

## **ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRMAN, GCIOBA, LAGOS BRANCH AT THE 2013 ANNUAL LUNCHEON OF THE BRANCH.**

It is my pleasure to welcome all the Old Boys of this great institution today, the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May 2013, to our Annual Luncheon and Merit Award Ceremony. It must be very difficult to imagine a greater assembly of distinguished men in Nigeria than the Old Boys Association of our great School. It is also most soothing to know that 84 years after the school was founded, Old Boys of the school still find some common bond and interest in their Alma Mater.

The Old Boys continue to strive valiantly to uphold the school and its ideals 35 years after the unfortunate exercise by various governments that led to the downgrading of many secondary schools including our great school. The policy of government in 1979 which turned the exclusive territory of Government College Ibadan to the domain of other secondary school including Apata Ganga High School and the near eradication of merit as a criterion for entry into the school was an unpardonable assault on quality education in Nigeria. These events heralded the collapse of secondary education in Nigeria which has now reached an extent that could be described as abysmal and miserable. One of the consequences of this action is that parents now struggle to send their children to secondary schools outside Nigeria leaving a serious dent on the pockets of these parents and creating an unusually early separation of the children from their families with its attendant social consequences.

The time has come when society led by its elite should refocus on restoring secondary education. We have heard of various efforts made by a number of governments to revamp secondary education. None of the efforts have been successful. We have the privilege today of a guest speaker who can be described as a leading light in the world of medicine and academia and who understandably is an Old Boy of Government College Ibadan. His topic: “Secondary Education as Second Fiddle – A Bewildering Paradox”, as to be expected from him very cerebral.

I have no doubt that we would all leave this occasion more enlightened and educated than we were before coming here today. We thank Prof. Oladipo Akinkugbe for accepting our invitation even though I know how extremely busy he is. We are also grateful to our guest of honour, Mr Donald Duke, who was deliberately chosen. He was not privileged to attend Government College Ibadan but was properly educated at Federal Government College, Sokoto and Federal Government College, Ilorin. He has demonstrated a very serious interest in the redevelopment of Nigeria as a whole.

We want to thank the Government of Oyo State for its contribution to Government College Ibadan. However, we should mention that three thousand students taught by about 33 permanent teachers and youth corps members cannot restore Government College Ibadan. We urge the Government to return the School to the Old Boys Association who are willing on terms to take over the administration of the school including its funding. We believe that this step, once taken, would be the harbinger of secondary school restoration in Nigeria.

I welcome all Old Boys to a great day where we celebrate the Alma mater that nurtured us to where we are today.

Thank you.

**Dr. B.O. Babalakin, (SAN).**

*1971-75 Set, GCI 2273, Grier House.*