

**October 1st, 2016. Volume.4**

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### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

It's another edition of the Minnesota Institute for Nigerian Development (MIND) Newsletter and I am very delighted to let you into this juicy edition. By all standards it is an improvement on the previous editions. Of course what you are reading now is made possible by the efforts of our resourceful, vibrant and unrelenting editorial board. To all who made this edition a reality, I say THANK YOU.

Needless to say that our usual are in, but most importantly, I am proud of the achievement of our sons and daughters who graduated from High schools and Colleges as well as individuals who were

given recognition at the national and state levels in their professions. We do have their names documented in this edition. We did not leave out other events of interest in the community either.

Culture is one thing that differentiates us from other people and this edition focuses on the uniqueness of cultural diversity of Nigeria

At a social event I recently attended, I was asked this question- What is MIND? For the benefit of others who still do not know, I will share with you my answer.

MIND (Minnesota Institute of Nigeria Development) mission is to act as the umbrella organization for Nigerians in Minnesota to foster unity through social, educational and economic development and with a vision to provide a platform that allows Nigerians and other groups to become productive citizens culturally and economically.

Membership is open to all sons and daughters of Nigeria and their spouses.

Every Nigerian should be proud to be a member of MIND and if you are not one yet do contact us and we'll be glad to get you registered. You can go to our website [www.mindmn.org](http://www.mindmn.org) for more information.

Happy reading

*Kola Adediran – President MIND*

October 2016

# 2016 Graduates



Congratulations to all Nigerian boys and girls that graduated from high school and college in 2016. As the saying goes, *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” (Nelson Mandela).* because *“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.” (George Washington Carver)*

## 2016 High School Grads:



David Ajagbe Jr. Woodbury High class of 2016  
Matthew Adeola, Woodbury High Class of 2016  
Qadre Ayinde, Highland Park Sr High Class of 2016  
Lois Oluwatomiyin Akintade, Highland Park Sr. High Class of 2016  
Oluwaseyi Ola, Sibley High School Class of 2016  
Ariel Isibome Igherighe, Dellassale High Class of 2016  
Angelique Aikoreighe, Twin City Academy Class of 2016  
Adam Aigbogun  
Zojie Eromosele  
Prince Brandon Onyemeh Sea  
DJ. Agbaje  
Lolade Agunbiade

## College Grads:

Oluyemi Ige, University of Minnesota, Twin City  
Olumide Ige, University of Minnesota, Mankato  
Colleen Enwesi, University of Minnesota  
Bishop Anyiwe, Univeristy of North Western

***Congratulations to all of these graduates and those that we are not aware of, we wish you all the best of luck in all your future endeavors.***

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**Urban Expedition** is a part of *Sundays at Landmark*, an event series was produced by Minnesota Landmarks, the nonprofit programming and management agency for Landmark Center. *Urban Expedition* is sponsored by Travelers, Ecolab, Minnesota Parent and RBC Wealth Management. Landmark Center is owned and sponsored by Ramsey County and managed by Minnesota Landmarks, a nonprofit programming and management agency.

On May 15<sup>th</sup> Zumunta, Oduduwa and Igbo groups represented Nigeria in cultural dances and performance under the umbrella of MIND.







MIND also represented Nigerian community at the Burnsville International festival on July 16<sup>th</sup> 2016



Posing with the event organizer

addressing visitors' questions about Nigeria



Posing with Somali organization during the flag parade event





# PICNIC

*MIND's family annual picnic was Saturday August 6th 2016.*



*Hope to see you at the next picnic in 2017.*

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Joe Oredola won the draft championship and Gbenga Wilson came second

Hope to see you at the next picnic in 2017.



**“What God has joined together let no man put asunder”** (Mark 10:9)

*Collins Mbibi and  
Holly Cameron got  
married on July 2nd,  
2016*



*Yvonne Efon & Joseph  
Agunsoye tied the  
knot Saturday 27<sup>th</sup>  
August 2016*



**Congratulations to these couples and all other newlywed Nigerians in 2016.**



## Okuyemi named Endowed Chair for Health Equity Research



The Department of Family Medicine and Community Health (DFMCH) at the University of Minnesota (UMN) recently established an

Endowed Chair for Health Equity Research. On May 5, 2016, Kola Okuyemi, MD, MPH was named as the inaugural recipient of this Endowment. In presenting the award on behalf of Macaran Baird, MD, MS (Professor and Head of DFMCH at UMN), Jim Pacala, MD, MS, (Associate Head of DFMCH) noted that “this honor comes with dedicated funds to support health equity research and associated community engagement and training.”

Kola Okuyemi, MD, MPH of University of Minnesota, Principal Investigator for NRMN’s Professional Development Core.

Okuyemi who is Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health, is the Director for the Program in Health Disparities Research (PHDR) and also the Director of Cancer Health Disparities for the Masonic Cancer Center, a National Cancer Institute designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Founded in 2006, PHDR has grown to include 11 core faculty and over 40 affiliated faculty across the University of Minnesota campuses. Together, this group of faculty, with community and

academic partners in the region and nationally, has brought in more than \$65 million in research funding from the National Institutes of Health and national and local agencies and foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, the American Lung Foundation and ClearWay Minnesota, among others.

