



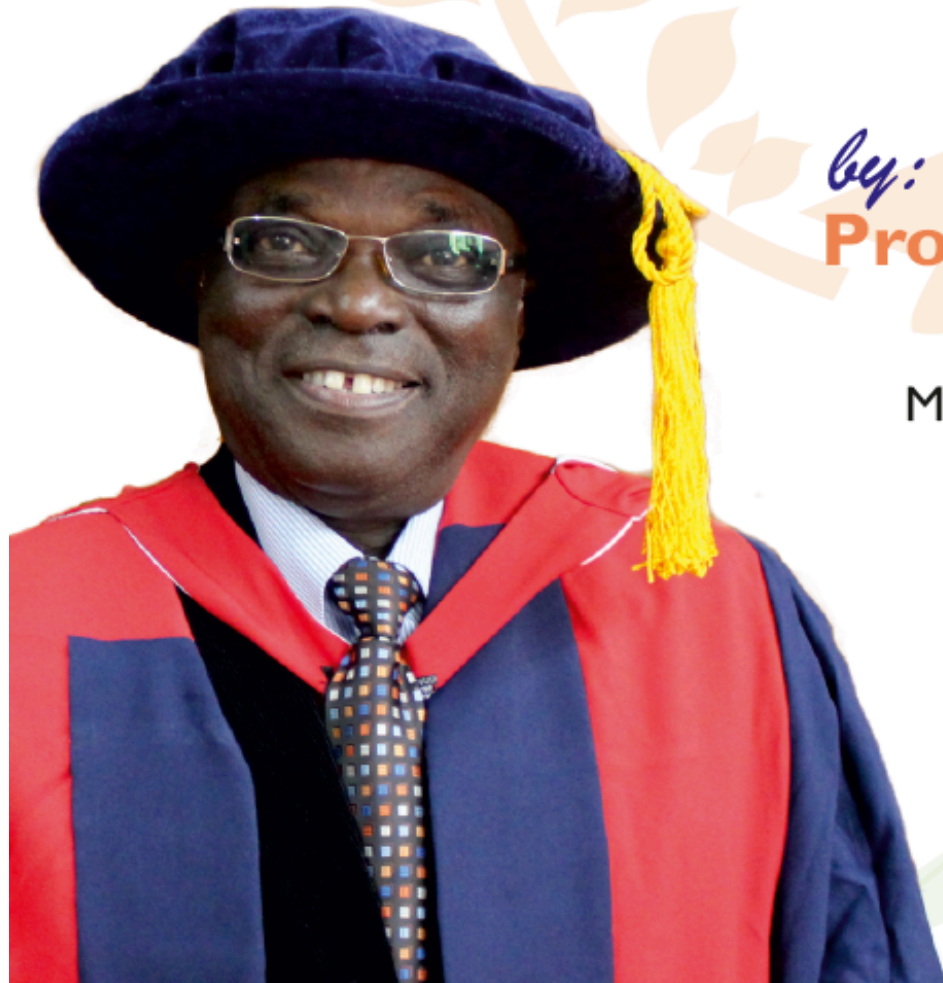
# VALEDICTORY LECTURE

*Titled:* **THE JOURNEY OF A PIONEERING  
PHYSIOTHERAPIST**

*By:*

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MS (S. Fraser), MNIM, FCP(Neuro.PT)



**IN ODUDUDWA HALL  
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE IFE**

On Friday, 4th May, 2018 at 10:00a.m

Under the distinguished Chairmanship of  
**PROF. EYITOPE OGUNBODEDE**  
Vice-Chancellor, OAU, Ile-Ife

# PROTOCOLS

- Vice Chancellor
- Deputy VC
- Registrar
- Provosts, Deans, Heads of Department
- Professors
- Distinguished Guests
- Distinguished Colleagues
- Distinguished Students- Our future leaders
- Ladies and Gentlemen

# PREAMBLE

- Standing before this August Audience is Matthew Olatokunbo born 69 years 364 days ago.
- My primary school education took eight years because of the rules for public primary education- Entry age was 6 years; Primary 1 and 2, then Standard 1 to 6. To impress that those of us that spent so long in primary schools then were not dullards, I obtained the Federal Government Scholarship in my Form 2 at St Finbarr's College Akoka, Yaba. Moving to Form 3, I came first in class with 250 marks above the student that was in the second position. In my final year (Form 5), I was made the Senior Prefect (Head Boy) of the school.

- This is the question I asked with this preamble; what factors influenced this early achievement? The factors can be attributed to the grace of God and the motivation of my father of blessed memory who always encouraged me to come first in examinations. His popular slogan.... “there is always room at the top”. My Mum, also of blessed memory taught me cursive lettering using the 2D Exercise Book.

