

AFE BABALOLA CELEBRATING 60 YEARS @ THE BAR
Afe Babalola: The Story Of An Incurable Optimist

By KOLAWOLE IGANDAN

What a pleasant irony! He never desired formal education. In fact, he loathed it. But today, perhaps only a colossus would achieve what he has done with his brain and brawn. He is spear-heading the birth of a country – Nigeria – that would be an exemplary haven of knowledge in the ilk of Cambridge, Oxford and more relevantly today, Havard, Yale

and Princeton. This encapsulates the personality of Chief Afe Babalola, an iconic legal practitioner – a king among kings in the kingdom of the Learned gentlemen. He is unarguably one of the most distinguished legal practitioners Nigeria has produced.

Some of the major events of his career are highlighted in this accompanying box. If the list is exiguous in any form, its because life is ruled by unpleasant realities as word limits. A

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COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

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I've paid my dues in the

Afe Babalola is indeed an energetic man. Rather than slowing down due to age vagaries, he is still firing on all cylinders. He tackled questions convently and in a very cerebral manner. KOLAWOLE IGANDAN capture the moment. Excerpts:

Today, Afe Babalola is a 'big man'. Tell us the sweet and sour story

I left the shores of Nigeria on January 1, 1960 after I had already obtained my first degree from London University in B.Sc. Economics by private study. That was after obtaining intermediate LL.B degree in law. Do you know why I had to leave? At that time, there was no law school and I wanted to be a practitioner of law, I did not want to be a teacher. It was mandatory for anybody who wanted to be lawyer to have the training. So, I chose Lincoln Inn, London for my training as a lawyer. So I left after I had made some money as a graduate in economics, hoping that within 18 months, I would finish my degree and return to Nigeria.

I also continued to pursue my degree privately; I did not enter any university for the remaining part of my LL.B degree. I did my parts 1 and 2 finance in England as a private student. Because of the small amount of money on me, I had to work while studying, I worked in Chelsea, where they have Chelsea Football pitch now, I also worked in a factory there, where soft drinks were being manufactured, I also worked at pools office in surrey at weekends just to make ends meet. Fortunately, I was able to finish both my LL.B degree and got called to the Bar in barely three years. It was an uncommon thing at that time. I was called to the Bar on July 9, 1963, making 60 years in my life as a lawyer now.

Not everybody knows you had your first degree in Economics. You could have become a very good economist. Why your interest in law?

I was the first child of my father. We lived on the farm, I loved farming. It was not my wish to go to school. It was a catechist, who came to my father and others in our compound and advised them to send their children to school. He told them of the advantages of going to school and in those large families, no one had gone to school before. There was no family enjoying the advantages of being educated.

There were just two schools in our town. One was St. Gregory Catholic School and the other was Emmanuel School belonging to the Anglican mission.

My father happily sent me to Anglican School, but it was about three miles from my home and we have to trek rain or shine. For the first four years in school, I was not doing well because my mind was on the farm and there was nobody flogging you for not dressing well, for not having your hair cut, and there was nobody punishing you for not doing well in school. Naturally, these were good reasons for a child not to feel like going to school.

But fortunately, when I got to the fourth class, one teacher from the Federal College, Oyo I.A. Olowu became my teacher. He saw that I had ability, but was not concentrating because my mind was on how to get back to the farm. And on a number of times, I ran away from school, but my father kept on driving me back. So, this teacher concentrated on those

who had abilities, I, an average person in the class, became one of the best and I came within the first three

That naturally, stimulated in me the sense of pride. The following year, we were five. By the time I finished Class six in 1945, we took what we called Ondo/Lokoja jurisdictional examination, involving all the secondary schools from Ondo to Lokoja and I came first.

I was offered admission to secondary school to start in year

three instead of year one, but I could not go because my father has four wives and other wives were worried, naturally jealous, you know women.

The money was only six pounds for a year. My father could afford that, but could not have afforded something like 24 pounds. So, I had to start teaching, earning one pound a month.

Well, that was my fate. I met a teacher called Ojumu, who was preparing for Cambridge School Certificate through a correspondence course at Wosseyford College, a correspondence college, training people overseas, to read, to study on their own, under their tutelage. I got the address and registered for a five-year course privately to lead my Cambridge First School Certificate. At the end of the course, I took my final year examination and I passed the Cambridge Certificate at home.

Of course, I was already interested in learning and I knew I had the ability. The following year, I enrolled for all my subjects at the Ordinary Level in London University, I cleared all the six. Again, I become more confident about my ability to do well. Immediately, instead of waiting for two years, I sat for my advanced level examinations. I sat for four subjects instead of two or three, and by the time the result came, three of us in Nigeria, cleared four subjects at the same sitting.

Daily times newspaper carried the story headlined; 'three Nigerians pass 4 papers in London Advanced Level.' I am talking about 1950-54. That qualified me for Economics because I had Advanced Level Subjects in Geography, Economics, New Constitution and Constitutional Law. All I needed to do was to have a scholarship to go and finish my degree in London University. I applied for scholarship. I was eminently qualified because all other subjects like Mathematics had been cleared at Ordinary Level. Ekiti was just one of the divisions in ondo state and we entitled to one scholarship from the government. I was the most qualified. When the result came, we were following the list of those who won government scholarship, my name was not there. I then went to the Chairman,

Scholarship Board, Rev. F.A. Banjo, a very decent man, the father of Prof. Ayo Banjo. I showed him my certificate. I showed him the list of those who got the scholarship. The one for Ekiti was given to the son of Chairman of Action Group in one village; my father, a farmer, was not known, that was how I lost out. The son of that chairman did not even have advanced level subjects, let alone being more qualified than me. He would still have to spend two years in England to

study Advanced Level before getting admission to a university.

Banjo encouraged me to try next time, I then decided to study Economics for final degree. Two years after, in 1958, I sat for my B.Sc Economics Part I finally and I cleared it and I sat for my final honours papers in 1959. London University arranged for the examination to take place in Lagos and I was the only candidate. This was because I was the only who qualified the previous year for the final examination. When the result came later in 1959, I passed. It dawned on me to study Master's Degree and Ph.D in economics or to look for another course to study. I considered whether it would benefit me to continue my post-graduate course in Economics, to pursue a course in Accountancy which was part of Economics, or to study law, which was also part of my subjects in Economics.

I cast lot on the three courses with three papers folded and indicating the three courses. The lot fell on Law, that was how I chose Law. At this point, I did not know any lawyer; I had no relation who was a lawyer. The few lawyers I was seeing then, though were a beauty to behold, were the children of rich people. This was how I admired law in the first place, but I finally chose it by accident. It was a gamble!

Going down memory lane, who were your contemporaries?

I still remember very well, Professor Oluyeade, now a traditional ruler in Ondo State. I remember Dr. Okereke; I remember Professor Ajomo, Professor Aluko and Professor Bolaji Ajibola, among others.

You and your contemporaries came back to Nigeria immediately you finished your courses overseas; why did you choose to return?

We went with British Passports and we had the option to remain British or change our passports, but many of us were anxious to come back home. Reasons: Our economy was stronger, though we were using the same pounds. Our naira was stronger than the pound. Why should we remain in a country with a weaker economy than ours?

The white men were eager

to come to Nigeria. So why should we stay there? Most of use came back. Opportunities were many for everybody. A few remained. They had more foresight than us. I had British passport; I threw it away. I never knew Nigeria would not keep the opportunity of advancement.

As a matter of fact, Nigeria, Brazil and India were rated as three countries of all the developing countries at that time likely to overtake the advanced countries. Indeed, India and Brazil proved them right.

But I must say, it was due to the constitution. The constitution we had then recognized the differences in culture and allowed each component part of the loose federation to develop at its own pace, however, preserving the nation as a federation. That was very good for the country. Western Nigeria developed very fast, others were following rapidly. Rivalry was healthy and development was fast. It was the military that caused all the problems. They threw away that constitution. Since then, it has been one day forward, one step backward.

When I defended Chief MKO Abiola case in Kaduna when Babanginda nullified the June 12, 1993 election. I said, "Nigeria is at the beginning of a journey, the end of it nobody knows." We are still on the journey and things are getting worse by the day.

Who do you blame for these woes?

Our leaders inherited a very mammoth problem and I think the solution really is: Somebody must have the political will to ask for a referendum in Nigeria. Do we need a new constitution or not? Let us vote on it. I think time has come; we must sit down either through round-table conference of about 250 ethnics nationalities in the country to decide whether or not each unit will be allowed to develop at its own pace, instead of having weak units that go on begging for allocations every month, which is hardly enough to maintain each component part, with the Federal Government having much power.

Unfortunately, those of us who know what it was before, who want a change so that we can redeem our glory, are not too many. And those who are benefitting from the lop-sided constitution are in majority and they won't want anything to disturb the status quo.

A lot of people are quick to say that you are the greatest beneficiary of both the democratic experience and military junta

Well, I had opportunities of becoming a minister a number of times, but I turned them down completely on each occasion. I have never held any government or political position, not one. The only time I was pro-chancellor of a federal university, I had to clear the rot. It was at the University of Lagos, where I spent my own money to rebuild the lost glory of the institution. For that, I was acknowledged the best pro-chancellor in the country.

legal profession – Afe Babalola

Besides, I can say that I have benefitted from Nigeria through my ability as a lawyer. I have appeared as a lawyer for federal and state governments several times and they paid my fees. By the grace of God, over a thousand lawyers have benefitted from my chamber one way or the other.

I have the greatest number of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs)! I have the largest chamber in Nigeria. Not only that my chamber has been labelled "Kingsway Chamber", because, with our ability, we charge our fees in dollars, the reason is that the naira is not as stable as the dollar.

In 2002, in my keynote address to the Bar, I challenged the seniors that they were not teaching their juniors and that's why juniors often leave them. I had warned them that if they wanted to be rich lawyers, "keep your juniors, make them happy, work together so that you can get big briefs, and share them among your juniors."

We have had the opportunities of handling many big cases all over. Look at the ones we handled in 1999. I don't want to mention an appeal case I handled for 14 days and I got my 2 million dollars. I made over N300 billion for a consortium of banks and I got my percentage. I have been handling big cases as far back as 1970.

You left the UK; that was a huge sacrifice because you had the option to stay back. When you came back you started the Emmanuel Chamber. How was it all starting as a young lawyer?

When I came back to his country. It was very tough, seemingly with no light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, since I did not come from a rich family and with the cost of setting up a chamber, people advised me to take up a job with my degrees in Economics and Law. A close friend of mine suggested a number of opportunities and even brought letters to me, of companies interested in me; I turned them down, I believed in my ability to overcome all problems. I knew I must go through problems.

My first problem was finance; nobody was ready to give me a kobo. When I finished my degree, got qualified and called to the Bar, I wanted to come back home. There was nobody in my family to help me. I wrote to a few friends who were working. I asked them to give me a loan of five pounds each and they were six, I was expecting 30 pounds and I promised to pay back in the next six months. None of them replied.

When I came back, I did not know that I was going to pay for Custom duties. I worked in in England day and night; I saved money for my passage back home. I worked for a year after I qualified in England. Day and night; I worked in South London in the day time and North London at night.

I was able to buy a second-hand Mercedes Benz car from Stuttgart, Germany. I went to train to Stuttgart. I had a friend in Germany. Instead of putting the car in a ship – it would have been shipped to Hamburg and to Nigeria – I decided to drive it myself from Stuttgart across four cities – Marseilles, Luxemburg, Switzerland and France. I had to come back home in a cargo ship. It took me 21 days.

But it gave me the opportunity of knowing many countries from Algeria, Morocco to West African coast. The ship was stopping at every port, so I arrived Nigeria on January 1, 1963. Then, my money had been exhausted. I had paid 50 pounds as Customs duty and I had no money on

me. This was the major reason I wrote to my friends to lend me some money. I started looking for an Ekiti man who could help me to raise money. The car was going into what we call demurrage, but one man came out and helped. His name is B.O.B Longe, a very nice man, he had a school. And I told him I would teach in his school for a while to pay the money. I eventually came to Ibadan to look for an office. The one available was in a garage. The house was directly opposite Idi-Oro House. A complex is now standing there. The house has been demolished.

I started there, bought my first table, two chairs and a fan. And I also bought an Imperial typewriter from one man called Oyeoke and I agreed to pay the man by installments in six months. That was how we started.

But by the end of the year, I was able to move from that place to a room and parlour office. It was precisely two years after that I had so many briefs; I had to employ juniors and one of my first two juniors was Ajakaye Ademola, now a traditional ruler.

Soon after, there was a coup and 18 ministers were affected and charged with stealing some millions of naira which is like 'chicken change' now. The big lawyers represented 17 of them; I represented the 18th then. I was the most junior among the lawyers. Kayode Eso, a brilliant lawyer, was among the big lawyers. At the end of the case, my client was the only minister discharged and acquitted. Just imagine the effect of that on my practice!

Thereafter, many big cases came to me. Before the end of that year, I was briefed to handle a very important chieftaincy case, and others followed. So, cases began to roll in. And before the end of 1970, my chamber was one of the foremost chambers in the country. And I started to make money. And by 1977, I built my first I house in Lagos. My success at that time was unimaginable. Faith and my ability saw me through. When you have faith, you will never fail.

What are the values and ethics that you hold dear - that defines you?

The credit goes primarily to God. I also owe a lot to my father who taught me the art of hard work; my success is also due to industry. I respect judges; I respect my colleagues. I respect my clients. Again, I believe that I should never lose any case and the Supreme Court also said that they were impressed with what they called, "Afe Babalola's Undoubted Industry." I believe in my cases; I don't believe there is a case a lawyer cannot win.

Can you expatiate on that?

One newspaper writer described me as 'Aso Rock legal advocate.' When your client gives you the fact of a case, it is your duty to sit down and prepare the defense and also preempt what the other lawyer ought to put as defense. I prepare my case and also what the other lawyer ought to put up if I were to handle the case. The problem with



case. I rushed out of the court and somebody told me there were two people who had brought something to the back of the court and smoke was coming out of it. I was not interested in that, so I ran to one hospital.

When judgment was to be delivered, I went to the hospital to see my client and told her I was going to court. I had no doubt I was going to win. After judgment was delivered, I left for the hospital to inform my client that we had won, before I got there, my client had died. Not only that, while the case lasted, her eldest child, who was in England, became mentally deranged. And some thing also happened to another child!

