



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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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 MR KOLAWOLE SHOLA OKEAYA-INNEH, SAN ON 26 JANUARY 2024 AT THE HIGH COURT OF EDO STATE, BENIN CITY

PROTOCOLS

1. My Lord, the Honourable, the Chief Judge of Edo State, Honourable Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa, and My Lords, the Judges of Edo State Judiciary herein sitting *en banc*, I stand before my Lords today with mixed feelings to pay last respects to a revered member of the Nigerian Bar Association; the very cerebral Mr Kolawole Shola Okeaya-Inneh, SAN, who transited from this side of eternity on 4 December 2023.
2. Although I never interacted closely with Mr. Okeaya Inneh, SAN, I have since his passing heard and read a lot of wonderful testimonials from people who had the opportunity of knowing and interacting with him in his lifetime. His was, undoubtedly, a life well-lived and he has left positive footprints in the sands of time – in his family, the legal profession, and his community. The only time I had the opportunity of meeting with him was in 2022. He prayed with me, and I must say, there cannot be a better moment anyone can share with a man who had dedicated his life to the service of humanity from the standpoint of the fear of God in his heart.
3. Called to the Nigerian Bar in January 1964, Mr Okeaya-Inneh was conferred with the prestigious honour of the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, 20 years later on 13 July 1984, making him the foremost legal practitioner of Bini origin to attain the rank. He served as a member of the Legal Practitioners' Privileges Committee (LPPC) and was a member of the Governing Council of the former Bendel State University, Ekpoma. Although born with the proverbial silver spoon, the learned Senior Advocate carved a niche for himself and rose to greatness through his positive work ethics, professionalism, and consistency.
4. He had a robust practice wherein he represented clients from all walks of life; serving both the rich and the indigent whom he represented *pro bono*. He instituted trailblazing cases and participated in matters that resulted in locus classicus decisions. Mr. Okeaya-Inneh, SAN contributed immensely to the development of the law outside the courtroom by writing legal commentaries, opinions for good governance and the advancement of the Law, and on customary law. In the words of his bosom friend, Chief (Sir) Alfred O. Eghobamien, SAN, the learned Senior Advocate was ***“a great Teachers' Teacher, Lawyers' Lawyer, a Solicitor per excellence, growing the law and nurturing Justice with tremendous erudition and dexterous prose”***. He practiced law with candour and fairness – in the finest traditions of the Bar, upholding the honour and

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dignity of the legal profession. At a time when the Bar and the entire country is in dire need of quality leadership, this is a great loss. The life of Mr. Okeaya-Inneh SAN was such that, if you never read the Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) but tailored your practice of law after his professional conduct, you would not run afoul of the Rules. That was how professional he was.

5. A practicing Christian, the learned silk was a peacemaker. He believed in exploring solutions to problems rather than emphasizing the problems. He advocated for love and unity and was never one to fan the embers of division. The testimonies at the service of songs yesterday, were testaments of his love for God which he allowed to find expression through his life as a legal practitioner.
6. As we celebrate the life and times of Mr Okeaya-Inneh and pay our last respects, let us remember to contemplate our own mortality, our sincerity, and our eternity. We must reflect on our lives, our fading moments, and the coming day of reckoning, and 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).
7. On behalf of the Nigerian Bar association (NBA), I commiserate with the learned family, it is my earnest prayer that God will comfort the hearts of all members of his family, his colleagues, and friends. I urge you not to mourn as those without hope, but rather, take solace in the words of the Scripture that this physical death is a mere exit from this earth and a continuation of the eternal life we have InChrist, in the presence of our Saviour for the rest of eternity. May the peace of God which is beyond human understanding, protect your hearts and minds through Christ our Lord, Amen.
8. I thank you all for your attention.
9. May it please My Lords.


Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN
PRESIDENT