

# UNIQUE UniPort

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## Ajiienka Four years as helmsman

### INSIDE

- New rice variety
- Remembering Claude Ake
- Pioneer Nuclear Engineers
- Wig and Gown

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## Consolidating the vision

*I always feel a zingy, thrilling urge each time I am saddled with the onerous responsibility of producing the next edition of Unique UniPort magazine. For me, this endeavour is an abiding article of faith and a labour of love that cannot be quantified in any hard currency. The experience is smoother than butter for me and the rest of the Editorial crew, who go far beyond the call of duty to produce each edition of the magazine that has come to be widely accepted by the University Community as a veritable source of information.*

*As Lord Byron once said, "Words are things, and a small drop of ink. Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions think." We hope we can set you thinking with this new edition of Unique UniPort.*

*In this edition, for instance, we look back at the four-year old tenure of Professor Joseph Ajienka as 7<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor and acknowledge the irrefutable conclusion that the University has undergone far-reaching structural changes that have made it stronger and ready to face the future with renewed confidence, despite daunting challenges that the administration had to contend with as it powers the entrepreneurial vision.*

*We took a look at the general developmental direction of the University under the new entrepreneurial vision of the Ajienka-led administration meant to capitalize knowledge in a Technology Park. This edition also focuses on some quality research findings by scholars and celebrates outstanding scholars who brought fame to the University in their service years, and lots more.*

*We trust you will find it a compelling read!*

## Contents

- Optiwell Software - p.4
- New rice variety - p.6
- Remembering Claude Ake - pp.8,9,10
- Pioneer Nuclear Engineers - pp.14,15
- Okara - p.28,29
- Wig and Gown - p.35
- UniSports - p.38

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NUGA Conquerors celebrating at Govt House, Port Harcourt

### Cont'd from p38

the last NUGA games was a very spectacular event because we won a total of 120 medals comprising 63 gold, 41 silver and 16 bronze medals to clinch the first pole position. The University of Lagos came a distant second with 13 gold, 10 silver and 7 bronze medals, while the host institution, Obafemi Awolowo University came third with 11 gold, 9 silver and 15 bronze medals."

The Vice-Chancellor added: "With this fifth consecutive victory, our admirers re-designated UniPort as UniSports and we have been recognized by NUGA, sports officials and fans

alike as the premier institution in sports nationwide. We have moved from running school sports to becoming a sporting school. We are winning because we understand the science of sports. Our vision is to run a sporting academy, a sports museum, a high performance centre and we are working hard to blend academics with sports. We have established dominance in many sporting fields. For instance, we won all the 30 gold medals on offer in swimming. We have forayed into track and field, tennis and also won the best behaved team award." What else is there to compete for and win?

Reacting to the victory, Governor Amaechi, who is also a proud Alumnus of the University of Port Harcourt, congratulated the all-conquering Team UniPort for its exploits in University sporting activities. The Governor promised to assist the University achieve its full potentials in sports development on a massive scale.

Director of Sports in the University, Dr Ken Anugweje, who has been harnessing all possible technical and scientific tactics in training the athletes, expressed commitment to continued excellence in sporting activities at national and international levels.

Speaking earlier while camping in preparation for the championships, UniPort Team Leader, Fidelis Awusa, had averred that: "we were prepared for the competition. We have set a standard; taking top position and that is what we always want to achieve. It is left to our competitors to learn the secret of our consecutive success story." All hail UniSports!

*"At the collation of the final medals table, Team UniPort, once again, mercifully carted away a whopping 120 medals, leaving the other 40 participating institutions to scramble for the remaining 364 medals as consolation prizes. So, it was the fifth consecutive victory for Team UniPort at the NUGA championships."*





Gov Amaechi (right) receiving NUGA trophy from V-C, Prof Ajienka in Govt House, PH



Team UniPort athletes displaying the trophy

UNIQUE UniPort

A Message from the Vice-Chancellor

## Building an attractive brand

**K**nowledge is power we are told; but that is if it is applied and publicized for the benefit of humanity. Applied knowledge further enriches our lives and enlarges the sphere of human existence. In the University setting, the pursuit of knowledge is the province of scholars and their students, who have a mandate to improve the lot of humanity as arbiters of contemporary taste and purveyors of truth. Propagating information in the age of globalization and social media is as important as showcasing the best research findings in the laboratory. Information is, indeed, power. Today, events in the remotest parts of the world are brought to instant notice around the world, at the push of a button. It is quite obvious that we are far behind in this digital divide.

As each new edition of the quarterly Unique

UniPort magazine rolls out of the Printing Press my delight knows no bounds because of its capacity to spread information about what we are doing here as a select community of scholars that are dedicated to the pursuit of the highest ideals that would propel our society forward.

It has been four years since providence placed me at the helm of affairs as the 7<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt. The driving force of the administration has been to build an Entrepreneurial University that all stakeholders in the affairs of the Institution would be proud to associate with as an attractive brand. Four years on, we have recorded some appreciable milestones aimed at repositioning UniPort as a centre of academic excellence.

As I begin the final countdown to the end of my administration, I am delighted to know that Unique UniPort magazine has been sustained and is able to provide information to the University Community and other stakeholders, who look up to it as a source of enlightenment on a regular basis.

This edition has happily followed in that tradition of documenting important events on Campus within the quarter and also focusing on some outstanding teachers, who left their bold footprints on the hallowed corridors of the academia over the decades.

I feel proud to, once, again, place yet another edition of the magazine in your hand in the belief that you would find it informative and educative.

I hope you will find the information contained in this edition useful.

You are welcome.

JOSEPH A. AJIENKA, FAEng., FNSE



Prof Ajienka

## All hail UniSports!

Team UniPort has again brought home the giant trophy of the Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA) as it carted away a total of 120 medals out of the 484 medals on offer at the 24<sup>th</sup> edition of the championships, reports [07185318.5.4500.02](mailto:07185318.5.4500.02).

**I**t was the 24<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), originally scheduled for last year, but for the protracted industrial action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Osun State, hosted the championship which the University of Port Harcourt has won back-to-back for the fourth time running.

Other Universities came for the contest with their minds set on dislodging Team UniPort from monopolizing the giant trophy as a matter of routine. The championship held between 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2014. At the collation of the final medals table, Team UniPort, once again, mercilessly carted away a whopping 120 medals, leaving the other 40 participating institutions to scramble for the remaining 364

medals as consolation prizes. So, it was the fifth consecutive victory for Team UniPort at the NUGA championships.

Conveying the cheering news to the Governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi during a rousing reception for the Team at the Government House, Port Harcourt, a visibly delighted Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, stated that: "our victory at

Cont'd on p39



Gov Amaechi, top public officers and delegation from UniPort

## OPTIWELL software scales Shell's model test

**OPTIWELL Wellbore Stability Management Software developed by the Shell Aret-Adams Chair of Petroleum Engineering, University of Port Harcourt, has successfully been used to model failure behaviour of subsurface formations in drilling operations, reports WILLIAMS WODI.**

The new UniPort-developed technology also known as OPTIWELL Model 1.0 has finally been certified to prevent borehole collapse by predicting adequate drilling mud weight to maintain borehole stability.

A statement by Occupant of the Chair and OPTIWELL Developer, Professor Adewalé Dosunmu, on behalf of the research team, described the revolutionary technique as so beneficial that "client operators are smiling home as a result of reduced wellbore problems and drilling efficiency cost in efforts aimed at saving cost," adding that the procedure aims at saving entire field development budgets of oil prospecting companies.

Drilling of well, the statement further said, consumes about 60 per cent of entire field budget, making savings as very substantial. "Nigeria's fiscal regime is such that 60 per cent of business risk is borne by the country," the research team said, disclosing that OPTIWELL ensures that operations learning curve is consistently on the upward slope.

"With OPTIWELL Geo-mechanical analysis, formations

are better known, as more information is gathered from previous wells, subsequent wells are better designed," the statement said.

It would be recalled that drilling operations usually encounter major setbacks as a result of instability in shales, while Non-Productive Time (NPT) expended in solving problems associated with wellbore instability significantly go beyond drilling budget and still does not necessarily lead to desired solutions. Operators are compelled to engage in trial and error approaches and equipment damage that cost much money and time wasted.

OPTIWELL predicts the minimum pressure under which the well could collapse, because an optimal mud weight is predicted to prevent well collapse, with a better criteria for failure, while pre-drill planning procedure insures against tool

failure incidents, thus saving the environment from radioactive contamination.

Professor Dosunmu disclosed that "OPTIWELL will result in improved profitability through cost reduction in well construction. Human capacity building, increased local content participation, domestication of high level technology, and better environmental conservation through reduction in abandoned radioactive materials." The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), has already endorsed the new OPTIWELL Software.

Benefits of the emergent software include reduced Non-Productive Time, increased savings from drilling time, reduced recurrent problems, improved operational performance, reliability and efficiency.

***"OPTIWELL will result in improved profitability through reduction in well construction in Nigeria, human capacity building, increased local content participation, domestication of high level technology, and better environmental conservation through reduction in abandoned radioactive materials."***



Prof Stanley



Professor Siminialayi

towards checking the negative trend that portends grave threat to the lives of Nigerians—especially those who are most vulnerable to substance abuse.

Delivering the 108<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled: *Who Hath Woe? Who Hath Sorrow? Who Hath Contention? A Chronicle of the Consequences of Alcohol Misuse and Interventions*, Professor Stanley, who is of the Department of Mental Health, Faculty of Clinical Sciences in the College of Health Sciences, noted that alcohol misuse is the gateway to advanced substance abuse, which has dire consequences on its victims and society in general.

Professor Iyechi Siminialayi of the Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, College of Health Sciences, delivered the 109<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled, *"That It May Be Well With Us: Food as Medicine and Poison"*, stressing the

importance of consuming the right kind of food in the right quantity and quality to live a healthy and longer life.

In the 110<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled: *"Inactive Squares and the Rumbling State"*, Professor Omenihu Nwaorgu of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, charged the Federal Government to be more populist in its actions as they impact on the citizenry, noting that prompt attention and responsiveness to the basic needs of the people's would reduce feelings of alienation and aggression in the people that usually result in the rumbling of the modern State.



