

*The*  
**NLNG**

# BOND

WHAT WILL  
**BABS?**  
DO ●



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2012

## ...Instep!

**A**t NLNG, we now understand that good people (...CEOs?) are borrowed for just a while! And this is why when they move on, we celebrate them and throw our arms wide open to welcome their successors.

As we bid Chima Ibeneche good bye, we welcome Babs Omotowa.

And this *Bond* is all about him; after all, it is only fair that we bring him up and close to people that he would be working closely with.

The BOND editorial team ‘invaded’ his home in Port Harcourt, a few Sundays ago, to find out his plans for the company and its subsidiaries. But that was not all, they also managed to pry into his childhood years and even how he met his spouse.

If Babs had played football, he probably would have been a striking midfielder! He aims for goal while covering his back! He can be described as a man with a laser focus, his strings of achievements in his prior assignments attest to this. Yet he is an excellent team player and builder.

...and for those aspiring to a Zero CEP (you know what I mean) look no further. Just turn the pages and pick up some nuggets.

Have a jolly good read!

editor-in-chief's comment



*Siene*

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News, articles, personal and working experience, family events as well as focus on jokes, letter, etc, are welcome from management and staff.

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On a quiet December evening at the Shell Residential Area, in Port Harcourt, **Babs Jolayemi Omotowa** seemed relaxed and unhurried as we sank into a brown leather settee in his sparsely furnished sitting room.

We had come on behalf of our readers who expect of us a revealing account of our encounter with Babs; an illuminating profile that is really a biography on the fly; a sketch offering insights into the psychology of the new helmsman that transcend interest in the man under scrutiny. A piece that answers the deep yearning of our readers to know that all is well with Nigeria's pre-eminent company and biggest private industrial corporation South of the Sahara.

Is Babs Omotowa a safe pair of hands to hand over Nigeria's prime piece of corporate estate worth over USD \$13 billion to manage? Obviously, Shell, his employer, knows the answer for he has proven his mettle and chalked up a blistering career that shot him into the Shell stratosphere in record time.

But we need not have worried for Babs is solid and was soon to put us at peace.

From his days in Federal Government College, Ilorin, Kwara State, through University of Ilorin where he studied Industrial Chemistry and Business Administration, to his brief stint as a chemistry and mathematics teacher in Bishop Smith College, Ilorin, Babs has always been a shining star.

He joined SPDC in 1993 as a management trainee and rose rapidly to Senior Operations positions in Warri, before proceeding on international assignment with Shell in the United Kingdom, Holland and Norway, serving variously as Production Asset Manager, Shipping Manager and Business Improvement Manager. In Europe, he was renowned for his re-engineering and successful turnaround performances.

He returned to Nigeria in 2006 as General Manager Supply Chain for SNEPCo and SPDC, and, two years later, was subsequently appointed a Director of SPDC. He distinguished himself with his work on contracting of goods and services to support production operations, major projects and services across both JV and PSC operations including the EPC for the Gbaran Ubie gas project, Afam Power plant, etc.

In 2010, he was appointed a Director of the West African Pipeline Company (WAPCo).

When work-related deaths at SPDC reached an alarming rate, 20 a year, it was to Babs the management turned to for rescue. And working without fanfare, he stemmed the ugly tide. He left an enviable record of no fatality for 600 days! It's a testament not only to his tough will and persistence, but also to his utmost respect for people and human life. He was also instrumental to the increased

**NEXT LEVEL & KEEPING AT IT**

transparency and external verification of the company's environmental performance.

Until his current appointment as Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria LNG Limited, Babs was Vice President, Health, Safety, Environment, Infrastructure and Logistics for Shell companies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

At 45, Babs, one of the youngest managing directors in the Shell stable, is enviably free of the tics and shticks that characterise many corporate big wigs whose finicky attention to the bottom line had robbed them of the ability to communicate; to express themselves in simple language. Babs chooses his words carefully, is not overly discursive and makes his points succinctly. And that he is direct and unevasive makes one think of that abused cliché – an interviewer's delight.

He had just returned from Bonny, Rivers State, where the Board of Directors of Nigeria LNG Limited announced his appointment, a ritual that, to all intents and purposes, ended his vice presidency in SPDC. On the First Day of February, his tour of duty at NLNG will begin.

As he welcomed us, we told him that we were surprised he was so tall and huge (he stands 6 feet, 4 inches); that he had zipped through Shell hierarchy like a thunderbolt. And all we got was a shrug and a chipmunk smile. However, when we suggested that he had got quite a reputation for go-getting and for running a lean organisation that spares neither budget nor manpower, he gently hinted at an aversion for wastage, a word his hands drew invisible lines under: waste of time as in contracting and decision-making, waste of money, manpower or resources.

While proud of his record, Babs has already begun thinking about his NLNG journey and what his legacy might be. He is already seeking guidance in elite management books. He is reading, among others, "The First 90 days" by Michael Watkins, "The Lean Manager" by Michael Ballé and Freddy Ballé, and "Real leaders don't do power point ... how to sell yourself and your ideas" by Christopher Witt.

Babs's candour is reminiscent of Chima Ibeneche, his predecessor, known for being unafraid to speak and hear hard truths when necessary. Babs's empathy is also of Ibeneche's, although his colleagues say his compassion tends to be more damp than Ibeneche's: it's more about understanding your argument than feeling your pain. Babs's simplicity is yet again reminiscent of Ibeneche's: simple words, uncomplicated ideas, laser visions. These are men with no baggage; men who travel lightly. These qualities are integral to Babs's charm, and to Ibeneche's success.

Babs's future is both unpredictable and unlimited. At 45, he already has a very high name recognition in the oil and gas industry; he has risen out of obscurity to become one of the trail-blazers in the corporate world. His uncompromising stand on discipline, integrity and continuous improvement, steely persistence - an absolute will to master whatever he encountered - combined with a reputation as a smart, prepared, serious administrator, gives him real influence. His reputation will, however, turn on how he stirs the company through world recession that has put some European customers on bankruptcy watch; how he keeps a production complex beginning to age and fray at the margins in tip-top shape and how he is able to keep turning Nigeria's abundant gas to gold.

The Bond team: **Gaibo Awoala, Dan Daniel, Elkanah Chawai and Yemi Adeyemi**, led by **Ifeanyi Mbanefo**, took him up on a lot of issues. Turn the pages and read his views of his job, and his new challenges.

**Did you ever have any inkling that, sometime in your career, you would become the Managing Director of Nigeria LNG Limited? Was it something you planned?**

It wasn't entirely a surprise, because in Shell, we usually have plans into the future and possible roles you could do in your career. In 2008, there were three next positions identified possible and this was one of them. So I won't say it was entirely a surprise. But again, in Shell, it is never a done deal, the fact that possible roles have been identified for you. It is just a possibility. You still have to demonstrate that you are ready and capable of doing that job. It wasn't a surprise, but it had to be something to be proven.

