



SONTA News

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Professor
Gowon Ama Doki
President, SONTA

"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"



Distinguished Leadership Awardees



FELLOWS OF
SONTA

Behold 2024 SONTA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Awardees



Patron
of the Arts
Awardees



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From The President's Desk

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

With profound gratitude to the creator of this universe, I welcome all our esteemed members and distinguished guest to this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference - SONTA-LOKOJA 2024. You have continued to honour our tradition by keeping faith with annual invitations, year in year out. This is not only exemplary, but it is commendable and encouraging. As an executive committee, we appreciate this uncommon fidelity to the ideals of the association and promise to continue to serve with the utmost sense of responsibility, dedication and humility.

At our AGM in Makurdi last year, our dear Vice-Chancellor, Professor Olayemi Akinwunmi of the Federal University, Lokoja requested to host this year's AGM/Conference. Members present at the meeting, deliberated and agreed to concede the hosting rights to the Department of Theatre Arts, Federal University Lokoja as requested. It is gratifying to state that the Vice-Chancellor himself opted to serve as the Local Organizing Committee Chairman. This clearly demonstrates his passion and commitment to the success of this conference. He has been in constant touch with the National EXCO, demanding at every point to know what is left undone. Seeing is believing, therefore, I leave all of you to see, savor and judge for yourselves.

In my presidential address last year, I alluded to the fact that the year's conference was unique, coming just after a new government had taken charge. I went further to admonish artists to continue to give hope to the hopeless as we practice our craft daily. I further urged participants to "remain hopeful in the Nigerian project" noting at the time that "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 political capital, which he should naturally explore and exploit for a better Nigeria"

The renewed hope agenda of the present government has come with mixed feelings. However, we must continue to assuage and



persuade Nigerians not to despair and become distraught. We must forge a common front in patience and hope for a better Nigeria. As artists with critical minds and consciousness we owe a duty to our dear nation to unite, hold and bind together the people with a tertian thread of our craft.

The ten days' protest in the country recently, was the people's way of communicating dissatisfaction over the rising cost of living occasioned by the sudden removal of fuel subsidy without commensurate precautionary and palliative measures put in place to cushion the effect on the masses. The protest is justified especially when viewed against the principles of good governance and social contract between government and her people. In places where the protest was peaceful, we commend the organizers but where it degenerated into breakdown of law and order, perpetrators must be reprimanded. Like I opined last year, "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" we, as artists, must continue to use our pen and computers to mobilize and galvanize our people and government towards credible, desirable, acceptable and sustainable development policies.

The Theatre, has overtime, helped to shape Nigerian history and society through its artistic representations of the unique multicultural nature and nationalist aspirations of the various regions of Nigeria. Nigeria is an ethnically diverse country



Ola Rotimi's Grip Am,

as performed by the Department of Performing Arts and Film Studies, KWASU, at the Mini Convocation Arena on January 31, 2024

with an estimated population of over 230 million people of multiple nationalities, unique cultures, languages, histories, heritages and performative contexts that embody diversity, that could be harnessed for sustainable cultural and theatrical entertainment locally and internationally. Theatre, Film and many other creative platforms have continued to play critical roles in shaping behavior, attitudes and mentality of Nigerians since before and after independence. This, we must continue to do in the hope that our dear nation might become great someday.

Through the various themes and sub-themes, SONTA for the past 36 years has continued to play this role. It is against this backdrop that the historic 37th SONTA International Conference/AGM which is hosted by a Historian-Vice-Chancellor provides scholars and researchers with platforms to interrogate how theatre and film will continue to play the role of giving Nigerians a strong sense of community.

I appreciate immensely members of 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. Worthy of note and commendation is the role being played silently by the conference of Professors, led by our enigmatic Professor Olu Obafemi. You have continued to offer valuable counsel, intervene and mediate where necessary. With your support, we are poised to overcome some of the challenges and move with the courage and strength of a lion to conquer the Culture and Creative Industry. The committee of Heads of Department of Theatre and Film Arts, have been awesome and I appreciate your contributions. To my fellow EXCO members, your support has been legendary and I deeply appreciate you all. Your willingness at all times to step in and help is highly exemplary. 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. Like I have always said, with an exciting and committed membership like yours, the sky is the limit for the society.

Thank you all!



SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award



HONOURABLE MINISTER BARR. HANNATU MUSA MUSAWA

legal advisor to Continental Transfer Technique Limited and CONTEC Global, a Nigerian and foreign based company that manages the CERPAC Immigration scheme for expatriates. As junior lawyer, she was attached and worked with the law firm of late Chief Clement Akpangbo (former Attorney-General of the Federation) and she also worked briefly with Barrister Bala Na Allah during the Oputa Panel's Human Rights Violation Commission. She consequently went ahead to form the firm of Hanney Musawa & Associates, where she is at present the Principal Partner. Her law firm has been engaged to litigate several high profile international and national cases and arbitrations. Shortly after being sworn in as the Minister of Art, Culture and Creative Economy, Barr Hannatu Musawa has also been appointed as member of the Creative Africa Advisory Group (CAAG) of the African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIM). From 2003, she has been an active political activist. She has fully participated in political activities through the years. She continued to express and voice her views through the medium of print media by maintaining a weekly newspaper column. Hannatu Musawa has been a human and women's rights activist and also involved in many charitable courses for several years.

Hannatu holds a degree in law from the University of Buckingham, United Kingdom (UK). She took a postgraduate master's degree in the Legal Aspects of Marine Affairs from the University of Wales and is quite versed in the field. In the time since she qualified as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, she has had a varied and rich working experience both in Nigeria and in the UK. She has qualified for the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test in the UK that entitles her to practice as a Solicitor in England and Wales. She is undergoing part-time training for the New York Bar exam. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. She has worked as a litigation lawyer and legal advisor to several private companies. In the past she acted as in-house



SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award

Professor Abdullahi I. Musa was born on 10th July, 1965 in Soba, Kaduna State, Nigeria. He started his academic journey at L.E.A Primary School, Soba, where he obtained his First School Leaving Certificate in 1977. From there, he proceeded to the famous Barewa College Zaria, where he obtained his Senior School Certificate in 1982. He had a brief academic stint at the College of Advanced Studies Zaria where he underwent an IJMB programme before gaining admission to Bayero University Kano (BUK). He graduated from BUK with a Bachelor of Library Science/Sociology (Second Class Upper) in 1987. His thirst for knowledge propelled him further to gain a Master of Library and Information Science degree, with particular focus on information science in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria in 1992. In 2013, he obtained his doctoral degree (PhD) in Library and Information Science with focus on Information Systems at Emporia State University, Kansas, United States of America (USA).

Professor Musa, a consummate academic, was a visiting scholar at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign USA (1997-1998); a visiting scholar at the Mortenson Centre for International Library Programmes, Undergraduate Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign USA (1997-1998); a visiting scholar at the Graduate School of Library and Information Management of Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas USA (2003); a visiting scholar at the Mortenson Centre for International Library Programs, Undergraduate Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign USA (2006). He has also served as Graduate Research Assistant at Emporia State University Kansas, majoring in electronic database access (2010).

Professor Abdullahi Musa has also served as University Librarian at Kaduna State University, Kaduna (2017-2022); Professor-at-Large, Southern University International Centre for Information Technology and Development, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA (2017); Acting University Librarian, Ahmadu Bello University Complex (2015-2016); Head of Department, Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (2014-2016); Adjunct Faculty, School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University, Kansas, USA (2009-2013); Member, Ahmadu Bello University Governing Council (in attendance) (2014-date); Member, Governing Council of Kaduna State College of Education Gidan-Waya (1999); Member, Executive Management Committee School of



Library and Information Management, Emporia State University (representing students body) (1999-2011); External Examiner, Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna (2014-2022); Member, Resource Mobilization Committee, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (2004-2008); and Lecturer, Bayero University Kano. He has over 50 publications in reputable local and international journals. He has also attended and presented papers in many national and international conferences.

In 2022, the then governor of Kaduna State, His Excellency Malam Nasiru Ahmad El-Rufai approved his appointment as the Vice-Chancellor, in tandem with the recommendation of the University's Governing Council. Since assuming office in 2022, Professor Musa has been steering Kaduna State University towards greatness and global competitiveness. He has been unwavering in his commitment to finding innovative ways through which the line between town and gown will continue to be blurred. Above all, his interest and support for the Theatre Arts programme in Kaduna State University is unmatched. His vision, dedication and hardwork speak about the values he holds dear to his heart. Values that are increasingly becoming scarce in a world where leadership is mistaken for shortcut to personal aggrandizement

SONTA FELLOWSHIP AWARD

PROF. OSITA CATHERINE EZENWANEBE



Osita Catherine Ezenwanebe, PhD, is a Professor of Theatre Arts and former Head, Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria, where she teaches and mentors graduate and postgraduate students. She has a B.A in English Education, two Master of Arts Degrees in English Literature (Drama and Society) and in English Language (Nigerian English), and a PhD in English Literature (Drama and Society). She is a Senior Fulbright Scholar and a Visiting Professor of Dramatic Arts, 2011/2012 in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Winston-Salem State University, North Carolina, USA. She has published numerous academic papers in local and international journals. Prof. Osita C. Ezenwanebe is a dramatic critic, a playwright and a gender scholar. she has written and produced ten stage plays: *Withered Thrust* (2007), *The Dawn of Full Moon* (2009), *Giddy Festival* (2009), *Daring Destiny* (2011), *Adaugo* (2011), *Shadows on Arrival* (2012), *Egg without Yolk* (2014), *Debris of Greatness* (2015), *String of Tales* (2016), *Ruptured Stream* (2018) and *Scars of Life* (2019), out of which seven are published. She is a member of International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR), Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) and African Theatre Association (AfTA), among others. Osita likes aerobics, praying, reading and watching plays and knitting. She is married with children.