In receiving the award, Okuyemi noted, “this honor is recognition of the collaborative work by my academic and community partners for their unwavering commitment to addressing health disparities”. Okuyemi further acknowledged support of “various community partners without whom our work has little meaning. You bring significance and purpose to our work. We study disparities, but you live with inequities every day.” Continuing, Okuyemi feels “inspired by this award to see that this work is recognized. I hope this will inspire my colleagues as well to continue the fight and uphill battle to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to achieve the best possible state of health including physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing”.

At the award ceremony, Susan Everson-Rose, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor of Medicine and Associate Director for PHDR noted, “PHDR leadership, faculty and staff share a deep commitment to authentic community engagement through not just research for academic purposes, but through the way we and the University of Minnesota conduct business and engage with historically underserved



communities. It is by Kola's leadership and example that we are able to do this work of promoting health equity that both drives us and sustains us. This approach is at the core of PHDR. Currently, PHDR has more than 50 community partners – these are people or organizations with whom the program has cultivated trusted reciprocal relationships and who, in the words of our Community Program Manager, Huda Ahmed, 'can call us on a whim, and know they will be heard (and vice versa).'" Okuyemi has a passion for mentoring and developing the career of the next generation of health equity scholars. This is evidenced by his serving as one of the Principal Investigators for the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) funded through a \$22 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. The NRMN is a

nationwide consortium of biomedical professionals and institutions collaborating to provide all trainees across the biomedical, behavioral, clinical and social sciences with evidence-based mentorship and professional development programming.

About Program in Health Disparities Research:

<http://www.healthdisparities.umn.edu/about>

About the Department of Family Medicine and Community

Health: <http://www.familymedicine.umn.edu/about>

Article written by ANDREW SIMENSON ON MAY 17, 2016

## “UNITED WE STAND. DIVIDED WE FALL”.

**N**igeria the largest and most populated Black Country in Africa, is a diverse nation with different ethnic groups. Nigerians in our state of Minnesota is diverse. There is always beauty in diversity. Granted that we have different groups and organizations of Nigerians in our Minnesota state, we are one and could turn things around by tapping into the best in our diverse nature to effect positive change and together build a future of trust and hope. This is most possible if we avoid myopic eye on the negative side of the equation and focus on those that unite us more. By coming together, planning together, and by channeling our positive criticisms through a common front, we become a relevant force, a strong pressure group capable of influencing public opinion at home for better change. According to Dr. Roosevelt Thomas Jr, (Beyond gender and Race, 1991) “It has become obvious

that diverse work force is not a burden, but a great weapon for positive change”.

Our challenge therefore is on how to manage diversity for change and growth. Abraham Lincoln taught us that a nation divided cannot survive. That no nation can survive if its people refuse to support and defend it. As we celebrate Independence, let us remember that Independence is a gift, a pleasure as well as a responsibility. Let us celebrate oneness and strong connections with one another.

When we as Nigerians in Minnesota for example hunt with one dog, fight with one gun, speak with one voice, and cut the grass together without calling any one a prisoner, we can move the mountain and pull down a wall. A house divided cannot stand. We could harvest all that is positive in our diversity to build and

move forward. We should draw inspiration, strength and motivation from the challenges at home to chart a new course for the future. Inspiration is a silent power that will carry us through the challenges of our time.

The fall of a man they say, is not the end of his life. When Nigerians abroad form a common front, when we pull talents and resources together, when we mobilize and educate the youth home and abroad, then we are able to “Take our country back and make it great again”. For us to preach change and effect meaningful change at home, we must first come together, see ourselves as one, love and appreciate our differences as groups and use them as opportunity to build a strong future.

The formation of different groups and organizations in the community is a blessing not a curse. The merits outweigh the demerits. After all, if you are not a good Hausa man, Igbo man, Yoruba man or Fulani man, you cannot be a good Nigerian. It’s unpatriotic and disrespectful to show indifference to the things that unite us as a nation.

No matter how poor, how backwards or corrupt your country, remember that East or West, home is best. Let us learn to develop a sense of duty that gives birth to a deep love for country. According to Thomas Gale, Is it unpatriotic to criticize one’s country, (Bonnie Szumski 2005, p.45) “There is no more effective way to kill national pride than to convince a people that

their past is a chronical of crimes against humanity”. Nigerians should refuse to accept the propaganda that their country is a home for crimes, evils and poverty. Let us continue to insist that our leaders lead with character, integrity and purpose. Nigeria is a colonial fraud. They used the strategy of “Divide and rule” to radically change our history and stories.

Nigerians should shift away from those social, political and cultural divisions that go beyond intellectual debates. Let us begin to feed our courage and learn to starve our fears for one another. Collaborative education and learning has become crucial in our society. It leads to open mindedness and curiosity in relationships. Collaboratively, we can accomplish a lot for our children and generations.

Nigeria today seems to be a ghost town. A stand still with things falling apart. What a challenge. But according to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience; it’s where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”. Fellow Nigerians, let us aim and aspire for a country where our success envelopes our failures, where commitment to excellence propel change, and where future generations will stand on the shoulders of our good examples.

God bless Nigeria. God bless Nigerians.

Chief Richard C. Ikeri. Writer and opinion analyst

### ***Editorial group:***

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