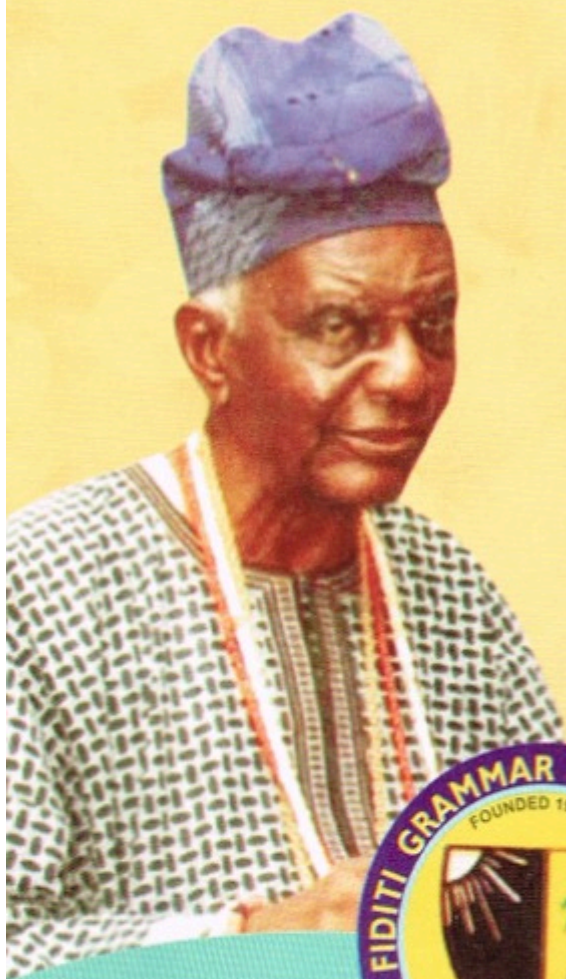


MEMORIES OF
CHIEF S. I.
OJELABI
IN TRIBUTES



BY:

FIDITI GRAMMAR SCHOOL
OLD STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
(FIGSOSA)



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First Printed 2019

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MEMORIES OF CHIEFS. I. OJELABI IN TRIBUTES

By Fiditi Grammar School Old Students' Association

(FIGSOSA)

A booklet of pictures and Memorable Quotes

Fiditi Grammar School Founded January 19, 1954

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Arise, O compatriots
Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom
Peace and unity.

Oh God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And live in just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation where peace
And justice shall reign

THE NATIONAL PLEDGE

I pledge to Nigeria my country
To be faithful, loyal and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honor and glory
So help me God.



THE SCHOOL ANTHEM

Hail the name of our Alma Mater,

FIDITI GRAMMAR SCHOOL, FIDITI.

How glorious and how gracious thou art,

Illustrious as the Sun...

Doff, Doff, Doff, we doff our hats to thee,

Pledge, Pledge, Pledge, we pledge our loyalty,

We remember Thee, Where're we go,

ADSPICE VIRTUTEM!!

UP SCHOOL!!!

PREFACE

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

One of the most important tasks expected to be accomplished by man in life is raising a child and impacting on lives. And this precisely is what Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi stood for throughout his sojourn on the earth's surface. He bestrode humanity like a colossus, having great impact on lives and giving without ceasing.

This compilation is a product of various viewpoints and perspectives of the late Chief as Tutor, Mentor and Life Coach who inspired, Encouraged and indeed affected positively and in no small measure, the lives of young men and women who today can testify to the life and Times of this gentle giant.

And so, once the breaking post below was pasted on the FIGSOSA Platform on 6th, January at 12:48pm:

Ladies and gentlemen I just heard S. 1. Ojelabi passed on today, by Tunji Oguntokun of 1966 set, Obalana house, it immediately served as a herald to a string of somber reactions from members. These in turn led to the early morning reaction of one of our Editorial members, Ade Ayeni of 1960 set, Obalana house, who on the 7th of January 2019 at 04:17am wrote, we can actually compile these condolence messages into a booklet to honour our Late Principal. Thank you All".

Then came a whirlwind of a response exactly 13 mins later very early that morning at 04:30 a.m from no less a person than Dr. Bode Olajumoke, a distinguished Senator and a former President of the Old Students' Association, of 1957 set, Obalana house who reacted thus:

"Good morning. I noticed that two of Figsosa Platforms Figsosa political G18 and Figsosa Lagos State branch are yet to change their photo id's in honour of Chief SIO! Bravo Figsosa National, Nec and BoT.

Let the Admin do the needful.

Thank you all those who have paid tributes so far, but we sure can do better than this!"-04:30am. That gave the required impetus for the formation of a 3-member committee to begin the compilation of all tributes by old students as presented in this booklet.

We wish you a solemn reading of the tributes as you go through the creative and thought provoking passages here.

This is a piece of literature which should be found in the book shelves of all old, present and future students of Fiditi Grammar School, as a reference material.

We regret any inadvertent omission of any member's tribute in view of the speed required in meeting our deadline. We thank all those who made the exercise easier for us by responding promptly to our inquiries.

Thank you All.

Ade Ayeni-1960 set

Wale Adekola-1973 set

Olaide Abbas-1976 set

Editor Committee Members

FOREWORD

Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, RIP.

Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi is no more.

He lived 88 years on this earth and breathed his last on Sunday January 6, 2019.

He touched many lives in his lifetime.

The book of tributes reflects the outpouring of emotions following his death.

We know that all human beings are destined to die but Chief Ojelabi's death surprised everyone. He looked superhuman and ageless and did not need glasses to read. He possessed uncanny memory abilities and was totally humane.

He was the quintessential Principal, Administrator, Teacher, Traditional Chief and Religious Leader as a Deacon in the Baptist Church.

In this book, one will find details of his generosity, his presence of mind always, his exemplary role as a Teacher / Principal, his dedication to his calling, his fatherly role, mentorship, his political life and his love of his native land, Fiditi. He was indeed many parts and he left indelible marks in each of his life's calling. His primary concern was that his products would excel in life and he followed very closely the progress of his students after they left Fiditi Grammar School until his death. Many of us attested to this fact.

Chief Ojelabi is no more with us, but his life has taught all of us the following lessons as contained in the various tributes being best in whatever we do, giving without asking, living without malice, seeking the good of others, mentoring and above all being devoted to one's creator.

Chief Ojelabi has left giant footsteps on the sands of time and his memories will remain evergreen because to live in the hearts of those we love is not to die.

We were fortunate to celebrate this education icon before his death during the "Teachers' Day 2018" special event of the Faculty of Education of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife.

On that occasion, he was honoured along with other prominent and Distinguished teachers and Fiditi Grammar School Old Students Association (FIGSOSA), endowed Faculty Scholars Prizes to ensure that his legacy lives on.

In retrospect, we had the opportunity to celebrate him while he was still alive. He will indeed be sorely missed.

It is indeed in this spirit that I commend the efforts of FIGSOSA to compile all the tributes and encomiums expressed on his death in this book that will tell generations to come of a great man, a giant in every sense of the word who made his mark as a Principal of Fiditi Grammar School.

Adspice Virtutem.

Professor A. Ogunniyi FIGSOSA,

National President.

Adeyi House.

1966 Set,

Dr Bode Olajumoke on Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the 30 yrs or thereabouts that I was National President of Fiditi Grammar School Old Students' Association, (FIGSOSA), I earnestly looked forward to two things at our annual AGM usually held in Fiditi.

- a) The reunion with all old students and
- b) CSIO-appearance with two baskets of esuru and assorted fruits and in his inherently peculiar coughing style - henhenhenhen would say "President, the small basket is for you and give to your members this."- it was an annual ritual!

Often I invited him to address the AGM, and whenever he did, they were filled with Solomonic wisdom.

Like mother hen CSIO dotted over our members starting from their Classrooms (for those privileged to have received his tutelage in our Adolescence years) till our post-secondary school years until he died!

Like mother hen, he monitored our movements and progress meticulously.

When I returned to Nigeria in 1974 with a Ph.D in law, he re- established contact with me which we maintained until a few days, 21st December 2019 precisely, before he passed on to eternity on the 6th of January 2019!

When I floated the Imeri Unity Group (IUG) in 1993, as a quasi-political movement to galvanize the Yoruba into the mainstream of Nigerian politics, he became a staunch member alongside late Chief Tade Ipadeola and Chief S. M. Akindele of Oyo.

Other prominent members of IUG were Chief Wole Awolowo and Chief Yomi Akintola, both children of the late stages, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief S.L.A Akinola.

One major achievement of IUG in 1996 was uniting the two great families with Yomi attending the historical IUG meeting in Efunyela Hall, Ikenne home of Obafemi Awolowo and Wole reciprocating when he attended the IUG meeting at the Ogbomosho residence of SLA Akintola.

CSIO attended both meetings with me finding time to discuss the way forward after each meeting.

CSIO wrote to congratulate me on my appointments as Pro- Chancellor, AAUA and Chancellor, Achievers University, and ditto when I was elected to the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in year 2007.

A truly mother hen!