**Since NLNG was identified amongst the three scenarios, it must have crossed your mind what you would want to do here?**

There are just two main things: one, that this is a successful organisation. So how do you sustain that success? That was one of the key things. But also how do you take it to the next level because in every successful organisation, there is always an upside. So those are the two key challenges: to sustain the success and to take the organisation to the next level.

**What would the next level be?**

I think you would have to look at an organisation internally and externally. Internally, you need to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and externally, you need to look at opportunities and threats. When you look internally, there are quite a lot of things, especially when you benchmark the organisation and see which aspects are doing really well and aspects that are still struggling. When you look at some of the benchmarks, you will see a very successful organisation in terms of shareholder performance, to the returns in terms of dividends, turnovers, return on assets. It is quite very strong.

When you look at the organisation and people, it is recognised all over the LNG world as very strong, especially in operations and technical aspects. Many

of the Nigerian staff are sought after in other LNG plants. And when you look at the plant itself, it is quite modern. It was built in the last 10 years and is still of recent technologies. So those are good strengths the organisation has.

There are a few threats as well, safety, being one of them. There were a number of fatalities in recent times. There are concerns around asset integrity and process safety. When a plant starts to get to 10 years and above, it is a different challenge and I think the first set of trains is already in that mode. Of course, when you start looking externally, you start with gas supply which has been a challenge in the last few years, especially during the security challenges in the Niger-Delta. Those external factors led to situations where there were *force majeure* and customers were starting to get worried whether NLNG can continue that successful story they were known for in the past.

There is the advent of unconventional gas. The United States used to be a very buoyant market but suddenly, unconventional gas has taken that. Henry Hub is a lot more depressed than it used to be. There is also the market share threat from competitors with the likes of the huge unconventional/LNG projects in Australia.

But you still see a lot of opportunities in the market, especially when you think about gas still displacing a lot of other energy sources and when you look at some of the far-eastern countries still looking for a lot of gas, especially as the world population continues to grow and you have a lot of people looking for gas in such developing countries as India and China, and even in the Middle East.

So when you look at the strengths and weaknesses internally and opportunities and threats externally, you will start to see what the next set of things is for NLNG. I still have quite some consultations to do; quite a number of talks to hold with stakeholders, customers, staff to be able to deepen this understanding, but at least a few things have started to emerge when we look at the scenarios.

One obvious thing is to continue to run a world-class organisation. That was always the aspiration of the founders of NLNG. World-class is both on the technical side of things as well as the non-technical side. So, on the technical side, how do we run without fatalities or injuries to people? How do we run the plant to the highest level in terms of process safety?

**Also, the reliability and the performance in terms of delivering cargoes to customers need to continue to be important. And then when you look at the non-technical side of things, you start to look at things like value-based decisions and policies and procedures. Are we running them in best-in-class modes? Are there opportunities to derive more value for the organisation?**

From the technical perspective, top quartile performance is what provides an opportunity. The second part of opportunity is enabling the host aspirations and when you talk about that, you are talking about three categories: the immediate community (Bonny Community) where there has been tremendous progress in the last few years. There is a lot of inter-dependence in supply electricity and other utilities, but there are still quite a lot of opportunities.

For instance, how do you develop the community to be self-sustaining and have more capabilities in the communities to deliver projects for themselves and also supply more services and equipment to the company?

Every company exists for stakeholders and the shareholders being the key aspect. How do you maximise the returns? That will continue to be a key priority and growth which NLNG has in Trains 7 and 8 which provide huge opportunities. Well, underpinning all of these is people; the staff of NLNG and the communities. I will continue to work with them to deliver these expectations.

**If you break these down and prioritise, what would be your number one priority? What area comes up in your mind that would be where you want to leave your mark?**

I think the key is people. When you talk about world-class performance, shareholders returns, enabling host aspirations, it is people that make the difference. If there is anything I have learnt in my career it is that if you are able to work with people with a vision that is very clear, a roadmap, and helping them to overcome barriers, you will find that you can deliver a lot in terms of these aspirations. So a people agenda would be very key.

**Let's take a few steps back. You obviously must have been briefed by your employers. What exactly is topmost for them for you to achieve in NLNG?**

The key is to continue to sustain the success, as I said, and taking the organisation to the next level. That has remained topmost in the mind of the shareholders. It is a successful organisation and it is not one where you have to make so many changes. It is not as if it is in crisis. It is a question of how you sustain that success. And as I said, people are key in that. The biggest asset of any organisation that can make the most difference is the people focusing on the right things.

**Your predecessor got into the company when the recession kicked in and the world is not quite out of the woods yet; a beginning-to-age-plant makes it**

**double whammy. Have you thought of how you are going to deal with these?**

In terms of the plant itself, what is very important in a plant is asset integrity and competent operations. Maintenance, for example, is a very key aspect of that. I think the beauty of an LNG plant is that when you look at plants like Brunei which has gone through 40 years of existence, there is a lot of learning and best practices across the world. The good part is there is a lot of learning in most plants in the world. So how to maintain a plant to 40 or 50 years is something that is already there. It is something we are going to learn from and we are working towards it already. NLNG is doing very well in that aspect, so we will continue to build on that. On global recession, there continues to

be new competition and challenges on prices of LNG. The Henry Hub, for example, is one of those challenges. But will the price continue to be the level in which we have it? Will the oil-linked prices of LNG in the Far East continue? Those are still challenges we see in the future. Key in all of these is to continue to deliver to the maximum of our cargo capabilities, gas supply and plant reliability and also contain our costs as well.

**You have been opportune to go round some LNG plants preparatory to this job. What did you find? What experiences are you bringing home?**

I think the first thing I will say about the plants I visited is the recognition of NLNG. People I visited indicated how they see the successes NLNG has made. People were impressed that a project like that could be delivered in Nigeria in difficult times and that we have continued to meet our customers' needs despite the challenges. In terms of some of the key evidence I have picked, as I mentioned, in a place like Brunei that has been there for 40 years, I have been able to pick some of the things to expect when a plant starts to age and how to prepare for it even before you reach the next set of SPAs that you will be getting into. You will start to look not only at asset integrity, but also on how you will take oppor-



"The biggest asset of any organisation that can make the most difference is the people focusing on the right things."



tunities in de-bottlenecking the plant to maximise value and rejuvenate the plant. That is quite a lot of learning from that perspective. On the commercial aspect also, some of the experiences in the older plants and how they market is changing. These are some of the things we will need to reposition ourselves for.