SONTA FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Prof. Emmy Idegu

Born on 3rd November, 1962 to Mr Isaac Oboni and Mrs Eluzai Egbunu Idegu who are both resting eternally with the Lord, Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegu attended the Qua Iboe Mission Primary School at Odolu in the present day Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area, Kogi State from 1968 to 1973. He had his secondary education at the Ochaja Secondary School, Ochaja, Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State. Thereafter, he proceeded to the then School of Basic Studies, Ugbokolo, Benue State for his A' Levels and got admitted to read and study Theatre Arts at the revered University of Jos from 1981 to 1984 bagging a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts. In 1984/1985, he had his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Kano State and served with the Kano State NYSC Secretariat as the NYSC Theatre Troupe Co-ordinator and Director with the dynamic Professor Chris Ugolo as a shining colleague on the project. He furthered his studies at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he earned his Master of Arts (Drama) in 1989 and PhD (Drama) in 2004 after surviving the academic



bullets of sages like Professor Oga Steve Abah, Dr Carrol Dawls, Professor Ahmed Yerima, Dr Dave Amkpa, and of course Professor Jenks Okwori and other great minds.

Between 1989 to 1993, Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegü worked with the College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State wearing both the administrative and academic caps as the Assistant Registrar, Student Affairs (Student Affairs Officer) and Lecturer, Department of Theatre Arts under the strict supervision and tutelage of the radical and pragmatically purposeful giant theatre practitioner, Tar Ahura of blessed memory. Consequent upon the creation of Kogi State in 1991, Emmy Idegü got deployed from Benue State to the College of Education (COE), Ankpa, Kogi State as Senior Assistant Registrar, Junior and Intermediate Affairs. Sacked in 1993 from the COE, Ankpa for his revolutionary political views termed double political loyalty, Idegü was quickly employed as Lecturer with the Department of English and Drama (now Theatre and Performing Arts), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria by the full intervention of Professor Oga Steve Abah with the electrifying ceaseless fire power of Professor Jenks Okwori of blessed memory. Rising from the humble beginning as Lecturer II in 1994, by October 1, 2010, Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegü was promoted to the exalted professorial status, professing Playwriting and Indigenous African Theatre. By 2016, Professor Emmy I.U Idegü transferred his service from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to the University of Calabar, and with the Department of Theatre and Media Studies where he was Head from 2018 till 2021 and where till date he researches, teaches and offers community service.

With a total of sixty-eight (68) publications so far (including 28 books), Professor Idegü has as of today supervised and graduated 43 (M.A) and 17 PhD students in various disciplines of Theatre Arts and Development Communication. Professor Idegü's play, Omodoko was selected out of several entries, for The National Troupe of Nigeria 2nd Play Reading Session which took place on February

22nd, 2000 at the National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos. He was the 2nd Nigerian playwright to be so recognized and honoured after Prof Chinwuezu. Nominee of the prestigious LNG Award for Literature (Playwriting, 2010) with his entry, Ata Igala the Great, quite a number of his plays have been staged in several Universities in Nigeria. These include but not limited to The Legendary Inikpi, Omodoko, Tough Man, The Humans are not to Blame, Beloved Odolu Kingdom, Six and Half a Dozen, Another Odolu Kingdom, Great Odolu Kingdom, Ata Igala the Great, INSTANCES Playlets (Nike, Mairo, Larai, Hassanna, Chinyere, Amina) and Kwarapchan.



Professor Idegü's play, The Legendary Inikpi, was produced as Command Performance by the African-Israeli Stage and the Academy of Performing Arts of Israel in ZAO Theatre, T26 Eben-Gevirol Street, Tel Aviv, Israel in collaboration with the Nigerian Embassy in Israel on 17th October, 2012 to mark the 20 years of renewed diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the State of Israel and to also mark Nigeria's 52nd independence celebration in Israel. In 2015, Professor Idegü propounded the Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC) Theory recommended for the critiquing of creative works.

He is currently and tirelessly working on expanding Jaques Derrida's Deconstruction theory to what Idegü has coined Collective Constructive Deconstruction (CCD).

Functioning as External Examiner (undergraduate and postgraduate) to some Nigerian Universities, Professor Idegü has assessed a number of colleagues for promotion to the ranks of Associate Professor (Reader) and full Professor. As part of his non-academic/community service, Professor Idegü is an ordained Reverend Minister of the Gospel and the Presiding Labourer of the Odolu Soul Hunt Ministry (OSHM), with the headquarters in Odolu, Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area, Kogi State. He is involved in hosting crusades and scholarship schemes for indigent orphans. A

complete orphan himself and still in search of motherless adults' home, Professor Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegu is happily married to a female wife Julie with children. Professor Idegu's Odolu Soul Hunt Ministry provides capacity building for youths and empowerment programmes for needy widows in Odoluland and beyond. In December, 2019 Idegu's OSHM sank a borehole (water project) for the Ojokwuta people in Odolu, Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area, Kogi State.

Professor Idegu is recipient of the Kano State NYSC State Chairman's Award, ARISE Igala Magazine Lifetime Achievement Award, Theatre and Performing Arts Association, A.B.U Zaria Unrepentant Apostle of Theatre Discipline Award, Actors Guild of Nigeria (Cross River State Chapter) Recognition of Theatre Exploits Award, The Restoration Theatre, Calabar Excellence for God's Kingdom Expansion through Theatre Award, Kogi State Confluence of Opportunities Education Achievement Award, African Academics Network Distinguished Lifelong Academic Excellence Achievements Award, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) Lifetime Achievement

Award and others. Amongst a number of professional memberships, Professor Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegu is Member, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (MSONTA), Member, The Nigerian Academy of Letters (MNAL), and Fellow African Academics Network (FAAN).

At this 2024 SONTA Annual General Meeting/International Convention at the Federal University, Lokoja, I present to the President of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), the Executive Council and all Members of SONTA and dignitaries here present and those who are unavoidably absent, a distinguished theatre practitioner, a remarkable lecturer and dignified servant of the Most High God, the leading playwright from the entire northern part of Nigeria, an international critic, a brutal theatre director with his cattle Fulani directing approach of, "if you don't move, I move you", multiple awards winner, medium philanthropist and lover of peace, and the theatre Field Marshal, Professor Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegu for the highest award of Fellow, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

“One Step: A Milestone”,

a Pantomimic Performance Directed by Yemi Atanda Lights up Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU)



2024 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Born to Sir Kenneth B.M. Okereke, a School Principal and Mrs Comfort N. Okereke, a Nursing Superintendent, (both of blessed memory) from Atta in Ikeduru L.G.A of Imo State, young Gloria Chimeziem did her primary education at Orlu L.G.A. She attended the famous St. Catherine's Girls Secondary School Nkwerre, in Nkwerre Isu LGA, but West African Examination Council (WAEC) took her to Atta Girls Secondary School following her father's retirement in 1986. Shortly afterwards, Gloria gained admission to study Dramatic Arts at the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) and transferred after her first year to the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Calabar, Cross River State where she graduated from, with a B.A. Honours 2nd Class Upper degree. Gloria did her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) at Breeze Newspaper in Aba, Abia State. She worked briefly at National Examiner Newspaper, before leaving for further studies. Gloria enrolled for an M.A. degree in Media and Communication Arts at University of Calabar; after acquiring a PGD in Management, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration (M.P.A.) at Imo State University Owerri. In late 2013, she left Nigeria for South Africa to research for her doctorate degree at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, where she earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in December, 2017.

From childhood, Gloria exhibited great talent and interests in creative writing and wrote her first novella at the age of eight (8) titled "The Unknown tomorrow" but it was not published because her father destroyed the manuscript out of anger that she spends a lot of time on books. So far, Gloria has published a couple of creative works including *Dear Kelechi*, an award-winning epistolary novel currently used in more than four countries, and *Iheoma my Dear*, its sequel. Gloria is currently working on the concluding part of the epistolary trilogy, titled, *Memoirs of the Prodigal*. She also has another novel, *Eclipse of Life* in near completion. Gloria is a talented playwright. Her dramatic creations include *Chicken Chaser* (2010), *The Enemy within* (2012) -a playlet; *Beautiful Masquerade* (2018), and *Radical Sacrifice* (2021) which has received impressive accolades. Gloria has several short stories to her credit; and up to 20 poems in different anthologies. One may therefore claim that Gloria is an all-round theatre artist. She has passionate interests in media and communication studies. This has yielded fruit in



Gloria Chimezie Ernest-Samuel Ph.D
Lifetime Achievement Award

form of a text book titled, "Media Arts, an Introductory Text." Gloria has more than fifty-four published peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters to her credit. She has equally starred as a female supporting lead character in *Dinobi*- a 2023 Nollywood film. The film is currently on film festival tour.