Prof Nwaorgu

***Anaesthesia is a rewarding and challenging specialty which combines manual dexterity with intellectual stimulation and is one of the few specialties where decisions made in critical situations can mean the difference between life and death.***





Prof Appah



Prof Mato

## Inaugurating new ideas

Following a moratorium on the exercise, more scholars have delivered their Inaugural Lectures and made recommendations aimed at tackling societal problems in the last couple of months. HUMPHREY OGU and OTKORSAMUEL highlight three of such recent lectures.

**W**orried by the not-so-acceptable quality of some Inaugural Lectures, the University Management placed a moratorium on the series, pending when modalities would be worked out to ensure improved performance. In response, Senate of the University came up with new guidelines to raise the quality of the exercise. The first in the revised series of Inaugural Lectures highlighted here was the 106<sup>th</sup> edition delivered by the Provost, College of Engineering, Professor Dulu Appah, who called for improved engineering education in Nigeria.

Appah, whose lecture was titled, *The Philosophy of Sanding: A Subsurface Production Engineer's Perspective*, said:

"Philosophy is all about thinking. In philosophy you think your way

out of challenges and in engineering, you invent your way out of challenges. The advancement of science leading to discoveries and invention is because of the search by some deep thinkers. National development is led by leaders who are capable of thinking through difficult problems," he observed, explaining that "the crucial term of the route and root of what I have called *The Philosophy of Sanding* is engineering education," he said. Delivering the 107<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture titled, *The Anaesthetist: Working Behind the Scene, Ever-Present, Ever-Watchful*, Professor Christie Mato of the Department of Anaesthesiology, Faculty of Clinical Sciences in the College of Health Sciences, stressed the need to train more Physicians in Anaesthesiology to cater for the needs of experts in the rare medical

specialization that is critical to successful surgical outcomes.

"Anaesthesia is a rewarding and challenging specialty which combines manual dexterity with intellectual stimulation and is one of the few specialties where decisions made in critical situations can mean the difference between life and death," the Professor of Anaesthesiology said, calling on relevant stakeholders to put in place institutional development measures to bridge competence gaps in training and skills.

On his part, Professor of Neuropsychiatry, Princewill Stanley, warned against the menace of alcohol misuse and other forms of drug abuse—especially by young people, calling for concerted efforts



Dosunmu



Sample of the rice. Inset: Dr Efiuse

## Enter new rice variety

*Nigeria's quest for food security received a major boost as a new rice variety known as UPIA was released by the University of Port Harcourt. The new variety was developed in collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the AGRA with Dr Andrew Efiuse of the Department of Crop and Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture as Programme Coordinator and Team Leader. Associate Editor, OBINNANWODIM reports*

Lead scientist, Dr Efiuse, disclosed that the new rice variety was released December last year, has a 38% yield advantage over the local variety. According to him, the variety is distinctive, uniform and stable across all tested environments, with long grains of Grade A, high yielding and resistance to economic abiotic stresses like iron toxicity and drought. He said that "the release of this rice variety will accelerate rice production and income

generation to resource-poor farmers in Nigeria," stressing that "the UPIA variety is of high cooking quality of medium to high amylose content that meet the consumption preferences of Nigerians." The Plant Breeder and Geneticist said that it also possesses good agronomic traits such as resistance lodging, early and medium maturity period and acceptable height, pointing out that it took six years of intensive research work to develop, register and release the

new variety.

Dr. Efiuse who expressed delight over the development said that the next stage is its dissemination to the consuming public. "We are doing this in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Nigerian seed companies and the farmers. The International Network for Rice Genetics in Africa, Rice Centre, Cotonou, Benin Republic is also putting it in the Africa Rice Breeding Task Force for evaluation in all other African countries," he stated.



Prof Ebeku, Dean, Faculty of Law

Legal studies have been long in coming to the University of Port Harcourt as previous efforts aimed at bringing the hallowed profession to reality didn't quite live up to the billing for some inexplicable reasons. But there is now a silver lining on the horizon as both the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Council of Legal Education (CLE), have given provisional nod for the Law Faculty to open in the University. It is cheering news that has been too long in coming; and now it is right here! It is bursrah! Already, two seasoned Professors of Law and a host of other qualified hands are on ground to commence programmes in the emergent Faculty.

New Dean of the Faculty, Professor Kanyi Ebeku, who disclosed that the Faculty is currently partnering the College of Continuing Education (CCE) to test-run a Diploma programme preparatory to the real deal, said that the University was awaiting formal approval from the NUC and CLE to commence full academic activities in September, 2015. He noted that Postgraduate and Undergraduate academic activities would commence in the 2015/2016 academic year, disclosing plans to

distinguish the Law Faculty from others, through provision of quality legal training to students that would stand them out in legal practice and in the larger society. "We propose to distinguish ourselves from other Law Faculties in the country by seeking to specialize in Oil and Gas Law and Environmental/Energy Law. Whereas these options are considered as Elective Courses in other universities, they will be major Law courses and a prerequisite for graduation in the University of Port Harcourt Law Faculty," the Dean disclosed, stressing that quality control measures would be rigorously enforced. He pointed out that the proposal is based on the priority attached to the University as a Centre of Excellence in Oil, Gas and Environmental Studies in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large. As part of his innovative ideas, Professor Ebeku hopes to partner outstanding legal practitioners, related industries and relevant organizations, both local and international to achieve the lofty dreams of the pioneers of the emergent Law Faculty. On staff development, the Dean said that staff would be encouraged to pursue

## Rebranding wig and gown

*The emergent Law Faculty in the University is poised to rebrand the legal profession in Nigeria by producing unique Lawyers, who will compete favourably with their counterparts anywhere in the world. In this interview with pioneer Dean of the Faculty, Professor Kanyi Ebeku, Correspondent, ETHEL TIMI-JOHNSON highlights the unique features of the new Faculty.*

continued legal education as a quality control policy, promising exchange and linkage programmes for students to update them on current trends in legal studies. He added that the Faculty was considering a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom, on exchange of students and staff as a semester basis. Just as is the case with the famous Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS UniPort), the Dean has disclosed that he is determined to carve out a niche for the emergent Law Faculty to make it an attractive brand that would appeal to diverse stakeholders. "The new Faculty will be known for academic excellence as we hope to provide the right training and produce the right graduates for the country. We are poised to train students, who are well-grounded in legal practice and who can distinguish themselves from their counterparts from other Law Schools on graduation," he promised. In accordance with NUC rules on the establishment of Law programmes, candidates who gain entry through the University Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) will spend five years on the programme, before proceeding to the Law School for the mandatory one-year professional training, while Direct Entry candidates will spend a minimum of four years on the programme.





Physically-challenged Photographer, Onyinye Amadi at CCDCD Congress

Cont'd from p33

compassionate and specialized services to help these children grow and develop their full potentials. We intend to put up a customized building, where these children can learn," expressing optimism that the Centre would begin a post-graduate programme in *Communication Therapy and Disability Studies*.

"We are not saying we can handle every developmental disorder, but we know we can handle, at least, 50 per cent of the cases we encounter within our limited resources. We need people to sponsor this project; we are here to give the children hope and I want to leave University of Port Harcourt and the Centre standing tall amongst its peers in and outside the country," Professor Ifode promised.

She expressed gratitude to the immediate past Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Professor Ozomekuri Ndimele, Professor Princewill Stanley, immediate past Dean, Faculty of Education, Professor Ebi Bio Awotua-Efebo and Professor Felicia Eke of the Department of Paediatrics, Professor Onyewuchi Akaranta, Drs. Desmond Nbeta and Ken Anugweje, for their support to the Centre.

In a related development, experts and stakeholders gathered in the University on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 as the

Centre held its 5<sup>th</sup> Congress with the theme: *"Unlocking Potentials for Total Childhood Development: A Guaranteed Future."* They stressed the need to evolve policies and programmes that would enable children with communication disorders to actualize their hopes and aspirations just like normal children.

Speaking during the event, immediate past Director, Institute

of Maternal and Child Health, Professor Alice Nte, stated that children's development involves progressive acquisition of physical cognitive, linguistic and social skills and other attributes, listing lack of awareness, poor data, negative attitudes and lack of access to care and diagnostic facilities, as factors limiting against unblocking of the full potentials of children with neuro-developmental disorders. She identified implementation of the convention on the right of persons living with disabilities, integration of the needs of physically and mentally-challenged children into the general service system, community-based programmes, monitoring and evaluation and research, among others, as a ways of addressing the problem.



A drama scene at the event

Professor Julian Osuji of the Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology is not just an academic; he is also a consummate researcher, whose effort has resulted in many findings. His current research focus could be likened to attempting to kill two birds with one stone. HUMPHREY OGU writes

## Engineering photosynthesis

**A**san academic with deep passion for research, Professor Julian Osuji is always engaged in one research or the other with a view to tackling challenges facing humanity, especially in Nigeria, his home country. He is currently engaged in a dual-purpose research aimed at finding solutions to two major challenges: boosting food production on one hand, and stemming the tide of global warming on the other hand. And he is pursuing both goals with equal zeal.

In an interview with *Unique UniPort* on his return from Sabbatical Leave with the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Osuji disclosed that he is currently working on molecular engineering of photosynthesis. This research, he explained, is

focussing on the use of molecular genetics of food crops to help combat food insufficiency in Nigeria by enhancing the productivity of selected crops.

"I'm interested in tuber crops such as yam, cassava and cocoyam. These are high energy crops that store energy as food. The project being planned is targeted at modifying the method and pathway of photosynthesis from a C3 to C4

pathway," he pointed out, explaining that C4 plants consume more carbon dioxide than C3 plants.

"If there is success in converting the plants from C3 to C4, the resultant plant will extract more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby producing more food. This obviously addresses the themes of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in terms of boosting food production, and achieving reduction in global warming," Osuji disclosed, adding that the effort could also be applied to bio-energy research.

It would be recalled that Osuji has carried out extensive research on pineapple and other staple crops aimed at boosting food supply in the country.



Prof Osuji

**I**t is tempting to think that the Nigerian Centenary award winner and internationally-renowned scholar, who bore the name, Claude Elme Ake, would come with a huge physical frame and walk with giant steps. On the contrary, that awesome intellect was housed in the man's modest physical frame. He wore those round-rimmed glasses that told you right away that here was a serious-minded academic. Although he was admired by many, the late Professor Claude Ake was not the type that hugged crowds. Some would even say he stood aloof from the society he so stridently defended. To be sure, he was at home with his own company and in the company of books. This is why he appeared to be an enigma to many people. He was not the type to talk much, or to many people, about himself; he did not relish that kind of small talk that some people find useful in telling their war stories. But why bother? His work spoke volumes for, and about him.