I had another one, a chieftaincy case. I was handling the case, Justice Agbaje was the judge. My client was having the upper hand and the judge said he was feeling uncomfortable on the bench. He ordered the police to

lock the door and search everybody in the court. Behold, the juju they found on the people were displayed on table. Daily Times newspaper captioned the story the following day, 'Juju in court.' They were common things then, but I think they are now dying gradually.

Do you believe juju have effect on the lawyers?

Well, all I can tell you is that with my experience, I cannot really say that juju

worked. I had handled much more difficult cases. But I am aware someone had buried a cow alive because of the case I was handling. It was a land case. My own party came to court and after the adjournment, the head of the family died. Then I applied to the court to substitute him with another head of the family. He too, within two weeks, died. That happened to all of them that took over, after about four times, the judge asked, "What is happening ... why is everyone, appointed family head, dying after he had come to court?"

I said: "I don't know o! So many things really happened that cannot be explained.

But how do lawyers survive all these?

People will succeed if they have faith in what they are doing. Faith never fails. Faith has component parts - hard work and determination. If you don't have faith in what you are doing, you will never get there. Now, this university is an example of an act of faith. I believe that it will be a model university; it will succeed and people will also agree it is grade one.

You've come a very long way and accomplished a lot. Look back through your humble beginning and project for the years ahead?

I have faith that the way I planned the institution, the way I planned my chamber, that in 50 years time, Afe Babalola's chamber will still remain one of the best because of the type of culture we imbibe at Afe Babalola and Co. That culture has been transferred to Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti - culture of faith, hard work, industry, humility and good management! We are getting support from people. Harvard is getting the support of everybody because of the type of culture which has been imbibed by everybody there.

At ABUAD, there is no notice telling students not to throw nylon bags anywhere. I did not tell them to respect people. Yet, everywhere is clean and everywhere you go, the students greet people. How did we do it? I built in them this culture.

So, when you come to ABUAD, that culture is there. The culture has been planted; it has germinated, it will grow and become permanent. There is also the culture of studying here. How many universities take learning up to 10pm teachers teaching them? That is the culture of Afe Babalola University and the parents/guardians are very happy.



Founder, Afe Babalola University, Aare Afe Babalola (c) with Vice Chancellor, Prof. Smaranda Olarinde (1st left) during the reception for Boluwatife Akinoso (2nd left), Odafe Angelo Okparanyote (2nd right) and MoyinOluwa Omoyajowo (right) after their six-week Clinical Posting in Johns Hopkins Hospital, USA.

I started my chambers in a garage – Aare Afe Babalola

By KOLAWOLE IGANDAN

Call him a legal luminary, he smiles; call him an entrepreneur, he chuckles, call him a philanthropist; he blushes – then hit him hard by calling a politician and watch as his affable men is instantaneously replaced with a frown. That is the quintessential Aare Bamofin of Yorubaland, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN)

From cutting his legal teeth in Olu Ayoola Chambers to heading one of the most revered law firms with offices in choice areas in the country, Aare Afe Babalola is undoubtedly a critical part of the very fabric of the legal practice in Nigeria and beyond! He is by all standards and parameters a living legend of the law profession and Iconoclast of no mean repute.

He only recently scaled his status by founding Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), which he prides as having the best law faculty in the country. Today, Kabiyesi, as he is fondly referred to by high ranking officials of the University, is taking on the herculean task of over-seeing his legal firm and the high-profile university in his homeland.

Aare Afe Babalola began making pleasing progress immediately he left the Chambers of Mr. Olu Ayoola, where he had his pupillage. He admitted that Mr. Ayoola had discovered the innate talent in him and tapped it immensely.

Hear him: ~Ayoola gave me the opportunity of handling cases I would have had the opportunity to handle. When I decided to leave his (Ayoola) Chambers, I started my Chambers in a garage, it was the only available space I had in Ekotedo, I had only one table, one chair and two other chairs for clients, but within a year, I had made enough money in practice that I was able to get a comfortable flat with about four rooms.

~within a year I had more cases than I could handle by myself. By 1967, I had two juniors with me. The present Oba, Oluyin of Iyin in Ekiti was the first junior in my Chambers, he later rose to be the Chief Justice of Ekiti State. By the end of the year, the number of juniors had increased to four including Mr. Bayo

Adenipekun.

~Between 1967 and the end of the year, I was handling many land and boundary disputes all over the country.

HIS FIRST MAJOR BREAK

~One major case I had was the case of 18 ministers charged with stealing eighteen million naira only (N18,000,000.00) after the coup. My

client, Chief Osuntokun who was a minister then and was one of those alleged to have stolen was the only one acquitted on no case submission. The Judges then was Justice Kayode Eso who later became the most celebrated Supreme Court Judge.

~By 1980, my Chamber was one of the largest in the country. Later, I built my office, the first of its kind in

the country then, By 1985, I had enough cases, I had established offices in Lagos, Abuja, Port-Harcourt, Ibadan and Ado-Ekiti~.

There are few Chambers in the country that compare to his as he had from the outset fashioned his Chambers to compare with ~the best in the world~.

Hear him; ~The first thing we do is that, every Friday, we hold lawyer's conference at our different Chambers. Now, each of the cases pending and coming up the next week will be reviewed and discussed. Those to whom cases have been allocated are expected to bring to the Chambers the note they have prepared for the case. Other lawyers would contribute so that when a lawyer is going to court, he is going with the opinion of other lawyers.

~I remember a case in Ondo State when a lawyer, on the other side said our submission is frivolous. The judge asked him; ~Do you have an idea where this man, referring to a lawyer in my Chambers, is coming from and you say his objection is frivolous, I can assure you that, behind him, there are 10 unseen lawyers. You better go and think well~, the judge told him. The Judge told the lawyer to go ahead. By the time our lawyer made his submission, the other lawyers could not reply him, the judge then told him, ~Didn't I tell you?~

~Every month, the lawyers in our Chambers set aside a day for them to discuss one issue, one topic in law which are usually give to a lawyer to go and prepare. If it is matrimonial matter, we tell the lawyer to go and prepare a paper on maintenance, pending suit or other divorce. That enables the lawyer to make research which everybody would learn from~.

WHY AFE BABLOLA & CO IS CALLED KINGSWAY CHAMBER

When the issue of staff welfare

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AFE BABALOLA: The story of an incurable optimist

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precise and exhaustive catalogue would closely follow Afe Babalola's inspiring Curriculum Vitae"... Fellow, Institute of Arbitrators of Nigeria; Fellow, Nigeria Institute of Advance Legal Studies; Fellow, Leadership Institute; Doctor of Letters, Kogi State University; Doctor of Letters, University of Ado-Ekiti; Doctor of Law, University of Lagos; Doctor of Law, University of Jos..." With these, it is no doubt incontrovertible that he embodies the legal profession. Someone once described him as its definition. Perhaps he was right! One important fact is that Babalola effectively bridges two centuries. Since the outset of his career in the latter half of the 19th century, he has fulfilled the historical necessity of transiting his Emmanuel Chambers from tradition to modernity. He has conveniently managed to preserve a certain continuity and smoothness of transition, whereby one is able to perceive the chambers as a seamless whole. Little wonders that 60 years after his call to bar

BRIEF PROFILE

- 1932 – Born in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State
- 1938 – 45 – Attended Emmanuel Elementary Primary School, Ado-Ekiti
- 1952 – Studied privately through correspondence and passed 6 subjects at London University GCE Ordinary Level
- 1959 – B.Sc (Economics), University of London (External Student)
- 1963 – LL.B (Hons) University of London (External Student)
- 1987 – Award of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN)
- 2000 – Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 2007 – Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 2004 – Best Pro-Chancellor Award out of 85 university pro-chancellors in Nigeria
- 2008 – The Aare Bamofin of Yoruba Empire

at Lincoln's Inn, London, the fragrance of his contribution to the legal firmament still remains bewitching. He still shines like a meteor in the legal firmament and lately, a remarkable facet of his output is education – He berthed the Afe Babalola University in Ado-Ekiti, his homeland, ABUAD, a relatively new citadel of learning is already in good contest in academic excellence with first generation universities.

At over 90, Babalola still exudes a remarkable presence. His towering stature and credibility in both the legal profession and scholarship have much to do with the deep responsibility he has shown to hearken to the inherent demands of the rigours of disciplinary protocol and vision he had set for himself early in life.

That he is a man with the midas touch is

no overstatement. ABUAD is a ready exemplar.

All through this no-holds-barred interview, Babalola did not fail to unveil himself as a trail blazer in profound legalistic discourse.

I stopped following him to court when I saw charms in the courtroom – Yeye Aare

Yeye Aare Modupe Babalola is the wife of the foremost legal icon, Aare Afe Babalola. In this interview with **AMINA SADIKU**, she spoke about the fond memories she shares with the legal titan. Excerpts:

They say Lawyers can be difficult people, they always want to have their way in anything. They want to do it their way. How have you coped ma, as the wife of a legal icon and juggernaut?

Well, I will say I thank God for everything, when we got married, I wasn't a born again Christian, but later on, I became a staunch Christian, I am such a person that will always want people to do their own thing. And in doing those things, there was no much argument between us, I already knew that whenever he is going to court, that he might stay longer than necessary. But one thing that I noticed about him in those days is that, he was very consistent, when he leaves for the office, he is there till about 2.30pm, he is back to the house to have his lunch and siesta, and then back to the office. Most times when people are with him in the office, he always come and ask about the welfare of everyone in the house. And most times maybe there are visitors that he wants to entertain, he will call the house so as to prepare food for them. So you are sure about his movement any point in time. I know him as a man that does not joke with his work. When he is at work, it is a serious business.

Fortunately, when I gave my life to Christ, it now deepened, because he had some cases that he handled in those days that were serious and what I had to do as a person was to wait on God, and pray for him for success. And let me tell you something, I witnessed a bizzare and gory tale at one of the proceedings where my husband was a lead counsel. I was in court after I had dropped the children in school. The court was filled to capacity and then I saw these other men sitting beside me with amulets and charms. We were all watching the proceedings. These men were chanting incantations obviously against the judge and my husband's client. As daddy was addressing the court, the judge was already dozing. I then called daddy's attention to the people chanting incantations beside me. Daddy immediately said to the judge "my Lord, I think we should adjourn for sometime." As soon as the court took a break, the security personnel came in, searched the people involved and seized the charms and amulets from I never stepped into the courtroom again because I was scared stiff that lawyers go through such experiences.

Did you imagine that, that was what he was going through every time at that point?

Even more than that. Let me tell you what happened. I will mention Chief Shodeinde. There was a night chief Shodeinde came, at about 12 midnight, he said he wanted to see daddy and daddy came downstairs. When he left, I ask daddy, why did this man come to you at this time of the day, he said he wanted to give me some information about the court case that is happening the next day. So I never knew the man came to tell daddy that he would not be in court, because so many things has been done in the court overnight, that daddy should not be in court as well. How did I know? When they got to the court and the case was mentioned and he won the case, the man ran to meet me and said, "that your husband is powerful, I told him not to come to court, I told him I was not going to be in court because of my safety. I told him, he went to court, and he won the case."

But let me tell you what happened, I think God loves him, as he was coming back from court, he almost ran into a train, it was a man that jumped in front of his vehicle and told him to stop, that was what saved him. You know things like that would scare you. And I told God, I don't want this man to participate in all these kind of cases any longer. I

had strong belief that God will do it and turn things around and make sure that there is a way he will not get cases that would endanger him. And to God be the glory, the story changed, he might not know that God intervened at that point of our intercession. That was when he started having multi national briefs. That was the breakthrough. So I know it is God and God loves him.

At some point ma, did you feel there was more to his boldness taking on these cases, like "is there anything that this man is not telling me?" People think lawyers use charms to win cases. At some point, did you think that way as well?

I never for once thought that way because we use the same room, I have the key to his room, I did not find anything fetish there. The only thing that i know about him is that, he is serious with his practice, he will not say because I am this or I know this. He will always make sure that he prepares for every case, even the questions that the other side would ask him. He is always ready with the answer by asking himself questions and answering them. I think God has given him that brain, it is very uncommon and he is using it to the best of his ability.

Let us go beyond Law, let us see his personal family life. How would you describe him as a family man? How he dots up over the children? How caring can he be, as a family man?

One thing that is very common about him is that when a child is very intelligent and doing well, no matter what that child does, daddy will not say anything. But if you are the one that is not doing up to expectation, he will always come hard on you. And when the children were young, fortunately we have a blackboard in the house, where he taught them Geography, because he said he knows they won't be taught in school. He has the time, he is always available for the children.

A lot of people believe Ekiti Men are not as romantic as other tribe. How would you describe him? I am talking about your relationship with him. Does he spoil you in any way with gifts and all sorts?

Well, me I can't say about other Ekiti Men, but I know of him. He is a very kind and loving man. He would not want anything to happen to me. So most times, when I am no happy, I would not like to tell him, because he will take it more than you have taken it, he would not like it at all. He will not want anybody beside him to be sick. I am still wondering how a father can be so passionate about his children, even when they are no more young people, but he still want to see that everything is going on well with them. But one



Yeye Aare Modupe Babalola

thing i know is that, he will not like you to be lazy. He would not take that. You will see the other side of him if you are a lazy child.

What I will say is that God has really favoured him. Because I know most times, he will not at the onset take a penny from cases that he taking up. And most times, he will always tell his clients, let us wait till we get to the end of this case, and then you can pay me. Even as at present, I know about one of the cases that he took over, the client is very sick in America, he is the one that has been funding that man, because the money is yet to be paid fully. And I know another one, whom I will not want to mention, that when he was in trouble, the case went up to overseas, he did all the payments to the lawyers

over there and to the ones here, and the money that they ought to have paid him is not even ready. So he will not say because you are poor, or you can't pay my money, i will not take up your case. We have so many in this Ado Ekiti, who volunteer to give him land when the case has been won. So many of them did that, because they had no money to pay when he was handling their cases.

What I know is that Aare is not all about money, even in his journey in the last sixty years. You know i cannot begin to count many of those things that he has done, even things that he has forgotten he did. So there is a lot of difference between him and many others now.