Gloria Ernest-Samuel started her professional career as a print journalist working with *Breeze Newspapers* Aba in Abia State for her youth service, before moving to *National Examiner Newspapers* in Owerri. She moved back to Aba to work at *Far-Out Magazine*, where she worked as Associate Editor until 1998 when she left for her post graduate studies. Immediately after her post-graduate programs, she was engaged by NTA Owerri as Guest Newscaster and Producer, a position she held till 2006 when she became employed as an Assistant Lecturer at Theatre Arts

2024 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Department of Imo State University. From a young Assistant Lecturer, Gloria has risen to the position of an Associate Professor (WEF 2020), while awaiting the announcement of her full chair. She has served the University community in various capacities, including the Humanities Senate Representative; Faculty of Humanities PG Coordinator; Sub-Dean, Faculty of Humanities- the only female to hold that position at Imo State University, and currently, the Pioneer Director, the Leo Stan Ekeh Foundation Centre. Gloria is a strong rallying point for students in and around the institution. Apart from being a full-time lecturer at the University, Gloria acts as a Volunteer Media Consultant with Community Youths Development Initiative (CYDI); a Non- Governmental Organization working on Youths and HIV/AIDS. She was appointed as a National Juror for Scenarios from Africa contests funded by Global Dialogues, UK and Emory University. She served as the Image maker and mobilizer for the organization; and singularly translated the 33 films from the Scenarios for African and Sahel Contest on HIV/AIDS to Igbo language. In recognition of these contributions, the Global Dialogues gave her a Golden Medal on World's AIDS Day. Gloria is also a National Juror of the first Imo International Film Festival (IIFF) billed for July, 2024.

Gloria is a member of many associations, including, Association of Nigerian Authors, Imo State chapter, where she served as Assistant Public Relations Officer between 2003-2005. She was the Vice-Chairman of the Chapter from 2009-13 when she left for further studies abroad. She is an active member of Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA). She belongs to Society of Movie Scholars (SOMS). She is also a member of the Imo State Chapter of National Association of Women in Academics (NAWACS) as well as Women in Academics among others. Gloria belongs to the Anglican Communion, and is currently the Chairman of the Publicity Committee at the forthcoming Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Owerri. Gloria is married to Hon. Ernest Samuel Dike, a self-employed entrepreneur from Ezimba Ogberuru in Orlu L.G.A. of Imo State. She is a mother of four children, 2 girls and 2 boys. She is a great role model to many, including her friends and colleagues, millions of thespians (students) and scholars who have crossed her path; and a delightful ambassador to the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA).



Dr. Chukwuma Boniface Anyanwu
Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Boniface Chukwuma Anyanwu, better known by his publication insignia, Chukwuma Anyanwu, is an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts in the Department of Theatre Arts, Delta State University, Abraka. B. C. Anyanwu, as fondly called by colleagues, hails from Eziala-Umuohiagu, Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State. Born in the 1960s, he started his educational career in the 1970s, where he attended the famous Umuohiagu Central School, Umuohiagu, and proceeded to the prestigious Emmanuel College, Owerri, all in Imo State, where he obtained his West African School Certificate in 1982. His academic aspirations were not fulfilled, as he went on to obtain a degree in Theatre Arts from Nigeria's foremost university, the University of Ibadan (U. I.), where he also earned a Master's degree in Communication and Language Arts. Not resting on his oars, he proceeded to the Delta State University, Abraka, where he received his Ph.D.

Chukwuma Anyanwu started his academic career in 1998 in the Department of Mass Communication, then in the Faculty of Arts, as an Assistant Lecturer. In 2015 he transferred to the Department of Theatre Arts where he teaches Media Arts, Film Studies, Broadcasting, Dramatic Literature and Playwriting. He was promoted to the rank of



2023 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Associate professor in 2022. Anyanwu served as the Head of Department of Theatre Arts from 2021 to 2023. Dr. Chukwuma Anyanwu is very versatile and creative. His creativity won him the 2023 Faculty of Arts Award for the Most Creative Staff in the Department of Theatre Arts. He is familiar with all the literary genres—prose, poetry, and drama. His literary oeuvre includes *Evil Hold* (2010), *The Twins* (2011), *Grandma's Folk Diary* (2019, a collection of short stories), (prose); his poetry collections include *Heartbeats: Poems of Youthful Love and Innocence* (2010) and *Moving Lines* (2024). His plays are *The Battle and Stunted Growth* (2007), *Boundless Love* (2007), *Testimony* (2009), *Another Weekend, Gone!* (2010), *The Brothers and A View from the Wings* (2015); *Three Draw Banker* (a radio drama) (2017), *Broken Image* (2018), and *Traffickers* (2022) among others too numerous to mention.

Dr. Chukwuma Anyanwu is well published—locally and internationally—in reputable journals. He also has several chapter contributions in edited works. He is currently the Editor (West Africa) of the *International Review of Humanities Studies (IRHS)*, Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia, as well as Associate Editor, *The Journal of Literati Philosophia*. Anyanwu serves as a reviewer for several International and local journals. He is a facilitator with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Emevor Study Centre. He has co-authored *Footprints of a Lion: Narratives of Lion (Sir) Monday J. Onyeme as District Governor* (2019) with Mathias Jarikre and Kenneth Eni, and co-edited *New Aesthetic Dimensions in African Drama and Theatre: A Festschrift in Honour of Sam Ukala* (2018), with Martins U. Tugbokorwei. His latest book on *Ethnic Dimensions in the Growth and Development of Nollywood* is with the press. He belongs to various academic associations, including the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Author Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), London and the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA). He was the Weekend degree coordinator for Mass Communication from 2005-2009 and served and still serving in various University and Faculty Committees of the Delta State University, Abraka. Anyanwu was given certification of commendation for his service as the Director of Edo NYSC Drama Troupe (1992/1993) service year. His play, *Boundless Love* won the Tess Osonye Onwueme prize for drama, ANA Delta in 2004. Anyanwu delights in making people laugh. One of such ways is through his use of malapropism. At DELSU, "Maka Why" is one of his catchphrases. Chukwuma Anyanwu loves reading and writing, travelling and being pleasant. He is married to Dr. Chikodi Joy Anyanwu and the union is blessed with children.

Alphonsus Shireku Orisaremi was born on 3rd day October 1966 in Igarra in present day Edo State. He is the last of seven children born into the family of Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Orisaremi. His father was a headmaster in the old Western region and later Mid-West Nigeria. Alphonsus Orisaremi attended Race Course Primary School, Potiskum in now Yobe State, Nigeria. He further attended St. Paul's Anglican Grammar School in Igarra Edo State from 1978 to 1983. From there he proceeded to get Higher School Certificate (HSC) in the Federal College of Arts and Science, Victoria Island, Lagos State, Nigeria where he studied Literature, Government and Economics. He then proceeded to study Theatre Arts in the University of Ibadan. From the beginning in the university, he focused on design aspect of theatre, specifically Set/Lighting design and the technicalities of their execution. He then graduated from University of Ibadan in 1991.

Orisaremi trained and worked under prominent theatre master-scholars like Dapo Adelugba, Sumbo Marinho of blessed memory and Femi Osofisan, James Aborishade, Duro Oni, among others.

The training gave him the impetus to design set and lighting together or separately for over 100 productions including Soyinka's plays, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as adapted for stage and almost all



Alphonsus Shireku Orisaremi
Lifetime Achievement Award

2024 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

of Osofisan's plays. Others includes Star Mega jam concerts in Lagos and Port Harcourt. Sarafina by a South African troupe and the design of permanent lighting installations for over thirty African Independent Television (AIT) studios all over Nigeria. He worked from 1996-2000 with AIT where he was their pioneer lighting director. While in AIT, he learnt the new art and technology of theatre design and technology through specialised trainings at home and abroad.

While in the training processes and due to his quest for more knowledge, he furthered his education by going for his masters almost immediately after his NYSC in same University of Ibadan. Having been thoroughly equipped in the emerging computer-aided design and the new lighting and digital control system he returned to the University of Ibadan as a lecturer in Theatre Arts in 2000 and has been teaching and conducting research in the area ever since: Theatre Design and Technology, Theatre History and Multimedia Designs and Execution. The above explains his deliberate choice of being a committed pracademic in the university system without equivocations in his approaches and methodologies. And to achieve his aim, he incorporated a theatre technology laboratory in February 2000. This laboratory was equipped with state-of-the-art equipment with the support of Dr Raymond Dokpesi and Alphonsus' personal efforts and sacrifices. Today in collaboration with UI Theatre Arts, it has become a practical training centre for students and a clearinghouse for some technical-oriented theatre graduates. Students from nearby universities also go there for industrial trainings. Thus, Alphonsus Orisaremi facilitated the new and then emerging theatre design and technology into concepts and practical experience for pedagogic purposes in the University of Ibadan.

He trained in Strand Lighting Academy in Pomezia, Italy after which he had the opportunity to represent Strand Lighting Italia in Nigeria and Ethiopia from 2000 to 2010. In 2014, he proceeded to FOCONO light emitting diode (LED) screen manufacturer in Shenzhen, China to train in LED screen installation and configuration (which he immediately started transferring to his students upon arrival). Today, it is on record that some University of Ibadan graduates are experts in the use and manipulation of LED screen while some have written long essays and dissertations on it under his supervision. In 2013, he in collaboration

with Sam Dede designed and specified a huge dome roofed stage for Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA). And in 2014 he trained 20 youths drawn from University of Port Harcourt and the Rivers State environs for RSTDA. They were trained on how to setup the huge stage, how to install and operate the LED screen and on digital lighting.

Alphonsus is a happy man and this reflects in his career and his home front. He is married with children. He speaks Hausa, Yoruba, English, Pidgin English and Etuno the language of the indigenous people of Igarra within the Kukuruku hills of Edo north. He is a member of SONTA, AFTA, IFTR, USITT and a fellow of NANTAP.



