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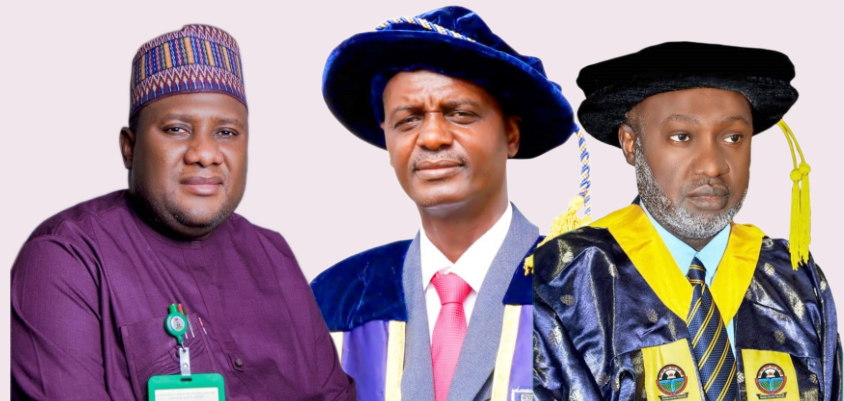


This year's conference is unique, coming just after a new government has taken charge of both the nation and state. As artists, we are trained and usually inclined to giving hope to the hopeless. As a result, I urge all participants to remain hopeful in the Nigerian project. I have no iota of doubt that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT), will deliver on his campaign promises.

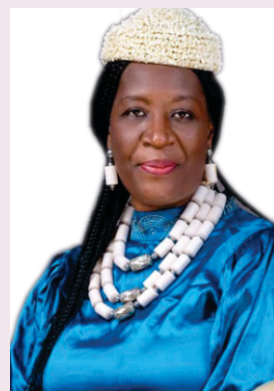
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Lifetime Achievement Awardees



Distinguished Leadership Awardees



FELLOWS OF SONTA



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.



DR OLIVER TERSOO AGUNDU

SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award

Oliver Tersoo Agundu, PhD was born more than Forty (44) years ago to the family of Late Pius Shima Agundu and Mrs Philomena Mbavan Agundu of Mbakundu in Mbakper District of Ipav, Gboko Local Government Area of Benue state. He

spent his early childhood with his maternal grandmother of blessed memory in Shangev-ya, Kwande Local Government Area of Benue State. During this time he did and completed his primary education at RCM Primary school Yaji. He attended and completed his Junior Secondary school at Tofi Memory Grammar School in Gboko. He proceeded to St. James Minor Seminary, Yandev for his senior secondary school where he graduated with distinctions as the Overall Best Graduating Student in 1998. He holds a Bachelor of Philosophy (B. Phil) Degree in Philosophy of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome and a Master of Arts (M.A) Degree in African-Christian Studies from the Benue State University, Makurdi and another Master of Arts (M.A.) Degree in Social and Political Philosophy and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Social and Political Philosophy all from the ONE and ONLY University of Nigeria, Nsukka. By the grace of God, Dr Oliver Tersoo Agundu is the first to hold a Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.) in Social and Political Philosophy in Northern Nigeria.

Dr Oliver Tersoo Agundu joined the services of Benue State University, Makurdi Seventeen (17) years ago and has moved steadily to the rank of Associate Professor of Social and Political Philosophy. Within these years he has served the university in different capacities including secretary of different committees, secretary of Departmental board, Coordinator of undergraduate projects, coordinator of Philosophy Unit in the default Department of Religion and Philosophy. Until the commencement of his Sabbatical leave at the Federal University of Lafia, in 2019 he was the Deputy Director, Centre for Gender Studies and Coordinator, GST 112 in Benue State University, Makurdi.

He is a consummate scholar that has

published both locally and internationally. As a prolific scholar, Dr Agundu have over Sixty (60) publications to his credit. He recently released a master piece titled: *Social and Political Philosophy in the Age of globalisation* which is generally regarded as a *Magna Carta* in socio-political reflections in contemporary Africa. In the forward to the Book renowned Prof. Maduabuchi Dukor described the book in this words "Of all the books, anthologies, articles, essays and discourses on Socio-Political philosophy in and about Africa, none is as dynamic and responsive to the changing faces of post-colonial African socio-political reality as this book. Indeed, this is a most singular Magna Carta on social and political philosophy since the end of the debate on African Philosophy..." Dr Agundu has devoted a considerable time in researching and publishing on the challenges of leadership and the way forward for democratic consolidation in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general, He has conceptualized alternative models of democratic governance compatible for the socio-political specificities of the African society. He is on the editorial board of different journals and the editorial consultant to different reputable journals and publishing firm. Until his current appointment Dr Agundu was also a Visiting Lecturer at the Federal University, Wukari and Editor of Nigerian Journal of Philosophical Studies

By the special grace of God Dr Oliver Tersoo Agundu is an Associate Professor of Social and Political Philosophy, the first in Northern Nigeria and currently, he is the Resident Electoral Commissioner of Plateau State where he recently Distinguished himself by superintending over an election generally rated to be among the freest and most transparent in the country. He also consults for different institutions and organizations on policy formulation, Leadership, politics and good governance. He is widely travelled and he is happily married to Doris Agnes Dooshima Agundu and they are blessed with three children (Olivia, Oliver Jr. and Odilia). He is a devout Catholic and a proud Marian Devotee who believe that through the Intercession of our Blessed Mother, The Virgin all our good wishes can be granted by God through Jesus Christ Our Lord. I, therefore, have this singular privilege to introduce and present to you one of Benue Finest Scholars and a Renowned Philosopher OLIVER TERSOO AGUNDU, Ph.D., JP, Associate Professor of Social and Political Philosophy and Applied Ethics who by the grace of God is now Resident Electoral commissioner, Plateau State, north central Nigeria.

SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award

Professor Olayemi Akinwumi PhD, AvHF, FHSN, FNAL is a Distinguished Professor of History. He started his higher education at the University of Ilorin where he obtained his Bachelor's degree in 1985 followed by Master's and PhD degrees in History from the same University. He is a Fellow of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letter (NAL), and former President of the Historical Society - first Academic Society in Nigeria.

Professor Akinwumi began his academic career also at the University of Ilorin and rose to become a Senior Lecturer in 1996. He then proceeded to Institut fur Ethnologie, Freie Universitat, Berlin, Germany from 1999 to 2004. On his return to Nigeria, he joined the services of the Nasarawa State University, Keffi where he served in various capacities, such as Head of Department, Deputy Dean, Dean, 2-term Chairman of Committee of Deans and Directors, Senate Representative in the Governing Council where he served in many committees, Director Institute of Governance and Development Studies, Director Research and Publications, and Dean School of Postgraduate Studies and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics).

He is an erudite scholar with over 70 publications in national and international journals. Two of his major works (books) were published in Germany, and has attended conferences in over 30 countries in the world. Professor Akinwumi was appointed third Vice-Chancellor of Federal University Lokoja (FUL) by the Governing Council on Friday, 18th December, 2020 following the interview conducted by Council where he emerged as the best and most suitable candidate out of the 81 Professors that applied for the plum job. It is on record that since assumption of office as the first indigenous Vice-Chancellor on Monday, 15th February, 2021, Professor Akinwumi has brought many remarkable developments and transformed the University in all facets. His Administration has dramatically uplifted the standard of FUL to an enviable height, bringing the eleven-year-old Institution to global visibility. Despite all these feats recorded in a very short time, Akinwumi has remained focused and committed to his vision plan.

Within the first one year of the Professor



**Prof. Olayemi Akinwumi,
VC, Federal University Lokoja**

Akinwumi-led Administration, FUL ranked first among the twelve Federal Universities established within 2011 and 2012 from the eight position it occupied before his assumption of office according to the NUC's Ranking of Nigerian Universities in 2021. This notable achievement is in addition to the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities report earlier released where FUL was ranked 35th in Nigeria and 3rd among the same twelve new Federal Universities.

His passionate desire and vision has been to make FUL ICT-driven for teaching, learning and research, aggressive internal revenue generation, massive infrastructural development, introduction of additional academic programmes, improved funding, institutionalization of university culture, promoting quality applied research, ensuring staff and students' welfare, and establishment of linkages with local and global bodies as well as well-meaning Nigerians, amongst other giant strides Prof. Akinwumi has achieved through his open-door and all-inclusive style of leadership in making FUL a world-class 21st century citadel of learning.

One Tree, Different Branches: A Profiling of Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu

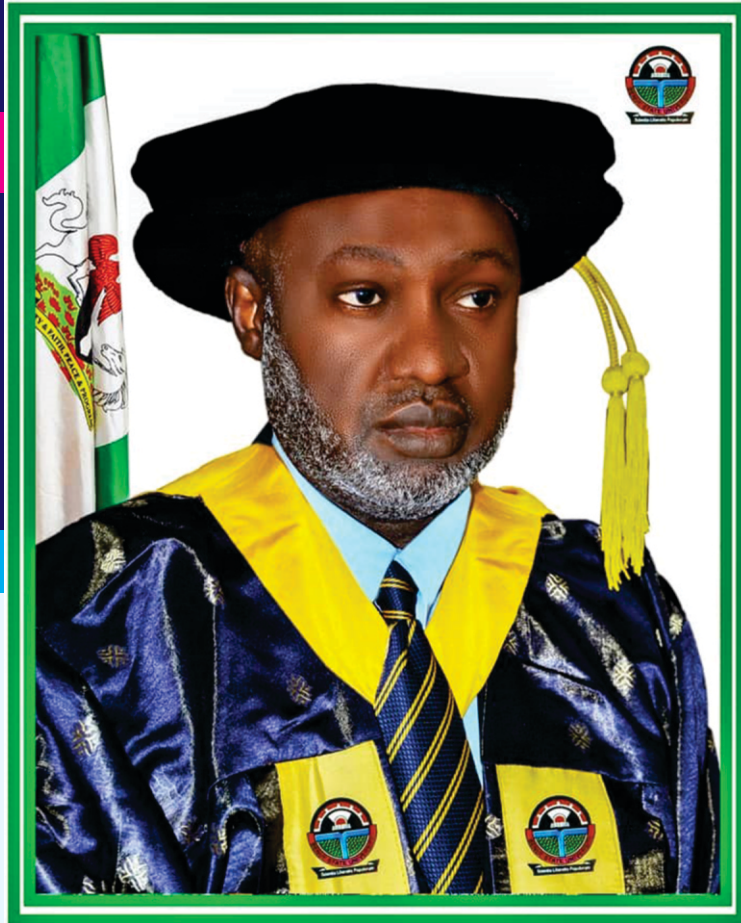
By Bem Alfred Abugh

Early life of Tor Joe Iorapuu

Doing a profiling for a great human being like Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu is not a task for a young academic like me who is almost three decades younger than the subject on the spotlight both in academics and in age. Notwithstanding, attempting a profiling of the subject with the title

One Tree Different Branches: A Profiling Professor of Tor Joe Iorapuu to me best describes the subject in question. This notwithstanding, but as a young academic of Masev extraction who have known and interacted with the subject for almost two decades is convinced to carry out a historical coverage or profiling of the man professor Tor Joe Iorapuu. Professor Joe Tor Iorapuu was born to the family of late Iorapuu Ibya of Mbalav community of Gwer East government area of Benue state, Nigeria. He received his elementary education at St Patrick's Primary school Taraku. While in St Parick's Primary School, the young Tor was the school's goalkeeper of the team Mosquitoes owned by the late bishop Athanasius Usugh. Tor upon receiving his first school certificate, he proceeded to Government Secondary School Katsina Ala where he obtained his WASC. While in Government College, Tor was made the house captain and he continued with his sportsmanship and this made him an all-rounder in the college. He was one of the most popular fellows in the college and this aimed him array of friends transcending the shores of Benue.