If you have an opportunity to just say things to him, you are not seeing him, you want to say it in a way, like back in the years they usually write love letters and then send it to their boyfriends and all that. If you have an opportunity on that particular day, to read something about him from you, on the day the publication will come out. What will you say to him? I want to believe the very first time you will say, Aare this is how I feel about you, this what I want you to know, this is coming from my heart. Please just tell me.

Just as I will say, that daddy is a passionate and loving husband. God be with you and give you good life, and good health.

On a final note ma, Aare has always been telling people that he is not a rich man, that he is a wealthy man. How would you describe your husband in terms of wealth and riches? Is he a rich man or a wealthy man?

Well, I want you to know why he is saying so. When he was in practice, money comes in left and right. Not in Naira, but in foreign currency. That was why he was able to buy those houses in England and all. And when this school started, he sold everything. So now, what he was able to do in those days, even for people, himself and for the family, he cannot do it any longer, because all those resources has gone to the school. Because I always tell the children, I say let me tell you something, don't get angry, this man has done his part. Each and everyone of you is well educated. He did not inherit anything from his parents and he has trained you, and has done everything, so go and work, make your own money, and let your children be as Good as you. That is my own take.

Afe Babalola: A cardinal in the Basilica of Jurisprudence



By TUNDE OLOFINTILA

One of the wonders of creation is the dotting of the galaxy of humanity with giant stars of men and women. These stars are the inventors, the great writers, the philosophers, the philanthropists, all who spend their intellectual and material endowments for the collective good of the society to leave the world around them better than they had met it.

Such is Nigeria's own Aare Afe Babalola, a man who by dint of hard work, determination and sheer grace of God fought and conquered grinding and debasing poverty right from his root in Ado Ekiti where he grew without a pair of shoes, living in a house without doors nor parenthood that could afford money for his education beyond primary school.

Fortunately, the young Afe understood the great powers of the twin master keys to open what appeared to be the Berlin walls of illiteracy and poverty obfuscating his great future. These two veritable keys are hard work and determination.

Having no opportunity for Secondary School education, he ventured into private study through correspondence, an endeavour through which he acquired London GCE Ordinary and Advanced Levels, one after the other, with flying colours.

The outstanding performances gave him an impetus that he could convert his obstacles to steppingstones. He thus registered as an External student at the University of London where he bagged a B.Sc. in Economics in 1959.

Not long after that, the man who has since won acclaim as an icon in quality education through private initiatives, again registered for Law as an External student in the same University of London where he bagged an LL. B (Hons.). He was later called to the Bar of England and Wales on July 9, 1963, some 60 years ago which is the essence of this celebration today.

In line with his belief in personal sweat for greatness, Babalola went into private practice in the profession he started at the base of the ladder as a one-man Chamber in a rented "One Room and Parlour" in Adamasingba, Ekotedo, Ibadan, in 1965 after his pupillage with the Ayoola Brothers. From there, he rose to the pinnacle of his career as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in 1987. He has since become a towering legal colossus and a leading Cardinal in the Basilica of Jurisprudence,

A Counsellor of Counsel and Teacher of Teachers, this polymath of pluralistic inclinations has become an international brand in jurisprudence and through his famous Emmanuel Chambers, he has trained over 1,000 lawyers, 25 of whom have become Senior Advocates of Nigeria (the largest by any Law Firm in the country), several Attorneys-General and Judges/Justices up to the Appellate Courts of the land.

He has scaled the ladder of the Law profession into international renown as a global citizen. His fame and integrity have served as a beacon and attraction to draw many young people into law profession.

A man of Spartan discipline and dogged determination, Babalola is a man who rose from grass to glamour, from zero to hero,

epitomizing legendary efforts at self-help and personal development. He has brought honour to Nigeria, a country he loves so much and serves with passion.

Happily, the society, locally and internationally, has not failed to acknowledge Aare Afe Babalola's immense contributions to make the world a better place to live in.

With over 50 titles and Awards across the globe, including Honourary Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Letters from 10 universities, including the University of London, University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and the elite Nigerian Defence Academy, NDA, the Zik Prize in Leadership, Obafemi Awolowo Leadership Award, the AU-ECOSOC Leadership Award, as well as many traditional titles, humanity has unequivocally and loudly demonstrated that Babalola is a rare gem with all-time and all-round relevance to the world around him.

His ovation reverberates from Ewi's palace in his root in Ado Ekiti to the Alaafin's Palace in the ancient city of Oyo where he has been awarded frontline chieftaincy titles.

His personality rings bells in Aso Rock where his name reverberates as an Officer of the Federal Republic, OFR, and Commander of the Order of the Niger, CON. The name also resonates far away in England on the Roll of Honour of the European Business Assembly in Oxford as the 2007 Winner of the Queen Victoria's Commemorative Award.

A legal luminary of global repute, he is a man who readily attracts attention of international media, and yet a true friend of the Nigerian media.

It was a dexterous combination of these virtues of distinction, excellence, industry, dignity, courage and hard work that propelled him to establish Afe Babalola University, which in barely 13 years of existence, has overshoot its expectation and become a clear leader in the comit y of



Universities in Nigeria as a result of which it has become the toast of others including those that are several decades older than it.

In line with Afe Babalola's Midas touch, the university has personified its Founder & Chancellor, the mercurial Afe Babalola. The location of the university in the serene heartland of Ado Ekiti is where the forest has fast given way to the emergence of a first-class citadel of learning with aesthetic structures, well-manicured lawns and state-of-the-art facilities.

Rated by local and international organizations and scholars as a benchmark University for modern tertiary institution, Afe Babalola University is adjudged as the fastest growing university in Africa.

The young university has also received accolades from national and international educational stakeholders including the National Universities Commission, NUC, the Regulatory Authority for University Education in Nigeria, which has acknowledged the university as "a model, benchmark and reference point" as well as "the pride of University system in Nigeria" while the Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU) has endorsed it as "the most successful private university in Nigeria". On its part, UNESCO has also recognized it as "a world class institution of Higher Education".

The icing on the cake of acknowledgments came in June 2023 when the University, for the second year running, was ranked by the highly respected Times Higher Education Impact Rankings as Number 1 University out of the 221 universities in Nigeria. More importantly, the university's global ranking has improved from Number 321 in 2022 to Number 221 in 2023.

Undoubtedly, the university has become a veritable incubator that would enable Afe Babalola to 'replicate' himself in the leaders' of tomorrow through functional all-round quality university education.

Although he never shows signs of trauma from the grinding poverty he experienced while growing up in his homestead in Ado-Ekiti, Babalola never forgets the pangs of poverty.

And so, as a confirmation of one of his memorable quotes, to wit: "I believe that full happiness is only achieved when one makes others happy". In fact, I am happiest when I give", he shares his hard-earned resources with the needy with the hope of alleviating their plight, a virtue he cultivated from his parents.

In a furthermore confirmation of the time-tested African aphorism that if a child does not resemble his parents morph

ologically, he/she must resemble them behaviourally. Babalola had this to say at the Maiden edition of the AB Foundation Poverty Alleviation Programme on Tuesday, January 3, 2017: "There is this time tested saying that if a child does not resemble his parents morphologically, he/she must resemble them behaviourally: in my own case, I am lucky, I resemble them both morphologically and behaviourally for I learnt the art of giving, kindness, generosity and industry from them".

He demonstrates philanthropy beyond borders, engraving his footprints with multi-billion-naira Projects across the landscape of Nigeria and beyond. An Artist in the art of giving, Babalola has built and donated multi-million Naira towering and gargantuan edifices to many institutions of Higher Education, Professional Bodies and Social Organizations in different parts of Nigeria in the last three decades.

His primary constituency is humanity. His manifesto is service to mankind. He is not political but nationalistic, not of royal blood but noble in character, not arrogant but dignifiedly proud of his nation and profession, not violent but fearsome because of his towering and intimidating impeccable profile which he has jealously and doggedly built over time.

Babalola has been different things to different people in his 60 years in legal practice and these included men at the Bar, those on the Bench, the parties that bowed before the Courts and from those who watched from the sidelines because he did not find it difficult, through his advocacy, to remedy equities that have been wronged and strived to make inequality equal.

Whereas a Judge in the old Western Region dubbed Babalola as "Lawyer ki gbo, ki i gba" (meaning a dogged lawyer who yields no ground to anyone), the late Gen. Sani Abacha called him Lawyer "Pack and go" while former Justice of the Supreme Court, Hon. Justice Emmanuel Ayoola (ret'd), the man who knew the sunrise of Babalola's luxuriant legal career, described Babalola as "A lion in the court and a lamb out of court".

His age-long friend, client and confidant, the late Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III had this to say about Babalola: "He is a foremost legal luminary whose life is all about Law. When you engage him in intellectual discussions, you would see how deep and knowledgeable he is. He knows all that needs to be known in Law. His confidence is boosted by his competence".

He added: "It is difficult for anyone to ignore Afe Babalola's academic distinction and phenomenal expansion of access to Higher Education through the establishment of his increasingly famous Afe Babalola University, ABUAD.

"He is a diligent and brilliant scholar of Law, a hard-working Jurist, a living encyclopedia of the rules of the court and a master of the techniques of legal rigmarole".

Hon. Justice Pius O. Aderemi (JSC ret'd) had this about Babalola: "You are just a citizen of Nigeria, yet you have turned almost three quarters of your fortune to help mankind; you funded and built a first-class University here (in Ado-Ekiti); you turned around positively the University of Lagos when you were its Pro Chancellor; you built a big BAR CENTRE for the use of lawyers in Ibadan, the same thing you did here (in Ado-Ekiti). Your Chambers has always remained a "FACTORY" for producing Senior Advocates of Nigeria and numerous Judges and Justices".

He added: "Very many law students and students in other disciplines who held themselves out as indigent have been favoured with huge financial assistance from you. They will remain eternally grateful unto you. I cannot here count all the areas or facets of human life to which you have extended your unparalleled generosity. Chief Afe Babalola, I am short of words to continue to say further things about you. All I want to say in finality is to thank GOD for the gift of your person to mankind. May God continue to bless you abundantly, give you good health and long life".

Commenting on Babalola, Prof. Fabian Ajogwu, SAN, said: "...so, in talking about a great lawyer, it would have to be your

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People like Afe Babalola come once in a generation –Chief Wole Olanipekun, SAN

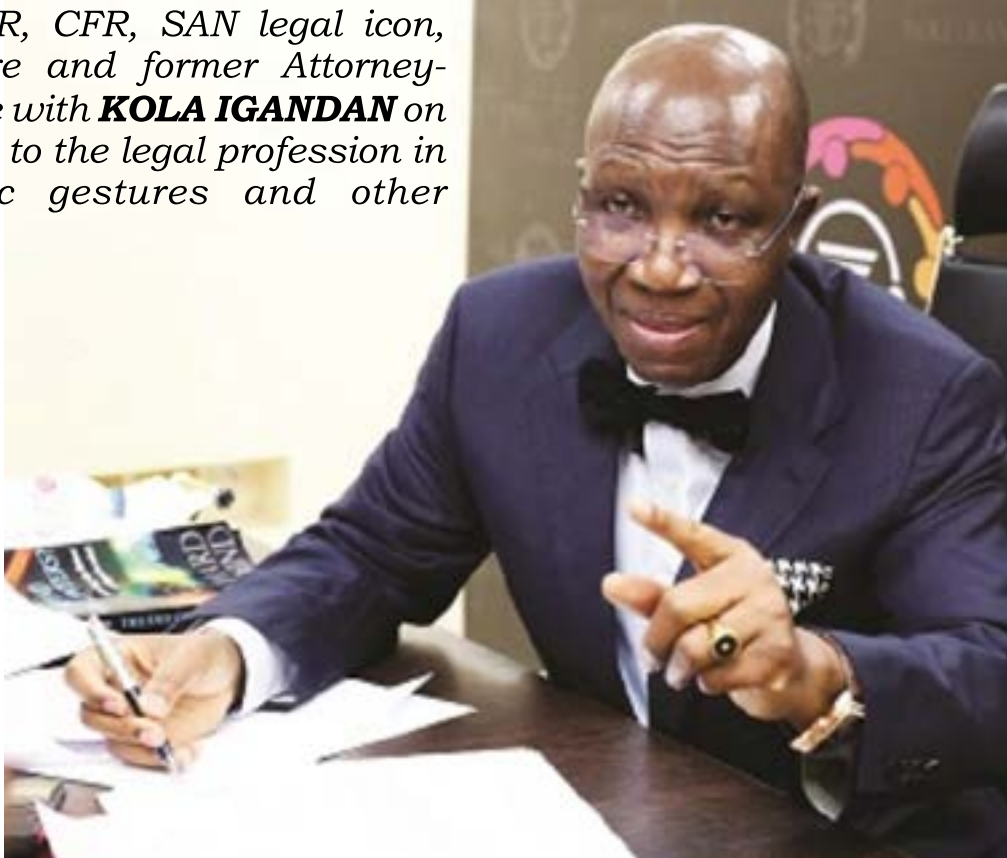
Chief Wole Olanipekun OFR, CFR, SAN legal icon, philanthropist extraordinaire and former Attorney-General of Ondo State, spoke with **KOLA IGANDAN** on Afe Babalola's contributions to the legal profession in Nigeria, his philanthropic gestures and other issues...Excerpts

How will you assess Aare Afe Babalola?

THE guru, legend and an icon called Aare Afe Babalola, is as profound as his legal exploits. I started reading about him when I was in secondary school, although I didn't know him despite the fact that he hails from my part of the country which is Ekiti State. Before meeting him in person, I adopted him as a role model because he really deserves to be called so and there are few role models in Nigeria today, even in the entire world.

I was called to the Bar in 1976 and two years later, in 1978, Chief Aare Afe Babalola came to handle a case in Ilorin, though he didn't know me then, but he had heard about me because I was the Students' Union Leader at the University of Lagos. That day, I went to him and said 'good morning sir' and he inquired about my identity, saying: "who are you?" I introduced myself to him. He then asked me if I was the Students Union Leader, I said, 'yes sir.' He said "I understand you are from Ikere," I said, 'yes sir'. He further asked me: "what are you doing here?" I told him that I completed my National Youth Service in Ilorin and I was working there. At that time, he was the counsel to Erinle. He gave me a file and told me that I will be standing in for him from that day. Right from the first day I met him, he presented himself to me as a father, uncle, role model, leader and as an encourager. Along the line I got close to him.