Ake's intellectual work and energy appeared focused in two analytically distinct but practically interwoven concerns. The first was about the nature of social science as an area of enquiry and as a tool for action in the real world. The second was about the marked underdevelopment of Africa in particular and the third world in general. He was concerned that the former had not achieved so-called scientific status in the sense that the natural sciences had because its major concepts appeared characterized by lack of adequate rigour and low-level abstraction. He was strongly of the view that Politics, Economics, and Sociology did not, each, constitute a separate science. These areas of enquiry constitute a science because they

*Ake's intellectual work and energy appeared focused in two analytically distinct but practically interwoven concerns. The first was about the nature of social science as an area of enquiry and as a tool for action in the real world. The second was about the marked underdevelopment of Africa in particular and the third world in general.*

# Claude Ake

## Social Science to society's rescue

*In his fruitful academic career, ace social thinker and teacher, Claude Ake, bestrode the intellectual world like a colossus. His protégé and Professor of Political Science, EME EKEKWE, resurrects the memory of the great man.*

were concerned with one body of knowledge – society – and each provided only a perspective on this body of knowledge. Besides, each followed the scientific methodology rigorously; none was satisfied with just providing only some description, no matter how elaborate, of phenomena. The true social scientist, he believed, worked with a paradigm that recognized the interconnectedness of these seemingly separate disciplines. His attempts to grapple with these issues yielded a huge academic

output by way of monographs, journal articles, conference papers and books.

Ake's concern with the problems of economic and political underdevelopment was intense and urgent. He saw in underdevelopment a conducive atmosphere for corruption, political instability, dictatorship and the trivialization of democracy, all of which compounded and consolidated the misery of majority of the African people. The late Professor strongly argued for a social science that decolonized itself from the ideologically-inspired concepts, models and interpretations of reality; a social science that was objective and critical, one which uncompromisingly addressed the conditions of poverty and misery

*Cont'd on pp. 9&10*



Prof Yul-Ifole, CCDCD

*Cont'd from p32*

there is not much that we can do to tackle communication disorders from childhood," she pointed out.

She described developmental disorders, as disorders that occur at some stage in a child's development which often retards normal growth pattern in communication, learning,

reading, writing, cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, brain injury, stating that children are grouped into *normal developing and not developing*.

The Director regretted that "children with communication disorders would have done better if the Centre had started earlier. Each child has a peculiar need that should attract

appropriate intervention measures. None of us prays to give birth to children with communication disorders, but they exist in our nuclear and extended families or in our neighbourhood and society has a duty to care for them," she stressed.

"Centres caring for children with communication disorders are

limited, expensive and beyond the reach of the average Nigerian family, which does not have the necessary expertise that can provide for such special children. It is necessary that parents, teachers and caregivers are constantly sensitized on the specific stages of physical, cognitive, behavioural, emotional and social development of the child to check developmental delays and the possibility of preventing such disabilities, as well as seek help for the communication-challenged children to enable them live a productive and independent life," Professor Ifole told our Correspondent.

Speaking on the programmes of the Centre, the Director said: "We have organised four conferences so far and we have been sending experts to the homes of these children to ascertain their wellbeing. The Centre also engages in research, trains people that would be devoted to

*Cont'd on p34*



*A cross-section of participants*





Some dignitaries arriving for the 5<sup>th</sup> CCDCD Congress

## A little kindness to little angels

*In a bid to improve the quality of life for children with special communication needs, the Centre for Child Language and Communication Disorders (CCDCD), gives hope to affected children. Former Director, Professor Shirley Ifode, spoke on what the Centre is doing to achieve its stated objectives. She spoke to **MERCY ADENIJI**.*

**P**rofessor Shirley Ifode, believes that a successful childhood lasts forever and it is the belief of the Centre for Child Language and Communication Disorders that every child with special needs such as developmental delays, disorders or disabilities, should participate in a comprehensive fully-integrated programme in a supportive setting that is devoid of pity and patronage. Director, Professor Ifode said the Centre is an educational treatment organization devoted to providing specialized compassionate services to children with developmental disorders to enable

them grow, develop and evolve to their full potentials, giving them a happy childhood, a life of quality filled with dignity and integrity. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the Centre is based on a philosophy that is based on the fact that children with developmental disorders usually have an overlapping set of difficulties. Most children identified with one developmental disorder or another will be accorded full attention to unleash their full potentials.

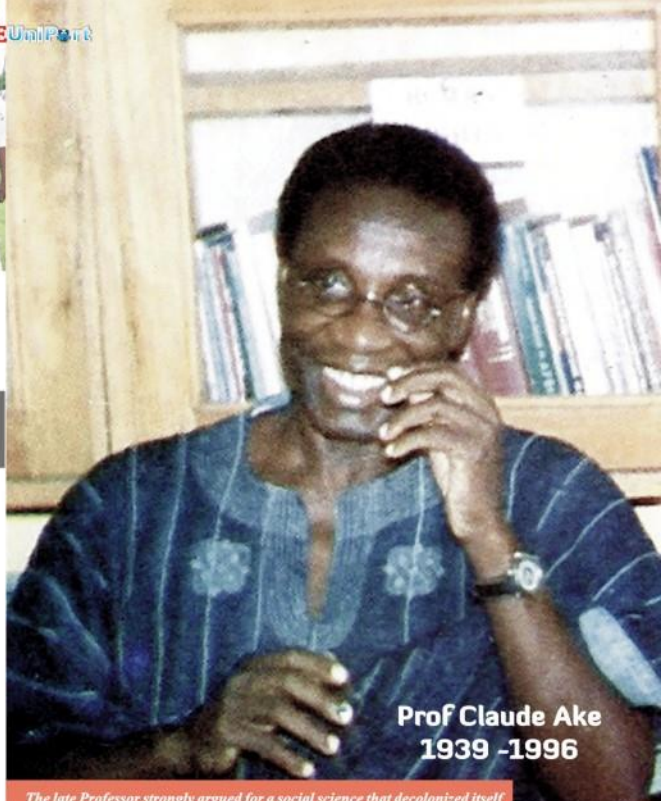
The Director stated that the Centre foresees a reduction in disability and the emergence of a

disability-friendly society, where all persons with developmental disorders would be assisted to lead fully inclusive lives, starting with a happy childhood that lasts forever. Using relevant experts, the Centre is working in partnership with other service providers, relevant professionals, and philanthropists. Non-Governmental organizations within and outside the nation to achieve excellence, dignity and self-empowerment for these vulnerable citizens who are usually left behind.

Professor Ifode, who is also a Lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, noted that Communication covers the child, who is also part of the concern of the Linguist. "Every language is spoken by a group of people and when the language is not used, it dies. There are also people who are not able to use the language naturally, but we reasoned that

*Cont'd on pp.33&34*

*"It is necessary that parents, teachers and caregivers are constantly sensitized on the specific stages of physical, cognitive, behavioural, emotional and social development of the child to check developmental delays and the possibility of preventing such disabilities, as well as seek help for the communication-challenged children to enable them live a productive and independent life."*



**Prof Claude Ake**  
1939 -1996

*The late Professor strongly argued for a social science that decolonized itself from the ideologically-inspired concepts, models and interpretations of reality; a social science that was objective and critical, one which uncompromisingly addressed the conditions of poverty and misery that characterized the African continent.*

Cont'd from pp8&9

that characterized the African continent. By extension, the development paradigm that must emerge would invariably be the socialist and democratic type that embraced the African peasant and worker. It would be a paradigm that facilitates, through its political and policy models and prescriptions, the empowerment of the majority of the people, enabling them to take their destiny in their own hands through democratic processes.

Nor was Ake making these arguments only in conferences and policy papers. As an academic of the Marxist orientation, he understood the need to be engaged with the people whose experiences he attempted to give voice. Initially, he did so only tentatively but gradually he immersed himself in it. He was as much at home in the rarefied atmosphere of the World Bank, Brookings Institution, the corridors of Yale, Columbia, Carleton and other universities, as he was in the rural communities of Rivers State, where he often intervened against state and corporate authorities on behalf of the peasants. He was no arm-chair critic and detached theorist.

As Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, Ake's vision of Social Science at the University of Port Harcourt was that it should be relevant, objective, independent, radical and progressive in orientation. Around this effort there evolved what came to be known as the *Port Harcourt School of Thought*. The Marxist orientation of the Faculty then was clear, but there was ample room for non-Marxist scholars. He very much believed that students should learn from both sides of the ideological divide so that they could remain objective in making their own choices. The only thing the Dean insisted on was thoroughness and depth in research and teaching. It would be right to say that he did not suffer fools gladly. Students in the Faculty were

***As Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, Ake's vision of Social Science at the University of Port Harcourt was that it should be relevant, objective, independent, radical and progressive in orientation. Around this effort there evolved what came to be known as the Port Harcourt School of Thought.***

encouraged to hold and defend their opinions.

The Ake name attracted outstanding scholars from across the West African sub-region and beyond. To help build that intellectual critical mass that crystallized into the *Port Harcourt School of Thought* were intellectual giants such as Professors Ikenna Nzimiro and Kodjo as well as the (then) younger minds like Eboe Hutchful, Mark Anikpo, Kimse Okoko, Julius Ihonvbere and Terisa Turner. Professors Okwudibia Nnoli from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Adele Jinaadu from the University of Lagos, were regular examiners and participants in the frequent Faculty Seminars that were organized under Ake's direction. There were other brilliant minds in the Faculty at the time, who were quite content to pursue and defend their non-Marxist orientation – people like Willie Okowa, Olatunde Ojo, Walter Olor, Ade Salau, Sam Ibadje and Joe Ellah. To the younger academics at the time, Ake often appeared to be a severe critic. But he was just as demanding of himself as he was of his colleagues. The fact is that he simply abhorred intellectual laziness or woolly thinking. Even while he still taught at the University of Port Harcourt, Ake had begun nursing the dream of an academic setting that would afford him the flexibility to combine his theoretical and political/practical pursuit. This dream eventually found expression in the founding of the Centre for Advanced Social Science (CASS) in 1991. In his vision of it, CASS was to be a first-

class research institution that attracted Research Fellows; a think-tank dedicated to applying theory to solve the problems of underdevelopment. Here, the gap between research and engagement, between academics and policy makers, would be closed and the synergy from both camps would facilitate improvement of the living condition of the dominated majority. The impressive research and policy output from CASS under Ake's direction show clearly that he was on course to achieving his vision.

