

Citation for Kayode Olule

The awardee served under two past chairmen as ICOBA Europe's general secretary from 2011 to 2015. Like most old Igbobians, he was appalled by the poor standard of education at Igbobi College. He served with the conviction that if it was at all possible, he was going to give his utmost and use the association as a platform to make a positive impact on the quality of education at Igbobi College. He was a firm believer in the fact that any money or donations made to our alma mater had to produce the desired effect of improving the educational outcomes of the students at Igbobi College. During his tenure, he was instrumental in convincing the then executives to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning at Igbobi College, thereby influencing the outcomes of the students in a positive way.

He wasn't just a general secretary who wrote and sent out minutes. In an association made up of all volunteers with busy jobs and businesses and competing ideas and interests, he was proactive, versatile, thorough and 'in your face'. He encouraged other non-elected members from the wider ICOBA membership to help out in planning committees and tirelessly worked to ensure that members from younger sets participated in the running of the association. At a time when relations between ICOBA Europe and ICOBA international were not where they needed to be, he worked tirelessly to build bridges between the two arms of the association. He successfully liaised and networked with ICOBA international, ICOBA North America and the then Principal and Board of Governors of Igbobi College, including visits to Nigeria, all at his own expense.

There was no decline in the quality of his commitment or his service whether he was away in Nigeria for months or busy with his private business in England. ICOBA Europe does have a written constitution. However, this is hardly referred to or consulted whenever he is around. This is because he is a walking/moving/roaming ICOBA constitution on demand. Dr. Sola Odemuyiwa (past chairman of IcobA Europe) referred to him as the 'engine and engine oil' of the association. He was a 'one man network' who still had the skills and humility to be a valuable team player. It is a testament to his success as general secretary and a Noble Nigerian that the association was able to provide a week's professional training for the leadership and teaching staff of Igbobi College in 2014. The association was also able to successfully organise two fund raising dinners and three family retreats during his tenure.

Typically, he was always prepared to help behind the scenes or on the frontline, wherever he was most needed. Over the years, ICOBA Europe has benefitted from his dynamism and superb organisational and coordination skills. He was also instrumental in cultivating a healthy partnership between the Nigerian secondary schools in Britain through his involvement in the organisation of the initial NSSFF (now NSF) sports events.

He is still making valuable contributions to the association, to his alma mater and to the wider community, despite great challenges and the tragic loss of his beloved son.

He is well regarded and respected amongst his peers and the wider ICOBA community, as well as the Nigerian Schools fraternity.

Given the exceptional standard and nature of his service, the ICOBA Europe Merit Award is hereby presented to Mr Kayode Olule.