiti State Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, Fellowship Membership Award from the International Professional Managers Association–UK, Most Outstanding Man of Integrity from Events International Magazine, Distinguished West African Personality of the Year from West Africa Youth Council and most recently, a Fellowship Award from the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria in recognition of his commitment and contributions to advancing professional and public interests.

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A dignified Professional

Prince Abayomi Ogunjimi MBA, FCTI, FCA

Born into a royal family in Okeigbo area of Ondo State, Prince Abayomi attended Anglican Secondary Commercial Modern School in Okeigbo and Catholic Technical College, Ile-Ife. He later enrolled with the Association of Certified Accountants of UK. After passing the ACCA foundation stage, he switched to ICAN, became an associate member of the institute in 1984 and Fellow in 1991.

Prince Abayomi Ogunjimi attended Emile Wolf Accounting College, UK for his professional studies. Prince Abayomi is also an associate member of The Chartered Institute of Taxation in since 1985 and Fellow (1992), an associate member of Nigerian Institute of Management (1990) and an associate member of the British Institute of Management (1985). He got his MBA in 2007. He attended various courses within and outside the country, worked in different organizations and audit firms before setting-up Abayomi Ogunjimi & Co. (Chartered Accountants) and Bayog Associates. in 1994. He was Executive Director, Symbolic Motors Limited, Ikeja from 1995 to 1999. He is the Founder and Pioneer Chairman of ICAN, Amuwo Odofin District Society. He has served in various committees of ICAN in the last 30 years – as Member, Accreditation Teams on

Accountancy in ICAN, NBTE and NUC. He has been Secretary and President of Okeigbo Youth Pioneers Club, Unit Commander of Special Marshal (Festac Unit) FRSC, Chairman, Ajangbadi CDA for 14 years and President Rotary Club of Amuwo in 1995/96. He is a Foundation Member of Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria, Lagos State Chapter, (representing ICAN), and Chairman in 2020/2022. Speaking to our correspondent on his professional career and entrepreneurship, Prince Abayomi Ogunjimi said, "After the pharmaceutical company I last worked for folded-up with the collapse of Yugoslavia, I started my firm but getting clients was not easy. I had to join Rotary Club to scout for jobs. I went through a lot before I could stabilise. It used to be ICAN monopolized scene until other professional bodies like ANAN had their share of the accounting deal. Passing an ICAN exams was



quite difficult in our time. It was 'fail in one, fail in all,' but I qualified at a young age, and that was a thing of joy and pride for me and my family. We have so many chartered accountants because of me – and so far, I'm very, very much fulfilled. My present level in ICAN is phenomenal and ICAN has afforded me the opportunity to travel around this country."

The man who wants to be remembered as a man who contributed his own quota, Prince Abayomi Ogunjimi counselled Nigerian youths to work hard and hope for better days rather than being dubious or fetish because the ill-gotten wealth will vanish. That is just the problem.

Experiential Marketing is an industry that is very proactive

-Mrs. Tolu Medeben

Some people are so incredible like an assumed lump of coal that turned into diamond. Their emergence is magical and their exploits are miraculous. Such is Tolulope Medeben, the daughter of HRM Oba Funsho Adeolu, Alaye of Ode-Remo, Ogun State, the garrulous and loquacious Chief Eleyinmi of the popular 1970's sitcom – *the Village Headmaster*. She is both magical and miraculous and her results are phenomenal.

Princess Tolulope did Theatre Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Higher Degree in China Business at China-Europe Business International School. In this executive marketer's statement, she said: "I took a major in Broadcasting but somehow, in the year 2000, my path moved into Experiential Marketing – and I have been on that for 23 years. I didn't pursue acting as a career because I love my private life, I wanted to do things in the background. I contacted Mustapha Amigo who took me to Klink Studios where I got my editing and subtitling experience. Then and there, I knew acting was not for me. I saw a lot of things I couldn't be part of." Tolulope's early life as an experiential marketer is lurked in several challenges especially the roles of motherhood and wife. In her words, "Experiential Marketing is an industry that is very proactive. My early years in this industry were always on the road – either out of town or out of the country. I got married in 1998, had my first child in 1999, started marketing in 2000 and the second child came almost immediately. I remember being overdue for the delivery of my last child and I got ready to go to work. Then my husband said, 'No, you

cannot go ... your EDD has already passed. Just imagine giving birth in the office or something happens. Wouldn't they say, I'm irresponsible?' My husband is a doctor – and that very day, I was at home with my brother-in-law when my water broke. I was juggling together office, field, motherhood and wife roles." Has she ever felt like throwing-in the towel? Tolulope replied, "I never felt like leaving the profession despite all the challenges, collision, disagreements and the dangers ... I love the work and enjoy every bit and every moment of it. It takes me to places, connects me to people and broadens my horizon." Speaking to our correspondent about the core of her career and how she penetrated the market, Tolu said, "Experiential Marketing is the ability to ensure that consumers have a personal experience of a product or services, leveraging on their major senses of hearing, seeing, tasting, feeling and smelling. Why this? He who feels it knows it. This is different from radio or TV adverts and it is not the same thing as on-the-shelf display. It is a one-on-one personal experience that can be confirmed by the end users. We didn't start getting it right immediately. I even intended selling off all my



equipment after we lost our first major bid. After that, we had this British Council job that was completely not related with what we do but someone counselled us to go ahead and give it a shot. We tried a different approach – and it brought more jobs. We leveraged on that work and we gained more accounts. I love this job because it enabled me empower quite a lot of people ... countless number of experiential marketers have passed through me. By so doing, I am giving back something worthwhile to the world in terms of people's development and growth." On the professional body of communication marketers, she said, "I love being a part of something progressive, something inspiring, something authentic and innovative. I am proud of being one of those people that created inroads for marketing communications industry. Although I never thought I would be President of the association someday but here I am," said Tolulope who loves to be remembered as a woman that was true to herself in all ramifications.

The people in private and public services killed a lot of companies because they don't have the expertise

*-Alhaji Sikiru Balogun
President CIPSMN*

Alhaji Sikiru Oladepo Balogun is an authority in the field of Purchases, Supply and Marketing in Nigeria. He has been at the helm of affairs for many professional bodies – including his area of specialisation and others.



Alhaji Sikiru was born and bred in Ile-Ife. He attended Oduduwa College in Ile-Ife after which he built up his career in the profession studying and passing the professional courses of the Chartered Institute of Purchases and Supply Management, UK. Alhaji Sikiru told our reporter on his life's journey and how far he has come. In his words, "I worked as a pupil teacher and at Ife District Local Government Council. I joined the service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources where I spent almost 10 years as a Produce Inspector. Apart from stiff competition to enter the university, my parents were not rich enough to sponsor me. I was driven out of hall during my school certificate exam. I wouldn't have completed if not for my principal, Mr. Olayinka, and for me to do the professional course, my parents had to borrow money. I chose Purchases and Supply because I didn't want to lose my meal ticket; I want to live better – and it always interests me to see some acronyms behind people's names. So I decided to develop myself. I saw a brochure of purchases and supply – and the rest is history. Not quite long, I

had two certificates that fast-tracked my promotion. I was so elated that I can put an acronym behind my name. I later went into more courses that made me more professional." Alhaji Sikiru Balogun enlightened our correspondent on the bits and pieces of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Management of Nigeria (CIPSMN). "The World Bank encouraged the establishment of CIPSMN. They sent in some experts that sat with Nigerians to give the country procurement assessment report. That was the genesis of Purchases and Supply as a professional body. The original impediment was that accountants, engineers and some other professional were put in-charge, not those people that really studied and practice the profession. As of today, we have not less than 3500 members. There is still a conflicting responsibility as the Bureau of Public Procurement and the National Procurement Council did what the institute should be doing, which is regulation, and examination of the key actors involved with procurement. That is why the people in private and public services killed a lot of companies because they don't have the expertise." What are the differences between procurement, purchasing and

supplying? Alhaji Balogun offered, "Purchasing is a transition function on procurement. Procurement is the act of acquisition whereby we establish the need, where to buy, ensure orders are taken and placed for clarity of competitive purpose. Purchasing on the other hand involves quotation and buying the quoted quality and quantity from designated sources. We have International competitive bidding and National competitive bidding. You may also have to present technical bid before the financial bid – but things are not done well in our country. The persistent problems we are having concerning qualities and supply are caused by our Permanent Secretaries and Ministers who want to grease their own pockets on every procurement. If we allow due process, we will have no problems in future. We will not have abandoned projects. We have government-owned contractors. The rule says before you choose a contractor or award any contract, the money must be available.

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I have faced a lot of challenges in life but none of them could stop me from being an accountant

-Folashade Ayoola Awe



Princess Folashade Ayoola Awe is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, a minister of God, wife of Barrister Olumuyiwa Awe and mother. A native of Ikole-Ekiti, Folashade holds HND Accountancy of the Polytechnic, Ibadan.

