



SONTANews

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... Visibility is key and we must strive to connect SONTA with institutions and agencies with a similar mandate of identifying, promoting, preserving and marketing culture for growth and sustainability. We are going to try to make incursions into the management hierarchies and boards of most if not all of the cultural institutions in Nigeria - Professor Gowon Ama Doki



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SONTA Laureate
Akayi

Wins African Writers
Award for
Playwriting 2022

Higher Education, Cultural and Creative Industries' Leaders

Bag SONTA Distinguished Leadership Awards



SONTA News is an annual publication of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). All articles, news reports, play/film reviews, picture stories, and updates should be forwarded by email to sontaeditor@gmail.com. Editor: Osakue Stevenson Omoera.



Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah,
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Abuja, Nigeria

SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award

Born on the 21st of December, 1962, Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah – a poet, scholar, critical thinker and recipient of numerous awards locally and internationally – holds a Bachelor of Arts degree

and a Master's degree in English from the University of Ilorin in 1988 and 1992 respectively. He obtained his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, and was subsequently a professor and chair of African Studies at Western Illinois University. The widely-read academic in African Oral Literature has written several books and poems earning numerous awards in the process. His academic success story began with the publication of his B.A thesis on "Dadakuada: The Trends in the Development of Ilorin Traditional Oral Poetry" in *Africa Notes* (3). It made him one of the few postgraduate students to be published in such a highly reputable Journal. His brilliant performance made the English Department of the University of Ilorin offer him a position in the department as a Graduate Assistant where he began his career as an academic in 1989.

Not done yet, Professor Na'Allah went a step further to undergo a Management Development Programme (MDP) at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, in June 2009, and an Institute of Educational Management (IEM) program in July 2010. Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah was appointed as the pioneer Vice-Chancellor, Kwara State University in 2009 where his wonderful performance and outstanding achievements earned him the rare privilege of serving again, in the same capacity, as Vice-Chancellor for another term of 5 years which he completed in 2019. He was appointed in 2019, and currently serving as the Vice-Chancellor, and Chief Executive of the University of Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, thereby making him the longest-serving Vice-Chancellor in Nigeria upon the completion of his tenure in 2024.

Prof. AbdulRasheed Na'Allah has authored and co-authored numerous books, including *Cultural Globalisation and Plurality: Africa and the New World* (AWP, 2011); *African Discourse in Islam, Oral Traditions, and Performance* (Routledge, 2010) and *Africanity, Islamicity, and Performativity: Identity in the House of Ilorin* (Bayreuth University African Studies Series, 2009). He also authored *Ahmadu Fulani: African Poetry* (AWP, 2004); *Ilorin: Praise Poetry* (Bookcraft, 2011), and *Almajiri: A New African Poetry* (AWP, 2001). His publications also include, *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare* (2003) and *Ogoni's Agonies: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crisis in Nigeria* (AWP, 1998). He co-edited (with Harry Garuba and Uzoma Esonwanne), *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature. Special Issue: The Short Century and After: Literature and Cultures in Africa and*

the Diaspora. 32.3-4 (2005); and also (with Harry Garuba and Uzoma Esonwanne), the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature. Special Issue: The Short Century and After: Literature and Cultures in Africa and the Diaspora* (2009).

Professor Na'Allah has been nominated for and received numerous awards and honours, including the University of Ilorin Alumni Association, Abuja Branch, Recognition Award 2013, University of Ilorin Alumni Association, National Branch, Achievements Award, 2012, Cathy O'neil Couga Award for Outstanding Leadership in National Diversity 2009, the Gold Key Recognition Award 1998, University of Alberta Student Union, 1998, the Graduate Student Service Award, GSA, University of Alberta, and The Alberta Heritage Charles S Noble Award for Student Leadership, 1998, the Province of Alberta, Canada, and the Black Achievements Award, Post-Secondary-Scholastic, 1998, the Black Achievement Awards Society of Alberta.

Others are Grant for Martin Luther King Jr. Poetry Anthology 2008-2009; Western Illinois University's Administrative Achievement Award 2008 – 2009 for achievements as Department Chair; Visiting lecturer's Committee Award for sponsoring IADDP lecture series, 2000 till date; Western Illinois University Centennial Honors College, teaching stipend 6/06; 45 thousand dollars funding from SSHRC; Canada, awarded to Uzoma Esonwanne, Abiola Irele and AbdulRasheed Na'Allah for digitalization of traditional African Oral forms, 2012; College of Arts and Science Outstanding Excellence in Multicultural Teaching award, 2006;

His Professional Affiliations include African Literature Association; African Studies Association; International Comparative Literature Association; Canadian Comparative Literature Association; Modern Languages Association; Performance Studies International and Association of Nigerian Authors.

The University don has had several public performances, readings and interviews including ALA 29th Annual Conference, Alexandria, Egypt, poetry performances in Yoruba and Hausa languages. 2003; University of British Columbia, David Lam Chair in Multicultural Education Series: "The African Voice: Poetry Performances from Almajiri." 2003; Vancouver International Writers Festival, Granville Island, BC, Canada, poetry readings and performances. 2002; and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Radio "The Arts Today", Interview.

Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah's recent and outstanding success cannot be separated from his achievements as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja, his aggressive drive and unrepentant commitment to infrastructural development, quality academic delivery, capacity and community inclusion has been viewed around the world as a world-class leadership style capable of positioning the university in its rightful place in the comity of the best Universities in the world.

With a vision to create a world-class university, Professor Na'Allah's selfless leadership style and the quest for change through innovation have placed the university on a pedestal far above other universities in Nigeria just as his notable scholarly and creative publications have contributed immensely to understanding Africans and the African identity. I salute one of the few higher education administrators with a radical approach to building a strong scholarship, and superior advancement in Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences. Professor Na'Allah is married and blessed with children.



SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award

Born in Kaduna to the family of Pa Bankole Runsewe from Ogun State, Otunba Olusegun Runsewe attended St. Michael Primary School, Kaduna before proceeding to Vohoeven Technical College Minna, now Government Technical College. He holds an MBA in Marketing from Edo State University; and Higher National Diploma in Management Studies from London School for Executives. He also has a Diploma in Public Relations from the London School of Management Studies and a Professional Certificate in Estate and Property Management from Kaduna Polytechnic.

Otunba Runsewe has remained a consistent phenomenon in the Media, Culture and Tourism Sectors in Nigeria in the last three decades. He worked as Marketing Manager at the New Nigerian Newspaper and rose to the position of General Manager at the organization. He also worked as Head of Public Relations (Media) at the National Theatre; Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, at Sports Weekly and was Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of National Network Newspapers. He was also the Media Coordinator, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2003, Abuja, Nigeria.

Otunba Runsewe was appointed as an Executive Director at the National Orientation Agency in 2000, a position he held until he was appointed as the Director-General of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) in August 2006. His tenure at the NTDC was a watershed in the development of the Tourism Sector in Nigeria. His aggressive Tourism marketing campaign, anchored on the catchphrase "Tourism is Life" gave the Nigerian Tourism Industry unprecedented national and international visibility. The tenure positioned Nigeria as one of the leading faces of tourism and a preferred destination in Africa. With consistent annual exhibitions at International Tourism Expositions like FITUR, Madrid Spain; ITB Berlin, Germany; Arabian Travel Market, Dubai; World Travel Market Oakland, London, etc., Nigeria, during Runsewe's tenure, began to seriously contend for the world's attention as a destination of preference. The era witnessed the harvest of commendation letters by the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation, including those from the World Travel Market, London and FITUR, Spain.

Otunba Runsewe was also the pioneer Chairman of the Abuja Carnival Planning Committee, the Carnival edition that has been adjudged by the international community to be the best organized since its inception. The



Otunba Olusegun RUNSEWE
DG NCAC

Nigerian Tourism Village, which he put together during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, was rated as one of its kind at the event.

Otunba Runsewe is a fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Chairman Nigerian Sports Writers Association; Chairman of, Board of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism; Fellow, of the Institute of Management (FIM); Fellow of, Association of Business Executives, (FABE), London; President, World Crafts Council, African Region and Chairman, Africa China Culture and Arts Exchange Society.

A detribalized Nigerian, he holds several titles from different parts of the country, including Danbura Kabi, Kebbi State; Obiagu one of Igbo Ukwu, Anambra State, amongst others. He is currently the Director-General of the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), a position he assumed in 2017. The vision of the Council under his leadership is to reposition culture as a tool for national unity, peace and social integration as well as a machinery for stimulating rapid socio-economic growth and development. He has been pursuing this vision with total passion and utmost vigour.

SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award



**Ado Muhammed
YAHUZA**

Ado Muhammed Yahuza was born on the 2nd of October, 1961 in Kano City. Yahuza started his educational career at the School of Arabic Studies, Kano where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate and proceeded to the School of Preliminary Studies, Kano to obtain his GCE O' Level Certificate. He thereafter attended the School of Basic Studies in ABU Zaria where he obtained his IJMB. Determined to pursue his dreams, Yahuza went ahead to study History at the Prestigious Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and graduated as one of the two best students with a 2nd Class Upper Division. With his thirst for more knowledge, he proceeded to the University of Ibadan where he obtained a Master's Degree in History in 1990.

At ABU, Yahuza was a student activist with the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS). He was the Public Relations Officer of the defunct Youth Solidarity on Southern Africa (YOUSSA) and the Secretary General of the Movement for a Progressive Nigeria (MPN), a Marxist Student Movement. While at the University of Ibadan, Yahuza was the Congress Chairman of the Obafemi Awolowo Post Graduate Hall.

Ado Yahuza started his civil service career with the Kano State History and Culture Bureau (H.C.B) as a Research Officer II in 1987 and rose to a Senior Research Officer in 1990. His deep commitment to public service propelled him to leave the Kano State Civil Service for the Federal Civil Service where his intellectual pedigree would be better utilized. This took him to the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Iganmu, Lagos in 1991 where he started as a Senior Research Officer.

He was later posted to head the Kaduna State Zonal Office of NCAC and National Durbar Research Centre, Kaduna where he served till 2014. While in NCAC, Ado Yahuza rose through the ranks from Senior Research Officer to Director, Human Resources Management of the agency, which is considered one of the repositories of Nigerian culture. He was the Director, Human Resources Management from 2014 to September 2020 where he was responsible for the following:

Coordinating and supervising activities of the NCAC; Analyzing manpower needs of the NCAC; Formulating, executing and reviewing Human Resources and administrative policy matters in NCAC; Monitoring, evaluating labour and welfare matters in NCAC; among others;

As an astute cultural administrator, Ado Yahuza has served as: A member, Cultural Committee, OAU Trade Fair, Kaduna (1995); Chairman, Sub-Committee on Durbar, National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), Kaduna (2004); Member, Organizing Committee, Arewa House Exhibition titled "Northern Nigeria 1900-1996" (2011); Member Governing Board, National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR), (2014-2015) among others.

As an ardent believer in continuous improvement, Yahuza attended various pieces of training, workshops and conferences. They include:

National training workshop on "Cultural Administration in Nigeria, NIPSS, Kuru, Jos, (1997);

Workshop on "Cultural and Transformation of Rural Societies" by the Kaduna State Council for Arts and Culture, (1996); Management Retreat on "Cultural and National Development", National Teachers Institute, Kaduna; (2009); Seminar on Chinese Culture for Government Officials from Asia and African countries", Beijing, China, (2012); Educational Tour of Dubai to use Dubai Culture and Tourism Model to "Rebrand Culture and Tourism in Africa" the Nigerian Mission, (2018).

He was in South Africa to study their cultural tourism infrastructure in 2019.

Ado Yahuza's passion for cultural education motivated him to carry out research on: The Social and Economic Organization among the Maguzuwa in Kano in 1988; The Patter of Urbanization in Colonial Kano 1906-1960 (1990); Promoting Tourism in Nigeria: Durbar as a viable Tourism Product (2009); The Role of Cultural Tourism in the Socio-economic Development of Nigeria (2008); Culture, Youths and Societal

Development (2008).

He has co-edited three culture research-based publications between 2021 and 2022.

Being an astute scholar with integrity and an accomplished manager of human resources, Yahuza has received the following awards: Certificate of Merit – History and Culture Bureau, Kano (1989); Letter of Commendation –National Council for Arts and Culture (1994); Productivity Awards as Best Head of Zonal Office, NCAC (1999); NCAC CEO's Most Outstanding Staff Award (2012).

Yahuza's professional competence and enviable track record earned him his current position as Executive Secretary/CEO of the apex cultural training institute in Nigeria; the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO).

As Executive Secretary of NICO, Ado Muhammed Yahuza is responsible for; The overall implementation and supervision of the functions of the Institute; Ensures prudent financial management of the Institute following the financial regulations and extent rules; Providing competent leadership in cultural matters including research and as a focal government agency for UNESCO in Nigeria; Promoting public enlightenment of the various facets of Nigeria's culture; Building up personnel and materials for innovative study and development of Nigeria's culture and history; Promoting Nigeria's cultural image; and Sponsor and undertake research into all aspects of Nigeria's arts and culture.



F a c e s o f **2022 SONTA** *Lifetime Achievement* *awardees*





Prof. Tunji Azeez
Lifetime Achievement Award

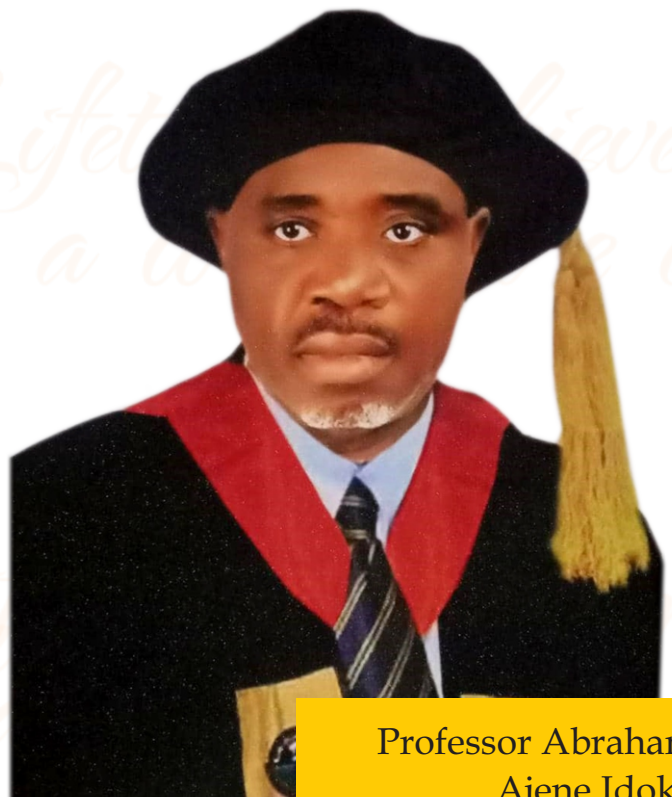
Tunji Azeez, is a Professor of Theatre, Film and Cultural Studies, co-founder and former Acting Head, Department of Theatre Arts and Music, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria. He has a B.A (Hons.) in Dramatic Arts from Obafemi Awolowo University with specialization in scriptwriting and directing and M.A and PhD in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan. He is a versatile writer, content developer and director whose feet stride the stage, screen, and radio. Some of the organisations he has consulted, written or developed contents for include, BBC Media Action, Flints Production, M-Net Africa Magic Original, 32 FM, Voices for Change, Goldmyne Productions, Centre Stage Productions, Media Concepts International Studios, SMAT Media, (producers of MTV Shuga 5 & 6) Aardschap Foundation, Netherlands and, the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) and many others.

As a scholar-artist, he is one of the few people who combine theory with practice. This has earned him invitation to give talks at fora with industry players. He has also served as a resource person to young artists and budding filmmakers. Through his troupe, Optimom Arts Konsotiom (OAK) he trained many young people who are today major names in Nigeria's entertainment industry.

He has published extensively on film, theatre, gender, cultural studies, war studies and, development communications both locally and internationally. His latest co-edited work, *Inside Nollywood: Issues and Perspectives on Nigerian*

Cinema is a major contribution to scholarship on the Nigerian film industry. He is a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), fellow of the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), Fellow, Institute of Policy Management Development, Vice President, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) the umbrella body of all theatre, film and media scholars in Nigeria and winner of several research and travel grants.

He is currently consulting for KAP Film and Television Academy as Head of School. His vision is to see the school become the destination of choice for anyone seeking training in the various art of film and television production.



**Professor Abraham
Ajene Idoko**
Lifetime Achievement Award

Born on the 20th day of April, 1967, in Otukpo, Benue State, Professor Abraham Ajene Idoko has been a teacher of Theatre Arts for about thirty years now. After his Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts at the University of Jos where he studied from 1988 to 1991 and graduated with a Second Class Upper Division, Prof. Idoko proceeded on the mandatory National Youth Service scheme in Benin City, Edo State and would immediately after the service year pick up a lecturing appointment with the Benue State College of Education, Oju in 1993. Professor

Abraham Ajene Idoko also studied for a Master of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts at the University of Jos between 1997 and 1998. In 2012, Prof. Idoko climaxed his educational pursuits with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Theatre for Development at the Benue State University, Makurdi.

After lecturing for about eight years at the College of Education, Oju, Abraham Ajene Idoko switched over to the Benue State University, Makurdi in 2001 as an Assistant Lecturer. With passion and dedication to duty coupled with high level academic productivity and excellent community service, the Governing Council of Benue State University, Makurdi was convinced to appoint him a Professor of Theatre for Development on the 1st October, 2019.

In his period of service to Benue State University, Abraham Idoko has offered stellar services to the University in the following capacities:

- i. Examinations Officer, Department of Theatre Arts; 2002 – 2005
- ii. Board Secretary, Department of Theatre Arts; 2005 – 2006
- iii. Staff Advisor, Department of Theatre Arts; 2007 – 2011
- iv. Coordinator of Sports, Benue State University; 2016 – 2020
- v. The Head, Department of Theatre Arts; 2020 to date

Currently serving in his second term as Head, Department of Theatre Arts, Prof. Idoko's superb service and commitment to Theatre Practice and Theatre for Development has remained solid. He has organized and facilitated over ten community theatre workshops across various Local Government Areas in Benue State. Prof. Idoko has also directed many plays, and particular mention must be made of his role as Artistic Director for the Command Performance of *Onugbo Mi'Oko* in honour of Prof. Shamsudeen O. O. Amali by the Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi, in February 2004, and Artistic Director of the same production during the meeting of Librarians of Federal Universities in Nigeria at the University of Ilorin in May, 2004. Prof. Idoko has also created several improvisations and workshop plays amongst which two plays are published, namely *Reflections in the River and Ogbuloko* (2011).