I say this without any doubt, I am not blinking, blabbing or stammering, that in the entire history of the legal profession since Sapara Williams was called to the Bar on 30th January 1888 up to this time, I don't know any Nigerian legal practitioner dead or living who has contributed more to the advancement of our jurisprudence, empowering people, building lives and advancing the legal profession to what we call human capital within the enclave of law as Aare Afe Babalola. The taste of the pudding is in the eating. In law, we say "res ipsa loquitur", which means, the act speaks for itself. There is no Nigerian lawyer like him in terms of product that has emerged from his chambers, cases he has handled, prodigious nature of his literatures and philanthropic gestures to the legal profession and to humanity at large.



are legendary. One thing about life is this: it is not the amount of acquisition one makes, or piles up that one is remembered for, but how one meaningfully impacted on humanity. Aare Afe Babalola lives in the hearts and minds, consciousness and sub-consciousness of most of us. He is a man for all seasons and I pray that; "agba Afe Babalola adi ale, won ko ni dagba ya" meaning "God will endow him with more grace, that is latter days will be more illuminating than his earlier years."

How do you want people to emulate Aare Afe Babalola's character?

People can emulate him by doing what he has been doing. There is no man except Jesus Christ that strode this path without any minuses. Some critics will just focus on the minuses without looking at the pluses. I can say it without doubts, that Aare Afe Babalola pluses overwhelm, overshadow and outnumber his minuses. The way to emulate him is to do as he does. He was the one who

Aare Afe Babalola lives in the hearts and minds, consciousness and sub-consciousness of most of us. He is a man for all seasons and I pray that; "agba Afe Babalola adi ale, won ko ni dagba ya" meaning "God will endow him with more grace, that is latter days will be more illuminating than his earlier years

encouraged and brought me into the "school", "cult" and "league" of philanthropists. I leant the virtue of giving from him. I appreciate the fact that the more he gives, the more he receives. I also emulate him in terms of doggedness and forensic advocacy in court. At times when we disagree in court and when we leave court he will say "onijogbon" (meaning the naughty boy, and I will respond that I take after you sir!) Aare Afe Babalola appreciates industry and encourages the younger ones. He said something about me and I felt humbled and tears of joy were rolling down my ears. In a paper he delivered at Ijebu-Ode in 2004, he said he has never seen a younger person more gifted than Wole Olanipekun. It was a huge encouragement for someone I take as a role model, pathfinder and leader to say that about me. Afe Babalola does not look back when he gives. Anytime people like us have the opportunity to celebrate him, we do so and that was why when I was the NBA President, I asked him to come and deliver the keynote address at our 2003 annual conference in Enugu and that is the greatest honour the NBA can give to anybody. Up till today, the keynote address remains a watershed. It was my turn to celebrate him.

In 1979, I and the late David Babalola (later Justice David Babalola) had a case that was beyond us. We needed more matured advise and because of this, we left Ilorin that day to Afe Babalola's house in Ibadan around 9.00pm on a Sunday and the case was to come up the next day. We got to Ibadan around 11.00 pm and he was still awake. We intimidated him about our mission and we worked on the case till around 2.00 am and left Ibadan.

We got back to Ilorin around 3.00 am. We slept for two hours and later went to court. Proverbially speaking, if a needle of law gets lost, Afe Babalola will use thunder to search for it. Meaning that, he does not leave any stone unturned and untouched. His ability is gargantuan, unrestricted and unlimited. He will go to any length and he is so industrious. I am not familiar with any senior member of the Bar that is more hard-working than Afe Babalola. I met him as a front runner and thank God that till today he's still sitting at the front bench. He has never been a plebeian, but he has always been a Spartan. His life is Spartan-like and he also has Spartan discipline. The ambience surrounding him is elegant and sartorial. He is always well dressed. He has all the qualities of a good lawyer and you can't receive any better honour than the one from the University of London which is one of the oldest and best universities in the world. Aare Afe Babalola deserves to be showered with confetti every day. He deserves to be celebrated in every area. He deserved to be celebrated in education, law, jurisprudence and agriculture. He is a farmer. There are a lot of things he does that I can't do. I envy him positively. He is indeed a role model. People like Aare Afe Babalola come once in a generation.

Aare picks the bill for our research journals

–Prof Yebisi, Provost, College of Law, ABUAD

Professor Tunde Yebisi is the Provost, College of Law of the Afe Babalola University (ABUAD). In this interview with **MIKE MORAH**, he spoke on the enormous qualities of Chief Afe Babalola, noting that the law faculty is the best in Nigeria because of the investment of human and material resources of the founder in the college. Excerpts:

One will believe that you know Chief Afe Babalola so well, even if you don't know him particularly from when he started the law practice. How will you describe him as a lawyer?

Aare Afe Babalola can be described variously. I came across him in my teens as a lawyer. Currently I am about 43 years at the bar and I actually cut my teeth in Ibadan. I am also fortunate today (though baba would not want you to say) "working for him". He will like you to call him his 'co-worker' or 'supporter'.

Baba believes it's a team and we have to support the team which we are actually doing. Baba as a Lawyer: in the courtroom, is a very dependable ally and a very formidable foe. He takes practice very serious and he will tell anybody that if you want to be a good lawyer, "don't think about the money, money will come. But learn the trade."

He will tell you that even in his formative stages, when there was no money yet, in order to learn this job, he would take some brief free. So, he didn't go out there to say that I am I. practice to make money at all cost. He will say it any day and I repeat that first of all, learn the ropes. Seek ye first, the kingdom of knowledge and everything else will be added unto it. That's why if you see him today, he still keeps to his pastime. Baba has no pastime other than being married to the law.

When people read his columns, you he has columns in Vanguard and Tribune, they believe these things are written for him. We live here with him, he is always writing and even correcting some of us who are professors. Baba will read it and correct it and I am telling you, he is not doing it out of malice or as a way of showing off. Sincerely, he will point out the corrections to you. And when you come back, you will discover that what you have written is actually better. I can say that I have had the opportunity of seeing him in court, and reading some judgments where he appeared as counsel. I don't know if people practice the way he practices because when you see the comments of judges on him, which sums up easily what he has been able to do in the court, his contributions even when he loses a case. That is why I said he is formidable even when you have him on the other side. Be ready, as far as baba is concerned, there is no case that is insignificant, every case is important and he prepares very well for it and it is something we are trying to instill in our students too. That first of all, forget about money, money will come if you have a very good practice.

It will be an understatement to say that baba has a good practice. The practice is the foundation of everything we are seeing about him today; this mighty university with a multi-system hospital. Everything coming up within a span of 12-13 years. Look at what we have through the struggle of one person. And back to practice, there is no dull moment in baba's life, even when you visit his office and there is an issue that bothers on law, he will ask for your opinion. He will call other people and ask what they feel before he draws his conclusion. When he is wrong, he will tell you that look, "I think you are right." That is a good leader. And if you are lazy, he will tell you, you are lazy, you are not reading.

I know some people do not like to come to him, especially lawyers. When you are coming to him with an agreement that is poorly drafted, he would correct the agreement but then, he would tongue-lash you. What that does to many of us is that anytime we are coming to him, we are prepared and he is also somebody who when it comes to appreciating you for a good job, you will be surprised that he does not think twice on rewarding excellent services.

At times we go out there and wonder why he appreciates us so much with gift and money for doing the job we are paid for me this. He has a way of encouraging people and we as lawyers in the university, are seen as being special.

Cuts in...The idea is, does he favour your college above others because of his background? Does he have the tendency to make you feel 'this is my baby'?

Every human being is emotional you know, whichever way we look at it. If the college of medicine or the college of engineering is not doing well (God forbid. They are all doing well) and just like the saying goes, when in a market place, there is a shout of 'thief, thief' apparently, somebody has pick-pocketed another person. A priest today will be the last person you will stop to search but not when you see a priest actually in the act of shoplifting. His episcopal character should not be in doubt.

Now, if the college of Law is not doing well and baba is here, how would the society feel? So, naturally it is baba's college, he used to be a lecturer there and occasionally we have instituted a forum for final year students, that every year as they are leaving, baba will be the last lecturer to come and give them talk on how to be a successful lawyer. So, at least, any lawyer that is going to leave here as a law graduate will have a feel of baba and he will have an interactive session with them and he will advise and even teach them, and tell them what they should expect out there and how to confront and combat some of the problems they will encounter. So he is there and I am proud to be associated with him and the college will continue to be the envy of many.

So how well has the college fared with Aare Afe Babalola's influence rubbing off the students? How well have they fared in notching awards or even prizes in the law school?

For example, in 2018, we had 24 of our students having first class at the law school, and then of the 36 prizes that were there to be taken, most of our students grabbed the prizes and we have the best student too. The best student carted away most of those best prizes and today, we have a student in oxford (a PhD student) who gained admission to Oxford without being required to do a Masters. Apart from that, we have a few in Canadian and British universities. Locally, baba's name opens a lot of doors, if you look at the law school, we are the only private university that is allowed to send in 180 students and many of the other universities are not there. The private school with a quota nearest to us is 100 but we have 180, and NUC gave us 300 admission quota, although we will still work that out with the NUC to let them understand why they need to work in tandem with the Law School. We are on course with that.

But then, baba's influence is working for us here. The students believe it is all hard work, you cannot be baba's friend if you are lazy and the students are aware. He will emphasize it that look, "I do not want you to use my name to get accreditation, one day, I will be gone, but if you are using me to get accreditation that means when I am gone, that will be the end of the university." That is why we ask people to come and see for themselves what

is on ground because sometimes they think its because of baba. Well, baba is here and nobody should downplay the influence of baba. What we have is that people who respect baba know that baba will always look for the best. So if the facilities are not there, baba will ensure they are there because people see him as the epitome of the best.

Let me add also that we have students from all over the country and many of them are coming from parents who are judges or lawyers. That show there is a lot of confidence in us. Children of Ministers, children of Governors are all here under our tutelage.

Now, coming to you. Something must have inspired you to come here. During your introduction, you did not tell us

your background, where you have also lectured and where you are coming from but I want to believe that you have also done well for yourself as a lawyer and as a teacher. Now, can you tell me why you felt that this is the place to work?

Well, I started as a young lecturer at the University of Ibadan around 1983. when I was an assistant lecturer, that was shortly after my masters. 2 or 3 years after, I was offered an appointment at the University of Ilorin, they then had a department of Law which was under the faculty of Social Sciences, so I was with them till 1988. When they started having problems, people

attributed the problems to the change of government; being that Idiagbon was an Ilorin man, Babangida came in so most thing that the Ilorin people tried to do will not sail or fly. Eventually, they had to close down the department and then move them to Ife. But I did not go to Ife with them, I came back to Ibadan and started practise.

So, in 2001, a classmate of mine was then on sabbatical and he invited me to join the faculty in the University of Ado-Ekiti then. At that time, Professor Akin Oyeboade was the VC so they invited me to join them, I was with them until 2019, when I decided to cross over here but before then, I had a stint here as a reader on sabbatical and I also did my post-doctorate here so I had a feel of it. Apart from that, even in Ibadan, I was visiting baba's chambers so when they started the law here, I couldn't come because I was doing my PhD. I wanted to finish my PhD before thinking, because I knew it was going to be probably the best university with law

faculty in the country but I couldn't cross immediately, so I decided to play on until it was time to leave but then, I have no regret. Even at that time, I was still trying to make up my mind, I knew the public universities will not be able to stand the test of time. Because there is no proper funding and there is no commitment from the staff, because if you look at what is placed here to make us successful, if you go to our library, I am coming from a state university, their Library have been in existence since 1991, their library cannot take up to sixty people, meanwhile our ICT here alone, we have over 500 computers in our library, and in terms of size, a state university for example has about 60, I am not running the place down, and it is not their fault because they have capable hands there, but when money is not there, there is no magic so they are only trying to make do with whatever they have, and it's not only in State Universities, if you go to Ife, it is the same everywhere.

For example, you cannot run a university without finance. Here, when you publish an article in a journal, the founder pays the bill.

An Article I published recently, what I was asked to pay is more than my salary, and the founder will pick the bill. So that should not be your problem, yours is to publish. You can't have that happening in a public university, who will pick the bills? You will look for your own money and do your research, it means spending all your salary. In a nutshell, there is no basis for comparison between my past and now. I am fortunate, I am still healthy, as at last call, I have about 15 of my former students who are on the bench, and I have over 10 of them who are SANs, they are still alive, although I know 2 or 3 of them are dead, but they were my former students either in Ilorin or Ibadan who are SANs.

Fantastic sir...so let me wrap it up sir, how will you describe Aare Afe Babalola?

On the Job, in special relation to matters from the college to him, Baba is very committed to his dream and I have to tell you that, anything that would put the name of the university on the World map, baba is ready to listen to you and go all the way up with you. So you come in there with a request, once you are making sense, you are even sure before you leave, you know baba will grant it. You don't need to lobby anybody. You will come in and explain yourself, Baba is patience enough to listen to you. Even when there are people, he will tell you why not come in the evening, when there will be less people here, so you can talk properly, to show you he is so interested in what you want to say. So he won't say I am busy and all that, and you know he works round the clock.

Now on the other side, I am still talking about him, how he is everything to us. Because no matter your age, baba will still call you "my boy". I am over Sixty Five years, and if baba calls me my boy, I feel younger. And if baba is still working, who am I to go and say I am sleeping. I don't think there is anybody who spends more time in this building than baba. Baba will come in at 8.00 am till midnight. Many people here leave by 5pm. He is also here on Saturdays and Sundays. Because many of us thinks Saturdays and Sundays is for time with the family. And then when it comes to rewarding people, baba knows how to reward good deeds and when you go to baba with your problems, he sees it as his own problems too and he is jealous with everything he does and he is very supportive of his students, he does not joke with his students and we are all forced to toe that line seriously. The other aspect, for example, when it comes to work, I remember one day, there was a book I was contributing to, I had a place to contribute, baba called me around 2am, and asked if I was sleeping, that it means I am Lazy, and asked if I had finished his work. So baba was awake at that time, I washed my face and started the work. He said, "see me in the morning." And in the morning, I went there and I was happy, because I would have been sleeping, and he has a way of encouraging all of us. I have to tell you, the rewards are enormous, the welfare, even in this harsh and hard times, baba has a way of cushioning the effect on us.