She served with Ashaka Paints Nigeria Limited. She became a Chartered Accountant in 2007 and was confirmed FCA in 2018. She was redeployed to Odua Investment as Business Development Manager. She was moved to Odua Printing and Publishing Company Limited as Acting General Manager in 2013 and was later moved to Lagos in December 2017 till March 2022 when she was announced the Acting General Manager of the hotel that presently heads the Management of that hotel. Why did Folashade choose accounting as a career and course of study? "I've had the determination to be a chartered accountant right from childhood; my elder brother, Prince Adekunle Adeleye foretold me. I picked interest in commercial studies

especially accounts, business method, typewriting and commerce. I am the product of my brother; he was my motivator." Did she ever feel like quitting accounting for other career? Folashade replied, "I'm a go-getter. When I am determined to achieve something, I do it. I have faced a lot of challenges in life but none of them could stop me from being an accountant – there was a time

I was unable to pass ICAN. I failed the exams many times but eventually I passed, and it was a great achievement on my part. I was so proud of myself."

Who is an accountant and how is being a chartered accountant rubbed off on Folashade's career? Princess replied, "You cannot be a professional accountant except you are a chartered accountant. Being a graduate of accounting does not make you an accountant. I became an accountant immediately I qualified, passed the final stage of my ICAN – and as at that time, we had very few chartered accountants in the conglomerates. The management of the group was on the search for accountants among all the subsidiaries. Immediately I qualified, I was transferred to the group headquarters and that

became a great leverage for me. The fulfilment I now have surpassed the cost of determination, money spent along the line, timing and the emotional stress I went through in passing the exams to become a chartered accountant. What I have gained surpassed the sacrifice. Remember, I was already married and blessed with two children before passing the final stage ... hmmm, that was not for a lazy man.

She was asked to highlight some of the benefits gained. "Moving to the group headquarters put me into the limelight, good salary, promotion and opportunities to relate with and operate at the top echelon. I am not really fascinated about banking job because of my family. I will not jeopardize my family because of my career. Odua gives an opportunity to build a career without neglecting your home. I joined as a clerk, became the credit officer and I performed creditably well."

Princess Folashade Awe loves to unwind with her husband and looks forward to joining him in Ibadan on weekends. She also admonished youths to be determined about their goals.

My main purpose of coming back to Nigeria is to bring down the cost of IVF

-Dr. Nobert Ekeh

Dr. Nobert Ifeanyi Chukwu-Ekeh was born in the former Eastern Nigeria in an area now known as Aniocha LGA, Anambra State. He studied Medicine at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the UK. He practised in Canada for about 13 years before coming back to Nigeria.



He is one of the very few Nigerians that believed in reversing brain drain and with the sole intention of putting Nigeria in the very heart of the world.

What informed Dr. Ekeh's decision to go into IVF? He replied, "It was actually the Redeemed Christian Church's 'More than Conquerors' programme in 2005 that inspired me to start an IVF centre in Nigeria. I saw how people in need of the fruits of the womb trooped out in the auditorium when Daddy G.O Adeboye called them for special prayer. I just came back from Canada at the time and was staying with my younger sister and her husband who are members of RCCG. On my return to Canada, I lost interest in the practice of O&G. I felt like returning home to start

something on IVF. So, I went to work in an IVF centre to see how things are done. I came back to Nigeria and set up my business."

Dr. Ekeh also spoke about the challenges of running such a costly centre without compromising quality, "I would say I was instrumental at bringing down the cost of IVF to a million naira. I was even told in a meeting that I wouldn't be able to successfully do IVF with 500,000 naira. When I came back in 2012/13, I was doing IVF with roughly N520,000. My main purpose of coming back to Nigeria is to bring down the cost of IVF. Although, there were challenges of electricity and fuelling the generator but we soon overcame that with inverter and solar panel. It was a big challenge to maintain electricity for 24 hours non-stop. I started by charging 350,000 naira for

the IVF and other charges for the drugs. The cheapest amount of drugs I used was 142,000 naira. When I started, I was doing it as they come but I now do it in batches every month – and on an average, we would have delivered between 1,000 and 1,200 successful IVF babies to date. On December 31st, 2022 we had a quadruplet; two boys and two girls, and this year, we've had two sets of triplets."

"I have also trained quite a few doctors who are fully practising and doing well, running IVF centres successfully." Said Dr. Ekeh who hopes that the economy will become so viable for younger physicians to find their greener pastures in Nigeria.

I cannot work in an uncreative environment

-Mr. Rufai Ladipo

Which other animal is as acrobatic as the monkeys – even in the family of apes, it stands out? Mr. Rufai Ladipo is a different breed of a professional. He is enigmatic, focused and practical. Rufai Ladipo is the Founder of Agile Communications and Power Brand. He was once the CEO and board director of Ice Tea before leaving in 2014 to start his own agency.

What motivated him into advertising industry? "I was a trained journalist and schooled in the United States of America. I wrote for local newspapers in Chicago. I returned home and got a job that gave me Coca-Cola, my first account which I managed for 10 years. From then, I developed interest in advertising. Being in the creative session, providing marketing support for Allstate agents throughout America and North America also prepared me for advertising." "I sacrificed good pay to come back home but I'm highly fulfilled. The only regret I have is the infrastructural support in Nigeria. If you live in America, you know everything is always there for you, but here, it's totally different, you have to adjust to the system. You either stay or go back. I decided to stay. I was determined to succeed in the corporate world. I nursed the ambition of heading an

agency when I started and when the opportunity came, there were seven of us senior managers that competed for that position. And to maintain some level of transparency, they brought people from England and South Africa to test us but I emerged top of the class and was made the MD before I became the Chief Executive Officer. I was also the first Executive Director in an agency. I am not the founder." If STB Makani was as great as he said, why did he leave to start his own? "I left because I got to a point where I had to do my own thing. I was CEO of another agency that folded up for about 15 months before I started my own. I've always wanted to be in advertising, creativity and writing. I cannot work in an uncreative environment – too strict or too monotonous. I hate doing the same thing every day and that is why creativity runs in our lives every day. I cannot work in an environment where I'll just be pushing papers." What were the achievements of



Rufai Ladipo as the president of the association of advertisers? "One of my achievements is being able to increase our subscription. I was also part of the executive team that initiated and moved into our new secretariat." Rufai Ladipo declared that reaching the top requires hard work, vision, focus, encouragement, team work and servant/active leadership – not a bossy type of leadership. "If you do very well, your people will do very well. Carry them along as you move. I learnt about culture shock when I returned from America. Nigerians don't do things the same way things are done in America, especially in terms of employee discipline, corporate governance and the ability to know that work is number one." He added.

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I came to Lagos with the Ghana must go bag

Dr. Felix King

Enigmatic and amiable Dr. Felix King is like a peacock among birds, sharks among fish. There is no way his likes will be categorised as a commoner. He is a man of knowledge; industrious, dynamic and versatile.



Dr. Felix King Eiremiokhae is an entrepreneur and a philanthropist. Born into the family of Mr. & Mrs. David Eraga Eiremiokhae on the 17th of March, 1970 in Afuda, Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo Nigeria. He was born into a family of 29 children, consisting of four (4) blood sisters, three (3) blood brothers, and twenty-two (22) half siblings. His father was a foreman who worked with the Ministry of Works & Housing, while his Mother (Alice) was a petty trader.

At 22, Dr. King earned a Diploma Degree in Management before relocating to Lagos to pursue an interest in the entertainment industry. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. He was also conferred with Doctor of Philosophy (Human Letters) by Trinity University, Georgia, USA in 2018.

In 1998, Dr. King helped to set up the operational structure of a South African marketing company called Direct Marketing Communications (DMC), later known as EXP Marketing – the first

directing marketing company in Nigeria.

After 7 productive years with EXP, Dr. King incorporated Oracle Experience Nigeria Limited, a West African multinational brand experiential company, with an objective to redefine brand experiences using story telling modules that truly excite the senses in an extraordinary way. In just a few years of its existence, the company was able to establish its self as the largest experiential marketing agency in Nigeria, creating extraordinary experiences for corporations like; Coca-Cola, Heineken, Nigerian Breweries, P &G, Nestle, Friesland Campina Wamco, Multi choice/DSTV, Mouka Foam, Flour Mills to mention but a few.

Today, Oracle as a company has grown its capacity and able to include planning, run-way events, themed attraction and multimedia. In 2011, Oracle opened operational branches in Ghana and Cameroon. In 2019, the company shifted its focus from experiential marketing to a full service creative agency.

Dr. King ventured into manufacturing business after an invaluable impact in the marketing and advertising space, by incorporating Mayor Biscuits Company (MABISCO) in 2014, a confectionaries and Foods company that produces one of the finest biscuits in Africa.

Whilst speaking to our reporter on his sojourn to the top, Dr. King took us down the memory lane, "I came to Lagos with the Ghana-must-go-bag, two shirts and two trousers and

a pair of sandals. My story is more of a story of a story of the audacity to survive.