Professor Abraham Ajene Idoko has contributed over forty journal articles and book chapters in both onshore and offshore publications. He has over a hundred undergraduate and postgraduate supervisions combined. He has also served as External Examiner at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels. Prof. Idoko is a member of several societies spanning across professional, faith-based and community based associations. He is married with children and enjoys football, music and the company of friends.

Rasheedah Aliyu Liman (Ph.D) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Her research interests include; Stage directing, Performance studies, Theatre for Development, Development communication and Playwriting. Her most recent published plays are titled; *Hustlers* (2018) and *Heart of a Woman* (2020). Born on the 29th of December 1978, Rasheedah Aliyu Liman attended both her primary and secondary school education in Kaduna state where she excelled and begin her leadership roles. She was the head girl and best graduating pupil (Kargi Road Primary School) 1989 and the assistant head girl and second best student (Labayi International school Kaduna) 1995. She proceeded to Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, where she studied Drama from 1997 to 2001. As an undergraduate student, she distinguished herself academically and was nominated for leadership roles in most undergraduate activities both at the State and National



Rasheedah Aliyu Liman (Ph.D)
Lifetime Achievement Award

levels. She served as assistant President of the Student leadership of Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ELA) between 2000 and 2001. As a Youth Corp member in Adamawa State, she was a Quarter Guard in camp and the director of the State Drama group, winning the NYSC Director's Prize in Drama and Creativity. She taught English Literature for two years at the Demonstration Secondary School Zaria before proceeding for her Master degree in 2005. She was employed as a graduate assistant in the Department while undergoing her Master degree in the same year.

Dr Liman earned her Master of Arts degree in Theatre and Performing Arts in 2007 from the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. She received a Fulbright Scholarship that enabled her to proceed to Michigan State University in the United States, where she studied under the scholarship of some of the most renowned scholars in New Media and Telecommunication. Dr Liman earned her Ph.D. in Development Communication 2014. She rose steadily through the ranks to the rank of Associate Professor in 2019. She has taught in the Department for 17 years and supervised numerous research projects and productions at the undergraduate, Master and Ph.D. levels. Dr Liman has over 30 research papers in reputable local and international journals. She has to her credit over 40 play productions, which she has directed, served as assistant Director or coordinated. She is the Chief Editor of MUKABALA (Journal of Performing Arts and Culture). She has served in numerous positions and has carried out several community services particularly in Kaduna and Zamfara states. She has also mentored so many young academics and students who see her as a role model. Dr Liman has served as Internal and External examiner to Federal Universities, State Universities and Colleges of Education.

She is the coordinator of the Annual Black History Month commemoration in conjunction with the United States Embassy Abuja, Nigeria. A research and project

facilitator/resource person for the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), she has served as a resource person for the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) and also an adjudicator for the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Zonal Drama Competition. She is the Theatre for Development resource person for the Isa Wali Development Initiative. She has served and is still serving on the board of several University Committees, some of which include; The Ahmadu Bello University Electoral Committee, University MacArthur Foundation Board, Directorate of University Advancement Board, the University Gender Policy Unit (Board Secretary), Faculty of Arts Electoral Committee, the University Examination Regulation Committee, the University IRB (Human Subject) Committee etc.

Dr Rasheedah Aliyu Liman is a Fulbright scholar and the National Treasurer Fulbright Association of Nigeria (FAAN). She is an American Council of Learned Scholar (ACLS) African Humanities Fellow. A British Council Festival Management Awardee, the German, Heidelberg Spring Academy Scholarship Awardee, a Department of State Alumni Thematic International Exchange awardee (Alumni TIES). Dr Liman belongs to several academic organizations such as; member, Society of Nigerian Artists (SONTA), African Theatre Association (AFTA), Member, International Society for Oral Literature of Africa (ISOLA), Member, International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR), Member, International Communication Association (ICA), Member, American Studies Association of Nigeria (ASAN), Member, African Studies Association (ASA), Member, Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), member, zonal coordinator Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ). Dr Rasheedah Aliyu Liman is the current Head of Department, Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria and the lead researcher of Centre of Excellence on Development Communication in the same institution. She is married to Professor Abubakar Aliyu Liman and they are blessed with children.



Ngozi Udengwu
Lifetime Achievement Award

Ngozi Udengwu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka where she teaches courses and supervises students' research projects at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She has travelled widely presenting papers at conferences in countries such as USA, the UK, Sweden, South Korea, India, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, and Tanzania. She has to her credit over thirty-six publications including articles in mainline journals, Chapters in mainline books, as well as a book. She is the author of the book, *Contemporary Nigerian Female Playwrights: A Study in Ideology and Themes*, which was published in Germany. The book is a major contribution to Nigerian Dramatic Criticism, which discovered five new female playwrights and their plays, in addition to the two pioneer female playwrights who have been studied over some decades. The book which is based on her PhD thesis on female playwrights in Nigeria, discovered, documented, and analyzed the contributions of women to drama and theatre in Nigeria. She is currently working on a book titled "Women in the Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria: The Untold Story" based on her post-Doctoral research under the African Humanities Program (AHP). She is a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS).

Membership of Professional Bodies

Ngozi Udengwu is a registered member of many professional association including International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), African Theatre Association (AfTA),

International Literacy Association (ILA),
Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)
(Treasurer ,
Reading Association of Nigeria
Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA)
ARTerial Network

Appointments

1. (2016) Visiting Senior Lecturer, at the Dept of Creative Arts, University of Lagos.
2. (2017) Appointed a Member of the Accreditation Team for Federal College of Education, (Special), Oyo by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)
3. (October – December 2017) Scholar in Residence at the Dept of Creative Arts, College of the Humanities (CoHu), University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
4. (2018) Appointed a Member of the three-man Panel of Judges for Nigerian Prize for Literature (Drama) and Literary Criticism, by Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas (NLNG).
5. (2018 – 2020) Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
6. (2020 – 2022) Head, Dept of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
7. Invited as a Guest Lecturer to deliver a titled "The Challenges Facing the Humanities in the twenty-First Century: Theatre, Research, Performance." Presented in the Dept of Creative Arts, College of the Humanities (CoHu), University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on 5th December 2017.

Resource Person at Workshops

Ngozi Udengwu has worked as a resource person at several workshops including,
A 3-Day Training for teachers of CFSI/AGEI Schools on teaching of reading, production of reading materials and observation of silent reading. Venue: Echara Community Primary School, Ezza East Local Government Area, Ebonyi State.
Sponsors: UNICEF and Ebonyi State Primary Education Board (SPEB)
Date: 3rd – 5th December, 2003 Resource Person

UNICEF assisted Training Workshop for desk officers and teachers from 40 focus schools on Silent Reading and Balanced Literacy/Making Literature come alive in the Classroom.
Venue: People's Club, Abakiliki

Sponsors: RAN/UNICEF/UNESCO/SPEB
Date: 31st May – 4th June, 2005. Resource Person

A 2-day workshop on “Reading Proficiency” for Primary and Secondary school teachers in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Venue: St Cyprian's Special Science School, Nsukka
Sponsors Enugu State NUT/Longman Publishers
Dates: 17 and 18 July, 2007. Resource Person

Membership of Some Professional Societies

Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA).....National Treasurer (2006 – 2009)

Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN).....Vice President (Enugu State Chapter)

Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA).....Member

International Literacy Association (ILA).....Member

African Theatre Association (AfTA).....Member

International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR)..Member

African Theatre and Performance Working GroupMember

Nigeria Association of University Women (NAUW) (Asst Secretary, University of Nigeria, Nsukka chapter)

Arterial Network, Nigeria Chapter (National Vice President)

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
Save our Children Project.....National PRO

Service on Committees in the University

Departmental Committees

Production/Rehearsal Timetable Committee (chair)

Welfare Committee (chair)

Curriculum Committee (Member)

Productions Committee (Member)

Scholarship Committee (Member)

Coordinator, Postgraduate Programme in the Department

Staff Adviser, Theatre and Film Studies Students Association

Coordinator Undergraduate Research Projects in Theatre and Film Studies

Coordinator, Combined Arts Students Association (CASA) 2018 -2020.

Faculty Committees

a. Faculty of Arts Students Affairs Committee (Secretary)

b. Save/Preserve Faculty of Arts Complex Committee (Member)

c. Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee (Member)

d. Faculty of Arts Scholarship Committee (Member)

e. Faculty of Arts Welfare Committee (Member)

f. Faculty of Arts Welfare Committee (Chair)

g. Faculty of Arts Impact Factor Verification Committee (Secretary)

University Committees

a. Faculty Senate Entrance Board (Member)

b. Senate Ceremonial Sub-Committee on Drama/Music (member)

c. Servicom Guild

d. Member of the University of Nigeria Senate 2020 – 2022.

Besides her teaching and research, Udengwu has passion for working in the community for the necessary mutual interaction between the university and the world outside the ivory tower for the benefit of both. In this regard, she has developed a school drama outreach in which she directs secondary school play texts using undergraduates to perform in Secondary Schools. The aim is not only to enhance students' interpretation and understanding of the play texts but also to improve reading and literacy among youths and revive dramatic activities in schools.

Her dream is to contribute to literacy development through a combination of her skills as a theatre artist as well as a literacy and culture enthusiast. Harnessing these skills to advance grassroots literacy development and empowerment is her long-term plan.

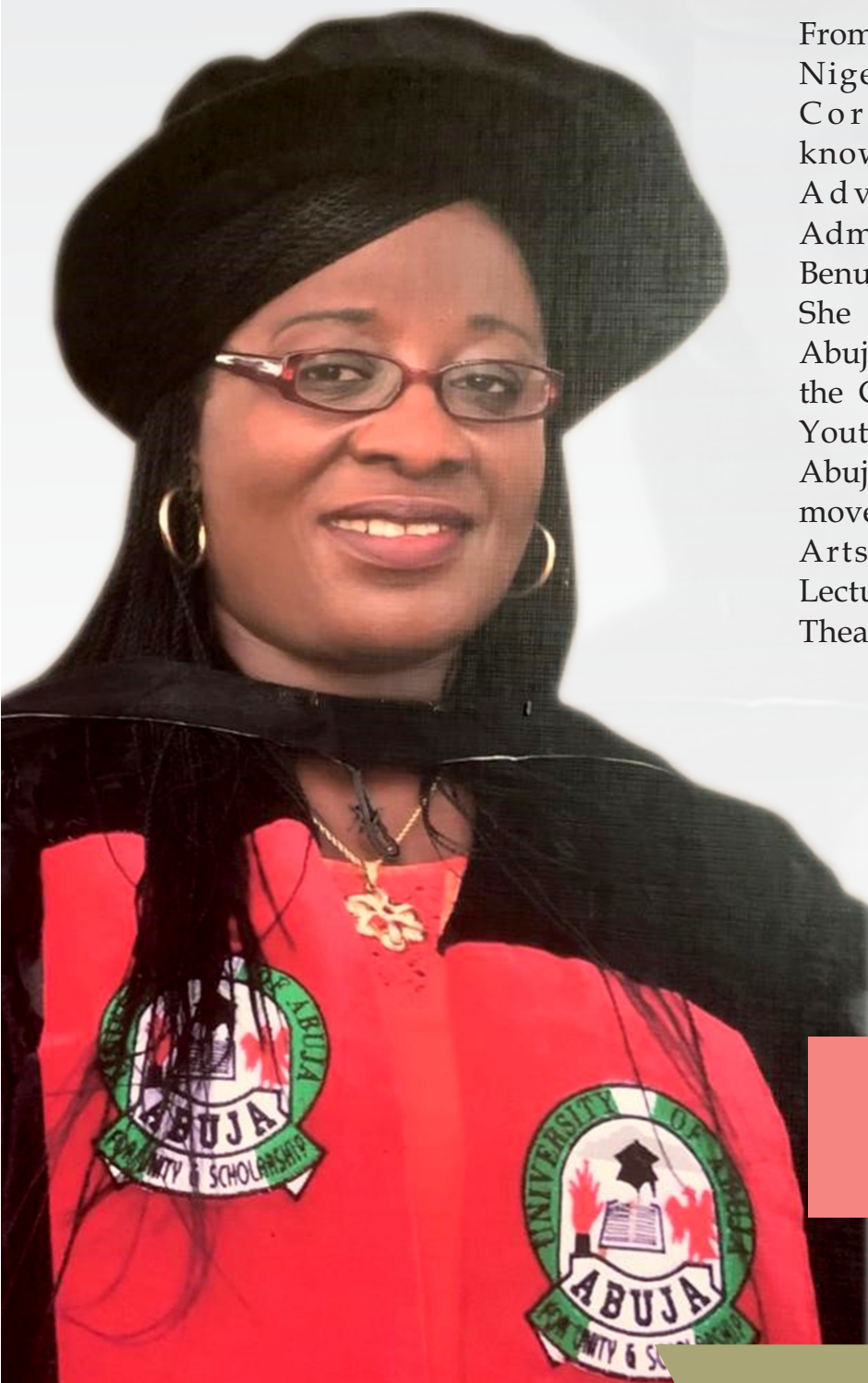


Lifetime Achievement Award

Roseline Yacim graduated from the University of Jos, Jos with a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Arts and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. The mandatory National Youth Service Corps was with the Lagos State Schools of Management Committee, Ikorodu, Lagos State.

Her working career started with the Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna, as an Administrative Officer after which *she* veered into the Insurance Industry and rose to the position of an Area Manager with Kapital Insurance Company.

From the private sector, she joined the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation. Her quest for knowledge made her acquire an Advance Diploma in Public Administration (ADPA) from the Benue State Polytechnic, Ugbokolo. She later joined the University of Abuja as a Programme Officer with the Centre for Security Studies and Youth Advancement, University of Abuja, Abuja. From the Centre, she moved Department of Theatre Arts. She is presently a Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Abuja.



**Dr. Roseline
Ande Yacim**

Alhaji Adedayo Thomas was appointed on March 30, 2017 by President Muhammadu Buhari as the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB). The National Film and Video Censors Board is the apex regulator of films and video works in Nigeria. Adedayo is a Journalist, Liberal Political and Economic Advocate, Theatre Artist/Critic and Philanthropist with strong belief in free market economy, peace and prosperity. He is the Executive Director/Publisher of African Liberty Organization for Development (ALOD) – a non-profit think-tank that strives to promote ideas and institutions of the free society in Africa. He is also the Africa Regional Director of Language of Liberty Institute, USA. At the Initiative for Public Policy Analysis (IPPA), he is the Director of Research and Operations. He has also worked at the International Press Centre (IPC) Ogba Lagos as the Production Editor of its international anti-corruption magazine. A regular guest speaker at over 50 universities spread across African continent on developmental and policy issues, he is also a board member of several nonprofit organizations including but not limited to Istanbul Network for Liberty, UK, Foundation for Economic Initiative and Development, Nigeria. As former student activist/leader at the Kwara State Polytechnic, University of Jos and Nigerian Institute of Journalism, he has dedicated all his efforts to serving humanity – preaching peace as a tool for development. In 2015/16 during the Transition Committee constituted by the Lagos State Government, Adedayo Thomas served as Head Committee of three departments (Poverty Eradication and Women Affairs, Health and Education) at Oshodi/Isolo Local Government Council. Prior to his appointment on March 2017 as the Executive Director of the National Film and Censors Board by President Muhammadu Buhari, he served as the Special Adviser to the Chief Executive Officer/Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). Adedayo has a B A (Theatre Arts) and Post Graduate Diploma in Public Relations from University of Jos and Nigerian Institute of Journalism respectively, a Diplomate of Cato University, USA in Philosophy, History, Jurisprudence, and Economics of Liberty and an MBA in Think -Tank Management from the Atlas Economic Research Foundation in Washington D.C. He also bagged a Master's degree in Development Studies from the Nigerian Defense Academy. Kaduna, Nigeria. He is currently pursuing his Doctoral Degree at the Benue State University. Aside from heading and carrying out extensive research work on several areas, Adedayo has undertaken many field research related to the provision of public services. He has written, presented and published several papers on economic development, theatre arts, conflict, good governance and democracy at national and international conferences. He co-authored -A letter from Jonathan Gullible based on the original novel, The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible by Ken Schoolland. He has published in both national and international print media.

As a core evangelist of a free society, Adedayo carries his messages to University students in English speaking African institutions in Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and a host of others. Mostly seen in the Nigerian Parliament in defense of sound policies and features in both local and international media. He published Victor Dugga's award winning play called A Bridge of Strings, Had I known and April 1421 by Tor J. Iorapuu , In Defense of Global Capitalism by Johan Norberg, Selected Essays on Political Economy by Frederic Bastiat, Twenty Myths about Markets by Tom G. Palmer, A Letter from Jonathan Gullible (a play based on the original novel, The



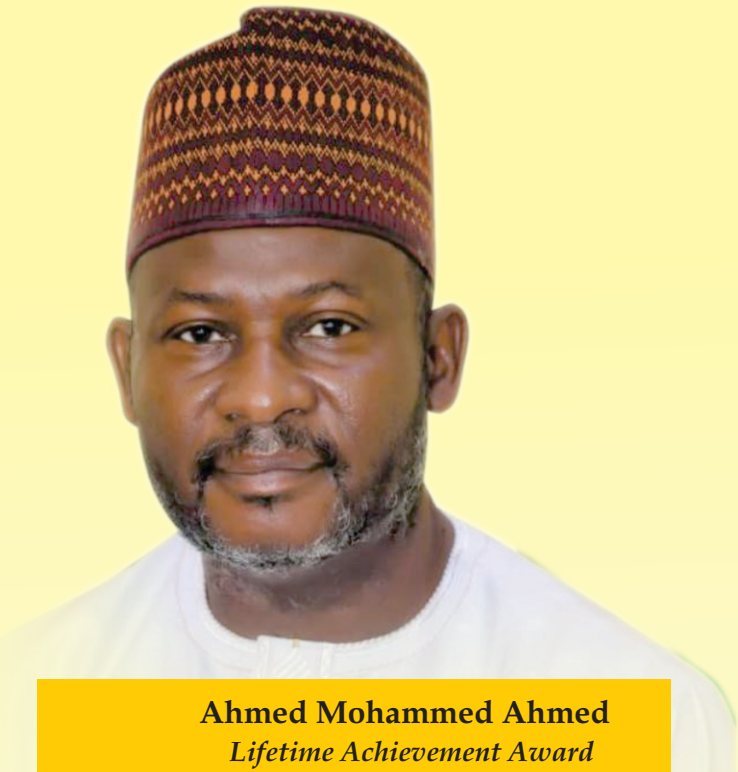
Alhaji Adedayo Thomas
Lifetime Achievement Award

Adventures of Jonathan Gullible by Ken Schoolland), Voices from Africa edited by George Ayittey and The African Version of The Morality of Capitalism titled The Free Markets and Justice. The African Version of after the Welfare State retitled The Bubble that Crashed the World Economy, and many others. As a philanthropist, Adedayo built and donated a Primary Health Care Centre (PHC) to Lagos State Government at the riverine areas of Shagbokoji under Amuwo Odofin Local Government in 2006. He has donated over 100,000 mosquito nets and anti-malarial drugs to various communities in Lagos State (2006-date) and has and still contributing immensely to several developmental programmes of Oshodi/ Isolo Local government Area of Lagos State. He represented the Local Government in Finland during Nigeria at 50 and facilitated the Sister-Cities collaboration with Oshodi Local Government and the Finland Government. He sponsored 25 Oshodi youths on Educational Seminars to Ghana, Tanzania, and South Africa. Only recently, he sourced and secured the donation of a container load of tertiary institution books to the newly constructed Oshodi library. He has distributed over 20000 CDs containing 100 textbooks to Lagos State University Students. In 2015, he commenced another yearly empowerment programme for the artisans to encourage SME's with distributions of fridges/freezers, hadicap wheelchairs, gas cooker and cylinder, microwaves, food items, cloths, fans, kitchen utensils, etc. The two editions held have empowered 200 households in Oshodi/Isolo Local Government Area council of Lagos State. Adedayo no doubt has turned around the film industry landscape in the country. Today Nollywood has continued to surpass all expectations and Nigerian films are challenging Hollywood movies in Nigerian cinemas. The proliferation of streaming platforms in the Nigerian space is another barometer to guage the performance of Nollywood. Fondly called DAYO ADUKE-THOMAS in the social circle and known as OBAMA by youths and political colleagues. Loves music and great ideas. He is happily married with children.

