

# Senator Tunde Ogbeha, mni

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## TRIBUTE TO PROF OLUGBEMIRO JEGEDE AT 60

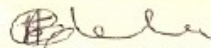
On behalf of myself and my family I congratulate my brother and friend, **Prof Olu Jegede** for attaining the symbolic age of **60** and still counting. I welcome you to the prestigious club of senior citizens and pray that Almighty God will continue to guide and protect you in the years ahead.

Yours has been that of a humble beginning rising through the ranks to the pinnacle of your chosen profession, through hard work and faith in God. My understanding of Olu since I met him over 30 years ago reminds me of his dedication to his family, hardwork, honesty, patriotism and always striving for the best. He is my role model and also to many.

He has put in energetic services in **Ahmadu Bello University, Australia, Hongkong and National Open University as Vice Chancellor**. The story has been consistent. He showed hardwork, dedication and honesty. He is an icon to many students and staff. In spite of his world exposure in the academic world he never forgets his cultural root. He brought up his children in the culture of his native **Ogori**. He is committed to the service of God by making out time in his involvement in church activities and his numerous generous contribution to the church. **Prof Olu Jegede** is an accomplished academician and family man who has excelled in all the assignments he is privileged to have headed through dint of hardwork, honesty and dedication.

It is my fervent prayer that, God in his infinite mercy grant him good health, long life, blessing, protection and the grace to continue to serve humanity.

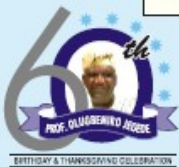
Happy Birthday and Celebrations.



Tunde Ogbeha, **CON** mni

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## Tribute Letter to the Family: MR. ADETUNJI ODENEYE

Dear Emaese

You and your siblings asked me to do a two-page write up about your dad, my good friend, Olugbemiro Johnson. I fondly call him Olu. I have so many things to say but I am conscious of the fact that you have constrained me to two pages!

How did we become friends?

Your dad and I were privileged to attend the then prestigious university- Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. He studied (Biology) Education while I was in the Social Sciences (Economics). We became closer when we were posted to the old East Central state of Nigeria (now broken up into five states Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi) for National Youth Service. We were in the camp together and we also travelled round Igboland together for many days. On our primary assignment posting, he got the teacher's privilege and went to Alvan Ikoku College in Owerri while I was sent to a village two hours (and one canoe ride) away on the bank of Imo River. I spent time in and out of the accommodation he and a few others were given to relieve me of the boredom of village life and also used the opportunity to shop in Aba for some things. When we passed out, he simply just returned to academics while I flirted for about two months with central banking. Actually I found I could not cope with the hectic Lagos life, especially with all the traffic, and spoke to him. He said my appointment was still valid in Zaria. At that point I decided to leave Lagos to be in Zaria. Of course he was there to guide me and assist me to settle down and as you know we shared a flat in Gellesu area of Zaria. Our living together brought me in contact with many Ogori citizens and I came to admire their serious attitude to work and business and the way God had placed them in wonderful positions in academia and the professions. Needless to say, your dad found me worthy to be his best man when he and your late mother, Felicia, got married in July 1978. It was a beautiful wedding in Zaria and I was not to match your dad until ten years later! In fact I had the privilege of staying with the young couple for a few weeks before I travelled to the UK to study accounting. Your dad was kind enough to help me sell off my VW Beetle car and pay the money to my account. No sooner had I left that he came on a two year scholarship to Cardiff for his PhD. During that time, he would often come to London to see me and I would reciprocate by going to Cardiff to see him.

One thing I remembered vividly was your mum arriving in the UK with your older sister Itiovie and my going to see them off to Cardiff on the way to visit your dad. It was again a great privilege your dad had granted me. I suppose it took another three years or so for me to see you and your sister again in Area C where you were living when your dad returned to ABU. Your dad in late 80's decided to emigrate to Australia and later came for you lot after Moto was born. The rest of the story you know.