In 2015, he and his wife started the Felix King Charity Foundation with the key objective of giving hope to poor and vulnerable widows and their children in communities across Nigeria.

"We are trying to expand into a 360 business, investing huge amount of resources to push to the next level." Said Dr. King, a man who wants to be remembered as that person who overcame all odds, scaled all hurdles, not just for himself, but also for the less privileged.

Dr. King has received several recognitions and awards amongst which are;

- The President's Life Time Achievement Awards – conferred by the President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump.
- Honorary Citizen of the State of Georgia- conferred by the State of Georgia, United states of America
- West African Patriotic Leadership Award- for fighting the course of women across Nigeria.
- Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Leadership Award as the outstanding Philanthropist of the year, 2017 in Nigeria.
- Brandcom awards – CEO of the year, experiential
- Marketing Edge awards – Leadership award in experiential.

The Enviably Rising of James Ekerare Neminebor

HND, BSc., MBA, MSc., PhD, FCNA, FCCFA, FNAA, CPA-Ireland

It is normal for cats to mew and for dogs to bark. It is a normal heritage for the family members of Neminebor to be affluent and influential. High Chief Dr. James Ekerare Neminebor was born on 24th September, 1958 at Ekeremor in Ekeremor LGA of Bayelsa State.

He attended R.C.M. School II, Warri between 1966 and 1972. He was also at the Government Secondary School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State from 1974 to 1979.

He obtained his Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and Masters of Business Administration (Management) between 1980 and 2001 from the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), Port Harcourt. His academic passion took him to Anambra State University, where he obtained M.Sc. and PhD Accounting between 2016 and 2020. Dr. Neminebor is a course participant at Leadership workshops of University of Pittsburgh, USA. (2011) and in Dublin, Ireland (2012). He has been a frequent participant at the World Congress of Accountants, Istanbul, Turkey (2006), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2010), Rome, Italy (2014), Sydney, Australia (2018), Mumbai, India (2022), and the African Congress of Accountants, Port, Louis, Mauritius (2011), Kampala, Uganda (2017), Marrakech, Morocco (2019), Kigali, Rwanda (2020), Maputo, Mozambique (2021), and ABWA Congress, Monrovia, Liberia (2022). Dr. Neminebor is a member of Board of Trustees of ANAN

University, and member, Board of Governors, Nigerian College of Accountancy, Jos, and Treasurer, Association of Accountancy Bodies of West Africa, (ABWA).

He is a thoroughbred Professional Accountant, Forensic Accountant, Fraud Examiner, passionate academic, and management consultant. He has robust experience in the Public Service, having worked to the privileged position of a Director and also served as a pioneer Bursar in the Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, Bayelsa State.

He is a Member and Fellow of several professional bodies in Nigeria and Ireland, including the Fellowships of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), Nigerian Accounting Association (NAA), Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN), Chartered Institute of Forensics and Fraud Examiners of Nigeria (CIFCFEN), Institute of Corporate Administration, and Chartered Institute of Public Accountants, Dublin, Ireland (CPA -Ireland), among others.

He has co-authored a book on Public Financial Authorities where he brought his diverse and distinguished experience to bear on the laws, regulations, public institutions and practices. He has published in both local and



international peer-reviewed journals with research interests in Corporate Governance, Institutional Quality and Professionalisation of Public Sector Accounting and Finance. He served as President, Rotary Club of Yenagoa District 9140 in 2006 – 2007 and Assistant Governor, Rotary Club of Yenagoa District 9140 in 2013 – 2015. As past President of Rotary Club and a committed Rotarian, he has served humanity with good sense of honesty and humility, and has also travelled wide within Nigeria and the world. Dr. Neminebor loves swimming, gardening, reading and motivating youngsters. He is happily married with kids.

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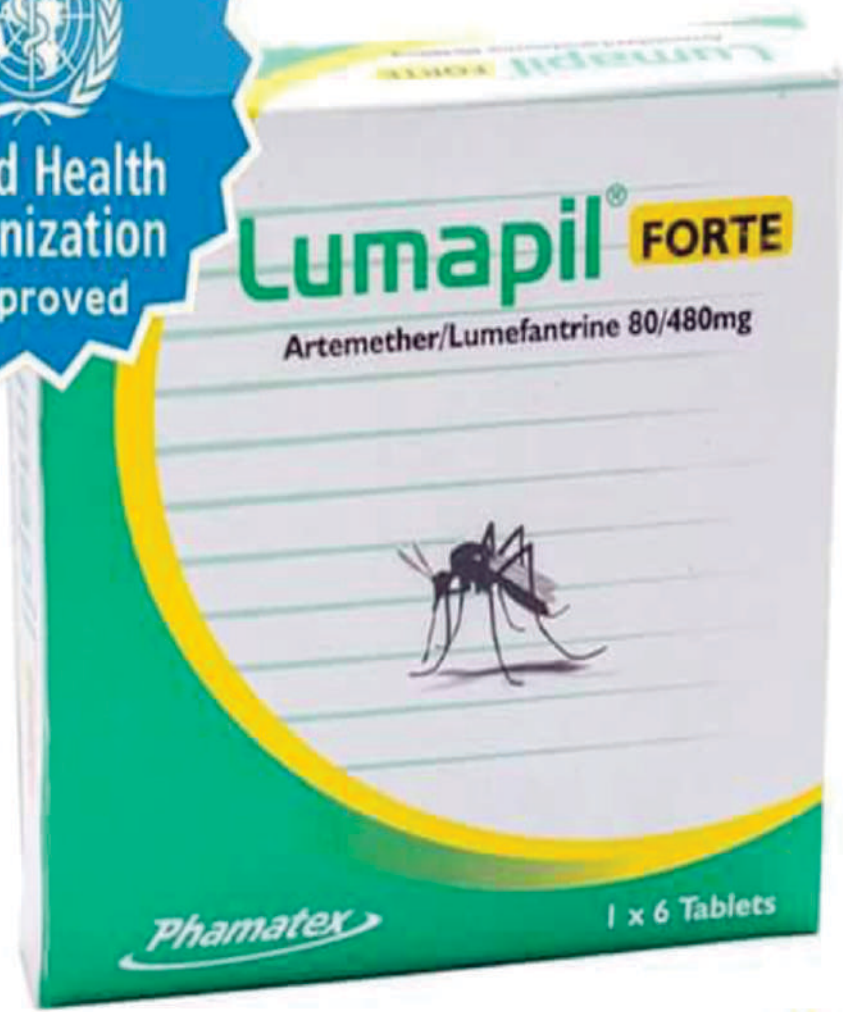
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Pap, though white, is prepared in a dark earthen pot, and an oak was once an acorn whilst a diamond was at a time look like a lump of coal. Journey to the top for Augustine was not a roller coaster but a din of hard work.

Pharm. Augustine was born on July 21st 1970. He did his A' levels at Kwara Tech, before studying Pharmacy at Amadu Bello University, Zaria, internship at Lagoon hospital, Apapa opportunity at Evans Medical, NYSC at LASUTH, and community practice at Julie Pharmacy in Ikeja. In his words, "As a Pharmacist, I have the hospital, community practice and industrial experiences. So, I ventured into marketing and got hooked. I joined Pharmatex Nigeria Limited as a medical representative covering Ikeja axis. We were the first set of pharmacists that promote a branded generic of COVID products in Nigeria. The challenges we faced were that our products were not known, so acceptability was a problem." We had to do medical presentation, attend seminars, get doctors to showcase the good points. All our products are registered by NAFDAC. The initial competition was not as keen as now. Some of our

products are Flucojay for cold and catarrh.

"Pharmatex started as a buying and selling marketing company around 1994, and grew into an industry, with Indians and Malays installed machines in 2014. The facility was valued at about 7.3 billion, and it has a capacity for manufacturing tablets, capsules, syrups, and liquids. We have WHO agents in our factories and we also partner with Red Cross." Pharm. Augustine also talked about features that distinguished Pharmatex from other pharmaceutical firms in Nigeria, "Pharmatex Industries started their operation with a syrup for fever and an analgesic for body pain and rheumatism, but today, we have about 37 products registered with NAFDAC. We have a track record of marketing quality products. We have contributed hugely to healthy living in Nigeria by making quality products available at affordable prices. We have partnered with health organizations to ensure our products are administered to patients. We sponsored doctors for seminars abroad, look-up to NMA and other professional bodies for guidance and counselling. We partner with pharmacies, ECPM, DSM and contributed our corporate social responsibilities various ways. We also participate actively with NGOs. Giving them free products.

In terms of information and research; We give out credible information to the regulatory bodies. We also ensure that our products and brands are what we proclaim."

Pharm. Augustine believed that pharmaceutical industry has not received any support from the government. "No interventions or rebates on imported raw materials, and we pay taxes on the company, the products and materials – Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients which are imported. There is no electricity; we run on gas plant, and diesel which is now over 1,900 naira per litre. The roads are bad – making transportation difficult and expensive. Our trucks sometimes get involved in road accidents and we lose goods and so many other things. Exchange rates is another impediments and so we need to source forex from black market to pay for raw materials."