The young Tor being a lover of knowledge enrolled for an NCE programme with College of Education Katsina Ala combining English / Theatre Arts. In the college, Tor Iorapuu was one of the best actors in the Department partaking in different plays as both lead and supporting actor. Tor graduated from the college of education in 1984 as one of the best actors and most populous candidate on campus in that year. The search for more knowledge further took the zealous Tor to the



prestigious University of Jos. In Jos, Tor continued with Theatre Arts, a course he adored and cherished with all sense of compassion. In the University of Jos, Tor rode on fortune wings because of his background at the College of education; he was again one of the leading actors both in stage and dance performances at the University of Jos. Tor graduated with a Second Class Upper honors degree in Theatre Arts. Tor proceeded for his NYSC in Lagos and while in camp, he was still one of the leading figures in the camp in that year. Tor Iorapuu was the Director of the NYSC drama unit in his platoon and his directorial and choreographed performances earned his platoon some awards to behold.

Academic life of Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu

Tor secured appointment with the Department of Theatre and Communications Arts now Department of Theatre and Film Arts with the University of Jos as a Graduate Assistant. Through the guidance of Professors Iyorwuese Harry Hagher, Saint Gbilekaa, Amali S. O.O and Irene Agunloye, Tor enrolled for a Master's programme graduating within fifteen months with a tall WGPA. As a young academic, Tor served as a level Coordinator, Departmental Examinations Officer and Faculty Examinations Officer respectively.

Tor was fortunate and got an opportunity to travel abroad for a PhD in Communications Arts but just at this same point in his life and career, Tor

was actively involved in a programme with MacArthur foundation and he felt it was better to continue with the programme because of the impart the programme was making on local communities across the length and breadth of Nigeria. I will return to this in as I progress with the profiling. Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu throughout his academic career remained a committed and astute scholar of our time; his published articles are in both local and international journals across the globe. Tor has remained one of the most traveled scholars in this country who has attended, presented and contributed numerous chapters in several local and international conferences across all continents of the universe. His commitment as a University Professor has brought him so much firm within and outside the University.

Within the purview of the academic circle, Tor rose through the ranks and he has equally held virtually all positions in the University system. He served in several committees in the University system. To begin with, Tor served as member, Departmental Examination Board, Examinations Officer, Coordinator, Directorate of American Corner of the University of Jos, Head of Department and Dean Faculty of Arts respectively in the University of Jos. Tor also served as External Examiner to many Universities in Nigeria at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. In the year 2020, Professor Tor Iorapuu was appointed the Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University, Makurdi. I will return to his exploits as the Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University later as I progress with the profiling.

Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu as an Activist

Beyond mentoring and shaping young people in the University as one of the core values of an academic, Professor Joe Tor Iorapuu is one of the few Theatre scholars in Nigeria who have thoroughly utilized the theatre instrument in pursuit of a just and an egalitarian society. Before joining the university system as an academic, Tor was a great unionist as an undergraduate student. Through the experiences of fighting injustices and demanding for favorable social welfare packages for the students, Tor and many of his kinds ensured that water and other social amenities that aid learning were provided the students on the campus. Upon joining the University of Jos as a Graduate Assistant in the year 1989, Tor continued with the struggle. Through Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) a university based union for

academic staff of Universities in Nigeria provided the platform where activism was projected and promoted. In the wake of Tor's early life in the university, it was a period when ASUU was at its peak fighting the military government and demanding for improved welfare for staff and students in Nigerian universities. Tor was one of the leading voices in the University of Jos' branch of ASUU. The struggle was to ensure that both staff and students got all that they needed to improve their welfare. This struggle traversed through decades yet, Tor was untiring.

As a theatre scholar, Tor developed interest in Theatre for Development Tfd at an early stage at the College of Education Katsina Ala and later with his involvement with Professor Steve Abah, one of the leading scholars in the area of Tfd, propelled Tor more into the life of activism. This is because, through Tfd programmes like the Nigerian popular Theatre Alliance, Tor and others traversed all nooks and crannies of the country empowering local communities and ensuring that the people are well educated and informed about the social realities in their communities and around the country. Tor has remained a quiet and consensus builder of people across age divide. Hence, the description "One Tree Different Branches", he is never a selector of any kind of people to mingle with and he is always on ground to share his time, talent and treasure with the people for the promotion of peace and social justice.

As a functional activist that traversed all parts of the country working with local communities through theatre for development approach, Tor saw so many limitations owing to the time frame giving to each Tfd activity in all local communities visited. With this in mind and going with his passion of emancipating the people and building their capacity for a better and functional society, Tor took his activism outside the conventional theatre practice within the academic circle and went into the trenches meeting with local people. This commitment and drive birthed the establishment of a non-governmental organization called Youth Adolescents and Reflection Action Centre (YARAC), based in Jos Plateau State, Nigeria. This platform gave Tor a more accommodating disposition to mingle with the locals so as to empower them more appropriately about issues that bother on their development. In the first instance, the Centre was poised to empowering young people on sexuality education. *Had I Known* a play was written about young people and the play traversed all the regions of the country

educating and empowering young people about sex education. The radicalism in the thematic handling of the play's subject matter gave Tor a more engaging platform with the young people. Through the play, young people were becoming more open to narrating their problems and how it affects them.

Again, after the 2007 general election, YARAC saw the gaps in the elections and decided to use its centre to empower the people by providing them with the needed voter and political education. Through YARAC, Tor went to several communities in Nasarawa state, Plateau State and Benue State engaging the people and providing voter education and sensitizing the people about the way and manner in which politics and votes are casted elsewhere. The campaign and voter education as fronted by YARAC revealed some missing gaps that were felt before, during and after the elections as narrated by the communities. This gave birth to yet another play by Tor titled *April 1421*. The play was a response to the narratives gotten from the field. The masses have outlined several bottle necks that were responsible for the killings before, during and after the 2007 general elections

For over two decades and counting, YARAC has trained, retrained and empowered over a hundred thousand young people in the States of Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Lagos Enugu, Jigawa, Katsina and many other states through its numerous intervention programmes. This shows that Tor, is indeed an activist who believed in the emancipation of the young people and

empowering them to be self-sufficient towards the betterment of the nation. Professor Tor's active life in the civil society spans four decades, unlike other social activists, Tor is a pure breed social networker with both theory and practice. Tor is trained as Theatre Artist with a bias in Applied and Social Theatre, therefore, he has used this medium to mobilize and organize communities into action. Through theatre and his experience in activism, Tor has made tremendous impact in building and mentoring young people across all divide.

It is imperative to note that the motivation to radicalize young people and make them self-sufficient in the society was propelled by Tor's reading of Soul Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals" and this led to his introduction courses such as Theatre and Community Organizing at both undergraduate and post graduate levels and Theatre, Democracy and Social Justice in the Department of Theatre and Film Arts, University of Jos. To conclude this section of a profiling on this quintessential scholar, it will be sacrilegious if I fail to mention that Tor's passion in activism propelled him in to writing a his PhD theses in "Theatre, Community Organizing and Development Action: The Role of Intermediary Organization in Nigeria", Tor established in his theses that indeed theatre and civil societies have done a great deal in reshaping our repugnant and repulsive society through development communication in many areas.

Professor Tor's Pinch in Politics

Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu became worried with the retrogression in Benue state and opted to dive into politics so as to redefine the status quo. He was particular of building on the dream and legacies of the late Sir. Aper Aku and the Late Fr. Moses Adasu whose blue print was and still remained a pointer to putting Benue on the world's mad if judiciously followed. This aspiration to rebuild Benue state came about in 2018. During this period, Tor left the University of Jos and came back to Benue to contest for governorship under Peoples Democratic Party. Tor's slogan was #Benuewillriseagain#. Tor was one of the poorest personalities in terms of money bag politics that has characterized the Nigerian political space. Yet, Tor became the most popular Governorship candidate in the State. His popularity spread through all the ends of the state and this was tied to his social and philanthropic lifestyle that he had built amongst his contemporaries in years past.



Professor Tor Iorapuu visited and consulted widely with every big name in the political scene in Benue and every local government area in the state. Young people took the project personal and it became glaring that Tor was going to get the ticket for his party. The unfortunate happened when the then seating governor at the time left his party, the All Progressive Congress and rejoined Peoples Democratic Party; all the aspirants including Tor were requested to step down for the governor with the caveat that he had the party structure. Indeed, all the aspirants had to comply. Many of the delegates were for Tor and they insisted that he should continue with the struggle but the humble Tor decided not to wage a war against the leadership of party and he equally stepped aside like all the other aspirants. Tor went back to the university where he teaches to continue with his profession of mentoring and shaping young people.

Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu as an Administrator

The administrative journey of Professor Tor is in many layers and I would want to state very emphatically that, as a university professor, Tor has handled all positions in the university. To begin with, Tor served as a level Coordinator in charge of a level; he graduated into the Departmental Examinations Officer and handles the position for close to a decade. Tor was made the Coordinator of the American Centre of the University of Jos. Thereafter, he became the Head of Department, Department of Theatre and Film Arts, as the chair of the department, Tor, demystified headship by running an open door policy where every members of the department was a stakeholder in the administration. Tor was elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, as the Dean, Tor ensured that the yearnings and aspirations of the members of staff were projected.

Professor Tor as the Dean of Arts attracted and signed a collaboration deals with Kenyatta University Kenya and Goethe University Germany with the support of the Vice-Chancellor. The collaboration from Kenya was to allow exchange of students and staff while that of Goethe University in Germany was for the Department of Theatre and Film Arts of the University of Jos in conjunction with National Film Institute to run a master's programme in Film Culture and Archiving. Tor in collaboration with the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jos ensured that all these programmes kicked started with Tor as the Dean of Arts before

he was stolen away from University of Jos and made the Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University. As the Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University, Makurdi, Professor Tor, has brought tremendous administrative policies that are moving the university to greater highest. He has introduced new Faculties and Departments that are about to kick start in the 2022-2023 academic session. He has supervised and ensured the completion and commissioning of some remarkable TetFund projects in the University.

Professor Tor as a Socialist/Philanthropist

Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu is a man of many layers and he has used his social lifestyle to attract friends for himself within and outside the shores of this country. Professor Tor is a fine gentleman that always lives an impression of love and unity in the mind of any personality he comes in contact with. Tor has the enigmatic and charismatic wherewithal to attract friends. He is one person that reads the minds of the people around him, sometimes, it seems as though Tor is prophetic in the way and manner he intervenes in matters concerning friends and brotherhood.

Despite his social standing in the society, Tor has remained a down to earth personality, ready to learn new ideas from people of all ranks. He is not just ready to learn, he is actually a fast learner and learns as fast as a computer processor. Tor's social/philanthropist live has taught him to be a single tree with different branches. This is because Tor has continued to be a strong source of support to many people who needs help. The thing to note is that Tor's kindness is second to none, he gives to those in need and even those who are not in need depending on the circumstances. He gives without looking back or expecting something in return.