He passed on to glory 6th January 2019. Engr Lati Busari a classmate of six years at Fiditi -and I were in Fiditi town as early as 8.am on the 7th of January to commiserate with the Principal and Staff, Fiditi Grammar School, the Vicar of 1st Baptist Church, Dcn. Dr. Ojuawo, and the family of late CSIO.

As we entered the living room upstairs and I tried to relate the many pictures-some arranged on the floor and the others on the wall, I noticed a portrait of mine up there!

That exemplified the type of bonding that existed between CSIO and his old students.

He was one of us and we adored him!

All the five media chat platforms of FIGSOSA which had an announcement of his passage were directed to change their logos to CSIO's photo ID, and dedicate their platforms for the following forty eight hours to only Tributes and Reminiscences in honour of our departed teacher and mentor.

God granted him peaceful, graceful exit-no pains, no anguish or lengthy death pangs before he breathed his last!

Can you imagine what personal anguish and misery it would have been for us all watching our beloved CSIO on support machines for months and years gasping for life! Titilayo the daughter told me that when he Directed to be taken to the hospital, she promptly contacted Prof Sola Ogunniyi an old student and a surgeon who assisted in his Hospitalization at the UCH where he died.

Imagine that! -his old student was there in his last moments on Earth!

What a reward for a great, faithful teacher! When the obsequies are rolled out by the family, it should be a Celebration of Life, not Mourning! In torrents, the Tributes kept on pouring in on FIGSOSA chat Platforms-simply unbelievable!

Old Students of Fiditi Grammar School at home here in Nigeria and in the Diaspora-and wait for this-even from the dead! As you read these tributes by old students ably put together by Ade Ayeni, Olaide Abass and Wale Adekola, you will encounter that of an old student, late Dcn Biodun Opaleye- a wordsmith and a great journalist of Baptist Convention who paid his tributes well in advance before he passed on to eternity, in his Brilliant Book Review of "A Scholar Par Excellence.'

This is an excellent biography of Chief S. I. Ojelabi by Olajide Olanipekun, a Fiditian lawyer in the Vanguard Newspaper seven years ago. I highly recommend this compilation as a must read for old and present students of Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi and indeed for any, that in one way or the other must have passed through the school.

May his departed soul rest in peace.

SALVETE, MAGISTER! ADSPICE VIRTUTEM!!

**Senator Dr. Bode Olajumoke,
1st Past President, FIGSOSA.
1957-62 Class Set,
Obalana House.**

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

I recall that in 1958, a young graduate of renowned Fourah Bay University Sierra Leone joined the staff of Fiditi Grammar School. He was a native of Fiditi. He came to serve, to honour his bond to do so.

In those days, public servants in senior staff cadre enjoyed the Privilege of a car loan and hastily showed off their status by riding a car. Not so for our humble, honest teacher who rode a bicycle around.

For unknown reasons, his schedule never included 1957/1962 set in 1958 and 1959, even when we lacked teachers in some subjects where his Competency was glaring. Thus, I never had the privilege of sitting in his class.

As Principal, Chief Ojelabi had the honour of fostering the old students Association FIGSOSA at its founding in 1966, (See Golden Jubilee Souvenir p.27).

He had played his role as a patron over the years presenting harvest gifts of Esuru, oranges, banana etc at every Annual General Meeting.

He also contributed articles to our publications. As a community leader he cared for Fiditi.

He was spearheading further higher institution idea for Fiditi. He pushed communal interest for electrification and when the town's Transformer broke down he was on my neck as Chairman Rural Electrification board to effect replacement.

I recall that he called me at every festival to wish me well and Prayed for me as he did for other old students.

FIGSOSA can never forget SIO.

We rose enthusiastically to rally round in his honour at OAU.

I am sure he departed with the fondest memories of FIGSOSA.

ADIEU OUR PATRON FOR ETERNITY.

**Engr. Lateef Busari,
Immediate Past President, FIGSOSA
1957 class set,
Adedoyin House.**





**SOLOMON IPADEOLA OJELABI
(1930-2019):
A STUDY IN DEDICATED MENTORSHIP
by Demola Badejo
'The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude'
Thornton Wilder**

The efficacious excitement that permeated the entire hall was not only infectious but palpably so. The historic hall named after the progenitor of the Yorubas, ODUDUWA at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife had not had the kind of crowd, in terms of quality and quantity in several years.



What could have brought distinguished and eminent personalities in the gathering together on a week day?

Seated in his alluring majesty was the Imperial Majesty himself, the present occupier of the seat of the progenitor, Kabiyesi Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, Ooni of Ife. Other dignitaries included the bridge builder, Dr. Ibrahim Shekarau, Sardauna of Kano and former Governor of Kano State who also once served as a Minister of the Federal Republic; Dr. Solomon Arase, former Inspector General of Police; Prof Peter Okebukola, former Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission and of course, the Chief Host, the Vice Chancellor of this most beautiful University in Africa, Prof Eyitope Ogunbodede; amongst many others.

The occasion was the celebration of the 15 World Teachers' Day by the University's Faculty of Education. An idea started in 1887 in Albania and later in Argentina in 1888, the UNESCO officially established the World Teachers' Day for every 5th October. It is a day to appreciate, assess and improve the educators of this world.

Among the honorees at the epoch-making occasion was a man of impeccable character. Royale yet unassuming, 88-year old Chief (Dnc.) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi sat all through the five- hour programme without dozing or even excusing himself to use the gents!

At the peak of the ceremony when the University justified his inclusion on the roll of honour with his intimidating profile couched in effusive adulation, Chief Ojelabi's family members, friends and well wishers notably and expectedly his former students joined him on the "high table". The Old Students of Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi, led by the National President, Prof. Olusola Ogunniyi and Patron (also a Former National President) Senator Bode Olajumoke in a rapturous glee sang the School's National Anthem, electrifying the entire arena. What a glorious day!

In a brief remark, Prof Ogunniyi announced the endowment of an annual award in the Faculty in honour of Chief Ojelabi by the Old Students Association.

That honour meant so much to him and tens of his former students who were present. Albeit one of many shows of affection bestowed on him by his ever-grateful former students, this was the very last as he passed on precisely 54 days after the national recognition!

But then, who was Chief (Dnc) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi?

CITATION ON CHIEF SOLOMON IPADEOLA OJELABI

Chief Ojelabi, Solomon Ipadeola was born on October 13, 1930. He was happily married to Mrs. Janet Sijuwade Ojelabi (Late). The marriage is blessed with children, grandchildren and a great granddaughter.



He attended First Baptist Primary School, Fiditi, from 1938-1946. Between 1947 and 1952, he attended Baptist Boys' High School, Abeokuta and obtained Cambridge School Certificate Division One, with exemption from London Matriculation. He taught at Alaafia Oluwa Baptist Primary School, Fiditi, between January and September, 1953. From October, 1953 to June 1957, he was an undergraduate of Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra-Leone, where he bagged a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, Latin and History. He proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland where he obtained Higher Diploma in Education in June 1958. From July 1958 to April 1960, he served as the Principal of Christ Apostolic Church Teacher Training College, Efon Alaye from May, 1960 to March, 1961. For political reasons, he resigned as the Principal of CACTTC Efon Alaye and returned to Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi, as the Senior Tutor, a position he held from April, 1961 to March, 1966.

After a ding-dong battle of brain and pen, he was appointed as the Principal of Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi on March 18, 1966, and he held the position until December, 1972. Deacon Ojelabi was appointed by Chief Bola Ige's government as a full-time member, Oyo State Central Schools' Board, Ibadan, from January 1980 to September, 1983. The Board was in charge of Appointment, Transfer and Discipline of Teachers in Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges in Oyo State.

Deacon Ojelabi has served in many spheres of life and it would be impossible to catalogue all of them here. He was a foundation member of Fiditi Students' Union and he served the Union as Treasurer and Editor-in-Chief for many years. He was the Secretary of the Fiditi Progressive Union; Member, Oyo South Self-Help Committee from 1964 to date; Member, Sagamu Marriage Guidance Council, Oyo (1978 to date); Member, Board of Governors, Ladigbolu Grammar School, Oyo (1970-76); Chairman, Oyo Zonal Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (1978-79); Executive Member, All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (1979); Chairman, The Fiditi Club, Fiditi (1980-89); Chairman, Board of Governors, Community Secondary School, Imini (1982-1990); Chairman, Prisons Visitors' and Visiting Committee, in charge of Federal Prisons Oyo Zone (1986-date).

In 1971, he donated two cups for Football and Volleyball for Boys and Girls respectively, to be competed for annually among Primary Schools in Fiditi Unit of AFIJIO Local Government of Oyo State. These competitions are tagged "Deacon (Chief) S.I. Ojelabi Football and Volleyball Cups Competitions. In 1983, he made Endowment Funds to Fiditi Grammar School, Fiditi and Ilora Baptist Grammar School. He is the Chairman, Board of Directors, Kernel Microfinance Bank, Nigeria Ltd, Idi-Igba, Ilora, (2008 to date).

Deacon (Chief) Ojelabi has travelled widely. Out of the present 36 states in Nigeria, he has visited at least 25; he studied in Sierra- Leone and Ireland; trained as a WAEC Examiner in Britain (1968); Hick-Hiked to France and Italy from London (1958); travelled round then world to recruit teachers for Oyo State and toured Britain, India and Sri-Lanka, Singapore, Philippines, West Indies, Canada, United States of America and Honolulu.