**Comparatively, which plant impressed you most? And if you want to adopt a model, which one appeals to you most?**

I think they are different in terms of their sizes. I was in Qatar which produces 77 million tonnes. It is a different dimension to Oman. They are different from Brunei as well. They are all different in terms of their age and dimensions and peculiarity in the communities where they exist are also different. Each one has its strengths and challenges. I think the beauty about them all is that they aspire to be world-class and deliver maximum returns to their shareholders. The competitive spirit I found in the LNG plants is something I really admire.

**Looking at your past roles, this is obviously a new challenge. How does this fit into your whole portfolio? Why do you think being the Managing Director was the next option for you?**

I will leave that for my superiors to answer. But I am moving into midstream for the first time in my career. I have been in leadership positions for more than a decade and leadership is the same in every organisation in terms that you will have to have clear vision about where the organisation would be and take the organisation along in the journey. This has to be linked into the aspirations of the shareholders and you have to be able to work with people, motivate and overcome the challenges the organisation faces. What I like about leadership is the journey. It is always about point A to B. You are where you are today. Your reality is your reality; and your history is your history and being able to determine where the B is, where the next aspiration and journey is; how to move from A to B and how the organisation will be run, I think, is the part of management I have always enjoyed.

**Colleagues described you as a go-getter? What accounted for this?**

I think I will allow my colleagues to answer. One thing I am very used to is being able to set certain targets and deliver on them. More importantly, being able to let people and staff see a future that is brighter and better than where they are and despite the obstacles you normally



“How to move from Point A to B and how the organisation will be run, I think, is the part of management I have always enjoyed.”

find in the way of getting to the journey, being able to overcome those hurdles and enable people to deliver beyond their aspirations and expectations. Those are the things I have found very useful in my career. I don't believe in impossibilities. I believe the human mind can deliver much beyond what it thinks it can. What gives me joy is when I see people move on that journey and get to a point where they never thought they could get to. That really gives me joy.

**Do you break heads or leave blood on the floor to get things done?**

You don't have to break heads to get something done or to get to your destination. To get to your destination, you have to create that awareness of what that future is and have people motivated to get there. They will meet challenges on the way and your role as a leader is to help them clear the way and shine light in that tunnel. If you are able to do that as a leader, then there won't be blood on the floor.

**Looking back, what assignments did you love the most?**

I think the role I enjoyed the most was actually not work-related. I spent seven years in Europe as part of my career. While there, I got involved in community projects. One of the projects I enjoyed the most was that in the town I lived, they had a decline in churches at that particular time. And in our worship of about 20 of us, we received a vision to build a church. I must mention that 17 of us were students and this, in itself, was a huge challenge. You could take this from the A to B perspective as well. Here we were with nothing and we had an aspiration to build a church. It was quite a challenge working with not only people who were members of the church but also of the community to overcome all the challenges in terms of finance and the project aspect -- that is how we got about building the church. It brought out quite a lot of aspects in leadership and management, but also it was not one that was an organisation hierarchy approach. We had to influence people, work with stakeholders and achieve to coordinate all of these and we were successful at building the church. I can remember the opening ceremony when the mayor came and opened the church. When I went back a few months back, the church had no fewer than 400 members. This gave me much happiness.

**You have worked in different environments, local and global. Now working in the Niger Delta, what has kept you awake since the announcement of this job?**

What keeps me awake is, first, safety, both personal safety and process safety. From the experiences we have seen in the world in places like the Texas refinery and Singapore refinery, in a plant like ours, asset integrity is what I am very concerned about. When you move away from the plant, what also keeps me awake is how we can continue to be a good corporate citizen with the community and where Nigeria is today, in terms of its aspiration; what role can we play in terms of that aspiration? Those two keep me awake.

**NLNG intervened to stabilise the supply of LPG, viewed alongside the nation's aspiration of having a robust LPG industry, do you think an opportunity to diversify away from our core business would hurt NLNG? Does LPG supply appeal to you?**

The only reason you think selling LPG in the local market is not a core business is probably because of the differential in pricing between the local market and the international market. Otherwise, wherever you sell your product, if you can get value for it, should not be a problem. But, importantly, I think we are part of the country and must be sensitive to the situation and the level of aspirations in the country. I do not see moving out of the LPG market as something to do lightly and, at this point, it is not something I am working towards. I think what we need to do is see how we can move the agenda forward on that in terms of how we can enable capacity to be created in the country where others can come and get involved and be able to develop the local market to a point where it becomes attractive for companies to supply into. I think that is where most of our energy should be rather than thinking of how to move out of that space. I am not looking at that, at this point in time.

**We asked some of your friends to describe you. The two adjectives they used were “nimble” and “lean.” We have seen you being nimble. What does “lean” mean? Cut staff, cut budget, cut money?**

I think what they mean is that I don't like waste. Lean does not necessarily mean cut staff or cut cost, it means avoiding waste. Wherever I have been, I don't tolerate waste because an organisation does better when it can avoid waste in processes, decision-making, how you spend money and everything because it doesn't add value. Every organisation is in a different place. There are some organisations that are in a start-up mode. The strategy, approach and leadership style in a start-up mode are different from if you are in a turn-

around mode or a re-alignment situation. So each stage of a company has different leadership styles. I think “nimble” describes that I act in the best interest in whatever situation I find myself, but “lean” relates to waste rather than just cutting cost or people.

**There are some apprehensions in NLNG and other places that you are going to cut cost and staff. Is there anything relating to staff and cost-cutting on your plate?**

Until I get into the organisation and fully analyse those aspects before I can review that. One thing I can tell you is that asset integrity, maintenance and process safety are top on my mind. And from the experiences I have seen in many parts of the world, these are areas where you have to spend money. I will be looking at those areas with the mindset of how we are going to ensure that we have the right investment levels to make sure that our plants are safe and that if there are opportunities for de-bottlenecking so that we can produce more, I intend to work with the shareholders to provide more money on these areas. For me, it is a value-driven decision. Where there is value, we will spend more money. Where there are no values and wastages, of course we will take out those wastages, but it will be in a structured manner.

**You have some experience in shipping in your career, and as CEO of Nigeria LNG Limited you will have responsibility for NSML and NLNGSS. Are there things you've identified as possible goals for those companies?**

I think some tremendously good work has been done on the shipping side of things, both in NSML and NLNGSS. I think that if you look at the shipping industry today, there is no one close to the capacity that NLNG has created in Nigeria. Of recent, the move to create the capacity to manage ships locally is quite unique. I strongly support this agenda and will continue to work with the key stakeholders to move that area forward. Obviously, we have a number of ships that are getting to the end of their lives and the board has already taken the decision to start acquiring new ships. We will continue to support the effort to refresh the ships that we have, especially in this period in the world where shipping capabilities have become very constrained and the cost of hiring ships is going through the roof. So we will focus on refreshing the assets, developing the people, and being more safety-conscious because we've had a few safety incidents on the marine side and we need to work with them to minimise the accidents and incidents we have. Also driving the local content and Nigerian capacity development agenda is something that I will continue to enable.