Ake despaired that Africa could not make any meaningful progress because its leaders and academics were wedded to the diagnosis of, and prognosis for the continent's condition as given the point of view of imperialism; they were slavishly following the capitalist paradigm foisted on developing countries by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This, in his view, would only lead to more desperate economic and political conditions, with the resultant descent into barbarism. That worldview and the concepts it yielded had little relevance to the African condition. The only way out was the urgent search for an alternative paradigm that derived from the experience of the African people. Few among the intellectuals and fewer still, if any, among the political leaders, shared Ake's concerns or heeded his warning. Watching what is now going on in Nigeria and several other African countries, it would appear that Ake's thinking was prophetic.



**Nwanze: University Curator**

them; they are not fetish objects as our people believed in the past," she disclosed, adding that today, "art is life and you can keep people busy through the arts. We can bring in peace and create good morals through the arts. The arts are so much in the society and the society cannot do without the arts."

Speaking on her dreams for children, Dr Nwanze said: "I want to organise children's carnivals that would reveal colours that are fundamental to life, organise various schools in the

neighbourhood of the University, put them into groups and teach them how to design costumes, manage floats that would reveal joy and happiness, including themes that may have either cultural or

***"We now mount regular exhibitions to showcase the work of artists in pictures and paintings. People are now beginning to know that such objects cannot harm them; they are not fetish objects as our people believed in the past"***

religious connotations. We also want to organise carnivals, workshops for children, bring them together and teach them good morals, rather than let them stay at home and watch films or roam the streets.

"I am interested in establishing a museum to be known as the *Boat Museum* that would represent Rivers State. I strongly believe that there is need for us to have a museum, a place where people can work into and see works of art and appreciate them. We have the *Arts Village* and my interest is to train people, because we need to help society grow," she revealed.

Dr. Nwanze added that she had shifted her focus to Oil and Gas arts, "I do exhibitions for the oil and gas people these days. I designed the new University of Port Harcourt wrapper. I also believe in encouraging students to develop themselves financially, so I give them part of the money from the proceeds for them to know that they are worth something in society and can also earn a living."

***"I am interested in establishing a museum to be known as the Boat Museum that would represent Rivers State. I strongly believe that there is need for us to have a museum, where people can work into and see works of art and appreciate them. We have the Arts Village and my interest is to train people, because we need to help society grow"***

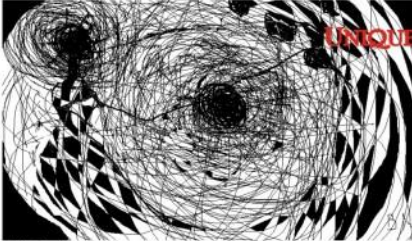


**D**r Bridget Nwanze studied art at different institutions. She has held several positions in the University and was adjudged the best teacher at the Federal Government College, Port Harcourt, where she taught Fine Art for 10 years. Her works have earned her recognition and popular acclaim.

Visual documentation is exactly what she is into as an artist. The propagation of visual arts is through documentation, through which the artist tells the world a story.

Explaining the kind of research she is into, Dr Nwanze said that as an artist, she had tried to bridge the gap between various traditional art forms that were in existence before most of us were born. The colonialists invaded Africa and carted away these priceless art works. Since then, it has become difficult to tell what happened in the traditional era of African art before embracing the contemporary era.

Dr Nwanze explained that instead of letting the art of the people die, she decided to embark on a research of the traditional art of the Aniocha people of Delta State as a means of learning more about their culture and worldview, before,



Spider's web

## Visual documentation

*Art is not just for aesthetic purposes; it is very functional and can be used to disseminate information. Dr Bridget Nwanze, a Senior Lecturer and currently the University's Curator, throws more light on her kind of art. Our Correspondent, MERCY ADENIJI, focuses on her in this interview:*

during and after colonial encounter.

"I am trying to bridge the gap between the various arts in Delta State and I am currently working on the *Ossisa Ifeoluwa Terracotta*—a yam god that is almost going into extinction. I first discovered it when I travelled to Edinburgh; I saw it in one of the museums, so I

got interested in it, though there was no label of any country or artists where it was taken from, it took me one year to trace from where the piece of art was taken," she said.

Dr Nwanze disclosed that when she got there, she decided to take a photograph of the object she saw at Edinburgh, recalling that she later discovered that the object was taken from a small village in Delta State. "Incidentally, I could not see the object there, because the only one that was left was usually buried for safety and exhumed every year for their festival. So far, I have been able to send some of the documentation of this art work to the colonialists so as to have a trace of where the piece of work was taken from," the artist told our Correspondent.

"We now mount regular exhibitions to showcase the work of artists in pictures and paintings. People are now beginning to know that such objects cannot harm

Cont'd on p31

## Ajienka Four years as helmsman

*When Professor Joseph Atubokiki Ajienka took office as 7th Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt on Monday, July 12, 2009; his Inaugural Address dwelt extensively on how to achieve accelerated development of the University. WILLIAMS WODI and OBINNA NWODIM look back at what has been achieved so far.*

**I**n line with Professor Joseph Ajienka's vision of a new up-building on assumption of office, new infrastructural facilities are springing up at several locations on Campus. When completed, these projects and other human capacity-development programmes are expected to enhance the capacity of the University to better serve its numerous stakeholders.

The new projects being put in place are expected to restructure the skyline of the University of Port Harcourt on completion. On assumption of office, Professor Ajienka regaled his audience with breathtaking architectural designs of modern buildings that would create the desired aesthetic appeal and a conducive atmosphere for quality learning and recreation.

Professor Ajienka had a vision of accelerated infrastructural development to address the critical needs of the University and has remained committed to achieving the vision. Four years into his administration, the University is undoubtedly a huge construction site with projects at various stages of completion. So far, no less than 21 projects are currently on-going in the University. It is obvious that by the time these critical projects are completed and put to use, the University of Port Harcourt would witness massive infrastructural

facelift.

For instance, the Central Office complex would provide offices for academic staff, thereby addressing the crying need for office accommodation for staff. The Faculty of Law building would provide the needed working and learning environment for the newly established Law programme in the University, while the Central

Instruments Laboratory is designed to accommodate laboratory equipment procured for researches at a central point that would be easily accessible to relevant Departments. This deft move would enhance effective coordination and efficient use of the equipment.

The Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences would give a big boost to activities in the Faculty as the need for a befitting building has become a necessity. Indeed, the Phase II of the Faculty of Agriculture building which is nearing completion is also expected to boost research in the Faculty. As a matter of fact, the Faculty has been so impressive in its activities, despite its short span of existence. There is no doubt that the classroom block under construction would serve the need for effective learning by students.

The new Faculty of Social Sciences complex would also provide accommodation for the rapidly expanding Faculty, while the massive Animal and Environmental Biology Department building would provide befitting accommodation for the Department. There is also the Faculty of Humanities building designated to be named after

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V-C, Prof Ajienka in a warm handshake with Nigeria's Vice-President, Namadi Sambo



Pollution



Prof Ajienka, V-C

Cont'd from p11

renowned novelist and playwright, Dr. Elechi Amadi, as well as the Department of Music building. The Patience Jonathan Centre for Gender Studies building is also at an advanced stage of construction, as well as the very impressive Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Centre of Excellence building for International Business and

**Professor Ajienka had a vision of accelerated infrastructural development to address the critical needs of the University and has remained committed to achieving the vision. Four years into his administration, the University is undoubtedly a huge construction site with projects at various stages of completion.**

Economics. There is also the College of Graduate Studies building and the Power Systems Engineering complex—all at the Permanent Site. There is the Scinye Lulu-Briggs Children Amusement Park that would provide leisure for children within the University community. It is worthy of note that most of these projects are funded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, apart from the Faculty of Humanities building,

Model Primary School and the classroom blocks. The passion and determination with which the Professor Joseph Ajienka-led administration is pursuing the actualization of these projects is highly commendable. It has been 48 months of intensive construction activities in the University of Port Harcourt, despite the challenges of land encroachment by the host communities, as a result of the non-payment of compensation to the them for the land acquired to set up the University by the Federal Government.

It is expected that in the next 12 months, these projects would have been completed and commissioned for use. When this infrastructural miracle happens, the administration would have made a

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Okara: A worthy pioneer

"you cannot stay at the bank of the river, watch the river flowing and then keep saying: 'I want to swim, I want to swim'." Just jump into the river, and then somebody who knows how to swim would correct your movements and guide you on how to propel yourself forward. Similarly, if you want to be a writer, you have to go ahead to read widely before you start writing. That is not to say you are being advised to imitate. You see how others write

and then develop your own style. It is very important that you develop your own style; otherwise you will be regarded as someone who only imitated others, rather than a genuine writer.

Okara, who won the Commonwealth Prize for Poetry in 1978/79 with his collection of poems, *Fisherman's Invocation*, shares his experience: "It wasn't an easy thing to have achieved that.

**"Before the Commonwealth Prize, I had earlier won the highest prize for the Nigerian Festival of Arts and Culture. I also wrote short stories. I had one of my stories broadcast on NBC, up till then I did not know I could make money from writing."**

That, of course, urged me on to keep writing. It assured me that what I was writing has an impact on people and society and that made me feel that I am doing something good for humanity. My joy does not come from the money. I can't remember how much I got; it was about 500 pounds or so. The feeling that I was recognised among thousands of writers is an honour that money cannot buy."

"Before the Commonwealth Prize, I had earlier won the highest prize for the Nigerian Festival of Arts and Culture. I also wrote short stories. I had one of my stories broadcast on NBC, up till then, I did not know I could make money from writing," says Okara, who was joint winner of one of the most prestigious literary prizes in Africa—the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Prize for Literature with his volume of poems: *The Dreamer, His Vision*, in 2005.

"One of the main things that encourage writers is that their works are being read by people and as a writer when your readers see you on the street and say this is the author of so-so and so book. I read your book. If you write and no one reads, it dampens your urge to write. When you sing and nobody listens, that sort of dampens your urge, even if you have the real talent," he notes, deprecating the dwindling reading habit in the country.