Despite those challenges, Pharm. Augustine opined Pharmatex will be at the stage of multinationals in the next 10 years as the company has begun exporting to Ivory Coast since 2021.

It wasn't just the academic side of Accounting that captivated me

Dr. Innocent Iweka Okwuosa, FCA

There will always be a way where there's a will, and just as no rock can stop a bulldozer from making headway, Okwuosa decision to be at the top, right from his secondary school days, is the reason why he keeps navigating his way through life without minding the tides of events.

Dr. Innocent Iweka Okwuosa holds a BSc in Accounting, MSc in Banking & Finance and another MSc in International Accounting and Finance from University of Stirling, Scotland; a PhD in Accounting from the prestigious Henley Business School, University of Reading, UK. He is also an SAP FICO Certified and a Fellow of Higher Education Academy, United Kingdom. He commenced his career at the then Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, now Bank of Industry and rose to become a Senior Accountant and Head of Accounts and Management Information Unit within the Finance Division. He later trained with Horwarth Dafinone & Co (Chartered Accountants) where he acquired practical accountancy and audit experience.

He co-founded Safe Associates Ltd, which later became the foremost tuition house in Nigeria as at that time where he distinguished himself lecturing Financial Accounting and Reporting. It was while lecturing at Safe Associates that he authored the popular Group Accounts and Advanced Financial Accounting Manual which became a household name and was widely used by professional accountancy and tertiary Institution students.

Dr Okwuosa has worked with Australian Trade Commission, London, Waltham Forrest NHS, and consulted as an SAP FICO Consultant. He has lectured Accounting & Finance at the University of Liverpool, Henley Business School, Hertfordshire

Business School, United Kingdom, On returning to Nigeria, he Caleb University and Pan Atlantic University, Lekki.

As an expert in International Financial Reporting with Entop Consulting Ltd, Dr Okwuosa carried out IFRS implementation for many listed and private companies and delivered corporate training on IFRS. He is currently the Managing Consultant of Entop Consulting and Managing Partner of I.I.Okwuosa & Co. (Chartered Accountants).

While fielding questions from Synochure International Magazine's correspondent, Dr. Okwuosa said, "From my secondary school days, I discovered how integral accounting is to the success of any business – and that became a foundation for making informed financial decisions, ensuring transparency and accountability within an organization. I leveraged on that fact to dig deeper to discover what I want from life."

"However, it wasn't just the academic side of accounting that captivated me. I also had the opportunity to gain practical experience through internships and part-time positions at accounting firms. These experiences allowed me to apply my knowledge in real-world scenarios and learn from seasoned professionals. I was exposed to a variety of industries and clients, each with their own unique challenges and opportunities." He added.

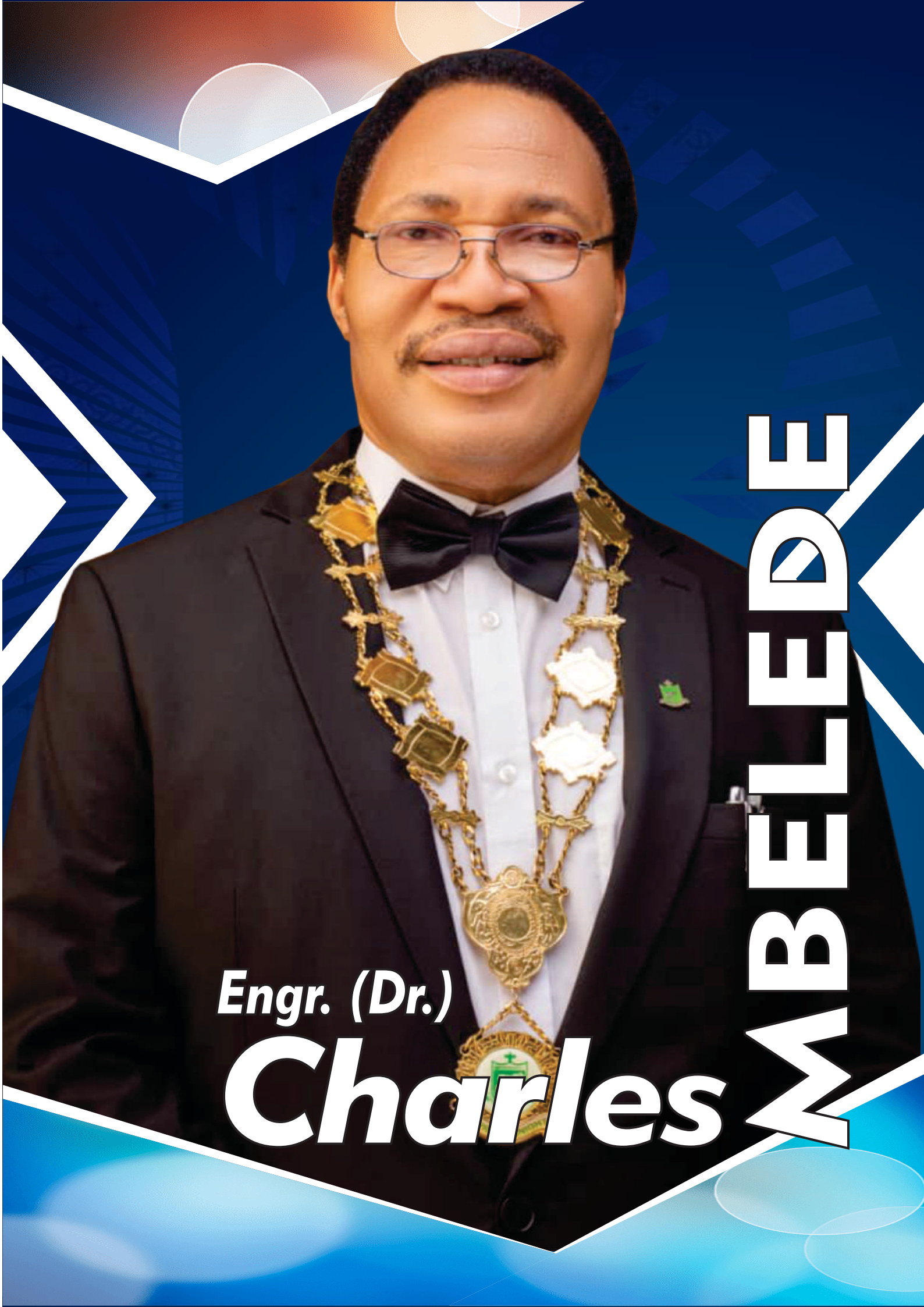
In 2017, Innocent was appointed a pioneer member of the African Integrated Reporting Committee (AIRC).

In September 2019, he was



meritoriously appointed as a member of the Board of the International Panel on Accounting Education (IPAE) of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) to represent Africa and the Middle East for a first term of three years which was renewed for another 3 years in 2022 and his voice continues to resonate on that Board where he co-leads IPAE's Subgroup on Sustainability.

Speaking further on his accounting career, Okwuosa spoke about an unforgettable experience, "One particular internship stands out in my memory. I was assigned to assist a small family-owned business with their financial statements and tax filings. As I worked closely with the owner, I saw the crucial role accounting played in making informed decisions and plan for the future – and at that point, there is no going back." "Throughout my journey, there were series of challenges that tested my resolve. The long hours of studying, the pressure of exams, and the constant need to stay updated with changing regulations were demanding. Each obstacle strengthened my passion for accounting and my commitment to become a professional of distinction."



Engr. (Dr.)

Charles

MBELLEDE

ENGINEERING...

THE ONLY OPTION FOR ME

-Dr. Charles Mbelede

Honour is meant for those who deserve it. It is only a foolish man that looks down on a noble because a king is saddled with authority whether he exercises it or not, and that is why whoever dares the king will pay dearly for it.

Dr. Charles Mbelede was born without a spoon, yet he built a factory where silver spoons are carved in thousands.

This gentle, principled and cultured man shaped himself as an icon of reckoning and when most of his age mates were crying no opportunity, he created one and seized the moment. He discovered he was not created to crawl, he dusted himself from the mud, spread his wings and flew, soaring beyond the reach of ordinary mist.

His name is a key due to his pedigree and devotion to Christian tenets and doctrines. He is a chronic Catholic but a liberal and godly mankind – and in his professional calling, Mechanical Engineering, his mark is glaring ... like a passing of an elephant. Have you seen a man of policy before? Meet Dr. Mbelede and you will discover that, elephant is beyond a load to be lifted by two hefty men. Talk to him and you will discover a man who single-handedly cultivated a plantation that will take 1,000 men to plough in 10 years.

In this piece, Dr. Mbelede spoke to our correspondent, Lanre Olusunmade on his life from birth to the throne.

COVER STORY

Excerpts below:

Can we have a concise history of you?