Tor's social lifestyle and philanthropic nature has helped many Masev sons and daughters and even beyond. In fact, I made bold to state here very unequivocally that there is no single district in Masev land that has not benefited from Tor's benevolence in the area of securing admissions into the University of Jos in pursuit of better and higher education. This is what Tor does with all sense of humor and commitment to brotherhood. In his words, he will always say "When we are no longer here, who will replace us". This continually remains his passion for ensuring that Masev sons and daughters are admitted into their choice of course.

Through his benevolence, Tor has helped in the payment of tuition fee for Masev sons and daughters going in for law school at different points. Tor has also facilitated the appointment of many Masev sons into the University of Jos including my humble self and many others who are doing practically well in their chosen professions.

This socialist and philanthropic attributes in Professor Tor has continued to waxen as burning flames. He is untiring and remains passionate with his desire to continue to build an army of Masev professionals who can replace the current professional in all spheres of life.

Professor Tor and Family Life

Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu is a lovely family man, he is married to Lady Nnena Iorapuu who herself is a lecturer in the Department of

Social Science Education of the University of Jos. Sir and Lady Iorapuu are blessed with four lovely children who are all experts in their different endeavors. Tor is a dynamic and caring family man with a dynasty to his credit. Beside his immediate and extended family, Tor has many foster family members on his pay role.

He is a grandfather of four and still counting. A visit to the Tor's castle makes one understand what a perfect family is.

To conclude, I am forced to state unequivocally that a profiling of Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu and his career as an academic, a civil society activist and an administrator has given us a perceptible appreciation of the subject as a true son of Masev land who has distinguished himself in many aspects of life and still counting.

SONTA Felicitates Prof Sunday E. Ododo on the Conferment of Chieftaincy Title on him

CONGRATULATIONS

on your

Chieftaincy Title

Prof.
Sonnie Enessi

ODODO

(fsonta, fta, fana, fnipr, faan FNAL)

as the

OTUN FIWAJOYE OF EKINRIN-ADE LAND

Sat. 24th June 2023

Cotcee
Eyi'ze Development Foundation



2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Dr. Achibi Samuel Dede was born in 1965 in Lagos, Nigeria. He attended Township School, Moscow Road, Port Harcourt, and the prestigious, American established Comprehensive Secondary School and the Federal Government College, Port Harcourt.

His interest in the Arts dates far back to his early years. He was a child actor at the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture, and anchored children's programmes on Radio and Television, even as a ten year old.

In the 1983/1984 session, he gained admission into the University of Benin to study Theatre Arts. While in Theatre School, he established his own Theatre troupe, performing off and on campus, and got it signed on as the resident performing troupe at the Delta Steel Complex, Alaja and the National Institute for Oilpalm Research, Benin. He also scripted and acted in many of the then Bendel Television Play House Drama Series. During his student days in UNIBEN, he was President of the Theatre Arts Student Association and National Vice President of the Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Students Association (NUTASA).

Upon his graduation in 1988, The National Youth Service Corp programme assigned him to the Nigerian Television College (NTA College) Jos, Plateau State. During the service year, in partnership with the NYSC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) he established a Community Theatre Project which functioned in many rural areas of the State as Theatre for Development.

He had a brief part-time stint with the National Troupe of Nigeria under the legendary Baba Hubert Ogunde in 1989 before he was invited to join the Department of Creative Arts at the University of Port Harcourt by the theatre and Academic giant, Professor Ola Rotimi. At Uniport, he studied Comparative Literature and obtained his Masters (MA) and Doctorate (Ph.D.) degrees in Film Studies.

He is still a Lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, where he teaches Acting, Voice and Speech Training and Film/Television Production. He has attended several training programmes and workshops and courses in South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States of America. He also attended the London School of Business and Finance in 2014, and has been a Visiting Scholar and Artist to the University of North Hampton, University of West Indies,

Jamaica, The University for the Creative Arts, United Kingdom and the London Film School.

As and an Industry Practitioner, Sam Dede has staged several plays and has made over 300 films in the capacity of Writer, Producer, Director and Actor. In 2006, he was inducted (First Set) into the Nigerian Filmmakers Hall of Fame. He has numerous Awards and Honours to his credit, including The African Movie Academy Award and many others locally and internationally.

Dr. Sam Dede holds Fellow Status in the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) Fellow- Institute of Management Consultants (FIMC). He is also a Chartered Management Consultant. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Corporate Administration and Member, Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists. He has been a member of the Management Committee of the Abuja National Carnival (Coordinator South-South). He was for six years the Artistic/Carnival Director of the Rivers State Carnival (CARNIRIV) and led the Rivers State Troupe to participate at the Notting-Hill Carnival, London, Uk in 2012,2013 and 2014. Sam Dede also served as the Director General of the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency from 2012-2015.

His personal philosophy as an Artist is to employ his craft to uplift humanity to its highest level of fulfillment.

Dr. Sam Dede is married with children.



DR. ACHIBI SAMUEL DEDE (SAM DEDE)
Lifetime Achievement Award

2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Adediranmi, as his parents liked to call him, is the last son of his mother, Iyaafin Rebecca Onaolapo Abike-odi Ademiju-Bepo's eleven children, but the sixteenth child of his father, Omo-Oba Michael Komolafe Isola-aye Ademiju Ademiju-Bepo (both of blessed memory) of the Owa Bepo/Aromolaran Dynasty of Ilesa Kingdom. He was born on Thursday, the 17th August, 1968 in Ilesa, Ilesa East Local Government Area in present day Osun State. He began his primary education at CAC Primary School, Sakasaka, Ejigbo, in 1973 and was transferred to St. Michael's Catholic Primary School, Yemetu Aladorin, Ibadan in 1977, when he joined his eldest sister and foster mother, Princess (Mrs.) Rachael Bolatito Adefunmike Olasoko (nee Ademiju) to begin a taste of urban life.

He earned the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) and gained admission into St. Patrick's Grammar School, SPACO, Orita-Bashorun, Ibadan in September 1979, where he was discovered early in Form One as a writer and an actor, even though he had participated in stage drama in the church and in primary school as a child growing up. Graduating in 1984 with the WASC O'Level in June before his sixteenth birthday, and the GCE O'Level in November, his career path in the Humanities was carved for him, having been unable to make a credit pass in Mathematics and Biology. He wanted to study Law, but after two attempts at JAMB UME, first in 1985 and later in 1987, he opted for Theatre Arts at Nigeria's premier University, the University of Ibadan.

He became a 1991 University of Ibadan graduate of Media Arts, Playwriting & Directing (B.A. (Hons.) and 1994 in Dramatic Literature, Theory & Criticism (M.A.). His plays have won acclaim at the annual Nigerian Universities Theatre Arts Festival (NUTAF) as an

undergraduate student in 1990 and postgraduate in 1996. In his quest for excellence and in pursuit of his dream, he enrolled for the MPhil/PhD programme in Film Studies in 1995 and eventually was awarded the Ibadan Ph.D. in Film Dramaturgy and Generational Literature which he earned in 2005.

Prof. 'Diran Ademiju-Bepo's informal teaching career began when he taught Playwriting, Dramatic Literature and Use of English respectively at the University of Ibadan as a Teaching Assistant, between 1994 and 2000 and has been on the Faculty of Nigeria's premier film school, the National Film Institute, Jos, as a Visiting Senior Lecturer/Resource Person since 2003, where he has taught and still teaches such courses as Acting and Presenting for the Screen, Film and Literature, Film and Society, among others.

From Campus journalism, he became an astute media practitioner, and worked with two reputable State-owned organizations, the Sketch Press Limited, Ibadan

(owned by the 5 South-West States, Nigeria) between 1993 and 2001, and the Fountain Newspapers and Publishing Limited, Ado Ekiti (Ekiti State) from 2001 to 2002 and rose through the Editorial ranks from a Proof Reader to an Associate Editor/Acting Editor before joining the Federal Public Service through the Nigerian Film Corporation in November 2002 as a Senior Programmes Officer. On resumption, he became the Desk Officer for the then National Film Festival, later rebranded with his efforts as Zuma Film Festival (2002-2006). He later served as the Registrar, Motion Picture Council of Nigeria (MOPICON) (2006-2008), and Head, Industry Support Services, a Unit under the Directorate of Operations (2008-2010) from where he left as an



Prof. Adediran Kayode ADEMIJU-BEPO, PhD
Lifetime Achievement Award

2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Assistant Chief Programmes Officer in 2010, to begin his formal teaching career with the University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria as a Lecturer I. He was promoted Senior Lecturer in 2013, Reader in 2016 and announced a Professor of Theatre and Film Studies in 2021 with effect from October 1st, 2019.

In 2012, in furtherance of deeper understanding of his profession, he was sponsored to attend the New York Film Academy, under the auspices of the TETFund and earned a Diploma in Digital Filmmaking. Subsequently, he earned two Certificates in Cinematography and Multimedia, from the School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster, London, United Kingdom and the Asian Academy of Film and Television, AAFT, Noida, India in 2013 respectively. This was made possible through the World Bank STEP-B Centre of Excellence in Multimedia Technology and Cinematography for the University of Jos, Nigeria. In 2021, he participated in an Online BAVASS Summer School in Film Archiving and obtained a Certificate.

Prof. Ademiju-Bepo has attended many scholarly conferences and film festivals both locally and internationally. His over two decades of Theatre and Film Studies practice and experience ignited keen research and teaching interests in Film Genres and Visual Dramaturgy, Generational Literature, Film Archiving and Dramatic Literature. He has written scripts for radio, stage and screen, some of which have been produced, and has over 40 publications in refereed local, international and online journals and books. His first published play, *Rape of the Last Sultan* (Kraft Books) came out in July 2010 and has been performed on stage in different universities and adapted for the screen; his second play, *Farewell to a Virus of Anomie* (DynastyGold, 2016) was until recently one of the texts for General Studies Peace and Conflict course at the University of Jos. His third play, *No More the Taming Hawks* (DynastyGold) published in February 2018 was one of the Longlisted 11 books for the NLNG-sponsored Nigerian Prize for Literature in 2018.

He has had a robust administrative and academic leadership career experience as the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator (2013-2017); Member, Departmental Board of Postgraduate Studies, and formerly, Secretary, Project Implementation Team, World Bank STEP-

B Centre of Excellence in Multimedia Technology and Cinematography for the University of Jos, Nigeria (2012-2017). He has served on numerous Committees in the University, Faculty and Department. His hobbies include publishing, writing, project consultancy, among others. He serves on the Editorial Advisory Boards of national and international Journals, and has been a regular reviewer for some Journals, including SONTA's Nigerian Theatre Journal, the Departmental publication, Jos Journal of Theatre, Arts and Film, (JOTAF), Journal of University Scholars of Religions (JUSREL), among others. He has been the Editor of Fountain of Mercy, the News magazine of Eleos Ministries International, aka Chapel of Mercy churches worldwide since 2008. He served as Editor-in-Chief/Chairman, Editorial Board of the Jos Journal of Theatre, Arts and Film, (JOTAF) 2021-2023). He belongs to many professional and academic bodies.

As a publisher, through his outfit, DynastyGold Impact Publishers, he has mentored younger creatives to bring their works to global attention through the company's DynastyTales and Impact Books imprints. Some of the titles include Thelma Duke's *Soaring on Our Dreams through New Hope* (2016), *Farewell to a Virus of Anomie* (2016), *Songs of My Rebirth*, a collection of poems by Tope Adeboboye (2017), *Resonance of Mercy* by Olutoyin Oyebamiji (2017), *No More the Taming Hawks* (2018), *Agbajowo and Other Plays* by Tor Iorapuu and Duke Ogbureke (2020), Duke Ogbureke's *New Dawn and The Rebirth. Two Plays for Tfd* (2020), *DIFU* by Chinyere Lilian Okam (2021), *Different Models, One Goal: Doing Theatre, Democracy and Social Justice. A Festschrift in honour of Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu* (in association with YARAC) (2022), and *Where is God?* by Revd. Dr. Isaac Oyebamiji (2023).

