On Her 70th Birthday and Retirement: A Note on the Contribution of Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan to Management Information System

B. O. Akinkunmi[1] and S. O. Akinola[2]
Department of Computer Science,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan,
Nigeria.
Email:[1]ope34648@yahoo.com; [2]solom202@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This technical note presents a synopsis of the academic and professional life of Professor Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan. This is a tribute on her 70th birthday and retirement as a professor of computer science at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This note is divided into ten subheadings which include family background, education, work experience, research supervision as well as honors and distinctions. Others include community service, commendation from the Vice Chancellor of University of Ibadan, marriage, conclusion and postscript.

Keywords: *Professor Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan, Birthday, Retirement, University of Ibadan, Computer Science.*

1. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Professor Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan was born in Oshogbo on March 11, 1950 to parents of Akure and Emure-Ekiti nobility. Her father was the Philanthropist, High Chief (Hon.) Josiah Orisaabinu Adedipe, the late Elemo of Akure and Mayegun of Oshogbo, who was also an elected Representative for Akure in the National Parliament in Lagos in 1954. Her mother was the Chief (Mrs) Felicia Fehintola Adedipe, the late Akuwajo of Saint Paul's Anglican Church in Emure-Ekiti.

2. EDUCATION

She attended Fiwasaye Girls Grammar School in Akure from which she completed the West African School Certificate in 1967 in the first grade and graduated as the best Mathematics student. She attended Comprehensive High School in Ayetoro where she completed GCE Advanced Level in 1969. At Ayetoro, she was also the best Physics student in 1968. She attended the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) where she was when Nigeria's first undergraduate programme in Computer Science started there in 1972. She switched over from a Bachelors programme in Physics into the new Bachelors programme in Computer Science with Economics in 1972, and graduated in 1976 with a Second Class (Upper division) honours degree as part of that pioneering class.

3. WORK EXPERIENCE

She worked as a Programmer at the University Computing Centre in Ibadan between 1976 and 1978 before proceeding to Georgia Institute of Technology, USA for a Master degree in Information and Computer Science, which she completed successfully in 1979. While at the University Computing Centre, she taught programming courses to classes that included both Professors Charles Uwadia and Sunday Ojo. She took up a lectureship with The Polytechnic Ibadan in 1979. She began doctoral studies in Computer Science at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1985 and successfully completed her doctoral studies in 1989, becoming the first person to earn both bachelor's and doctoral degrees in Computer Science from any Nigerian university and the first Nigerian woman to earn a doctoral degree in Computer Science. Her doctoral thesis "Data Processing Model for a Multi-access Computer Communication Network" focused on the specification and design of a nation-wide data-handling computer network for Nigerian Universities. That visionary Thesis pre-dated the efforts in the 1990s to build a Nigerian Universities Network called NUNET. She also studied for and earned the MBA degree of the University of Ibadan between 1991 and 1993.

She rose through the ranks till she reached the peak in the polytechnic system as Senior Principal Lecturer in 1993. While at the Polytechnic, she served as the Head of Department of Computer Science between 1986 and 1995 and as the Dean of the Faculty of Science between 1995 and 1997. She transferred her services to the University of Ibadan to begin another phase of her career in 1999, after serving as a visiting Senior Lecturer between 1997 and 1999 and as an adjunct teaching staff member between 1991 and 1997. She became the Head of Department of Computer Science at the University of Ibadan in 1999.

When she resumed work in the Department as the Head of Department, the staff strength was four academic staff and four non-teaching staff while the Department had only one academic programme. The tons of positive energy she brought into the Department rapidly turned things around. Under her watch, the Department grew to a staff strength of 21 teaching staff and developed a vibrant postgraduate programme that has produced up to 39 PhD graduates starting from the pioneer PhD graduate, Professor Bamidele Oluwade in 2004. Among this group she alone completed the supervision of 19 PhDs while the 20th is about to complete. The Department got a full complement of non-teaching staff. Her success in Ibadan was replicated at Lagos State University where she served briefly as Head of Department of Computer Science while she was on leave from Ibadan.

4. RESEARCH SUPERVISION

She pioneered research in the areas of Internet Technology, Data Mining and Machine Learning as well as Data Warehousing and Human-Computer Interaction. Her 20 academic children specialized in a wide spectrum of research areas that range from Theoretical Computing, Software Engineering and Agents, Knowledge Representation and Knowledge Management to Information Retrieval and Bioinformatics. This has helped to develop multiple areas of research in the Department, making it a very highly versatile research environment. She is the author of over 80 influential publications in the field of Computer Science that appeared reputable local and international journals and conferences. She also served as the first Director of the University of Ibadan Business School between 2012 and 2014.