Ahmed holds a Master of Arts (MA) Degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Jos, and a Project Management certificate (PMD Pro 1). He served Bauchi State Government until his retirement in 2020 as a Director in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. While serving with Bauchi State Ministry of Information and Culture, and later Ministry of tourism and Culture, Ahmed has facilitated many productions and demonstrated skills in presenting cultural practices of Bauchi State through performing arts medium (drama, dance and dance-drama), especially towards packaging for Bauchi State Festival of Arts and Culture (BAFEST), National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST), Abuja Carnivals, and host of other independent productions. As a UNICEF trained "Theatre for Development" practitioner, Ahmed was able to build capacities of over 40 local theatre groups across northern States of Nigeria including Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Adamawa and Kano. The Hausa film industry, popularly known as Kannywood also benefited from his artistic expertise. Ahmed contributed to many cultural journals including African Women Drama and performances published in 2011.

Ahmed is also multi-disciplined as he ventured into public health with skills in Communication for Development where he contributed immensely to addressing maternal, newborn, child health and reproductive health in northern Nigeria when he was seconded to work with funded projects of USAID, DFID and UNICEF. In appreciation of his contribution to the health sector, Ahmed was nominated by his ministry to serve in the Governing Board of the Bauchi State Primary Healthcare Development Authority (2017 to June 2019), while the Governor also appointed him to serve in the Standing Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility for the Bauchi State Health Sector (May 2016 to June 2019). Ahmed also made a presentation at the APHA Annual Pre-Conference CBPHC Workshop in Boston, Massachusetts, USA in November, 2013 titled: Targeting Vulnerable Women and Children in Communities of Bauchi and Sokoto States, Nigeria for improved MNCH/RH/FP Delivery. He has written series of unpublished plays including *The Royal Ring*; *Sins of the Fathers*; *One with a Difference*; *A Drama of Life* and published articles in Nigeria's newspapers such as: *Quest for a New Vision*, *Man's Endless Journey*, UNICEF for World Posterity, and a number of poems (*Dying Ember*, *A Simple Dance*, *Wilted* et al). His specific areas of expertise include community engagement, theatre for development, social behaviour change communication, project management, human resource management, and evidence-based advocacy. His skills cuts across building capacities of various professionals (program managers and officers) of theatre practitioners, civil society organizations and media in evidence-based advocacy, community action cycle, theatre for development, behavior change and media design in line with Communication for Development strategy, resource mobilization, strategic and team building, social and community mobilization.

Ahmed is married with six (6) children. He also holds two (2) traditional titles of DANMALIKIN UBANDOMAN BAUCHI, and SARDAUNAN



ZANDAM. He is the substantive Artistic Director/Chief Executive Officer of the National Troupe of Nigeria and since taking over, he has driven so many initiatives, aimed at reviving and repositioning the Troupe for effective service delivery and the demonstration of Nigeria's advancing cultures. Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed has initiated many progressive projects within one year as Artistic Director/CEO, all of which are contributory to bringing the National Troupe of Nigeria back to mainstream. These includes:-

Two editions of National Troupe's Children's Creative Station in Bauchi and Abeokuta respectively; Staging of STRINGS – a folk musical drama in Lagos and Abuja;

International Cultural Exchange:-

- Dance Performance during the Nigeria Day at EXPO2020 Dubai UAE, and
- Dance Performance at MASA 2022 in Abidjan; National Audition to recruit Artistes into the National Troupe, held in Lagos and Abuja respectively which drew participants from across Nigeria.

Several artistic collaborations and supports for third party cultural and theatre projects

Personal Aggressive Campaign, marketing and networking to create visibility and to secure collaborations with relevant agencies and international organizations. Some of these are yielding desired results already.

Equipping the Communications unit and other departments of the National Troupe of Nigeria with modern tools and equipment.

Facilitating human capital development through training of staff at various levels.

Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed is a team player, an organized administrator and his management skill is very apt and workable. He has also initiated mutual working relationship with other sister parastatals in the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture.

He is well loved by the management team and staff of the National Troupe of Nigeria.



Professor Adakole John Oklobia (Post Humus)
Lifetime Achievement Award

Born on Friday June 9, 1967 in Kano City at the Nasarawa Maternity Hospital to the family of John and late Ogehi Oklobia, of Akpegede, Otukpo in present day Benue State of Nigeria. Adakole John Oklobia (Jnr) was the second of eight children of his parents. At the age of two and half, Adakole started kindergarten at a school in Kuru, in what is today Jos South Local Government area in Plateau State. He attended the famous Fatima Private School, Jos, Saint Catherine Primary School and Demonstration Primary School all in Makurdi for his primary education. Between 1978 and 1983, young Adakole, attended the Saint Michael's Secondary School, Aliade where he obtained the General Certificate of Education (GCE)- Ordinary level and proceeded to the Federal School of Arts and Science, Suleja, Niger State subsequently.

In 1985, he was admitted to study Theatre Arts, at the University of Jos, Plateau State from where he bagged the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. He capped his academic pursuit at the University of Abuja with a doctorate degree in Theatre Arts. Professor Oklobia loved the art and practice of theatre with and from the heart. While on National Youth Service in Maiduguri, Borno State, he served as the Resident Artistic/Public Relations Officer of a theatre outfit known as Space 2000 Productions. He deepened his knowledge in professional theatre practice by taking up positions at different times as Resident Artistic Coordinator, Artistic Director, Freelance Artiste, writer, producer and director with Heritage Productions Jos and the Gong Theatre Company, Abuja between 1992 and the year 2000.

His passion for teaching and academics saw him taking part-time lecturing positions at the Department of Mass Communication, Centre for Continuing Education, University of Jos, and Centre

for Distance Learning and Continuing Education, University of Abuja at different times. The young and energetic Adakole, between 2005 and 2007, served as a Superintendent of Narcotics, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, (NDLEA). In 2007, the University of Abuja engaged him as a full-time lecturer. Until his untimely demise he was a professor of performance aesthetics and media arts at the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Abuja, Gwagwalada, FCT.

As a Theatre and Media Scholar, Professor Oklobia's interest was broadly in the technical and design aspect of the theatre, popular culture, film aesthetics, television and radio. He also wrote and directed several plays and stage performances. One of his favourite works was the epic screen play on Queen Amina of Zauzzau. His scholarly articles and research works are published in several peer-reviewed journals across the globe. He commands chapters in numerous books as well as other volumes he co-authored, edited and co-edited. Furthermore, numerous undergraduate and post graduate students have successfully undergone tutelage under Professor Oklobia, leading to several stage and screen productions as well as scholarly research outcomes. Adakole is a member of many academic and professional bodies such as the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), English Academy of Southern Africa (EASA), Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA), Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN), African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) among others.

MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE

Professor Oklobia got married to his school-days heartthrob, Joan Oklobia (Nee Anigbogu) on 3rd August 2002. That union was blessed with four precious children. However, with the sudden passing of Joan in 2008, Adakole became a father and mother rolled into one thus filling the motherly gap the death of his beloved wife had left. Single-handedly but effectively, he played this new role for about a decade until his last child left home for secondary school. God comforted him and the children in 2018, when he got married to Lawre Longi-Grey. Lawre and Adakole are famed to be practically inseparable as the entire university community sees them together round the clock. A devout member of the University of Abuja Catholic Chaplaincy community as well as a committed member of the Police Community Relations Committee in Gwagwalada Division, Professor Oklobia, was a man alive to his duties in serving God, his immediate community and humanity.

Many who have come to know and associate with Professor Oklobia, will always attest to the fact that there was no dull moment with him. He carried with him an infectious joyous aura but yet maintained the candour needed to get all serious matters effectively addressed. His students call him the accessible, approachable, compassionate and erudite teacher and scholar while his classmates over the years and across the various levels of academic pursuit would acknowledge his commitment to true friendship,

promotion of peace, harmony, equity, fairness and justice among men. To his immediate and extended family, he remains an epitome of fatherhood, a complete gentleman, a selfless son, brother, uncle, cousin and nephew who is fiercely loyal to family and friends.

OUR CONSOLATION

Though Professor Adakole John Oklobia, left us too early and without saying good bye, we take solace in the fact that he lived a fulfilled life. He was able to accomplish significantly most of the goals he had set for himself particularly in his career as an academic. His promotion to the rank of a Professor recently was the icing on the cake of his career as a university don. That he did not live long enough to relish the joys of accomplishing such feat and to further contribute to the scholarly space and to humanity leaves a great pain in its wake. However, we remain grateful to God for the opportunity He gave us to cross parts, live, associate, love, explore and accomplish many things with him. As family, the best way to honour Professor Adakole John Oklobia, is simply to keep his legacies on. This we are committed to doing trusting in the ever present and sufficient grace of God. As we are taught by the holy book, we are waiting in joyful anticipation of that time when we will once again reunite at the Master's feet.

Until then, Good Night, Prof!



AE-FUNAI's
Theatre Arts Department

Gets Nominations at the
Bayelsa International
Film Festival



...Dr. Dan is something else. However, Tara herself has an internal conflict of laziness, which thereto makes her vulnerable to the abusive lecturer to devour. Hence, Tara has always been a victim of herself before being a victim of another...

Tara's Diary, a musical feature film produced by Theatre Arts Department, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI), which subtly espouses the flaws of the victimized and the victimizer in sexual harassment among the youths especially in the academic environment has once again been nominated for an award at the Bayelsa International Film Festival which will be held from October 26th to 29th, 2022.

The Theatre Arts Department's Tara's Diary had won the best musical feature film at the Abuja International Film Festival in November 2021 and was also nominated for an award at the Coal City International Film Festival in March 2022.

Soon, the Department will be attending another international award ceremony for Tara's Diary's nomination wherein some cast and crew members of the film (who are staff and students of AE-FUNAI) were also nominated for awards in different categories.

The nominations are as follows;

1. Nomination for Best Director's Category: Charles Okwuowulu (HOD, Theatre Arts)
2. Nomination for Best Feature Film category-AMEH DENNIS AKOH (DVC Academic)
3. Nomination for Best Supporting Actor category-CHARLES EMOKPAE (staff)
4. Nomination for Best Actor category-ODOH KINGSLEY EMEKA (student)
5. Nomination for Best Actress category-CHIDERA FUASTINA (student)
6. Nomination for Best Supporting Actress category-CHINELO ASSUMPTA (student).

It did not stop there for Theatre Arts Department, AE-FUNAI as its 2019 feature film, The Lost Soul, and its documentary film on IMAPS were selected as good films to be premiered in the cinema during the festival.

On the student film category, "Memories are Bullets", a short film directed by Chinelo Cassandra, a third-year student of the Department was also nominated for the best student film at the Bayelsa International Film Festival.

Thankfully, AE-FUNAI Theatre Arts Department which hosted SONTA 2021 is reinvigorating the pace for film scholars.



Professor AbdulRasheed A. ADEOYE (SMN: 0033)

FELLOW OF SONTA (fsonta)

Professor AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye is a Nigerian constantly searching for knowledge and he takes delight in teaching others. He is a humble scholar with clear vision who always glows in the climate of truth, creativity and he is flexible while accommodating emerging perspectives and competing themes on Theatre Studies and the Performing Arts. As a patriotic citizen of Nigeria, he appreciates the place of quality education in the social process. A brief cultural mapping of Professor Adeoye's professional theatre practice has also shown that he represents the multiple images that can be found in the Nigerian multicultural setting.

He was born in the late 1960s to Mr. and Mrs. Musa Adeoye of Agbeye town in Odo-otin Local Government of Osun State. His Father is the scion of Ojomu dynasty of Agbeye while his Mother is a princess of Ahunloye ruling house of Okua, another agrarian and hybrid community in Odo-otin Local Government Area. He was formerly known as Rasheed Abiodun Musa and he changed his name on 12th June 2008 to AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye.

His primary education took place at Baptist Primary School, Kano, Nigeria between 1974 and 1980. Kano afforded him the opportunity to learn the best of Christian doctrines in School, and Islamic ethics at home and in the neighbourhood. He attended Agbeye Community High School, Agbeye for his secondary education between 1980 and 1985. Agbeye Community High School also prepared him for the prospects and challenges in literature and debating activities. He was taught the

history, culture, ethics, mores and cosmology of Yoruba people during festivals, marriage ceremonies and other social events in his town. He was the School's Social Prefect and he won the best student award in Literature. He read Performing Arts and he received the Senate prize for the best graduating student in Performing Arts at the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin of his set with Samuel Amao. He was at the University of Ibadan, from 1999 to 2007 for his Postgraduate Programmes. He led his set and obtained his M.A. Theatre Arts in year 2000. He also obtained his Ph.D. Theatre Arts in 2007 from the same University, specialising in Play Directing.

He started lecturing at the University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria in 1997. He has, however, been teaching Play Directing, Playwriting, Dramatic Literature and Criticism, Acting, Theatre History, Media Arts, Performance Theories and Theatre Practical/Workshop courses in the Performing Arts Department, University of Ilorin, Ilorin since 1999 to date. He has over 90 publications in revered local, national and international outlets. To access some of his publications, please visit: <http://scholar.google.com/citations?user=w1YhNCwAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>

In the last 10 years, he has contributed to the edition of three major Nigerian academic journals as Production and Assistant Editor. He edited *The Dramaturgy of a Theatre Sociologist: Festschrift in Honour of Ayò Akínwálé* in 2012 while he co-edited *Culture, Identity and Leadership in Nigeria*, a Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists' book with the former SONTA President, Emmanuel S. Dandaura in 2010 and *African Theatre: Studies in Theory and Criticism* with Ziky O. Kofoworola and Martin O. Owusu in 2017. Also, he has edited 15 volumes of *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts*, the official journal of the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. He was appointed to the rank of Professor of Performing Arts in 2015.

On the professional plane, Professor Adeoye has directed many plays in the American, Asian, European and African traditions. The recent ones are; Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Tewfik Al-Hakim's *Fate of a Cockroach* and Wale Ogunyemi's *Queen Amina of Zazzau*, Bode Sowande's *Tornadoes Full of Dreams*, Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*



and *Eda* by Duro Ladipo. He is a theatre director in the experimental school with a Midas touch. Thus, he has also directed numerous plays in the Ngugian, Fugardian, Rotimian, Irobian, Soyinkaerian, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and the Western theatre traditions. In the last six years, he has made a deliberate choice to be involved totally in the production of “the so called difficult plays.” These plays are; *Julius Caesar* (an European play) by William Shakespeare, *Umabatha* (a South African play) by Welcome Nsome, *The Mulatto* (an American play) by Langston Hughes, *Sakharam Binder* (an Indian play) by Viday Tendulkar, *Huilanji* (The Chalk Circle, a Chinese play) by Li Xindao and *Arabian Nights* (an Arabian play) by Ellen Johnston McHenry. He has served as national judge to Nigerian major festivals such as NAFEST, Abuja Carnivals and NYSC annual cultural events. He has served and still serving as External Examiner to some institutions in Nigeria while he has been privileged to assess some scholars into the professorial rank.



Professor Adeoye's Neo-alienation Theatre is a new prototype of Afro-Brechtianism in which the narrative, rewriting and experimentation of the Brechtian philosophical and performance dialectics are reinvented. The Neo-alienation Theatre is a reinvention of the ageless Bertolt Brecht's theatre and at the same time, it is a radical departure from it. We should not forget that the Brechtian theatre falls into the praise poetry of continuity, no magical thesis. Thus, the canonisation of the Brechtian theatre is because of its timelessness, romance with major global theatre styles, multiple but realistic dialectics of politics, eclecticism of social vision, potent aesthetics and multicultural flexibilities despite the numerous misbegotten notions on it. Therefore, his Neo-alienation Theatre is a dramaturgical conversation within the expanding border of the Postcolonial theatre. Its meaning is partly found in the Dramatic Theatre of Aristotle and Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre. It is also a syncretic African festival theatre of multiple rhythms and it has been valorised into twelve aesthetic projections.

His Inaugural Lecture entitled, *Poetics of Legislation and De-Legislation on Play Directing* was presented on 12th December, 2019 at the University of Ilorin. This Inaugural is about the main themes and tendencies of Play Directing, directorial styles and aesthetics, directors and the Postcolonial theatre. Indeed, the metaphors behind the poetics of legislation and de-legislation are examined in relation to his contributions to theatre scholarship in general and Play Directing in particular.