He served as Head of Department, Theatre and Film Arts, University of Jos (Feb.2021-Feb. 2023). He is currently the Senate Representative on the Governing Board of the Non-NUC; Faculty of Arts Representative on the Board of the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Jos. He recently served as the Chairman, Entertainment Committee of the University of Jos Combined 33rd and 34th Convocation in May 2023. He is the current SONTA Vice President (Programmes and Projects). He is married to Oluwatoyin Afolakemi and they are blessed with four children.

2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Tochukwu John OKEKE was born into a very devout Christian family of Chief Gabriel Nwabude and Madam Catherine Nwadiogwa Okeke of Umuchioma Kindred, Umuezechua Quarters of Umudioka town in Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State. He is the first child of his parents; Chief Nnanyelugo Obidi Joseph and Madam Oduugo Paulina Okeke.

Tochukwu had his primary education at Central School, Umudioka, Dunukofia and O'Connor Street Primary School, Asata, Enugu He later proceeded to St. John's Secondary School, (Now St. John's Special Science School), Alor, Idemmili South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

He had his A'Levels at the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu and later got admission to study Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts (B.A Hons) Second Class Upper Degree and a Master of Arts (MA) Degree. Tochukwu was the best graduating student of his set.

He had his NYSC at Asaba, Delta State with MAMSA (now NOA, National Orientation Agency) as a Senior Mobilization Officer.

Tochukwu went into Professional Theatre Practice after his Masters programme and later went into politics.

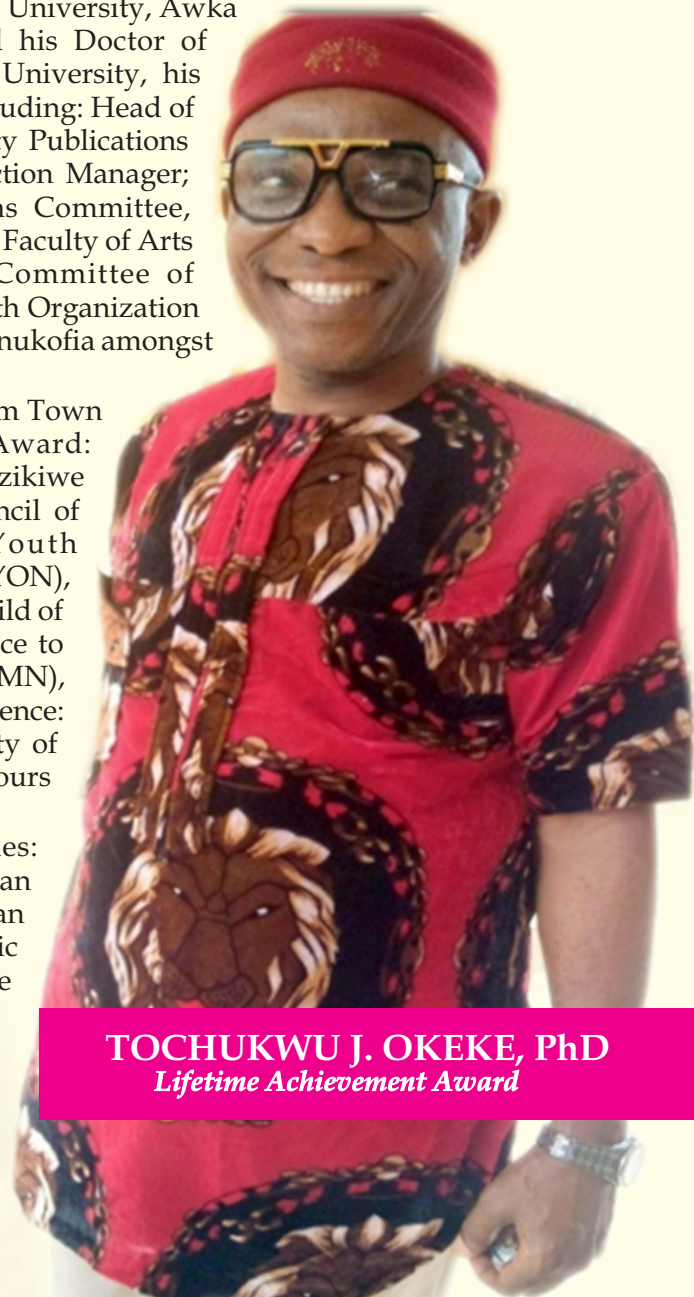
He was a Special Assistant to the Governor of Anambra State 2003-2006 and contested for the State House of Assembly Seat (Dunukofia Constituency) in the 2007 general elections.

Dr. Okeke joined the services of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka as an Assistant Lecturer in 2009 where he obtained his Doctor of Philosophy, PhD. Degree. Tochukwu has served the University, his department and his community in various capacities including: Head of Department, Theatre and Film Studies. Member, Faculty Publications Committee; Staff Adviser. Examination Officer; Production Manager; Chairman Faculty of Arts, Research and Innovations Committee, Member Faculty of Arts Conference Committee; Member Faculty of Arts Environmental Committee; Chairman, Ito Ogbo Committee of Umudioka Improvement Union; President Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, St. Anthony's Catholic Church Umudioka, Dunukofia amongst Others.

Tochukwu is a recipient of numerous awards from Town and Gown; these include; Leadership Excellence Award: Association of Theatre Arts Students (ATAS), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (2022); Mentor National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Dunukofia Chapter (2008); Youth Ambassador: Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON), Ifite Dunu Deanery (2005) Movie Ambassador Actors' Guild of Nigeria, Anambra State Chapter (2005) Dedicated Service to Humanity: National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria. (NIMN), Anambra State Chapter (2005) Choreographer Per Excellence: Association of Theatre Arts Students (ATAS), University of Ibadan, Ibadan (1994). N.Y.S.C. Merit Award State Honours Award, Delta State (1992).

Tochukwu is a member of professional bodies: African Theatre Association (AFTA), Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP); Young Catholic Professionals (YCP); International Federation of Theatre Researchers (IFTR); Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN).

Dr Okeke is a consummate scholar with publications in both local and international journals. His hobbies include, volley ball, table tennis, soccer, reading and travelling. He is married to Mrs. Chika OKEKE and the union is blessed with children.



TOCHUKWU J. OKEKE, PhD
Lifetime Achievement Award

2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*



DR (MRS) LILIAN EGURIASE BAKARE
Lifetime Achievement Award

An indigene of Delta State by birth and that of Ekiti State by marriage, Dr Lilian Eguriase Bakare was born in Lagos on 6th November, 1969 to the family of Chief Gilbert Ohre from Ovirorie - Ovu, Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State. She completed her primary school education at Alero primary school, Warri in 1982, secondary school education at Ovu Grammar school, Ovu in 1987 and finished her A Levels at School of Preliminary Studies, Yola, Adamawa state in 1991. In 1992 she was admitted into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for a B.A Drama programme (that programme is now known as B.A Theatre and Performing Arts) and graduated with a Second Class Upper degree in 1995, specializing in Acting. She did her National Youth Service at the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies in the same University.

In 1997 she joined the services of Department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile - Ife as a technical staff in Acting and Theatre Management. Three years later, she transferred her service to the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Uyo as a Theatre Manager and Studio Instructor in Acting. However, in 2006, she decided to become a full academic after nine years as a technical officer. Therefore, she joined the Department of Theatre arts, University of Abuja as a Graduate Assistant. She became an Assistant Lecturer after completing her M.A Theatre arts programme in 2009 before joining Federal University, Oye- Ekiti as a Lecturer II in March, 2012. She was promoted Lecturer I in 2015 before completing her Ph.D in Theatre Arts, with specialization in Costume Design and Construction at the University of Abuja in 2017. She was promoted Senior Lecturer in 2019 and Associate Professor in 2022. She currently has over 25 articles published in reputable journals across the globe, with some in high impact indexed platforms.

Dr Lilian E. Bakare has an impressive administrative experience in the university system having served as Staff Adviser to Theatre Arts Students Association in University of Abuja before Federal University, Oye- Ekiti where she served as Hall Warden from 2012 to 2023, member, students welfare committee from 2012 to 2018 and Faculty of Arts Representative at TETFUND Committee from 2018 to 2021. She is also serving as Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts and Head, Department of Theatre Arts from 2020 till date. She was appointed Chairman, Business Committee of Senate in April, 2023.

A devout Christian, Dr Bakare was the President, Good women Fellowship, Life Gate parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Province 4, Ekiti Region from 2017 to 2023 and currently a member of the Church Council. Her marriage to Prof. Rasaki Ojo Bakare is blessed with three Children.



Professor Olusola Anthony Fosudo

FELLOW OF SONTA (fsonta)

Professor Olusola Anthony Fosudo was born on the 18th of March 1958 at Ejirin in Lagos State into the family of Pa James Oshintayo and Otunba Rebecca Adejoke Fosudo. He started his early education at Emmanuel School, Italupe, Ijebu Ode, from where he proceeded to Nazareth College, Ibonwon, Epe, where he obtained his West African School Certificate in 1975. He also obtained a Teacher's Grade II Certificate from Muslim Teachers Training College, Surulere, Lagos in 1977. Between 1977 to 1989 when he clocked 31, young Olusola has through determination and hard work, obtained the following certificates and degrees: Certificate in Dramatic Arts (CDA), (1980, Ife); Diploma in Modern Salesmanship, (1980, London, UK); Diploma in Theatre Arts (1985, Ibadan) and the Degrees of Bachelor of Arts BA, (1988) Master of Arts MA (1989) and Doctor of Philosophy PhD in Theatre Arts (2008, all at UI, Ibadan).

He joined the teaching service of Lagos State University in 1994, and rose through the ranks to become the first Professor of Theatre Arts in the Department of Theatre Arts and Music, Lagos State University in 2016.