He has written some Journals, Articles and had delivered several papers at Conferences, Symposia and Lectures. Suffice it to mention just a few out of nineteen. "The Attitude of

Christian Youths to the Laws of the Land" A talk at the Methodist Youth Conference, Fiditi (1970).

"School Records and School Reports" Paper Presented at a Seminar on School Management, organized by the Oyo State Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, held at Loyola College Ibadan (1978).

"Prison Reforms" A paper presented at the International Conference on Prison Reforms in Nigeria, organized by the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in Collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Justice (1990).

There are so many Merit Awards and Certificates out of which a few will be listed here:

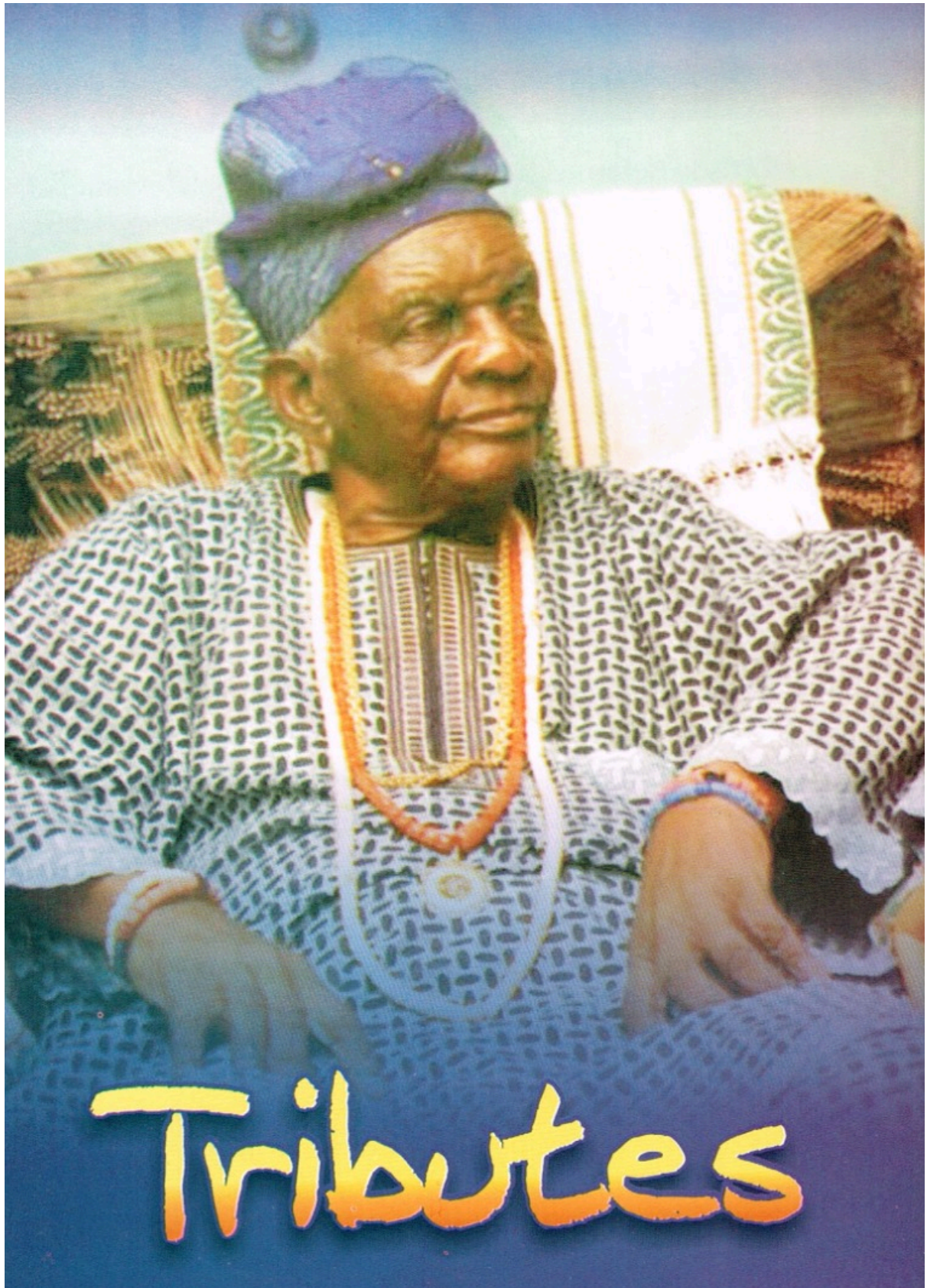
February 7, 1989. Certificate of Honor, for Selfless and Meritorious Services as a Principal, in recognition of his contributions to the course of Education, the Teaching Profession and the Progressive Growth of ANCOPSS, especially in Oyo State.

. October 16, 2004, Award of Meritorious Service to his Motherland-Presented by Fiditi Progressive Union, Fiditi. December 7, 2004 - Meritorious Award for his Selfless Services as a member of Juvenile Court Panel - Presented by Ministry of Women Affairs (Community Development and Social Welfare), Oyo State.

August 12, 2010 - Certificate of Appreciation for his Diligence, Honesty and Steadfastness in his contributions, in diverse ways to the spiritual growth and physical development of First Baptist Church, Fiditi, presented on the occasion of the Centenary Anniversary of the Church, 1910-2010.

His hobbies include gardening, sports and travelling.

"When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure"



Ladies and Gentlemen I just heard S. I. Ojelabi passed on today (January 6th, 2019)

Oguntokun Tunji

1966 Class Set
Obalana House.

OUR ICON TAKES A FINAL BOW:

Elders, National President and members, a member of my set, Prof Kayode ALAO just informed me that our icon, Chief S.I. OJELABI passed on about two hours ago.

He was hospitalized for the first time three days ago but couldn't make it. A kuaraferaku!

Alex Demola Dedeke
1958 Class Set
Obalana

Allah Akbar! From Allah we come and unto Him our return! May Allah grant him Aljana Firdaus whilst giving those of us he left behind the fortitude to bear the loss!

Hakeem Kilanko
1966 Class Set

Adeyi House Sir, is this really confirmed? If so may his soul rest in perfect peace with the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. So sad.

Chief Engr Folakemi Adejokun
1973 Class Set
Bale House

Chief S.I.Ojelabi was a teacher, a mentor, and an erudite scholar. A good administrator, and very intelligent, who called his students by name.

May your soul rest in peace. Amen Baba lives on with the Lord

Oladipo Oyetunde
1970 Class set
Adeyi house

If you went to Fiditi Grammar School definitely Baba SIO must be part of your life except you didn't go to FGS....well as you journey on I wish you every happiness and be received by Him. Amen

Olusola Alaba Osiname
1966 Class Set
House: Adedoyin

Chief OJELABI was a teacher per excellence, erudite scholar, mentor, a molder per excellence, intelligent and who knew all Name. He lived a fulfilled life, and also touched many lives positively. BABA LIVES ON. May his gentle soul rest in perfect his students by peace.

Bamiduro Adebayo 1970/74 Class Set
Adedoyin house.

Baba fulfilled through his diverse experience on earth. I wish him joyful activity on his journey to the Eternal Gardens of Luminous Ones. AMEN!

Adesina Odunmbaku
1969 Class Set Adeyi house.

Our great mentor, dearest molder of life's you are second to known among educators of your age. As you always say "He who is so diligent in his business shall stand before kings and not before mean men". Thank God you stood among kings during your life time, and we that you impacted are standing before kings today (which gladdens your heart). Chief SI Ojelabi. RIP.

We truly Love you but your Redeemer loves you more. Good Night sir till the resurrection morning.

Rachel Makinde
67/71 Class set.

Bale House
Glory be to God for a life well spent.

Chief S. I.O, the crowning glory of your life is that you embraced the saving living faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and spent your entire life totally committed to the betterment of Fiditi Grammar school and the community. You have fought a good fight, finished the course and kept the faith. The entire students of Fiditi Grammar school nselede leyin yinn. RIP.

Victor Ademola Adekanmbi
1966 Class Set
Adedoyin house

Chief S.I. Ojelabi was not wealthy in dollars nor pounds sterling not even in Naira, yet he gave so much to humanity than what most wealthy billionaire could give. What he gave had multiple effects on all of us that had opportunity of his mentoring.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

Folorunso Alebiowu,
1969 Class Set
Obalana house.

HE'S DEAD BUT HE LIVES ON.

Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, a.k.a. SIO Oniwe, has gone. He has gone the way of all mortals to the great beyond. "Life is like a walking shadow full of sound and fury signifying nothing." (WS). We are not crying, we are not even mourning; we are celebrating because SIO lived a fulfilled life.

SIO was a compassionate teacher, a renowned principal, seasoned administrator and an astute politician. He was not just a scholar but also a molder of character. His courage, determination and commitment, even in the face of difficulties, were contagious. It's a privilege to have been mentored by such a great mind. He has bequeathed to us inestimable values. This is why he lives on in our hearts. Great men don't die, they live in the hearts of their followers.