Despite being in the nonagenarian class, Okara has continued to defy ailments associated with old-age; writing and mentoring younger ones. Hear him: "I'm trying to write, though not so fast as before. The desire to write is there. No one stops singing or eating. You sing because you want to sing and eat because you are hungry. You write because you want to write joyous fiction and some of the conflict you encountered in your life. I have written many works in my mind both poetry and short stories."

His latest novel, *The Lion's Dilemma*, was published in the US in 2010.



At 93, Dr. Gabriel Okara, the oldest African writer alive is still very active with his creative muse—writing and mentoring younger writers, reports HUMPHREYOGU:

# Okara Master of the muse at 93

Dr Gabriel Okara, who honed his creative writing skills at Government College Umuahia, began his voyage into the world of published authors in the 1950s. Six decades down the line, Okara, who is now a Writer-in-Residence in the University of Port Harcourt, where he received the *Honorary Doctor of Letters*, in 1982, has continued to fraternise with the muse.

"It all started at Government College Umuahia, where we were exposed to Classics and the modern writers. It was that exposure that made me try my hands at creative writing. I can't remember the exact date, but most of my works were published in the 50s. Then, there was this literary magazine known as the *Black Orpheus*," the legend recalls.

The literary icon affirms that between the 1950s and the present a lot of notable writers with genuine talent and inspirations to write have emerged on the Nigerian literary landscape, observing that "what I think is threatening the emergence of genuine writing is the desire by some of these new generation of writers for publication of their works so that they will be known as authors. I say this because many of them have come to me—they still come to me to read through their manuscripts, write forewords and recommend publishers. But I ask them: How do you know that any publisher would publish your work?"

"Publishers are business people. They won't touch or publish any work that would not bring them some money. I usually tell those whose

manuscripts are not worthy of even being called poetry or genuine fiction that I won't write a foreword for their book, having gone through their works and found out that they are not good enough. That may sound like a very harsh judgement, but I felt I must speak the truth to them about how I perceive their works. If they like, they can take them to other 'senior' writers to hear their own judgement or perception of what they have written," he explains.

Okara observes that most of such budding writers resort to self-publishing, where the writers provide the money to have their works published. "If the truth is not told, these writers would sometimes see themselves as prolific writers. The standards, the quality of literature will go down the drain. I would rather have a few good books of fiction or poetry than to have thousands of books that are worthless," the multiple award-winning poet points out, adding that producers of such works go about rejoicing under the euphoria of being known as authors until they find out that their books don't sell.

The nonagenarian observes that such persons cannot produce something that could be termed works of fiction or poetry since their

main aim of writing was to make money and be known as authors, rather than being driven by the urge to write, stating that "unless your works are good and the publishers sell in thousands and you receive royalties which might put you in the category of writers having produced bestsellers, you cannot become wealthy by writing alone; mind you, writers of such quality are not many."

Explaining that high quality literary works can only originate from the muses, the literary patriarch, whose contributions to African and world literature cut across poetry, prose and children literature, urges budding writers to read, read and read good works. "That is what, we the older ones did. We read the classics; we had no African to look up to as role models. We had to read European literature; some of them were in translations from French, Portuguese and Italian amongst others. In the process of reading, one picks up one or two ideas about what makes good literature and how to read," he says.

"If you are a genuine writer and you have the urge to write, nothing can stop you from writing. Continue writing, if you are naturally talented success will crown your effort. If you are chosen by the muses, you cannot fail. You just write and then experienced writers could look at what you have written and advise you accordingly," the Poet Laureate points out.

Drawing analogy from the river, which is a recurring symbol in his writing, the celebrated author notes:

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V-C and First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan

*To achieve these lofty goals, Ajenka has crusaded for the concept of an Entrepreneurial University that would enable graduates of UniPort capitalize knowledge. Researchers in the University no longer place low premium on their findings in pursuit of publish or perish concept. Staff welfare services have been placed on the front burner in this dispensation, as Unions are enabled to run their own affairs in a democratic atmosphere.*

huge impact in the physical and intellectual development of the University of Port Harcourt.

The Vice-Chancellor also directed immediate review of the Strategic Plan document to bring it in line with emergent realities that were not foreseen at the time of drawing it up in 2003.

Four years in charge, Ajenka has earned favour from fortune and generous human agencies in actualizing his vision and mission statements. His Administration unarguably represents the third wave of institutional development of the University. He has so far operated on three levels: ideas, presence and close captioned

supervision of subordinates, who have been empowered to act freely within extant statutory rules in their areas of responsibility.

The Vice-Chancellor has redefined and deepened the academic culture of the University anchored on the application of research in a Technology Park to benefit researchers and industry players. To achieve these lofty goals, Ajenka has crusaded for the concept of an Entrepreneurial University that would enable graduates of UniPort capitalize knowledge. Researchers in the University no longer place low premium on their findings in pursuit of publish or perish concept. Staff welfare services have been

placed on the front burner in this dispensation, as Unions are enabled to run their own affairs in a democratic atmosphere. By so doing, they too have tested the ingrained assumption that leadership is an easy preposition for all comers.

Ajenka's administrative reputation has soared in the last four years as a solemn metaphor of his quality and unassuming leadership style that embraces all stakeholders. Legions of honour have been heaped on him by discerning organizations in acknowledgement of his numerous achievements. He is currently the Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigeria's Federal Universities (CVC) and Chairman of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU).

We envisage a future that is full of promises for institutional fulfillment; a future that has its roots in the achievements of the present and a future that will deliver the vision and mandate of the University as envisaged by our visionary founding fathers, who started this laudable project in February, 1975. Part of Ajenka's vision for actualizing the future is to place the University in a very strong position to engage in its triple mandate of teaching, research and community service. It is an exciting voyage and together, we will actualize the present and build the future of the University of Port Harcourt in our own unique way that future generations would be proud to associate with. We want to be first in Nigeria, then the world!



V-C and Senator Uche Chukwuemerie

V-C and Pro-Chancellor, Eng. Gert Asanmwe

*"If you are a genuine writer and you have the urge to write, nothing can stop you from writing. Continue writing, if you are naturally talented and success will crown your effort. If you are chosen by the muses, you cannot fail."*

# Pioneer Nigerian-trained nuclear engineers

*At last, Nigeria has joined the ranks of countries with locally-trained atomic energy experts with the graduation of 10 Nuclear Engineers from the University of Port Harcourt. Associate Editor, OBININAWODIM examines the feat*



Some of the pioneer Nuclear Engineers with Professor Okujagu (arrowed)

**B**reaking news of the rare feat to *Unique UniPort*, Director of the Centre for Nuclear Energy Studies, Professor Ayode Kuye, said that it was sequel to the approval granted by Senate of the University of Port Harcourt for the result of the programme, at its 395<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2014, stressing that results of the remaining seven students would be approved at the next meeting. He said that the programme was carried out in collaboration with the University of Maiduguri,

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, and the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with sponsorship from the National Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC). According to him, the collaborating universities developed a joint curriculum for Nuclear Science and Engineering at the Masters Degree level after which they were mandated to run the programme by NAEC, pointing out that as at today, only the University of Port Harcourt has been able to admit and graduate students in the programme.

The Director stated that the programme which was designed to last for 15 months had the students spend a month on registration in the University, after which they proceeded to the Research Centre provided by NAEC in Sheda, Abuja for six months. They thereafter, returned to engage in courses related to the programme and their projects. He said that the resource persons sourced from all over the world were drawn from the three collaborating universities, NAEC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Professor Kuye stated that this development was imperative in the transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, noting that the attempt by the Federal Government to diversify the energy sector of which Nuclear Energy is paramount, will be given a major boost by the graduation of the students. "This would go a long way to improve the country's energy needs as the training of the required manpower in Nuclear Engineering would add impetus to the drive," he stated.

The Director also disclosed that the Centre was already working out a Doctoral programme in Nuclear Engineering at the Departmental level. "Now that we have the Bachelor in Engineering

*Cont'd on p15*

# Achom soprano virtuoso

*Did you not hear my lady  
Go down the garden singing?  
Blackbird and thrush were silent  
To hear that alley ringing...*

*The above evergreen words of German Composer, Frederick Handel, aptly capture the enchanting voice of Ihechi Achom, a Third Year Student in the Department of Music, HUMPHREYOGU writes*

**I**hechi Achom began her journey into the world of singing at age six, when she sang in the children's choir of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in Lagos until the age of ten, when she joined the Winners' Chapel Choir in Port Harcourt. She later enrolled for a degree programme in the Department of Music in 2011. Music was, however, not her first choice as she came to the University of Port Harcourt to seek

admission in the Department of Management. "I love music, but I didn't know it could be studied as a course in the University. I was already on Campus when I learnt about music as a discipline. I got to know that Onyee Nwankpa, who happens to be my uncle, is a professor of music," she explains with gusto.

Achom, whose lifelong ambition is to become a professor of voice, said: "now that I know about music as a discipline, I think I have made the right career choice. If I have to start afresh, I will choose music over and over again. On completion of my first degree, I hope to enrol into the Master's degree here; I believe by then the Department shall have commenced a postgraduate programme. If not, I would like to pursue my Master's and Doctoral degrees abroad." Given her eclectic interest in music, Achom, who has role models in different genres of music, especially classical and contemporary music says: "I would like to sing better than my role models in classical music namely: Sarah Brightman and Cecilia Bartoli," disclosing that Juanita Bynum is her role model in contemporary music.

As a student who hopes to make a mark in the musical world, Achom laments that "most music produced in Nigeria today have lyrics without message; they do not promote moral values, they rather encourage negative values." The talented

soprano singer, who also plays the flute, has a dream to reverse the ugly trend by making people understand the true meaning of music and what it should be.

"I compose contemporary music. I and my younger one are currently working on an album titled: *'Knocking on your Door'*. People refer to kids in our family as *sound of music* because everyone in my family sings; from my parents to my grandparents, everyone sings," says the music prodigy, encouraging music students to be versatile, believe in themselves and avoid seeing any course as being too difficult.

Head, Department of Music, Professor Nwankpa says of the up-and-coming musician: "Ihechi is one of the highly gifted students we have in the Department. She has a very wide vocal tessitura; the quality of her voice is enchanting and captivating."

The above position was corroborated by the exceptional Tenor singer and Lecturer in the Department, Precious Omuku, who describes Achom as "one of the best Sopranos you can find in these parts. The quality of her voice is rare."

Imagine a talented singer being trained by skilled teachers... That's what Ihechi Achom is—an ingenious singer studying under great musicologists. Handel probably had Ihechi in mind when he composed "Silent Worship", the piece quoted above, because birds and thrushes kept mute to hear Ihechi Achom's alluring voice!