Afe Babalola: A cardinal in the Basilica of Jurisprudence

Continued from page 6

contribution to the profession or to the society or to learning, to law generally. It has to be a contribution that defines you as great. Not your receipt. Your receipt does not define your greatness. It is your giving that defines your greatness. That is my view".

He added: "A lawyer like Aare Afe Babalola, SAN is a great lawyer. Not only has he excelled in his profession in rising to the enviable rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, but in the kind of cases he has done. He has contributed to knowledge, written seven major Law Books which have enriched Law Practice throughout the whole country namely:

- Injunctions and Enforcement of Orders, the only authoritative book on the important subject,
- Law and Practice of Evidence in Nigeria,
- Enforcement of Judgment,

Royal greetings from the House of Oduduwa

I write on behalf of the good people of Ife kingdom and descendant of Oduduwa worldwide, on the Diamond Anniversary (60 years) of a patriotic nigerian, law luminary, foremost philanthropist, entrepreneur, educationist and elder statesman; Aare Afe Babalola, OFR, CON, SAN, LL.D (london) at the Bar.

For several decades, the name "Afe Babalola" has dominated the international space as a household name which birthed numerous achievement across Nigeria and beyond. Top of these feats is the prestigious Afe Babalola University which today stands above its contemporaries in the country and ranks 221 globally.

Among others, Aare Afe Babalola is a bridge builder who cannot afford to be quiet when there is a lacuna in governance, particularly in his home country, Nigeria, where his opinion and stance are well respected.

Today, his Chambers - Emmanuel Chambers has produced 25 Senior Advocates of Nigeria and judges up to the Appellate Courts among others.

To the ancient throne of Oduduwa, Aare Afe Babalola is an indispensable elder whose wealth of experience, philanthropy, kindheartedness and



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- Election Law and Practice in Nigeria, the leading Authority on the subject in the country. The book is widely used by Judges, Lawyers and Politicians throughout the country.
- Autobiography - Impossibility Made Possible.
- University Administration in Nigeria, a Book presented to the Committee of Pro Chancellors in 2005. The N.U.C. has printed the book for circulation among all University Administrators in the country, and
- The Elusive Search for the Nation Nigeria

In his concluding remarks on May 24, 2023 during the 12th Aare Afe Babalola Annual Lecture organized by Ado-Ekiti Branch of the NBA, the Guest Lecturer, Prof. Joash O. Amupitan, SAN, had this to say about Babalola who he acknowledged as a father, a mentor and a pace setter. "He is Affable because he's easy to talk to. He is Amiable because he's friendly and nice, he is Charming because he has a "magic" effect that

overall good nature have helped to integrate our Kingdoms in Yorubaland and service to our subjects globally.

Nigeria and indeed, Africa is lucky to have this great man and I wish him a healthy long life filled with prosperity as he continues to contribute to human development, capacity and nation building.

Happy diamond anniversary at the bar, Aare.

No Living Nigerian Today Deserves More Respect And Accolade Than The Aare

Our living prodigy and legend, Aare Afe Babalola, SAN, OFR, CON, FCI Arb, LL.D, is a man whose lengthy academic and professional qualifications can easily form a long sentence, if not a paragraph. You must pick up and read his epic biography, "Impossibility Made Possible", to understand this enigma of a man, who has many positive layers like an onion; each layer showing a different personae. This colossus of a man is one of the finest legal minds to have sprung from the African soil.

In my humble opinion, no living Nigerian today deserves more respect and accolades than the Aare, considering his incredible and phenomenal landmarks in life. It is merely stating the obvious to say he is a living legend. He has today single-handedly set the bar of individual performance and achievements. He has thus become the benchmark and standard for measuring successful legal practice, statesmanship and quality tertiary education in Nigeria; nay Africa.

His ABUAD University, Ado-Ekiti, is not only miles ahead of others as the numero uno University in Nigeria and one of the top 400

makes people like him, he is Polite because he's good at saying "please," "thank you," etc, he is Likeable because he's easy to like, he is Gregarious because he likes being with other people, he is Impartial because he doesn't support just one side of a disagreement., he is Self-disciplined because he can control his own behaviour easily, he is Resourceful because he's good at finding ways to solve problems, he is Proactive because he doesn't wait for things to happen. he makes them happen, he is Practical because he's good at finding the simplest and most efficient solution, he is Efficient because he can organise things quickly and clearly, he is Hardworking because he works hard, he is Diligent because he does his work carefully and cares about the details, he is Versatile because he can do different things depending on the situation, he is Intuitive because he can understand what's happening using his feelings (not just facts), he is Dependable because if he says he will do something, he will do it, he is Trustworthy because you can trust him to be honest and sincere".

With the string of successes already recorded in virtually everything he has laid his hands on, one can only wish the plutocrat with pluralistic tendencies the grace and the good health to continually be relevant in saecula saeculorum. Like the late Premier of the Western Region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, told the late Hon. Justice Kayode Eso in the presence of Chief Oluseye Ejiwunmi in 1965 during the trial of the Nobel Laureat, Prof. Wole Soyinka, "Olorun a fun yin se o" (meaning may God assist you).

Olofintila is Director, Corporate Affairs, ABUAD



Universities in the world (as recently attested to by the highly respected TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT RANKINGS), the Aare as an individual, is indeed head and shoulders above others in terms of private entrepreneurship and unflagging determination to succeed in spite of all odds.

PROF. MIKE A. A. OZEKHOME, SAN, CON, OFR, FCI Arb, LL.M, Ph.D, LL.D, D.Litt.

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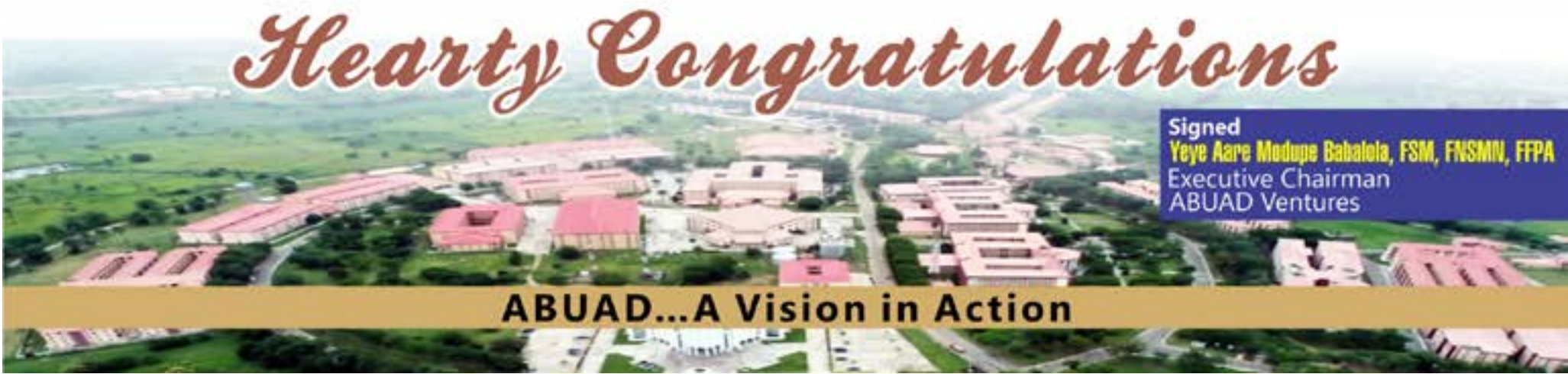
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All of us at ABUAD Ventures celebrate our Leader and Founder, **Aare Afe Babalola, OFR, CON, SAN, LL. D (London), LL. D (UNILAG), LL. D (UI), D. Lit (NDA), FNIALS, FCI.Arb, FNSE**, on the celebration of your Diamond Anniversary of your call to the Bar of England and Wales today, Monday, July 10, 2023.

There is no doubt that you have impacted many lives in the legal space since your days as a one-man Chamber in a rented “**One Room and Parlour**” in Adamasingba, Ekotedo, Ibadan, in 1965 after your pupillage with the Ayoola Brothers. Through dint of hard work, you rose to the pinnacle of your career when you became a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in 1987. You have mentored not a few including, but not limited to the over 1, 000 lawyers, the 25 Senior Advocates of Nigeria and several Attorneys-General and Judges/Justices up to the Appellate Courts produced by your Chambers, Emmanuel Chambers.

For these and sundry other contributions to the legal landscape, we celebrate you and celebrate with you on this momentous occasion



Celebrating the Iconoclast of Higher Education Reform: Aare Emmanuel Afe Babalola, SAN, OFR, CON, DLitt., LL.D (London)

By D. S. Olawuyi, SAN

In a compelling and thought-provoking speech by Lord Denning to students of the University of Oxford, and titled “The Way of An Iconoclast” (1959), the revered jurist asked “what then is the way of an Iconoclast?” Lord Denning provided an answer by explaining that an Iconoclast embodies three core qualities: they challenge the existing way of doing things; they design a better way of doing things; and use their knowledge of the law to save the society from stagnation and decay. The students responded with a loud ovation and a solemn determination and pledge to become Iconoclasts.

For several years, the Nigerian education system has lacked such rare breeds of Iconoclasts described by Lord Denning. Stagnated by years of acute under-funding, perennial strikes, government neglect, and infrastructure decay, Nigerian universities waned in quality to such a pitiable extent that they would not even receive a mention in the list of top 1000 universities in the world! Students, parents, academics, and stakeholders longed for an Iconoclast who will understand the problems, challenge the old ways of doing things, and provide a path for the reform of the waning higher education system in Nigeria.

In 2001, former President Olusegun Obasanjo GCFR, known for his tireless knack for quality, found his Iconoclast: a sartorially elegant and well-decorated lawyer, revered advocate, relentless human rights crusader, prolific author, cerebral legal scholar, a natural leader, and the Aare Bamofin (Attorney General) of Yoruba Land- Aare Emmanuel Afe Babalola, SAN, CON, OFR, and appointed him the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Lagos. Aare Afe Babalola’s impact as a seasoned and iconic administrator was immediate.

In addition to declining his salary for this role, Aare Afe Babalola, SAN

single-handedly donated buildings, books, ICT tools, grants and scholarships to the University. The multi-million Afe Babalola Hall that he bequeathed to UNILAG was commissioned in 2006, as a physical reminder of Aare Afe Babalola’s selfless sacrifice and impact during his remarkable tenure which won him the award of Best Pro-Chancellor in Nigeria twice. The African Iconoclast has bequeathed over 20 multi-million buildings and grants to other professional learned societies and universities, including the University of Ibadan (UCH Nuclear Medicine Building); University of Ado Ekiti Faculty of Law; Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, and more recently the King’s College, London, amongst others. These and several other philanthropic donations have widely opened the door to Nigeria’s poorest and often forgotten people to access quality education thereby unlocking their life potentials.

Aare Afe Babalola’s pursuit of reformatory and technology-driven education led him to establish ABUAD. ABUAD has since 2009 surpassed expectations to become ranked as the best University in Nigeria and one of the first 400 in the world according to the prestigious Times Higher Education Impact Ranking. Aare Afe Babalola has used his knowledge of the law to save higher education system in Nigeria from stagnation and decay. His place



Prof. Olawuyi

in history as the Iconoclast and Father of Higher Education Reform in Africa is fully assured.

When you read about Aare Afe Babalola’s legal accomplishments from afar, you see excellence. When you meet him in person, you see intellect, eloquence and humility. When you move closer to him and learn of his humble beginnings, you see miracle, the impossibility made possible. Baba Aare Afe Babalola is one of the most caring mentors of all time. He considers the welfare of his junior colleagues and staff as his supreme calling.

I am one of the most fortunate beneficiaries of his kind mentoring as he single-handedly mentored, motivated and supported me to apply

for the Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) rank. It is beyond inspirational and only fitting that his university -Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti (ABUAD), became the very first private University in Nigeria to produce a SAN, when I was named a SAN in 2020, at the age of just 37 years. Aare Afe Babalola therefore remains the only lawyer in Nigeria to have produced SANs in both the advocate and academic categories. Like Lord Denning, Aare Afe Babalola’s selfless passion for mentoring and societal reform carries lessons for all lawyers.

We celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the call to the bar of the great Iconoclast and specially gifted administrator, whose towering and reformatory impact has won him ardent admirers, friends and adopted children in law practice, academia, political arena, international, regional, state and local communities.

On behalf of myself and the entire legal academia, I wish our great mentor Baba Aare Afe Babalola many more years in perfect health, supernatural blessings, and divine grace. Amen.

Professor Damilola Sunday Olawuyi, SAN, FCIArb is the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research, Innovation, and Strategic Partnerships (ARISP) Afe Babalola University Ado Ekiti; and Chair, United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights

Primus Inter Pares- A Jolly Good Fellow

On the 60th anniversary of your Call to the Bar of England and Wales, we heartily rejoice with Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), a true Nigerian, and a multi-generational inspiration.

We join all people of goodwill to paraphrase William Shakespeare in “Julius Caesar,” Act 5, Scene 5

“His life is so gentle
And the elements so well mixed in him
That nature might stand up
And say to the world:
‘This is a man.’”
Congratulations our friend and brother

His Majesty, Nnaemeka Alfred Ugochukwu Achebe (Agbogidi) CFR, mni, *Obi of Onitsha*



Afe Babalola is an outstanding gentleman — Justice Belgore

YOU are Afe Babalola’s friend, how would you describe him?

I think I first met him when he did not know me. That must be about 1961. I have known him for 52 years. he was a student in London and some of my friends in the north who were wealthy, the late Shehu Mohammed and Mai Dama with some others were also there then. They were studying for their Bar final examination.

That was the time I knew him, and because we were not introduced, I never knew who he was. But when he returned to Nigeria, he had his pupillage in the chambers of Olu Ayoola & Co in Ibadan. I was in Ibadan for the meeting of the old Students of Ilesha Grammar School, Ayoola being a member and late Justice Kayode Oso. It was in the chambers of Kayode Oso that I saw him for the first time. Afe Babalola was a junior lawyer and he drove a Mercedes Benz car. So I asked: “What kind of a junior lawyer is this?”

Well, he became independent, set up his chamber, and has been one of the finest lawyers this country has ever produced.