Sola Fosudo as he is fondly known in the Nigerian movie industry, has acted in, directed and produced several productions on the stage, Television and video film. He is considered a man that has successfully traversed the two worlds of theory and practice in a way that is hitherto perceived to be impossible. Having joined the Lagos State University at a time when his profile as a showbiz impresario was at an all-time high, many had thought that he was just trying to pull a media stunt. However, within a few years on the saddle in LASU, Fosudo initiated and pushed to the

realization of the emergence of the Diploma programme in Theatre, T.V. and Film production in 1997, which later culminated into the establishment of a full fledged department of Theatre Arts and Music in 2001. He served as the coordinator of the burgeoning diploma programme from 1999 to 2001. Between the years 2000 and 2001, he served the University as the Chairman, Operation Keep LASU Clean (An Environmental Task Force). He was later appointed as Pioneer Assistant Director (Academic), at LASU School of Part-Time Studies, Lekki Campus between 2003 to 2005. He served as Ag Head, Department of Theatre Arts and Music between 2005 and 2007. Prof. Sola Fosudo has also held the following positions at the Lagos State University: Sub-Dean of the Postgraduate School, 2010 to 2012; and Congregation Representative in the University Senate 2010 to 2012. The Pioneer Director of Information, Press and Public Relations, from 2011 to 2014. He Chaired the Committee for the establishment of the School of Film, Performing Arts and Cultural Studies at LASU between 2012 and 2013. He was a Visiting Lecturer at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Maiduguri, Borno State from 2015 to 2016. Upon his return from Maiduguri, he was appointed, Director of the Centre for Museums and African Heritage (LASU CEMAH). (Formerly LASU MUSEUM) from 2017 to 2018. In 2018 he was withdrawn from the Museum and appointed, Coordinating Head of the Philosophy Department from where he returned to serve as the substantive immediate past Head of Department of Theatre Arts and Music from 2019 to 2022. Sola Fosudo continues to serve Lagos State University in various committees, at the departmental, faculty and university level. He is a six (6) times Director of University Convocation Productions:

- Oyono Mbia's Three Suitors, one Husband (1997)
- Femi Osofisan's Many colours make the Thunder King (2000)
- Bode Sowande's Mammy Waters Wedding (2001)
- Femi Osofisan's Twingle Twangle, A Twinning Tale (2005)
- Akinwunmi Ishola's The Spirit of Lagos (2016)
- Bode Sowande's Mammy Water's Wedding (Reloaded, 2020)

SERVICES TO THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT

Starting from 1992 Sola Fosudo served as the Artistic Director of Akinwunmi Ishola's





abridged Spirit of Lagos for Lagos State Arts Council's Drama entry at the National Festival for Arts and Culture, Abuja. (Emerged 4th Position out of 36 States) In 1997 he was once again, appointed the Artistic Director - Lagos State Arts Council's Dance Drama Entry-Sonubi's Not With A clenched Fist at the National Festival for Arts and Culture, Abuja. (Emerged 1st Position out of 36 States). In 2002, he wrote and directed - godslave (A Stage Drama) devised from Bode Sowande's Tornadoes Full of Dreams, presented at the Lagos State Black Heritage Festival, Suntan Beach, Badagry. In 2010 he was appointed a member of the Central Planning Committee for the Lagos State Black Heritage Festival, Badagry. In 2016, he was the Resource Person at the Stakeholders Summit on Policy Direction and Promotion of Arts and Culture in Lagos State: NECCA House, Agidingbi, Ikeja, Fosudo returned in 2017 to direct - Akinwunmi Ishola's Spirit of Lagos, in commemoration of Lagos @ 50, at the National Theatre Iganmu, Lagos. July 12th & 13th. During the same period, he served as the Moderator- The Lagos International Conference, titled Towards a Smart City in Commemoration of Lagos @ 50 celebration, Eko Hotels, July 17th-19th. In 2019, he was the Special Guest- at the 1st Edition of "DECASIA": Berlin-Lagos Archival Film Festival, Stake Holders Workshop, by NFC on Thursday 24th October 2019. He was appointed in 2021 as the The Administrator, Lagos Theatre in Badagry, Topo ASCON Road. Fosudo was the Lead Paper presenter at the Lagos State Film and Video censors board Stakeholders Conference, on 31st August 2021 at State Treasury Resource Centre, Assbifi Rd, CBD Ikeja. The title of the Paper was "Content Development as a Driver of sustainable growth in the Film Industry".

SERVICES TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

Beyond serving his University and the Lagos State government, Prof. Fosudo has also served the nation in many capacities. In 1993, he was a Guest artist - Nigerian Contingent to Quidah Voodoo and Cultures Festival Cotonou, Quidah & PortNovo. November '93. In 1994, he served as a Member - Committee on World Aids Celebration, Federal Ministry of Health. In 2004 he was appointed facilitator of - the Workshop on Screen Acting for Nigerian Film Corporation at the Nigerian Film Institute, Jos. In 2009, he Chaired the 25th Play reading session by the National Theatre/National Troupe of Nigeria for the Play - Golden Fleas by Segun Adefila. He was invited to serve as a resource person in the Stakeholders Workshop on the Merger between National Theatre

and National Troupe of Nigeria, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja in 2010. He was also a resource person at the National Workshop on Culture and the Socio-Economic Transformation of Local Government in Nigeria: Setting an Agenda for Development, Shehu Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja, by Nigerian Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), October 2012. In 2019, he was a Special Guest/resource person at the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) Stakeholders Engagement on Policy Issues, Harmonisation, New Seal, Certificate and Inputs, 49A Joel Ogunaike Street, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos on Friday 6th September. In the same 2019, serving as the HOD and chief-host, his department hosted the National Film and Video Censors Board Conference on Media Literacy, Capacity Building and Film Classification at Aderemi Makanjuola Lecture Theatre, Lagos State University on Friday 14th - Sat 15th June. The success of the hosting led to another hosting of the National Film and Video Censors Board Conference on Film Classification and Distribution in Emerging Markets in Africa at Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies Conference Hall, Lagos State University on 4th - 5th July 2019. Fosudo also served ad a resource person in a two-day capacity building Workshop for Management and Staff of National Theatre Lagos, Mon 30th Nov - Tue 1st December 2020

AWARDS

Prof Sola Fosudo has received many National and International awards including the "Congress Service Award" by the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners, (NANTAP); the Afro Hollywood Award U.K. and U.S respectively; the National Merit Award for Arts and Culture (NAMAAC) Abuja; African Youth Congress award, Nigeria and the Gambia; African Credibility Awards for Academic Excellence, promotion of African Heritage and many others.

He is a member and fellow of many national and international organizations, such as:

- Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Management (FNIM)
- Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Resources and Scientific Management (FIRSM)
- Fellow of Theatre Arts, Nigeria (FTA)
- Member, British Film Institute (BFI)
- Member, Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists SONTA.
- Member, Research Board of Advisors, American Biographical Institute (ABI)

He was PRO Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (AWAM), and Board Chairman, Ikeja Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

Professor Mariam ASABE IYEH

FELLOW OF SONTA (fsonta)

EXTRACURRICULAR

Beyond his scholarly and showbiz activities, Sola Fosudo is a deeply religious man whose concern for the pitiable state of widows and orphans in Nigeria led him to set up the Blessed Fruit Foundation for Widows and Orphans (an NGO, established for the care of widows, their children and orphans, since 2008). Blessed Fruit Foundation has chapters in Abuja and Calabar. He is also the founder and President of the Blessed Fruit Orphanage (Managed by Blessed Fruit Foundation), established for the care of orphans. Abandoned and vulnerable children (since 2018). Fosudo's passion for the practice and the training of young artists led to the formation of Centre Stage Productions - an entertainment marketing and productions outfit where he serves as the CEO. In 2008 and 2010 he was Installed as Otunba Fonasewa of Simawa, Makun, Sagamu, Ogun State by HRM, Oba Gbenga Sonuga (Ogbodo 1) Fadesewa of Simawa, and as Otunba Bobagunwa of Igboye, Eredo-Epe Lagos State, by HRM, Oba Michael Onakoya, Orijeru of Igboye, respectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Prof. Sola Fosudo is widely travelled, He has participated in several national and international conferences, festivals, workshops and international cultural exchange programmes including the British Council Theatre Voice Seminar, Stratford, U.K; International Visitor Programme (IVP) to Washington DC. Minnesota, New Orleans, San Francisco and New York U.S.A. He is quoted in Newswatch's Who is Who in Nigeria: and also in Marquis' Who is Who in the World.

Prof Fosudo has to his credit well over 50 publications in reputable local and international journals including chapters in books. He has edited and co-edited about six (6) books in the areas of Theatre Marketing, Film and Creative Writing.

Over the years, Fosudo has been instrumental to the successful completion of PhD


programmes of members of academic ranks in his department; supervised over five (5) PhD candidates and served as External Examiner in numerous others. Prof Olusola Fosudo is married to Mrs Yetunde Abiola Fosudo and they are blessed with children.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I hereby present to you Professor Olusola Anthony Fosudo.



Prof. Mariam Asabe Iyeh is lecturer in Ambrose Alli University and a three-time Head of Department of Theatre and Media Arts 2010 - 2013, 2016 - 2018 and 2021-2023. She is a dance ethnologist, librettist, choreographer, playwright, singer and performer. Prof. Iyeh is a native of Warrake in Owan Local Government Area of Edo State. She was born on the 5th of July 1969 in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. She attended Bishop Smith Memorial Primary School, Ilorin (1975-1981) and proceeded to Egbe Girls College, Egbe, Kogi State (then Kwara State) (1981 - 1986). At both primary and secondary school levels, Mariam Iyeh (nee Bello) exhibited prospects in academics and talents in dancing and singing which she pursued to the highest academic level. In primary school, she led her school's cultural group to inter-school competitions in traditional dances with wins. As a





multi-linguist, while in secondary school, at graduation ceremonies, she led different ethnic dances, which left many wondering as to where she hails from.

Prof. Iyeh obtained her first degree in Performing Arts (Dance Major) in 1991 from the University of Ilorin, Kwara State. She obtained her Master's degree from the Department of English and Modern European Languages, Edo State University, Ekpoma, with a stress in (choreography) in 1999. She proceeded to bag a Ph.D. degree in African Dance from the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan in 2008. Prof. Iyeh began her academic career in the Department of English and Modern European Languages, Edo State University, in 1993, as a graduate assistant. Years later she became a pioneer staff of the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, where she rose through the ranks to become a full professor of dance in 2016 which earned her the place as the first female dance professor in Nigeria.

Prof. Iyeh has served in various administrative capacities, first as the Corper's Liaison Officer (CLO) Dustse-Ma Local Government Area of Kastina State 1991 -1992; Secretary General (NAWACS) National Association of Women Academics, AAU Chapter, 2001 -2008; P.R.O (NAWACS) AAU Chapter, 2009 - 2013; Welfare Officer, ASUU AAU Chapter, 2009 - 2014; Member, Medical Committee ASUU, AAU 2009; Member, ASUU National Committee on Human Rights 2010 - 2012; National Treasurer, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artist (SONTA) 2013 - 2017; National Vice President, Association of Dance Scholars & Practitioners of Nigeria (ADSPON), 2015 - 2017; Ex-Officio 2 (ADSPON) 2017; Member, Committee on Strategic Planning for SONTA; Member, Committee on Strategic Planning for the Faculty of Arts, 2015 - 2019; Adjudicator, NYSC Cultural Programmes 2017, Abuja; Secretary AAU Adhoc Committee on Mode of Dressing 2004; Member of Documentary Committee on AAU, 2011; Welfare Committee Rep to Theatre & Media Arts 2009 - 2013; Vice-Chairman Welfare Committee, Faculty of Arts 2011 - 2011; Chairman Welfare Committee, Faculty of Arts, AAUE; Chairman Junior staff Disciplinary Committee, AAU 2017-date; Member, University Convocation Ceremonial Committee 2010 - date; Assistant Hall Warden, Emotan Hall; Patron Man 'O' War, Ambrose Alli Chapter, Ekpoma; Patron Boys Scout, Ambrose Alli Chapter, Ekpoma; AVC Nominee for Various Staff Appraisal & Promotions exercises, among others.