Who is Olu?

Like any human being he has his good and bad sides. We all do. What we are all striving for in this life is to shed the ugly and put on more and more of the beautiful or, as we Christians prefer, "to put off the old man and put on Christ".

Your father is very friendly. He likes to make friends. I can give many instances of this but the biggest one to me is how he has made me a friend of many Ogoris, whom I'd not ordinarily have been friends with. For instance I know all of your dad's big uncles, half siblings, cousins etc and I still ask after them. He is not just an Ogori person; he is a pan-Nigerian. He has friends in many parts of the country. I suppose his friendliness has to do with two things in his history- the work with the military school and the opportunity of attending ABU. But really, I think it is a gift he has from God.



## Tribute Letter Continued: MR. ADETUNJI ODENEYE

Your dad is generous. From the time we lived together in Gellesu to this day, he has always been ready to touch people. Many of your uncles and cousins and near relatives regularly came to visit or stay with us for a lot of the time we were in Zaria. Even after he came back from the UK, he still harboured them, which I noticed when I spent about two weeks studying in Zaria for my local professional exams. I sometimes wondered how your mum coped with the near-constant stream of visitors and invitees. But, of course she herself was a mighty host.

Your dad is diligent. He worked hard at all the things he did- academic, social or a project. He always had foresight and was always planning everything with a keen attention to detail.. Whatever he laid his heart upon to do, he did it to the best of his ability. I suppose this attribute helped him a lot in his sojourn in Australia and Hong Kong, so that when he was called to manage the National Open University, he was always miles ahead of the people working with him. In fact, some of them had at one time or the other asked me indirectly to tell him to slow down because he was too fast. I did, despite knowing that doing so would only serve to make him even more of a “workaholic”!

Your dad is a traveller. I was shocked the day he phoned me and said he was in Australia! I just exclaimed back at him- “Australia?!” I remember wondering how he’d managed to go that far and how he could stay so distant from his kinsmen. Yet even there they went to see him or he arranged for one or two to attend university there. He is a traveller. I wonder how he managed all those trips within and outside of Nigeria, to Africa, Asia and America all in pursuit of the best for the NOUN.

Your dad is strong in heart. Do you know that your mum and sister spent the night before they departed Lagos for Benin and to glory in our house? They both shared prayers and meals with us and the driver came for them that the next morning. They stayed with another family before setting out to Benin and then... home. I did not know they were saying bye. Someone came to my office to break the news and I told the man to go and check carefully since both of them just left my house and had no expectations that they’d meet an accident in Nigeria. Your dad called me that afternoon in my office to confirm the news. Somehow he trusted I would tell him the truth. I told him someone had come to say something of the sort and I had asked the man to check carefully. I could not bring myself to believe the news was true but he had heard from many sources. From that time it was a fast flow of events. He took everything stoically though he later confided to me the many nights he spent crying, wondering what he would do with you and your siblings. How would he cope? But God has been faithful.

Olu is helpful. If you mentioned an issue you needed to handle and he could not assist, he would search his repertoire of friends and contacts and ask you to see this person or ask for this person to ensure you got what you needed. When he came back from his rather long foreign sojourn, I observed he resumed contact with and helped so many old friends and they were quite enough to let him settle fast into the chaotic pace of Nigeria.

He always wants to keep in touch. I remember each time he travelled to Ogori from Zaria, he would branch many places and greet many people- friends and relations- on the way in and out. He would buy things on the way and give out on arrival. He still does this, though of late the nature of his work especially at the NOUN has forced him to be less intense but I am sure he still found the time to do this on his many travels. Sometimes he would tell me that he saw this person while he was travelling. I marvel at how he does it, but I suppose that is one of his rare gifts from God.

I could go on and on.....but above all I admire his dogged spirit. He has always been intensely focused. A couple of times he would speak to me saying he wanted to quit (NOUN) and I would say no and encourage with some counsel. I am glad he left his last posting with a lot of accolades.