**You are obviously six-feet...**

I am 6 feet 4 inches.

**It would be an economic waste if you don't play basketball?**

When I was much younger, I used to be a footballer—a goalkeeper in my secondary school. But with age, we are no longer as agile as we used to be. So these days, I spend a lot of time walking. I sometimes walk eight kilometres in a day. That gives me a good opportunity to appreciate nature as well. That is what I spend my time on.

**Tell us about your family?**

I am married to my beautiful wife, Helen. She has been the rock for me. She has provided the home and peace of mind that has enabled me to be where I am today. I think the adage that “behind every successful man is woman” is one I subscribe to. I have had a very supportive wife. I have three boys; Tobi is the first and he is 12 years old; I have Fiyin, who is 10 and Dara, who is five years old. For me, they are the inspiration into what the future holds. I love to see children. My first job was as a school teacher and I must say it is one of the most fulfilling jobs I have ever done. With children, what you find is the transformation of what they can be and what the future is and being able to be part of that journey; being able to see them when they start off as toddlers and see what they have become. This is the transformation I love in human beings which also is what I love to see in the work place.

**Are they in the country?**

As I mentioned I was in Europe for seven years. I just returned to regional responsibilities. My family is still outside the country but they are regularly in the country.

**When you were in charge of contracting in SPDC, you looked after the sub-Saharan Africa. What were the challenges and peculiarities dealing with different countries?**

I think the challenge in contracting in the developing world is how you can create local capacity. That always has been what drives you in a supply team



“My beautiful wife (Helen) has been the rock for me. She has provided the home and peace of mind that has enabled me to be where I am today.”

function because the closer your suppliers and manufacturers are closer to you, the easier you can do things just in time and maintain very lean stock. So being able to see how you can do it in a country like Nigeria is always a challenge. In sub-Saharan Africa, what you find is a different challenge in different countries. In Nigeria, in Joint Ventures (JV), for example, contracting cycle took up to two years between when a demand is identified to when it falls in place. This was quite an inefficient process in itself and it was quite a lot to make lean such a process and bring the contracting cycle down. This was peculiar to Nigeria.

**Why was it peculiar to Nigeria?**

I think it is the situation of where we are in the country. In the upstream, the involvement of our JV partners is very integral to the contracting process. There were about 14 approval steps in every contract process and that takes time.

**Let's take you back to where you taught. If you compare yourself, then and now, it's such a climb. Do you ever look back and say “Come on, what happened?”**

One of the key things about me is that I am a very God-fearing person, which means that I have never felt that there were impossibilities in my entire career. I don't say that with any pride, but I believe human beings have in them the ability and capacity to do a lot better than wherever they find themselves at the moment. Of course, when I was teaching I would never have thought that I was going to be in this industry, let alone become the CEO of an organisation, but it was always clear, in every thing I did, that there was always an opportunity to move from an A to B and there was opportunity to do much better. For me, some of the key attributes that I have always had are: hard work, integrity and always having a sense of responsibility and accountability in all I do. I think that has always helped me to move forward. I never look at the next job, I just do the job I have very well because I believe that it is how you handle the job that you're doing that helps to determine where you will be in future.

**How did you join Shell?**

At one point in my teaching career I travelled to Lagos and on my way back from Lagos I bought *The Guardian* newspaper just to read in the car whilst travelling back to Ilorin. There were some Shell vacancy adverts in the paper

and when I got back to Ilorin I thought "OK, I should apply," at least I seemed to have the basic requirements. So I posted my application from Ilorin and forgot about it. A few months after, I got a letter to attend a written test at Shell offices in Port Harcourt and I thought I should give it a try. There was the challenge of funding the trip from Ilorin to Port Harcourt and back on my teacher's salary, but I was eager for the experience, I had never been to Port Harcourt before, at least I would get to know the place. So I borrowed the money from someone and made the trip. When I got to the test, Shell, in their magnanimity, decided to pay for my return transport and my accommodation and I found myself returning to Ilorin with more money than I set out with. In the end, I felt that at least I hadn't lost anything.

Probably two-months later, I got another letter from Shell in the post office box, informing me that I was wanted back for a second test. At this point, I knew a bit more about Port Harcourt and I knew that I would likely get paid some money if I made the trip, so I went back for the test. The same cycle then repeated itself and I was called back for an interview, which I took part in, after which I was called back to do medical tests in Lagos which I did. A few months after, this process probably took about a year, I got another letter in the box instructing me to resume in the Shell offices in Warri. The other part of the story was that when I was applying at the beginning, I had a school friend who I encouraged to apply for the test but he felt that those kinds of jobs were not available to everyday people like us. As I made progress, I kept him informed at every stage and when the final letter came, he was quite surprised and I think he felt very bad because he could as well have been in the same situation. That is why I always encourage everyone, till today, to never limit themselves, to put themselves forward, put in their best and be prayerful, and unexpected opportunities can come.

**Could you tell us a little about your early years and what growing up was like for you?**

I think the first thing I will say is that my parents were both teachers, and my father was also a farmer, and they were both very deep Christians. My growing up years were in the central part of Nigeria. I started off in a town called Okene, in present Kogi State, and later moved to

Ilorin, in present Kwara State. Being the children of teachers and farmers, there were a few things that were very important for my father: education and discipline. I started off schooling in Okene for my primary school, and I continued in Ilorin. As Christians, they also had a high sense of responsibility and integrity and those were very important to them as well. These were virtues that I learnt from my parents which stayed with me throughout my life. Growing up, I spent quite some time in the farm, but the rest of the time was entirely spent in school and I had both my secondary school and university education in Ilorin. So, that was my growing up really, as a teacher's boy. We were five in the family and I was number three, the first four are male and the last child is female.

**How many languages do you speak?**

I speak Yoruba, which is the language of the area where I come from in Kogi State. I come from a village called Okoro Gbede. I understand a bit of Ebibira, which is the language of the Okene people, where I grew up in the 1960s, but it's been many years since I used it, so my level of knowledge in it is not so good anymore. Those are the two Nigerian languages I understand and obviously I can also speak English.

**From what you've said, you enjoy working with people, especially young people. What puts you off?**

The first thing I don't appreciate is when people have no integrity. I always like to work with people with integrity. I also like people who are responsible, who take responsibility and are serious about whatever goals they are assigned. I think those two for me are what I like to see in people: a high sense of integrity and a strong sense of responsibility/accountability. The gaps that we all have as human beings, since we are all imperfect, are things you can work on, but not lack of integrity and irresponsibility.