Prof. Mariam Asabe Iyeh, a woman of many parts,

is known as "Madam Abeni," a name she adopted for her short drama skits on stage and in the social media. She featured as Margaret Benson Idahosa in *Benson Idahosa Trails*, a movie directed and produced by Stanley Ohuikuare in 2017; Olori in the *Vow* by Wale Ogunyemi directed by Ayo Akinwale in 1988; Nyobi in the *Black Hermit* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in 1989; Madam Bambina in *Our Husband has gone Mad Again* (1990); Alma Mater in "The Ivory Tower" convocation plays at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State written and directed by Zulu Zofola of blessed memory; Abeni in "Abeni : The Thorn that Pricks," a play written and performed by Mariam Asabe Iyeh, A command performance for the commissioning of a 1000 capacity lecture Hall by Governor Adams Aliu Oshiomole, 2016; Abeni in "Abeni on the News," a command comedy skit performance on the visit of the Minister of State Education, Prof Anthony Gozie Anwuka in 2017, written and performed by Mariam A. Iyeh; "What else can a Man do for his Country," a play written by Mariam Iyeh, a command performance for the founder's day, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

Among her librettos and choreographies are, (1) 'The Tragedy of a people' a dance libretto written and performed in 1998 as the practical component of her M.A. dissertation, Edo State University; (2) 'Efunsetan Aniwura: A victim of Political Intrigues' A dance adaptation in partial fulfillment of her B.A. Dissertation at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State; (3) "Sunset at Dawn" written by Mariam Iyeh, story by Osobase Elvis, etc. (4) Invasion; (5) Nemesis. Among her online comedies are Madam Abeni in "sekin out" valentine zanku, Abeni is president, Abeni and EFCC etc. She is the initiator organizer and Chief choreographer of Theatre La Danza from 2009-till date. Theatre La danza is a major annual dance programme in Ambrose Alli University with over 1,500 viewers per sitting. It attracts artists and dance troupes from different parts of Nigeria. Prof. Iyeh has three published dance research books to her credit two published plays and poems and numerous articles in both local and international journals and books. She is a resource person both to the academic community and the society at large. She has some distinguished awards to her credit. Prof. Iyeh is an ordained Pastor in Word Fountain Assembly Church, Benin City. She is happily married to Pastor Augustine Nnamdi Iyeh and their marriage is blessed with lovely children. She is the current President of ADSPON.

GREATER SONTA, 2023: SONTA PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Once again, on behalf of the Chairman and Members of Board of Trustees as well as Executive Members, I say merry Christmas and compliments of the season to distinguished members of our great society. Merry Christmas simply means “be as happy as you can during this time of the year” and I presume you all tried to be as happy, in spite of the challenging circumstances. We have had quite an eventful year with highs and lows. Nevertheless, as faithful adherents of our dear profession, we acted our way through the fading year and in a few hours, we shall triumphantly be entering another historic year-2023 (election year), in our dear Nation-Nigeria. We shall be required to go to the polls to elect another set of leaders who would lead us in the next four years. This decision is as crucial as it is critical to the survival of our country and by extension our great Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). Our choices in the forthcoming general election would go a long way in impacting either positively or negatively, the nation generally and SONTA in particular. We, therefore, must be dispassionate, conscientious and considerate in making these choices. As creative artists and culture experts, I have no doubt in my mind that we all shall approach this exercise with an open but informed disposition.

In spite of challenges of the fading year, we still were able to maintain our tradition of convening the Annual International Conference and General Meeting. The 35th edition of the

conference tagged 'Abuja 2022', was hosted by the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Abuja, from 29th November – 3rd December, 2022. Although, the eight months strike by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), impacted negatively on both the planning and attendance to the conference by members, the National Executive Committee as well as Local Organizing Committee, managed to orchestrate a successful conference in the circumstance. I want to sincerely appreciate those who made huge sacrifices to physically attend the conference. It was colourful as all our invited guests attended the opening ceremony. I am aware of the clamour for a hybrid conference where those who are unable to physically attend would join via zoom. We indeed made provision for this and will continue to do so, as a number of factors have recently combined to force this approach on us as a world best practice. However, I want to encourage members to see the need to make efforts at physically participating at our conferences. Ours' is a performing profession and it is more fun and psychologically edifying when we are physically present to experience, behold and appreciate the entire gamut of the conference. On this premise I want to believe that SONTA-BENUE 2023 would be well attended.

I deeply appreciate members for their individual show of commitment and fidelity to annual registration. As we can see on our platforms, about 155 members paid their regular annual dues and 3 members paid the life membership dues for 2022. What is even more intriguing being the fact that a greater percentage of those who paid are our senior colleagues in the professorial cadre, some have already commenced payment for 2023. This shows responsibility, commitment and professionalism; virtues that must be emulated by younger colleagues who should derive inspiration from this exemplary conduct to aspire to higher professional heights. On our part as an executive committee, we shall ensure the judicious appropriation and application of resources that accrue to the Society. A detailed statement of account will be presented during the Annual General Meeting in Makurdi for members to peruse.

By His grace we have been able to secure approval for the Nigerian Theatre Journal to now be on the African Journals Online (AJOL) – the world's largest and preeminent platform of African



Professor Gowon Ama Doki, FSONTA, MNAL
SONTA PRESIDENT

Conted next Page



published scholarly journals. This is just as we reported during the Annual General Meeting that we secured E-ISSN for the Journal. We are now working on acquiring a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for the journal which plans are at advanced stage. We have been able to pay and expand our website and more content is being uploaded on a regular basis now, members are encouraged to visit the website for regular updates on our activities.

2023 holds a lot of promise for us as individuals and SONTA as an association. A few of our members are already in strategic positions and it is my earnest prayer that a good number shall get into even more lucrative positions that would benefit SONTA. To this end, let me thank our erstwhile Vice President, my teacher and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Tor Iorapuu, who generously donated half a million towards the success of the just concluded Conference and Annual General Meeting, I pray the good Lord to replenish your pocket a million fold.

I appreciate Professor S. O. O. Amali, FSONTA, OON, Chairman Board of Trustees (BoT) and indeed members of the Board for their commitment to the success and survival of the Society. In spite of age and schedule, Professor Amali made sure he attended and sat through the opening ceremony of the conference in Abuja. Professor(s) Irene Salami-Agunloye, Emmanuel Dandaura and Sunday Enessi Ododo (members of BoT), all sat through the AGM to offer guidance and direction. Senior colleagues like Professor(s) Olu Obafemi, Mabel Ewrierhoma, Duro Oni, Ahmed Yerima, Charity Angya, M. I. Umar-Buratai, Ojo Bakare, Alex Asigbo, Sola Fosudo and a host of others who for good cause were unable to physically attend, all called to encourage and tender apologies. This level of humility and show of concern is humbling and must be appreciated. Members of the National Executive Committee have been awesome; they have continued to offer varying degrees of sacrifice to ensure the survival of our great Society. I appreciate the generality of our members who are ever ready to respond to calls of duty. Without you, there can be no SONTA and I pray the good lord to continue to bless and protect us all.

Lastly, though not many of you were aware that I had a health challenge which I concealed and bore through the conference, I came back straight to a TURP surgery, which by His grace was successful and I have substantially recovered. I thank members like Professor Ododo, who came all the way from Abuja to visit me on my sick bed. My VC and the Benue State University chapter of SONTA were amazing, I couldn't have asked for a better family. With your prayers and good wishes, I shall enter the New Year in good health and stable condition. Together we shall forge a common front for a GREATER SONTA, 2023! I

News Updates on SONTA Members Successful PhD Defences

1. Victor Osae Ihidero
2. Terngu Gwar
3. Oluchi Igili
4. Cecil Olizedeme Ozobeme
5. Kingsley Imomo-Emi Ineritei
6. Martina Omorodion
7. Ore-ofe Williams
8. Nsa Bassej
9. Agozie Ugwu
10. Jonathan Ezeh
11. Treasure Nwani
12. Godwin Onuche
13. Uwaoma Nwazue
14. Ayodeji Kunle Kayode
15. Chibuike Macdonald Abunike
16. Oluyinka Smart Babalola
17. Chijindu Mgbemere

Professorial Announcements

1. **Prof. Adebisi Ademakinwa**, promoted to professorial chair, UNILAG
2. **Associate Prof. Felix Emoruwa**, promoted to associate professorial level, UNILAG
3. **Associate Prof. Bunmi N. Adedina**, promoted to associate professorial level, LASUED
4. **Associate Prof. Femi A. Adedina**, promoted to associate professorial level, LASUED

Appointments

- **Dr Somtoo Arinze-Umobi** appointed Head, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, NAU, Awka
- **Prof Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh**, appointed Director, Centre for Migration Studies, NAU, Awka
- **Prof Alex Chinwuba Asigbo** appointed, Director, School of General Studies, NAU, Awka
- **Dr. Emenike Azunwo** appointed as HOD of the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt



From the Convener's Desk

**Prof. Abraham A. Idoko,
HOD, Theatre Arts, BSU**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you most cordially to the Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi at this official opening of the 36th edition of the International Conference/Annual General Meeting of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA); where we have the privilege of hosting. I am more than grateful to stand here and welcome you all.

This event is the culmination of an enormous collective effort which began in 1982 (the inception of SONTA), championing quality curricula, research and promotion of academic discourse and robust practice in the areas of theatre, media, film and culture in Nigeria and beyond. From that moment, many individual and institutional contributions have been made in one form or another towards the organization of its annual conventions and conferences.

Benue State University is an acknowledged institution that is committed to inculcating discipline, diligence and artistic innovations in consistence with the aspirations of the theatre profession. This commitment is justified in our readiness in hosting SONTA Conventions and Conferences. Interestingly, we are hosting SONTA for the third time in the last three decades.

In recent years, we witnessed a significant increase of global concern with the rational utilization of renewable natural resources, and with the conservation of species from the impact of an expanding society with an ever more sophisticated technology at its disposal. We are witnessing the most critical environmental challenges in human history, exposing the climate, planet, lives, and future of humanity and civilization all at risk. This has called for interdisciplinary conversations towards advancing solution that would restore in the already polarized ecosystem.

Let me on behalf of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), express our most sincere wish that the discussions and agreements resulting from the two

days to come will positively contribute to effective interventions that will set pathways for a more resilient, productive and guaranteed stability in our ecosystem; in line with the aim of this Conference and the philosophy of our profession. As you cross-fertilize artistic ideas to not only to move the theatre profession forward, but also to effect the desired change in the society; we look forward to an amazing time with you all ahead.

Very specially, I welcome our respected lead paper presenters, honourees and distinguished participants. You are most assured that we are ready to make this Conference fascinating—with our well-packed activities that will make your stay in Makurdi memorable. To say that you are in the 'Food Basket of the Nation' and are most assured of savouring a wide variety of the Nation's most treasured delicacies is to be understating the fact. Feel at home.

May I also take this time, to very specially appreciate my indefatigable Vice Chancellor, Prof. Joe Tor Iorapuu, FSONTA at whose request, Makurdi 2023 SONTA became possible. He has always raised the bar for hard work and dedication in the society. To talk about him would possibly consume a lot of time, given the many roles he played and has continued to play to bring us where we are today. Sir, your immense contributions to only SONTA, Benue State University and the education system in Nigeria in general will not only benefit humanity; but will also stimulate the upcoming generations to strive for a better future.

On behalf of the Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University Makurdi and the Local Organizing Committee, I assure you all that this year's Convention and Conference is pregnant with ideas that will open up new vistas in our scholarly engagements; given its apt and current theme: Performing Climate Change, Citizens Agitations and Food Security in Africa. Thank you, and have a wonderful time.



