



THE
SIR ALFRED & LADY AMENA
EGHOBAMIEN
LEADERSHIP SERIES

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY OF SIR ALFRED EGHOBAMIEN AND LADY AMENA EGHOBAMIEN.

We consider it a privilege to write a eulogy about the late illustrious patriarch of the **Kola Okeaya-Inneh Family (KS)**.

Our families shared a profound acquaintance, and three main reasons accounted for this. Firstly, in the beginning, both families lived in the heart of Benin City- New Benin. The Okeaya-Inneh' family home – distinguished by an imposing parameter fence – stood out, providing a sense of insulation in the bustling New Benin community. It was a delight to visit. Second, the patriarchs of both families were in the legal profession. Finally, our grandmother Modupe Ojomo (nee Akpata), had a familial bond with the late sage.

Our knowledge of the late sage goes back as far as we can remember. His very close friends called him **“Akika”** (of course we dared not call him such), and he responded with equally excitable verbs such as **“Agbakosi”** that depicted an energetic and convivial atmosphere.

Known for his style and elegance, **Akika** (forgive my impertinence), a showman in every sense, would often arrive in one of his sports cars. The atmosphere would come alive as he walked straight into the kitchen, bellowing orders with his unmistakable voice. He will call out his catering orders to the hearing of everyone. *“50 roasted chicken, roasted goats”* etc. So regular were his orders, they made the caterers anticipate his preferences in advance. His sweet tooth, and consequent love for cakes meant he shared an affinity with Mum, being herself, both sweet-toothed and a renowned caterer. The fact that they both spoke Yoruba further cemented their affinity.

KS's presence in the house ignited great excitement from his good friend, Sir Alfred. From the balcony, (now at College Road) Sir Alfred would enthusiastically echo his nickname repeatedly, making the entire scene bustling with extremely heartwarming excitement. As children, we watched with envy from a distance, yearning to be part of the banter and hoping we too, could address the old man as **“Akika”**. His presence was magnetic, leaving a lasting imprint on our memories.

In the summer of 2003, a coincidental holiday gathering brought the two families together in London. Sir Alfred extended an invitation, and during this event, KS presided over the naming ceremony of Orobosa, Osaro Eghobamien's daughter. Both Sir Alfred and KS cracked jokes repeatedly to the admiration of the guests, exhibiting the Benin tradition with pride and exuberance. His camaraderie with Sir Alfred shone as they continuously entertained all guests present. At the event, KS distributed what he enjoyed to call *“African biscuits”*. Amusingly, one of the guests took this name too literally, and as one would do to a biscuit, put the entire kola nut in her mouth at a go! Naturally,



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she was quick to spit it all out immediately. The drama was remarkable with KS and Sir Alfred making great and excitable fun at the (good-natured) expense of the guest. This incident highlighted the warm and enjoyable relationship between the two families.

In the legal arena, KS was an extremely prominent figure. He made his mark very early on in land matters, and very quickly, his name became synonymous with cases that established fundamental principles. As a result, he and Sir Alfred crossed swords on numerous occasions. Sir Alfred, ever an avid storyteller, would regale us (the entire family) with tales of their courtroom battles, capturing legal intricacies within engaging narratives. They had many battles, cumulating in a case that defined procedure in our legal land space and jurisprudence. This was the epic clash in the notorious case of Omonuwa v Oshodin. Such encounters in the superior courts of records were a recurring theme, with KS playing a resounding role in the legal drama.

My joy reached unprecedented heights when I had the rare opportunity to encounter KS in the Supreme Court. It was clear that the client had insisted on his direct involvement. Despite unfavourable circumstances, he exhibited no hesitation in proceeding with the matter, even though it amounted to an inherently uneven battle, given his towering image in the Supreme Court. Following the case, he simply said, "Well done" an acknowledgment I will continue to cherish.

In the three years since Sir Alfred's passing and the last two years following our mother's demise, KS consistently visited our home and our respective offices in Benin. He would simply drop by to say hello and watch over us. This gesture held profound significance for me and my brothers. His steadfast commitment to safeguarding Sir Alfred's children remained firm. The absence of the lion in "*Akika*" will surely be felt.

In this challenging time, we extend our heartfelt wishes to Ade, Oghogho, Mudia, and all other siblings.

May Ade, Oghogho, Mudia, and the rest of the family find the strength and grace to navigate this new chapter in the absence of the towering figure that was the Iroko tree.

BY OSARO EGHOBAMIEN, (SAN) ON BEHALF OF THE EGHOBAMIENS'