**You love teaching; do you want to go back to the profession some day?**

Absolutely! Like I said, it is a profession I enjoyed a lot and I still enjoy it. Of course, one day I am going to retire from active service and with age you can still do some part-time work, even when you leave business. So I am still hoping to be imparting knowledge to people. Perhaps as a mentor, it doesn't necessarily have to be in the classroom, I could begin to mentor others who work in organisations but if it also has to be outright teaching, I would enjoy doing that too.

**What drives you?**

What drives me is that I believe people can reach higher heights than sometimes they feel they can. I think people often limit themselves. So what drives me is to work with people, so that they can see a much brighter future so that they can also work towards that future and where I can help to remove some of the obstacles in front of them and help them to reach beyond their aspirations and what they think that they can do; that gives me a sense of joy. I believe that humanity has tremendous potentials and abilities much more than we sometimes think. So that drives me.

**You've repeated the word "deep Christian" several times, what does that mean to you?**

To me, the most important thing is that I believe in and fear God. A fear of God will show in the way you relate with fellow human beings and in terms of personal devotion. These are things that help build you up. So, for me, it is not about one religion or the other; my closest friends cuts across religion. It is about personal belief in God and treating people well,

**Who are your role models?**

I think I have always appreciated Reverend Martin Luther King and the work he did for social rights in the United States of America, for being able to have a dream that went beyond what most people at that time could see and to have the perseverance to remove barriers on the way, overcome a lot of the challenges that were prevalent at that time, and to be able to move the civil rights movement forward as he did.

I also have a lot of respect for the late General Murtala Muhammed. I appreciate his discipline and I appreciate his drive to bring probity into the country at that time. I also admire people like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, for the dedication to education and for the foresight from his generation of leaders in focusing on education.

**You mentioned that you have been married for quite some time now, how long have you been married for?**

I have been married for 15 years, I got married in 1996.

**Where did you meet your wife and what's your story?**

I met my wife in Ilorin. She was doing her internship (industrial training)



"The first thing I don't appreciate is when people have no integrity. I always like to work with people with integrity. I also like people who are responsible, who take responsibility and are serious about whatever goals they are assigned."

at that time. I was then in the process of moving from my teaching job to my career in Shell. We met at a supermarket and for me it was love at first sight, but I had to prove myself before she would take me. We spent a period of about three years getting to know each other better, after which we then got into marriage. She accepted me with my imperfections; I have quite a few, one of which is that I am a bit of a workaholic and that could sometimes be tough on the family, but she has been very gracious to accept my imperfections.

**You mentioned the work you did with the church in Europe. We also observed that you have done some work with the International Federation for Nigerian Children. Tell us a little more about that.**

It was actually a web-based association; I joined a few other professionals, Nigerians in Diaspora, that is in the US and in Europe, at that time. Our aim was to garner international support to help children in need especially in schools, so we came together, virtually, to find resources that could be pooled together, and we were able to help a number of schools. We provided the schools with quite a few notebooks, textbooks and other school materials. We were able to identify a number of schools in various regions of Nigeria and were able to provide this sort of support for the children. My heart is always in things like this, and I love working with people and children, but I also love to see communities develop. In Nigeria, there are quite a lot of opportunities for us to see our communities come up from the current level of low infrastructure and the high poverty level. So, those are things that I think that as a citizen we all have a role to play, in our own ways. I love to work in communities and help to create improvements in the lives of people in our communities.

Even in my own community in Kogi State, being a teacher's boy, education is a priority to me, so I give out scholarships to a number of children. We have also delivered a lot of support to the schools for construction of classroom blocks and hostels, which is in line with my belief that if you give children a chance at a good education, they can reach heights that they previously could not have imagined.

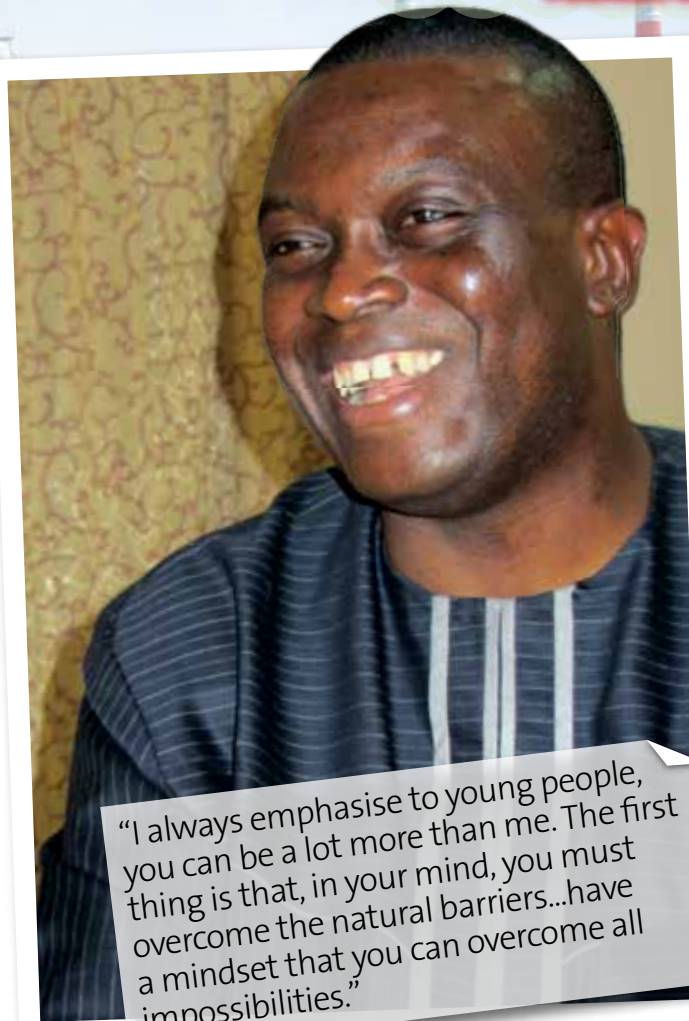
**What has been the most challenging or trying moment in your career?**

I think every job I've done has been very challenging. You sometimes meet a job that is in a start-up phase, some jobs are in turnaround phases, some of them are realignments, some of them are crises, and some of them are successes that you have to sustain. They all come with different challenges and being able to highlight those challenges and apply the appropriate strategies to deliver has been paramount. I would say that my last job as vice president for health, safety and environment, infrastructure and logistics for the sub-Saharan region was also particularly challenging. On safety, we had a history of between 10-20 fatalities every year. When I took the role that was the sort of situation that I was challenged with and I was determined to see how I would work with the organisation to take away this unacceptable situation where we were having fatalities in our organisation. There were quite a number of things we were able to do, bringing best practices to bear and we were able to go for a period of over 600 days without a fatality which was a challenge in itself to achieve. Again, after those 600 days, we did have a fatality and that, as well, was quite difficult. So, achieving the long period without fatalities showed we were on the right track but clearly we still have a lot of work we need to do. The environment side was also a challenge. Of course, in the oil and gas industry, flaring and oil spills in the Niger Delta are challenges we had to work with. There was a lot of interest from NGOs and having to become much more transparent, much more open about what we were doing was also challenging.