Adieu SIO.

Akinola Akin-Ojo

1967 Class set

Obalana house.

Adieu, Baba-ewe of the Fiditi grammarians.



Vini,vidi, vici.....you came, you saw, you conquered----this has been your saying to us including "tete jaiye ki o ma ba jaiye pe,ma tete jaiye ki o le ba jaiye pe".

This created a sense of seriousness in us in our school days and beyond and we all got better for it.

Baba SIO we will find it difficult to forget you.

REST ON IN THE BOSSOM OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Akinoshun Kolawole Munir.

1969 Class Set.

Adedoyin house.

Adieu, Chief S,1, Ojelabi, Oje omo one, The Ekefa of Fiditi you came you saw and you conquered, Good night, you have made an indelible mark in the life of many of us, ever will you be remembered.

**Jide Gbode,
1962 Class set,
Bale House.**

Principal 'par excellence'. Erudite Scholar, Teacher of Teachers, Selfless leader and a great Mentor. May God bless all you left behind---Adieu

**Philip Amoo
1967 Class set
Bale house**



Condolence visit to the Ojelabis by FIGSOSA led by the President Prof. Adesola Ogunniyi

I still remember what happened in 1973 when i and 3 other guys went to watch (LOVE IN TOKYO) at scala cinema ibadan, we took the 'akedu ma loso' truck and came down at the first gate to your waiting hands at about 2.00am. Who on earth would expect you at that time of the night but then you were there still watching over us in spite of the fact that the school had about 4 night guards. You called us up at the assembly next morning and upon the

mention of my name, the school shouted my alias which I inherited from a past seniors (abonje).

You asked if I was popular or notorious and the answer was not popular. You gave others 6 and I can't remember the number of strokes I got as you said in Yoruba "Bolaji Akinola ko si oro Ana mbe ma na e bi ejo aije". I honestly never went to town again without a duly signed paper from a house master. Thank you sir for teaching those of us that passed through you how to be diligent in whatever we do. Good night sir.

Bolaji Akinola
1969 Class Set
Bale house

OJE BABA OJE,
OJE KAN,
FGS KAN.
Late Chief SIO..

Teacher of teachers, and a great disciplinarian did great work in our lives as students.

He has made me great. He can never be forgotten. He lives on. PAGIDARI,IGI DA.!AJANAKU SUN BI OKE, ERIN SUBU KO LE DIDE!!Good night..

Foluso Adeduntan
1966 Class Set Adeyi House.

Chief SI Ojelabi, a perfect strong willed gentleman. He was highly dedicated to his chosen profession and to politics; but was unfortunately born in either a wrong country or at



FIGSOSA first National President, Senator Bode Olajumoke and the immediate Past President Engr. Lateef Busari with the Ojelabis during condolence visit

some centuries far from when his natural characteristics would have been much more appreciated.

All said and done, he weathered the storm by the grace of the Almighty and the strong support of his heartthrob. SIR, YOU AND YOUR HEARTTHROB WILL TILL ETERNITY BE GUIDED BY THE DIVINE LIGHT OF GOD WHEREVER YOU MAY BE OR IN WHATEVER YOU MAY BE DOING.

RIPP sir/ma IJMN.

**Maj-Gen Kola. Ogunkoya (rtd).
1962/66 Class Set,
Adedoyin House.**

Pa Chief S.I OJELABI, I was happy the last day I saw you at OAU, during the Distinguished Veteran Teacher's Award in good You will forever be remembered, especially by those of us who passed through you tutelage at FIDITI GRAMMAR SCHOOL, for your mentorship and discipline, which moulded us to become whom we are today.

Baba, your integrity, honesty and exemplary life was second to none, as you were a teacher of teachers. Your life was so impactful, cutting across tribal boundaries.

May God grant the children, family and FIGSOSA Family the fortitude to bear the loss of a Father to all. May your soul rest in peace in the bosom of God Amen.

Good Night!!!.

Alex Olajide Banjo.
1969 Class Set,
Adeyi House.

My condolences to the FIGSOSA family, Fiditians, and the family of our dear Principal, teacher, mentor and an astute politician of note on his passing on to eternal glory after a long sojourn on this planet.. You will be remembered for all your good deeds while with us. You lived a life well spent in the service of your creator and humanity. Your memory will continue to linger in our hearts. May the soul of Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi continue to rest in perfect peace. Adieu..

Adebayo Aderinto,
1966 Class Set.
Adeyi House

Chief S.I Ojelabi is appreciated as an intellectual colossus & would always be remembered as educationist, mentor, achiever, protector, with retentive memory, and a good Christian. You were great when alive even after peacefully passing on.

Adieu Chief SIO for leaving a good legacy behind.

Akinwumi Akinwale.
1969/73 Class Set
Adedoyin House

Although the iconic teacher of teachers has left FGS, Fiditi before we came in, but his achievements speak after him. Chief S.I Ojelabi was a unifying factor who loved all his students as his biological children. I pray that God in His infinite mercy will surely give his family left behind a fortitude to bear the irreparable loss. Pa Ojelabi, continue to rest on the bosom of the Almighty God. Adieu Papa.

Engr Ajunwon Oladele Williams.
Senior Prefect
1974 Class set".
Obalana House.

Adieu Pa Ojelabi, may his gentle soul rest in perfect peace, Amen.

Rachel Longe Ladokun

1974 Class set
Adedoyin house.

Chief, Deacon S.I. OJELABI, the principal with difference who recognized all his students by name anywhere anytime. You were instrumental to my educational advancement after leaving FGS. My getting appointment with Sokoto State Government was through you.

GO AND REST PAPA.

Tundun Adeyemo.
1969 Class Set.
Adedoyin House.

To Papa Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, In memoriam. It was you who would philosophize to us: 'Tete j'aiye k'o ma baa j'aiye pe; ma tete j'aiye k'o le baa j'aiye pe'. How very true. You were a God- appointed lamp unto our hearts. We deservedly revered you, even as an indispensable icon; a pearl.

But you left when we had only just begun celebrating your person. Your spirit was still in its prime. You were a mobile library and archive; a faithful encyclopedia of knowledge, culture and liberal education. How very painful to have lost you when the FIGSOSA hearth still longs to have you around as its Illuminate. But our consolation is that you will always be alive in our hearts and minds. Well then: 'another place, another time, another clime, another realm'. In_requescat__en_pace_. Be well. It is well. K'a sunre Ajala lji. Dele Layiwola,

**1971 Class Set.
Adeyi House**



CSIO with some old students

Adieu to Baba Chief Deacon S.I Ojelabi (JP). Baba was a rare breed, an astute gentleman and need I add disciplinarian to the marrow.

The few short years spent at Fiditi Grammar School under Baba's tutelage molded me to be who I am today. There is no need to shed a tear as Baba's legacy would continue to flourish even in his demise.

He added value unto others.

All I can say is thank you Baba, rest in the Bosom of the Almighty.

Abimbola Dada-Reisa
1969 Class Set
Bale House

May his great soul rest in peace. Adspice Virtutem. Taofik Ademola Bello, 1966 Class Set.
Bale House.

I was opportune to know Baba Ojelabi as a member of FIGSOSA, and through the activities of the association. His gift during the AGM was wonderful. Baba picked up my name and never failed to address me 'Laide ñ I o', he never scratched his head to remember my name, very super at this. He regularly sent me greetings during the festive period. At the award ceremony in Ile Ife, Baba shook hands with all and you could see fulfilment and happiness written all over him. We saw last at the burial of Chief Adeogun, his warm embrace, I will cherish forever. His legacies live on so we will celebrate him as a living legend. Adieu S.I, and rest peacefully.

Olaide Abass,
1976 Class set,
Bale House

Erin wo, Ajanaku sun bi oke!!

Adieu Teacher of all teachers. Primus inta pare-First among equals.

I always remember ur words of advice to ur students- 'Tete j'aye ko ma ba j'aye pe, f'eso j'aye ko le j'aye pe. Pa (Dn) S. 1. Ojelabi, sun ree ooo. O dowuro ooo.

Surv. Maradesa Oduola.

1970 Class Set.

Adeyi House.

Erin wo! Kole dide !! Ajanaku sun bi oke !!; Oloye(Diakoni) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi kan. Ile eko grammar Fiditi kan. Ilu Fiditi kan.

Oluko ati oga Oluko. Ologbon dori eja mu : Oloye to moye : Igboya baba Igboya :Akoni loju ija. Titi la' o ma seranti yin. Afeyin sugbon Jesu feyin juwalo. Sunre o Baba S. I Ojelabi.

Good night sir.

Omojowolo Paul

1969 Class set

Obalana house

The teacher of teachers, seasoned principal. Chief SIO. RIP. The good work you left behind would continue to be remembered. May Almighty God give the family the fortitude to bear the great loss. Continue to rest in the Bosom of the LORD.

Ogunfowora Davies Adesina.

1969/1973 Class Set.

Bale House.



**Chief S. I. Ojelabi receiving the award and surrounded (from the left)
the Vice Chancellor O.A.U, Dr. Tunde Oloko (1954 Set)
Mr. Ademola Badejo (1971 Set) Kabiyesi the Ogiyan of Ejigbo**

Thank God for the life of Chief (Dnc) S. I. Ojelabi who came, fought and conquered. He was a teacher per excellence.