I am glad that God answered the many prayers I made to Him concerning Olu.

Sincerely, Uncle Adetunji Odeneye



**Prof. Olu Aina OFR**

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Wednesday, March 14, 2012

His Excellency  
**Prof. Olu Jegede**  
Secretary General and CEO  
Association of African Universities  
Accra  
Ghana

My Dear Brother and Friend

**Congratulatory Message**

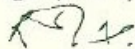
It is with heartfelt joy that I join other well wishers in congratulating you on your 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary. The attainment of this golden age is of great significance as it marks a new beginning in a life time. It is a milestone for praises and adoration to the Almighty God who has bestowed on you such enormous blessings and divine protection that have seen you through to this date.

It is worthy to note that you are, and remain an international treasure, an icon of hope for our country, and inspiration for many. Your notable contributions in enriching the educational landscape, especially at the higher level and beyond the borders of Nigeria as well as affecting knowledge into the lives of many through sharing can never be erased time immemorial. This is not to talk about your doggedness, and your focused approach in moving men and materials to achieve set goals, and your knack to reach out unceasingly.

The occasion of your birthday, and the opportunity to congratulate you remind me of the times we have shared, and the mutual respect which have attended our relationship.

On behalf of myself and my family, I wish you more prosperous years ahead, and further pray that the good Lord will continue to shower His blessings and benevolence on you and on your family.

Once again, hearty congratulations to you, Olu.



**Prof. Olu Aina, OFR**



# Olu @ 60: Still Sizzling

An Ode to **Professor Olugebmiro Jegede** at his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration

By

**Professor Paul Omojo Omaji**

*Vice Chancellor Salem University, Lokoja*

Your Excellency, Chief Professor Olugebmiro Jegede (we fondly and simply call you Olu), this 60<sup>th</sup> birthday has met you still sizzling in all spheres of life.

My thought of you at 60 conjures the image of a man who is diligent in all his ways. As the Holy Scripture proclaims, such a man “will stand before kings; He will not stand before mere men” (Prov 22: 29). Your life exemplifies this inspired saying.

Recall that not too long ago, the Anglican Communion of Ogoriland (your birth place) perceptibly presented to you a **Nehemiah Award**, with which I fully identified. I did that because that unique Award recognized you for what I have come to believe about you: your manifest credibility, your service as a leading light in the various organizations where you had worked, and your being a professional who devoted his skills, talents and resources to the services of the Almighty God and mankind. The Award also attested to the fact that you displayed indisputable excellence in word, thought and deed; and that you met universal and timeless standards by the sheer volume and nature of your contributions in life.

I had the rare privilege of offering some comments for the documentary that was prepared for that Award. In those comments, I drew significant parallels between you and the Biblical Nehemiah. Like Nehemiah, you are a builder of things that matter for individuals and nations; a restorer of abandoned/lost glory giving hope to the next generations; and a dedicated promoter of open education designed to turn around destinies of people young and old. And like Nehemiah, you have done all this, while rising above personal tragedies that would have condemned the less diligent and the less resilient to the dustbins of history.

Many are personalities who never worked as hard as 50 percent of what you have done in life, and at 60 were already vegetating. But not you. You are as active physically, sharp intellectually, and caring interpersonally, today at 60 as I encountered you over 30 years ago. Permit me to refer to Australians with whom you and I are connected. They remember their departed soldiers,



among other things, with these words: "Age shall not weary them". With very high respect for the solemnity of this remembrance, I can say we have in our midst a professional and an accomplished gentleman at 60 whom age has not wearied.

Even more remarkable, especially on this auspicious occasion of your 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, is that you had suffered a potentially debilitating personal tragedy when your beloved wife and your first daughter passed away in a ghastly motor accident when both of them visited Nigeria from Australia in 1996. Without notice, you were left with four children all of them at ages when they still needed a mother to help them navigate the vicissitudes of life.