Thank you very much. My name is Engineer Dr. Charles Mbeledede. I was born in Enugu, Nigeria, I did my primary and secondary schools in Lagos. I did my tertiary schooling at Yaba College of Technology and University of Lagos. I also attended Lagos Business School where I did Chief Executive Programme, CEP. I've had the opportunity of working with Tacker's Associates, Pyramid Consultants, a firm of architects, engineers and planners. I worked under Engineer Tade, my mentor. I set up MILCON (a firm of electrical, mechanical, cost engineering and project managers) in 1991. We've done quite a number of projects. I'm the immediate past Chairman of what we call Pfac prevention, investigation and accident analysis of Nigerian Society of Engineers. I'm the immediate past Chairman on Issues of Appraisals and Cost Engineers, a division of Nigerian Society of Engineers and member of the International Cost Engineering Council. I'm also the current Chairman Engineering Codes and Standards Committee of Engineers. I'm also the current Chairman of West African Engineers Association – among other posts. I'm the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Mulumba, Nigeria. I'm also in charge of Cameroon and Uganda.

What was your growing-up like?

My growing-up was interesting and fine. My father worked with PWD as an engineer. My mom was a trader of good standing. I grew up at Adeniran Ogunsanya, Surulere. My family attended St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Surulere. I grew-up on parental guidance and control. My parents were strict Catholics; they trained us to pay attention to details.

What motivated you to study Engineering?

My father guided me in core subjects required to study engineering like Physics, Chemistry and Maths. I also had a cousin, Bright, studying Electrical

Engineering at Unilag. I used to give him *Toro*, about 3 pence or more from the money in my safe whenever he was returning to school. When he graduated, he joined NEPA. He visited our home in Peugeot 404 one day, took me out for a treat, bought me some meat pie and took me to Bar Beach, Victoria Island in that car. I made up my mind to also study engineering – and have his type of open roof car. I followed suit – and today, my sons are all engineers. It's been a very interesting journey.

If not engineering, what would you have opted for?

Engineering was the only option for me but I probably could have been a good lawyer because I have the quality of a lawyer.

Did you ever regret taking that decision?

No, I have no cause to regret. I see myself harnessing scientific knowledge for the betterment of mankind and I see that in all my projects. For example, each time I pass by National Stadium, Abuja, I feel fulfilled or Federal High Court, Abuja, I say, '*This is my project*'. I am fulfilled each time I see my projects. The work of my hand has touched mankind and I am thrilled.

What really prompted your interest in the activities of the Nigerian Institute of Engineers?

Many years back when I was a young engineer, I was sent on training and I saw the way those trainers, the resource persons were

ditching out lectures with exquisite methodology and attention to details, I imagined myself being on the podium one day - and, as it were, my dream came true. I'm a multi competent engineer, a multi certified engineer. I'm not only an electrical engineer, I'm also a chartered mechanical engineer, chartered building services engineer, chartered lighting engineer, chartered project manager. I'm also an accredited cost engineer, accredited engineer economist, accredited engineering follower. I'm also an international Certified Professional Engineer. I'm a resource person and cost engineer. In fact, I'm the national person in charge of cost engineering in this country and I lecture all engineering professionals annually and virtually all the time.

What were the initial challenges you faced when you established your firm?

Well, there were no challenges because it was something God has propelled to happen. I have had 16 years post qualification experience and acquired a lot of skills. I started when I realized I was getting a lot of PP from my friends and colleagues and it was time to devote my time to my vision. I didn't have to steal my office time to do my work – and God blessed us with a lot of projects.

What is your take on the argument that the government gives contracts to foreign



engineers than local ones as a strong player in the association?

You know, Rome was not built in a day. The only way engineers can excel is by giving them projects. I believe we have a lot of engineers, certified and international professional engineers whose competencies or professional competencies are better than those of white people. Well, because of our tendency to patronize white people, we think that they're the best, they're certainly not the best. You can only learn from the challenges you have and build on your challenges, explore on your challenges and make the most of your challenges in developing the country. When we're talking about competencies, there is even a federal government directive that any project above N5 billion or 1 billion must have indigenous participation – to ensure our engineers acquire the skill needed and be conversant with the costs of the project. We're not having enough share of the engineering profession, some jobs are still done in South Africa, UK, and other countries. We don't have enough patronage in Nigeria.

Why didn't you go into public service?

My training and practice commenced in private firms. I never really bothered about the public sector. I have no regrets working in the private sector.

How did you get and retain your clients?

Yes, when I started this firm, I am friendly with quite a lot of architects we have done a lot of projects with. Your best job is your best advert. Good projects bring good memory; good memory brings back memorial projects that bring more referrals.

Which of your projects will you say is the most challenging?

The NITEL headquarters in Abuja is very challenging because of how it started. The National Stadium, Abuja is challenging in terms of speed. The Federal High Court, Abuja was also a project that required speed and attention to details. Different projects have various challenges depending on speed, accuracy and attention to



meet the costs, the targets and the quality. So, all our projects are challenging.

What distinguishes your firm from other consulting firms?

Our firm is duly registered with CAC and recognised associations of consulting engineers in Nigeria. To be registered with those bodies mean you cannot compromise on your quality.

Tell us about your Christian walk ... your life as a Catholic; have you ever thought you would one day become the Supreme Knight of Mulumba?

I never knew. I thought it was something for old men, so I never really bothered about it. But I was surprised when approached and given the form because you don't apply to become a member of knighthood KSM Nigeria. People will see and recommend you from your activities and actions or inactions. You will then be profiled and interviewed to authenticate your qualification to be a member. It took another four years before our results came out. I saw and became friends of numerous learned, ethical and passionate old Christian men. The knighthood has moulded my life towards catholic faith, contributing to the betterment of mankind, prisoners' release, building homes for the less-privileged, widows and doing charity.

As an outstanding community leader, what ways have you used your position to develop the people?

For example, when I became estate chairman where I live, this knightly work has endeared me to contributing and helping others.

How do you think the wrong mindset of today's youth can be corrected?

They don't need to put money first and they need to be mentored by good role models. Life starts from somewhere and advances in a gradual process. Our youngsters must first acquire the needed skills.

Who were your role models when growing up?

My dad was my childhood hero and Engineer Tade is my professional mentor; he taught me everything about engineering in a way I cannot forget.

Why haven't you contested the presidency of the institute or association?

I didn't because I am running a firm. I am not politically inclined. I am willing to be a division chairman, offering my services but not at presidency level.

What do you want to be remembered for?

I want to be remembered as a man of good and godly character. A man of honour and integrity who contributed his time, money and talent for the betterment of mankind.

What is your advice to the young ones who are looking up to you?

My advice is that they should take their time to learn the ropes. They should acquire the skill and become ethical. They should also be fair to all concerned. They should be fair in their dealings whatever creed they belong. Above all, they should know that everything good or great is by God's grace.



MY HUSBAND WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS STERLING LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Lady Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbelede

There is a certain book in the Bible called Proverbs. It is a compilation of wisdom sayings and lessons. Special references are made on the wonderful traits of great women and wives in different

chapters and verses of that wisdom book. Proverbs 18:22, for example, admonishes men, "He who finds a wife found a good thing and obtains the favour of the Lord." This means that a wife is a good thing *plus*

God's favour. Proverbs 19:14b also says "A prudent wife is from God," meaning a wife who thinks about the future and makes careful plans can only be given by God, not skills and oratory prowess. To cap it all, in 22 verses of Proverb 31 are listed certain traits of a virtuous, righteous, morally inclined and disciplined wife that every man should clamour. It can be inferred from that passage that it is one thing for a man to marry a woman and another thing for him to have a lady because wife's materials – like eagles in our aerial space – are relatively scarce. Lady (Dr.) Ifeyinwa Anthonia Mary Mbelede is an empress in the region controlled by Dr. Charles Mbelede. She is a woman, a lady, wife and mother – a combination of brain, beauty, bucks and brand. Ifeyinwa is also a banker, realtor, marriage/relationship counsellor, mentor and life coach. She is the CEO of Rising Sun Bureau De Change Ltd, Founder, Salve Regina Widows Foundation and St. Aloysius Ability Development Centre, a haven for special children – and none of these big duties and honour will make her shirk her responsibility as a wife and mother. Lady Dr. Ify Mbelede is a strong advocate of family values and patroness of many laudable groups and organisations. Her personal mission statement is to be a blessing to every soul she encounters with a view of winning souls for Christ. She is a woman of intelligence, honour and integrity. Just as it is written in Proverbs 31:29, "Many daughters have done well but you excel them all." Countless women have proved their worth but Dr. Ifeyinwa Mbelede is a jewel of inestimable



value to Dr. Charles Mbelede and children.

In this piece, Ifeyinwa revealed the secret of her first meeting with Charles, and some matters unknown to the world about her hubby, Dr. Mbelede. "I met him in my home through a mutual friend during a festive season and as our friendship morphed with time into something deeper, I noticed he possessed the qualities I desired in a spouse; gentleness, honour, integrity, and uprightness. His profile is better captured by Psalm 15 of The Holy Bible."