He belongs to the following professional and academic organisations; Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), National Association for the Promotion of Studies in Arts and Sciences (NAPSAS), International Federation of Translators (IFT), International Theatre Institute (ITI), African Association for Japanese Studies, Performance Philosophy Working Group, Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Association of Nigeria (ANFAAN), International Research and Development Institute, Committee for Relevant Arts (CORA), International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC) and others. From 2002 to 2015, he served SONTA as Public Relations Officer, Financial Secretary and Events Manager. Considering his humble contribution to professional theatre practice, he was also honoured with **Lifetime Achievement Award -Hsonta** by SONTA in 2013.

He has been privileged to serve, and still serving in various administrative and academic positions in the University of Ilorin. He was Ag. Head of Department of the Department of Performing Arts between 2012 and 2014, Postgraduate Coordinator, Level Adviser, Assistant Hall Master, Chairman, Credit Committee of Multipurpose Cooperative Academic Society; Faculty of Arts Representative on the Board of Education and Engineering, Final Year Project Coordinator, Staff Adviser to Man 'O' War, Performing Arts Students Association, Faculty of Arts Students Association, Chairman of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Ilorin Branch among others. He was again, the Head, Department of Performing Arts from 2016 to 2019; Dean, Faculty of Arts from 2019 to 2020, a member of the Governing Council from 2016 to 2020, Chairman of the Unilorin Ceremonials Committee from 2018 to 2022. He was also re-elected into Unilorin Governing Council in 2021.



Professor Ameh Dennis AKOH (SMN: 0045)

FELLOW OF SONTA (fsona)

Ameh Dennis Akoh was born to the family of late Mr Peter Obiora Akor and Mrs Sarah Akor on 16th June, 1970 in Iyano village in present day Ibaji Local Government of Kogi State. He had his early education in the village and later, Government Secondary School, Onyedega (1987) before proceeding to the then Cross River State School of Basic Studies, Akamkpa for his A/Level (1987-1989). He later attended the universities of Jos and Ibadan for his undergraduate and postgraduate studies which culminated in PhD in dramatic theory and criticism in 2006.

Between 1988 and 1999, Akoh taught in Community Secondary School, Iyano and Jinie College, Kaduna. He began his university teaching career from the University of Jos as an Assistant Lecturer in November, 2000. In June 2002, he joined the Kogi State University, Anyigba as Lecturer Grade II and rose to the rank of Senior Lecturer in October, 2007. In September 2009, he was appointed by the Osun State University as an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts where he was until July 2012 the Head of Department. In October, 2013, he was promoted professor of drama and critical theory of the university and in September, 2016 he transferred his service to the Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI).

Prof Akoh has held many administrative positions as well as rendered national and community services. These include:

- Head, Department of Fine and Applied Arts and Music (2017-2018), AE-FUNAI;
- Director, Research and Development (2018-2019), AE-FUNAI;
- Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies (2019-2020), AE-FUNAI;
- Acting Dean of Culture (2012-2013), Osun State University (UNIOSUN);
- Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Provost/Head of Campus, College of Humanities and Culture (2014-2015), UNIOSUN, Ikire Campus;
- Director, General Studies (2015-2016), UNIOSUN;

Head, Department of Languages and Linguistics (2010 - 2012), UNIOSUN;

Member, Research and Publications Committee, College of Humanities and Culture (2009 - 2016), UNIOSUN;

Member, Research Management Committee, UNIOSUN, 2011 - 2016;

Chairman, Ikire Ventures, UNIOSUN, 2009 - 2011;

National Treasurer, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), 2009-2013;

Editor, Nigeria Theatre Journal, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), 2013 - 2017;

National Vice- President (Programmes & Projects), Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), 2017-2021;

Ex-Officio Member, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), (2021 - date);

Sub-Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities (2006-2009), Kogi State University (KSU), Anyigba;

Member, Senate Committee on Examinations Results (2006 - 2009), KSU;

Chairman, Disciplinary Committee, Department of Theatre Arts & Mass

Communication (2006 - 2009), KSU;

- Faculty Representative, Committee on Infrastructure for Academic Work (2006 - 2009), KSU;

- Member, Curriculum Committee, Department of Theatre Arts & Mass

Communication (2002 - 2009) KSU;

Examination Officer, Dept. of Theatre Arts & Mass Communication (2005/2006 - 2007/2008 sessions), KSU;

Seminar Coordinator, Dept. of Theatre Arts & Mass Communication (2006 - 2009), KSU;

- Seminar Coordinator, Faculty of Arts & Humanities (2006 - 2008), KSU;

- Secretary, Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee (SSDC), Faculty of Arts & Humanities (2006), KSU;

Member, Disciplinary Committee on Examination Misconduct, Faculty of

& Humanities (2008 - 2009), KSU;

Interim Secretary, National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners

(NANTAP), Plateau State Chapter, 1996;

Artistic Director, Yobe State NYSC Performing Troupe, 1996/97 Service

Year;

External Examiner for undergraduate and postgraduate students to University of Ibadan, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, University of Uyo, University of Abuja, University of Port



Harcourt, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Benue State University and Redeemer's University, Ede.
Assessor for professorial positions to several Nigerian universities

Editorial Assignments undertaken include:

- Editor, Nigerian Theatre Journal, 2013 – 2017
- Co-Editor, African Nebula, Journal of the College of Humanities and Culture, Osun State University, Nigeria, 2009 – 2016.
- Co-Editor, College of Humanities and Culture Monograph Series, Osun State University, Nigeria, 2009 – 2016.
- Editor, Nigeria Journal of Indigenous Knowledge and Development (NJIKAD), 2008 – 2009
- Associate Editor, Anyigba Journal of Arts and Humanities (AJAH), 2007 – 2009.
- Member, Editorial Board, African Teacher, 2001 – 2005.
- Editorial Assistant, Humanity: Jos Journal of General Studies, 2001 – 2003.
- Reviewer to several local and international academic journals.

Honours, Awards and Distinctions

Nollywood Ambassador by Southeast Zone, Directors' Guild of Nigeria, 2021
Listed in The Year's Work in English Studies (YWES) Index of Critics (vol.88, Iss.1, 2009, pp. 1279-1307
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ywes/map020>)
Lifetime Achievement Award, SONTA, 2013 (HSONTA)
Fellow, Institute of Corporate Administration (FCAI), 2012
Most Supportive HOD Award by the English Studies Students Association (ENSSA), UNIOSUN, 2011.
Official (written) Commendation from the Vice Chancellor, KSU, 2008.
Best Lecturer Award by the Association of Theatre Arts Students, KSU, 2007 and 2008.
Yobe State NYSC Merit Award for Community Development, 1996/97 Service year.
Best Graduating Play Director, UNIJOS, 1995/96 session.
ATAS Best Play Director, UNIJOS, 1993/94 session.
Benue State Ministry of Education Best Graduating Student for Government Secondary School, Onyedega, 1986/87

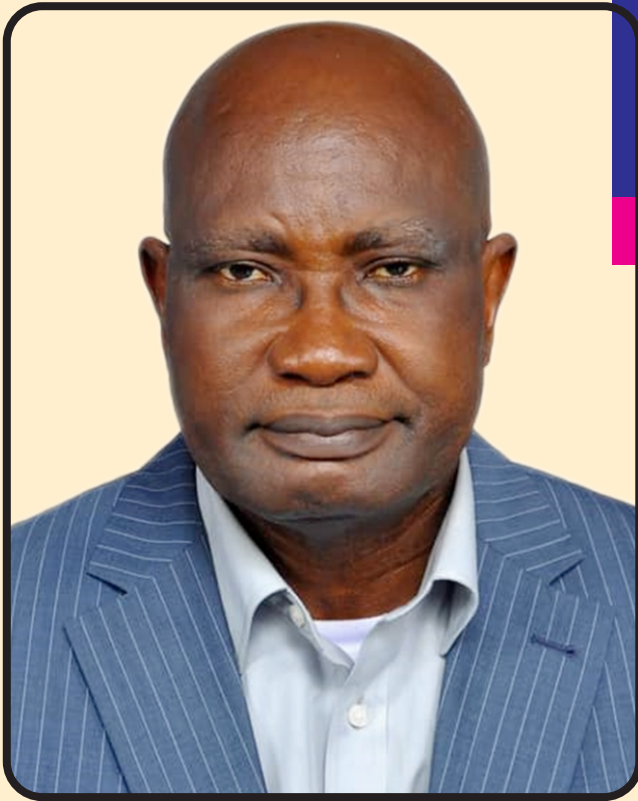
Prof. Akoh has also won several research and travel grants and fellowships, most important of which are:

Travel Grant by the European Research Council (ERC) Project "Developing Theatre" to the international conference on Theatre for Development (TfD): Historical and Institutional Perspectives, 16-20 March 2020 in Pretoria, South Africa
TETFund Institution-Based Research (IBR) grant, AE-FUNAI, 2019
AHP Postdoc Fellow, American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), 2014
Resident postdoc fellow, Rhodes University, South Africa, February-April, 2015
Nominated Visiting Scholar, University of Cape Town, South Africa, 2010.
Travel grant by the Indian Intercontinental and Cultural Association to the 7th International Writers Festival in Wardha, India, 26-28 November, 2012.
Research Assistants for:
ActionAid Nigeria grant for a research entitled: "Enhancing Democracy through Youth Involvement (Principal Investigator: Dr [now Professor] Tor Iorapuu), 2003
University of Jos Senate Research Grant for the project "Masquerades and Social Functions in the Middle-belt of Nigeria" (Principal Investigator: Dr D. E. Musa, 2000/2001)

He is a member of many local and international professional and learned societies, namely:

Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)
Nigeria Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA)
International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC)
International Theatre Institute (ITI)
Nigerian Society of Indigenous Knowledge and Development (NSIKAD)
American Biographical Institute (ABI)
International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS)
Centre for Research on Men and Masculinities (CROMM), Australia

Prof Akoh has over 60 publications in refereed local and international journals and books. For his contributions to literary criticism, he is listed in the Year's Work in English Studies (YWES) Index of Critics. His areas of research interest include critical theory, dramatic criticism, and sociology of literature, gender and cultural studies. Prof Akoh is currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of AE-FUNAI. He is also a pastor with the Deeper Life Bible Church. He is happily married to Faith and they have four children.



Professor Femi Okiremuette SHAKA (SMN: 0228)

FELLOW OF SONTA (fsonta)

Professor Femi Okiremuette Shaka studied at the Universities of Benin and Ibadan, respectively in Nigeria. In 1991, he won the prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship for his doctorate degree in Film Studies at the University of Warwick, Coventry, England. After his studies in the UK, he took up appointment at the University of Port Harcourt where he helped to pioneer the Film & TV Studies programme of the University. In 2001, he won the Fulbright Senior African Fellowship which enabled him to teach and conduct research at the Africana Studies Programme, New York University. The fruit of that one year residency was the publication of his 'magnum opus', *Modernity and the African Cinema: A Study in Colonialist Discourse, Post-Coloniality and Modern African Identities* (2004)

published by African World Press, Lawrenceville, New Jersey, USA. He is a widely read scholar whose articles are published in reputable international and local scholarly journals and a well-known strong advocate of the cinema as a tool for national development. In this respect, he has regularly mounted campaigns for the establishment of Departments of Film & TV Studies across the geopolitical zones of the country to help professionalize the teaching and practice of both sectors of the creative industries.

On Professor Shaka's return from academic sojourn to Nigeria, he took up appointment with the Department of Creative Arts, University of Port Harcourt, which unbundled to become Departments of Theatre Arts and Fine Arts and Design. Some years later, the name of the mother name department was changed to Department of Theatre and Film Studies. To make his mark in the new discipline of Film Studies, he had to design Master's and Doctoral courses within the Department of Theatre Arts to train the next batches of Film Scholars. It was an arduous task but by the grace of God, many of the first set of students are today Professors. They include Professor Barclays Ayakoroma, Professor Austin Akpuda and Professor Friday Nwafor. They all took their PhDs in Film Studies. He believes the next batch of Professors will arrive before he retires. He was a one-time Dean, Faculty of Humanities as well as member, Governing Council of the University of Port Harcourt.

In October 2009, he was appointed Nigeria's first Professor of Film Studies. Since then he has been a strong advocate for the promotion of the Nigerian film industry, popularly known worldwide as Nollywood, as a tool for national development. In this respect, he has regularly advocated for the establishment of Film Schools and Department of Film Studies in the six geopolitical zones of the country for the promotion of knowledge of filmmaking. In recognition of his contributions in the area of training and advocacy, the National Film Corporation, Jos, Plateau State, awarded him a Life Time Achievement Award, and appointed him Rector of the Nigerian Film Institute. Even though he declined the appointment for security reasons, during the course of the one week he spent as Rector, he was able to secure full accreditation for the professional courses run under the National Board of Technical Education. In recognition of his contributions to the training of manpower for the film industry, the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA) gave him a Life Time Achievement Award. He is a strong believer that if we worked together to develop the Cultural Creative Industries (CCIs), it will hopefully remain one of the key sectors of the Nigerian economy, and a major employer of Nigerian youths. He is happily married with children.



Patron of the Arts Award Professor Owunari Abraham **GEORGEWILL**

Professor Owunari Abraham Georgewill was born with his twin sibling, Hon. Justice Biobele Gerogewill JCA on May 15, 1965 in Abonnema, Akuku Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State. He attended Bishop Crowder Memorial School, Abonnema between 1970 and 1976 and obtained a Credit pass in the First School Leaving Certificate Examination, he then proceeded to the Nyemoni Grammar School also in Abonnema where he obtained his O'Level Certificate in 1981 with flying colours.

His quest for higher education, took him to the University of Port Harcourt to study Medicine. In 1987, he graduated with Second Class Honours, Upper Division (B.Med. Sc.) Degree in Pharmacology. His diligence earned him the nickname "Prof" as early as his second year of Undergraduate study. In 1990, he obtained the MBBS degree of the University of Port Harcourt, he did his Housemanship at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital before proceeding to Edo State for his one-year National Youth Service Corps scheme as Medical Officer at the Specialist Hospital, Ossiomo.

In 1993, he commenced Residency training as a Registrar in the Department of Internal Medicine, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH).

In 1994, on the leading of his teacher and mentor, Professor Reginald Nwairegbu Pawa Nwankwoala of blessed memory, he applied and was employed as a Lecturer II in the Department of Pharmacology, University of Port Harcourt after a successful interview. He rose through the ranks and was promoted Professor of Pharmacology on May 4, 2010 at age 44. He holds an M.Sc Degree in Pharmacology and the MD Degree of the University of Port Harcourt.

Professor Owunari Georgewill has served the Department of Pharmacology, the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, the College of Health Sciences and the University of Port Harcourt in various capacities: As Examination Officer in the Department of Pharmacology. He has served as Acting Head of Department, Pharmacology, he has served as acting Head of Department, Pharmacology and Associate Dean of Student Affairs Department, member, Hostel Maintenance Committee, Students Welfare Committee, Medical Officer, Team Uniport, Deputy Team Leader, Team Uniport at WAUG in Kumasi, Ghana and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He served as Board Chairman, UDPS Governing Board. In all these positions, he discharged his duties creditably.

Professor Owunari Georgewill is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, London and Institute of Industrial Administrators. He is also a Member, International Association of Medical Educators, USA, Society of Pediatric Oncologist, Italy, American Society of Neurochemistry, West African Society of Pharmacology, Nigerian Medical Association, Association of Specialist Medical Doctors in Academia, Indian Society of Pharmacology, The World Academy of Science, Research in Medicines Society, National Cancer Investigation Society, UK, World Health Workers Without Borders and West African Society of Toxicology.

Professor Georgewill is happily married to his lovely wife, Dr. Udeme Georgewill, a lecturer also in the Department of Pharmacology. He is blessed with four children, Barrister Melford, Tamunoemi, Tamunodein and Tamunobakam and a grandson, Master Tamunotariye Georgewill. He loves his wife, his twin sibling, Hon. Justice Biobele Georgewill, and his children and grandson dearly. He is a devoted

Christian of the Anglican Communion. He is a licensed Lay Reader and a Knight of St. Christopher.

In 2009, in recognition of his invaluable services to his community, he was installed a Chief in the Otaji Group of Houses of Abonnema Council of Chiefs.

Professor Owunari Abraham Georgewill, an erudite scholar, an academic colossus, and achiever per excellence, a Knight of St. Christopher, a lover of God, a loving husband, a doting father of four, a Justice of Peace, a traditional ruler, a Pharmacologist, a toxicologist par excellence, a great and unique set of twin, a humble and unassuming academic, is the 9th Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt.

He is a friend to the New York Academy of Medicine and the Australian Academy of Science. Professor Owunari Gerogewill has also served his community Abonnema, Rivers State, Professional Associations, Nigeria Medical Association and the West African Society of Pharmacology in various capacities. He was appointed Justice of Peace by the Rivers State Government in 2002. He has served as Assistant Secretary General NMA, Rivers State, Editorial Board member, Journal of the WASP, Secretary, Board of Governors, Comprehensive Secondary School, Abonnema and Executive Adviser on Health, Akuku-Toru Local Government Area, Rivers State.

In 2015, he served as Honourable Commissioner in Rivers State Commission of Enquiry. He is a Reviewer of Pharmacology articles for many journals. He is currently a member of the Editorial Board of the Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine. In 2010, Professor Georgewill was appointed Dean, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Niger Delta University, where he served creditably during his tour of duty there. In February 2012, he was elected Deputy Provost, College of health Sciences of the University

In 2013, he was voted into the Governing Council of the University of Port Harcourt as Congregation Representative where he served in various Committees of Council including the Finance and General Purpose Committee F&GPC. Professor Georgewill served as Chairman, Syndicate Session on Universal Basic Education (UBE) in National Education Summit, organized by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Abuja, 2008.

He served as member of Technical Committee for the Senate Committee of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Education between 2008 and 2009. He was a Resource person at the National Education Conference organized by the Senate Committee on Education in conjunction with SIGNIP promotions in Abuja in March 2010. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Industrial Administration of Nigeria.

Professor Georgewill's engagement in research activity began in 1987 and has culminated in the writing of a textbook in Pharmacology: "Reasoning in Drug Biology" and contribution of chapters to books on Pharmacology. He has over 50 original articles in peer-reviewed, local, regional and foreign indexed journals.

His research activities has taken him through the University of Texas in Houston, the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Newcastle upon Tyne UK, Cancer Research Centre, London, German Cancer Research Centre, Heidelberg, Germany, School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, Department of Pharmacology, University of Liverpool, New York Academy of Medicine, New York, Department of Pharmacology, University of Birmingham, Harvard Medical School, Boston, amongst others.