Achom



# Maximizing petro-dollar economy

Dr Chijioke Nwaozuru is a petroleum economist, who is very passionate about optimal utilisation of Nigeria's abundant petroleum resources. Nwaozuru, who is a Senior Lecturer at the Emerald Energy Institute for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Policy in the University of Port Harcourt, spoke to our Correspondent, HUMPHREY OGU:

Although, the Nigerian economy has, for some decades now, been thriving on oil and gas; experts, however, believe that the country is far from attaining optimal capacity utilisation of the energy resources, given its huge oil and gas reserves. The perennial problem of petroleum scarcity in the country despite its abundant endowment should be a cause for serious concern for policy-makers, experts and other stakeholders alike. As an institution committed to tackling the crises through research and manpower development, the University of Port Harcourt responded by establishing the Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS) in concert with the IFP

School in Paris, France. In addition to this world-class manpower development institute, more petroleum technology and policy development centres and institutes such as Centre for Gas, Refining and Petrochemicals, Offshore Technology Institute and the Emerald Energy Institute for Petroleum & Energy Economics and Policy have been established with seasoned experts drawn from industry and international institutions as lecturers. Dr. Nwaozuru is one of such experts. He obtained a doctorate degree in Downstream Petroleum Management & Policy from Dundee University in the United Kingdom through a Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) Scholarship. With such credentials, many years of experience in teaching and research in oil and gas management and petroleum economics, there is no doubt that Dr. Nwaozuru is eminently qualified to speak as an expert in petroleum economics.

He regrets that the government-owned refineries located in Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Warri, which have the capacity of refining 445,000 barrels of oil per day, currently operate at 25 per cent of their installed capacity, warning that the licence given to the Dangote Group to establish a refinery that has the capacity to refine 500,000 barrels of crude oil per day is not in the best interest of the country.

Before you ask him why? He declares that the lease would create room for monopoly that could hold the nation's economy to ransom at will, calling on the Federal

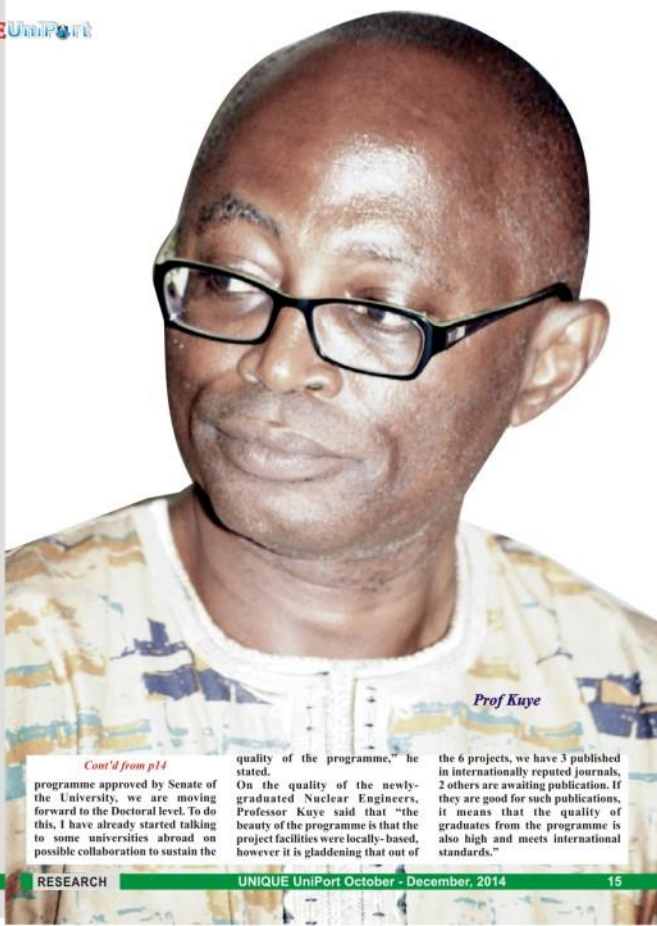
Government to initiate a partnership with one of the oil majors to counterbalance a monopoly situation that appears to be the unintended policy direction of government in the strategic sector.

Nwaozuru, who noted that oil and gas abound in the defunct Soviet Union and parts of China, explained that "the production of these unconventional petroleum resources is progressing at a very fast pace that is devoid of politics as appears to be the case in Nigeria. As the economics of scale kicks in, there would be a progressive decrease in the unit cost of production in those countries. It might, with time, become cheaper than the conventional crude oil that Nigeria currently exports.

"The United States of America, which consumed about 40 per cent of our crude oil has stopped buying crude from Nigeria. As products from China and the Russian Federation increase, there is the likelihood that Europe and other Asian countries may start to import shale oil and gas from those countries, thus undermining Nigeria's legitimate economic and strategic global interest. If India, for instance, chooses to import crude from nearby China or Russia, then we will have difficulty in accessing markets for our crude," Nwaozuru pointed out, adding that this will affect the revenues accruing not only to Nigeria, but other OPEC communities.

"Crude is useless until it is refined; gas is useless until it is piped," he observed, stressing the need for government to urgently commence the building of petrochemical refining plants and encourage any industry that would utilise the country's crude oil and gas, as one major way of squaring up to the challenge to be posed by a looming global oil glut.

"It wasn't raining before Noah built the Ark. The time to start is now. The power sector is going to benefit much from our huge deposit of natural gas. We need to find a way to convert our abundant crude oil to secondary and tertiary products that are saleable both domestically and internationally," Nwaozuru noted.



Prof Kuye

Cont'd from p14

programme approved by Senate of the University, we are moving forward to the Doctoral level. To do this, I have already started talking to some universities abroad on possible collaboration to sustain the

quality of the programme," he stated.

On the quality of the newly-graduated Nuclear Engineers, Professor Kuye said that "the beauty of the programme is that the project facilities were locally-based, however it is gladdening that out of

the 6 projects, we have 3 published in internationally reputed journals, 2 others are awaiting publication. If they are good for such publications, it means that the quality of graduates from the programme is also high and meets international standards."

Dr Nwaozuru



High Chief (Dr) O.B. Lulu-Briggs, OON  
Chair Sponsor

## Roundtable on petroleum geosciences

*Stakeholders in the oil and gas industry address challenges facing the sector as it struggles to meet emerging challenges. Associate Editor, OBINNANWODIM, reports:*



Prof. Odigi, Chair Occupant

A recent Roundtable on Petroleum Exploration, Development and Production organized by the O. B. Lulu-Briggs Professorial Chair for Petroleum Geosciences in the University of Port Harcourt, sought ways to meet the socio-economic and technological challenges facing Nigeria. Participants brainstormed on aspects of the oil and gas industry and reached the conclusion that the sector needs a lot of restructuring to dig itself out of the hole into which it is currently stuck.

For instance, participants stressed the importance of passing into law, the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), currently under legislative scrutiny at the National Assembly, noting that the Nigeria Petroleum Industry is facing threats which may force its total collapse, if the trend is not urgently redressed by policy makers. The Roundtable also identified the alarming level of crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism, as well as the depletion of oil and gas reserves,

with no new major discoveries or investments in exploration, as major concerns to the national economy.

In a Keynote Address titled, "Sustaining Investments and Reserves in the face of growing Challenges," Executive Director, Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), Mr. George Osahon, stressed the need to urgently grow indigenous capacity to boost oil reserves in Nigeria, assuring stakeholders that DPR would continue to encourage the growth of indigenous capacity.

Mr. Osahon, who was represented by Head of Strategy and Value Management, Engineer Alfred Ohiani, stated that, "Our regulatory framework in the Petroleum Industry needs to be reviewed. The current

regulation in Nigeria's oil and gas reserves is a major constraint to its development and is no longer acceptable in the industry," stressing the need for a robust regulatory framework for the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. He identified insecurity in the Niger Delta as a major challenge but, however, commended the efforts of the Federal Government in curtailing the problem through

*If we don't discover the reserves, there will be nothing to produce in future". He said that the passage of the PIB is the only way to stimulate the growth of the economy*

*Cont'd from p24*

with adherence to neither religious liturgy nor creed. Welcome to the intrepid world of a good man without blemish in the hallowed corridors of the academy. This high-profile Professor of Entomology recognises that the powerful of this world need the little ones in our midst to survive in a complementary relationship. To Emeritus Professor Okiwelu, life is not worth living without the desire to extend its benefits to the disadvantaged ones in our midst. He abhors chaos and confusion in the order of things. His sensitive spirit can be explained away on account of his nearness to nature and respect for all men. As a teacher, Okiwelu was passionate about animal population ecology and preservation of the species.

Having watched the competition between insects as they battle to survive in a hostile environment, Okiwelu worked all through his active career to ensure that humans did not destroy themselves through unbridled competition that is based on their inordinate ambition to control the world. As one of his students quotes him as saying 30 years ago, "Intra-specific competition gives way to inter-specific competition in every animal population." Translation: a group of animals, including humans could fight among themselves, but an external attack from another group would always unite the group to face an external attack. As a good and inspirational teacher and leader, Emeritus Professor Okiwelu motivated his numerous students and younger scholars who came under his tutelage to become teachers in their own right.

With over three decades of unbroken quality services to the University of Port Harcourt and the academia generally, Okiwelu unarguably left his bold footprints and legacy on the sands of time for everybody to see. In the words of

one of his protégées, Professor O. C. Umeozor, "In truth, Professor Okiwelu has impacted tremendously on the lives of many people in the University of Port Harcourt more than any other person in the history of this institution." What really drives Okiwelu to high achievement that is acknowledged everywhere? In his own words: "My goal is to facilitate transition from the old to the new status and environment." As one of his latest academic granddaughters, Cameroon-born Dr Adline Noutcha recalls of her mentor's advice, "There were privileges and obligations in professional life that compensated each other..." Discipline took Okiwelu and kept him at the zenith of his professional target.

Whether as Head of Department, Dean of Faculty or Ceremonial President of Senate of the

development endeavours in the University of Port Harcourt. He was also a Consultant to the now defunct Niger Delta Environmental Survey. Okiwelu was a Member of the Governing Council of the University between 1984 and 1990. It is on record that he held the highest teaching load in the then Department of Zoology and its successor, the Department of Animal and Environmental Biology till his glorious retirement from the then Faculty of Science. It is also on record that he published more articles in the post-professorial period of his career as the defining trait of a consummate scholar and great intellectual mentor.