Remarkably, you single-handedly brought up these children, stirring them through life like a divine agent. Today, these children have become assets to nations. They remain a testament of your manifold gifts and strength of personality. As in your professional life where you had the privilege of being one of the few academics in the world with two professorial elevations in two distinct academic areas of learning, you have also admirably achieved two personal elevations in two distinct social areas of fatherhood and motherhood.

Fifteen years after the passing of your wife and mother of these children, you got joined to another lovely woman as your lawfully wedded wife - with whom now your home continues to serve as an anchor to these wonderful children.

Olu, as we celebrate this 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with you, I join many others to say that you have indeed distinguished yourself above your fellows. I recall what the Psalmist said of Jesus Christ (no equality intended): "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps 45: 7). Heavens will continue to smile on you.

Your current role as Secretary General of the Association of African Universities - a continental academic body with oversight and capacity building functions for both public and private universities in Africa - involves you criss-crossing the whole world as a man of productive action. This leaves no one (not even the doubting Thomas) in any doubt that at 60 you are still sizzling!!!

Bravo to you, our 60 years young Nehemiah and international icon!!!. Enjoy your 60<sup>th</sup> birth year.

God bless.

## ***Tribute from Mr. Edmund Agyekum***

My relationship with Olu started many years ago when I was acting as his financial adviser. From this initial professional relationship a strong and enduring friendship has developed, and I now consider him to be one of my closest allies.

Olu is a man of great integrity and intellect. He has dealt with enormous adversity in his life, particularly with the death of his wife, daughter, and in laws, and yet he has found the strength and drive to continue and has devoted himself to bringing up his family. They, in turn, are an enormous credit to him, each of them having carved out successful and accomplished professional careers. I am honoured that he and his family refer to me as “Uncle Edmund” and have embraced me as one of their own.

Olu has stood by me in times of great joy and great sadness. I have very fond memories of the wonderful 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations he organised for me in 2008. I was also deeply moved when he flew from Nigeria to be by my side at the funeral of my youngest daughter, Melanie, who died tragically from leukaemia.

There is not much more to say except Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Professor Jegede! Your achievements so far speak for themselves and I have no doubt you will continue to be successful in your role as Secretary General to the Association of African Universities.

I wish you many more years of good health and prosperity.

Your faithful “Uncle”

**Edmund Agyekum**





## CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO A DEAR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE AT 60

First and foremost, on behalf of myself, my family and the entire Nigerian University System, I wish to heartily congratulate Professor Olugbemiro Jegede on the occasion of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

Birthdays come once in a year and I know some of us do not pay much attention to it. But when the Almighty God grants a man the grace to witness his 60<sup>th</sup> year on planet earth, it becomes a cause for thanksgiving and celebration. Therefore, this momentous occasion of Professor Jegede's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary affords me a good opportunity to say a few words about this dear friend and colleague of mine whom I have known for the past twenty years.

Professor Jegede is one of those rare breed academics with exceptional intellectual capacity. His impressive array of academic and professional accomplishments bears a strong testimony to this fact. With integrity and a profound love and passion for excellence he has served and continues to serve his country, the continent of Africa and humanity at large. Little wonder then that higher responsibilities always come calling at his doorstep in the wake of one national or international assignment. His footprints will ever remain indelible in the history of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), nay Open and Distance Education in Nigeria.

He is one jolly good fellow whose abiding faith in the Almighty God has seen him through one of the greatest storms of life. I pray that the Almighty God will grant him higher heights, greater achievements, sound health, and long life. Congratulations once again.

From:  
Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede  
Vice-Chancellor University of Ilorin  
&  
Chairman, Committee of Vice Chancellors/  
Association of Vice Chancellors of Nigeria Universities (CVC/AVCNU)



## Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede.

My first contact with Prof (Chief) Jegede was in 1986 in late Chief Oki's house at Ilorin. I walked up to Prof without much of courtesy and I told him I have finished my A-Levels and I needed to further my education. He told me tersely to come over to Zaria.