SONTA 20

SONTA EXCO-LOC PAY COURTESY VISIT ON BSU VC - PROF TOR JOE IORAPUU



As preparations gather momentum towards the successful hosting of the forthcoming 36th Annual International Conference/AGM of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, SONTA, the Executive Council, and the Local Organising Committee, LOC, SONTA Makurdi 2023, on Thursday, 27th April, 2023, paid a courtesy visit ON the Vice Chancellor, Benue State University, Makurdi, Prof. Tor Joe Iorapuu, FSONTA, in his office. The SONTA President, Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, FSONTA, who led the delegation, in Makurdi to assess the state of preparedness of the host University, expressed SONTA's gratitude to the VC and the BSU Management for accepting to host SONTA 2023 Int'l Conference/AGM.

The President of SONTA, Prof. Doki added that the visit was part of the strategy to motivate the host institution, as well as assess the level of preparedness of the host department.

While welcoming the delegation, the VC, Benue State University, BSU, Prof. Joe Tor Iorapuu, FSONTA, thanked the SONTA EXCO for the hosting right, the trust and confidence reposed in the University, and promised to do his best to ensure a very memorable Conference. In addition, the VC suggested the reintroduction of Workshop sessions at SONTA conferences and urged the LOC to bring back the Kwagh Hir performances of the Tiv as a competitive component to spice up the event, since this year's Conference/AGM is going to be hosted by Benue people.

The Chairperson, LOC, for the SONTA Makurdi 2023, and former Vice Chancellor, BSU, Prof. Charity A. Angya, FSONTA, promised the Exco and all members of SONTA an unforgettable and more enriching experience during the 2023 Conference/AGM. She added that the LOC's promise is predicated on the current VC's passion for our profession, noting that her Committee is committed to staging a bigger and more successful SONTA than the edition she hosted as the sitting Vice Chancellor in 2013, about ten years ago.

The DVC (Academic), Prof Mike O. Odey, gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the BSU Management and promised the support of the Management to the VC and BSU to ensure a good outing at the Conference/AGM. Also present on the BSU team were, the University Librarian, Prof Innocent Ekoja, representative of the University's Provost, and the representative of the Registrar, Mr Ahola Ogeh. The SONTA President was joined on the visit by other members of the EXCO, like Prof. Tunji Azeez, VP (Admin & Policy), Prof. Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo, VP (Projects & Programmes), Prof. Alex C. Asigbo, FSONTA, (IPP & Ex-Officio), Dr. Tochukwu J. Okeke, the PRO, and Dr. Imam Mohammed, the Events Manager. Prof. Abraham A. Idoko, Head of Department, Theatre Arts, BSU, and the Convener was also present during the visit.



Department of Theatre Arts, BSU Preparing to Host SONTA 2023



Introduction

The Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University Makurdi secured hosting rights for the 36th International Conference and AGM of SONTA 2023 at the University of Abuja which played host to the 2022 SONTA. Consequently, the Department constituted the Local Organizing Committee and Sub-committees giving the terms of reference as follows:

The Central Planning Committee of SONTA 2023 consists of the following:

1. Prof. Charity Angya FSONTA- Chairperson
2. Prof. Abraham Ajene Idoko- HoD/Convener
3. Prof. Gowon Ama Doki FSONTA- SONTA President
4. Dr. Marcel. Asen- Secretary

Conference Theme and Subthemes

With the constitution of subcommittees, members swung into action with the secretariat committee proposing the conference theme and subthemes which was analyzed by the entire Department and arrived at the theme; "Performing Climate Change, Citizens' Agitations and Food Security in Africa" with the following sub-themes:

Performing Arts, Climate Change and Food Security
Performing Arts, Food Security and the Farmer/Herder Crisis
Nollywood, Climate change, and Citizens' Agitations
Dramaturgy and Food Security in Africa
TiE, Climate Change and Food Security
TfD Climate Change and Food Security
Costume and Make-up and Climate Change
Dance, Climate Change and Sustainable Food Security
Music, Climate Change and Sustainable Food Security
Stenography, Climate Change, and Citizens' Agitations
Home video, Climate Change, and Citizens Agitations.
Performing Arts, Civil Society Action and Citizens' Agitations
New Media, Climate Change and Active Citizenship

Theatre and Community Action Against Food Security
Media, Communication and Environmental Justice
Ethnomusicology, Citizens' Agitation and Food Security
Performing Arts, Conflict Management and Environmental Crisis.
Theatre Design, and Climate Change
Theatre Management and Climate Change
Children's Theatre, Climate Change and Food Security
Culture, Food Crisis and Environmental Justice
Performing Arts, climate change, gender inequality and marginalised groups.

This was presented to SONTA EXCO who approved same with some modifications. Consequently, the theme and sub-themes were communicated to SONTA members and members of the academia, arts institutions and cultural departments for their necessary participation at the conference.

One hundred and twenty-three (123) abstracts were received for the conference while over Fifty (50) full papers have also been received at the time of going to press.

General Preparation

Considering that the Department will be hosting SONTA for the third time, it is not oblivious of what to do. As such, all committees are working tirelessly to ensure that participants have a memorable conference come July 11th-14th 2023. The Vice-Chancellor has already subsidized accommodation by 50% which will go a long way in encouraging many participants to attend the conference. With eminent personalities of SONTA in Benue State and the Department of Theatre Arts, Benue State University Makurdi, we know that much will be expected of us and we are equal to the task. On behalf of the LOC, I wish to assure all prospective participants of SONTA 2023 that they will not regret the experience hence no one should consider giving up the conference for any other thing. Thank you.

Dr. Marcel. Asen, LOC Sec.



The General Manager/CEO National Theatre, **Prof Sunday Enessi Ododo**

**Delivers Lead City University's
Maiden Faculty of Arts Public Lecture**



The General Manager/CEO National Theatre Lagos, Prof Sunday E. Ododo has called on Nigeria's tertiary institutions to equip graduates with the practical orientation that will prepare them for life outside the university as well equip them with the right efficiency and proficiency to fit into the labour market.

Delivering the maiden Faculty of Arts Public Lecture of Lead City University, Ibadan on May 16th at the University's International Conference Centre, Prof Ododo bemoaned the skills gap that currently exists amongst graduates of tertiary institutions which he said makes them unemployable. In his lecture titled: "Re-engineering University's Graduates for Relevance in Industry", the one-time National President of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA) and Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (FNAL) hinted that the labour market needs a workforce that can apply skills to generate profit while universities appear to merely provide knowledge, with little or no practical orientation to its graduates.

To stem this tide, Professor Ododo was of the view that the current Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) would go a long way in shaping and preparing university graduates to

become more relevant and competitive in their specializations as programmes in the universities would now be taught to reflect current realities of the 21st century. He further stressed the need to start divesting knowledge to include entrepreneurial orientation and skills. This way, he said, graduates are not only prepared to make organizations and companies they would work for more profitable but would also develop a consciousness of self-employment and business mindedness thereby becoming employers of labour themselves.

Prof Ododo also suggested that lecturers require the exposure of practice outside the four walls of the university as some lecturers, as argued in some quarters, become complacent and lose track of current trends in their fields of study. This gap he said could be filled if training and research funds are made available for them to collaborate and share experiences with other colleagues and professionals in their fields or with common interdisciplinary interests across global scales. In his remark, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Kabiru A. Adeyemo thanked the Guest Lecturer, Prof Ododo for finding time to visit Lead City University, Ibadan and was full of praise for the new insights being generated by the public lecture.

The Dean of Arts, Prof Donald Odeleye in his speech also reiterated that the 21st century with all life's challenges is a big opportunity for self-expression, international growth and collaboration. He said the Faculty's Public lecture is game-changer of sorts because "up till now, the employability of Nigerian university graduates is in question. The reason for lecture he added, is to contextualise our challenges as a country and get more incisive reflections on the way forward. Highlights of the event featured dance performances from students of Department of Performing Arts and Film Studies, presentation of books and other reading resource materials by the Guest lecturer to the university.



Performing Arts and Film Studies Department, Lead City University inducts 170 Students

The Department of Performing Arts and Film Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan has inducted 170 students admitted during the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic sessions. In a colourful ceremony that featured breathtaking performances and displays by the fresh students, the Head of Department, Dr Emmanuel Uzoji remarked that the induction ceremony is important activity that introduces the newbie to the world of the theatre, which he said presents a universe of endless mutations that that takes the artist on a voyage of limitless opportunities.

He hinted that 2023 induction ceremony which featured 170 participants is the highest number of inductees to ever grace the LCU stage. Dr Uzoji also commended the dedication, commitment and sacrifice of both staff and students in making the ceremony an unforgettable experience for the university community pointing out that the students' efforts have shown that they represent the brightest hope for the theatre profession in the future. The induction ceremony and grand performance had in attendance the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof Kabiru A. Adeyemo, the Registrar, Dr (Mrs) Oyebola Ayeni and the Dean of Arts, Prof Donald Odeleye.



Igbinedion University Okada



Skits not threatening stand-up comedy –Bovi

By Olamide Famuwagun

Nigerian stand-up comedian, actor, and writer, Abovi Ugboma, popularly known as Bovi, has said skit-making is not a threat to stand-up comedy. In an exclusive chat with Midweek Entertainment, Bovi said before the advent of social media, skit-making was used to promote stand-up comedy shows, adding that it made no sense for people to conclude that skit-making was a threat to stand-up comedy. He said, "Skits threatening stand-up comedy is a very stupid assumption. Skit making is skit making and stand-up comedy is stand-up comedy. There has always been skit-making, even before the advent of social media. "I don't know where the theory that one is affecting the other came from, it makes absolutely no sense and I hate to indulge in the topic because even before social media, we used to use skits to promote our shows, people can watch skits and still go for shows.

Culled 25th January 2023,
from *Punch*

<https://punchng.com/s>



NATIONAL THEATRE RECEIVES EXCELLENCE AWARD AT GHANA'S 66TH INDEPENDENCE THANKSGIVING RECEPTION

By Tolulope Ayileka



The National Theatre has been bestowed with an award of excellence as a commendable symbol of friendship, diplomacy, and unity between Nigeria and Ghana advancing its course through sports, culture, trade, commerce, and entertainment. This was at Ghana's 66th Independence Thanksgiving Reception which took place in Lagos where the management team of the National Theatre led by GM/CEO Prof. Sunday Ododo was received with pomp and pageantry.

Prof Sunday Ododo who was also the chairman of the occasion appreciated the chief host of the event, Joseph Anayo Odebeatu, CEO of Ojez Entertainment for the honour and privilege given to his team and the National Theatre. He went ahead to commend him for his efforts in bringing the two strongholds of West Africa, Nigeria and Ghana under the same roof. He equated the relationship between the two countries as one of healthy sibling rivalry. Prof Ododo also commended the host for using the tool of entertainment as an olive branch between the countries. Revealing that the relationship Ojez Entertainment and the National Theatre has with Ghana is a commendable and praiseworthy one.

The General Manager of Sparkling FM, Effiong Nyong was in attendance and gave a remarkable address on the pre-colonial and post-colonial relationship between Nigeria and Ghana and how they have been able to stay connected and maintain deep relations through music, sports, culture and entertainment. He also revealed that the Elders Forum will be returning to Nigeria and Ghana to further strengthen the bond.

Also in attendance was the special guest of honour, Her Excellency Samata Gifty Bukari, The Deputy High Commissioner of Ghana to Nigeria and The National President of Neghacon, Hon. Frank Ekow Quaye. Several Nollywood veterans such as Charles Inojie, Chinedu Ikedieze, Segun Arinze and many others were also in attendance to show their support for the prestigious occasion.

Culled March 30, 2023, from: <https://artourey.com/national-theatre-receives-excellence-award-at-ghanas-66th-independence-thanksgiving-reception/>

History of Sam Loco Efe

Culled from: EsanRadio/TV.