The discipline he instilled in us at FGS, Fiditi molded us for life in the discipline each and every one of us find ourselves in life. Talk of integrity, honesty and thoroughness you will find in our principal who took all of us as his biological children.

You not only received your reward on earth, you' have received it in heaven.

May God watch over all that you left in this world.

Rest in perfect peace. Amen.

Evang. (Mrs.) Olubukunola Daini.
1968 Class Set,
Adedoyin House.

Journey through the universe is always short, but what will the souls of the creations left behind say about you.

The soul of the departed SIO is not only resting in the Bosom of his creator but thanking everyone that appreciate his good achievement which any day is unquantifiable. Words fail to appreciate this genius sent to the world to share wisdom at its best.

REST IN PEACE, YOUR MEMORY LIVES ON

Alex Kesiro
1958 Class Set
Obalana House

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace. I am sure he was a happy man before the end came for he knew he had many loving Children who God directed to HONOUR him at the appropriate time and not posthumously God bless you all.

Our Daddy our Principal in his life time was a LEGEND and a GIFT from God to Fiditi Grammar school and to the Community.

All us that passed through his tutelage knows his worth. He was a disciplinarian to the core.

This makes us who we are today-Strong to withstand any storm. In fact the fear of using his left hand to cane us was the beginning of wisdom. He changed to left when he disciplined a dear or closer person to him amongst others he built our foundations.

I will still love to clean your office in the next world if the same setting arises.

ADIEU BABA.

**Kayode Eugene Daniyan,
1965 Class Set
Adedoyin House.**

Chief Samuel Igbayilola Ojelabi (CSIO) - Iconic Teacher and Legendary Leader.

I have heard and known about Chief Ojelabi (popularly called S.1) long before meeting him physically. My parents and great Uncles usually spoke of this great son of Fiditi anytime they had cause to discuss issues especially educational development in Fiditi. With him and Chief Adeyi, they remain the shining light for projecting Fiditi in the education map of Nigeria. By divine arrangement and shall be eternally grateful to my parents, I was sent to write the entrance examination for Fiditi Grammar after losing my elder brother to the cold hands of death in Premier Grammar School, Abeokuta so as to be close home and on the advice of my uncle, Pastor OLADELE. The exam was highly competitive with rigorous rounds of interviews led by S.I the great. When the names of successful candidates were announced, I was in the first set of five best candidates.

That was my very first Physical contact where we were further drilled and taken through the culture of the school. He called me Lagos boy and warned that the school I'm about to come, takes no nonsense and that there were many Lagos boys. I remember the S.I signature - the sly but legendary cough -khe.. khe.. keh.. that sends jitters.

While I was admitted by S.I, I was not fortunate to be "his student" as a Principal. He was moved to Ilora Baptist Grammar School. His legacies remained indelible as a quintessential tutor, mentor and life coach. For the old students, we enjoyed a tremendous support in all ramifications especially his presence at our AGMS with the traditional gifts of rich fruits including Esuru and Egbo which he never missed with his physical presence.

As a National Secretary, I had the rare privilege of relating closely with S.I through the enigmatic former President, Senator, Dr. Olajumoke. Once I greet, he'll say " Adekola, ma se Dada oo pelu Olajumoke" and other admonitions and counsel.

At the community level, he was an energetic leader with uncommon passion for the growth and development of the town. Despite his advanced age, he served conscientiously at the small dam committee which late Bayo OLADELE was the initiator where I served as the Secretary. He was always there for us especially in relating with the local and traditional leaders.

The Old Students, the town, the education community and indeed the world will miss Chief Ojelabi.

Adieu S.I (Khe... Khe..Khe).. Though lights out!!!!.. You live on, in our hearts.

Wale Adekola
1973 Class Set
Bale House

TRIBUTE TO A PEDAGOGIC HERO

Just about 24 hrs after Alhaji Tunde Atiku and I spoke on phone about the general unpredictable and harsh economic condition we found ourselves in the country and the loss of close relations we had both suffered in recent times, there was a news bang of the passing on of our late Emeritus Principal Chief S.I.OJELABI, popularly referred to on this platform as SIO.

I waited with bated breath expecting a rebuttals of the story which never came. But got continuous confirmation of his demise. Chief S.I. Ojelabi happened to have departed remarkably when the ovation was loudest. He really left in grand style after receiving a well-deserved award which he made sure was not given him posthumously.

He waited to see his moment of glory and reveled joyfully in witnessing his products surround him that day. Noteworthy is the fact that they came from all walks of all life and diverse professions. Name them, and you will find one of them as a practitioner. Is it in Law or Engineering, Science, Medicine, the Armed Forces or Broadcasting. Whether in Arts, Languages, Accountancy or Business; they abound. In academia, Estate Management, Architecture or Theatre Arts and so on.

He must have died a fulfilled gentleman. May Papa's soul, our teacher, educationist, mentor, great disciplinarian etc do continue to rest in perfect peace Amen.

Ade Ayeni
1960 Independence
Class Set
Obalana House

Chief Solomon Ipadeola OJELABI, our own Pa SIO, apart from being a second to none educator, was a teachers' teacher, a molder per excellence. He picked among teachers that struck him as academically good but indigent, and sent them to school but to come after completing their course of study, to come and teach. Such was what happened to Late Chief Tade IPADEOLA, who became an English & French teacher in Fiditi Grammar school. I recall that up to his death, he was still driving, and could recollect and mention by name any old student that comes across him.

Baba, was gifted.

I had cause to share a business transaction with him, within the last ten years and I cannot but notice a man of integrity in every sphere of his life. Even as at November event at Ife, SIO sang the school anthem with us, at attention and to the admiration of the VC and others in attendance.

Adieu, a pace-setter, lover of Education, a character molder, a highly disciplined human being & a respected community leader. Good night, the GREAT one!

Bukola Ipadeola
69/73 Class Set
Room 1, Obalana House.

Sleep on in the bossom of the father.

Engr Tunde Okubanjo
1964 Class Set.
Adedoyin House

Learning about the death of Chief S.I. Ojelabi brought shock to me because by my own human calculation, the mother lived for 120 years and the son had a physique to surpass her own age but death snatched him away without saying goodbye to us. We give God the honour and Glory that he gave us a teacher, an Icon and a disciplinarian, S.I. OJELABI, OJE KO, ONIWE, which till his demise, no principal names outshines his because, he was related to both the past and present students of our school, Fiditi Grammar school by not missing your names wherever he met you.

He made us to be neat students through our outlook and taught us that failure should not be our portion and gave us this quotation by Stephen Grellet - "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

ADIEU BABA S.I. OJELABI

I pray that may his soul rest in peace.

Adebayo Ayanwale,
Adedoyin House.
1969 Class Set,

SIO: The Quintessential Character Moulder. It was in Jan 1971 at about 8pm when every student was expected to be at the PREP (it was mandatory for students to be in class 7pm-9pm to study/prepare for classes). A senior student in class 4 and two of us, new intakes were in the hostel (an abomination!). All of a sudden the room door quietly opened and entering was a man clearing his throat (a habit we later got acquainted with).

Of course, the senior instantly knew it was SIO and wasted no time in jumping through the window into the darkness leaving behind the rice he was cooking (a greater abomination!).

SIO asked us for the name of the senior. Albeit new, we had learnt that 'woe betide a junior who identifies his senior who has committed a nefarious action'.

Both of us were then matched to the Principal's office to be issued suspension letters but with a caveat to be left off the hook if we mentioned the senior's name. Pronto we did! After a stern warning we were released but the senior to my knowledge never showed up to serve his punishment.

Even though he was the best sprinter in school, he 'voluntarily' expelled himself! The lesson stuck on us. When I visited my accomplice in Maryland, USA, where he's making waves, he confided in me how that single incident shaped his life. I retorted that it's been same with me.

I personally take solace in the fact that in the last couple of years, many of us have had the opportunity to show SIO genuine love and appreciation.

The visit of the 1971 set to him in March 2017 was a game changer!

We thank God for his life.

Demola BADEJO, Esq.
Chairman, 1971 Class set
(Mustard Seed Set).
Baale House

TRIBUTE TO OUR LATE & BELOVED PRINCIPAL CHIEF S.I. OJELABI.

House. 'Erin wo ajanaku sun bi oke'. This is a dirge to our late Principal & mentor. Death where is thy sting, grave where is thy victory? You took a fine molder of destinies, a man of impeccable integrity, a highly cerebral man, a firm disciplinarian. Yet a man with a humble disposition and high sense of humour just when our set was coming up to celebrate this Gem of inestimable value. We all owe you a debt of gratitude for moulding us at our formative stage of development. With a heart of thanksgiving, we bid you farewell to the great beyond & pray God to preserve all you left behind. Adieu Master. Sleep well in God's bosom. Eternal Rest grant him o Lord. Amen.