2024 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*



Yibo Koko
Lifetime Achievement Award

Yibo Koko is a creative visionary with a strong academic and professional background in the dramatic arts. His career spans a range of successful initiatives, particularly in the management of events that raise awareness of cultural and developmental issues. Born in Rivers State, Yibo hails from Amadi-Ama, in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, and is an alumnus of the prestigious Okrika Grammar School and the University of Port Harcourt, where he earned a B.A. in Theatre Arts. His artistic foundation was shaped under the guidance of Professor Ola Rotimi and Dr Carol Dawes at The Crab in Uniport.

During his time at the University of Port Harcourt, Yibo was the 1988 Mr MACHO and was known for his determination, notably leading various anti-cult campaigns, which culminated in the historic ABUMOG anti-cult revolt on March 23, 1991. Despite not being an active member of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), he was appointed Care-Taker Committee Student Union Leader by Vice Chancellor Professor Kelsey Harrison and later served as the spokesperson for all federal universities at a critical "Family Dialogue" meeting with the Babangida regime in May 1991. Yibo furthered his studies at the New York Film Academy at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University, and Universal Studios in Hollywood, California. There, he produced the award-winning short film on Female Genital Mutilation, "A Clean Woman," which continues to evoke powerful emotions years after its release. His work earned him the "Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking Award" at the Women of

African Descent Film Festival during the 42nd Brooklyn Arts Council International Film Festival.

In 2013, Yibo was a TEDx speaker, discussing "Vision, the Art of Seeing Things Invisible." His numerous accolades include the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2012 for his contributions to the Nigerian film industry, and the Award of Excellence at the 10th Anniversary of the Women of African Descent Film Festival in 2010. Yibo has held several influential roles, including serving as the Sub-Committee Chairman for the 17th National Sports Festival (Garden City Games) in Rivers State in 2011, where he collaborated with China Beiad International Cultural and Sports Company. He also played key roles in various carnivals, including the Notting Hill Carnival, Calabar Carnival, and Abuja Carnival, where his innovative designs and choreography won multiple awards.

Over the past decade, Yibo has served on various boards and committees within the creative and tourism industries as a Creative Consultant and Set/Production Designer. He is the creator and director of the CNN-recognized Seki Dance Drama and has served as a judge on Nigeria's Got Talent and as Executive Producer/Creative Director of the Nigeria's Got Talent franchise. He has also consulted for Bongoe TV South Africa. Yibo was Head of Production African Magic, Mnet West Africa. He is the Chairman of Teen Africa TV on DSTV Channel 315. Yibo Koko is the Creator and Artistic director of the internationally acclaimed Seki dance drama, a masterful blend of American Tap Dance and the rich cultural traditions of the Core Niger Delta region. Seki tells a mystical narrative where gods from the aquatic realm interact with mortals on Earth.

In 2021, Seki performed in New York, Kingston, Jamaica, and Kinshasa, Congo, on the invitations of various dignitaries, including President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Seki has also been performed at the Presidential Villa in Abuja and was the opening dance at the 2018 African Movie Choice Awards (AMVCA) and the NDDC-powered Niger Delta Stakeholders Summit. In collaboration with the Seki Dance Drama Foundation, the Department of Theatre & Film Studies at Rivers State University recently hosted the first-ever Sekiology International Conference. Themed "SEKI Performance and Cultural Identity in the Niger Delta," the conference explored the art form's impact on theatre directing, dramaturgy, choreography, and digital culture, promising to deepen the appreciation of Sekiology. Today, Yibo Koko serves as the Director General/CEO of the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency (RSTDA). He is married to Kelechi Yibo-Koko, and they have three children: Amoni, Tekena, and Daibi. Active on social media, Yibo occasionally teaches traditional dances and is currently rehearsing The Cardinal, a Broadway Styled Musical in honour of Rex Jim Lawson the unsung King and Cardinal of highlife music across Africa. Yibo Koko is a Fellow of Theatre Arts.

2024 SONTA *Lifetime Achievement*

Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, PhD, graduated from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dramatic Arts, a Master of Arts degree in Theatre Arts, and capped her academic pursuit in the same University with a doctorate degree in Theatre and Film Studies. She spent her National Youth Service year working with DBN Television Ikoyi, Lagos, as an Entertainment News Editor and Reporter.

Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, has traversed a journey of excellence, leaving a trail of inspiration and impact in her wake. Her working career started with First Bank of Nigeria PLC, NIJ House Branch, Victoria Island Lagos as an Operations Staff and she later moved to Fidelity Bank PLC, where she demonstrated a keen sense of banking acumen, driving growth with innovation which facilitated her meteoric rise to the position of a branch leader and the pioneer Manager of Fidelity Bank PLC, Nsukka Branch in Enugu state. In March 2012, she left the banking industry and was appointed the Chief Executive Director and a Member of the Board of Trustee of Ikeoha Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organization based in Abuja and Enugu, where she channelled her strength and passion into making a difference in the lives of people. Thus, with unwavering commitment and compassion, and through her Theatre for Development initiative, she also champions the causes of marginalized and indigent students, living a lasting legacy of hope, literacy, and change.

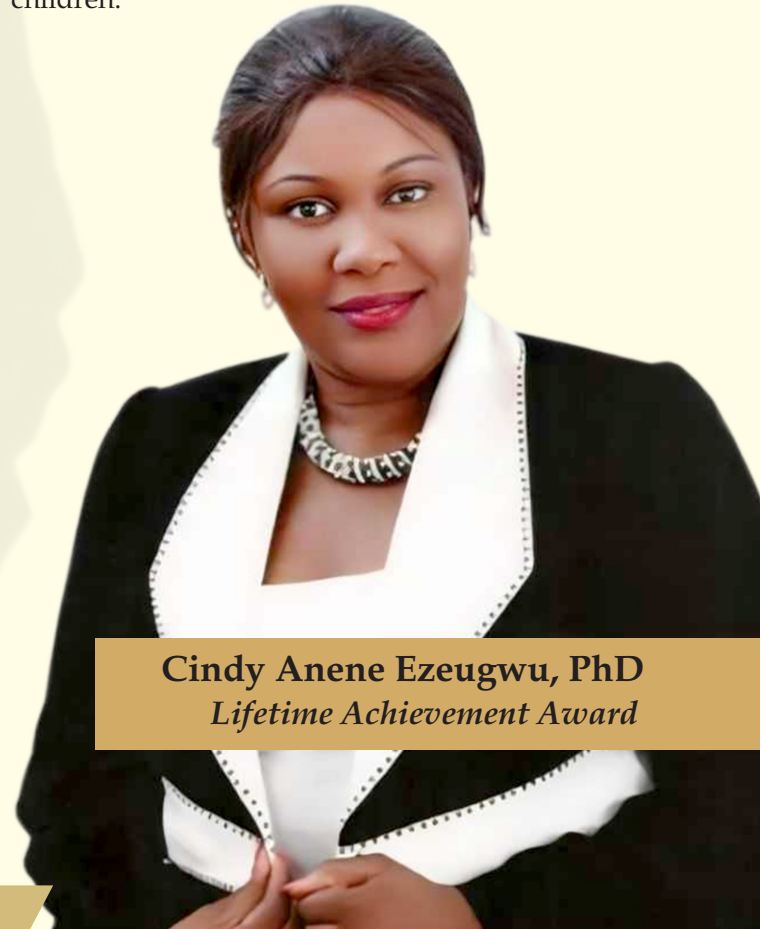
Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where she teaches and supervises students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She has published extensively in both national and international journals and has attended various Conferences, Workshops, and Seminars both locally and internationally. She has to her credit, over 45 publications in peer-reviewed journals, as well as contributions to chapters in seminal books, and Anthologies. Cindy is a poet, raconteur and researcher. She is a member of many academic and Professional bodies such as the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), Pragmatic Association of Nigeria, (PRAN), Member, Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered) MNIM, and Member, Lagos Study Association (LSA) among others. Her area of research interest includes but not limited to: Theory and Criticism, Gender and Sexuality, Scenography (Costume and Makeup), Modern African Drama and Eco Theatre. She has ample and significant research record of international repute in Theatre and Performance.

She has received several academic Awards in the cause of her academic pursuit including but not limited to: Departmental Prize for Best Graduating

Student in Theatre Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Jazz Amankulor Award for Best Graduating Student in Drama University of Nigeria, Nsukka. National Theatre Students Award for Best Alumnae of the Year (2023). Award for her support for sports, Faculty of Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Theatre and Film Studies Meritorious Award as Distinguished Staff Mentor of the year.

Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, has continued to offer stellar services to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in some of the capacities, listed below: Faculty of Arts Exams and Time Table Chairperson. Faculty of Arts Welfare, Association Member. Departmental Staff Adviser. Member, Editorial Board, Nsukka Journal of the Humanities (2018-2023). Member, Editorial Board, Ikoro Journal of African Studies (2018-2022). Member, Editorial Board, GO Journal of the Humanities. Secretary, Faculty of Arts Bi-Monthly Lecture series. Chairperson Departmental Welfare.

Cindy, has acted and led the costume and makeup crew for many departmental and non-departmental Productions and creative Works. Her passion for community-oriented theatre for change propelled her to work in collaboration with several NGOs in many rural and urban communities in Nigeria. Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, is happily married to Hon. Justice C.V.C Ezeugwu, a Judge of Enugu State High Court, Enugu state, and they are blessed with children.



Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, PhD
Lifetime Achievement Award



FULOKOJA

SET TO HOST SONTA'S AGM/INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN GRAND STYLE

The Vice-Chancellor of Federal University Lokoja (FUL), Professor Olayemi Akinwumi has assured that the university will give full support to the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists' (SONTA's) Annual General Meeting (AGM)/international Conference to be hosted by the Department of Theatre Arts, FUL, from 3rd to 7th September, 2024. The Vice-Chancellor gave this assurance when the President of SONTA, Professor Gowon Ama Doki paid a courtesy visit to him in his office. According to him, FUL is properly positioned to host the conference adding that the university's facilities would be adequate to service the round table and plenary sessions during the conference.

He also assured that since participants would lodge in various hotels within Lokoja, some university buses would be available for shuttle services. Prof. Doki appreciated the Vice-

Chancellor for the support he is giving to the Department saying the gesture should be sustained to ensure that the university reaps the dividends of having a vibrant Department of Theatre Arts. Principal officer with the Vice-Chancellor included the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Admin), Prof. M.S Audu. Other members present at the meeting were members of the Department of Theatre Arts, Federal University Lokoja: The Head of Department, Prof. Gbenga Ibileye, Prof. Ted Anyebe, Dr. Felix Egwuda, Mr. Emmanuel Ikpelemoh, Dr. Kayode Ayodeji, Mr. Olushola Babalola, Mr. Gabriel Joshua, Mr. Olanrewaju Rotimi, Mrs Oluwakemi Emmanuel, Mrs. Esiwoghene, Dr. Stephen Adewumi, Mr. Vincent Nnamele and Mr. Tampul.





Arc. Sonny ECHONO OON

SONTA Patron of Arts Awardee

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and served in that capacity until 2022. In 2 March 2022, he was appointed Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund.

Under his administration, TETFund entered into a series of strategic partnerships with notable institutions; the University of Brazil, for the training of more Nigerian professionals in agriculture; secured transnational cooperation with the government of Britain; Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa; Nigerian Economic Summit Group; and African Union in areas of research and collaboration that would aid the growth and development of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Under Arc Sonny Echono, TETFund established the “learn to work” scheme in Nigerian campuses in collaboration with industry partners to provide outsourcing employment opportunities for Nigerian students while studying in schools. The scheme, which will link qualified students with industries globally, could guarantee their employment as soon as they graduate from tertiary institutions. This scheme, which is exceptional in all ramification, will impact greatly in the growth of education in Nigerian as students earn income while learning, coupled with the assurance of employment after school. This is an invaluable initiative capable of improving the standard of education in Nigeria. It is coming at no better time as now.

Other areas that the TETFund Chief Executive has tried to address is in the area of university revenue which is a major problem for university administrators. Provision of electricity on the campuses. TETFund seeks to address the issue of power supply in its beneficiary institutions. According to the TETFund Executive Secretary, “We are working assiduously to ensure that the issue of power on campuses is addressed. We are looking at all the options on our table.”

Arc. Sonny Echono OON, is a Nigerian diplomat and architect. He had his early education in St Mary's Primary School Otukpo and St Murumba College Jos. In 1978, he proceeded to then Murtala College of Arts, Science and Technology, Makurdi, which later became the Benue Polytechnic. This early education sufficiently prepared this young, unassuming, icon of excellence when he started his life expedition by hoisting on his back the mark of distinction. He later moved to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria from where he got his BSc and MSc in Architecture in 1983 and 1985 respectively. In 1987, with a background deeply-seated in dedication and entrenched in a vision foretold to transect through the early period of Nigeria's dark ages, during IBB's SAP, which introduced the nation into the dreary environment of economic downturn, the young Sonny Echono, AKA Sonny Togo, started his career in the Nigerian public service. Beginning from the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, where he started work as an architect in 1987, he rose through the ranks, serving in several ministries as is the nature of the civil service. In 2014, he was appointed Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture. From 2015 - 2017 he was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communication. In 2017, he was appointed



Chief Michael A. OGLEGBA

SONTA Patron of Arts Awardee

Chief Michael A. Oglegba is an indigene of Adim-Akpa in Otukpo LGA of Benue State. He was born on August 8, 1972. He attended Demonstration Primary School, Makurdi and Mount Saint Gabriels' Secondary School, Makurdi and a child. Chief Oglegba had his university education in University of Jos and currently researching for his PhD with Bakke Graduate University, USA. Professionally, Chief Oglegba is an entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience in finance, technology, and agriculture. He is the founder and CEO of Techvibes Ltd, a leading technology company in Nigeria with hundreds of employees. He is also the founder of Easy 30 Ltd, Creativity WareHouse Ltd, Ihotu Farms Ltd, Quampus Plus Ltd, Studylab360 Ltd, Veritex payment Solutions, and Estate303 Ltd.

He is a board member of Quolours Ltd, PATRIS Initiative Centre for Transformational Leadership (CTL), Kingdom Citizens Pavilion, and Nasarawa State University Microfinance Bank (NSUK). Michael Oglegba is the current Honourable Commissioner of Finance and Economic Planning for Benue State under Governor Revd. Fr Hyacinth Alia. He is also a Member of the Idoma Traditional Council of Chiefs. He is a renowned philanthropist. He operates free qualitative schools in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State with over 500 pupils on scholarship. He championed the hiring and payment of teachers across several schools in Benue State. His other achievements include but not limited to eight international patents related to ICT, training of several ICT specialists from Benue State, among others. Chief Honourable Michael Oglegba Ebo Ki' Doma is a dedicated husband, and a father of three children. He is indeed passionate about early childhood education.



High-Powered

Delegation of SONTA Visits the Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy

The President, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, FSONTA, today led a delegation on a courtesy visit to the Hon. Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Barr. Mrs. Hannatu Musa Musawa in her office in Abuja. The working visit according to the President, is part of the build-up of activities towards the 2024 SONTA International Conference and AGM slated to hold at the Federal University, Lokoja in September of this year.

The high powered delegation includes the Chairman, Board of Trustees, Prof. Shamsudeen O. O. Amali, OFR (The Amir Musulmi of Idoma land). His Excellency, Prof. Iyorwuese Hagher (former Senator, Minister and Envoy) Prof(s) Saint Gbilekaa, Mabel I. E. Ewwierhoma, Alex Asigbo (IPP) Ameh D. Akoh, (Ex-Officio) and Prof. Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo, Vice President (Projects and Programmes).

The President who explained that the purpose of the visit was to congratulate the Honourable Minister on her well-deserved appointment, with a promise to key into her 8-point agenda for the industry, noted that if the Minister's "creativity is the new oil" slogan is followed diligently, then SONTA will definitely be one of the oil wells. He further stressed that as an intellectual Society, SONTA was ready to partner with the Ministry on the implementation of the Agenda, especially on Skills Development.

On SONTA's Mandate, the President explained that as an umbrella body for lecturers in Theatre, Film and Cultural Studies in Nigeria, SONTA has for the past 40 years, championed quality curricula, research and the promotion of academic discourse on theatre, film and culture as tools for sustainable democracy, peace building, moral and technological development. He thereafter, conveyed the decision of EXCO to nominate the Honourable Minister for one of the highest Awards of SONTA during the Lokoja conference.

While congratulating the newly appointed General Manager/CEO of the National Theatre, Mrs Tola Akerele, who was present during the visit, Prof. Doki lobbied the Minister to consider SONTA members when constituting Management Boards of parastatals under her ministry. The President presented some publications to the Honourable



Minister and prayed the good Lord to continue to bless, guide and protect the Hon. Minister in her quest to reposition the Creative Economy in Nigeria.

The BoT Chairman, Prof S O.O Amali, also used the moment to congratulate the Minister on her appointment, commending her on her vision for the culture industry, which he noted aligned with his own academic pursuit, adding that Africa and Nigeria are known for culture. He recalled his time in China with two other Nigerians during the time of Chairman Mao Tse Tung, whose wife was a dancer and how it was emphasized to them that culture was a goldmine. This, he observed, showed that the Minister was on the right track. Prof. Amali, in the full complement of his regalia as the Amir Musulmi (spiritual leader of Idoma land) thereafter offered a short Islamic prayer for the Minister's success.

In her response, the honourable Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy said Theatre Arts is the purest form of arts and she appreciated it more recently when she was invited by veteran actress, Joke Silva to Lagos to watch a stage performance. She observed that there was need to re-awaken the Theatre and promised to work with the new GM/CEO of the National Theatre of Nigeria, Mrs. Tola Akerele. She pledged her willingness to



partner and work with SONTA in order for her to bequeath a strong and viable creative industry through the new Ministry she is heading now.

Barr. Mrs. Musawa lauded SONTA for the Award and expressed her acceptance, saying she looks forward to attending the Conference in person to receive the honour. She revealed that her Ministry is committed to incorporating Culture into the curriculum, noting that Theatre Arts can help drive the initiative. She remarked that she considers the delegation as a kaleidoscope of what Nigeria is, "This is Nigeria!"