I got to Zaria and made minimal follow up in respect of my admission and I left without leaving a trace behind. My admission came through, but he could not locate me because i did not leave any contact address. Consequently, I lost that academic year.

In 1987, as he was on his way out of Nigeria on international appointment he kept tab on my admission request from far away Australia, through Dr George Kwanashie with whom I guessed he had a lot of goodwill. I got the admission into the university that year.

My story is the same for many Okuro Egben (1) as Prof ushered me many times into his Aran (2), in Zaria in the 80s. He says amon-sonma (2). He connects and made me remember that Uwuro (3) that quenches the thirst of patched throat of a village boy and my soul got fattened. As I take a deep pause and reflect, you cast uri (4) of unini (5) that hold me captive to my father's land (Oko) (6)  
Prof Jegede

Oko Uloko (The symbol of Ogori heart)

Oko edayen (Symbol of Ogori wisdom )

Oko ete (Ogori gene)

Oboro no leme-sena (The little sparks of past deeds)

Ashe nera gayin (as turned to a bon fire of goodness)

Akon usiye ti yo osen oyara na (as you dance in the village square)

Tabale wose (we are learning how you do your dance steps)

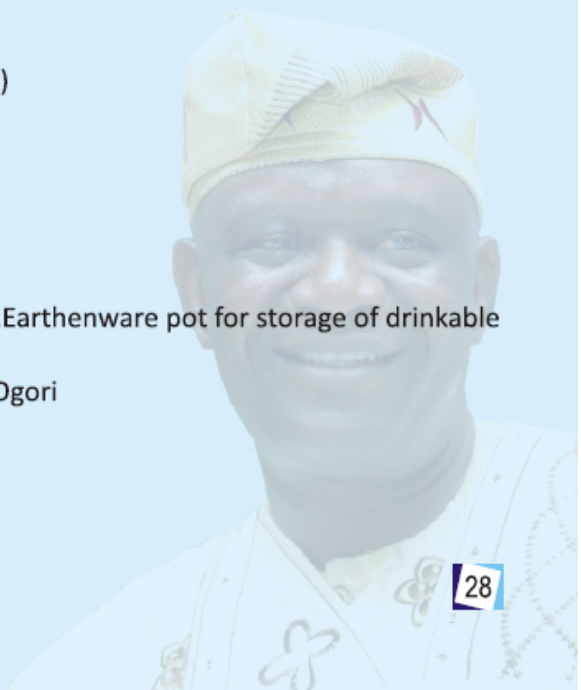
Kegolo (dance regally)

Kebogbon (you deserve it)

### Footnotes

1. Ogori kindrel 2) Aran. Hut 3) Uwuro.....Earthenware pot for storage of drinkable water.

4) uri.....Shadow 5) Unini.....Love 6) Oko.....Ogori  
From David Makanjuola



## FAMILY TRIBUTE & MESSAGES

Dear Brother,

On behalf of ALL of us, (Folorunsho, Lanre, Femi & Dorcas), we want to wish you a very Happy 60th Birthday. We all rejoice with you as our eldest brother even as you mark this special milestone. We are very grateful to God for keeping you till now.

We also pray God Almighty will grant you long life with many many more years to come, full of good health and blessings in Jesus Name.

Here are two songs we like to sing for you:

Happy Birthday to you.. Happy Birthday to you.. Happy Birthday Dear Brother, Happy Birthday to you! Ena taka gami Jesu eba ti'me din. Ena taka gami Jesu eba time din. Usiye 'gan ti gumekuten ro ededa. Ujo gegwe tefo wiruru po ededa.

Once again, Happy 60th Birthday. We love you.

- 1) Col(Dr) Folorunsho Jegede & family
- 2) Dr Lanre Jegede & family
- 3) Dr Femi Jegede & family
- 4) Arch(Dr) Dorcas Jegede-Ayeni & family