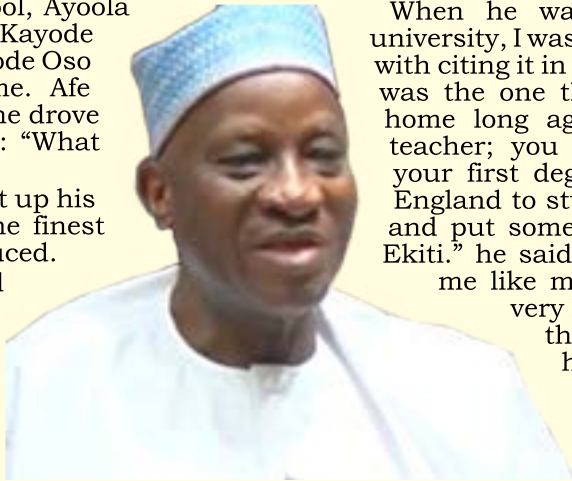
But you can be a good professional; another thing is what you are. Are you a good man? Afe Babalola is one of the greatest gentlemen this great country has ever produced.

He is kind, he is generous, not

only to his people, but to all those that he has met. He helped many lawyers to find their feet, some of them became judges. So many of them are Senior Advocates of Nigeria, some of them are still in practice are making lots of money; they are doing very well.

Afe Babalola is a man I know that does not have a single enemy among those that served under him. But that is very rare in this country. I have a feeling that even if you served under Babalola and you cheated him, and you are in trouble tomorrow, he would still come to your aid. That is how God has made him.

When he was about to start his university, I was told that he is tinkering with citing it in Ibadan or at Ado-ekiti, I was the one that told him, “you left home long ago for Ibadan to be a teacher; you struggled, you passed your first degree, then you went to England to study law, came back, go and put something at home in Ado-Ekiti.” he said: “You have so advised me like many people too.” I was very happy. ABUAD is one of the finest universities I have ever seen. By any standard, he devoted himself to it completely. But that



is what he is. Whatever he is doing, he does it to the highest standard.

The prayer I have for him is that he who works hard on every case, even if he was losing a case, you will know that he has put in his best, and has done a lot of research. The court respects him and he is a gentleman who respects the court.

Can you vouch for his professional acumen and integrity?

You can’t doubt that one. Afe Babalola is a man who works hard on every case, even if he was losing a case, you will know that he has put in his best, and has done a lot of research. The court respects him and he is a gentleman who respects the court.

Was there any interesting encounter with him as a judge in any of his cases?

He appeared before me in many cases; he was always very good. The most important incident with him as a legal practitioner was when I was doing an inquiry into the students’ riot of Ife University, now Obafemi Awolowo University. I think he was representing Modekeke Community. Despite his friendship with the Ooni of Ife, he was very loyal professionally to the client.

During cross examination, he asked many questions to the extent that the Ooni appealed to me: “My Lord, please, save us from Afe Babalola.” I told Ooni, “Afe Babalola is doing his work. If you had been smart enough, you would have briefed him first before this people briefed him.”

I started my chambers in a garage

Continued from page 4

was breached, the octogenarian grinned with satisfaction, saying that his Chambers is renowned for quality welfare package for his lawyers. He disclosed that he is one of the few lawyers who have insisted that ~lawyers must pay their juniors well~.

~I trust my lawyers the way I do because I believe that when lawyers are treated well like other workers, they will be more loyal, well dedicated and more productive. ~When I delivered the keynote address to the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in Enugu in 2002. I admonished all my colleagues particularly the Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs) that the respect which was accorded to lawyers before is dwindling. This is because junior lawyers are not treated well by their seniors, hence they leave quickly and go and establish a one man Chambers called AK and Co or whatever. In the process, the standard of practice is affected adversely.

~I advise one colleague to be more generous in the way they treat their juniors. I also advise them to charge good professional fees to enable them take care of their juniors.

~Our Chambers have been nicknamed ~Kingsway Chambers~ because we charge our fees in dollars with the option for the client to pay the naira equivalent. I tell you why; naira has been very badly devalued and yet we render the same service, using the same books and other materials as our international counterparts.

~My lawyers are comfortable and respectable anywhere because Judges know they undergo solid training in my Chambers.

~Again, in this country, I know we can hold our heads high on the way we treat our lawyers. No lawyer wants to leave this chamber.

~Because they are comfortable and the name opens doors, nobody wants to leave. We have more applicants than we can cope with. Students come for attachments and we have more than we can cope with from Law School. In all our offices, Afe Babalola and Co. is a chamber of First Choice for students on attachment and youth corpsers”.

THE LAWYER OF LAWYERS

For a man who could rightly be described as a study in diligence, his elevation to the model of modern times Lord Dennings has over the years turned out men and women in the legal profession who have become renowned in their career. Indeed, his Chambers parade a galaxy of distinguished alumni who have reached the pinnacle of legal practice.

Hear him; “I think with humility, we at (Afe Babalola and Co.) have produced the largest number of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in the country. I can say confidently that 14 of my lawyers have become Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).

We have produced more than 2 attorney generals of the Federation while we have had more than four of them as Attorney Generals of their respective states. This Chamber has produced many High Court judges, Magistrates, eminent businessmen and even traditional rulers among others”.

HOW A JUDGE ONCE ANGERED ME

There is certain level of popularity that automatically confers polymath status on a renowned personality. Whatever you want to do, somebody will enable you to do it. That seems to be the lot of Chief Afe Babalola who disclosed that one of his life’s vicissitudes was occasioned by a judge who tried to stampede him in his early years of practice.

“The judge who has now retired from Lagos Judiciary was an interesting judge. I was a counsel for Leventis Nigeria Limited which had a large number of workforce. As a result of restructuring that took place, some workers were sacked and asked to go. These workers went to court. Ordinarily, in legal matters, you cannot grant an injunction to bring back those who have been sacked when a motion had been filed.

”Surprisingly, the judge granted an injunction that they should be brought back pending the determination of the case. Later, I filed a motion before his Court asking him to discharge the order. He was reluctant to do so. He said: “you have to bring the directors of Leventis back to the Court before I can consider your application”. Even



though, that was unacceptable to me. I pleaded with him to give me time to bring them to court. I asked for three days but he gave me two days.

As soon as I left the court, I put a paper to the Court of Appeal to stop him from further hearing the case. I obtained the order when I went back to him three days later, I gave him a copy of the judgment of the Court of Appeal and what followed was very interesting. He said: “I thought you are a gentleman. When you brought your client, I thought you were honest when you said I should give you time to bring your client. You now ran like Ben Johnson to the Court of Appeal to ask for a court order restraining me from handling this matter”.

The judge continued: “You this Ekiti man. I will make sure you don’t come to Lagos again. Do you think I am bound by the decision of the Court of Appeal? I did not want to become a judge but for the case I handled against Gani Fawehinmi when he was in the Ministry of Justice,” he said. The judge continued lambasting me, saying: “I asked you to bring your client. This was the same thing they did in Ghana and they ran to Nigeria. Now, I will let the newspaper know the activities of this your client,” he told me.

I insisted that there is a Court order that says you must not go on with this case. The court was full and everybody kept laughing. At the end of the day he adjourned the matter and that was what I wanted. Immediately I left the court, I sued him because what he did was extra-judicial. He had no right to stampede a lawyer. People pleaded with me to drop the case because the man was going to retire soon. That was how the matter was laid to rest.

BILLIONAIRE JUDGES CONTROVERSY

“I was not the person who stoked the fire on billionaire judges. It is not correct to say I called some judges billionaire. I am the president of the Institute of Arbitration of Nigeria. Other great members include Justice Kayode Eso, Justice Alfa Belgore and others. I was worried by the criticism of the way election petitions were handled. I then suggested that election petitions should be taken from normal court and be given to Arbitration so that there will be less controversy. Hon. Justice Eso supported my view and said there are many billionaire judges in the country. That was how the issue of billionaire judges came about. Unfortunately, my advice about turning election petitions to Arbitration, attractive as it is, has not been adopted by government.

ALLEGATION THAT SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE BAR ARE AIDING AND ABETTING CORRUPTION IN JUDICIARY

I won’t know the senior advocates who are aiding and abetting corruption in the judiciary. What I know is that the way election petitions are handled is different from the way I have handled election petitions for 40 years. You will recall that from 1999 to 2008, we did not have an array of

SANs announcing themselves for one petitioner. The practice I know is that one senior advocate would be briefed, it is now for the SAN to have with him juniors, but what we have today is that many Senior Advocates will appear jointly for a petitioner, most of whom do not have the files of the petition.

There was an election petition case that our Chambers was briefed to handle for a governor. Soon after, some SANs approached the governor to allow them handle the case free of charge. This is the sort of thing that happens — that is all I can say but you know what that means.

MY UNILAG YEARS

Let me say straight away that I do not like to hold public positions because I cannot tolerate civil servants pace of work. I have been asked to become the Attorney General of the Federation of this country five times and I have turned down the offer five times on that ground. However when there was an allegation of serious corruption and politicization of UNILAG, the highly respected President Olusegun Obasanjo, who was the Chairman of Transparency International announced my name on television without consulting me that I should go and sanitise the university. I saw my name on the TV and I phoned him (Obasanjo) and he appealed to me to go there (UNILAG). I told him I will accept on the ground that I won’t take any allowance and salary.

The first problem I saw there was that UNILAG has established an outreach centre in South Korea and they were awarding degree of UNI-LAG without the approval of the Senate. That automatically devalued the certificate of UNILAG. At that time, the University was like a market, not a University which should be serene environment for learning.

The investigation was made and we found out that the Senate was not consulted and the Vice-Chancellor was asked to go. I found as a fact that the library, laboratories, hostels and most buildings were in a state of decay.

I, then, decided to put up my own building named Afe Babalola auditorium because if you want people to help you, you must help yourself first. Having done that, I invited my major clients: Julius Berger, Shell, Mobil etc to come and launch an endowment fund for the University. They agreed and we raised about three billion naira.

The Nigeria University Commission (NUC) recognized our achievement and declared us the number one university in the country. I was also voted the best Pro-Chancellor out of 27 Universities.

IS AFE BABALOLA A POLITICIAN

I have never carried any party card. I do not belong to any political party. But I want to ask you, who is a politician? A politician is somebody who is interested in how his community is governed and how he himself is governed. I am interested in how I am governed.

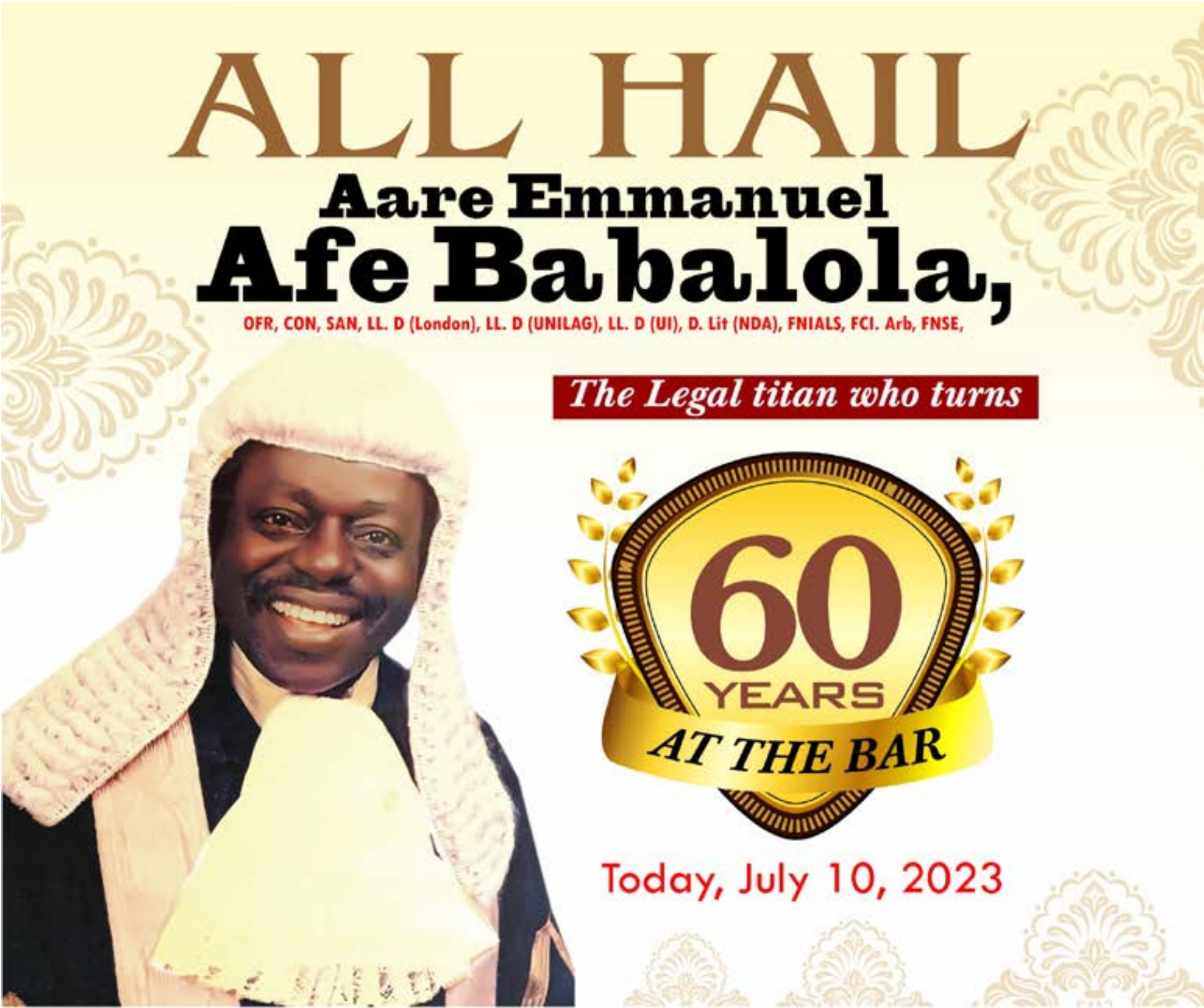
300 years before Christ was born, Plato said: “if you are not interested in how you are governed, you should live among animals in the forest. To that extent, you are a politician. Every animal is a political animal. That is why I write articles almost every day on how Nigeria should be governed.