Bridget Omotunde Sokan.
1971 Class Set.
Adedoyin House

I would have amounted to nothing today if not for this great man, after the completion of form 4 in 1976, a mistake was made in my report sheet and I was asked to look for another school, the mistake was corrected but the principal said that form 4 was too full for me to repeat and even after the correction he said that form 5 was also full.

I was even given S75 which would have been the end of the road for my education. Chief Ojelabi met my Dad after I had stayed at home for one term, he asked after the boy he admitted in January 1973, he had moved to Ilora Baptist Grammar School, and pronto he admitted me again to have a new start in form 4 and was able to finish in 1978 with good result. The man made me. Goodnight SIO

Tunji Majaro
1973 Class set
Obalana House

TRIBUTE TO A PATRIOT, A COLOSSUS, AN ENIGMA AND A MAN OF NO MEAN REPUTE.

Every soul that came across or crossed the path of Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi during his life time would *definitely* have felt some aura of love, compassion, high sense of discipline and devotion. Even those of us who were his students felt his love in his disciplinary actions as well as his quest to shapen or re-shapen us for the future. And he did that compassionately even when we thought he was being too tough on us.

He was one who could see the potentials in every student that he taught even as Principal. His sense of humour was equally fantastic and sometimes unusual. Short of being a perfect man, a teacher, a Principal, he was the second best of all that I had as a father, mentor and teacher after the death of my biological father who passed on when I was in Primary school.

Two particular incidents I always remember years on after leaving FGS was a morning as usual when CSIO came into the Assembly hall and asked who was the student in Room 1 Obalana House that tapped the Radio wire (then referred to as Rediffusion) into the room to listen to private radio. I was fixed to my seat lost as to what was coming next.

My God I got pardoned. Pardoned....? His very comments amongst others was "If not because it's you....." Till today I still don't know what that meant other than that I was in his good books I guess. The other incident was years after my school days in FGS, I was passing through Fiditi to Oyo for an occasion and it occurred to me that I should pay CSIO a surprise visit. I found my way to his house but unfortunately he wasn't home but met mama. He had gone to church and was being expected back. I had to leave a message with mama as I

couldn't wait not knowing when he would be back. To my shock and pleasant surprise I got a written message from him a week or two later acknowledging my visit. This is the type of personality CSIO was till his last moment. Always having the interest of his students at heart while asking after them as well as appreciating them.

Thanks be to the Almighty that made it possible for me to fulfill my wishes through the opportunity I had to felicitate with him at Fiditi along with the '69 set a couple of months ago and also to be at UNIFE last November 14th 2018 at one of his finest moments during the presentation of "Distinguished Vereran Teacher Award" to him by the Faculty of Education as well as the Endowment instituted in his honour by FIGSOSA at the same event.

Pa Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, you will forever be remembered in our hearts. Continue to Rest In The Lord. Adieu. Sun re ooo. Erin lo!

Engr Richard Ayinde Adenekan. FNSE. FNIEEE

1965 Class Set.

Obalana House.

Great is Thy Faithfulness Oh Lord.

Pa S. I Ojelabi is unarguably the best Principal FGS ever had for laying a very solid foundation for all students who passed through him. A very dedicated, energetic and humane teacher of all teachers.

He laid emphasis on our studies and held sports with all seriousness. He shall be missed by all. May his gentle soul rest in peace.

**Osuolale Ogunrinde (JP),
1969 Class set,
Adedoyin house.**

An adage says that it is better to teach one how to fish, than providing one with a fish.

Chief. S. I. Ojelabi passed unto us and several generations, knowledge of how to fish in the oceans of the world where struggling for survival is imminent.

Adieu, our mentor, father and teacher.

The good contributions you made into our lives will live in our memory forever.

**Ishola. Iyiola,
1976 Class set,
Obalana House.**

TRIBUTE TO OUR LATE AND BELOVED PRINCIPAL CHIEF S.I. OJELABI.

Erin wo ajanaku sun bi oke'

This is a dirge to our late Principal and mentor. Death, where is thy sting, grave where is thy victory? You took a fine mold of destinies, a man of impeccable integrity, a highly cerebral man, a firm disciplinarian, yet a man with a humble disposition and high sense of humour just when our set was coming up to celebrate this gem of inestimable value. We all owe you a debt of gratitude for molding us at our formative stage of development.

With a heart of thanksgiving, we bid you farewell to the great beyond and pray God to preserve all you left behind.

Adieu Master, Sleep well in God's bosom. Eternal Rest grant him o Lord. Amen.

**Michael Ojo-Abegunde,
1962 Class Set,
Obalana House.**

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN....

How can I forget our disciplinarian father? I was wrong when I thought being Yoyin Ojelabi's close friend will exonerate us from being punished.

Yoyin and I plucked mangoes on a farm, the farmer reported us, so the following morning at the assembly he asked. "Is Yoyin and Felicia here in the hall?" All the students remained silent, then he said, "bring them here dead or alive."

Jesus, we saw stars. Anyway, I learnt a lot from him. He was never a partial judge.

Papa, I will not render you a dirge lamenting your demise, for triumphant saints such as you, don't die, rather they depart their lowly mortal for the glorious immortal. Therefore, I would rather offer you a lyric to soothe your gentle soul, now lying on the master's bosom. Sleep on, I know the parting is temporary while the meeting again at Christ feet is eternal.

We will meet to part no more.

Adieu papa SIO.

Mrs. Felicia Olateju Ogunleye." (Karufi")
1968 Class Set.
Obalana House

Baba CSIO lived a fulfilled life.

He came, he saw and he conquered.

May His Gentle Soul Rest In Perfect Peace.

Jelili Olayide Lasisi.
1966 Class Set,
Bale House.

To the Teacher of all Teachers, Chief (Deacon) SI OJELABI –the Ekefa of FIDITI. Fare thee well!

You have paid your dues to your Town, to FIGS, to the Church and the Nation..Now is the time to go home and rest till we meet to part no more.

May you be met by angels to carry you home unto Eternity.

See. See. How much we love you.

Please carry along our Bags of Thanks to God for giving us such model at our most impressionable age.

Good Nite, Pa SIO.
Peter ATILOLA,
1969 Class set,
Bale House.

Baba SIO, rest in peace. The heaven has gained another angel. Till we meet on the resurrection day.

Adieu, babá to ju babal.

Tunde Adedeji,
1976 Class Set,
Obalana House.

ADIEU TO LATE CHIEFS. I. OJELABI:

OUR BEST TEACHER EVER!

Words are not enough to express our grief over the passing away of a dearly beloved teacher, mentor and friend, who nurtured us since he made his debut, as a graduate teacher on the soil of Fiditi Grammar School 'for Boys'. 'Mr. Ojelabi', as we fondly called him, was my first encounter with a left-handed teacher and if I may say, he was also ambidextrous, using both hands with a reasonable level of perfection! He was *primus inter pares* and without doubt, first and best among them all.

How can those of us in the 1958 set forget some of the lines from our Literature set books?

Examples of his favourite lines include:

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said this is my home, my native land....."-Sir Walter Scott. 'Reading makes a full man, conversation makes a ready man, and writing makes an exact man.' Francis Bacon and his favourite quote from Shakespeare Macbeth-"There is no art to find the mind's construction on the face.....He was a gentleman, on whom I built an absolute trust".

No wonder many of my mates and Mr Ojelabi's other mentees achieved excellence in Literature and English Language.! We, of the 1958 Set, and a few sets immediately after us, missed not experiencing and enjoying him as a full-fledged Principal. Notwithstanding this, all his mentees have given good accounts of his impact in Language Arts and carried his Flag in academic circles around the world. We are eternally grateful to him.

What about his utterances and mannerisms -"Hm m hm, the best of you is bad enough, hm! Hm.....!" as he caned the noisy and troublesome little boys? He really nurtured and polished us all.

We have no doubt that his gentle soul is resting in perfect peace with the Lord.

Adieu to our great teacher, Chief SI Ojelabi!

Professor Adekunle Akinyemi.
1958 Class Set,
Adeyi House.

Tribute to the man who, indirectly made my ambition come true as a doctor. SIO in 1962 gave me 32 strokes of the cane for an offence against the Maths teacher Oyelakin, who had earlier given Late Akani Momoh, zero over Three hundred mark. I confronted the teacher who made a report. Subsequent stay was full of frustration which now took me from FGS where only Gen. Science was offered.

I left for Ibadan Grammar School to start from form three which placed me two classes behind my classmates in FGS. At IGS, I started Physics, Chemistry, Biology from the scratch. If CSIO had not done the caning, today, I would not have become a trained Obstetrician/ Gynecologist of repute. I salute a teacher of all teachers. Eternal rest grant his soul. Amen.

Dannykaye
1959 set
Bale House

Baba you are loving, nice, caring, reliable, kind & always willing to offer sincere advice. You came, you saw and you conquered. May the Good Lord reward your labour of LOVE.

Adieu Baba.

Deaconess Kemi Akinpelu
(Nee Adeyemi)
1976 Set
Baale House

A TRIBUTE TO CHIEF SOLOMON IPADEOLA OJELABI:

A MENTOR AND LEADER OF RARE VIRTUES

My beloved teacher and mentor, by the time this piece is published, you will be far away. You must have left behind many of those who loved you dearly and those you loved deeply. Among your loved ones are those you have imparted positively into their lives. These include students who have passed through your hands or have seen or heard of you through testimonies. Your activities as a teacher have left behind you precepts too useful to ignore. Teaching is so small in what grows the child. Doing the right thing always laced with empathic sessions of advice and garnished with sincere listening periods. All these instruments in your hand were used to build up many people.