**Where do you see yourself five years from now?**

I don't spend time thinking about my next job. I spend time thinking about the job at hand because I am convinced that it is what you do with the job at hand that determines your next job. If you do it well, then your superiors will look at you and feel able to recommend you for the next job. If you don't do it well, you might be talking about a different picture. So, with respect to the job at hand, my focus will be on where we will have gotten to in five years' time especially in the areas of having world-class plant facilities, running a world-class system of processes and procedures in the organisation, taking forward the Train 7 growth agenda, how well we've done in the communities and our contribution to the nation at large, and how well we've done with our shareholders' returns, and our people. I am only determined to make all of these successful in that time frame.

**As a prominent Nigerian, if asked, how would you respond to the question: What is wrong with the country?**



*"I always emphasise to young people, you can be a lot more than me. The first thing is that, in your mind, you must overcome the natural barriers...have a mindset that you can overcome all impossibilities."*

If you look at some of the other countries we compare ourselves with, they've had history running into hundreds of years, whilst we have had just over five decades now in our history. We've had a very challenging period as one country. Remember we've had a civil war in this country. So just building and being one nation has been a challenge for us. Nigerians all over the world have excelled in various fields. There is a Nobel Prize winner. Nigerians that excel in medicine and IT and many other areas, so we are obviously as good as it gets. We are also fortunate to have the kinds of natural resources we currently have, so you could ask why we haven't emerged as a stronger economy and why our level of poverty is still this high and those are legitimate questions that I think we can tackle. It is clear to me that as a country we are now getting aligned about the direction we want to go. We want to become this super power that we believe we have the potential to be. Focusing on our infrastructure to enable that, improving on our fiscal regimes in the country and dealing with the problem of corruption are things that have become very clear in the country. Nigeria is being increasingly recognised as an emerging economy in the next 20 years and I am confident that we will get there.

**What recipe for success would you give to the youths?**

You don't have to be like me; you can be much more than me. And that's the first thing I always emphasise to young people, you can be a lot more than me. The first thing is that, in your mind, you must overcome the natural barriers. Once you have that aspiration for a much stronger future, then it becomes about how you can overcome the challenges that you have. I have always believed that there is no impossibility, and you have to have a mindset that you can overcome all impossibilities. If you think about the kind of things that have been achieved in the world today, you can imagine that we can do a lot more. So the first things are: to have a much broader future in sight, have a journey map for getting from A to B and then have the discipline to work on that journey and you will see that you can achieve it. So, there is no one recipe and you don't want to be constrained in terms of what you can achieve as a human being. Have a journey from A to B and stay the course.

BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY PEOPLE

1. ESEMOGIE Jocelyn ..... 1 Jan
2. IKURU Belejiti ..... 1 Jan
3. USMAN Bashir ..... 1 Jan
4. YAKUBU Fatima ..... 1 Jan
5. BUOWARI Dagogo ..... 1 Jan
6. UDE Olughu ..... 1 Jan
7. EKUMANKAMA Patrick ..... 1 Jan
8. JIBRIN Shehu ..... 2 Jan
9. OKWEYE Jacob ..... 2 Jan
10. IFESEMEN Michael ..... 2 Jan
11. OGOSI Albert ..... 2 Jan
12. OKAFOR Anthony ..... 3 Jan
13. OLA Ehimigbai ..... 3 Jan
14. ANURUKEM Chinyere ..... 3 Jan
15. KADIRI Bernard ..... 3 Jan
16. PLANTENBERG Jelle ..... 3 Jan
17. AFOLABI Adedayo ..... 4 Jan
18. GADU Iiyasu ..... 5 Jan
19. NWAGU Okechukwu ..... 5 Jan
20. AMINU Kabir ..... 5 Jan
21. OHA Chibuzo ..... 5 Jan
22. YUSUF Salihu ..... 5 Jan
23. ALFA Ahmed ..... 6 Jan
24. OKOLI Christian ..... 6 Jan
25. DAHUNSI Adedeji ..... 6 Jan
26. ITUEN Nwamaka ..... 6 Jan
27. WAY Calvin ..... 6 Jan
28. AYENI Oise ..... 7 Jan
29. ASIKA Yvette ..... 8 Jan
30. EMECHETA Tobenna ..... 8 Jan
31. ONYEMA Charles ..... 8 Jan
32. CHUKWU Agu ..... 8 Jan
33. IBITAYO Temidayo ..... 8 Jan
34. OZOKO Emmanuel ..... 8 Jan
35. AKINLUYI Ololuwa ..... 9 Jan
36. GUOBADIA Roland ..... 9 Jan
37. OLOWU Adehisi ..... 10 Jan
38. FATOYINBO Isaac ..... 10 Jan
39. OKECHUKWU Chinedu ..... 10 Jan
40. BIOBAKU Lateef ..... 11 Jan
41. YANI Jamila ..... 11 Jan
42. EKANEM Edward ..... 12 Jan
43. OMERHI Oghenetega ..... 12 Jan
44. MANYIE Kabeh ..... 12 Jan
45. CHANDRA Kunal ..... 12 Jan
46. AGA Benjamin ..... 13 Jan
47. JACKMAY Idala ..... 13 Jan
48. OPALUWA Idoko ..... 13 Jan
49. ALLAGOA Anthony ..... 13 Jan
50. ESO Jane ..... 13 Jan
51. AMOO Kazeem ..... 14 Jan
52. ATTOYE Mosiwamafa ..... 14 Jan
53. HART Emilia ..... 14 Jan
54. UMORU Paul ..... 15 Jan
55. SHABA Hassan ..... 15 Jan
56. ONIBERE Mazino ..... 15 Jan
57. UCHENDU Chinwe ..... 15 Jan
58. CHUKUMATI Winifred ..... 15 Jan
59. OKORO-EFFEYOTAH Clement ..... 16 Jan
60. MAIMALARI Mohammed ..... 16 Jan
61. NKONO Nkono ..... 16 Jan
62. AMACHREE Ipallibo ..... 17 Jan
63. IBANGA Udem ..... 18 Jan
64. KOENS Jakob ..... 18 Jan
65. DE GRAAF Jan ..... 18 Jan
66. OJO Babatope ..... 20 Jan
67. WYSE Yejide ..... 20 Jan
68. AKINRINDE Henry ..... 20 Jan
69. AKINMUSIRE Afolake ..... 20 Jan
70. AMOTSUKA Daniel ..... 21 Jan
71. AKINGBOYE Ayodele ..... 21 Jan
72. KOLEOLU Arinola ..... 21 Jan
73. TULA Olawe ..... 22 Jan
74. JACK Sunday ..... 22 Jan
75. AKINGBOGUN Okikiola ..... 22 Jan
76. KUYEBI Temitope ..... 22 Jan
77. IZEVIZUA Paul ..... 22 Jan
78. SALIH Umar ..... 23 Jan
79. ESUMOBI Jude ..... 23 Jan
80. OYALAMI Oluwaseun ..... 23 Jan
81. MEREDITH John ..... 23 Jan
82. AKOJA Paul ..... 24 Jan
83. AYEMHOBA Andrew ..... 25 Jan
84. YINKERE Akpoaboere ..... 26 Jan
85. ETOH Umana ..... 27 Jan
86. JAMES Victor ..... 27 Jan
87. OLA-PETERS Oladipo ..... 27 Jan
88. ADEREMI Olajumoke ..... 27 Jan
89. METSEAGHARUN Weyimi ..... 27 Jan
90. OGUNBODEDE Rotimi ..... 27 Jan
91. BELLEH Nathaniel ..... 27 Jan
92. IBRAHIM Yusuf ..... 28 Jan
93. OLUFADEJI Toyin ..... 29 Jan
94. OKORO Obasi ..... 29 Jan
95. UKANDU Chidiebere ..... 29 Jan
96. LOUIS-OZUZU Chinyere ..... 29 Jan
97. HEUMANS Franciscus ..... 30 Jan
98. AROGUNMATI Adekunle ..... 31 Jan
99. ALLWELL-BROWN Siene ..... 31 Jan
100. JAYEOLA Akinola ..... 31 Jan
101. SALLAM Nasser ..... 31 Jan