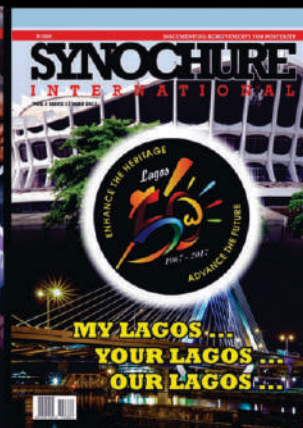
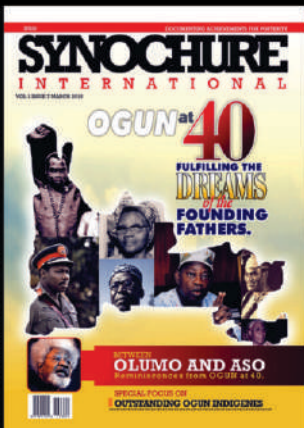
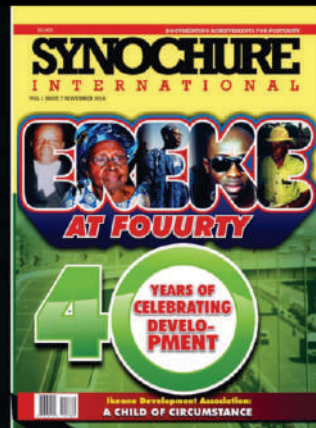
Speaking about an indelible experience she has of her husband, Lady Ifeyinwa said, "I have had quite a number of unforgettable experiences but the most indelible one was the trip we took to Milano, Italy in 2014, where he emerged as the Director of International Conference of Evaluation and Cost Engineers in Africa. He was the only black man among the team. I felt very proud of him attaining such a height in life through a dint of hard work, prayer and commitment. His immense contribution in many capacities – both locally and internationally – speak for him. Wherever he goes, he grooms and develops young engineers into confident and proficient professional engineers."

"My husband is a very responsible husband and father who plays his role very well, and as the Worthy Supreme Knight of the Honoured Order of the Knights of St. Mulumba, he has impacted quite a number of lives positively, spiritually, professionally and materially. In recognition of his immense contribution to our community he was honoured with a chieftaincy title as a member of the Owelle's cabinet at a very young age. My husband will be remembered for his sterling leadership qualities which he has generously applied in the service of God and humanity almost all his life. He has always been a blessing to any community he belongs and will forever remain in the mighty name of Jesus Amen!" She said about her husband's contributions to nation building and human capacity development.

In conclusion, Lady Dr. Ifeyinwa Anthonia congratulated her husband for making the family proud at all times and prayed that more feathers be added to his cap. She also implored him to continue to offer selfless service to God and mankind with very deep sense of altruism.

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Dr. Mbelede is a dedicated Catholic and family man

-Sir Steve Adehi, SAN, FCIA (UK)



Sir Steve Adehi is also the Supreme Advocate of the Knights of St Mulumba, Nigeria and National Vice President of the Association of Papal Knights and Medalists in Nigeria.

In his response to our questions of how he met Dr Charles Mbelede and what the relationship birthed, Sir Steve Adehi, SAN replied, "We met at a meeting of the Knights of St Mulumba when he was a Grand Knight of a Lagos sub-council. I liked him and loved how fast he grew in the Order of the Knights of St Mulumba till he became our Supreme

Knight two years ago. Dr. Mbelede is a dedicated Catholic and family man. He is a proven Engineer with outstanding records, a great man, community leader and team player. He is well focused and very eager to bring about positive change wherever he finds himself."

Sir Steve also spoke on unforgettable moment with, and traits he believed young professionals can learn from Dr. Mbelede, "I once shared a private issue with him – and his advice was indeed encouraging. It put me on the right track and it worked well for me. He is also

receptive of genuine and sound advice, he does not aggregate to himself knowledge of everything – and from him, the younger ones can emulate the attributes of hard work and determination to succeed."

"Dr Mbelede has used his time, talent and treasure positively towards service to God and humanity, and I respect him as my Supreme Knight, brother and friend." Sir Steve Adehi concluded.



Charles Mbelede is one of the best friends I have

-Arch. Cephias Lar

MD, Lape Construction Ltd

Cephias Lar is an America trained Architect. He met Dr. Mbelede during his compulsory youth service with Pyramid Consultant, Lagos in 1985. He is a honest man – tested and trusted in all ramifications – and like a gorilla in the company of apes, he stands out, big, strong and reliable.

Speaking with our reporter on his meeting and relationship with Dr. Engr. Charles Mbelede, Cephias Lar said:

"Charles Mbelede is one of the best friends I have; our relationship clicked from the first day we met. He

is gentle and very honest human being. He doesn't lie. He's highly intelligent. He researches very well into whatever project he's handling and comes out with the best solution. He was a problem solver all the days I was with him."

"An indelible experience I have of him was when I was getting married in my village in Lantang, Plateau State, I wasn't expecting him to be there but this man came and gave me all the support I needed as a friend. Since then, I felt indebted to him. He even learned and sang Tarok songs with us. I saw the genuineness and love he has for his friends."

On Dr. Mbelede's contributions to engineering profession, Lar said, "Dr. Charles designed many complex buildings and involved in many national edifices. We both worked on

NIDB regional headquarters in Akure, Ondo, which turned out to be a masterpiece, from the engineering point of view. He was also involved in and supervised the engineering aspect of National Stadium Complex in Abuja, known today as Moshood Abiola Stadium, from beginning to the end. He is a renowned engineer with vast experience. He's a thoroughbred professional who interacts well with other professionals, artisans and labourers in building industry. He has diverse knowledge of architectural, electrical and other engineers, and quantity surveying. Any serious minded youngster who relates with him can be imparted with knowledge, humility, and hard work." He further urged Dr. Mbelede to continue doing his best.



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*On behalf of the management and staff of T. Line Engineering Limited, we heartily rejoice with an outstanding Engineer and a friend of the house, **ENGR. (DR.). CHARLES MBELEDE** as he receives the synochure international magazine **Role model of the year award.***

Sir, as an astute Engineer, you are a source of Inspiration to all who come in contact with you.

Your immense contributions towards the development of the Engineering profession in Nigeria can never go unnoticed.

You have written your name in gold and you truly deserve this honour. We pray for more healthy life on earth in sound mind.

Congratulations!

Signed

Engr. Bunmi Ogundana, FNSE
MD/CEO.



Whenever I think about humility as Jesus Christ instructed us, Dr. Charles comes to my mind

-Engr. Ikenna Odike

Engineer Ikenna Odike holds a degree in Petroleum Engineering from University of Benin. After graduation, he joined Maersk Shipping Company as Sales Executive before delving into business as an entrepreneur in 2004/05 in Customer service and Information Technology.

He spoke to our correspondents on his relationship with Dr. Charles Mbelede. "Dr. Mbelede is my relative. I have known him since I was young but we became very close when I did my IT at Mobil. All I can say is that Dr. Charles Mbelede is a very intelligent person, extremely smart, very knowledgeable and God-fearing. He's very humble. Whenever I think about humility as Jesus Christ instructed us, Dr. Charles comes to my mind. He's also a family man to the core; so compassionate and considerate. A distinguished professional who does not build any sort of air around himself." "He is very honest and straightforward. He will not cut corners and will always lecture you on why you should not cut corners. I believe that's

why he has risen to the top of his profession, top of his career and of the knighthood. Everything he does, he does it with determination. He doesn't do things halfway. He believes that as a professional, you should always give more than a 100 percent in everything you do. He's generous with his time and money – whether to the church, or the people. I remember visiting him in those days, you would see at least four or five relatives sitting there in his four bedroom, semi-detached duplex. He and his wife are so accommodating. I respect their level of generosity and admire their hospitality." He said as he prayed that the good Lord will grant Dr. Mbelede sound health and more years to enjoy his good works.



I have never witnessed him looked down on anybody


-Engr. Bunmi Ogundana, FNSE

There are many stars but only one moon – and yet, the collective light of the stars cannot be as bright as that of the moon. Engr. Bunmi Ogundana has been shining to the chagrin of his antagonists because God is his source. Engr. Bunmi Ogundana is an Electrical Engineer and MD of T. Line Engineering Limited, an electrical and mechanical engineering contractors.