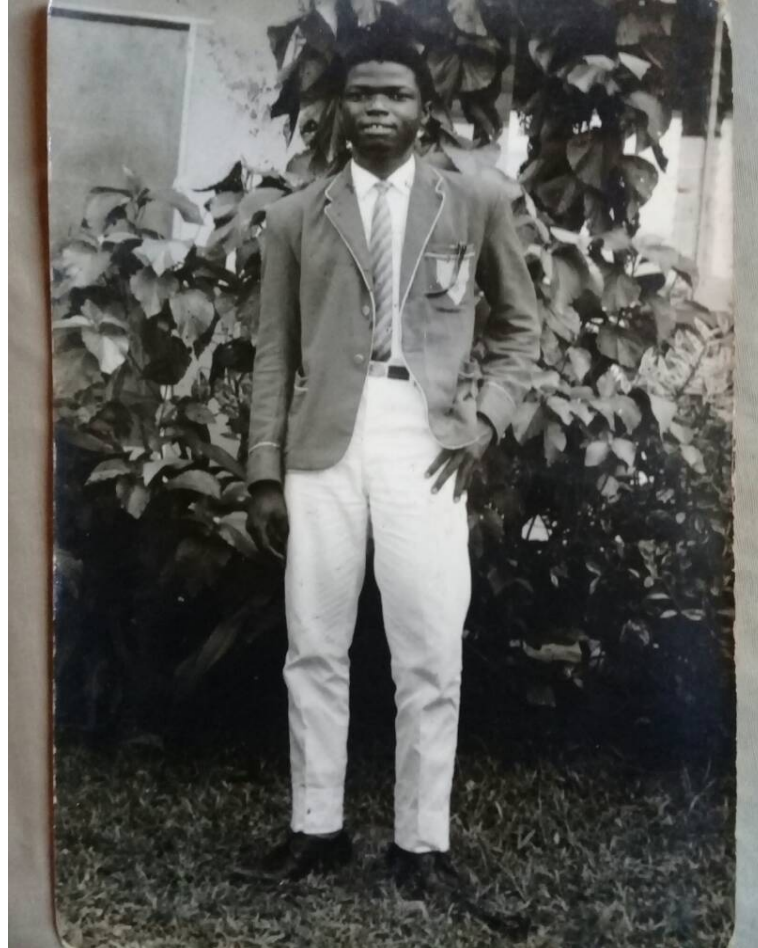


**Pa Martins Olaogun**



**Maami Eunice**

- With all glory to God, as a result of this feat, I owe a special recognition to the Federal Government of Nigeria whose scholarship awards I enjoyed from my Form 2 at St. Finbarrs College through Federal Government College, Warri to the University of Ibadan the premier University of Nigeria.



- **Plate 1: Matthew as Head Boy at St Finbarr's Collge, Yaba, Lagos; 1967.**

- **God is sovereign.**
- **He leads where He will**
- **And wherever He leads is right.**



# MY PIONEERING JOURNEY BEGAN

- My journey as a pioneer began in 1973, during my 300 Level (second professional year) at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan when I became the President of the Association of Undergraduate Physiotherapists (AUP) of Nigeria. Then, only two universities were offering physiotherapy training in the nation—The University of Ibadan offered BSc Physiotherapy degree while the University of Lagos offered Diploma in Physiotherapy. My association submitted a memorandum to the Udoji Salary (and Wages) Review Commission.

- I sat before Justice Udoji to defend our memorandum with the key point that fresh graduates of physiotherapy should be placed on Scale A – Salary entry points for degree holders (in the then Federal Government Salary structure) instead of Scale CT4 for Technical/Diploma products. Earlier physiotherapists in Nigeria were diploma holders from the United Kingdom. After much deliberations, the memorandum was favourably considered. Our petition scaled through, though with some hurdles, successfully. The salary scale for physiotherapists was adjusted and the entry point was put at GL 08, which was equivalent to Scale A for fresh graduates. AUP changed to NAPS -National Association of Physiotherapy Students- when the diploma programme of University of Lagos was upgraded to degree awarding.



- **Plate 2: Matthew as President AUP, University of Ibadan. 1974**

- My professional career in physiotherapy started in Kwara State as a National Youth Service Corps Member (what is now slanged as Youth Corper) in August, 1974. To get to Ilorin from Lagos I boarded a train at the Idumota Railway Terminus in Lagos. The train (with locomotive engine) took off at 12 noon (of the date in August, 1974) and got to Ilorin at 1: 10 am midnight of the next day. The time for the journey (not the distance) erroneously confirmed my assumption that Ilorin is situated in the Northern part of Nigeria. And any thing “north” was very far (Poor Geography- yet I had an A3 in my WASC Geography).