Sam Loco Efe was born in Enugu on 25th December 1945. His father was a warder, by name— Arase Efeimwonkiyeke. He was a Benin man who worked in Eastern Nigeria and his mother was a petty trader who sold akara. He spent his childhood in the town of Abakaliki in present-day Ebonyi State. In fact, he spent much of his years in Abakaliki. When he was in primary school, he lost his father. He had to support his mother in her business which made him spend longer than usual years before graduating from primary school. He started acting while still in school when a theatre group came to stage a play called "The Doctor In Spite of Himself", afterwards he discussed with members of the group about the theatre and performance arts. In elementary school, he was a member of various groups including a drama society that performed a rendition of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar at an Eastern regional arts festival in Abakaliki, the play came last in the drama competition but Efe was noted as the best actor which earned him a scholarship to complete elementary school. After finishing elementary school, he attended various secondary schools and was active in the drama society, organizing a performance of The Doctor in Spite of Himself and a play called Vendetta.

After secondary school, he was a member of a traveling theatre group and played soccer earning the moniker locomotive later shortened as loco. That was how his name Loco came to being. During the Biafran genocidal War, Efe fought on the Biafra side until he returned to Benin in 1968. He saw himself as an Igbo man and a Biafran before anything. While in Benin in the 1960s, he started the Ovonranwen Theatre Group with their debut production being Ogierhiakhi's Obaiwape. However, his earnings from acting was meagre and thereafter, he traveled to Lagos to seek better career opportunities and to explore a career in football. He got his first job in 1972 working for Michelin tyre company. He applied for the position without



knowing how to drive which was a requirement for the job. He learned how to drive a day before the interview. During the interview, he passed the oral interview and failed the driving test but honesty about his error in judgment won over the interviewer.

He worked for Michelin selling tyres in Lagos, Ijebu Ode and Abeokuta. He soon left Michelin to work for Dunlop Tyres as a Senior Sales Representative in the Tyres and Allied products division. While working for Dunlop in Benin City, he was a cast member of NTA Benin's television series, *Hotel de Jordan* and also performed in a rendition of Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are Not to Blame*. In 1977, he left sales for a career in theatre. He auditioned and got the lead part of *Langbodo*, a play by Dapo Adelugba presented during FESTAC. After the end of FESTAC, Adelugba introduced him to a friend of his at University of Ibadan about opportunities in theatre. Adelugba's friend was able to get Efe a position as a senior artiste in the institution.

Sam Loco would later become a household name and one of the early pioneers of Nollywood. He made the world laugh. He featured in *Things Fall Apart* TV series in the 1980s. Some movies he featured in include: *Tom and Jerry*, *Final World Cup*, *Long John*, *Ukwa*, *Ak d*, *My Love*, *I Want to Harvest You*, *The Return of Anunuebe* and many others. Sam Loco Efe died in his hotel room at Amak h a, Owere, Imo State on 7th August 2011. Till date, nobody knows the cause of his death. Ventolin was found with him when the room was broken open. Report has it that Sam Loco has been an asthmatic patient.



The Director General National Council for Arts and Culture, Otunba Segun Runsewe has been conferred with the Distinguished Leadership Award by the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) for 2022.

Presenting the Award, the president of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists SONTA, Prof. Gowon Doki said the yearly statutory award was reserved for exemplary leaders in the country with distinguished record of service to institutions, government and other sectors of the Nigerian society. Prof Doki added that as a professional body, "we have watched how you have silently brought to bear on the National Council for Arts and Culture, a sense of pride and worth with your administrative prowess."

The president also remarked that Otunba Runsewe has positively projected the image of Nigeria home and abroad within the culture and tourism space and is also working assiduously to transform Nigeria's rich and diverse cultural heritage into a viable economy to complement our gain from oil. He restated that the award which is the Society's way of recognizing and encouraging hard work will spur the Director General to continue in his quest to bring to the fore the underlining benefits in the Arts, Culture and Tourism sector of our economy.

In his response, Otunba Runsewe thanked the association for finding him worthy of the award which confirms his status in the industry. Runsewe said as an astute believer in the Nigerian project, he will leave no stone unturned in his quest to reposition the Arts, Culture and Tourism sector to be the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. The Director General who reechoed his respect for SONTA promised to collaborate with the association in areas that will provide a veritable springboard to realize their mandates. Highlight of the visit was the decoration of the Director General with the title of Hsonta.

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



A Scene of the play, *Woza Albert* as staged at Pit Theatre, Dept. of Dramatic Arts, OAU, Ile-Ife on 16th December, 2022



Ahmed Yerima's *Túti* as staged at Pit Theatre, Department of Dramatic Arts, OAU, Ile-Ife on 20th December, 2022



A Scene of the Play, *Dansoho: The Artist* as staged at Pit Theatre, Dept. of Dramatic Arts, OAU, Ile-Ife on 19th December, 2022

Today, May 25, 2023, I am delighted to announce that ten leading humanistic scholars have been conferred with 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 ten 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 Ayobami Kehinde** (Literary Studies) – Regular Fellow)
2. **Professor Asabe Kabir Usman** (Literary Studies) – Regular Fellow)
3. **Professor Solomon Oluwole Oyetade** (Languages) – Regular Fellow)
4. **Professor Herbert S. Igboanusi** (Languages) – Regular Fellow)
5. **Professor Egodi Uchendu** (History) – Regular Fellow)
6. **Professor Olufunke Asake Adeboye** (History) – Regular Fellow)
7. **Professor Emmanuel Samu Dandaura** (Theatre, Visual and Performing Arts) – Regular Fellow)
8. **Professor Irene Isoken Agunloye** (Theatre, Visual and Performing Arts) – Regular Fellow!
9. **Professor Isaac Olawale Albert** (Interdisciplinary & Multi-disciplinary Studies) – Regular Fellow)
10. **Professor Akinbiyi Akinlabi** (Languages and Linguistics) – Overseas Fellow)

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 Duro Oni, FNAL
President, Nigerian Academy of Letters/
Chairman, College of Fellows of NAL

From The President's Desk

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

It is that time of the year for our dear society – SONTA, when we all, as professional colleagues, gather on a particular campus to celebrate our common existence as thespians, share results of our individual researches and felicitate one another. This year, as it has become our tradition in recent times, we collectively took the decision to honour one of our own, Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu, himself a former Editor and Vice-President of SONTA, who was appointed Vice-Chancellor, of the prestigious Benue State University, Makurdi, by granting hosting rights to Benue State University, upon his request. I am happy to state that we made the best decision as this gentleman VC, has gone out of his way to ensure that we have one of the most successful conferences. I leave you all to savour the sweet melodies from the Benue Valley.

This year's conference is unique, coming just after a new government has taken charge of both the nation and state. As artists, we are trained and usually inclined to giving hope to the hopeless. As a result, I urge all participants to remain hopeful in the Nigerian project. I have no iota of doubt that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT), will deliver on his campaign promises. He has been around Nigeria for a while championing progressive struggles for justice as well as building solid political blocs across the country with huge political capital, which he should naturally explore and exploit for a better Nigeria.

As Theatre Artists, we owe a lot to Benue State as our members have been called upon severally to serve the State at very high levels. The likes of Professor(s) Iyorwuese Hagher, Saint Gbilekaa, Charity Angya, Tor Joe Iorapuu, as



well as Dr. Sam Ode, Robert Tyough, Langba Kapu, and a host of others have served variously as Elected Representatives of the State as members of the National Assembly, Minister, Chief of Staff to the Governor, Vice-Chancellors, Permanent Secretary, etc. It is instructive that we now have a Deputy Governor as one of us, and we pray that in a few years from now, perhaps, after his principal, Very Reverend Father Hyacinth Alia, we will have to edit his script to remove the Deputy.

Ours is to write, ours is to critique, ours is to construct, ours is to deconstruct, just as ours is to reconstruct as well as perform to instruct. This is precisely what we are gathering in Makurdi to

do. We have been at the vanguard of promoting the virtues and tenets of good governance in Nigeria for some time now. Notable personalities in the business of creativity for development and development communication are amongst those expected to grace this year's conference and Annual General Meeting.

We are poised to interrogate the ravaging impact of climate change on our society, which has continued to threaten with warmer temperatures and changing weather patterns, disrupting the usual balance with severe and frequent catastrophic conditions like storms, flooding, droughts, desert expansion and reduction in lands for growing foods. All these have jointly combined to introduce far-reaching and broad based problematics, which continue to generate aggravating circumstances with tension and restiveness.

There is, therefore, the urgent need to look critically into these contradictions as they affect life and living conditions not just in Nigeria, but the world over. As earlier alluded, we as theatre and film scholars must take up the challenge to investigate and put into perspective the issues around this phenomena, for managers of our economy to leverage for informed policies and frameworks of administration. I am optimistic that a strong worded and workable communique, would be fashioned out at the end of this conference, which will be shared with Government at all levels for implementation.

With a brand new government in place, may I take the liberty to encourage those in, or may find themselves in power to look towards professionalism and excellence in governance. We must search and identify professionals with capacity to man relevant institutions, ministries and parastatals. It is on this note that I want to commend His Excellency, Abiodun Abayomi Oyebanji, the Executive Governor of Ekiti State. While I was writing this welcome speech, I received the cheering news that one of us, the first Professor of Dance and Choreography in Nigeria,

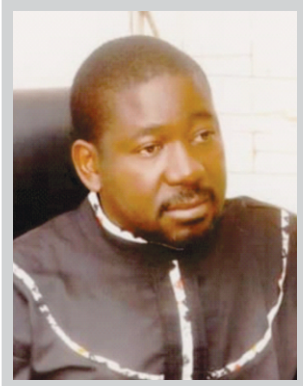
Professor Rasaki Ojo Bakare, was re-nominated to serve as Commissioner in His Excellency's cabinet. This indeed, is heartwarming and we as a society owe a debt of gratitude to this great man for recognizing hard work and professionalism. I encourage other Excellences to take a cue from Governor Oyebanji.

Let me thank specially, members of our Board of Trustees, led by our father, VERY PROFESSOR (emphasis mine), Shamsudeen O. O. Amali, who have continued to stand solidly behind us to ensure that the society continues to blossom. In a similar vein, I salute the tenacity and resilience of the Conference of Professors, led by our enigmatic Professor Olu Obafemi. With your support, we shall overcome all challenges and move with the courage and strength of a lion to conquer the Culture and Creative Industries. The committee of Heads of Department of Theatre and Film Arts, have been awesome and I appreciate your contributions. To my fellow EXCO members, I couldn't have asked for a better pair than you guys. Given another opportunity, we shall be better at it. Finally, and most importantly, I am grateful that I have a wonderful lot as members. All of you together have always provided the inspiration to carry on even when the road appears not so clear. With an exciting membership like yours, the sky is the limit for the society.

As a member of the Local Organizing Committee, I can confidently state that, with the support of the gentleman Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tor Joe Iorapuu, and the commitment of members of the Local Organizing Committee, this year's Conference and AGM will be remarkable indeed.



SONTA EXCO



Gowon Ama Doki
President



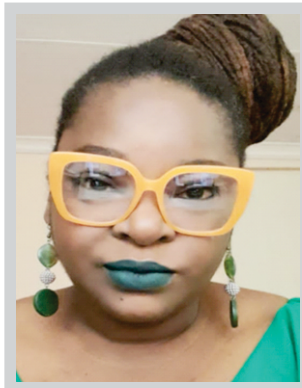
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