

**2ND ANNUAL LECTURE OF THE STEPHEN OLUWOLE AWOKOYA
FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION**

**THE AWARD OF THE POST GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS DR. A. K. FASINA
- 1997**

MR. CHAIRMAN The Guest of Honour The Guest Speaker Chief (Mrs) J. G. O. Awokoya Members of the Board of Trustees Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

My brief duty is serve after the mail meal from the Fountain of knowledge freshly served, courtesy of Emeritus Professor of History, Professor J. F. Ade AJAYI. So the celebration continues. Which celebration? The celebration of the immortality of excellence as personified by the late Professor (Chief) Stephen Oluwole AWOKOYA.

God gives man the right to choose and thereafter, man is fully responsible for his choice. The late Professor Awokoya chose EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND SCIENCE EDUCATION. He was the first Nigerian to obtain a university degree in Chemistry (London University 1946). Many politicians have influenced (positively or negatively) the course of Nigerian history. Many teachers have taught in our schools. We have had many permanent-secretaries (now called directors-general). Many ministers of education (federal and state) have influenced the direction the direction of education in Nigeria. Of all the rulers we have had, of all the teachers that ever taught and of all the ministers/commissioners of education and permanent-secretaries/director-general we ever have had, none has affected the quality and meaningful direction of the course of education in Nigeria as the late Professor (Chief) S.O. Awokoya.

The Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation for Science Education which was set up in the memory of the late Professor Awokoya, has chosen to continue affecting the quality and positive direction of the course of science and science education in Nigeria. Last year (1996) after a very illuminating lecture by Emeritus Professor of Physics, Professor Olumuyiwa AWE, the Foundation awarded two post-graduate scholarships. This year (1997) after another interesting and educative lecture by another Emeritus Professor (this

time, Emeritus Professor of History) the Foundation is awarding another two Post-Graduate Scholarships.

The exercise of the selection of the awardees involves asking the Universities to nominate their best graduates who are interested in post-graduate who are interested in post-graduate studies in science and science-education. Although the responses were better than last year's, we appeal to the Vice-Chancellors, Registrars and Deans of Faculties to give prompt responses to our requests. We received responses from universities across the length and breadth of our country. After the usual screening we selected the two awardees of today. Mr. Chairman, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, down memory lane, one recalls that when Molusi College Ijebu-Igbo (Ogun State) was founded and Mr. S. O. Awokoya (as he was then) was invited to be the Foundation Principal, effective from 28th January, 1949, he gave the school, its now popular motto, taken from an earlier statement by Dr. John Aggrey of Ghana: "Only the best is good enough for Africa." From the abundance of the heart, the mouth does speak. This motto also guided Professor Awokoya throughout his lifetime. So this too remains the guiding motto of the Foundation. Let me assure all Nigerians and the Friends of Nigeria, that we shall keep this high standard: ONLY THE BEST.

The award which covers TUITION and BOARD is of the order of N50, 000.00 per student per annum, renewable each year for a maximum of three years provided the awardee maintains a good record of performance as attested to by the authorities of the university he/she attends. The two awardees this year are Mr. Omololu Kwame AKIN-OJO and Mallam Audu MOHAMMED.

Mr. Omololu Kwame AKIN-OJO: was born on April 13, 1974. He attended the Staff School University of Ibadan, the International School University of Ibadan and the University, (i.e. the University of Ibadan) for his primary, secondary and tertiary education respectively. In the GCE - OL - 1990 at age 16, Omololu scored six distinctions and one credit in all the seven subjects for which he sat. In the 1993/94 degree examination at the University of Ibadan, Omololu obtained FIRST CLASS

HONOURS IN PHYSICS (with a GP of 6.8). He is currently a Graduate-Assistant, at the Department of Physics University of Ibadan.

Mallam Audu MOHAMED was born on June 30, 1960.

He attended : 1. Yelwa Practising Primary School, Maiduguri, Borno State 2. Teachers College, Waka, Biu, Borno State (Grd.II) 3. Advanced Teachers College, Maiduguri 1981/84 (NCE) 4. University of Maiduguri 1989/92 (1st Class B.Sc. Maths-Education) 5. University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne England (M.Ed. 1994/95)

As the best graduating student in 1991/92 at the University of Maiduguri; Audu won (a) The Shetima Ali Munguno Prize (b) The Dean's Prize and (c) The Chancellor's Prize

Like the late Professor Awokoya and like Professor Babs Fafunwa, Audu has interest in the important role of a child's mother tongue in the child's understanding of teaching processes of early education. Sometimes the late Professor Awokoya (then Mr. Awokoya) in 1950, apart from his duties as College Principal at Molusi College, also taught geometr. On a particular occasion, there was difficulty in being understood by the students and he involuntarily resorted to Ijebu-dialect: "Iyen ri fo, we ri angle we, ke s'ai ri? We ri totun ati tosi, e nnoke we, sofo bakan nen ron je? The student answered: a a , mo ri wa a, ye pa ri pa, ewen ra be, mo ti ri. It dawned on 37-year old Mr. Awokoya that the mother tongue of a child plays an important role in the child's early education. In later years, Professor Babatunde Aliu Fafunwa (a former Federal Minister of Education) was to preach this same philosophy. Today we are proud to present to you, a 37-year old Audu Mohammed who will carry out a Ph.D research study in Mathematical-Education with special interest in the role of mother-tongue in the early education of our children. He will carry out the studies covering some of the states in the North-Eastern Zone of Nigeria: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno and Taraba States; for whom Hausa is not even their mother-tongue but some other dialects.

Finally, Mr.Chinsman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the efforts, which the FOUNDATION has made, revealed that Nigeria is not a nation of mediocres after all, but that of first class brains. The question however arises: "Why doesn't Nigeria make use of these high class brains in place of lying talkatives? The search for an answer continues.

Meanwhile, please welcome to the rostrum, the distinguished awardees: Mr. Omololu Kwame AKIN-OJO and Mallam Audu MOHAMMED.

TO THE AWARDEES: I commend to you the life and times of late Professor (Chief) Stephen Oluwole AWOKOYA. In him, there was no East, no West, no North, no South but ONE NIGERIA. I also commend to you, my own guiding principles: "Excellence breeds brotherhood, no man chose his place of birth". On behalf of the Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation For Science Education, I wish you successful study-times. May God prosper your efforts to the glory of His Name, Amen.

THANK YOU.