- I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of the National Youth Service Corps scheme- close to being a pioneer but I was the **first** physiotherapist in Kwara State. The then Medical Director who welcomed me to the General Hospital, Ilorin (for my primary assignment) remarked “ A rare gem; you have to start from the scratch/grass”. I accepted the challenge.
- I made plans to visit the UCH, Ibadan to get some briefing on starting a Physiotherapy Department from my first mentor, Dr TA Oshin, the first physiotherapist in Africa, still alive and kicking at age of 92+. The Senior Consultant Surgeon of the General Hospital, Ilorin, Dr Abogunrin, opted to take me to UCH Ibadan in his car. On the day of the trip, within 2 hours we were at UCH Ibadan.... Whao! How come..?

- On the completion of my service in July 1975, I was compelled to stay and work by the Kwara State government, with a promise of sponsorship for my postgraduate studies. I consented. I took up a permanent appointment and continued in my pioneering effort of initiating physiotherapy services and sustaining same not only in the then General Hospital, Ilorin (the State capital) but also in other part of the state which included “Kwara Overseas” -Dekina and Ankpa which are now part of Kogi State. I made many friends (some close, others distant), most of them were/are Christians. For the Christian “corpors” the acronym NYSC was National Youth Serving Christ. Two of the friends I made then (almost 44 years ago) are here today. One of them is Professor Babafunso Sonaiya (Brother Funso then), former Dean of Agriculture of this University – still my friend; and the other is Dr (Mrs) Adenike Olaogun (Sister Nike Onawola then)- now my wife.



- **Plate 3a: Professor Babafunso Sonaya (Brother Funso)**



- **Plate 3b: Dr. (Mrs) Adenike Olaogun  
(Sister Nike Onawola)**





- **Plate 4: Matthew's First Car VW Beetle – KWC 5317 1976**

- Another friend I met, though not very close then, and who is here today is Professor Wale Akinsola, former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics) of this great University.

### **SUCCESSIVE NYSC MEMBERS IN THE PIONEERING TRAIN**

- Below is the list of Kwara State NYSC physiotherapists who came on board in the journey to serve one at a time. They left after service.
- TT Agbaoye                      August 1975 (Of blessed memory)
- Polycarp Nwoha              August 1976 (Now Professor Polycarp Nwoha of this University)



• **Plate 5: Professor Polycarp Nwoha**

Ronke Mosadomi      August 1977 (Professor (Mrs)  
Aderonke Akinpelu, University of Ibadan)



- **Plate 6: Professor Aderonke Akinpelu**

- **Others are:**
- Dapo Maraiyesa August 1978 (Now Dr (Mrs) Dapo Taiwo)- Retired Deputy Director, UCH, Ibadan)
- Gbenga Jaiyesimi August 1979 (Now Rev Dr Jaiyesimi, University of Ibadan).
- I was able to leave for my post graduate studies when a full time employed post NYSC physiotherapist came on board.

# FULL TIME PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

- Joseph Balogun August 1979 (now Distinguished Professor, Chicago State University, USA after serving as Dean, College of Health Sciences of the Same University for 10 years).



- **Plate 7: Distinguished Professor JB Balogun**

- **Others:** Mr Adalumo/Kejemilobi, Mrs Awawu Ayinla-Edun, Mrs Onifade, JD Jogunola (Immediate past Registrar of MRTB) and Alfred Abegunde (Immediate past HOD of Physiotherapy, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital)



# THE JOURNEY CONTINUED

- I got married to my sister, friend and wife, on June 10, 1978.



- I was sponsored by the Kwara State Government for my postgraduate studies at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC in Canada in 1979. At that time there were no postgraduate studies in physiotherapy in Nigeria. While in Canada, Dr Oshin wrote and invited me to come to Ibadan to take up appointment as Lecturer in Physiotherapy in the University of Ibadan. I declined the offer and explained that I would have to go back to Kwara State to serve my bond. On my return to the country in 1981, therefore, I worked briefly for the Kwara State Government to fulfil all righteousness in serving my bond. I rose to the rank of Principal Physiotherapist I in 1983/4.

- In mid 1985 Emeritus Prof VCB Nwuga (of blessed memory) the **first professor of Physiotherapy in Africa**, sent a door label with my name inscribed (“ M.O.B. Olaogun”) to me through Mr. Williams, his then confidential secretary. “Your office is ready” Mr. William said. Two weeks later I was invited for an interview. I later got my letter of appointment as Lecturer II in Physiotherapy in the Department of Medical Rehabilitation. I used the letter to apply for my transfer of service from Kwara State Ministry of Health to the then University of Ife.

# THE JOURNEY TWISTED AND CONTINUED

- My academic career in physiotherapy started in September 1985 as Lecturer II in the Department of Medical Rehabilitation of this University. The University of Ife (which then changed to Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) was the first University in Nigeria to start postgraduate training in Physiotherapy with the Master of Science (MSc) Degree programme in 1986 under the headship/leadership of Emeritus Professor VCB Nwuga. I was part of that history of the **first** postgraduate programme of Physiotherapy in Nigeria. Being the first kinesiologist in the department, I lectured in Advanced Kinesiology (MRH 601) and Neurologic Physiotherapy (MRH 602) in the postgraduate programme.