Amb. Prof. Iyorwuese Hagher in his vote of thanks while appreciating the Minister, also noted that culture is everything. He said Nigeria has not realized that she has a soft power more lethal than military prowess, to become the focus of our foreign policy, and that is culture. He recalled how Nollywood, our movie industry, and our music have dominated the world; "We have costumed Africa and the world", he said. He said the vote of thanks should, in the first instance, go to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who made her the Honourable Minister of Arts, Culture and

Creative Economy, then to her for being present, next to her vision and lastly, to her Directors and other staff. He closed by adding that "Our women scholars have brought the consciousness about gender to the country, with people like Prof. Mabel Evwierhoma, among others. In his words "Culture is the soul of a nation; All over the world, the arts determine the trajectory of development. We are willing to help rid the country of banditry, terrorism and the like, as we did with the HIV/AIDS scourge through Theatre for Development concept and its variants, and developed massive Programmes of Development Communication". Professor Hagher noted that members of the Society will not lobby but if the Minister and the Ministry need our services, the SONTA President is the appropriate contact person.



SEKIOLOGY

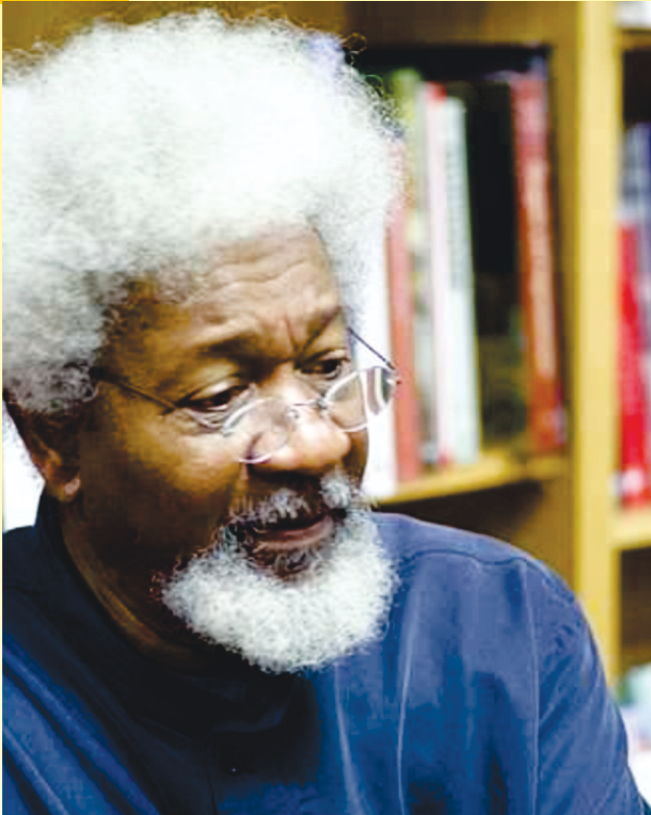
International Conference holds
in Grand Style at Rivers State
University, Port Harcourt



SONTA 20

WOLE SOYINKA @ 90:

A Tribute



This month of July has been agog with enchanting activities – all in honour of the one to whom honour is due, Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka who turned 90 on 13 July, 2024. Born the second child of his parents' seven children, in the city of Abeokuta, Nigeria on 13 July 1934, Soyinka studied in Nigeria and the UK, and worked with the Royal Court Theatre in London before returning to Nigeria at independence. He went on to write plays that were produced in both countries, in theatres, on television and radio. Playwright, novelist, poet, play director, and essayist, Soyinka took an active role in Nigeria's political history and its campaign for independence from British colonial rule. In 1965, as a young activist, he seized the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service studio and broadcast a demand for the cancellation of the Western Nigeria Regional Elections. In 1967, during the Nigerian Civil War, he was arrested by the federal government and put in solitary confinement for two years, for volunteering to be a non-government mediating actor.

As much of the community followed indigenous Yoruba religious tradition, Wole Soyinka (WS) grew up in a religious atmosphere of syncretism with influences from both cultures; much of this early beginning experience is captured in his memoir *Aké*:

The Years of Childhood (1981). While at the University College Ibadan, Soyinka and six others founded the Pyrates Confraternity, an anti-corruption and justice-seeking student organisation, the first confraternity in Nigeria.

Soyinka's literary productions cut across the three genres of literature – drama, poetry and prose – and many critical works from which he became in 1986 the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Accordingly, he was described as the "who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence". Besides the Nobel, he has won several other awards such as the Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award (2009), Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, Lifetime Achievement Award (2012), Europe Theatre Prize - Special Prize (2017), among many others.

Just as we all continue the month-long celebration of this global citizen, more cheering is the news of the announcement by the federal government naming the National Theatre after Wole Soyinka. It is indeed an honour well deserved by WS. This honour now rightly places him in the category of Shakespeare of England and Ibsen of Ireland who have enjoyed such honours by their national governments! Now, a prophet indeed does have honour in his country! As a Distinguished Fellow of SONTA, we are more than proud of Soyinka's contributions in the field of literature especially tragic theory as well as political activism over the years. We join the entire world to celebrate him and wish him greater health and peace on the ninth floor.

Happy birthday, our WS!



Professor Gowon Ama Doki, FSONTA, MNAL
SONTA PRESIDENT

Premiere Performance of *The Truce* written by Isdore Diala and directed by Ebiriukwu Anthony at Comassie Arts Theatre, Imo State University on Thursday, 3rd August, 2023.



News Updates on SONTA Members

Successful PhD Defences

1. Lilian Ioryisa
2. Samuel Iyanda
3. Anne Adejor
4. Samson Akapo
5. Habsat Joyce Imhanobe
6. Okokor Violet Omojan
7. Lucy Onavi
8. Abayomi Ojo
9. Vincent Uchenna Anyaemele
10. Ihuoma Okorie
11. Yusuf Shamagana
12. Esther Omolara Emoruwa
14. Mark Ogah Onwe
15. Abeha Gertrude Machunga
16. Martins Moses Agena
17. Samuel Jackson Udo.
18. Bonat Tagwai UniAbuja
19. Sandra Kingsley
20. Abdullahi Lawal
21. Musiliyu Sanni
22. Tayo Joan Adeniga
23. Thomas O. Anongu
24. Tunde Oliogu
25. Gloria Bassey
26. Udokang
27. Davina Davids
28. Hameed Olutoba Lawal
29. Wole Balogun
30. Adeniyi Adakunle

New Appointments

1. Prof. Elo Ibagere, *Provost of the Oleh Campus, Delta State University*
2. Prof Victor Dugga, *Provost, College of Postgraduate Studies, Federal University of Lafia*
3. Prof Olufemi Bifatife Adeseye, *Dean, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti*
4. Dr. Mrs Eunice Uwadinma-Idemudia, *HOD, Theatre and Film Studies, Redeemer's University, Ede*
5. Dr. Abiodun Olayiwola, *HOD, Dramatic Arts OAU Ile-Ife*
6. Dr Tosin Tume, *HOD, Federal University Oye-Ekiti*
7. Dr. Kingsley Anyira, *HOD, Department - Performing Arts, University of Delta, Agbor.*
8. Dr Kingsley I. Ehiemua, *HOD, Department of Theatre and Media Arts, AAUE*



Take Advantage of Social Media to Make Money, Prof Okiremuete Advises Nigerian Youths

by Pauline Onyibe



Nigerian youths have been advised to take advantage of the internet and social media to make genuine money and better their lives instead of indulging in internet fraud. Professor Shaka Femi Okiremuete of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Port Harcourt spoke in Yenagoa on Saturday as a keynote speaker during a conference organized by the institute of mass communication and information management of Nigeria. With the theme, 'Communication for National Integration', the professor stated that social media is the in thing now adding that the whole world was drifting towards the internet.

Speaking on social media and national integration, Professor Okiremuete said that the youths of the country can go into software creation adding that soft wares have brought a big revolution on social media/internet. Stating that all should use social media including small-scale businessmen and women, he added that social media should be a tool for monitoring the activities of the government. He said "If you have a small-scale business, you should create a website to advertise your wares. Social media is a tool for monitoring the activities of the government. "Government can use social media for image laundering. Social media has brought unity to nations. It is very important for economic integration and it is a way of building business and creating jobs for the youths. Also speaking, Professor Emman-Owums Owuamalams

of the Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University with a topic of political communication for national integration and unity stated that in political communication for national integration, four major considerations will be made which are words choice, use, and presentation, hence the significance of language use in message delivery. He continued "The implication is that political communication in a diverse society facilitates an understanding of public policies, their significance, and how they should be understood and adopted for unity and general social harmony. In that way, the frontiers of typologies that differentiate the diverse entities are made less significant in the consideration of persons who make up the nation-state. "Political advertising and political debates he said also help better to enhance understanding of how people of different ethnic origins can be brought to a common focal point in the achievement of unity as an integrative reality emanating from political communication. Dr Doubra Otio of the Department of Mass Communication, Niger Delta University also gave a lecture on social media communication and national integration. In his goodwill message, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Africa Toru Orua, Professor Barclays Ayakoroma said that parents should allow their wards to choose their own course of study disclosing that his uncle almost gave up on him when he chooses to study theater arts in the university.

He advised the student to hold all the lectures they had listened to dearly to their hearts adding "Even if you can get hard copies, grab them because you will learn so many things from them. Speaking on the advent of social media, he said "Many printing outlets are closing down but online is on. Of course, there are negative aspects of social media and that is where control has to be taken into consideration. For some of us, anything comes you post without checking if it is true or not and that is why fake news is all over the place. He congratulated the I institute for organizing the conference adding that that was the first time the institute was making its presence felt in Bayelsa. Earlier, the Commissioner of the Ministry of Information, Orientation and Strategy, Bayelsa State, Ayiba Duba represented by Ruth Gwegwe a director in the ministry commended the institute for hosting the conference. He said that the state was ready to partner with organizations like INIM to bring publicity to the achievements of the Bayelsa State Government. The high point of the event was the induction of Adam Domo, Uzaka Seiyefa Abraham, and Vincent Ekwerike as fellows of the institute while an outstanding award was given to the deputy governor of the state Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo by the institute.