He has served as External Examiner in MBBS, M.Sc. and Ph.D examinations in many Universities in Nigeria. He was recently conferred with Personality Award of the Times Africa Magazine, 2022 this was in recognition of his impactful performance across various areas of academic, human capital development and infrastructural expansion in the University of Port Harcourt and beyond. Please receive with me the indefatigable 9th Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt – Professor Owunari Abraham Georgewill.



SONTA President Pays Courtesy Visit to UNIPOINT VC

The President of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, paid a courtesy visit to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Owunari Georgewill, on 10th November 2022. SONTA President's visit was to convey to the Vice-Chancellor the decision of SONTA to honour him with the Patron of the Arts Award for his enormous contribution to the growth and development of Theatre and Film Studies in

Nigeria, especially in the University of Port Harcourt. The Vice-Chancellor was elated over the nomination and promised to be in Abuja during the International Conference/ AGM of SONTA to receive the award. On the entourage of the President were the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Prof. John Yeseibo, Head of the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Prof. Faith Ken-Aminikpo, Prof. Emmanuel Emasealu, Prof. Innocent Ohiri, Prof. Ilami Krama, Prof. Benjamin Ejiofor and Dr. Sunday Edum, Assistant Secretary of SONTA.

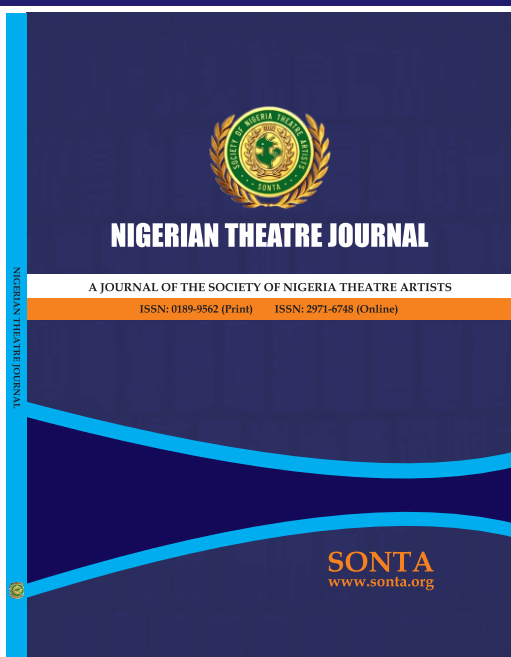


Photos from the performance of Wole Soyinka's Alapata Apata, Irene Salami's More Than Dancing and Zulu Sofola's Song of a Maiden at the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Bayero University Kano.

Photo splash of a stage performance at Igbinedion University, Okada



NTJ Gets Online ISSN and Listed by World Acclaimed Scholarly Indexers



In his acceptance speech at AE-FUNAI, President Gwon Ama Doki noted that going forward, “visibility is key and we must strive to connect SONTA with institutions and agencies with a similar mandate of identifying, promoting, preserving and marketing culture for growth and sustainability. We are going to try to make incursions into the management hierarchies and boards of most if not all of the cultural institutions in Nigeria.” One critical area the current SONTA EXCO has explored to achieve the deliverables regarding the above is the acquisition of an online ISSN for the Nigerian Theatre Journal: A Journal of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), aka, NTJ, which is the flagship periodical of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists and its indexation by world acclaimed scholarly databases. The NTJ Editor, Osakue Stevenson Omoera with the support of the President and other EXCO members, Past Editors and some SONTA members was able to procure the online ISSN through the National Library of Nigeria. Also, the NTJ has been listed by the Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliography, New York, Ulrich's Web, Society of African Journal Editors (SAJE), and Cite Factor, among others. According to Osakue Stevenson Omoera, discussions are ongoing to link NTJ with African Journal Online (AJOL), which is based in South Africa and other partnerships/relevant university websites to gain visibility and wider readership. A recent publication of the Times Higher Education University Rankings posits that standards/universities are now generally measured on 5 pillars, namely, teaching,

research, citations, industry income and internationalisation. We are proud to announce that these have been the driving forces behind NTJ, and its parent body, SONTA. We believe that by the foundation we are laying, the journal will only grow from strength to strength. SONTA is an organisation of Nigerian theatre, culture, media arts and film scholars/professionals. The bulk of its members is researching and teaching theatre, culture, film and media arts in Nigerian universities/polytechnics/monotechnics/colleges of education that offer theatre, media arts, film and cultural studies. NTJ is a peer-reviewed, professional association journal that is currently domiciled in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, where the editor resides. It is duly registered with the National Library of Nigeria with ISSN (Print): 0189-9562 and ISSN (Online): 2971-6748. It aims to publish themed articles from the SONTA Annual International Conference, which usually applies itself to current issues of national or international importance but is approached from the varied areas of theatre scholarship and practice. NTJ provides a platform for scholars, researchers and practitioners from all areas of theatre arts studies such as drama, dance, music, media arts, scenography, theatre technology, playwriting, costume and make-up, theatre for development (TfD), film, puppetry, etc., to publish their papers and research findings. It publishes only original research papers that have been presented at SONTA annual international conferences. The submitted papers should meet some criteria such as originality, unpublished or/ not submitted to any other journal. Suggested terms under which journal should be listed in the subject index: Theatre Arts, Film, Communication, Humanities, African Studies, Literature, Drama, Music, Dance, and Media Arts. Name(s) of the editor(s) and their period of editorship are Chris Nwamuo, 1983-1984; Iyorwuese Hagher, 1984-1987; no editor activity occasioned by challenges at SONTA, 1998-1991; Saint Gbilekaa, 1992-1994; no editor activity occasioned by challenges at SONTA, 1995-1998; Mabel Ewrierhoma, 1999-2001; Jenks Okwori 2001- 2004; Duro Oni, 2005-2006; no editor activity occasioned by challenges at SONTA, 2007-2008; Tor Iorapuu, 2009-2012; Denis Amen Akoh, 2013 -2017; Barclays F. Ayakoroma, 2017-2021; Osakue S. Omoera, 2021- present. SONTA journal editors are elected at SONTA elections every two years and are academics with proven record of research productivity in the field.

ODODO

BUILDING ON HIS GOOD FOUNDATION IN THE NATIONAL THEATRE

The Guardian

Guardian Arts | Arts National Theatre in Enduring Optimism

By Debo Olatimeji | 13 January 2022 | 2:43 am



Scene from *Strings*, one of the plays performed during the festival

The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, has said the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR) will not leave any stone unturned in providing an enabling environment for creative entrepreneurs to thrive, blossom and attain full potential.

But in this piece the focus will be on how some of the innovations he has brought to the administration of the National Theatre have advanced the course of theatre practice in Nigeria. We reported the last time on the first edition of the National Theatre festival of Unity which held barely three months after he assumed office on how "Healing the Nation" was aimed at providing much needed succour after the COVID-19 pandemic and the ENDSARS maladies. This festival has not been a one trick act as the second edition successfully held in 2021 between December 10-December 12, 2021 under the theme "Enduring Optimism".

Just like fine wine, the second edition was bigger, better and sweeter. It was a presentation, promotion of culture in many respects including the masquerade acts that thrilled the audience. Among other notable Nigerians in attendance were five heads of government agencies who took in the whole three days of events and performances. Another notable addition to the performance was the street carnival and the float which was used to herald the festival in the National Theatre environs. Before the festival, there was a press conference organized by the National Theatre and Ever Green Music Company. This was a first of its kind in the history of the National Theatre. It yielded immediate results as the two events that the presser addressed were huge successes. The other event was a music challenge that featured 50

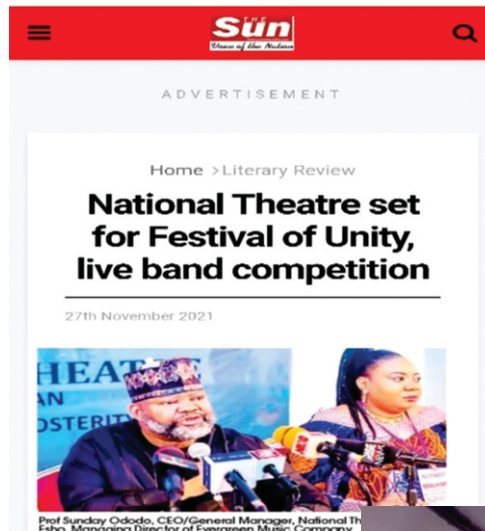
Since our last feature on the National Theatre and Professor Ododo, fsona, things have continued to progress at the iconic Headquarter of Culture in Nigeria under our erstwhile President (2013-2017).

Highlife bands in an overnight contest.

December 2021 was very busy as the National Theatre organized a 2day Workshop Training on "Marketing the National Theatre as World-class Event Centre and Entertainment Hub". This workshop was for Management staff and selected staff of the agency. The Day 2 of the Workshop titled "Interagency Engagement on National Theatre Approach to Wealth Creation" had heads of government agencies and the private sector in physical attendance and online. This was a continuation of the training strategy adopted early on in the administration of Prof Ododo. Earlier in the year, the National Theatre had organized a 1Day Technical Training for the members of the new department created in January of 2021.

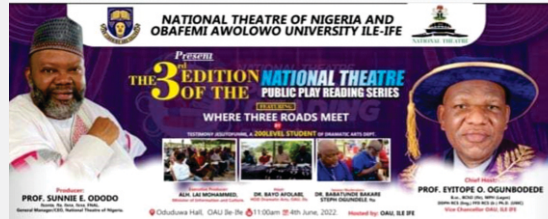
National Theatre Quarterly Play Reading of which we brought you reports last time out has now had two other editions in 2022. But unlike the first edition which held within the National Theatre, these latest editions have been outside the National Theatre. In what the GM/CEO described as "taking the National Theatre to Nigerians outside Lagos", the Play Reading was hosted by Nasarawa State University, Keffi. And the third edition was held in the ancient city of Ife inside the Obafemi Awolowo University. New Telegraph Newspaper report: *Day OAU Stood Still For 3rd National Theatre Play Reading*. There is no gainsaying that giving mobility to the National Theatre through the play reading is masterstroke as it has returned the 'national essence' of the edifice.

Very heart-warming news on the ongoing renovation of the National



Theatre. The constant inspections of the work show how much commitment the Federal Government, Central Bank and the Bankers' Committee have towards the timely completion of the National Theatre. With the pace of work so far, the November 14-17, 2022 United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Conference is attainable.

As this year marks the 60th birthday of Professor Sunday Enessi Ododo, fsonta, fta, fsna, fana, fnipr, FNAL, we end this piece with a message by President Buhari to him on the occasion:



PRESIDENT BUHARI GREETSS GM/CEO OF NATIONAL THEATRE, PROF. SUNDAY ENESSI ODODO AT 60

President Muhammadu Buhari shares in the joy of celebrating the 60th birthday of the General Manager/CEO of National Theatre, Prof. Sunday Enessi Ododo, on 21st October, 2022, congratulating the screenwriter, playwright, poet and renowned thespian on the milestone. The President rejoices with the Professor of Performance Aesthetics and Theatre Technology, his family, friends and professional colleagues on the occasion of his birthday, knowing that he has invested many years in the development of performance arts in the country, with evidences in the entertainment industry, which currently impacts on global screens and stage acts.

President Buhari affirms that the works of dramatists and theatre-makers, like Prof. Ododo, have significantly contributed to the understanding and acceptance of Nigeria across the world, creating identities, lifting and giving relevance to folklores and cultures, and pushing barriers on performances that have culminated in recognitions and awards.

The President believes the scholar's versatility and flexibility in teaching the theories and practice of theatre and other literary genres continue to inspire new interest in research on Nigerian and African culture, paving way for the younger generation to embrace theatre as participatory communication and platform for benchmarking and networking.

President Buhari applauds Prof. Ododo for his diligence in supervising the structural and operational turnaround of the National Theatre.

The President prays for the well-being of the award-winning director and actor, and that of his family.

Femi Adesina
Special Adviser to the President
(Media & Publicity)
October 20, 2022



Prof. Hyginus O. Ekwuazi, VC Dominican University



New Vice Chancellor of Dominican University, Ibadan, Prof. Hyginus Ekwuazi in this interview with NODEBECHI OKONKWO, OGUNDELE EMMANUEL and LOVETH UGWU, speaks on his plans to reposition the University to gain more social penetration and offer opportunities to students who are intelligent enough to absorb the kind of quality of holistic education the institution provides.

Are there developments in the University you think can be improved or changed?

The danger of such a question is, it will look as if I'm criticizing those who were here earlier. But, building an institution is a gradual process, and there is definitely room for improvement here and there. I want to say something, the challenge we have is among other things, a lack of social penetration and it's a problem that you don't really lay at the door of one person. We are all workers here, so, if I'm saying this was wrong, I'm also saying that we did not do certain things, so it is not specific. Even last year, this present set that has graduated, I remember going to the class and asking them, what is the mission and vision of Dominican University? Nobody knew it, I tried it down the line and the result was the same. I went to my HOD and told him there is something terribly wrong happening here. This Institution is bringing up students who don't even know the mission and vision of the place. How can they represent the brand? You saw what happened today?

Do you mean orientation for all the students?

Yes! That's where what happened today got its inspiration. I have taken it upon myself to start from this place, because, if you have to brand a place, it is both ways, -you're branding the products and also bonding the brand ambassadors. Those things for

me are the major things in any school. They become advocates of the brand. You see, when you're staying in a place and you get that type of answer, it means something is not alright and it means you're dealing with a lot of issues. And, the thing about branding again is, if I make this product and I don't brand it, there is already a brand. The brand is whatever people want to think about it because I've not directed what they should think about it, I've not created that emotional attachment to my product, which is what branding entails. We have a university that exists, but, has not been branded, which is negative branding, because, lack of branding in itself is branding of a type.

That is why you can come out and say Dominican University, and you will be asked where is it? We're dealing with a lack of social penetration as we call it. This brand has not penetrated in society, so why hasn't it, four years after? I want to make this University known within and outside of its location. You are a professor of film and broadcasting, are there plans towards making broadcasting rooted in this university with respect to a functional and accessible studio?

Yes! Let me tell you something about the studio, the media centre here is the best I have seen apart from the one in BUK, Bayero University in Kano. I came with three of my colleagues from Pan Atlantic University (PAU) when Father Ken Nkadi ran a workshop and they were amazed by the kind of equipment we have here. This university has the best and that's the advantage. As regards to broadcasting and film, there's a new course here. I took part in the unbundling of the mass communication programme. I designed one of the courses - film and multimedia. Father Akinwale, when he was here as the VC, agreed that the course would be taken, so we're going to have a department of film and multimedia, because, that's what NUC has approved for mass communication, for social sciences. What (NUC) approved for Arts is B.A. Film, whereas for Social Sciences it's B.Sc. Film and Multimedia and that's where I'm targeting that studio. The film media component is solid.

As I said, I designed the two courses for NUC and I'll tell you what I did, the template I used for the equipment that any university teaching film and multimedia should have, is the template that I got from here- Dominican University.

Besides academic concerns, do you have other plans for the university?

Oh yeah! Because it will not just be all bookwork. In what I presented to the Board of Trustees (BOT), I argued seriously. Part of my argument was that virtually nothing happens here except reading and teaching. But then, there should be more of those things that don't deal with reading and teaching. Do you know the lucky thing? The man who just came in here is the Provincial, meaning that he's the proprietor of the University. He said there must be

something other than teaching and learning in the place. He's from the US and he understands how these things work over there. So I'm answering – yes. I'm going to hold a meeting with the students' union executives on Monday and that is part of what we're going to discuss. What programmes do you have that we can buy into? So, we're also trying to create something that can bring the parents of the students in.

Are there other things you have in mind about repositioning the institution for the best?

Let me say this, nothing can happen if we don't carry the students along. Absolutely nothing. So, we cannot talk down on the students. It broke my heart when I discovered that eight of the students would not recommend here. That means that there's something missing. The point for me is that we cannot create that brand if we don't create ambassadors for that brand. So, I'm going to create the ambassadors. We'll have to buy into the vision, the mission and the core values. And that's why I challenge the students to challenge us with whatever they think we're not doing or not doing well. Demand value for your money. Maybe I should quickly add that if you go to our website, it says those students who scored about 180 in JAMB, the Provincial has said no, we must aim at something higher. That, if we have only five students, he's willing to spend money to run this place. It was like he was speaking my mind. So we will not be taking the bottom of the barrel.

So, your aspiration is to have the best students?

Yes. We'll take people that are intelligent enough to absorb the kind of quality education we provide. It also makes for healthy competition among students. If you're intelligent, you're in the midst of other intelligent people and the consultant said the same thing. He said, no parent who has an exceptional kid would want to go to your website if you target low-performing students. Am I sending him/her among dummies or to go meet dummies? So the process of branding is that you're trying to give yourself that class. Many students in private universities are not teachable and they come out with 2.1 (Second Class Upper). we're already damaging the brand if we do that here. When you take a student that cannot speak good English, you're killing the brand that you're creating and that is what is happening in

most private schools. When somebody has a first-class or 2.1, you don't need to be told. And, because we're not challenging persons with who they should be challenged with, which is what life is about. So those are the things we want to see if we can retrace.

What inspired you to seek the position of vice chancellor of Dominican University?

What inspired me, I suppose, is the fact that one would really want to take one step ahead. Within the university system, there's virtually nothing I haven't done. Once you attain a professorship, it means you've done virtually everything. Two, I had established a school earlier, a degree awarding institute, Nigeria Film Institute (NFI). That's something like a monotech, it awards just one degree, a degree in film production. And, I had been a Director General (DG) in a Class B parastatal – Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC). It is a high parastatal in the Federal Government. I had designed a lot of courses for the National Universities Commission (NUC), so becoming a VC is like a new challenge entirely. I have done virtually everything you can do in the university system except be a VC. So that's a big challenge and for God's sake, why not, if I feel I can do it.

What was your reaction when you were announced as the new Vice Chancellor?

My reaction was "Thank God". I now have an opportunity to run a university the way I think it should run. Let me quickly put it this way, I've had experiences that are A1, that's what I'm trying to say. I've been in UI (University of Ibadan), I've been external examiner to various universities in this country. I've had cause to also design courses both for the NBTE and the NUC and a crucial part of that, I've spent quite some time at the Pan-Atlantic University. I spent some time at Covenant too. By the time I'm done, I'd have brought Dominican University in-between Pan-Atlantic and Covenant. You can see what I spoke about today, because we must begin to think in terms of that brand. So yes, I think I have enough experience for that. And, change is coming!