- **A 3-Year Diploma Programme** commenced at the University of Lagos/Lagos University Teaching Hospital in 1972. The reason was to “fast-train” physiotherapists which were in dire need after the civil war. The department started as a unit/programme in the Department of Paediatrics of LUTH. After the graduation of two/three sets of diploma physiotherapists the programme metamorphosed to 4 Year degree programme, the degree of which was awarded by the University of Lagos. Insisting on a 3 Year diploma programme the Federal School of Physiotherapy, was established in Dala, Kano (the building moderately furnished) by the Federal Ministry of Health, Lagos. The school principal was appointed and for about 2 years there were no students. The principal later left the country for greener pasture.

- In search of another principal to start the diploma programme an internal advertisement was made by the Federal Ministry of Health in August, 1989. The then secretary of the Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy, Mr Ezeala, visited Ife to persuade one of us (Messers Aberojoje, Obajuluwa and my humble self) to apply for the job in order to prevent the take off of the physiotherapy diploma programme. We discussed and I opted and applied for the post. I attended the interview. In course of the interview which was chaired by the then Honorable Minister of Health, Professor Olikoye Ransome Kuti (of blessed memory), I was charged to go and admit students and start the 3 Year diploma programme. I explained why I would not advise for the 3 Year diploma programme but opt for a 4 Year degree programme instead. "How will this be possible?" was the sharp question that followed.

- I answered “ I would review and revise the 3 Year “Trimester” programme (given to me) and use the then Ife (OAU) 4 Year programme” for the start-off. In annoyance, Ransome Kuti banged the table- “Impossible...!; you have lost the job.....” I thought I had lost the job indeed as two other candidates (one a diploma holder in physiotherapy and the other a non physiotherapist) were interviewed before me. I bowed down and humbly said “With your support Sir, it will be possible”. I was asked to leave and I left the interview room.

- A few days after the interview (about mid September, 1989) I got a DHL parcel with a letter of appointment as Principal, Federal School of Physiotherapy, Dala, Kano on GL 14. I had the mandate to report immediately and prepare the school (building without students) for commissioning by the then Military Head of State General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida in November, 1989. I then applied for secondment from Obafemi Awolowo University to the Federal Ministry of Health to report for duty as Principal, Federal School of Physiotherapy, Dala, Kano. My request was granted. I travelled to Kano to resume duty as Principal, FSP, Kano.





- **Plate 8: Matthew as Principal Federal School of Physiotherapy, Kano 1990**

- I admitted the first set of students to the School in January, 1991. I immediately initiated the process of affiliation with Bayero University Kano (BUK). I met Professor Shukla (an Indian of blessed memory), and the then Dean of Faculty of Medicine/Head of Anatomy Department. He assisted in negotiating and engaging, as associate staff, the lecturers for preliminary (100) courses for BUK medical students to take our students in the required 100 Level courses. ***I advised the students (with deficiency in subjects that would disqualify them for a degree in Physiotherapy) to go and privately re-do their WASC examination and obtain a credit pass in their deficient subjects to have a minimum of credit passes in the five subjects of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English and Mathematics.***

- This was one of the conditions for the affiliation. The affiliation process for the award of BSc Physiotherapy degree was successful on the long run, but very eventful. Along the line, there were two major crises. In the first, I was kidnapped by the Students and later released, at the second in February 1995, I fled the School, the School was closed down for seven months, during the period of closure, I was able to work with affiliation committee of BUK. The committee was chaired by professor Dambata of Chemistry Department, Dean of Faculty of Science.

- I got the letter of affiliation on the 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1995.
- I handed over the school with the students at the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the 4 year programme that I had introduced, to a new principal on the same day.
- I fixed the radiator of my car- Fiat 132-Climatizata on the next day - 10<sup>th</sup>.
- And by 5:30 am on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 1995, I drove myself out of the school premises in Kano to Ilorin, Kwara state. I passed the night at Ilorin with the Soladoyes (Daddy Dr Soladoye (of blessed memory), former State Secretary to the Military Government, was my spiritual daddy from my NYSC days).
- On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, I drove from Ilorin to Ife to meet my wife.
- On the 13<sup>th</sup>, I was at the Federal Ministry of Health, Ikoyi, Lagos. I met the Honorable Minister and delivered the (BUK Vice Chancellor's) original letter of affiliation of the Federal School of Physiotherapy to Bayero University, Kano. ***The school then became a department in the Faculty of Science in 1995.***
- ***(The programme was later upgraded to B. Physiotherapy in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, College of Health Sciences in 2003).***