This professional colleague took us down the memory lane on the frill and thrill moments with Dr. Charles Mbelede. According to him, "I met Engr. Charles Mbelede shortly after I left school and started working in an Engineering firm. Our friendship blossomed and we started meeting on various projects."
"Later in life, Engr. Mbelede became very beneficial to me. He started connecting me to various projects, giving me contracts on the ones he was

handling and by that, I advanced in knowledge and improved my profile. I will forever be grateful to him." Speaking further on his personality, Engr. Bunmi Ogundana said "Engr. Charles Mbelede is a complete gentleman who sees only good in every human being. He is kind to a fault and he is always interested in looking to bring the best out of everybody. In fact, you cannot meet him and not benefit something from him – especially if you are an engineer. He has this humble way of relating with everybody

on site – be you an engineer, a technician, an artisan and even the labourers. I have never witnessed him looked down on anybody."
"He is a devout Christian and the Supreme Knight of St. Mulumba. Today, our friendship has transcended into being family friends. He is a wonderful person and I am sincerely happy for his nomination as a Role Model for Youths. I believe he truly deserves it." He added as he asked God to grant Dr. Charles Mbelede the grace to enjoy the fruits of his labour.






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My dad is a father to his biological children and to many others

-Nneoma Pearl Obiajiku

Lion's cub will roar. Goat's kid will bleat. It is normal for a tiger to hunt its game – it will never feast on stale meal. Nneoma Pearl Obiajiku is the daughter of Engineer Dr. Charles Mbelede.

She studied Law at Babcock University and did her LLM at the University of Warwick, United Kingdom – and after graduation, she has hit the ground running, leaping over the walls and conquering territories – just like her dad. She is happily married to Toby Obiajiku and they are blessed with two children.

From a daughter's perspective; who is Engr. Mbelede – and what qualifies him for a great dad? Pearl replied, "I'm proud to say he is my father. He is a father to his biological children and to many

others. I've learnt a lot from him; his parenting style is excellent, his generosity is awesome, his love, hospitality and kindness are magnificent. Everything about him is a great lesson – his actions, interactions with people, his drive for life, love for God and His things, his hard work and passion for his career. He possesses great qualities of an extraordinary mankind."

"My dad is a good man. I've seen that children tend to learn more from the behaviour of their parents and that's something I've also tried to inculcate.

He has a good heart and he's a genuine person. He may not be perfect, he may not be an angel but his intentions are always pure. He has genuine love for his immediate and extended families. His concept is family first. I'm awed by how he respects his family. He is a faithful



father, very faithful husband; caring, not materialistic, always giving to family, friends and even strangers."

"My dad is very calm; it takes a lot to trigger his annoyance. He was very strict but in a tender and loving way. He balanced his love and discipline for us. He's both diplomatic and tactful. He personally drove me to the university, stood with me throughout my registration and during my NYSC posting to Abuja, he was there for me all through the process. He is a great dad." Pearl said.

My Dad paved a very good way for us and we have someone to look up to

-Mrs. Stephanie Osegbe



Eagles are not comparable with parrots - they are born to soar, higher in the sky, and whilst parrots are satisfied the cage and crackers, eagles do not feast on junks and remnants - they hunt for fresh meals. Stephanie Osegbe nee Mbelede, the first child of Dr. Charles Mbelede is an eagle among her mates.

She set out on the journey to greatness early enough to make a considerable mark in life this

astute Fintech guru and experience banker is hitting targets that naysayers dread.

Speaking on her relationship with her father she said"

My father is an amazing person. He paved a very good way for us the children and we have someone to look up to in terms of exemplary life, in terms of building career, in terms of having interpersonal skills and relationship with people, in terms of networking and looking at the bigger picture. He is currently the supreme knight of St. Mulumba and I believe if he wasn't found worthy, I don't think he can get to such exalted position. Am privilege to have him as my father. He has given us very big shoes to fill. Even at his age, he has not stopped studying. He has two PhDs as we

speak. I have my masters and maybe we'll think of that later, but of course, he gave me the yardstick to follow and I know with this, nothing less is expected from me and my siblings. In the course of my growing up as the first child, of the family. I had several experiences with my father but one that I cannot forget in a hurry was when I was to experience my first boarding school, my Dad took me to the school and personally carried my box on his shoulder and when he was about to leave, he looked at me and said "Am here for you. You are just going to be in school, you are not going to leave us forever. I will be coming to see you all the time." And with that statement I felt more reassured that I was not alone.



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Engr. Mbelede is a total gentleman

-Chief Dideolu Falobi

From the State of the Living Spring in Western Nigeria, Chief Engr. Dideolu Falobi is like a torrential rain without cloud. He is a delight of the city and the country.

Chief Dideolu Falobi, a native of Iwoyin-Ijesha in Iroyinade LGA is an engineer born and brought-up in Ilesa, Osun State. He studied Engineering at University of Lagos and worked as an engineer in various firms and on different projects. How and when did Chief Falobi meet Dr. Charles Mbelede and what has kept their relationship going to date? He replied, "Our paths crossed about 35 years ago when I was doing my national service at Exxon Group

and Partners. He was then working with Pyramids Architects. We have since been professional colleagues and good friends. Engr. Mbelede is a total gentleman, a thoroughbred engineer, well-trained and always thirsting for more knowledge, giving back to the profession in so many ways."

"Mbelede is a loyal friend who will move mountains for you – I'm really proud to call him my friend. Most of our collaborations are professional, and minimal on personnel fronts. If he notices you're not throwing all your weight into something, he will ensure he gives you the right moral



kindness, guidance and supports to ensure you do the right thing. He will not support your bid just because you are his friend. He will only support your bid based on your capacity and capability to deliver. He collaborates on merit."

"Engr. Charles has designed iconic projects, trained a lot of budding engineers



Engr. Charles Mbelede is well loved in our estate

-Mr. Oscar Macaulay

Do not compare a lizard with a crocodile. They might both be reptiles. One is an aquatic creature while the other is created for the land but the croc is a carnivore that eats flesh while lizard is an insectivore – and that explains the reason for their size and power.

Just like a mighty croc in the ocean, Oscar Macaulay, the Managing Director/CEO of McDaniels Personal Care Limited is a professional of repute. He is an entrepreneur who has contributed immensely to the development of the Nigerian economy.

He and Engr. Charles Mbelede have been neighbours for many years. On Oscar's relationship with his friend, he said "I met Engr. Charles Mbelede when I moved into the estate he was staying and we became neighbours. The first thing I noticed about him was his selfless service to the development of the estate. He is ever ready to solve any problem in the estate. During his tenure as the Chairman of the Estate, he brought a lot of unprecedented developments that we are all benefiting from today."

"He is a gentleman to the core; accessible and accommodating. He is without any air around him. I am the current chairman of the

estate and Engr. Mbelede has been very supportive wherever and whenever I requested his assistance. He is well loved in our estate due to his happy nature and generosity." He added.

Speaking further on certain embedded traits of Engr. Mbelede that are not known to many, Mr. Macaulay said, "His love for his family reflects in his children and wife. They look excellent all the time and are well behaved. He is a good man to the core, so qualified for any role model award – not only to younger ones but to the elderly as well." He said as he also prayed for more influence and affluence.

Engr. Mbelede is a selfless human being who is ever ready to give his best to any aspect that will benefit humanity

Sir. (Chief) Stephen N. OBI

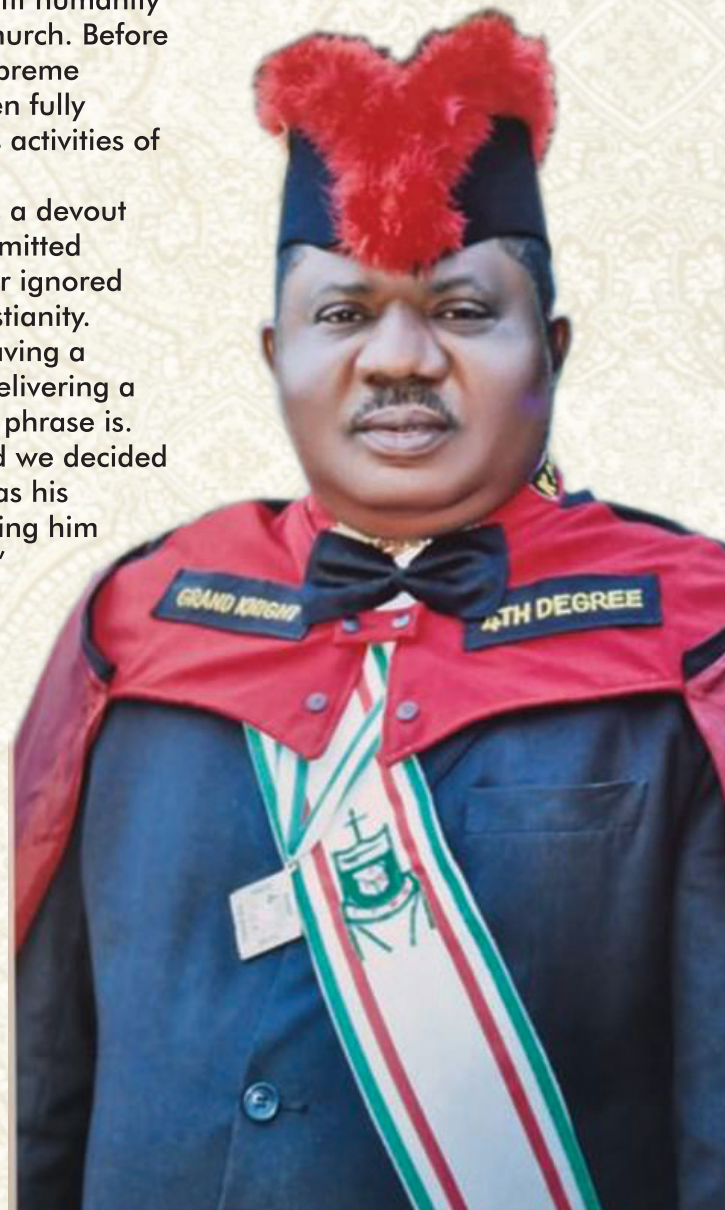
It is unimaginable and incredible for a mouse to challenge a cat to a brawl. Only an uncultured child, a quack and novice will question the ability of Chief S.N. Obi. He is a man of experience, both on the field and boardroom. He is a retired customs officer and now an entrepreneur and a farmer. Also, he is a Knight of St. Mulumba.