Garlanded with many local and international awards in celebration of his enduring intellectual exploits, Emeritus Professor Okiwelu is a breath of fresh air in the hallowed corridors of the academia and the

*This high-profile Professor of Entomology recognises that the powerful of this world needs the little ones in our midst to survive in a complementary relationship. To Emeritus Professor Okiwelu, life is not worth living without the desire to extend its benefits to the disadvantaged ones in our midst.*

University, Emeritus Professor Okiwelu's unbroken quality leadership in all spheres of academic endeavours glitters on the firmament. Rising to the Professoriate in 1981, he internationalized the University through scholarly publications, editorship of peer reviewed journals, and mentorship of students and scholars from all over the world with whom his golden path crossed in and off the line of duty. He was part of the team that travelled abroad to recruit first-rate academic staff to man various positions in the University.

When the University needed a knowledgeable and incisive expert to power its Strategic Plan Document, it looked no further than Emeritus Professor Okiwelu to chair the project. The document his Committee produced still guides

larger society. He is a great champion of good causes in his belief that less-privileged people do not necessarily have to be connected to people in high positions before they can receive assistance. He has been a Fellow of the Entomological Society of Nigeria since 1996 and was also a former President of the body. He is indeed, an outstanding bridge builder, who sees the entire universe as his primary constituency. His religion is to serve society well and do good in all circumstances. Behold the undisputed grand master of insects!



# Okiwelu

## Grand master of vector biology

*Emeritus Professor Samuel Okiwelu is widely hailed as a renowned Vector Biologist and the unofficial President of the Senate of the University of Port Harcourt, where he made solid contributions in many years of service, reports WILLIAMS WODI.*

*Great men are  
the real men:  
in them nature  
has succeeded*

**M**eet the undisputed father of entomology in Nigeria! Emeritus Professor Samuel Nwabufor Okiwelu is a great intellectual and statesman worth taking interest in for his outstanding contributions to the academia and society. He is a man you can follow naturally without asking why. He is calm, easy-going, personable and ready to help at every turn. He is a great mentor without equal. People gravitate towards Okiwelu simply for his goodness, integrity and milk of human kindness that flows in abundance in his heart.

Search as far and wide as you can; you may need to go the end of the world to find someone who was wronged by Emeritus Professor Okiwelu. Like water, Okiwelu has no known enemies. He comes close to an angel of mercy. He will make Mother Theresa of Calcutta smile in her grave by his unending acts of generosity and mentorship. He is almost a non-canonized saint

the Amnesty programme.

In his address, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, who noted the importance of addressing the challenges facing the Industry, pointed out that, "If we don't discover new reserves, there will be nothing to produce in future". He said that the passage of the PIB is the only way to stimulate the growth of the economy, stressing the need to invest in by-products of the industry in order to provide employment for the teeming youths in the labour market.

"What we are talking about is how to stimulate the oil and gas economy and the PIB is crucial in this regard," he stated, commending Moni Pulo Limited for endowing the O. B. Lulu-Briggs Chair in Petroleum Geosciences in UniPort. According to him, intellectual property resides in the universities, stressing the need to partner the industry for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders to grow the industry. Also speaking, Chairman and Chief Executive of Moni Pulo Limited, High Chief (Dr) Olu Benson Lulu-Briggs, said that the endowment of the Chair is a reflection of the premium the company attaches to education and continuous learning, as well

as the need to create lasting synergies between academic research and practical solutions that would enhance the operations of the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Represented by his wife, Chief (Mrs) Seinye Lulu-Briggs, the Chairman said that "the event brought together constellation of stars in the industry and academia; each one sharing concepts and perspectives that will hopefully shake up preconceived notions and help proffer new solutions that would open up fresh vistas of sustainability and success in the oil industry."

The event also featured plenary sessions with presentations by the Director of Emerald Energy Institute and President of the International Association of Energy Economists and Director, Energy Information Division, Centre for Energy Studies, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, United States, Professor Wumi Iledare, and President, GWEST, Washington DC, Paul Wibbey, who spoke on: "Growing Nigeria's Oil Reserves in Challenging Times" and "Security, Oil Theft, Lost Reserves and the New World Energy Order," respectively.

Technical papers were also

presented by other industry experts and Professor Minapuye Odigi, as well as Dr Ubani Nkaginieme, amongst others.

The panel session, which was chaired by former Vice-Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Nimi Briggs, had former Managing Director of the Nigeria LNG Limited, Engineer Chima Ibeneche; Director, Centre for Refining and Petrochemicals, University of Port Harcourt, Professor Godwin Igwe, Shell Aret Adams Chair for Petroleum Engineering, University of Port Harcourt, Professor Adewale Dosunmu, as well as Managing Director, Weltek Limited, Engineer Pedro Egbe, as discussants.

In his remarks, Chair Occupant, Professor Minapuye Odigi, who said that the theme provided an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the oil and gas industry, expressed happiness that the discussions focused on contemporary issues in the sector. He said that the outcome of the Roundtable would go a long way in helping Government address the challenges in the industry.



Participants after Roundtable Discussion

Emeritus Prof Okiwelu



Some Principal and Senior Officers of UniPort and German delegation

## Partnership in German Studies

*Authorities of the University of Port Harcourt express willingness to partner the German Embassy in Nigeria to stimulate interest in German Studies. OBINNAWODIM reports:*

The emergent partnership was the result of a consultative process between experts in the University of Port Harcourt and officials of the German Embassy in Nigeria. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Joseph Ajienka, who received the visiting delegation, expressed the willingness of the University to collaborate with their counterpart in Germany to actualize the project. He spoke when he received the Attaché for Culture and Press in the German Embassy, Dr. Burkard Weth in the Governing Council Chambers. Represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Professor Ethelbert Nduka, the Vice-Chancellor, who disclosed that German, French, Spanish and English languages were major languages used for communication in the international arena, said that

"Our University is well placed to interact with groups and countries that offer these languages." He said that the University can go beyond this to have exchange programmes that would yield mutual benefits to Nigeria and Germany, including the University, in particular, adding that the University is experienced in such partnerships. Professor Ajienka expressed hope that the visit would be the beginning of a fruitful interaction between the collaborating partners. He recalled a time when the German Language, Spanish, Swahili and Portuguese were taught in the University, expressing optimism that such a golden era would be revived with the new partnership. In his speech, the German Attaché, Dr. Weth, expressed pleasure that the University offered German

language as a discipline, noting that the language is important in many respects, particularly in the international diplomatic arena and scientific research.

Dr. Weth, who observed that political and cultural realities between Germany and Nigeria were developing very well, pledged to encourage German language studies in the University. He stressed that the Embassy would be interested in equipping the University library with books that would enhance the study of the language, adding that authorities of the University should keep the Embassy informed with current developments to enable it keep abreast of events. "As far as collaboration is concerned, we should think about university partnership. We will support you as much as we can," he stated.

Also speaking, Facilitator of the visit, Dr. Aloysius Orjinta, who described the University as properly equipped to offer German Studies and International Relations at the Doctoral level, enumerated steps taken to develop the programme in other institutions, including the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

In their separate speeches, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Aho Akakuru and Professor Boniface Nwige of the Department of Philosophy said that the visit was an opportunity to reinvent German studies in the University, noting that it would help train students in the discipline.

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propel Nigeria and Africa forward to development, in place of wallowing in superstition.

Way back in 1964, Emeritus Professor Nduka had published his combustible seminal book titled: *Western Education and Nigeria's Cultural Background*, which dissected the gaps between Western Education and Traditional African systems of thought, custom and values. The book was a scathing criticism of the Ashby Commission Report, which was an exercise in raw courage at the time it was published. It was a direct attack on the colonial system of educating the African. He introduced the scientific method of enquiry in the Nigerian educational system in furtherance of his long-held belief that Africa's backwardness is traceable to undue emphasis on dogma in place of empirical verification of facts. The rise of Pentecostalism and fake healing by Prayer Contractors is a justification of Emeritus Professor Nduka's thesis that Africans need to free themselves from superstition based on ancestor worship and acquiescence to Western Judo-Christian religion.

Between 1963 and 1965, Emeritus Professor Nduka taught educational philosophy at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he is credited with establishing the subject among Faculty members and students. Between 1969 and 1980, Emeritus Professor Nduka, taught philosophy at the premier University of Ibadan, from where he obtained his Doctoral Degree in 1979. The then Dr. Nduka shocked his colleagues at Ibadan, when he opted to join the services of the emergent University of Port Harcourt in 1980. He retired in 1981 after a glorious career that produced the next crop of



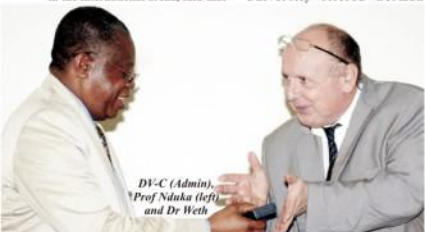
Emeritus Prof Nduka

academics in the emergent Faculty of Education. In 2006, the Professor threw another bombshell in the academic space with the publication of his book titled: *The Roots of African Underdevelopment and Other Essays* (Spectrum Books). This book tended to contradict the likes of Eric Williams (*Slavery and Colonialism*) and Walter Rodney (*How Europe Underdeveloped*

Africa). Nduka was a member of the first Rivers State Advisory Council—a form of Government-in-Exile under the Military Governorship of the then Lt Commander Alfred Diete-Spiff at Queen's Drive, Lagos.

He is also a past President of Ogbakor Ikwerre Cultural Organization Worldwide. Despite retiring from the public service since 1990, Emeritus Professor Nduka remains a highly-sought after Educational Consultant, Speaker at conferences and workshops in and outside Nigeria. In recognition of his admirable exploits in both the academy and the larger society, the University of Port Harcourt invested him with the title of Emeritus Professor on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2012. The cap really fits this teacher of teachers and philosopher.