Culled from Prime Business Africa
<https://www.primebusiness.africa/dominican-university-brands-to-become-nigerias-best-vc-ekwuazi/>

SONTA TRUSTEES

1. Prof. Shamsudeen O.O. Amali, OFR, fsonta - Chairman
2. Prof. Iyorwuese Hagher, fsonta
3. Prof. Emmanuel S. Dandaura, fsonta
4. Prof. Sunday Enessi Ododo, fsonta
5. Prof. Olu Obafemi, NNOM, fsonta
6. Prof. Irene Agunloye, fsonta
7. Prof. Abdulrasheed Abubakar, fsonta
8. Prof. Femi Osofisan, NNOM, fsonta
9. Prof. Chris Nwamou, fsonta

NEW SONTA EXCO



Gowon Ama Doki
President



Tunji Azeez – VP
(Admin. & membership Services)



Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo – VP
(Programmes & Projects)



Chisimdi Udoka Ihetuge –
Secretary General



Tosin Tume –
Financial Secretary



Ruth Etuwe Epochi-Olise –
Treasurer



Tochukwu Okeke –
Public Relations Officer



Mohammed-Kabir Jubril Imam –
Events Manager



Sunday Edum –
Assistant Secretary



Osakue Stevenson Omoera –
SONTA Journals Editor



Alex C. Asigbo –
Ex-Officio Member



Ameh Dennis Akoh –
Ex-Officio Member

Professor Barclays F. Ayakoroma

Appointed

DVC (Academic), UAT



The Vice-Chancellor, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT), Bayelsa State, on Monday, 11th of April, 2022, announced the immediate past Executive Secretary/CEO, National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Abuja-FCT, Professor Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, as his choice for the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), of the University.

The appointment is because the tenure of the pioneer Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Admin.) of the University, Professor Iwekumo Agbozu, who has served out his two terms of two years each.

Making the announcement at an Extra-Ordinary Senate Meeting, the Vice-Chancellor said that the appointment, which is subject to ratification by the Governing Council of UAT, was vital as a lot of work needed to be done to improve the academic fortunes of the University, adding that he was confident that the new DVC will bring his wealth of experience to bear in the performance of his duties.

Responding, Professor Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma (Prof BFA, as his friends call him), assured that he will contribute his quota to add value to the management of the University, adding that the first task was improving the visibility to the University to ensure that there is significant increase in admission.

Until his new appointment, Professor Ayakoroma was the Head, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT). He is former Executive Director, Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture; and former Coordinator, Postgraduate Programme, Institute of Development Communication (ISDEVCOM) as well as the Department of Theatre & Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK).

Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu

Holds Eighth Inaugural Lecture

<https://www.absradiotv.com/2022/04/15/godfrey-okoye-university-enugu-holds-eightieth-inaugural-lecture/>

As media convergence continues to gain momentum, there is growing apprehension from both the academic and professional circles that the new media has created deep disruption and altered the nobility of the conventional system of communication.

The argument is that the new media has grown uncontrollably powerful, slowly discrediting the authenticity and hitherto dominance of the conventional media.

At the Eight Inaugural Lecture of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu experts were of the agreement that while the new media has come to stay, the conventional media must sit up and reclaim its place while the global audience awaits future technological steps to regulate what people read, watch or hear.

Correspondent Daniel Ezeigwe reports that the theme of the inaugural lecture was, “Mediated Convergences, Cosmo-philosophical Ideologies and the Building of a Modern Nigeria”.

The inaugural lecturer, a professor of Mass Communication and immediate-past Acting Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Professor Armstrong Aduku Idachaba, in his presentation, said that by gaining intrusive power, the new media has distorted the news process by eliminating the valued conventions of veracity, balance, decency and respect for choice.

The foremost playwright, also stated that even though the disruptiveness of the converged media could hardly be controlled owing to its complex design, the ethos, sacredness and credibility that defined the conventional media must be rediscovered quickly to save it from total collapse.

A former Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Professor Stella Okunna, who participated in the inaugural lecture, believes that it is not a negative story for the converged media since it has availed people the opportunity to source for news at their convenience, and reduced monopoly of the airwaves.

Professor Okunna who is the first female Professor of Mass Communication in Nigeria, also noted that though the threat is increasingly huge, the conventional media still has its audience and retains a certain level of relevance that can hardly be gotten rid of.

The Vice-Chancellor of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Reverend Father Christian Anneke, had, before the lecture, listed the achievements of the institution, which was founded in 2009.

The Chairman of the Inaugural Lecture Committee, Professor Romanus Igudu, in his speech, praised the effort by Professor Idachaba to come out with the academic research and pointed out that it was left for a deliberate approach to be taken to adjust the trend.



ANA, VATSA, MPAPE & THE FRUITION OF A DREAM

By Tunde Olusunle, PhD, MNGE

Mpape, a spectacularly rocky district in the nation's capital, Abuja, is not your characteristic venue for a conference, convention or retreat. Not with exquisite facilities like the Transcorp Hilton, Sheraton Hotel and similar upscale hotels in the city. There is also an avalanche of dedicated event places, in the nation's capital. Mpape, the rocky topography which has spawned communities, settlements and ultramodern housing estates, is famous as a primary hub for granite mining. Earthquaking rhythms, reverberating sounds of explosions and bombing blasts therefore, are the defining characteristics of the undulating topography of Mpape. Quarrying activities in the nation's administrative hub, are predominantly domiciled on those eye-fall ranges. And the hummings and grunts of heavy trucks in relentless motions up and down the ascending terrain, is the music of everyday.

All of that, however, temporarily acquiesced to a notable event which recently took place in the district. The superiority of "words of iron and sentences of thunder," to borrow the expressions of the charismatic poet, Niyi Osundare, took centre stage. They subdued the dust-filled Mpape air, activated by the rapid descent of northerly harmattan. The cream of Nigeria's literary producers and their critic counterparts in the engaging vocation of creative writing and literary intellection, congregated up Mpape hills. The dates were Wednesday October 26, through Saturday October 29, 2022. And the event was the 41st Annual Convention of the Association of Nigerian Authors, (ANA). The venue, *Mamman Vatsa Writers' Village.*

Mamman Jiya Vatsa, an army Major General in his time, was creatively inclined. He authored verses published as poetry collections including: *Verses for Nigerian State Capitals,* (1973); *Tori For Geti Bow Leg,* (1981) and *Back Again at Wargate,* (1982). Vatsa also published *Reach for the Skies* in the same year. The renowned literary scholar, Biodun Jeyifo in a 1988 critique of Vatsa's work, applauded him for deploying "his enormous influence in government and the federal bureaucracy to avail ANA of much needed infrastructure and logistical support to see the body through at least two of its yearly conferences."

The administration of Vatsa's military colleague, Muhammadu Buhari which was in office between January 1, 1984 and August 27, 1985, appointed Vatsa Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT). He had responsibility for the administration of the Federal Capital Territory, (MFCT) and was concurrently, Member of the Supreme Military Council, (SMC), the nation's highest policy making body in that era. Former military President, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida in 1985, retained him in the position, upon the overthrow of the government of Buhari.

Vatsa was reportedly, a childhood friend of Babangida, and one of the coterie of elite military officers in their generation,

from Niger State. Others include Gado Nasko, Abdulsalam Abubakar and the late Mamman Kontagora. Between the quintet, they occupied some of the most prominent and strategic military and political offices during military rulership of Nigeria. Barely four months into the Babangida administration, Vatsa was arrested and detained "on suspicion to commit treason" and interrogated closed door, by a military tribunal. Alongside his "co-conspirators," Vatsa on March 5, 1986, was summarily executed by firing squad. They were convicted "for treason associated with an abortive coup." Vatsa was just 45.

Fortuitously, Vatsa had engraved his name and memory, in the sands of time, before his unfortunate despatch. Since its establishment in 1981, as the brainchild of the revered master storyteller himself, Chinua Achebe and half a dozen other like-minded writers, ANA desired an ideal creators' resort. Achebe's co-founders of the association June 27, 1981, included: John Pepper Bekederemo-Clark; Timothy Aluko; Femi Osofisan and Niyi Osundare. Two Kenyan writers, the iconic Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Gacheche Wauringi, also attended that premiere.

The association wanted a congenial atmosphere where writers could observe their hideaways and listen to their Muses for inspiration. The FCT under Vatsa's watch, hosted the Fifth Convention of ANA in the last quarter of 1985, just months before his arrest. The event held within the geographical space of "Usuma dam," in Bwari Area Council, FCT. Vatsa at the event acceded to the request of the association, by allocating a sprawling expanse of land in contemporary Mpape district, for the development of its dream, purpose-built writers' village.

Mpape was then some far-flung, forlorn, forested abutment to the city centre of Abuja which was then being gradually developed into the future capital. If that pseudo-remoteness of Mpape was initially assumed to be a safeguard against the sighting of the property by prospectors or trespassers, such calculation turned out to be wrong. Today's Mpape is labelled *Maitama Extension* in day-to-day communication in Abuja. It sits directly behind the highbrow *Maitama* district, abode of the nouveau riche: politicians, businessmen, top technocrats and bureaucrats in particular, in city. This speaks to the exponential human occupation of the erstwhile "no man's land," which Mpape was, and the contemporary intensity of socioeconomic activities in the district.

Possessing, policing and developing that generous expanse of land in an FCT which is still lapsing development like famished fish, was not as straightforward. Indeed, it became a tortuous ding-dong, from one Nigerian government to

another, one leadership of the FCT to the next, and indeed from one ANA national executive body to its successor. The dream of the village, subsequently and sadly, spawned several twists, turns, tales, even tribulations. When there were no threats of revocation of the property, mischievous land grabbers coveted the asset. At other times, land wheelers and dealers, nibbled substantially at the ears of the land in places.

Immediate past National President of the association, Denja Abdullahi alludes to "lack of capacity, failed promises, betrayals, revocation, reallocation, long-drawn litigations and brazen trespasses," as impeding the early consummation of the envisioned project. ANA at some point indeed prayed that some literary-minded national leadership of the country, will launch the physical development of the concept. By the time the visionary and strong-willed ANA leadership under Abdullahi entered into a partnership with KMVL Developers, an expanse of property which was initially a mass of 61 hectares, had shrunk to about 37 hectares! The joke has been made about KMVL, steered by Kolawole Shaw, a retired army Colonel, from a younger generation, helping to develop a property earlier allocated by a former General, both from the same military constituency! Actual development commenced in 2017, and by 2018, the ANA leadership felt confident enough to relocate its secretariat from its temporary abode at the National Theatre, Lagos, to the fledgling Abuja site of the Writers' Village.

It was an eye-arresting, scenic, burgeoning resort which welcomed delegates to the 40th anniversary of the creation of the organisation last year, hosted between Wednesday November 3 and Saturday November 6, 2021. From the hilly major access road which leads up into Mpape, the view of the valley on the left side of the road as you approach "Grange Hill Hotel" to your right, is breathtaking! Dominantly inscribed as signpost at the approach of the upcoming community is "Mamman Vatsa Writers' Village." This indeed is the eventual reincarnation of that indomitable soldier-poet, 36 years after his unfortunate liquidation via martial pronouncement.

You meander through tar-paved, snaky roads, ascending, descending, taking in the humongous physical development being undertaken in the village, intricately interspersed between boulders and rock outcrops. The cream-coloured "ANA International Conference Centre," sits royally in the luminous landscape of the Vatsa complex. With a few bungalows in the immediate view, that was about all that was in place during the milestone event in 2021. A caterer was also hired to provide for delegates in the absence of a functional kitchen. The voluminous conference hall has since been fittingly christened "Chinua Achebe International Conference Centre, (CACIC)." It houses the association's national secretariat, which has been named "Femi Osofisan ANA National Secretariat." There is also the "ANA Library and Research Centre," within the Chinua Achebe Complex.

The pre-event "meet and greet," was spiced by drama, music and dance, as delegates to the Convention savoured banter, back-slaps, drinks and finger foods. Titled: "Resilience and Nation Building: The Role of Nigerian Literature," the 40th anniversary lecture was delivered by literary laureate and awardee of the Nigerian National Order of Merit, (NNOM), Emeritus Professor Femi Osofisan. He saluted the memory of the initiator and pioneer leader of ANA, Chinua Achebe. "We cannot forget him," he said. Speaking about "The Story As Escort," Osofisan reminded writers about their core obligations to their societies.

According to him: "We are the storytellers, the people who hold the society spellbound by recounting issues that shape and reshape our beings... We are here to create history, to recreate our societies. We will be indicted if we don't sit up and speak out." The keynote paper was presented by multiple award-winning Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, and titled: "Creativity, Literary Advocacy and Nation Building: The Role of Nigerian Literature." She charged Nigerian writers to "bomb criminals and those responsible for crippling in Nigeria, with words to compel them to change their evil ways." She expressed delight "for being the very first person to deliver a keynote address on the hallowed grounds of the brand new Writers' Village!"

For a Convention which was more or less a test run of the new facility, the attendance was impressive. Apart from frontliners like Osofisan and Adimora-Ezeigbo, other renowned writers and scholars in attendance included professors Shamshudeen Amali, Remi Raji, Sunnie Ododo, Al Bishak, Joe Ushie, Rasheed Na'Allah, Moses Tsenongu, Maria Ajima, Mary Nwoye, Dul Johnson, Mabel Ewrierhoma and Greg Mbajorgu. Other renowned writers and stakeholders of the tribe included: Wale Okediran, Lindsay Barrett, Abdul Oroh and John Asein. The ANA Convention retained its appeal as an international brand with writers from Ghana and Cameroun in attendance, notably Sarpong John Asiedu and Pobee Mwintombo, both from Ghana.

The recently concluded 41st International Convention of ANA, and the second such event to be hosted at the "Mamman Vatsa Writers' Village" was indeed bigger than the first edition. It began Wednesday October 26, through Saturday October 29, 2022. The theme of the event was: "Literature And National Consciousness: The Story As A Catalyst," and the keynote speaker was Abdul Rasheed Na'Allah, Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja, (UniAbuja). The day before the lecture, however, ANA conferred fellowships on deserving writers and culture workers. These include: Na'Allah, Anaezi Okoro, Moses Tsenongu, Razinat Mohammed, Udentia Udentia, Nduka Otiono, Tess Onwueme and Lindsay Barrett. Yusuf Adamu, Amanze Akpuda, Dul Johnson, Mark Nwangwu, Francis Egbokare, Ademola Da-Sylva and Olabanji Fashina were also inducted as fellows.

Olu Obafemi, recipient of the Nigeria National Order of Merit, (NNOM), spoke at the induction and

enjoined inductees to build upon and raise the bar of the state of literature, beyond what it is in Nigeria today. Razinat Mohammed, a professor at the University of Abuja, presented the keynote address on Na'Allah's behalf. The institution was thrown into mourning Monday October 24, 2022, when Adakole Oklobia, a professor of theatre arts, sadly died in an automobile crash. This accounted for the zero turnout of writers and creative practitioners from the school, at the Convention. The session was chaired by Benue State Governor, Samuel Ioraer Ortom, who was represented by his Chief of Staff, Gabriel Tivlumun Nyitse, himself a poet, journalist and mass communications scholar. Nigeria's musical luminary, *Bongos Ikwue,* made a rare appearance at the programme and sang a number of his evergreen songs to the admiration of older participants.

In attendance were legends like: Kalu Uka, Ernest Emenyonu, Adimora-Ezeigbo, Osofisan, Obafemi and Justus Obi Joseph Nwachukwu-Agbada, more prominently known as "JOJ Nwachukwu-Agbada." Shamshudeen

Amali, Al Bishak, Akpuda, Ushie, Mbajiorgu, Chimalum Nwankwo, James Tsaaior, Chidi Osuagwu, Mngumember Vicky-Sylvester, all distinguished scholars and professors, made it to the event. Obari Gomba, (award-winning poet), John Asein, (Director-General, National Copyright Commission); Nyaknno Osso, (foremost librarian and archivist); Steve Shaba, (reputable publisher), Helen Wang, Chukwudi Eze, (an architect), Emmanuel A. Frank-Opigo, (an engineer), Emmanuel Ojukwu and (a retired police commissioner), participated at the Convention. John Sarpong Asiedu (from Ghana) and Sulayman Tekanyi (from Gambia), gave international colour to the attendance.

The *Mamman Vatsa Writers' Village* is work-in-progress. But Nigeria can appropriate to itself today, the bragging rights of giving to Africa, perhaps the

first of its kind of haven for writers and literary creators. The Writers' Village, is an upcoming tourist delight in its own right, even as it stands solidly today in Nigeria's bright sunny savanna. A few more structures have been added to the budding complex, notably a block of 22 all-ensuite chalets in a multistorey block. Rather than a serial numbering of the rooms in the structure, they are named after notable Nigerian writers and select former leaders of ANA, as the project grows. This is where names like Achebe, Clark, Wole Soyinka, (Nobel laureate), Mabel Segun, Akachi-Ezeigbo, Kole Omotoso, Osofisan, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Odi Ofeimun, and Abubakar Gimba, resonate and rebound. Obafemi, Okediran, Jerry Agada, Raji and Abdullahi, also have chalets christened after them.

President of ANA and convener of the Convention, Camillus Ukah, expressed delight at the quality of attendance, vigour of discourse and the rapid acclimatisation of writers to their new environment. He thanked those he described as "living ancestors" of Nigerian literature and literary criticism, for their continuing mentorship of younger writers and the leadership of the association. He saluted them for leading by example, courtesy of their prompt and regular participation at ANA events, despite the fact that many of them have retired from active formal teaching and research engagements. Gradually, as it were, the tortoise is crawling to its desired destination, as the Yoruba proverb says. Mamman Vatsa Writers' Village is yet another symbol of Nigeria's continuing dominance of literature and creative arts, on the African continent. Elsewhere, Lesotho-based Chris Dunton, a professor of English, has fittingly reaffirmed Nigeria as "the powerhouse of African literature."

Olusunle, PhD, poet, journalist, scholar and author, is a Member of the Association of Nigerian Authors, (ANA).

Thrills and Frills

of the 3rd Edition of National Theatre Public Play Reading Series at OAU, Ile-Ife

By Hameed Olutoba Lawal

It was a pot-pourri of dramatic literature and captivating dances, when the department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo Univeristy hosted the third edition of the National Theatre Public Play Reading Series at Oduduwa Hall.