Culled from: <https://newtelegraphng.com/take-advantage-of-social-media-to-make-money-prof-okiremuete-advises-nigerian-youths/>

SONTA President Visits NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

as Reps. Member promises to sponsor Theatre Bill



The President, Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, yesterday, 19th February 2024, was received in audience by the House of Representatives Member for Kwande/Ushongo Federal Constituency, Hon. Terseer Ugboor, who was elated that the leadership of SONTA found him worthy to sponsor the "Theatre Arts Professionals Regulatory Council (Establishment) Bill. In his presentation to the Member, Prof. Doki narrated how the Bill was successfully passed by the 8th Senate and is awaiting concurrence

by the House of Representatives for it to be subsequently accented to by the President. The SONTA President, while stating the many advantages of the Bill, which include the regulation of Theatre practice, formulation of code conduct and entrenchment of professionalism in the Arts and entertainment sectors generally, stated that the visit was to request the indulgence of Representative Ugboor to kindly take up the task of sponsoring the Bill in the Green Chambers.

Responding, Representative Terseer Ugboor stated that he's happy that various sections of the nation are looking to strengthen the laws and regulations of activities in the country in order to close the many gaps existing. The Parliamentarian stated that he is a willing partner for effort that seeks to further strengthen weak legislation in many sectors of the economy. Hon. Ugboor further expressed his delight that the Bill does not seek to draw funding from the Federal Government but was rather a practitioner's self-regulatory tool. He, therefore, promised to take it up and initiate the process for concurrence by the 10th Assembly.

He further hinted at the many other bills he is working on, foremost amongst which is the 'preservation of endangered species Bill', which seeks to preserve and conserve our forests and wildlife. Others who accompanied the SONTA President to the interaction include the erstwhile Dean of Postgraduate studies at the University of Abuja, Prof. Kwaghkondo Agber. Others include Drs. Olympus Ejue, Esther Omwuka, and Shadrach Teryila Ukuma



Wole Soyinka At 90:

Defying Age With Finesse

HURRAH! Babatunde Soyinka is 90 years old today! Professor Akinwande Oluwole. Let us all celebrate the first blackman from the world over and the first from sub-Saharan Africa to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986. Wole Soyinka is among the contemporary Africa's greatest dramatists and writers and he is also one of the continent's most imaginative proponents of the use of traditional African culture and of the compassionate social order it embodies.

laureate of the international order of merit, Soyinka carved a niche for himself as a world-class dramatist and literary writer and also as a doyen of traditional African culture and criticism whose foot-print on the sands of time in African literary scholarship is indelible. His hard-work and sustained commitment to research, writing, teaching, directing and political activism will forever illustrate his life as a cerebral scholar of international and uncommon standing who has had a distinguished and unparalleled career all over the world.

His contribution to knowledge is encompassing and beyond discipline boundaries. With uncommon erudition it spans Wole Soyinka as king of playwriting, monarch of directing, supreme ruler of acting, crowned head of performance, sovereign of literature, ruler of music and song, baron of dramatic structure, emperor of the use of language, sultan of dance, mime and movements, prime of teaching methods, Czar of political activism, overlord of elegant poetry and

khan of profound prose.

This uncommon erudition can only be so because Soyinka was born an uncommon child, reading the Holy Bible at the age of two years! Then growing up with this out of the ordinary characteristics, Soyinka became, in his adult age unconventional in his ways and manners of doing things and in handling situations. For example, Soyinka became unfamiliar in his eating habits, became unexpected in his teaching methodology, became surprising in his writing styles, became

unusual in his demeanor, attitude and manner, became unorthodox in his dressing code and appearance. In this regard, Soyinka would buy hand-woven clothes from Igbira traders and sew it into round turtle-neck, shirts, a rare thing that was not common in Nigeria in 1950's, 1960's and 1970's!

Soyinka is a man of many parts as he is an actor, playwright, novelist, poet, director, singer, hunter, political activist, wine connoisseur, teacher, critic and scholar all roll into one. The amazing thing is that he has been able to blend them all of these parts into just one personality and

simultaneously excelling in each of these facets of his life. It will be pertinent, however, to note that he is first and foremost a creative artiste expressing himself in the various forms of the arts with an almost uniform dexterity.

Although Wole Soyinka considers himself primarily a playwright, he has also written novels- *The Interpreters* (1965) and *Season Of Anomy* (1973- and several volumes of poetry *Idanre and Other Poems* (1967), *Shuttle in Crypt* (1972), *Mandela's Earth and Other Poems* (1988) and



Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known (2002). The Man Died (1972) is his prose account of his arrest and 22-month imprisonment for Nigeria's Civil War in 1967-1970. Myth, Literature and African World (1976) is Soyinka's principal critical work in which he examines the role of Yoruba mythology and symbolism. An autobiography, Ake: The Years of Childhood (1981) was followed by Isara: A Voyage Around Essay (1989) and Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years (1984). He published another memoir, You Must Set Forth at Dawn (2006). Wole Soyinka served on the Board of Advisors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica Board (2005-6).

In addition to poetry, memoirs and other critical works, Soyinka has written several plays. To date he has published hundreds of works. He wrote a Dance of the Forests in 1960 to celebrate the Nigeria independence. The play satirizes the new nation by stripping it of romantic legend and by showing that the present is not glorious than the past. He wrote The Lion and the Jewel (1963) to make fun of the pompous, Europeanized school teacher. In The Trials of Brother Jero (1960), he

mocks the clever teacher preachers of the prayer-churches who grow fat on the gullibility of their worshippers. But in his more serious plays such as The Strong Breed (1963), Kongi's Harvest (1967), The Road (1965), From Zia with Love (1992), King Baabu (2002), he reveals his disregard for African authoritarian rulers and his disillusionment with the Nigerian political hardscape as well.

Soyinka denounced the sit-tight rulers of Africa who promote the ignominious narrative that government should be at whims and caprices of selfish and decided individuals like President

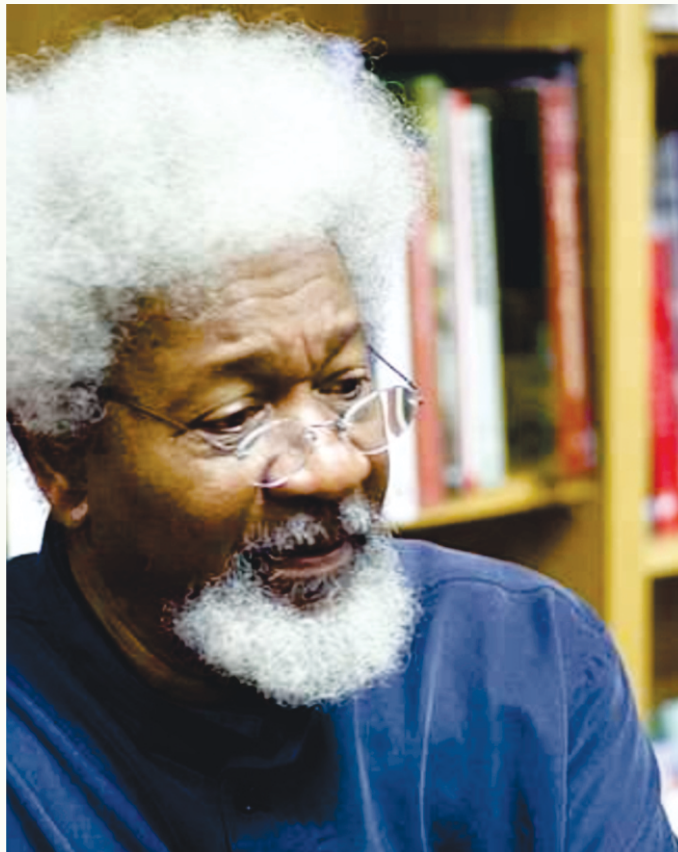
Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea (since 1979). Paul Biya of Cameroon (since 1982), and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda (since 1986) who are negative examples of the African leadership tragedy. In Madmen and Specialist (1971), Death and King's Horseman (1975), and The Beatification of Area Boy (1995), Soyinka exhibits in these plays and his best plays, skillful use of rich dramatic structure in which elements of European drama are expertly crafted with Yoruba Folklore, Festival and religion in ingenious plotting to

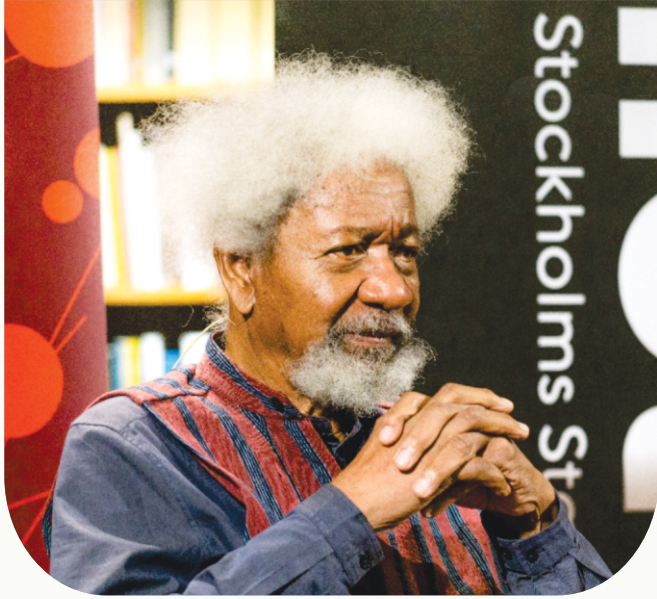
manifest dramatic techniques of symbolism, flashback, humor, fine poetic style as well as gift for irony and satire and expert use of language.