*Emeritus Professor Nduka had the distinction of delivering the second Inaugural Lecture of the University titled: "In the Socratic Tradition," in which he skilfully laid out his guiding philosophy in the academy—submitting that progression in scientific discovery and technological application would propel Nigeria and Africa forward to development, in place of wallowing in superstition.*



Dr. Weth (Admin),  
Dr. Weth (left)  
and Dr. Weth



# Otonti Nduka

## Crusader for values education

Despite retiring from the Public Service in 1990, Emeritus Professor Otonti Amadi Nduka remains a highly-sought after academic in and outside Nigeria. Dissatisfied with the moral decline in society, this foremost Educationist and Philosopher set up his own Foundation to teach Values Education, reports WILLIAMS WODI

*Knowledge is silver among the poor, gold among the noble, and a jewel among princes* ~ANONYMOUS

A great teacher declares American historian, Henry Adams, affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops. Famous Educationist, John Quincy Adams, submits that to furnish the means of acquiring knowledge is the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon mankind. A good education is a great asset which no misfortune can change; neither can the man with quality education be marginalized for too long in any society. Man transforms into a reasoning savage without wearing the gracious ornament of a well-grounded education.

Some people acquired education for its utilitarian value, while others believe education to be a convention to which they must conform as they wobble and tumble along in school and society. To very select thoroughbred academics, however, education is to be acquired for its own sake and applied to solving teething societal problems and not a means to an end as appears to be the case today.

Emeritus Professor Otonti Nduka, is an intellectual colossus, who has taken the entire knowledge industry as his province as part of his self-imposed mandate to advance learning, enlightenment and leave his little corner of the world far better than he met it in his odyssey on planet earth.

Nduka was not in school to worship what is known; this teacher of teachers went to school to rigorously question the accepted conventional wisdom. He is an implacable enemy of received wisdom and a proponent of progressive ideas. You may not be too far off the mark to call him a non-conforming maverick in the hallowed temple of knowledge and enlightenment.

Totally dissatisfied with the

*Emeritus Professor Otonti Nduka, is an intellectual colossus, who has taken the entire knowledge industry as his province as part of his self-imposed mandate to advance learning, enlightenment and leave his little corner of the world far better than he met it in his odyssey on planet earth.*

unacceptable moral decline in society today. Emeritus Professor Nduka took to gravitas by establishing his own Foundation for Values Education, aimed at rallying the country to the moral barricade to end the decline in national values that has turned Nigeria into a laughing stock around the world. A senior Fellow and immediate past President of the Nigerian Academy of Education, Emeritus Professor Nduka has been a high-profile Consultant at all levels of the educational ladder, as well as a Member of the Governing Board of both the National Commission for Colleges of Education and the

Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). This Cicero in the hallowed corridor of the academia is currently Chairman of the Rivers State Quality Assurance Agency. The Otonti Nduka Foundation for Values Education has mounted high-profile conferences, workshops and seminars; initiated enlightenment programmes in the print and electronic media and reached out to schools at all levels with the message of moral rearmament in society. The

Foundation has so far published three books and raised the moral tone in social discourse.

Emeritus Professor Nduka was the pioneer Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of

Port Harcourt from October, 1980 to September, 1984 and from 1988-1990. He was appointed Director of the emergent Institute of Education of UniPort from October 1984 to September, 1988. Emeritus Professor Nduka had the distinction of delivering the second Inaugural Lecture of the University titled: *In the Socratic Tradition*, in which he skillfully laid out his guiding philosophy in the academy—submitting that progression in scientific discovery and technological application would

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## UniPort joins NgREN network

Represented by the Minister of State for Education, Chief Ezeibunwonyes Wike, President Jonathan reiterated the resolve of his administration to transform the Education sector. He said that the initiative was aimed at boosting research and intellectual cooperation among universities in the country, hoping that participating universities would make the best use of the opportunity afforded by the important project.

The University participated in the NgREN project at the conferencing via live video conferencing at the Conference Room of the Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICTC).

Confirming the functionality of the facility while speaking to Minister of State, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Igbo Joe, who is the project Focal Officer for

*Barely two months after the University hosted the Port Harcourt Cluster Workshop of the Nigeria Research and Education Network (NgREN), the priced facility has become fully operational with its launch in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory by the President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan reports OBINNANWODIM.*

UniPort, commended the President, the Federal Ministry of Education and the National Universities Commission (NUC) for the initiative, appealing that the project be sustained to meet the objective for which it was set up.

It would be recalled that the Nigerian Research and Education Network collaborated with the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU) to sensitize stakeholders which comprised Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Academic Planning, Directors of Information and

Communication Technology, as well as Directors of Research on the possibilities and opportunities that the Research and Education Network (REN) presents, with the hope that the universities would forge a common front to properly utilize the Network.

With the latest development, University of Port Harcourt has joined 121 other universities connected to the facility that would enhance cross-fertilization of knowledge for improved research and learning.

The University is the centre for South-East and South-South zones

# New face of Engineering

## Technology • Economics • Environment

The study of Engineering has grown in leaps and bounds in the University. Our Correspondent, OTIKOR SAMUEL tracked down the pioneer Provost, Professor Dulu Appah, who spoke about the restructuring programme and future of the College.

We would like to know when you assumed office as Provost of the College?

I assumed office as Provost of the College of Engineering on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The College of Engineering is an upgrade of the defunct Faculty of Engineering. The whole idea of the College is to expand and upgrade the Faculties. Right now, we have a College, a Provost and three Faculties. The College has a number of Centres and Institutes. Before now, we had Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and a Department of Petroleum and Gas Engineering, so we have demerged Electronic from Electrical. We also demerged Gas from Petroleum and Environmental from Civil Engineering. These are the new creations which have gone through all the processes of creating new Departments and programmes that have been approved. We have also appointed Heads of Department. The purpose of the College as against the Faculty is to be able to harness the potentials that we have, take advantage of the fact that we are in the Niger Delta which is a gas province with pockets of oil and render service to the community. I want to say that before now, the vision has been that of teaching, research and community service. We have moved into the second stage of the vision which is research and the College is supposed to conduct applied research that would enable us source funding to support institutional growth which is the third mission of the University. Today, we talk of an Entrepreneurial University; that is the third stage in the development of the University and when we talk about Entrepreneurial University, we are not just talking of people going to make money, but people being self-sufficient on their own.

Can you explain further?

We want to move from research through development and wealth creation through

knowledge. So that is the whole purpose of the College of Engineering. We have so many Centres and Institutes under the Institute of Petroleum Studies which was established in 2003; we have the Centre of Petroleum Geosciences, Offshore Technology Institute, we are in the Niger Delta where we are surrounded by marine and aquatic environment and we want to take advantage of that and improve aquatic life and animal life and ecosystem studies, etc.

We have the Centre for Occupational Health, Safety and Environment and there we are looking at job hazard, the safety of personnel and environment because what we do hinges on a tripod – technology, economics and the environment. The problems we had in the Niger Delta were partly based on environmental neglect and so we are focusing on environmental issues and the health of the workers in the Niger Delta.

We have the Centre for Gas, Refining and Petrochemicals. We are at the centre of industry and so what we want to do is to be able to meet the demands of industry. This University by virtue of its age and number of professors should be an exporter of human capacity, manpower to the Gulf of Guinea. Before now, we had Petroleum only in the Niger Delta. But now, there are so many countries that produce or have found petroleum: Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone and we are developing partnerships with a number of the universities to support them and further enrich our experience.

We are training their manpower at the PhD and Master's levels. Over there, we have established Departments, so the whole idea is to make ourselves more relevant as an Entrepreneurial University.

You talked about research which is part of the core mandate of the University. Can we know how the College has fared so far in that component?

Now we have a World Bank research facility which is a Centre of Excellence for the whole of Africa to do research. A number of universities bided, we are fortunate to have the centre for petroleum research. Prospective Candidates from

different countries have applied and we are to train them. We have been given a number of Master's degree and PhD targets to attain every year for a period of five years.

The Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) wants to build and equip an LNG centre. We want a partnership whereby, they don't just come here and dump things on us; we want to be able to service those things so that there can be maintenance culture, so we can offer services to them and be paid for those services. The industry would come here to teach and co-supervise with us, while we would partner them to solve industry problem.

We have a number of academic and research Chairs in the College: the Shell-Aret Adams Chair in Petroleum Engineering, Emmanuel Egbogah Chair of Petroleum Engineering, PTDF Chair in Gas Engineering, Ch. Ikoku Chair in Petroleum Engineering, Malam El-Rufai Chair in Engineering Management and Enoch George Chair in Geotechnical Engineering. Taken at the full tide, these Chairs would transform the College into a centre of excellence in engineering and technology.

If you want to speedily grow an economy and also increase GDP, you must know that technology is the game changer. We want to train specialists that would be balanced engineers, balanced artisans, balanced technologists who have ideas of the humanities also.

With the number of Chairs, Centres and Institutes you have mentioned, what are the research outcomes?

The issue is that we are beginning to have results. Now we have developed Wellbore Stability Software from the Shell-Aret Adams Chair that Shell is using. We are signing a Memorandum of Understanding on it and research is a long-term project which takes time to yield dividends, but we are making progress. Our students are all over the place and the determinants of success of any programme is if the graduates are employable.

In this University, we have the highest number of Professors in Petroleum Engineering in Nigeria and West Africa. We have eight Professors of Petroleum

Engineering of which six are here in the Department that is the strength of the University and College. There are professors in specific areas, but we have professors in all the disciplines in Petroleum Engineering which gives diversity to experts who come here. We have a number of staff on staff development programme on TETFund, PTDF, NDDC and some who went on part-time programmes that just returned. We have been able to attract sixty more new academic staff to the College and our goal is not only to attract, but to also retain staff.

On assumption of office, what was your vision for the College?

I assumed office at the time the College of Engineering had just been approved. My vision was to establish the College, make sure we start a College of Engineering building, expand existing programmes and consolidate on our areas of specialization. One year into my tenure, we have done very well. One thing is you must be a leader who listens to others and brings people together. Our programmes have started well.

Which other targets have you set for yourself?

Our target should be yearly and achievable; in the year to come our vision and mission would be to attract needed resources for research because emphasis now is on entrepreneurship research. The job of the Provost is to go fund-raising and attract resources, and ensure staff development.

What are your future plans for the College?

The College would still be an exporter of highly qualified manpower to the Nigerian economy and international workplace. The foreseeable immediate and medium-term challenge facing the College of Engineering is the absence of a befitting College complex. The complex would house all Faculties, Departments and Units. The accomplishment of this task would be a historic landmark. All hands must be on deck – the University, College, Alumni, Industrial and Collaborative partners, students and staff to realize it.



Prof Appah, Provost, College of Engineering