Understanding the difficult periods we were passing through as members of the first set of our school, Fiditi Grammar School, the echo of your voice saying "you boys, listen; according to Arnold Glasgcow, "you better continue to sharpen your focus; the world expects results, not excuses. Don't tell stories of your labour pains, show them the baby." You have demonstrated to us that life is not only measured by duration, but by donation. Can we exhaust the list of the number of donations you have made into our lives? No! You have donated discipline, time management spirit, character, integrity, determination to succeed... The list is endless. During your sojourn on this planet earth, it was possible that you asked for all things that you might enjoy life, but your creator gave you long life that you might enjoy all things. Yes you did and thank God for that. You enjoyed the confidence that people reposed in you; you enjoyed friendship, peace, joy and fulfillment.

We saw in you numerous attributes of people that can be classified as successful. You demonstrated deep and intense interest in whatever good things you laid your hands upon to do. You exemplified discipline, time management, focused and sincere spirit of friendship and love. You exuded confidence in yourself. Hard work, honesty, sincerity and integrity were your hallmarks. In the words of Haden Hitchman, social, economic, medical, political science and technological achievements and advancements of man and the universe owe their conception and birth to the creative power of vision. You were a visionary leader and mentor in your teaching career and your other engagements. Institutions like University of Ife, Ile-Ife in the State of Oshun acknowledged this and honored you in their own little way in November 2018.

The most profound prayer is a simple turning of the mind to the spirit of God praying within us in loving desire to pray. And so we pray, that the family you left behind shall continue to live in the sweet memory of your life. We pray that Fiditi Grammar School Old Students' Association-FIGSOSA- and the generations of the Staff and Students of our school, Fiditi Grammar School, Fidit, shall continuously hold you in high esteem as their role model and pathfinder. We pray that Fiditi Community in particular and Nigeria as a whole shall cherish your presence on this planet forever.

We thank your creator for giving you the right heart to serve man and God according to His will. Therefore we are comforted forever in you even as you continue your journey to the land of everlasting bliss. Good night our great teacher and dependable friend. May you live forever in our hearts.

Dr. Olatunde Oloko
Chairman BOT, FIGSOSA

A BIOGRAPHY OF DEACON S. I. OJELABI

7 YEARS AGO BOOK REVIEW

Title: A SCHOLAR PAR EXCELLENCE

A BIOGRAPHY OF

Chief (Deacon) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, JP

AUTHOR: BARRISTER OLAJIDE OLANIPEKUN

PRICE: NOT STATED

PAGES: 273

REVIEWER: BIODUN OPALEYE

Which one would you prefer at 80? A biography or auto- biography? I have read the autobiography of Mrs. Golda Meir - the late first female Prime Minister of Israel. It's a 493+ page book. Whatever the case, only S.I. knows his own preference which Mr. Olajide Olanipekun neatly and innocently chronicled in his 273-page volume on Chief (Deacon) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi, JP.

If one takes out the treatise on FIDITI GRAMMAR SCHOOL, from the biographical book, the remainder becomes peculiar to Deacon Ojelabi and to him alone. But with FIDIGRAMS added to it, the horizon widens on the character and personality of Chief Ojelabi as a tutor and mentor.

As the first proof reader / writer and reporter at the Baptist Press, Orita Mefa, Ibadan, in 1969, I garnered that the biographical book on Deacon Ojelabi allowed too many empty pages between one chapter and another. I believe Chief Ojelabi's archival library has enough pictures - historical ones which could have filled the spaces even without any textual stories.

A singular example of a photograph missing in the book and which could have told a story or stories is the 1958 or 1959 staff group photograph where Messrs Alex Ajayi (Principal), Christopher Okigbo, and S.I. Ojelabi prominently appeared. The three persons at that time rocked the boat of Fiditi as well as that of Nigeria in different ways. What a miss!

I (this reviewer), being an old student of Fiditi Grammar School of the third set admitted into school in January 1956, understood, like some others, the experience and reactions of Chief Ojelabi on issues and situations dexterously captured in the book. When the author talked of S.I. possessing intelligent and good memory of people and events, my mind went straight to the day Fiditi township welcomed him back home in 1958 at First Baptist Church, Fiditi with

a 21-gun salute. I was present at that occasion as a Form Three Student then. As he moved out and met us at a corner, I remember him saying to me, "Hello! A.B. The General", my nickname since age six and which is common to all those bearing Abiodun. Other incidents followed at advanced level when we consider how he keeps records and remembers names. Somebody once referred to him in Latin as "Encyclopedia Fiditia" in addition to original "Ojelabi - Oniwe" recorded in the book. I concur!!!

Reading through the biography of Chief S.I. Ojelabi, one would agree as the author ably put such in sequence that S.I. had been consistent since childhood in protesting against injustice meted to himself or to other people. While I am not claiming to know more than other people on the issue of oppressive policy, I wish to submit that majority of people from whose hands S.I. suffered injustice happened to be Baptist Christians with whom he worshipped and among whom he served in various capacities. I can say I know this as a Baptist myself having served the Baptist Convention as a features editor; church training programme editor and finally as first ever, Public Relations Officer / Press Secretary up to Dec. 31st 2011. I was a reporter and still reporting.

One major reason for this phenomenon among Baptists is traceable to our congregational system of worship whereby, in an all-comer affairs in leadership and Baptist polity - some turn out to be difficult leaders hiding under a so-called committee decision which, in itself, is good and representative enough but could be misused by a diabolical leader. It is, and has been a human problem rather than being a spiritual problem. For example, this reviewer had repeatedly come across Fiditians and Baptists for that matter who are said to be excessively critical of Chief A.O. Adeyi, Chief S.I. Ojelabi, and Chief Pekun Adesokan for the past fifty years running.

As a Christian, I often challenge such destructive critics. "When will the battle against Chiefs X; Y; and Z be over? Or don't you think the cumulative effect is already telling on you the critic, the church and allied institutions?" In fact, a former Governor of old Western Region was said to have complained that the highest number of excessive criticisms (not protest now, if such protest is righteous) came from Oyo south (Fiditi in particular) and Ekiti Local Government Area respectively. But the consolation from the above sad situation now is that there had been political realignment making former enemies to be colleagues again in the same party. The former inter and intra- church quarrels had resulted in a new generation of

the same stock getting married to one another and finding themselves as business, political, or social associates.

Back to the issue of Fiditi Grammar School as it featured in the book, recognizing the many sacrifices of our indefatigable Master, Tutor and Principal, S.I. Ojelabi - we have nicknamed FIDIGRAMS as the Areopagus of Fiditi - or (Fiditi Grammar School for Boys) - the cradle and seat of wisdom or learning that was and still is never like any other (*Adspice Virtutem*). Reading through the book, one is tempted to ask - why is it that the best brains are usually attracted to Fiditi? Again, come to consider Messrs Alex Olu Ajayi, Christopher Okigbo and Solomon Ipadeola; Ojelabi between 1956 and 1960, Nigeria's year of independence. This reviewer spent at least three years under the tutelage of each of the three between 1956 and 1961 when I left school.

I can "usurp" an award for each of them -the motto of Deacon S.I. Ojelabi's BBHS old school of "Nulli Secundus". When Alex Ajayi left Fiditi in 1959, he assumed office as Deputy Registrar, WAEC, Yaba-Lagos, and later as Registrar at the University of Ife (now OAU). Before 1961, there was only one university in Nigeria - that of Ibadan. In the case of Chris Okigbo, he left Fiditi about 1960 to become the sole representative of Oxford University Press Ltd in Ibadan. But one needs to read an authentic account of Nigeria's Civil War of 1967-70, to discover the radical role Chris Okigbo - the poet - played until he was killed in the war. What Okigbo fought against before and during 1967-1970 war is still with us and rearing its head until the 2011 general elections.

The trio of Okigbo, Ajayi and Ojelabi are poets. Thank God

Chief Ojelabi tells his own story frankly and correctly. We their students of old could be the greatest beneficiaries of the erudition and in the case of Deacon S.I. - we're beneficiaries of his gallant academic and administrative competence at Fiditi. On 28 June, 2010, I attended the 80th birthday ceremony of Chief Alex Ajayi at Anglican Cathedral, Montgomery Road, Yaba, Lagos. At the occasion, Fiditi town, and indeed Fiditi Grammar School of all places the celebrant served, did come out prominently in significance. Alex Ajayi is an Anglican Christian; S.I. Ojelabi, a Baptist; and Chris Okigbo, a Catholic.