PHILANTHROPY — A TRAIT I IMBIBED FROM MY PARENTS

I have today, by the grace of God, twenty-two structures that I have given away. I have built houses for universities, Labour Congress, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and the University College Hospital in Ibadan where I have the most modern nuclear medicine department which is the biggest and best in West Africa.

What spur me is difficult to explain, but all I can say is that I inherited the trait from my parents who were very generous. I knew what poverty feels like. My getting over it seems to be because God wanted to use me to change the attitude of man to money and wealth. I am happy when others are happy. I prefer to be hungry and ensure others are happy. It is not the amount of money that I have that gives me happiness, but how I use it to affect the lives of others.

If you go to University of Lagos (UNILAG), members of the council will tell you that, even though. I didn’t take salary or allowance, I still give council members allowance. The last time I travelled, I bought IPAD, blackberry, shirts, and perfume for all staff in ABUAD. If you ask my lawyers, they will tell you I bring boxes of clothes from abroad and distribute to everybody when I resume in the office.



The Board of Trustees, The Council, Senate and the entire Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, ABUAD, Community, celebrate our genial Founder & Chancellor, the proponent of quality and functional education, a valiant Entrepreneur and Philanthropist, the upright, downright and forthright patriotic Nigerian who has the following in his kitty:

- A legal giant who at various times has been a member Nigerian Bar Association, International Bar Association, Former member Body of Benchers (The Highest Ruling Body of the Bar) and Former Member, Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee of Nigeria (the body responsible for appointment of SAN).
- A man who twice declined the offer of Minister of Justice in a country when people are fighting tooth and nail to have such offers.
- A legal pundit who has trained more than 1,000 lawyers, produced 25 Senior Advocates of Nigeria, several High Court Judges and Justices of the Appellate Courts.
- A legal juggernaut who (as at 2022 Convocation) has produced 1,427 Law graduates from his University’s College of Law which NUC acknowledged as the “Best in West Africa”, and
- A man who has written his name in indelible ink where others etch theirs in invisible ink.

WE WISH YOU MORE OF THESE SUCCESS STORIES AS YOU CONTINUE TO SHOW THE WAY TO HAVING A BETTER NIGERIA.



Afe Babalola turns down £5m legal Fees in exchange for University for his people

BY KOLAWOLE IGANDAN

What do you call a man who Presidents court his friendship; powerful, influential, charming or courageous? That is too glib, too pedestrian and thus, buries the story!

All Aare Afe Babalola - a quintessential legal practitioner and exemplary philanthropist of no mean order - ever wanted to be is the biggest there ever is, the best there ever was. Yes! You may loathe him, but you certainly can't but admire his style. A typical example is the recent convocation of his first set of graduates of his school, where the President of the Federal republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck ebele Jonathan, not only graced the occasion but spoke glowingly of the icon of law practice, who only recently sealed his status as a first-class educationist with the founding of a university that is racing to compete with ivy league institutions.

An inside source close to the Presidency admitted that Jonathan may not have had a chummy relationship with the elder statesman (Afe Babalola) over his past comments about certain policies of his (Jonathan's) administration, but stated: "Afe is one patriot the President respects and reveres. I can assure you, Afe is not a frivolous person, so the President takes his criticism in good faith."

But that is indeed his (Afe's) winning streak. he is known to be firm and transparently honest with his clients, associates and government functionaries. his natural ability to handle people is so inspiring that even when he disagrees with them at meetings, he would disarm them with grace and wit. That is the reason he has had the rare privilege of hobnobbing with all the Presidents that have been ruling the country. They associate with him; they curry his favour because they know he is imbued with a Midas touch. The late President Shehu Shagari asked him, after he won a celebrated case for the federal government, what he wanted in lieu of his legal fees. Shagari had marveled at 'how a man could turn down a whopping five million pounds in exchange for a university for his people in Ekiti.'

Yes, that was what Afe Babalola wanted and he told Shagari that he would forgo his fees of five million pounds if he (Shagari) could fulfil his heart desire of having a university in Ekiti, then a part of the old Ondo State. That was the first time Afe Babalola caught national attention. From that point, successive Presidents had begged him to be part of their governments.

When they could not convince him to join the train, they appealed to him to recommend people of his choice to fill plum positions in government even the late fiery General Sani Abacha was said to have persuaded and even sent emissaries to appeal to the legal giant to be the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister For Justice. That stemmed from the respect he earned himself with his views.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, as Nigeria's President, also engaged him to gain political and legal mileage for his government. The visit by President Jonathan to the Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), weeks ago, was just to keep a tradition that his predecessors had, for years, kept inviolate - honouring a man who has

been touching lives in awe-inspiring ways.

A top government functionary in the President's entourage to the commissioning



of the engineering Complex of the university named after the President, noted: "What the President has done today is nothing new. Afe Babalola has hosted several presidents. In one way or the other, the man has kept faith with people in top government positions. he speaks truth to power.

Isn't it a little curious that the man was the first to criticize Jonathan when he changed the University of Lagos to Moshod Abiola University? Isn't it also ironic that he has spoken against several policies of the current president? even before he spoke about national conference that is generating ripples across the land, Afe had taken it upon himself to say it and the President counted on some of his views. We know he means well. We would rather appeal to him to always have a private audience with the President before making these things public. he is one of the very few who can call the President even at midnight."

Afe could be charming and conciliatory, but if required, he could move on to a prolonged vituperation against imperial hubris and power chauvinism and then switch to an erudite philosophical and legalistic discourse.

The visit by the President, however, was not without some drama. Weeks before the event, some people had expressed doubts about the President honouring Afe's invitation. They adduced a lot of reasons; prime among them was that Jonathan was not comfortable with his criticism of some of his policies. They also said Afe was extremely close to Obasanjo, who they reckoned, was not in good terms with President Jonathan. All these, the legal luminary, dismissed as sheer balderdash. He stated emphatically that President Jonathan remained his very good friend. At government circles too, it was alleged that some "sycophants" had attempted to talk the President out of honouring Afe's invitation, because according to them,

'the man is hostile to our government.' But the President reportedly told them that 'Afe Babalola is too big a man to ignore' and that he would not only honour him by gracing the occasion, he would also come

with his cabinet members as a show of love for the rare pillar of education.

President Jonathan kept his promise as he landed on ABUAD's campus at 11:15a.m in an Air Force helicopter on October 19. He was received by a tumultuous crowd at the commissioning of the university's engineering edifice.

To underscore the importance of the commissioning, Jonathan was accompanied by a powerful delegation, including the Minister of Police Affairs, Navy Captain Caleb Olubolade (rtd); his counterpart in the education Ministry, Dr. Nyesom Wike; Minister of State for FCT, Oloye Jumoke Akinjide; Governor Kayode Fayemi of ekiti State; Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State and their Kaduna and Gombe states counterparts.

At the commissioning, Jonathan said Afe's feat as the founder of the university was "notably one of the most outstanding individual contributions towards government educational project". He paid glowing tributes to

Afe and his wife, Yeye Aare Modupe, describing them as persons with an undeniable passion for qualitative education and who had made a name for themselves by establishing a world-class university - ABUAD. He confirmed that the facilities, structures and learning character he had seen in ABUAD were living testimonies to the founder's commitment and sense of mission after his eight year stint as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council at the University of Lagos. he said: "Some of the greatest institutions in the world were shaped by the vision, foresight and personal experience of their founders, with ABUAD sharing same through Babalola, a man of unassailable character, profound vision, an epitome of the highest ideals and a quintessential Nigerian patriot."

And as if to rub it in that he came to honour Afe alone and alone, Jonathan refused entreaties by political leaders to meet with party chieftains and governorship aspirants of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state. Point-blank, he was said to have told some leaders of the party: "When it is time to play politics, ekiti people will know that PDP is the party to beat in the state, but for today, I am here to honour a foremost Nigerian, your son, our son, Afe Babalola."

Perhaps nothing established the fact that Afe has won a place in the history of the nation's gianthood through educational advancement than the spectacle tagged the maiden convocation of ABUAD a few days back.

There was no elbow room as his admirers from far and near stepped out to be counted in huge numbers. The Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, Dr Lalla Ben Barka, who gave a hortative convocation lecture, was unsparing in accolades for the legal icon. Thunderous ovation rose to high heavens. Aare Afe Babalola who was most gratified and humbled with the successful turn of events noted with glee that the 108 pioneer set of graduates, with 18 first class degree holders would excel in the years ahead.

Similar heart-warming encomiums flowed from the lips of ex- President Obasanjo who smiled back to his Ota, Ogun State home with the university's honorary Doctorate Degree. What a celebration of a true patriot who came to make an indelible mark in his time!

Kola Igandan is a media consultant and PR executive with PUSH MEDIA CONCEPT

No limit to what I want to achieve as long as I am alive – Afe Babalola

"A candle does not loose anything by lighting other candles" – James Kelly

BY: TUNDE OLOFINTILA

Barely three weeks after vouching to continue supporting education in all its ramifications until he leaves the planet earth, legal colossus and Founder of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Aare Afe Babalola, SAN, has again pledged that there is no limit to what he wants to achieve as long as he is alive.

Babalola made this revelation at the grand reception for the trio of Boluwatife Akinoso, Odafe Angela Okparanyote and Moyinoluwa Omoyajowo, all 600 Level MBBS ABUAD students who travelled to the US on April 14, 2023 for a six-week Clinical Posting under the tripartite Agreement among Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, ABUAD, Little-by-Little Foundation and Johns Hopkins Hospital, USA.

The Agreement which exposed the three lucky beneficiaries to world-class training in one of the best Teaching Hospitals in the world, Johns Hopkins Hospital, USA, was signed at an elaborate ceremony in ABUAD on January 10, 2023.

In his brief remarks during the ceremony in Ado-Ekiti over the weekend, Babalola who was full of lavish praises for Little-by-Little Foundation, ably represented by Mr. Fisayo Ajayi, a member of Trustees of the Foundation, for its most altruistic gesture, the trio of Boluwatife Akinoso, Odafe Angello Okparanyote and Moyinoluwa Omoyajowo who represented the university very well during their six-week Clinical Posting at Johns Hopkins Hospital, USA, said the initiative is the beginning of better things to come.

His words: "If there is anyone to be congratulated on this occasion, it is not my humble self nor the three students who went on Clinical posting to Johns Hopkins. It is Chief Julius Ade Ajayi, the Chairman of Little-by-Little Foundation. Here is a simple, tireless, industrious, respectful, and focused man who is full of hope. Good enough, the God has blessed him with good children who are doing excellently well in their various callings all over the world".

He added: "How I wish Chief Ajayi were here in person today. But it does not matter. He is here in a representative capacity. Fisayo, (referring to Mr. Fisayo Ajayi who represented the Little-by-Little Foundation at the ceremony), please tell your father what you have seen here today. As for me, I will continue to support education and there is no limit to what I can achieve as long as I am alive". This is true of the ever-green words of James Kelly who once posited that "A candle does not loose anything by lighting other candles".

Addressing Akinoso, Okparanyote and Omoyajowo, who he relished dupped "ABUAD Ambassadors to Johns Hopkins", he added: "I have listened to all the good things said about you and your superlative performance in the United States. That notwithstanding, I would like you to know that you have just started. This is just the beginning; better days are ahead. You must continue to work hard, learn from your varied experiences in Johns Hopkins and apply them now that you are back



Regulatory Body was not only happy, but it also commended the efforts of the Founder and those of the entire university for this uncommon achievement.

The quartet of the Director of Quality Assurance, Prof. Yekini Lawal, the Chief Medical Director of ABUAD Multi-System Hospital, Dr. Kolawole Ogundipe, the Provost College of Law, Prof. Tunde Yebisi and former Provost College of Sciences, Prof. Abiodun Ojo, commended Babalola's altruistic inclinations, particularly in the realms of Education, Healthcare delivery and Medical education as well as Philanthropy as a result of which he has made the society better than he had met it.

Narrating her experience, Boluwatife Akinoso said: "It was an amazing experience to see the medical equipment in Johns Hopkins most of which are readily available in our Multi-System Hospital. However, I saw and knew some other things which I probably would not have been opportune to see and know if I had not gone to the US. As a way of paying back, I will deploy the experience I gathered in the US to make things better here at home".

MoyinOluwa Omoyajowo profoundly appreciated the Founder for establishing the ABUAD Multi-System Hospital, stressing that "I say this because what I saw in Johns Hopkins is not substantially different from what Aare has invested so heavily in to put the Multi-System Hospital in a shape that compelled leading stakeholders in the health sector to adjudge as the most well-equipped hospital in sub-Saharan Africa".

She added: "There is no doubt that we did not only prove our mettle while in the United States, but we also represented our country well and made all of us proud.

"We will use what we learnt in the US to better the lot of our people at home. With our experience, we will never remain the same again after this one-in-a-life-time opportunity and experience in Johns Hopkins.

Waxing philosophical, Odafe Angello Okparanyote noted that the seed which Afe Babalola has planted in them will germinate, flourish, bear fruits, many fruits, more fruits and a variety of fruits.

According to him "Our US visit was an amazing experience which enabled the Americans to see some of the stuff we are made of. We will deploy what we have learnt for the benefit of the people".

Mr. Fisayo Ajayi thanked Babalola, whom he described as a man of excellence, for his selflessness and his willingness to always help people.

"While in Johns Hopkins, you students gave a good account of themselves. Indeed, they were able to show the white folks that we are a brilliant set of people", he said.

He added: "This is not surprising because it is often said that a fruit does not fall far away from the tree that bears it. Your students reflected what you are during their stint in the US. Because of their superlative performance, many more of your students will benefit from the scheme in the nearest future. We are even thinking of extending it to Engineering students.

"It will not be limited to the students alone. A time is coming, and that is going to be very soon, when there will be staff exchange programme. This will enable ABUAD to send some of its Professors to Johns Hopkins and vice versa. It is a win-win situation and that is our philosophy in Little-by-Little Foundation. The Professors coming from Johns Hopkins certainly have a lot to learn from ABUAD's flourishing story too.

Olofintila is Director, Corporate Affairs, ABUAD

Brilliant legal mind, exemplary philanthropist

BY KOLAWOLE IGANDAN

By all standards, Aare Afe Babalola, one of the best legal minds of his generation, aptly fits into the description of an icon. he is, undoubtedly, a pride to the legal profession and one of the few eminent Nigerians who have the ear of the number one citizen in Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck ebele Jonathan. To say he is powerful, influential, charming and courageous is to put it mildly. In fact, it is like under-reporting the reality.