According to this Nimo in Anambra State Chief, "I was from the same place with Engr. Charles Mbelede. As a matter of fact, it was in Lagos during the *Nimo Indigenes in Lagos* general meeting that we first met but I later realised we were related." "As members of Catholic Mission, we are both members and Knights of St. Mulumba. I am always humbled by his level of humility. His moral standard, love, care and respect for mankind – especially the less-privileged is very hard to come by these days. He listens to advice and whenever he offers you a piece of advice, you can be sure of positive result if you apply it. His discipline transcends his job and whenever you meet his wife and children, you will see a reflection of man who fears God."

Speaking further on Engr. Charles Mbelede, he said "Although, I have heard a lot about him before we finally met and when I eventually met him, I wasn't disappointed in what I have heard about him. Engr. Mbelede is a selfless human being who is ever

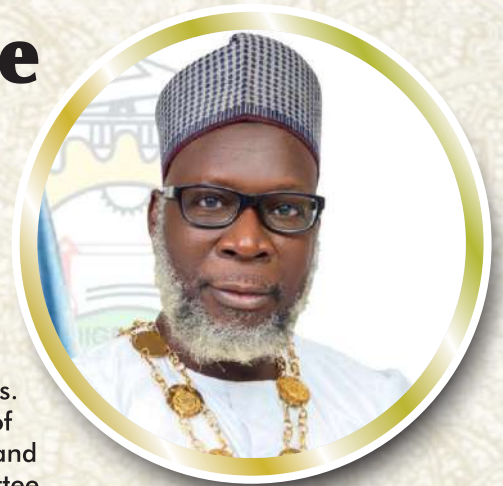
ready to give his best to any idea that will benefit humanity especially in the church. Before he became the Supreme Knight, he has been fully involved in various activities of the church without complaining. He is a devout Christian and committed Catholic who never ignored the virtues of Christianity. Anytime we are having a meeting or he is delivering a paper, his popular phrase is. 'Let's move on,' and we decided to use the phrase as his appellation by calling him Mr. Let's move on."

"Engr. Charles Mbelede is a wonderful brother and friend. We are very close and our children see themselves as siblings. For this award, I strongly believe he deserves it and I pray Almighty God will continue to replenish his knowledge in good health and sound mind." He concluded.



If you give Engr. Mbelede an assignment, you can go to sleep

Engr. Tasiu Sa'ad Gidari-Wudil
NSE President



Eagles must not be compared with parrots – they are born to soar higher in the sky. While parrots are satisfied with the cage and cracker, eagles do not feast on junks and remnants – they hunt fresh meals.

Engr. Tasiu Sa'ad Gidari-Wudil is an eagle among his mates. He set out on the journey to greatness early enough to make a considerable mark in life and in the field of Engineer. No wonder, he keeps hitting targets that naysayers dread.

Speaking to our correspondent on Engr. Charles Mbelede, Engr. Tasiu said, "Mbelede is an active member of NSE, and Nigerian

Institution of Electrical Engineers. He is the Divisional Chairman of Cost and Appraisal Engineers, and of Codes and Standard Committee. He has trained many young people and impacted on codes and standards of engineering in Nigeria. He is a resource person to the Standard Organization of Nigeria, and one of the most valuable engineers we have in the society."

On relationship and personality of Mbelede, Engr. Tasiu said, "We met at the NSE almost 30 years ago. He is friendly and thorough in whatever he does. If you give him an assignment, you can go to sleep. When I was in the civil service, a company brought his CV

as their staff, and I knew he wasn't. I inquired and discovered he was only consulting for them. He cross-checked with them, and his status was corrected. His firmness is his strong trait; once something is not correct, he will never bend his standard." Engr. Tasiu implored budding engineers to follow Mbelede on Twitter so as to learn a lot from his meritorious service to the development of the profession.



Charles is my brother; we are both from Nimo

High Chief Albert Joseph Chidozie Orizu

A stranger can march around the town like a soldier on war mission but the true son of the soil will always tread softly. It is not a surprise to see High Chief Albert Orizu handling the affairs of Nimo with ease; it is because a true indigene will not be part of chaos and disruption.

Chief Albert Orizu was the immediate Senior Partner/CEO of knight frank Nigeria where he retired meritoriously after

spending over 35 years in the organisation. Presently, he is the Founder/CEO of Orizu & Co. On his relationship with Engr. Mbelede he said, "Charles is my brother; we are both from Nimo. We have been together for a long time and throughout the years, I never found him wanting. He is a thoroughbred professional and a family man to the core. He is a genuine Role-model to the coming generation."

"Charles Mbelede is a devout Christian who spent his time, contacts and resources to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am the godfather of his

daughter, and he also sponsored the wedding of my son. There is a strong connection among our children and families. On the professional side, he has been very helpful in so many ways, I remember when we had electrical problems with the property we were managing for NITEL, he came to our rescue." "In the field of Electrical engineering, he is one of the best in Nigeria and beyond – and this is proven by the number of projects he has worked on and still standing." Orizu added.



My dad is incredibly hardworking and dedicated to providing for his family

Obinna Mbelede

The 5th child and 4th son of Dr. Charles Mbelede, Obinna is a lion's cub that will never bleat like a goat's kid.

In Obinna's word, "My father is my first role model, mentor and beacon of responsibility and diligence. Growing up with him was a balance of fun and discipline. He ensured we had good moral, godly character and sound education."

"My dad is incredibly hardworking and dedicated to providing for his family, so generous and humble. I will

never forget the rush and excitement I had as a kid whenever he took us out to buy video games."

"In his career, he has achieved multiple milestones and honours such as being listed as one of the top 50 engineers in the country by the Nigerian Society of Engineers. As a man of strong faith, he serves God by carrying out free building services for multiple churches across the country. He is also a revered member of the Knights of St. Mulumba and has contributed immensely to the project over the years." He said about Engr. Charles Mbelede's contribution to human

development.

Obinna admonished aspiring youths to emulate his dad's humility, approachability, diligence, focus, discipline, commitment to his work and family's wellbeing and his generosity.

In conclusion, Obinna said, "Congratulations Daddy! We are full of pride and joy for this astounding achievement of yours. You deserve this and more! May God perpetually endow you as you allow His will be done through you. Amen!"



My Dad is a Cheeful Giver

Victor Mbelede

Can we have your concise history?

Victor Mbelede, the last born child.

How is Dr. Mbelede to you?
He is my father.

How was your growing with him?

It was great, I learnt a lot of important things from him.

How can you describe him?
He is a God-fearing man, a cheerful giver, a great father and grandfather.

Can you recollect an experience you had while growing up with him that you cannot forget in a hurry?

When I was younger, I must have been between the ages of 5-7 around that time, he

would always buy biscuits and sweets for me on his way back from work.

In what ways would you say he has contributed to the development of his profession and humanity as a whole?

From the results of his projects, he has taken on difficult projects and come out with great solutions, he has also taken on a few non-profit projects which have helped benefit a good cause.

What do you think the younger ones can learn from his life?

Selflessness, he puts the needs of others before his, he is humble, generous and kind.



The good life I had as a child was not available to every child; it was only possible because of my father

Ikenna Mbelede

Gone are the days when the elephant and its calves cannot tusk at the same time but these days, all can tusk simultaneously. Engr. Ikenna Mbelede, an Electrical Engineer by profession, is the 4th child and the 2nd son of Engr. Dr. Charles Mbelede.

Ikenna said about his father, "My dad is a highly ethical man with honour and integrity. I had a wonderful childhood growing up under his roof. He was the superhero that worked very hard to make sure we turned out better than himself. He gave us the best education from primary to our Masters' levels. He was always taking us to Ikoyi Club every Sunday, and overseas for holiday. He also took us to Nimo, Anambra State every Christmas. The life I had as a child was not available to every child and was only possible because of the calibre of man that my father is."

Ikenna described his father as a hyper-successful and accomplished individual with good sense of direction and purpose.