On political activism, Wole Soyinka has been involved actively in politics right from the beginning of his career till date. In 1959, he wrote a very important and the first play of his life, A Dance of the Forests in which he satirizes the Nigerian political elite. He was imprisoned for his political involvement in the Nigerian civil war in 1967 for 22 months. He criticizes bad governance, dictatorship, corruption and sit-tight rulership in

Nigeria, Africa and all over the world as he believes "The greatest threat to freedom is the absence of criticism".

In July 2009, Soyinka led a group of people on a protest mission to the National Assembly under the banner of "Enough is Enough". The protest produced the Doctrine of Necessity which eased Goodluck Jonathan into job of Acting as the President of Nigeria when some mafia blocked his way from acting for President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua when he was sick. That singular act when Soyinka acted as the conscience of the Nigerian community and the Lion of land also prevented





Nigeria from breaking into bits and pieces.

On July 15, 2019, Wole Soyinka declared that the "inability of President Muhammadu Buhari to find solution to the problems of herdsmen has wiped away the positive achievements of his administration. The carelessness and negligence of Buhari had led to hundreds of people being killed and massacred in their farms and their farms taken over by herdsmen have wiped away a lot of the positive achievements of the government" (The Guardian, 15 July 2019: p.8).

Wole Soyinka is the most articulate champion of the African theatre and is the first Nigerian academic to popularize African drama and theatre. Through his frequent theatrical revenues, gorilla theatres, seminars and essays in the mass media in Nigeria, he domesticated and gave public face and relevance to the supposedly arid discipline with nothing exciting or interesting in it. Popularly called Kongi for comparing his intellectual exercise of unpredictability to the dexterity of the politicians, Soyinka was a restless Nigerian intellectual who deployed his raw energy and conviction to courageously put the Yoruba culture in the global arena with his *Myth, Literature and the African World*.

In a career that spanned nearly nine decades of relentless research and consistent inquiry into African theatre, Soyinka waded through professional enquires of colleagues who were acolytes of colonial drama intellectual tradition, and survived the inferiority derision of neophytes to gain acceptability. His point was to battle with an influential and established Western tradition that claimed Africans had no culture, drama or theatre. Soyinka believed that Africa has a solid tradition of drama and theatre. Therefore, he spent the rest of his life to defend the thesis that Africa theatre does not exist.

First, he used his productivity, painstaking and relentless researches and lifestyle to disprove

the notion that Africa has no drama and theatre. Secondly, he demonstrated a tenacity for scholarship and consistency for research long after retiring from the academic of university teaching. Wole Soyinka exuded, even at retirement and old age, an academic culture and intellectual mien that confer value on the professorship. Thirdly, Soyinka's prodigious intellectual energetic life becomes a worthy example for today's youths that hard work does not kill but confers honour, reward and respect for the person who is hard working.

The myth Soyinka has debunked is that Africans do not have the capacity for profound intellectual reasoning. His life signaled the fact that the true mark of scholarship is solving problems and breaking new grounds. He solved the problem of "Does African theatre exist?" by writing plays with African gods instead of Greek or Roman or British gods. Ogun, Obatala are African gods in plays like *A Dance of the Forests* and *The Road*. He is indeed the distinguished father of modern Nigeria/African drama and theatre. Soyinka demonstrated his mettle by sheer productivity - hundred of books, plays, novels, essays, songs and music- rather than engage in endless polemics. With raw energy and bold resolve, Soyinka put in passion and personal sacrifice to entrench his intellectual conviction on a global academe that had always been riddled with Euro-Western ethnocentrism and prejudice against ideas emanating from Africa.

Wole Soyinka at ninety years is still mentally alert, physically strong, spiritually agile and intellectually acrobatic. He is still teaching as a visiting professor of World Literature at the Middle East Universities. He deserves to be given the highest honour in Nigeria, the Grand Commander of Federal Republic (GCFR). The Federal Government should consider this appeal because we are reminded that for all its insistence on and preference for the sciences and technology, it is in the Arts and Humanities that Nigeria has gained global attention through our worthy ambassadors of the pen. HAPPY Birthday your Excellency of Drama and Theatre, The Nobel Laureate of the World Literature! Baba o Baba o Baba o/ Oluwa da Baba si fun wa Baba o Baba o Baba o/ Ki Oluwa da Baba si fun wa.

Soyinka @ 90: THE GUARDIAN WEEKEND, July 13 - 14, 2024, www.guardian.ng

Muyiwa Awodiya is a retired Professor of Theatre Arts. He can be reached through 08037424915



**“WITH THIS SONTA AWARD,
I AM ENCOURAGED TO DO MORE”.... PLATEAU REC***

The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, SONTA, led by its President, Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, FSONTA, yesterday led a delegation on a visit to the Plateau State INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr. Oliver Tersoo Agundu, in Jos. The purpose of the visit was to present the REC with the SONTA Distinguished Leadership Award, for which he was nominated in 2023.

Addressing the REC, who was in the company of senior administrative staff of the Commission, the SONTA President noted that the Board of Trustees and the EXCO considered Dr Agundu worthy of the Award as a mark of recognition of his service to the nation in general and Plateau state in particular. Prof Doki observed that the credible manner in which Dr Agundu has discharged his responsibilities thus far, as evidenced in the conduct of the last General Elections where even opposition candidates emerged victorious in Plateau State, stands Dr Agundu out as a man of integrity and honour.

The SONTA President added that the choice of Dr. Agundu was not accidental but approved, following a painstaking screening that

produced three Awardees, namely the Vice-Chancellor, Benue State University, Makurdi, Prof Tor Joe Iorapuu, who was the host of the 2023 International Conference/Annual General Meeting of the Society, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi, Vice-Chancellor, Federal University Lokoja and the REC. The presentation according to Prof Doki, had to be done now because the recipient was unavoidably absent at the conference last year, and the statutory award could not be conferred by proxy.

In his remarks, Dr. Tersoo Agundu, who until his appointment, was an Associate Professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the Benue State University, Makurdi, appreciated SONTA leadership for this honour, noting that his achievements as INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner for Plateau state would not have been possible without the unflinching commitment of all his staff at the Commission.

The REC eulogized staff of the Commission for giving him invaluable support, adding that in that light, he regards the recognition as a collective achievement rather than an individual honour. "Without the contributions and support of all the

**PROF. TUNJI AZEEZ GETS APPOINTMENT AS
MEMBER OF COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF
NATIONAL TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY POLICY OF
NIGERIA**

staff of INEC State Office, we wouldn't have recorded the modest achievements you have recognized. So, I see this honour as a collective one. They deserve all the respect and recognition for helping us to deliver on our core mandate as the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Plateau State.

He was thereafter conferred with the award by the SONTA President, Professor Gowon Doki, ably assisted by the Vice President (Projects and Programmes), Professor Adediran K. Ademiju-Bepo, HSONTA.

On the visit also were Professor Irene I. Agunloye, member, Board of Trustees and Director, Centre for Gender and Women Studies, University of Jos, Dr. Nancy King, Acting Head of Department, Theatre and Film Arts, University of Jos, Professor Godwin Jeff Doki, Head, Department of English University of Jos.

A session of group photographs concluded the visit and award presentation.

The Dean, Lagos State University School of Tourism, Film, Performing Arts and Culture Studies, Prof. Tunji Azeez has been appointed as a member of the newly constituted Committee for the Review of the National Tourism and Hospitality Policy of Nigeria and the Tourism Development Master Plan. Prof. Azeez's appointment by the Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Tourism, Lola Ade-John, was contained in a letter dated 17th April and signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, James Sule.

The Committee is expected to serve as a crucial bridge between policy objectives and practical implementation, ensuring that policies are well-crafted, legally sound, and aligned with organisational and governmental goals. The Committee will be inaugurated on *Thursday, 25th April 2024*

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello, mni, NPOM, has congratulated Prof. Azeez on the appointment. She expressed her confidence that he would tap into his wealth of experience to add positive contributions to the work of the Committee even as his participation in the national assignment would rob off positively on the newly established School of Tourism, Film, Performing Arts and Culture Studies, under his leadership.

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Congratulations



Prof. Gowon Ama Doki, we offer our warmest congratulations on your distinguished appointment to the 7th Benue State University Governing Council! This esteemed recognition is a shining tribute to your remarkable expertise, unrelenting passion, and steadfast commitment to excellence. May the Almighty bless you with profound wisdom, innovative insight, and boundless energy to excel in your new role, driving the university towards greater heights. Your dedication is truly inspiring, and we celebrate your achievement with immense pride.

Congratulations once again, sir!

SONTA EXCO



Gowon Ama Doki
President



Tunji Azeez - VP
(Admin. & membership Services)



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



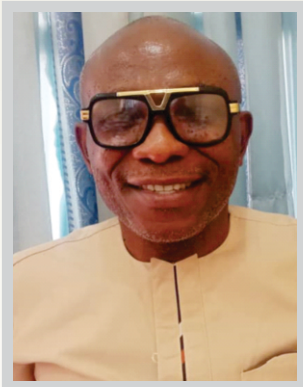
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