

**4TH ANNUAL LECTURE AND AWARD OF POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS OF THE STEPHEN OLUWOLE AWOKOYA FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, LAGOS ON TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH 1999.**

**WELCOME ADDRESS - OTUNBA OLABIYI DUROJAIYE.**

The chairman of this occasion, distinguished Senator David Dafinone, our respected Guest speaker, *Prof. Gabriel Babatunde OGUNMOLA*, Our cherished Guest of Honour, Dr Olu Allison, my Lords, your Excellencies, my colleagues on the Board of Trustees of Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation for Science Education, members of the forth estate of the realm, representatives of various associations present, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

1. I have a duty and particular pleasure to welcome all of you to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture of the Foundation and Award of Post-graduate Scholarships ceremony. My duty arises from the fact that I am the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. My particular pleasure stems from the fact that this is my first public participation in the activities of the Foundation since our first Annual lecture was delivered three years ago. The circumstances of my absence are well known and need not be repeated today. I pray that Nigeria may never again witness or suffer the reign of a Leviathan who could deny fellow citizens their liberty or even life at will.
2. We are assembled here today, respected ladies and gentlemen, to commemorate the life and times of one of the most brilliant Nigerians that ever lived. I refer with profound respect to Chief, Professor Stephen Hezekiah Oluwole Oluremi Atanda Jenriogbe AWOKOYA. He was the first Nigerian University graduate in Chemistry, he was the first Minister of Education in Western Nigeria (1952 to 1956), foundation Principal of Molusi College Ijebu-Igbo, first principal of the Federal Emergency Science School, Lagos, a past chief Federal Adviser on Education and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education. He was also a distinguished world civil servant for he was the Deputy Director-General for

- Science at UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) in the 1960s. He was awarded the Ph.D. degree in Chemistry honors causa by the University of Lagos. He later became a Professor of Education at one of the best-known universities in Nigeria – the University of Ife, now the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
3. Professor Awokoya could aptly be called – “Mr Education”. He served in Chief Obafemi Awolowo’s innovative and record-breaking cabinet of Western Nigeria in the Pre-Independence years. The star-studded cabinet that paraded giants like Chief Awolowo, Chief Rotimi Williams, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief Akin Deko, Chief J.O Oshuntokun etc with Prof. Biobaku as Secretary and Chief S.O Adebo as Head of Service, scored outstanding number of firsts in the fields of tele-communication, integrated rural development, sports and most enduringly, EDUCATION. Professor Awokoya was the cabinet’s helms man in the execution of the epoch-making free primary education scheme. This is a scheme that has got the most profound, revolutionary and beneficial effects on millions of our countrymen and women. There was also the ASPAU (*African Scholarship Programme For American Universities*). The ASPAU programme was the brainchild of Professor Awokoya. ASPAU has also positively influenced the lives of thousands of Nigerians. Modesty may not permit me to say some things about the direct children and linear descendants of this educational icon almost all of who are specialists in the field of science or science-related disciplines. Some are here with us today while others are in world-famous, research institutions overseas. Also here are the Chairman and three other members of the Board of Trustee of this Foundation who are either direct students or otherwise associated with the late Professor.
  4. Having said so much about Professor Awokoya by way of illustrating why it was necessary to establish a Foundation to continue his good work, I should mention a good woman who faithfully and steadfastly stood by him and assisted him virtually throughout his adult life. I refer to his wife, Chief Mrs. Josphine Olufunke Gifty Awokoya (nee Otubushin), a princess of the royal house of the Awujale of Ijebu land. She is now of blessed memory. Those of you, our guests

who have attended our previous gatherings will remember this quiet lady who joined the Saints triumphant on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1998. This being the first Annual lecture since the transition, I respectfully invite all of you, ladies and gentlemen to rise and observe a minute of silence in her memory. May her soul rest in perfect peace.

5. The main purpose of my address is to welcome all of you, good people, to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture and Scholarship Awards of the Stephen Oluwole Awokoya Foundation. We are particularly glad to welcome as Chairman of today's gathering Senator David Dafinone a Veteran, Economist and Chartered Accountant, a past Director of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and one of the most influential parliamentarians known to the politics of Nigeria. Most people still remember and rever him as a most distinguished Senator and chairman of the Public Finance Committee of the senate in the Second Republic. Welcome Sir, also worthy of note is the Guest Lecturer of today. Here is a silent worker and very talented science educator who, according to our information, once got nominated among world science luminaries considered for Nobel Award in the field of Chemistry. Our prayer is that this rare honour will eventually fall on his laps Amen. The Board and all of us here welcome Professor GABRIEL BABATUNDE OGUNMOLA FAS, (*Professor of Applied Chemistry, University of Ibadan*).
6. Finally I have the pleasure to welcome our revered Guest of honour in the person of Dr Iyowuawi Ishola Olukayode ALLINSON himself, a giant in the field of Analytical Chemistry and the man who endowed a professorial chair in chemistry at the University of Ibadan. Coincidentally, it is worthy of note for all of us that the guest lecturer of today Professor Ogunmola, is the Olu Allinson's Professor of Applied Chemistry. We also welcome all of you distinguished ladies and gentlemen to this celebration of excellence in honour of our great mentor.

Hearty welcome to you all.