This story of this quintessential legal practitioner and exemplary philanthropist of no mean order is one that any educated reader will find unputdownable; it is gripping and full of some didactic messages.

Afe Babalola, a man with catholic taste, is not known to court cheap favour from any quarters because he is a man of integrity; so, you will never find him calling a spade a big cutlery. You may dislike him because he doesn't seem to have any apologies for expressing his frank views on some national issues, but you will certainly admire his style.

Perhaps, this explains why a number of people who have literally been made the anvil of his criticism over some issues in the past still don't see him as a noise maker or rabble-rouser. he doesn't talk balderdash, especially on matters of national interest. Or do you need any further proof? A typical example is the recent convocation of the first set of graduates of the Afe Babalola University, Ado ekiti, where the President of the Federal republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, not only graced the occasion but also spoke glowingly of the icon of law practice. Until that eventful morning when President Goodluck Jonathan arrived the university campus for the event, many had dismissed the possibility of his attendance as a figment of the imagination of the organizers.

But powerful Afe Babalola, also a respected educationist, once again, proved all his traducers wrong. Indeed, an inside source close to the Presidency admitted that Jonathan might not have had a chummy relationship with the elder statesman (Afe Babalola) over his past comments about certain policies of his (Jonathan's) administration, but he stated that "Afe is one patriot the President respects and reveres. I can assure you that Afe is not a frivolous person, so the President takes his criticism in good faith."

But that is, indeed, his (Afe Babalola's) winning streak. he is known to be firm and transparently honest with his clients, associates and government's functionaries. his natural ability to handle people is so inspiring that even when he disagrees with them at meetings, he will disarm them with grace and wits. That is the reason he has had the rare privilege of hobnobbing with all the successive presidents of Nigeria. They associate with him; they curry his favour because they know he is imbued with the Midas touch. Former president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, asked him, after he won a celebrated case for the Federal Government, what he wanted in lieu of his legal fees. Then, Shagari had marveled at 'how a man could turn down a whopping five million pounds in exchange for a university for his people in Ekiti.'

Yes, that was what Afe Babalola wanted and he told Shagari that he would forgo his fees of five million pounds if he (Shagari) could fulfill his heart desire of having a university in Ekiti, then a part of the old Ondo State. That was the first time Afe Babalola had caught national attention. From that point, successive Presidents begged him to be part of their

governments. When they could not convince him to join the train, they appealed to him to recommend people of his choice to fill plum positions in their governments. even the late fiery General Sani Abacha was said to have persuaded and even sent emissaries to appeal to the legal giant to be the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister for Justice. That stemmed from the respect he earned himself with his views.

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he has spoken against several policies of the current president? Even before he spoke about the national conference that is generating ripples across the land, Afe had taken it upon himself to say it and the President counted on some of his views. We know he means well. We would rather appeal to him to always have a private audience with the President before making these things public. he is one of the very few who can call the President even at midnight."

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They adduced a lot of reasons; prime among them was that Jonathan was not comfortable with his criticism of some of his policies. They also said Afe was extremely close to Obasanjo, who they reckoned, was not in good terms with President Jonathan. All these, the legal luminary, dismissed as sheer balderdash. he



stated emphatically that President Jonathan remained his very good friend. At government circles too, it was alleged that some "sycophants" had attempted to talk the President out of honouring Afe's invitation, because according to them, 'the man is hostile to our government.' But the President reportedly told them that 'Afe Babalola is too big a man to ignore' and that he would not only honour him by gracing the occasion, he would also come with his cabinet members as a show of love for the rare pillar of education.

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the Minister of Police Affairs, Navy Captain Caleb Olubolade (rtd); his counterpart in the education Ministry, Dr. Nyesom Wike; Minister of State for FCT, Oloye Jumoke Akinjide; Governor Kayode Fayemi of ekiti State; Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State and their Kaduna and Gombe states counterparts.

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ABUAD were living testimonies to the founder's commitment and sense of mission after his eight-year stint as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council at the University of

Lagos. he said: "Some of the greatest institutions in the world were shaped by the vision, foresight and personal experience of their founders, with ABUAD sharing same through Babalola, a man of unassailable character, profound vision, an epitome of the highest ideals and a quintessential Nigerian patriot." And as if to rub it in that he came to honour Afe alone and alone, Jonathan refused entreaties by political leaders to meet with party chieftains and governorship aspirants of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state. Pointblank, he was said to have told some leaders of the party that "When it is time to play politics, ekiti people will know that PDP is the party to beat in the state, but for today, I am here to honour a foremost Nigerian, your son, our son, Afe Babalola." Perhaps nothing established the fact that Afe has won a place in the history of the nation through educational advancement than the spectacle tagged the maiden convocation of ABUAD a few days back.

There was no elbow room as his admirers from far and near stepped out to be counted in huge numbers. The Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. Lalla Ben Barka, who gave a hortative convocation lecture, was unsparing in accolades for the legal icon. Thunderous ovation rose to high heavens.

Aare Afe Babalola, who was most gratified and humbled with the successful turn of events, noted with glee that the 108 pioneer set of graduates, with 18 first-class degree holders would excel in the years ahead. Similar heart-warming encomiums flowed from the lips of ex-president Obasanjo who smiled back to his Ota, Ogun State home with the university's honorary Doctorate Degree. What a celebration of a true patriot who came to make an indelible mark in his Time!

Afe BABALOLA — The ultimate idealist scores another first

By KOLAWOLE IGANDAN

In conferring the honorary degree award of Doctor of Law degree (LL.D, Honoris causa) on Aare Afe Babalola, the University of Lagos was not merely paying a tribute to the legal luminary. It was, in fact, more than that; it was also in recognition of him as an iconic educationist and administrator par excellence, who taught the nation a new thing in attaining a standard of academic excellence.

Since he accepted the position of Pro-chancellor of the university, albeit, reluctantly, but in total submission to the pressure the then President Olusegun Obasanjo, of whom he (Afe) has tremendous respect for, mounted on him to go and clear the mess the revered institution was mired in, he most unconsciously slipped into the personae of heroes, who had done a lot to salvage the dwindling level of education in the country.

Before then, Afe Babalola never hid his distaste for serving in a government establishment. he had always complained about their style of management. he loathed their lazy approach to job functions. Afe Babalola revealed sometimes ago: "I had refused the government's offer of juicy appointments several times. I thought I could not work with the civil servants. "My dedication to duty, the way I wake up as early as 5.00a.m. and work till 12.00p.m., I know I will make several enemies if I have to work at a place where people are used to lazy ways of doing things."

So, when the President insisted that he was the one to take up a job he would rather not touch with a long pole, he had no choice than to accept the offer to sanitize the ivory tower.

Yes, the university was at its lowest ebb. The challenge posed by certain discrepancies occasioned by what had become attitudinal was to set his tenure into a tailspin. He admitted that he met the institution in bad shape. hear him: "The President told me there was a lot of rot in the university. he appealed that he needed somebody of my type with a lot of integrity to clean the mess.

"When I got there, I knew he was right. There was a lot of polarization in the university. They were training people and were granting degrees of the University without the approval of the Senate. There was the issue of cultism. The standard and quality of degrees awarded were questionable.

"I accepted the challenge and of course, I had a stiff opposition by those that were benefitting from the rot. Fortunately, I had men of impeccable character as Council members and we set up committees of all types and we were able to unearth those responsible for the problems of the university.

"Apart from that, the issue of the post university matriculation exams came to limelight. There were scandals about students who were able to secure higher scores by special arrangement.

Those who scored high marks were found to be the most unsuitable for the university.

I protested and was able to convince members that the university should conduct its post-University Matriculation



examination, UMe. This was opposed to by parents benefitting from the rot. "The universities were then allowed to do their screening exercise. It paid off for us here. The first post-UME conducted in the university, for instance, was very revealing.

I asked a student who wanted to study law, "do you know the author of Things Fall Apart? To my utter chagrin, he said "Ibrahim Abacha!"

That was the height of academic decadence before he took the mantle of leadership of the university. But for a man whose mind operated within broad parameters, he did not limit himself to clearing the Augean stable; he also attracted development to the institution by ensuring that the private sector was neck deep in the affairs of the university. he spoke glowingly of how he led by example when he built an auditorium with modern facility. The Afe BABALOLA hALL, which is conspicuously close to the Senate building. "I put up an edifice and then invited my clients,

Shell, Mobil, and others to come and assist the university. Julius Berger tarred the roads and put up an auditorium. Others put up buildings and provided all sorts of facilities and the university became one of the best in the country.

"I got an award as the best Pro-Chancellor after four years. My University of Lagos was chosen as the best university and my Vice Chancellor was voted the best Vice Chancellor. The teamwork was fantastic. The visitation panel commended me for my leadership role and noted that I never took a kobo from the university," he said. With the honour being

bestowed on him today, Afe Babalola, unexpectedly, may not laugh loud. Yes, he may for a moment take a mental note of his career trajectory in the ivory tower. he would most probably shed tears of joy and feel a sense of justification, conviction and vindication. Justification in the sense that he had justified the confidence reposed in him by the erstwhile president!

Conviction because he left his mark on the sands of life in the educational sector, and vindication that his abrupt exit from the institution after the third year of his second term was most uncalled for. "After four years, I ought to leave the place but because of what I achieved, the alumni and others petitioned the President that they wanted me to remain for a second term. Normally, I should run for four years, but President Umaru Yar' Adua thought differently, as he asked us to go after three years. I was told to go to court to defend it, but I rejected the option as I was not making money from it," he said.

The act, which was deemed gratuitous on the part of the government by not a few people, was the tonic that fired the zeal in Afe Babalola to create a world class

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Indeed, I decided to establish a university of my own to teach Nigeria how a university should be run. That is why the motto of the university (ABUAD) is: "To revolutionize education by example."

institution known today as Afe Babalola University, Ado-ekiti (ABUAD). This much he echoed: "I love education with a passion. I would have loved to give more to the University of Lagos before Yar' Adua told us to go, but I was greatly inspired to create an institution that would be highly rated

Not just here but in the world. "Indeed, I decided to establish a university of my own to teach Nigeria how a university should be run. That is why the motto of the university (ABUAD) is: "To revolutionize education by example." For a man whose life and mission is a

vindication of what a determined person can achieve against extraordinary odds, the honorary award could not have come at a better time!

It is the university's golden jubilee, hence, its decision to honour a man that contributed immensely to the development of the university. The letter of his award read in part: "The University of Lagos cherishes its association with accomplished and seasoned

personalities who have been in charge of the governance and management of the university since its inception. You definitely occupy a very important position as one of the giants in this regards. "The award is in recognition of your immense contributions to the development of education, advancement of knowledge, learning and research. Also, note is taken of your unrelenting philanthropic contribution to the advancement of education and your passion for seeking the general welfare of the society.

"The university noted in particular that as a former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council for the two periods that you were appointed, you contributed immensely to the development of the university and you have remained consistent in putting the university in the world map. "You laid the foundation and provided the roadmap for the present enviable ranking of the university as the best in Nigeria and 16th in Africa. The university is filled with the remarkable strides you made in the course of restoring values on academia, providing a blueprint for income generating units and creation of new avenues of endowment in the university. The benefits remain obvious till today. It is incontestable that you are eminently worthy to be identified with the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the university." Afe Babalola would most certainly be remembered for being a trend-setter, hailing from a modest background. his success had led to a chain reaction. Young men and women constrained by poverty to stay at home and not get educated have dared to pursue their dream. It is a revolution that has but one catalyst – Afe Babalola himself!

60th Anniversary at the Bar



The Board of Trustees, Management and Staff of Afe Babalola University Multi-System Hospital (AMSH), acknowledged by leading healthcare stakeholders as *"The most well-equipped Hospital in Sub-Saharan Africa"* identify with our great icon, the Founder and Proprietor of AMSH, the inimitable **Aare Afe Babalola, OFR, CON, SAN, LL.D (London) LL. D (UNILAG) LL. D (UI), D. Lit. (NDA), FNIALS, FCI.Arb, FNSE, GFSM**, on the occasion of your 60th Anniversary at the Bar today, Monday, July 10, 2023.

Your dedication and hard work are truly inspiring. You have been an inspiration to many and have made a significant impact in the legal profession, among others.

We at AMSH are proud of you, we congratulate you on reaching this incredible milestone and pray that your passion for the law and your commitment to excellence and justice continue to endure in your desire to make Nigeria and the world a better place for all to live in.

Hearty Congratulations & Happy Celebrations



Signed
Dr. Kolawole Ogundipe
Chief Medical Director

ABUAD...A Vision in Action

Celebrating a Man of Excellence



All of us in Topfingers Investment Limited felicitate with the consummate Entrepreneur, a fatherly father, an uncommon mentor and a rare Philanthropist, **Aare Afe Babalola, OFR, CON, SAN, LL. D (London), LL. D (UNILAG), LL. D (UI), D. Lit. (NDA), FNIALS, FCI. Arb, FNSE**, as he turns 60 years at the Bar today, **Monday, July 10, 2023**.

Our darling daddy, we are so proud of you and all your sterling accomplishments in the legal profession among other areas of human endeavour where you continue to be a beacon of hope and encouragement.

Your 60 years at the Bar is an eloquent testimony to your grit, uncommon dedication and unparalleled achievements in the legal profession where you have remained a shining bright star.

Congratulations once again and we pray that God will continue to sustain all your achievements and grant you the best of all that you desire in life (Psalm 91:16).

Congratulations, our dear Baba!



Signed
Dr & Mrs Samuel O. Abiodun
MD/CEO

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The Abuad Guarantee

I am releasing them to soar like the eagle. I assure you that they would compete favourably with the world's best.

They will show the world who they are. I have no doubt about their ability and potentials. I can vouch for them because I know the tutelage we have imbibed and inculcated in them. I have had interactions with them and I can tell you that, as an integral part of them, they have learnt every thing that would make them excel in the world; both in practical and theory.

Mark it! We never wanted to be just another university; what we designed is a breeding ground that would be a reference point, not just in Nigeria, but the world over.

So watch out, if you see a man or woman who is highly respected in any reputable organization in the years ahead, he or she would probably be a Abuad product. Don't ask him or her; their character, business acumen, skills and refinement is the proof that he or she is our product. This is the Abuad guarantee