• Dagogo Jan 1



• Olughu Jan 1



• Usman Jan 2



• Jelle Jan 3



• Bernard Jan 3



• Ehimigbai Jan 3



• Okechukwu Jan 5



• Ahmed Jan 6



• Yvette Jan 8



• Agu Jan 8



• Isaac Jan 10



• Tega Jan 12



• Jane Jan 13



• Yejide Jan 20



• Ayodele Jan 21



• Arin Jan 21



• Dorothy Jan 22



• Jude Jan 23



• Oluwaseun Jan 23



• Weyimi Jan 27



• Chidiebere Jan 29

## FEBRUARY PEOPLE

## BIRTHDAYS



• Hamilton Feb 2



• Folayemi Feb 2



• Lawrence Feb 7



• Chukwudi Feb 15



• Johnson Feb 19



• Maureen Feb 21



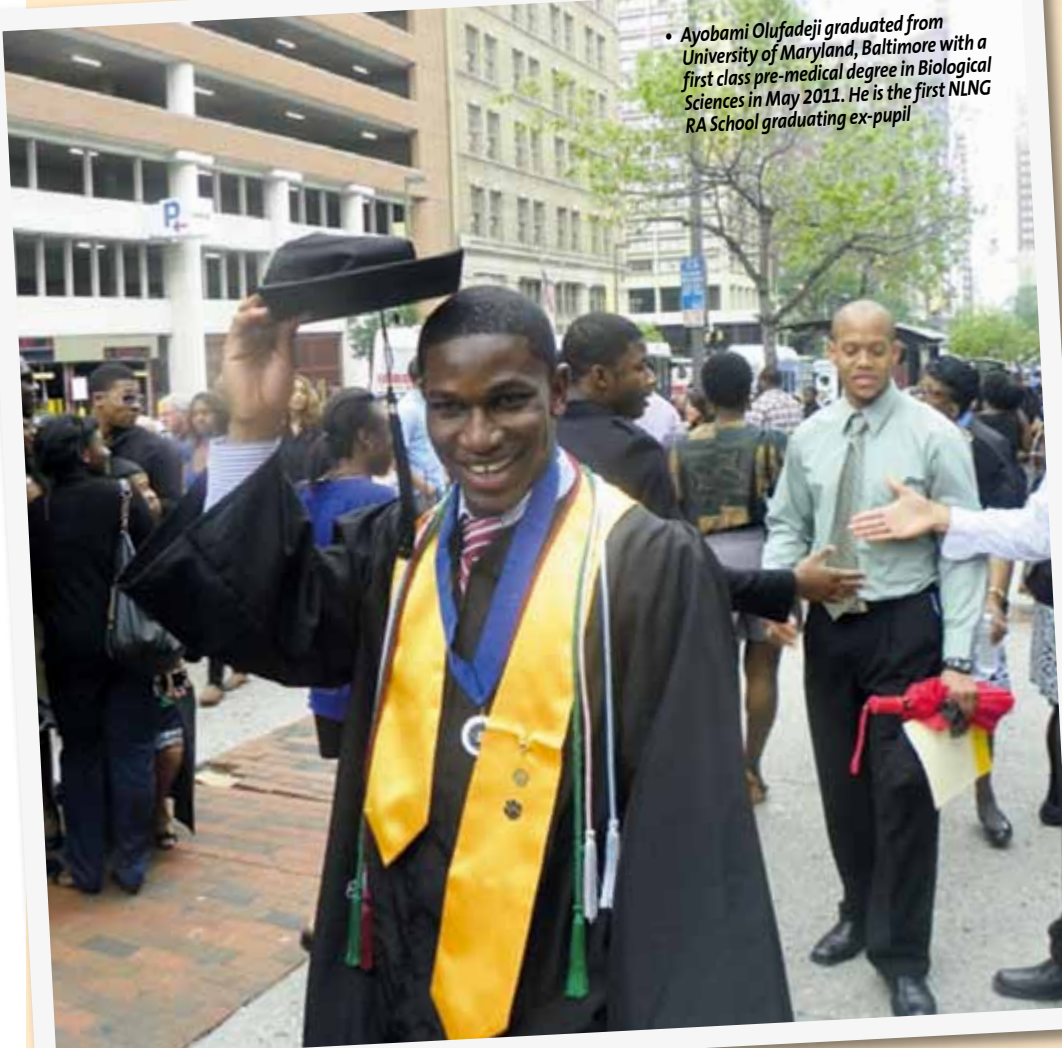
• Godpower Feb 22



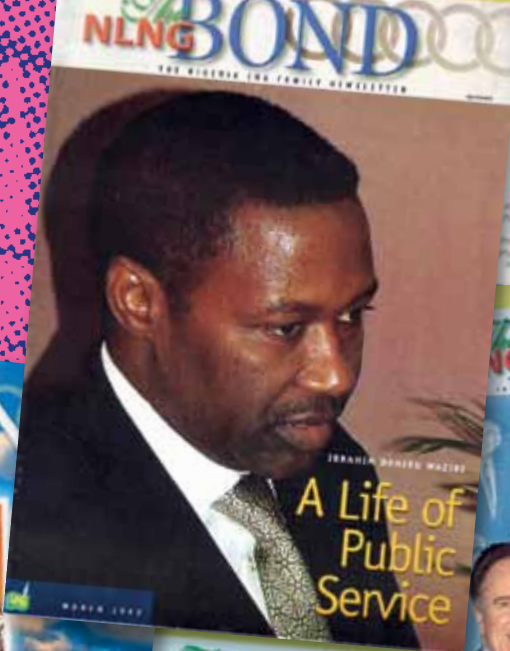
• Timothy Feb 25

1. OBU Nkemakonam ..... 1 Feb
2. AHMED Goni ..... 2 Feb
3. EGBUIE Hamilton ..... 2 Feb
4. ANIFOWOSHE Folayemi ..... 2 Feb
5. ADODO Osagie ..... 3 Feb
6. OYEBOLA Adetunji ..... 3 Feb
7. AHMED Abdulkadir ..... 4 Feb
8. OYADOTUN Oluseyi ..... 4 Feb
9. OTTAH Isaac ..... 4 Feb
10. CHIAZOR Ijeoma ..... 5 Feb
11. ADEBAYO Oluwatoyin ..... 5 Feb
12. ILORI Babatunde ..... 5 Feb
13. MOHAMMED Balarabe ..... 6 Feb
14. ALETOR Mahmud ..... 6 Feb
15. UGOJI Obioha ..... 7 Feb
16. UMARU Suleiman ..... 7 Feb
17. CHUKWU Lawrence ..... 7 Feb
18. AGBOOLA Regina ..... 8 Feb
19. IYOKO Ewache ..... 9 Feb
20. BECKLEY Margaret ..... 10 Feb
21. ILIYASU Mustapha ..... 10 Feb
22. ONWUTEAKA John ..... 11 Feb
23. IMUH Lionel ..... 11 Feb
24. OSEMWINYEN Ekorutomwen ..... 11 Feb
25. KEHINDE Adewuyi ..... 11 Feb
26. OGUNDELE Adenike ..... 11 Feb
27. LAWAL Yayha ..... 11 Feb
28. SAFI Mohamed ..... 11 Feb
29. EZECHUKWU Chijioko ..... 12 Feb
30. ARCHIBONG Ikemi ..... 12 Feb
31. NWAFOR Ogbonnia ..... 13 Feb
32. MOHAMMED Ibrahim ..... 13 Feb
33. OBASI Chibor ..... 13 Feb
34. AMOLE Rasaki ..... 13 Feb
35. NWAALOR Theophilus ..... 13 Feb
36. IHEJIRIKA Chuka ..... 14 Feb
