



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT: Plot 1102, Muhammed Buhari Way, Cadastral Zone A00, Central Business District, Abuja Nigerian Tel: +234 800 333 1111
www.nigerianbar.org.ng

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION, MR YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, OON, SAN, DELIVERED AT THE VALEDICTORY COURT SESSION HELD IN HONOUR OF THE LATE HONOURABLE JUSTICE CHIMA CENTUS NWEZE, JSC, ON 10 OCTOBER 2023 AT THE SUPREME COURT COMPLEX, ABUJA

PROTOCOLS

*“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time”*

– *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* [Psalm of Life]

1. My Lord, the Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Honourable Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, GCON, and My Lords, the Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in this special court session, to pay tribute to one of the very outstanding personalities that ever graced our halls of justice, **the Honourable Justice Chima Centus Nweze, PhD, JSC, CFR.**
2. Valedictory Court sessions, irrespective of the circumstance, are sober and solemn moments; they both speak to the transience of the positions we are privileged to hold in life and the fleetingness of life itself. When it is about death, it comes with it an additional feeling of sadness for an irreparable loss.
3. The Honourable Justice Nweze, CC as he was fondly called by friends and colleagues, was a very distinguished judge who was not only devoted to duty, but also carried out the same conscientiously and with an unflinching dedication to the cause of justice. With his undeniable intellectual prowess, His Lordship made very significant contributions to the growth of our jurisprudence and helped extend the frontiers of our legal landscape.
4. His lordship will always be remembered for his erudition and the painstaking manner in which he waded through volumes of legal arguments to present the position of the law with clarity. His lordship’s decisions were legally sound with strong logical foundations, a testament to the amount of hard work that went into every one of them. His Lordship was also a master of words; with practiced dexterity he weaved English words and phrases, sometimes laced with Latin, to lucidly drive home the point in very interesting and memorable ways.

NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN **President**

Adesina Adegbite, FICMC, **General Secretary**; Linda R. Bala (Mrs), **1st Vice President**; Chukwuemeka Clement Ugo, **2nd Vice President**; Amanda Ego Demechi-Asagba, **3rd Vice President**;
Caroline Ladidi Anze-Bishop, **Treasurer**; Chinyere Gladys Obasi, **Welfare Secretary**; Akorede Habeeb Lawal, **Publicity Secretary**;

Daniel K. Kip, **Assistant Secretary**; Charles Ajiboye, FICMC, FCAI, ACIS **Assistant Publicity Secretary**

5. Honourable Justice Nweze of blessed memory was one of the Justices, the thought of whom drove counsel to go the extra mile in preparing for a case. When pressing any position before His Lordship, against which there is an existing conflicting authority, counsel can be sure that His Lordship will raise the existence of such authority and would always expect, nay, require counsel to distinguish between his case and the case which the conflicting authority was decided. His lordship was painstaking in conducting every individual case and did not suffer unprepared counsel lightly.
6. His lordship's life was marked by diligence, hard work, and dedication to the cause of justice and the advancement of the legal profession. This is seen not just from his work on the bench, but from other contributions to society. For many years his lordship, while a judge of the Enugu State High Court, was a law teacher at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, I am told by a former student of his lordship, that My Lord was very consistent and devoted to his students even though the service was being rendered gratis – *pro bono publico*. Brilliant, amiable, humane, godly, ethical, are just a few of the many wonderful attributes that have been ascribed to Hon Justice Nweze; an astute scholar, a law teacher par excellence, a quintessential jurist, with a healthy dose of humour. In and out of the courtroom, His Lordship maintained decorum and was always courteous to colleagues on the Bench and to members of the Bar. All through his sterling career spanning nearly three decades on the bench, His lordship conducted himself in the finest traditions of the legal profession. His Lordship's passing is a great loss to the profession – ***here was Justice Nweze, when comes such another?***

Concluding remarks

7. My Lords, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, everything that has a beginning must have an end. Today we commemorate the end of a stellar judicial career which began in 1995 when His Lordship was appointed as a Judge of the High Court of Enugu State. We all hoped that His Lordship lived to be seventy (70) and retire from the bench of this court after a fulfilling career, but it pleased God to let it happen this way. Even in death, we celebrate His Lordship and His excellent service to the nation.
8. To My Lord's wife, the Honourable Justice Ugonne Jacinta Nweze, the children and grandchildren, I know that in all these years of supporting your husband and father and sharing him with the rest of the country, you must have looked forward to the day he would retire; to his twilight years when you would finally have him to yourself. It did not turn out this way, but still, we have every reason to be grateful to God.
9. We must also use this opportunity of My Lord's passing to contemplate our mortality, our sincerity, and our eternity. We should reflect on our own lives, our fading moments, and the coming day of reckoning. Let us see to it that we walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, making the most use of time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5: 15 – 16). We must remain conscious of the transient nature of life and daily rely on God

to “... *teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*” (Psalm 90:12).

10. On behalf of the Nigerian Bar association (NBA), I commiserate with the Nweze family particularly My Lord’s wife and children, and the entire people of Enugu State. I also extend my condolences to My Lords the Chief Justice and the Justices of the Supreme Court, My Lord’s support staff and the entire Judiciary; Justice Nweze’s departure is our collective loss. My prayer is that God, whom he served with his intellect, resources and entire being, will comfort the hearts of all members of his family, his colleagues, and friends. May the peace of God which is beyond human understanding, protect our hearts and minds through Christ our Lord, Amen.
11. My Lord, Justice CC Nweze, has ran his race and finished his course – His lordship acquitted himself so creditably, we pray the Lord Almighty God to grant him perfect rest in the bosom of our Lord.
12. I thank you all for your attention.
13. May it please My Lords.


Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN
PRESIDENT