I remember in 1958-1959 Mr. Ojelabi (S.I.) teaching us Civics apart from major subjects like English and Latin. I have never forgotten a maxim he taught in Civics saying, "Don't cheat; and don't let anybody cheat you." When this maxim is placed alongside his biography, one

readily agrees that he lives his philosophy. When he visited us in hostels for pre-school physical exercise and inspection, I never knew until reading his biography that he was imparting into us what he learnt at various levels of his education. That was before 1960 Nigeria's year of independence and can you imagine how such ideals saw us through our various professions? When I succeeded him as Secretary General of an organization of Fiditian Baptists in Diaspora named "Pastor Daniel Adegoke Memorial/Evangelistic Society of First Baptist Church Fiditi" - I noticed one aspect of his brilliance. He kept a neat and orderly record of minutes. I was already used to that in my decades of service at both the Baptist Press and the Baptist Building Headquarters in Ibadan. But what I never always had was the fact of being at a crossroad (or dilemma) over a matter or issue of concern. A phone call to Oga S.I. was like touching a computer or wireless www.com for an answer. When I read many of such instances as recorded by his biographer - "I just de laugh!" Finally, on politics, readers would readily agree with the author that it had been all stormy and turbulent. If Chief Ojelabi felt marginalized by both the dead and the living in the struggles for political representation in Fiditi some fifty years ago, we wonder if the situation has improved generally now even with his successors despite realignment of political forces. If the answer is no, then we need to admit quickly that the way and manner we weigh politics in Africa is not peculiar to Fiditi alone but it is also fundamentally wrong all over Africa. Fiditi can't be an exception. Where then do we go from here after Nigeria's fifty years of political independence by the year 2010. Or, did Chief Ojelabi remember (at least in a chapter) to tell his generational successors the way out? Thank God he is still alive and doing well. Maybe we need an extra- curricular article in tract form as addendum to his biography on the way out of the present nation-wide confusion in politics just like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, according to S.I., mapped out democratic socialism for the ancient Action Group. Again, please remind me, does any of the present political parties in Nigeria have an ideology? Please remind me! Which one in particular? We must view the struggles of Chief Ojelabi from another perspective of being a pioneer in many of the fields so recorded in the book. Could his pioneering challenges be different from those of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in whose church he currently serves as a revered Deacon? Such is to be expected. I read Chief Ojelabi's biography twice. I then compared my own private notes on FIDIGRAMS as an archaic student with his own as a veteran master and principal in the same school. I concluded that any student that found himself at FIDIGRAMS between 1954 Year of Foundation and the first seven years terminating in 1961 must be a hero indeed. In fact, we realised this in 2004 during the Golden Jubilee when we mobilized FIGSOSA to locate the

pioneer students in particular whose ages then ranged from between seventy and seventy-five. Only a few could attend. Thereafter, welfare committee of FIGSOSA reached out to the sick and the bereaved in various locations. Old students of the first seven years, 1954 - 1961, studied with hurricane lanterns. There was no pipe borne water but treated one to provide safe drinking water. We slept on two- piece wooden bed. We uprooted palm trees, Iroko and Araba trees to make the school site wear the present beautiful look. Yet, despite all these hazards, FIDIGRAMS, led by sports Master Okigbo, was ahead in soccer and sports nationwide.

Through the dedication, steadfastness and patience of Deacon S.I. Ojelabi, Fiditi boys and girls are today found in every profession and in every country in the world. That, I think, is the reward for pioneers like Chief S.I. Ojelabi. (Governor Babatunde Raji Fashola of Lagos State was reported to have said that the reward for hard work is to have more work to do. So, let it be with S.I.). As a proof to the above, we heard the news on VOA radio in 2010 of a Sierra Leonean woman who commendably reflected on her life after the Sierra Leonean civil war. She remembered with tears that Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone which Deacon S.I. attended used to be educational beacon to most West African youth before 1960. Apart from that legacy destroyed in Sierra Leone, the woman lamented that Nigeria that drank from the fountain of knowledge flowing from Fourah Bay has had to send all kinds of relief materials to Sierra Leone in recent years. What a loss! What a damage to legacy! Thank God, our own Deacon Chief S.I. Ojelabi is still alive and in Nigeria to do more for her only because he had received grace to do so from the Lord God. The book is a must read for any elite that would not stumble in present day crisis. Teachers! Tutors! Teachers of English in particular! God bless my teachers! The article "God bless My Teachers!" was written by me in the "Nigerian Baptist" magazine in the 1970s; but in 1969, before then and at the Baptist Press where I had practical training in religious journalism under American Missionary Miss Barbara Epperson, I received a few awards. My boss (Epperson) gazed at me one day to ask, "Who and who taught you English?" I remembered to mention Messrs E.O. Oyerinde (Aawe); Alex Ajayi (Ado-Ekiti), A.O. Adeyi (Fiditi), S.I. Ojelabi (Fiditi), E.O. Ogunjuyigbe (Ijebu Jesha); Christopher Okigbo (Anambra), E.A. Adeyemo (Ibadan), Mike Agboola Olajumoke (Imeri-Ondo State) and a few others. Miss Epperson saw me through the use of English as a second language up to writing naturally not necessarily by observing too many grammatical rules as I would but by speaking and writing English naturally. The same thing happened to me when I began to study French. You learn French by speaking French - not just by grammar. One last question: With all commentators in the book praising Chief Ojelabi, S.I.

for keeping good records - may we then know how much records the commentators themselves keep of their individual nuclear or extended families; records about Fiditi township; of the church they attend; and yea of the Yoruba race they claim to jealously belong? Or, are they just mere titled spectators and commentators leaving only Chief (Deacon) S.I. Ojelabi (aka 'Oniwe') with the saddle of record keeping while they look on.

A columnist, Muiyiwa Daniel, commenting on "Nigeria's Forgotten Heroes of Sport!" in the "Sunday Life" of 24, April 2011 (page 9) concluded thus: "It all boils down to a nation that has failed to recognise the meaning of keeping records". What a commentary in AD 2011 after the book launch on Ojelabi S.I. in the previous year AD 2010!!! Three days before I finally left school in 1961 after writing my school certificate examination, Mr. Ojelabi summoned my class to his house at Temidire, Fiditi. With cabin biscuits and orange squash, he bade us farewell telling us how to face the new life we were about to experience. God bless my teachers, including S.I. then, as I thereafter found many things he told us to be true **MY VERDICT:** 75% of Nigerians (educated or illiterate alike) don't read; 90% don't keep records. But who wants to lead such a people? Maybe reading the book "Chief (Deacon) Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi JP. - A Scholar Par Excellence" would change that situation! **PERIOD!!! POSTSCRIPT (NOT AFTER THOUGHT):-** When, by the grace of God Chief (Deacon) S.I. Ojelabi clocks either 90 or 100, he can review this biography to consider in addition the aforementioned thoughts or what he feels about them.

Biodun Opaleye
27 April, 2011
08063467561

FUNERAL ORATION ON
CHIEF SOLOMON IPADEOLA OJELABI, RIP
BY

PROFESSOR ADESOLA OGUNNIYI PRESIDENT, FIGSOSA

Chief Solomon Ipadeola Ojelabi was born on October 13, 1930 and breathed his last on Sunday, January 6 2019. He started teaching in Fiditi Grammar School (FGS) after completing his University Education in 1958. He taught English Language, English Literature, Religious Knowledge, Latin and Yoruba Language. He endeared himself to his students with his teaching skills and retentive memory. He returned to FGS as Senior Tutor in April 1961 after a brief sojourn as the Principal, Christ Apostolic Church Teacher Training College, Efon-Alaye (May 1960- March 1961). He was appointed Principal of FGS in March 1966 and he held the position till December 1972 when he was redeployed to another Institution.

FGS blossomed during his tenure with students scoring high marks in the exit examinations and qualifying for admissions into various higher institutions. The number of eminent Nigerians holding key positions in the International, Financial, Political, Academic and Social arena, who are members of FIGSOSA, attest to this. He retired as a first-class Principal on December 31, 1979. He had a fulfilling career as a teacher and Principal as he touched many lives.

Chief Ojelabi will never be forgotten by the old students of FGS(FIGSOSA) and all teachers who served under him while teaching at FGS.

He was the quintessential Principal, Administrator, Teacher, Disciplinarian, Family man and Custodian of Information. He was rightly described as a 'the colossus of our time' by one of his old students. The outpouring of emotions by members of FIGSOSA upon the announcement of his passing to glory have been compiled into a Book of Tributes to serve as a repository of his good deeds and kindness.

The book attests to the highest regard we had for him. His primary concern was that his products should excel in life and followed very closely our progress until his death. Indeed, he was a role model and a source of inspiration for many of us. He was always appreciated for his generosity, presence of mind, exemplary role as a Teacher/ Principal, dedication to his calling, fatherly role and love of his native land, Fiditi.

Chief Ojelabi is no more with us but his life has taught all of us to leave a mark and contribute to the success of others. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) wrote in 'A Psalm of Life' - "Lives of great men all remind us, we can live our lives sublime, and departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time."

Chief Ojelabi has left indelible footprints in the sand of time and his memory will remain evergreen. He has left a huge gap that will be difficult to match by anyone for a long time to come.

He will indeed be sorely missed. The entire members of FIGSOSA commiserate with his children and the entire Ojelabi family. We pray for the repose of his soul.

May he continue to be in the bosom of the Lord.

Adieu, our Principal, until we meet to part no more.

Adspice Virtutem.