37. COLES Terry ..... 14 Feb
38. OHAJI Cosmos ..... 15 Feb
39. AWAIBE Chukwudi ..... 15 Feb
40. BANJOKO Abiola ..... 15 Feb
41. ASHIFATU Gbolagade ..... 16 Feb
42. UNIGWE Franca ..... 16 Feb
43. BELLO Olumuyiwa ..... 17 Feb
44. ALETILE Oluwadurotimi ..... 17 Feb
45. NWOKEDI Ogochukwu ..... 17 Feb
46. ORUPABO Bessie ..... 17 Feb
47. AMAECHI Chidinma ..... 18 Feb
48. YUSUF Ibrahim ..... 18 Feb
49. OLORUNSOA Johnson ..... 19 Feb
50. ATANDA Kayode ..... 19 Feb
51. INEGBEDION Eromosele ..... 19 Feb
52. OJI Humphrey ..... 19 Feb
53. OKONKWO Maduakoam ..... 21 Feb
54. ADEGA-IDUMESARO Maureen ..... 21 Feb
55. SMITH Harvey ..... 21 Feb
56. ISMAILA Hafis ..... 22 Feb
57. OLUNGWE Godpower ..... 22 Feb
58. AFOLABI Ajiboye ..... 22 Feb
59. NWAENZE Chinonyerem ..... 22 Feb
60. NWOCHA Faith ..... 23 Feb
61. WILCOX Henry ..... 24 Feb
62. OBOMANU Ronald ..... 24 Feb
63. OLUJIMI Ayodele ..... 24 Feb
64. GIBBS John ..... 24 Feb
65. DRYBURGH Keith ..... 24 Feb
66. PHILIP Yakubu ..... 25 Feb
67. SULEMAN Kaka ..... 25 Feb
68. EGHENLEN Timothy ..... 25 Feb
69. DIENYE Godson ..... 26 Feb
70. OZOH Patrick ..... 27 Feb
71. EKAM John ..... 27 Feb
72. NWORAH Okechukwu ..... 27 Feb
73. ZWAANS Jasper J. .... 27 Feb
74. SALIU Charles ..... 28 Feb

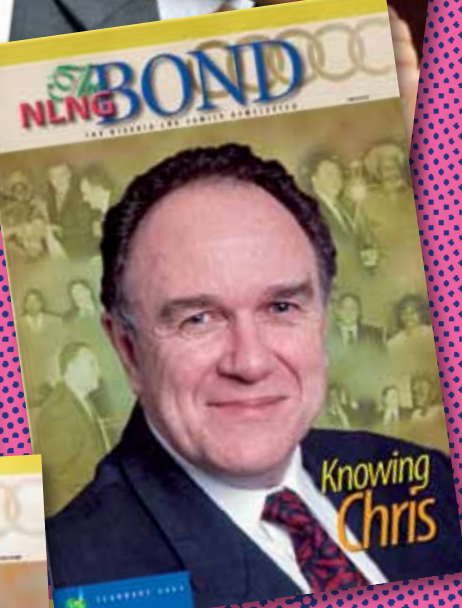
## REMEMBERING 2011



• Ayobami Olufadeji graduated from University of Maryland, Baltimore with a first class pre-medical degree in Biological Sciences in May 2011. He is the first NLNG RA School graduating ex-pupil



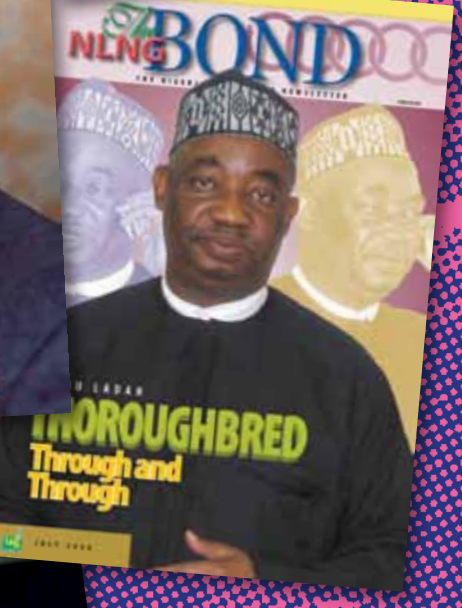
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*Being able to improve your profitability at the same time grow!*



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CHIMA ISILEBO

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