In his opening remark, the Head of Department, Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Dr. Bayo Afolabi appreciated the National Theatre of Nigeria under the able

management of Professor Sunnie Ododo for the Public Play Reading Series Initiative. According to him, it is an ingenious way of developing the Theatre profession nationally. As one of the pioneer institutions in Theatre Scholarship in Nigeria, OAU Ife, Dr. Afolabi stated, has one of best Theatre departments, not only in Nigeria but in Africa.

This, he recalled, was built by foundation parents like Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Kole Omotoso, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Femi Euba, Olu Akomolafe, Folabo Ajayi Soyinka, Chuk Mike, Carol Dawes, Sumbo Marinho and those on ground now. The playwright, Testimony Jesutofunmi, the Head of Department revealed is a part two student in the department. He is a very serious student, right from his part one. It was therefore not a surprise his play won.

In his opening address, General Manager, National Theatre, Professor Sunnie Ododo gave insight into the objectives of the Public Play Reading Series. He highlighted that; it is to fulfil our mandate



of presentation, preservation and promotion of our cultural heritage through arts and creativity. To ensure mobility and visibility of the National Theatre and further connect the iconic edifice with the Nigerian people. To discover hidden playwriting skill early in our youngsters within the University community and environs. To give play-wrights opportunities for national and international exposure. To give platforms to budding playwright's works to be interrogated and improved upon for positive public reception. To present different creative works that will challenge students and teachers of theatre and indeed, all participants to creative possibilities.

While appreciating the National Theatre management for the choice of OAU, Ife and the opportunity to host at short notice, the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eytayo . Ogunmodede contended that, while we cannot surpass the western world in science, we have a lot of untapped human and material resources in arts and culture to show case to the world. He therefore stressed the need to hone budding talents to bring out the best in them.

After the speeches, ecstatic dance of Esin Oye performing Troup and Fikayo Group of Schools, Ile Ife heralded the performances. The well choreographed dance steps of the upcoming dancers kept the audience at the edge of their seats. In the group reading session that followed, the thematic focus of the play, *Where Three Roads Meet*, as characterised in the divisive tendencies of the three major tribes of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo were dramatised in the rendition Professor Ogunmodede, Professor Sonnie Ododo, the deans, faculty members

and students. This is typified in ethnicity, religion and desperate bid for political power.

The interpretative reading session in variety of tempo, tone and diction that aroused the interest of all present in the virgin script is again spiced with an interlude of dance by the students of the Dramatic Arts Department, OAU, Ife. The energetic free style dance of the boys and girls sustain the tempo of the reading without any dull moment. In his response to questions, the upcoming playwright, Jesutofunmi, traced the inspiration to write from discussion with a friend who believes secession is the way out of discordant tones of the major tribal groups in Nigeria.

The title of play, *Where Three Roads Meet* according to him is a metaphorical representation of the three major tribes in Nigeria. The character Madman in the script, he revealed is the humanisation of the voice of reasons that is always derided by the political demagogues in Nigerian society. While most of the commentators commended him for relevance of the theme to the unfolding crises of disharmony as exemplified in banditry, terrorism, kidnapping and regional agitations, the script need to be more explicit in vices of disunity, interest of the minorities and fusion of dance and music for total theatre.

Other highlights of the reading session was the presentation of leadership award to the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ogunmodede by the management of National Theatre. The playwright whose play won the competition for public. Reading series was also recognised with an award of plaque and certificate. The play is to be staged to access its stability before it would be published by the National Theatre.



SONTA Laureate Akayi

Wins African Writers Award for Playwriting 2022

Gloria Akayi Asoloko, known as Akayi which is her pen names, has been announced the recipient for the African Writers Award for Playwriting 2022, which was presented during the just concluded African Writers Conference in Douala, Cameroun.

During the presentation, the chief judge of the literary competition, Anthony Onugba, noted that Akayi was the recipient of the same award in 2020, therefore this would make her a 2nd-time winner. Her play *Who Knows Amanda?* (Winner, SONTA/Olu Obafemi Playwriting Prize 2018) fetched her the African Writers Award in 2020, While *Dusk to Dawn (What Happened Before Dawn?)* has fetched her the 2022 prize.

Akayi is also a university scholar, and a development worker – currently pursuing a PhD in Development Communication in the Institute of Strategic and Development Communication, Nasarawa State University.

Eleshin Oba

Travels Light from Page to Stage to Screen: Nollywood and Film Adaptation

Sir, have you watched the film?
What film?
Eleshin Oba.
Yes.
The film is somehow.
How somehow?
Em...em...Somehow shal

Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) is not an ordinary play, and it is not written for ordinary folks. It may have ordinary folks but not ordinary issues. The issues are beyond the ordinary and they require a higher intellect to be fully appreciated. They are beyond the "clash of cultures" and above the "clash of civilizations". They are esoteric philosophical discourses demanding the brains that are ready and willing to dare the transition. They require brave hearts that are prepared to fill the lacuna between the transitions from the world of the living to the dead and to the unborn. They are not for lilliputians with no chthonic power to bridge the planes across the gulf and into the abyss. They are for pathfinders with the Ogunian spirit to dare the crucibles of the Fourth stage. They are..

Haaa! E gba mi! Kilode! Aha, ki la gbe, ki le ju? Sir, abeg, take it easy .come to my level.

Sorry, please. It's not my fault. It is the play.

Sir, it seems we are not talking about the same thing.

What are you talking about?

Eleshin Oba: *The King's Horseman*, the movie on Netflix directed by Biyi Bandele

Death and the King's Horseman written by Wole Soyinka

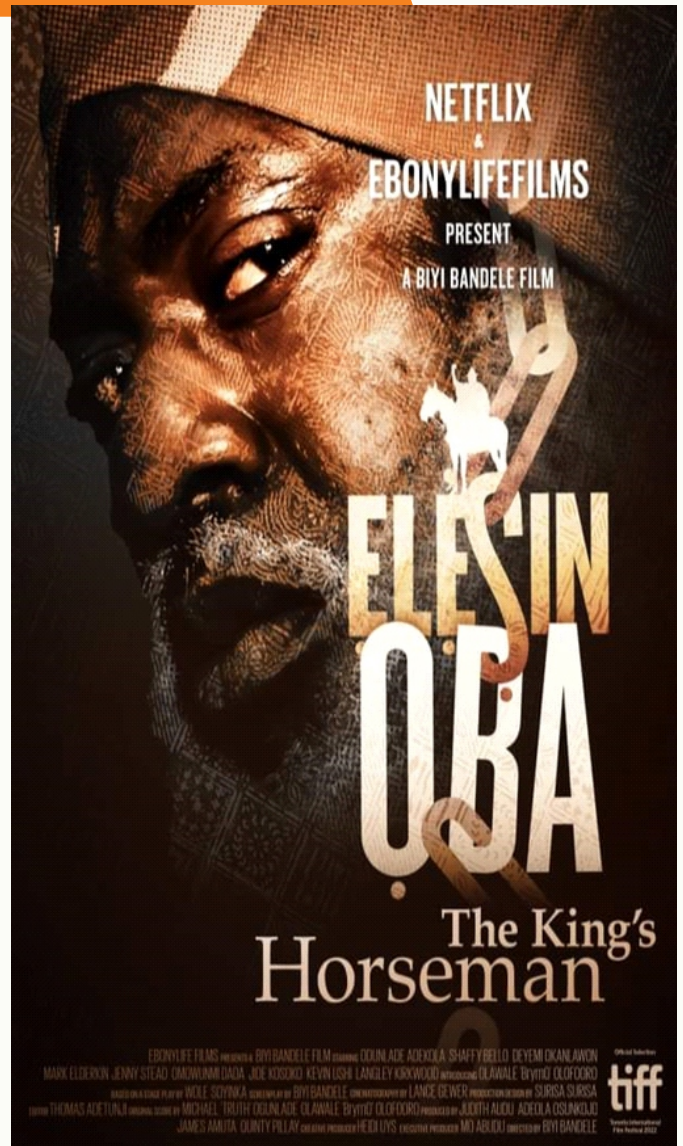
Sir, this one on Netflix is not written by Soyinka o

Eleshin Oba and *Death and the King's Horseman* are the same.

Are they?

Well, yes and no. Let me explain.

Eleshin Oba: *The King's Horseman* (2022) is a film adaptation of Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. Film Adaptation has been in existence for several centuries. From around 200BC to 300AD, many classical Roman playwrights such as Livius Andronicus, Gnaeus Naevius, and Plautus adapted classical Greek plays just as the Renaissance playwrights like Williams Shakespeare and Christophe Marlowe adapted both the classical Greek and Roman plays. In fact, William Shakespeare's plays have been adapted in all the eras after the Renaissance and they have been translated into several languages. His plays have been adapted for cinemas, home movies, radio dramas, cartoons, and films. In fact, most great playwrights and movie directors are involved in one



form of play adaptation or film adaptation. From Hollywood to Ghallywood, and Bollywood to Borehamwood, all nations of the world take pride in their histories of film adaptations. Film adaptations ... from Titanic to The Da Vinci Code, from Omkara to Slumdog Millionaire and from Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to Saro- Wiwa's *Basi and Company* and Wale Ogunyemi's *Eniyan*. Film Adaptation ... film adaptation is..

Sir, what is this film adaptation gangan?

It is like eating tuwon shinkafa or amala with fork spoon or chopstick to make Americans and Chinese salivate.

You don't mean it, Sir?

It is like swapping Bruce Lee and Jacky Chan for Aki and Pawpaw to make them appealing and understood to the Nigerian audiences.

Sir, please be serious.

It is the act of turning pre-existing stories or ideas from written works like novel, poem, and drama into a film, television drama and for cinema Sir, I think that is stealing of someone else's idea.

No. It's not.

If I am Soyinka, I will sue them.

I saw the picture taken in 2018 when Mo Abudu and Professor Soyinka agreed to turn his literary work into a film. So, it must have been done with his consent. And Soyinka is not the first person whose play would be adapted for film in Nigeria. Film adaptation in Nigeria predated Nollywood. Folktales, stories, novels, poems, and songs have been adapted as far back as the time of Hubert Ogunde, Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala), and Adeyemi Afolayan (Ade Love) (1940-1996). Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was adapted for radio drama in 1961 and released for movies in 1972. Adebayo Faleti's novel *Ija Ominira* was adapted for Yoruba film by Ola Balogun in 1979. Fast forward to the 1990s and the emergence of the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood, film adaptation became regular features of the repertoire of Nigerian movies. In 1995, Tunde Kelani adapted for film, *Saworoide* a novel by Akinwunmi Ishola. In 1998, a novel, *The Virgin* by Bayo Adebowale was adapted for film, *The White Handkerchief* by Tunde Kelani. Kola Akinlade's novel, *Owo Eje* was adapted for film in 2005 by Yemi Aodu and Remi Ibitila. Other writers whose literary works have been adapted for film include Femi Osofisan's *Maami* released in 2011; Chimamanda Aditche's *Half of a Yellow Sun* adapted for film in 2013; Sefi Atta's *Swallow* (2008) adapted for film by Kunle Afolayan in 2021; Ebi Akpeti's *The Perfect Church* (2010) adapted for film by Wale Adenuga Productions in 2011; Olayinka Egbokhare's *The Dazzling Mirage* (2007) adapted for film by Tunde Kelani in 2015. Lest I forget, *ayi ba won si nibe ni ayi bawon da si*, I have also contributed two literary works to the story of Nollywood film adaptation. My play, *When the Dream Dies* (2005) was adapted for Yoruba film and titled, *Ti Ala Baaku* by Saheed Salami and Kehinde Salami in 2008; In 2013, *The Gods are Still not to Blame* (2012) was adapted for film by Funke Fayoyin. Go and verify!

But Sir, if it is not *Panadol*, it cannot be like *Panadol*.

Well, you are right and wrong.

Sir, at best, it can only be like *Phensic* or *Ibrupofen* At least, they will serve the same purpose and more...

Sir, it is not possible. Side chick and wife cannot serve the same purpose...

Well, no two human beings are the same, even if they are Siamese twins

The original work and its adaptation may serve the same purpose. They may be like Siamese twins but occupying different spaces, places, and mediums just like *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* and *Death and the King's Horseman*. They may be faithful to each other, they may be separated but not divorced and they may be divorced, separated, and not on talking terms. The 'dialogic processes' between them may reveal their filial relationships, hatred of each other,

and betrayal, violation, and desecration of each other. They may be done to clarify the similarities and differences or agreements and disagreements that they have with each other. *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* is obviously in love with *Death and the King's Horseman*, and it is very proud to flaunt their filial relationship. Its desire is to be faithful, truthful, honest, and resemble *Death and the King's Horseman* in every way possible regardless of whose ox is gored, and regardless of whether those watching their relationship are close friends, acquaintances, or total strangers. *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* is more concerned about transposition and less worried about commentary and analogy. It should however be stated that a relationship will be boring if one of the parties brings nothing to the relationship table. Therefore, both parties must bring something new to sustain interest in the relationship. As Morris Beja in *Film and Literature: An Introduction* (1979) rightly observed, "Of course what a film takes from a book matters; but so does what it brings to a book." (88) The major thing which *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* brings to the table and not shy to present to *Death and the King's Horseman* is its voice, sound, and music. Much as it tries to please and emulate *Death and the King's Horseman*, it realizes the importance of maintaining one's voice and spicing it up with esoteric diegetic and non- diegetic sounds. Appropriate music dots every significant difference between *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, even as it is obvious that the '*Eleshin Oba*' is not a virtuoso dancer. It however pays for that deficiency in the way it perfectly showcases their shared colonial heritages through well-researched characterization and appropriately designed settings. The characters on the pages are mirror images of the characters on the screen just like the architectural design of the colonial residence. Although, critics may wonder why everything happens in a day with most of the events happening in a market. It is as it is the original text and it is in keeping with the Yoruba worldview, *ojani aye* (Life is a market). Also important is the bond of agreement of the subject matter and thematic focus of both *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* and *Death and the King's Horseman*. As difficult as it is, the director and designers struggle not to give the reductive impression that the play is about the clash of cultures or clash of civilizations. It is indeed a daunting and tricky plot to capture. Soyinka himself states in the 'Author's Note' that, "The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is *Eleshin* and the universe of the Yoruba mind-the world of the living, the dead and the unborn, and the numinous passage which links all: transition." (Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*; 305)

To do justice in the criticism of *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* requires an understanding of the rules of engagement in the film adaptation. It is not *iru wa*, *ogiri wa* or *gbogbo ero* (all comers) criticism lacking in measure, perspective, and focus. Critics of *Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman* must bear in mind the four paradigms noted by Kline Karen in "The Accidental Tourist on Page and on Screen: Interrogating Normative Theories about Film Adaptation" (1996).

Klein advises critics of film adaptation to tailor their criticism from the following perspectives: (1) "Translation"; (2) "Pluralist"; (3) "Transformation"; and (4) "Materialist. Justice can only be served to Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman if it is criticized from the perspective of "Transition" because the aim of the producer, Mo Abudu and the director, Biyi Bamdele of blessed memory is its fidelity to Death and the King's Horseman. Criticism of the film from the Pluralist perspective can also be justified since there are obvious similarities and some departures between it and Death and the King's Horseman. Criticism of Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman through the lens of "Transformation" may be right but the original material is not merely a source or raw material but its mirror image, heart, and soul. Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman may be seen as a distinct art form, but full justice may not be served to the creative efforts of the producer, the director, the crew, and the actors. This is not to state that film adaptation is a lesser art. Speaking from personal experience, Film Adaptation can be much more difficult than producing an original film. Lastly, examining Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman from the "Materialist" perspective may take away the shine from Death and the King's Horseman to extraneous and irrelevant factors. Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman is a play whose producer strongly believes the Yoruba adage, OdoD tin oD baD gbaDgbeD oriDsunyoDoD gbeD. (A river that forgets its source will dry up).

Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman is a ritual drama. A ritual is any act that is done at a particular or specific time and follows a particular or specific order, sequence, and mode. The dialogues and actions in the play are ritual metaphors for the initiates and masses. This is in line with Soyinka's position that "ritual is the language of the masses". (Soyinka's "Drama and the Revolutionary Ideal"; 87) This is also in line with Martin Esslin's statement that, "One can look at ritual as a dramatic, theatrical event - and one can look at drama as ritual." (Martin Esslin, An Anatomy of Drama; 27). It is from this perspective that one should appreciate the pathfinding Dionysian and

Ogunian daring and theatrical inputs of Mo Abudu, Biyi Bamdele, Adeola Osunkojo, Odunlade Adekola, Deyemi Okanlawon, Shaffy Bello, Mark Elderkin, Omawumi Dada, Brymo Olawale, Langley Kirkwood, Jenny Stead, Jide Kosoko, Debbie Ohiri,

Omololu Shodiya, Michael Okorie, Biodun Adefila, Seun Awobajo, and Ifenaike Abiodun.

Eleshin Oba: The King's Horseman is another affirmative statement on the improving quality of the Nollywood movies. It is now on Netflix. Approach it with caution. Be sure to have popcorn with a nice wine by your side as you watch how 'Eleshin Oba' travels light from page to stage and to screen.

#ElesinOba

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- By Dr. Rasheed Adedoyin Ismaila Otun, Department of Comparative Humanities, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky, USA. r0isma01@louisville.edu +15029961075

News Updates on SONTA Members

SUCCESSFUL PHD DEFENCES

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Omolola Tosan Akinwale - UI | 9. Ikechukwu Ejelonu - IMSU | 18. Chizinum G. Ohia - UNIPORT |
| 2. Maureen N. Ndu-Udeji - UI | 10. Felix Akinsipe - UNILORIN | 19. Charles Agha -- UNIPORT |
| 3. John Bardi - UI | 11. Kayode Idebi - | 20. Oluwatayo Bankole Isijiola - UNIPORT |
| 4. Cecil Ozebome - NDU | 12. Bridgette R. Yerima - RUN | 21. Sylvia Obiageli Okwuosa - UNIPORT |
| 5. Uche Oputa - IMSU | 13. Jimmy Akoh - UniAbuja | 22. Terkimbi Adoka - BSU |
| 6. Chinyere Nwachukwu - IMSU | 14. Fayam Joel - UniAbuja | |
| 7. Joe Divine Sheriff - IMSU | 15. Patrick A. Okuneye - ABU | |
| 8. Kingsley Anyira - IMSU | 16. Chiagozie Ugwu - UNN | |
| | 17. Bassey Nsa Ekpa - UNN | |

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“Willy-Willy” Felicitates with Prof Ayakoroma, Visit Him at UAT



Professor Innocent Ohiri, best known for the role of “Willy-Willy” in *Hot Cash*, a popular TV drama serial on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Port Harcourt, in the 1980s and early 1990s, has felicitated with the newly appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT), Bayelsa State, Professor Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma.