5. HONOURS AND DISTINCTIONS

She was twice a Federal Government Scholar between 1973 and 1976 as well as between 1985 and 1989, and was twice a Fellow of the International Council of Computer Communications to New Delhi India in 1987 and Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1989. She was a Commonwealth Fellow to Nyeri in Kenya in 1992 and a UNESCO Fellow at the University of KwaZulu Natal in 1998. She was a Fellow of the University Linkage Development Programme at the University of Iowa in 1993 and a Fellow of the International Women in Science and Technology at the same University in 1995. She was a United Nations University Fellow at the Swinburne University of Technology in Australia. This is apart from Visiting Professorships at University of Nancy II in 2003 and 2008.

6. COMMUNITY SERVICE

Within and without the University, Professor Adenike Osofisan is committed to the service of community and humanity. She was elected the First President of the Nigerian Women in IT in 2003. She served as the President and Council Chairman of the Computer Professional Registration Council of Nigeria (CPN) between July 2005 and June 2009, the first woman to serve in such a capacity. She served on the executive council of the Nigeria Computer Society for ten years.

She has been at various times served as Chairman of various sensitive committees of the Nigerian Computer Society. These committees include the Credentials Committee, the Education Committees and the Publications Committee.

In appreciation of a lifetime of service, a grateful community including professional and student organizations have honoured Professor Osofisan with numerous awards. She is a Fellow and a Life Member of the Nigerian Computer Society. She is a Fellow of the Nigeria Institute of Management. She has been honoured with an *Akinkanju* webpage by the Dawn Commission. She was one of only 22 women in Nigeria inducted into the Nigerian Women Hall of Fame on June 10 2019.

7. COMMENDATION FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

In celebrating that momentous occasion – The Nigerian Women Hall of Fame, Professor Idowu Olayinka, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, wrote:

> "Prof Adenike Osofisan is a pioneer and role model in the field of Computer Science. She has taught Computer Science at the University of Ibadan for well over two decades now and she has successfully supervised many PhD candidates in her discipline. The fact that many of our Readers and Senior Lecturers in the Department now have PhDs can be attributed to her singular determination to develop the next generation of scholars in the field and we remain eternally grateful to her for raising the bar. She takes a particular interest in gender development. Anytime a female member of staff is promoted to the grade of Reader or Professor by the Appointments and Promotions Committee for Academic Staff, Prof Adenike Osofisan takes a special interest in such candidates. This is particularly helpful for a University like ours that is strongly committed to Gender Mainstreaming. We equally acknowledge her role as the pioneer Director of the highly regarded UI School of Business. We congratulate her for this special recognition of being inducted into the prestigious Nigerian Women Hall of Fame. Her best is yet to come"

Having excelled in a field in which there is male dominance, Professor Adenike Osofisan is an icon in the community promoting girls' involvement in STEM fields and a strong advocate for attracting the girl child into Information Technology fields.

8. MARRIAGE

Married to the iconic playwright and poet, Professor (Baba) Babafemi Osofisan, and together they have four children and many grandchildren. Two of their children are graduates of Computer Science. One of them, Akinmaderin, is a proud alumnus of the Department. Beyond her immediate family, Mama Osofisan, as she is fondly called, is mother, mentor and an inspiration to many generations of Computer Scientists and scholars from other fields.

9. CONCLUSION

Like a chip off the old block, she is a graceful and generous spirit as anyone who knows her would easily testify. Of the many gifts she gives people, her favourite no doubt is the beautifully printed and glossily bound annual edition of the devotional, *Our Daily Bread.*

Professor Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan, pioneer Computer Scientist, Business Educator, principled advocate for the use of Information Technology, mother and inspiration to a whole generation of Computer Science leaders, the first woman Professor of Computer Science in Sub-Saharan Africa and a Professor of Professors is about clocking 70 soonest. The Department of Computer Science, the entire Faculty of Science and the University of Ibadan, celebrates her icon with great gratitude for her life and career that have been a great blessing to our community, our nation and beyond. We celebrate her mentorship, her passion and intellectual energy, her forthrightness and guidance. At 70, a new phase of life begins and like our Vice-Chancellor, we pray in faith that indeed for Mama Osofisan, her very best is yet to come.

CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE

This technical note is a revised version of a citation on Professor Adenike Oyinlola Osofisan which was read during the Valedictory/Send Forth Ceremony held in her honour on 4th March, 2020. The ceremony was hosted by the Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.