

**BRANCH CHAIRMAN'S OPENING SPEECH AT THE 2017 ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER OF  
GOVERNMENT COLLEGE IBADAN OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION, LAGOS BRANCH ON 21<sup>ST</sup> OF MAY,  
2017 AT CITY HALL, LAGOS ISLAND, LAGOS.**

The Chairman of today's occasion, Chief Ajibola Ogunsola; the National President, Biodun Jolaoso, Trustees of GCI/OBA here present, members of the National and Branch executives, invited guests, distinguished Old Boys, our ever supportive, reliable, ever beautiful and age defying young girls, members of the press, today's honorees, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Lagos Branch of the GCI/OBA, it is my pleasure, honour and privilege to welcome you to this year's Annual Luncheon and Merit Awards ceremonies. We thank God Almighty for counting us worthy to be among those to witness this year's Annual Luncheon. Since the last year's edition, so much has happened within the country and the world at large with serious consequences for individuals, the nation and the world. Within the nation, there had been serious security challenges with the nation, there had been serious security challenges with kidnapping, armed robbery and marauding herdsmen on the prowl, the national economy had gone into recession with attendant job losses and debilitating social disorientation, the ever present high level of corruption continues to threaten the economy of the nation and undermine its ability to fulfill its obligations to the nation, the price of Crude Oil fluctuated with serious impact on the national budget, several states in the country have failed to pay the workers' wages, the army of the unemployed continues to expand.

We like to commend the Federal Government of Nigeria for its courage and determination in reaching the myriads of problems confronting the nation. This has seen the downgrading of the Boko Haram insurgency, provision of life line to States to be able to pay their workers' salaries, dialogue with members of the private sector to stem the tide of job losses and the whistle blowing policy that is leading to the recovery of billions of Naira hopefully to the National Treasury.

At the global level, there is the upsurge of populism and nationalism in key western countries with these countries beginning to shut their doors against the world. Traditional old friends and allies are reappraising their relationship and singing the mantra of *"to your tent oh Israel"*. Terrorism continues to wreak havoc among others.

In all these, we have not been cushioned. We therefore have cause to thank the Almighty for his past mercies, savior his present grace and hope for his future blessing.

The Branch has kept faith with both the national body and its members participating fully in all the activities of the National Association. Many Branch members continue to serve the Association meritoriously to the pride and delight of the Branch. Members of the Branch are at the fore front of the GCI Foundation Project.

Locally, the Branch has continued to hold its meetings regularly in spite of several challenges. In this respect, allow me to place on record, the generosity of individuals and Class Sets that have

hosted Branch meetings and have gone to our Alma Mater to execute key projects for the improvements of the College. The Branch is also trying to 'acquire a property of its own' to host its meetings and other activities on a permanent basis. To this regard, we like to thank our benefactors who have in the past done us some favours and also to notify you that we will be coming again by the time we succeed in identifying a property in a suitable location to assist us financially.

The Branch also extended a modest helping hand to some members in need in the course of the year and hopes to continue to do so in the future subject to our means and ability.

While we thank God for our modest achievements, the Branch is not without its challenges. Among these is the dwindling attendance at Branch meetings. This contrasts with Class Set meetings which delightfully hold regularly and record reasonable attendance. We are using this medium to appeal to respective class sets to demonstrate the same level of commitment to the Branch. This they can do by ensuring that the Chairman of Class Sets come to represent their sets at Branch meetings. If we succeed in this, we can be sure of at least double the number of attendance. This is if only sixty out of eighty-nine sets are able to attend. Also, Class Set should notify the Branch Chairman about the time and venue of their meetings so that he can attend and make pleas to the sets to this end. The Chairman has attended a couple of such meetings in the course of the past year.

Also, the Branch faces the challenge of raising its own levy of Five Million Naira to the GCI Education Foundation. This is part of the measures put in place to have a seed money for the restoration of our Alma Mater. It is in this regard that we will be calling on our benefactors to come to our aid to fulfill this obligation.

It is our determination to overcome these challenges with your cooperation and assistance. We have endeavored to keep faith with tradition in this year's luncheon as care has been taken to meet the usual standards. If however there are inadvertent lapses, we crave for your understanding.

I will like to close this remark by congratulating the awardees of today for the honour done them and urge all members to be at their best in both their endeavours and commitments to the Branch so as to be honoured this way one day. I wish you all a nice time.

Long live the School of our pride!  
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!

I thank you for attention and God bless.

**Yomi Akinyeye (2430, Swanston, 1972)**  
**Chairman, GCIOPA-Lagos Branch.**