Professor Ohiri, who stated this on Wednesday, 11th April, 2022, when he visited the newly appointed DVC, stated that Professor Ayakoroma has been his close friend since their university days at Calabar and Ibadan, and that the new DVC convinced him to resign from the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Port Harcourt, where he was a senior producer/ director, in the mid-1990s.

The university don said that with Professor Ayakoroma as DVC, considering his antecedents at Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture and Executive Secretary/CEO, National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Abuja-FCT, he was confident that there will be an upsurge in student admission, thus improving the visibility of the University.

Prof. Ohiri expressed his appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor of UAT, Professor Kingston Nyamapfene for finding Professor Ayakoroma worthy of the appointment; just as he used the opportunity to congratulate the Registrar of UAT, Dr. Akpoebi Adesi, saying that having two Thespians as principal officers in the University is a blessing to the Department, and that it behoves members of staff and students to draw from their experiences.

“Willy-Willy” also used the opportunity to encourage theatre arts students to look at the entrepreneurial prospects of the theatre profession, disclosing that he did that in his younger days, by taking his Wizi Travelling Theatre for performance at Calabar, Benin, Warri, and many other cities, adding that his most challenging moment was when his fans in Warri insisted that he must vanish on stage, as they used to see on television.



SEVEN LEADING HUMANISTIC SCHOLARS ADMITTED INTO THE COLLEGE OF FELLOWS OF THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS!

Today, June 1, 2022, I am delighted to announce that seven leading humanistic scholars have been conferred the award of the Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL). They have been admitted into the prestigious Fellowship of the Academy based on their outstanding contributions to scholarship and extension of frontiers of knowledge in their various subfields of the Humanities. The Fellows of the Nigerian Academy of Letters are a group of distinguished scholars of the humanities, nominated and elected in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the humanistic

scholarship.

The seven new Fellows have been elected following a robust review process; they have been recognised for the excellence of their research outputs. The new Fellows of NAL, highly accomplished in their fields, are as follows:

1. Professor Roseline Oro Aziza (Linguistics - Regular Fellow)
2. Professor Godini Gabriel Darah (Literature/English - Regular Fellow)
3. Professor Oluyemisi Adebawale (Literature/Yoruba - Regular Fellow)
4. Professor Alex Chinwuba Asigbo (Theatre Arts - Regular Fellow)
5. Professor Yakubu Aboki Ochefu (History - Regular Fellow)
6. Olumuyiwa Adebajo Falaiye (Philosophy - Regular Fellow)
7. Professor Emeritus John Ayotunde I. Bewaji (Overseas Fellow - Philosophy)

Two Honorary Fellows have also been elected:

1. Chief Olusola Akintola Osuntokun - a veteran journalist; columnist; editorial consultant of many of the most outstanding Nigerian newspapers; corporate, national and international media guru; media proprietor; political analyst; theorist; activist, and media intellectual
2. Oda Ofeimun - a well-garlanded and decorated Nigerian poet, essayist, dramatist, activist, journalist, politician and polemicist. He has established himself as one of the leading poets in Africa with several poetry collections to his name.

Allow me to convey, on behalf of the College of Fellows, the Executive Committee and Members of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, my warmest congratulations on your appointments as Fellows of the Nigerian Academy of Letters. Wishing you every success in your new status.

Professor Ayobami Kehinde
Secretary, Nigerian Academy of Letters

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Professorial Announcements

- 1 Prof Steve Inegbe - University of Uyo
2. Prof Innocent Uwah - University of Port Harcourt
3. Prof Friday Nwafor - University of Port Harcourt
4. Prof Emmanuel Jegede - ABU, Zaria
5. Prof Benjamin A. Ejiofor - University of Port Harcourt
6. Prof Faith I. Ken-Aminikpo - University of Port Harcourt

Appointments

Prof. Elo Ibagere, Provost, Oleh Campus, DELSU
Prof. Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo (MASK), member of the Board of Governors, Directorate of Non-NUC Funded Programmes as Senate Representative, on the Council

Committee of University of Jos

Prof Diran Ademiju -Bebo: *Head of Department, Theatre and Film Arts, University of Jos*
Prof. Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo (MASK), *member of the Board of the Campus Radio, ICE FM, University of Jos*

Dr. Godfrey Enita, *Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Delta State*
Ms. Josephine Odunze, *Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Culture and Tourism, Delta State*

Dr Rukayya Nihinlola Banjo - *HOD, Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Bayero University, Kano*

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From The President's Desk



PROFESSOR GOWON AMA DOKI, FSONTA, MNAL
PRESIDENT- SOCIETY OF NIGERIA THEATRE
ARTISTS (SONTA)

Distinguished Colleagues

On behalf of the Board of trustees and Executive members, I welcome us all to this year's conference and annual general meeting of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, tagged SONTA-Abuja 2022, I am particularly delighted because this is my first conference as SONTA President, and I am both ecstatic and apprehensive. Ecstatic because of the opportunity to serve colleagues at this level but apprehensive in the sense that I do not know what to expect in terms of outcome and verdict. Nevertheless, I derive strength and confidence in the cream of very abled team I am blessed with as executive members. They have all been very supportive and together, we shall attempt to serve you with zeal, zest and commitment.

Still basking in the euphoria of my being elected, selected or better still, unanimously endorsed as the 10th President, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, last year at Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu Alike (AE-FUNAI), in Ebonyi State, permit me to acknowledge both the holy and historic spirits for making this day a reality. Let me sincerely thank profusely the Almighty God for seeing us through the turbulent and challenging times of first, the dreaded COVID-19 global pandemic and then the protracted strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria. His grace is sufficient and on His promise we are alive today and I return all glory and honour to Him for sparing our lives.

No academic, worth his or her salt would want to willingly embark on a strike action; strike actions as far as I am aware, eventually come as the last option. Having served as a branch Executive member for several years, I know of fact that several meetings of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of ASUU amidst advocacy and sleepless nights of negotiation between stakeholders take place before a strike is finally declared. It is indeed, failure on the part of critical stakeholders in arriving at amicable resolutions that strike actions are declared. Once declared, every member of the academic community as well as other critical stakeholders are affected. Hence, the effect on this years' SONTA Conference and Annual General Meeting.

We left Alex Ekwueme Federal University without announcing the host for SONTA 2022, and we were, therefore, saddled with the responsibility of looking for a host. Several options were thrown up but a majority of our members settled for University of Abuja as a more central and easily accessible venue and with enthusiasm, we quickly settled down to work.

The Head, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Abuja, Dr. Roseline Yacim, quickly constituted a Local Organising Committee (LOC), who in a short time fashioned out a topic and sub-themes that were approved by SONTA National Executive Committee. With the propagation of the theme and sub-themes, the stage was set and we commenced preparations towards the conference but were forced to halt preparations when on the 14th February, 2022, ASUU declared a national strike.

Days turned into weeks and weeks into months as we waited for the strike to be suspended until it was finally suspended on the 14th October, 2022. In keeping with the theatre spirit of the “show must go on” we again re-commenced preparations and I must commend the Head of Department for her “never say never” spirit. She has remained positive and we can now say thank God the conference is on.

The theme of this years' conference “Nigerian Theatre in a Digital Era” is not just apt but also strategic in the sense that with a plethora of challenges bedeviling Nigeria as a nation, the theatre which has always mediated these challenges must take advantage of the cyberspace to transit from analogue to digital technology. If the narrative on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), is to be given functional expression within the social and economic realities in Nigeria, then theatre practitioners must begin to envision a theatre within and around the cyberspace.

Theatre researchers, scholars and practitioners must proactively move towards responding to Nigeria's socio-political as well as socio-economic realities by taking advantage of improved technology in a knowledge based economy. This explains the imperative for the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) on the 35th edition of its International Conference/AGM, to cause its researchers, scholars and Theatre practitioners to beam their searchlight on the transition of theatre into the digital era and interrogate the nature and character of Theatre in terms of representations and presentations on stage and the cinematic arts. It is our firm belief that at the end of this conference, the viability of these arts of the Theatre in a digital era would have been critically examined and key variables unearthed.

Having welcomed members and also briefly touched on the theme of our conference, permit me to re-echo some paragraphs of my acceptance speech back in Ebonyi, after I was declared President. This will perhaps, afford members who could not attend the conference last year, the opportunity to understand the direction in which we are headed as an EXCO.

I was indeed, overwhelmed with joy on collective decision of members to afford me the opportunity to serve as President of this great and noble society, populated with great intellectuals and distinguished academics, with varying degrees of expertise comparable to any other around the globe. Such a privilege usually comes with great expectations and I am not oblivious of this fact. An intellectually robust, visionary and critical membership is the most challenging to lead. However, as a Professor of Performance Aesthetics, I promised to explore and exploit all the resources available to me in the huge reservoir of the society's membership to be able to galvanize a rewarding term.

In a special way I acknowledge and thanked my brother and fellow Josite, Professor Dennis Ameh Akoh, who exhibited an uncommon sense of brotherhood and comradeship. He indeed, lived the wordings of our anthem *No One Can See the Love that Binds Us* – the UJ-ATAS spirit in play. He opted to let me run unopposed even as he obviously had the odds in his favour as host. I will remember this for a long while.

To Professor Alex Asigbo – my brother from another mother. You are indeed a true friend and I pray the good Lord, Jesus Christ, to define your next step in life; it is surely going to be a rewarding step full of positive rhythm with shouts of joy. Your “Massification” of SONTA Membership is unprecedented. To Professor Emmanuel Samu Dandaura - the Architect of modern SONTA, the Society owes you gratitude for reinstituting structures that define SONTA today. You are indeed a 'go-getter'.

Professor Sunday Enessi Ododo, would forever be remembered for deepening the structures on which SONTA is today firmly established. Apart from the CAC registration which conferred the legal status on SONTA, you brought glamour and prestige to bear on the Society. History will not forgive us if we fail to acknowledge the one man who championed the reinvention of SONTA – late Professor Ayo Akinwale. I am sure you are at peace with the Lord today, knowing that, you did not labour in vain to resuscitate SONTA – may your gentle soul continue to find peace with the Lord.

The fatherly role played by my mentor, Professor Olu Obafemi, in my academic life cannot go unmentioned. You have always been interested in my growth and I will forever savour this experience. To my Vice-Chancellor and teacher, Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu, I say congratulations on your appointment as Vice-Chancellor, Benue State University and I pray the good Lord to richly bless your tenure.

To the Chairman Board of Trustees, Professor S.O.O Amali, my mentor and academic father, Professor Iyorwuese Hagher, Professor Irene Agunloye, and indeed all members of the Board of Trustees, I say a big thank you. To all those who have contributed in the past towards the growth of SONTA in official capacity



amongst whom are Professor(s) Saint Gbilekaa, Mabel Ewrierhoma, Charity Angya, Bakare Ojo Rasaki, Barclays Ayakoroma, Tracie Ezeaju-Utoh, just to mention a few, I doff my cap.

To my fellow EXCO members, while I congratulate all of us for making it to the list of Executive members of SONTA for the next two years, I admonish you all to begin to think creatively on how we can chart a new course for this great Society. History will be looking at us, members will be looking at us, our inner selves will definitely be looking at what we as an EXCO will be bringing to the table in the next 2 years and we must be conscious of this.

A lot has been done by past regimes to reposition the Society and we should not only consolidate on this, we must break new grounds. For me visibility is key and we must strive to connect SONTA with institutions and agencies with a similar mandate of identifying, promoting, preserving and marketing culture for growth and sustainability. We are going to try to make incursions into the management hierarchies and boards of most if not all of the cultural institutions in Nigeria. To this end, we shall be calling on some of you at short notices to pay courtesy visits on strategic partners in the theatre business. We already have collaborated with the National Video and Film Censors Board, which hosted the first edition of SONTA EXCO-HODs meeting in Abuja, where curricular and policy matters were discussed. We hope to institute this as a yearly tradition where Heads of the various Department will meet to review emerging trends and perspectives in our profession.

We shall be taking more than a passive interest in developments across Departments and formations of Theatre practice in the country. It is in our interest to stay united and anything that will jeopardize this interest must be lampooned and lambasted with dispatch.

We shall strengthen the practice of our profession by seeking the regulatory framework of administration from the parliament. To this end, we shall vigorously move for the SONTA Bill, which is before the National Assembly to be passed. Once this is done, we can then begin to standardize our practice and consequently, reap the benefits therein.

With a growing membership, our regime will take solidarity and comradeship very seriously. Do not hesitate to invite us to occasions you require SONTA's representation. The principle of "what affects one, affects all" will be tenaciously held onto. Anytime any of you require SONTA to intervene, please do not hesitate to let us know. We must do everything possible to protect our members any way possible. Members must, however, remember to always play the game by the rules so as not to make it difficult for us to negotiate.

Time will not permit me to mention everything and everyone, but I have had a unique encounter with each one of you over time and I will always remember this. I hope to leverage your individual experiences and broadmindedness in moving the Society forward.

When Solomon opted for Wisdom instead of riches, it was so the people and God will be happy with him at the end of his reign. I, therefore, ask God for His wisdom today, so that at the end of my term both you as members of SONTA and God would be happy with me.
God bless us all!

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Dr Lucy Iseyen Michael – HOD, Department of Performing Arts, Akwa Ibom State University

Prof Barclays F. Ayakoroma – DVC, University of Africa, Toro-Orua, Bayelsa State

Prof Hyginus O. Ekwuazi – VC, Dominican University, Ibadan

Prof Abdulrasheed Adeoye – Member, Governing Council, University of Ilorin

Prof Kene Igweonu – Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head, College of

Communication, University of the Arts London, United Kingdom

Transitions

Prof Festus Idoko –

UniJos

Prof Adakole John Oklobia –

UniAbuja

Prof. Canice Nwosu -

Unizik

NFVCB HOSTS FIRST SOCIETY OF NIGERIA THEATRE ARTIST (SONTA) / HOD'S ROUNDTABLE AT ABUJA

Following the marching order by the Federal government to the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) to intensively dialogue with major Stakeholders in the film industry to look into the issue of 'Ritual killings and Moral decadence' in films, which has caused serious menace to the society, the National Film and Video Censors Board in collaboration with the executive committee of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artist (SONTA) convened a roundtable assembly of Heads of Department of Theatre Arts across Nigeria Universities to deliberate on the issue of curriculum and the future of the creative and entertainment industry in Nigeria. The event held from 23rd-26th of February, 2022 at the NFVCB headquarters in Abuja.

The meeting was chaired by the president of SONTA, Professor Gowon Ama Doki, with thirty-two Heads of Department from state, federal and private universities as well as colleges of Education in Nigeria. The meeting commenced at about 12 noon with opening prayer from Christian and Islamic religious institution. In attendance, were Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, president of SONTA, The Executive Director, National Film and Video Censors Board, Alhaji Adedayo Thomas with his management team, Prof. Victor S. Dugga chairman of the unbundling committee, Prof. E. S. Dandaura, 8th President of SONTA and current Executive Director/ CEO of National Theatre, Prof. S. E. Ododo amongst others.

The Executive Director National Film and Video Censors Board, spoke extensively on the issue of ritual killings and moral decadence in some of our Nigeria films. He stated categorically, that the Board does not approve films celebrating negativity and moral decadence. The Executive Director NFVCB re-emphasized in his speech that there is no film celebrating negativity and moral decadence with the Board's approval and he went further to state that whenever the Board collects film for censorship, The Board looks at the area where there is justice and punishment for crime in that film before its approval.

He said where there is no justice and punishment for moral decadence in a film, such films submitted to the Board were never approved. The Executive Director said that since 2017, he can confidently boast that no film passed through the Board that celebrates negativity. He said that parents' and guardians, religious bodies, including media has major role to play when children watch a film that did not pass through the Board. In his statement, he emphasized that parental care, moral and cultural values are the functions of parents. He said from the concept, the child grows up from home before government takes over his/her building, and the way it will grow. He appealed to parents and guardians to look into the kind of films that their children take and watch on a daily basis.

The Executive Directors went further to state that in his own time, after the NTA News at 7pm they were forced to go to bed, but these days, parents buy expensive phones for their children. there is no parental guide or control. We are in the days of technology, you tube and unknown platforms pumps in. There are things they access which is beyond our control, The ED said.

According to Alhaji Adedayo Thomas, he said though he is a Muslim, he went to African Church, Nursery and Primary School in Surulere Lagos state where both moral and culture were taught, so religious bodies equally have a lot of role to play.

Finally, in his speech, he said that media should instigate positive action to correct the society and build the society in a good manner. Prof. Sola Fosudo, The Head of Department Theatre Arts and Music, Lagos state University, said that government should device ways of curbing ritual killing rather than banning films with ritual content. He said if there is no ritual killing in the society, then it will not happen. He said what film writer do is that they take from society and they give back to the society so all things you see in film is a reflection of what happens in the society.

In conclusion, he said that what we need to do is to organize ourselves in such a way that there will be no ritual killings, why looking for money, so government needs to do something different to curb the idea of looking for money by all means.

Prof. Gowon Doki, the president of SONTA, said that the roundtable was to unbundle the theater arts programme.

According to Doki, the society is growing and if we must remain relevant in the society of today, we need to free our minds and open our space, so we are trying to unbundle the theater art programme which has been B. A. Theatre Arts all through. There are other areas of creativity that are so important to our growth and development today, so if we

unbundle the programme and we have a faculty of creative arts, it will give us room to navigate where we bring in other allied courses that need specific attention such as fashion and modelling that is why we are thinking of opening the Theatre Arts programme into different areas that will attract specific attention for the growth and development of this profession, he said.

There were series of deliberations at the meeting among the different associations, and at the end it was resolved that members must uphold integrity by avoiding issues of sexual harassment, plagiarism, sales of grades, among others. The issue of quality assurance along the line of quality papers that will promote the profession was articulated and discussed. Colleagues were cautioned to be mindful of the ethics of publication to avoid bringing embarrassment to the body.

CLOSING REMARK: The president of SONTA, Gowon Ama Doki thanked members for the attendance and prayed for journey mercies for all participants. He further observed that given the huge success of the Round-table, it will be sustained to hold annually. Members applauded the decision and promised to ensure sustainability.

CONCLUSION: At the end of the round-table, participant unanimously appreciated the Executive Director NFVCB Alhaji Adedayo Thomas who did not only ensure conducive atmosphere for the Round-table, but also advanced a token to each participant to assist with the transportation fare. There was also tea-break, lunch, and dinner at the event. The event ended with a cocktail party at about 9.30pm.

