

**TEXT OF ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY CHARLEAN TAYO OREKOYA, 10<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF ST. CHARLES GRAMMAR SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION UPON HIS ELECTION AT THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE ASSOCIATION, 20 FEBRUARY 2010**

**PROTOCOLS.**

It is with a deep sense of humility and responsibility that I stand before you to accept the mandate given to me by you all, distinguished Charleans, as the 10<sup>th</sup> National President of our Old Boys Association at this auspicious 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations Convention of our dear great Alma Mater, St. Charles Grammar School, Osogbo. The theme of this acceptance speech and a foray into the years of the newly elected National Executive Council of our Association, which I am privileged to lead, I have titled "the giant leap into the Golden Years".

Let me start by expressing my profound gratitude and that of the entire newly elected National Executive Council members to you all for the confidence reposed in us to steer the ship of our dear Association in the next two years.

Please permit me to recognise three (3) of our past National Presidents, now of blessed memory Late Charlean Felix Babalola, Late Charlean Dr. Adewale Adejumo and Late Charlean Rasheed Ajani as well as our founding father, Late Mr. Russell Macfarlean. May we please observe a minute silence in their memory as well as those of departed old boys, Principals and staff of our dear School. May their souls rest in perfect peace (Amen).

I wish to appreciate most respectfully, my predecessors in office, our nine past Presidents, particularly the legendary immediate past President, Charlean Adetunji Adepeju, who has laid a solid foundation for our administration to build upon. May I request that we all please give a standing ovation to this pride of our Association who has worked tirelessly in the last five years to take the Association and indeed the development of our good old school to the next level.

On this great occasion of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary I wish to congratulate the members of Caroleans '65, who were the very first set that enrolled in the school 50 years ago. They, surely, are the chief celebrants of this anniversary.

The vision of the founding father of our great school, Late Russell Macfarlean was indeed a worthy one. He espoused his vision in his own words as follows " the country (Nigeria) was going to become independent and I saw what Nigeria needed most at that time were men of integrity and especially practically minded men. What the country was going to need would be architects, doctors, electrical, mechanical, water and chemical engineers, even teachers and lecturers, people of that type, practical minded people and especially ones who put profession before profit." He continued " What I hear confirms that my dream has come true. What I never anticipated was that you (Charleans) would spread all over the world like missionaries of St. Charles".

To a large extent this vision has proven to be accomplished through a number of our old boys in various spheres of life . Our dear school impacted us so much that today, we have Charleans in all areas of human endeavour, both in the private and public sectors at the highest levels contributing to national and international development. Suffice to mention here is the feat being performed by our worthy ambassadors, Charleans in the Diaspora, under the able leadership of the President of Charleans in the Diaspora, Dr. Lai Opawoye, with a commitment to the Old Boys Association, that is worthy of emulation.

In spite of the gains of the dreams of our founding fathers however, suffice it to state that years of neglect as well as policy somersault in the education sector by successive governments at State and Federal levels have contributed to the level of decadence, both moral, academic and infrastructural, rendering our dear school a caricature of its old self. A school that once prided itself as achieving hundred per cent success in School certificate examinations year in year out has become a mere shadow of its old self. A school with students coming from across the nation, including from abroad (Raja Kapardia, one of the first students), without barriers of ethnicity, all living as one has changed to a school reserved for Oke Ayepe and Ita Olokan indigenes only, what a sorry development!

It is in the light of the prevalent situation of our dear alma mater that I see my election and that of members of the new Executive Council as a call to duty, to which we accept to commit ourselves without wavering. While a lot has been achieved by the outgoing exco in terms of infrastructure provisions, awareness creation, among a host of others, there is no doubt that there are yet a lot more grounds to cover.

Our focus is to return our dear school to the glorious days of the past and exceed our past achievements academically, in infrastructural excellence and delivery of first class leaders to our dear nation, internationally from now, through generations unborn.

In this regard our administration shall proceed to be proactive and pragmatic towards achieving the giant leap into the golden years to which we have committed ourselves. For starters, It is my firm belief that as an organisation, the Old Boys Association must fundamentally clearly articulate and define a Vision and Mission for itself. This will be a subject of discourse and will hopefully be finalised in the months ahead.

Our approach to administration will be that which emphasises team work, commitment and passion. The members of the National Executive Council will be galvanised into taking full responsibilities as demanded by their offices and beyond, while other Charleans will be required to fully join hands with us in this quest.

We will operate based on clearly defined and articulated programme of action, broken down into short, medium and long term projects, with clearly identified responsibilities and timelines, to be driven by relevant standing Committees to be constituted and inaugurated by March 2010. Each of these Committees will be chaired by either a member of the National Exco or any other Charlean as may be found appropriate.

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to make a wake up call to Charleans in this onerous task of further taking the Association and our dear school into the golden years. The support and cooperation of current stanzas, new stanzas to be formed or resuscitated, branches, Charleans in Diaspora and indeed all Charleans is central in achieving our objectives.

At this juncture, I wish to state that the major issues to which we shall direct our focus and attention immediately will include the following:

1. **Infrastructural Development Enhancement.** This will be pursued vigorously with the objective on building on the gains achieved so far, by the out-going administration, which we are proud to have been a part of. This is with a view to further enhancing the school's infrastructure and transforming the school to the highest standard attainable. Particular attention will be given to production of modern desks and chairs in the classrooms.
2. **Infrastructure Maintenance Initiatives.** Lack of maintenance culture has been the bane of getting the best out of investments by both the founding fathers and charitable Charleans who have committed their hard earned resources to provision of infrastructure in the school. We would therefore put in place policies and strategies to ensure that maintenance is guaranteed, while in collaboration with the school authorities appropriate controls and penalties would be put in place for abuses and wilful destructions.
3. **Return of the School to the Mission & Promotion of Academic Excellence.** This initiative of returning our dear school to the Catholic Mission will be subjected to further discourse and the decision reached will be pursued with the necessary authorities to a logical conclusion. Where necessary, we would not hesitate to collaborate with other Old Students Associations in the State with the same objective, towards achieving this goal. We shall take holistic approach to identifying the major causes of low academic performance of the school currently and proffer additional solutions to the above. The standards of teaching staff as well as availability of quality books, computers, library and science facilities, etc will be given priority attention. Additionally, motivational and Leadership Seminars will be organised by the Old Boys Association for current students, from time to time, towards reorientation and developing their leadership as well as entrepreneurial skills and potentials.
4. **Re-introduction of the Boarding House System.** One of the legacies of our good old school was the existence of a vibrant boarding house system which was contributory to building a generation of resilient, hardworking and leadership inclined Charleans, through challenges of youthful communal living and discipline in our formative years. Our administration will take as central, the re-introduction of Boarding House system in collaboration with other stakeholders.
5. **Networking & Collaboration.** We will emphasise the need for networking and among Charleans through the enhancement of current initiatives such as registration with the current [charleans@yahoo.com](mailto:charleans@yahoo.com) For those not registered, please note that it is a rare opportunity, I therefore implore you to kindly do so. We would also encourage all charleans to log on to the Old Boys Association web site at [www.charleans.org](http://www.charleans.org) as well as forward valuable information for upload unto the site periodically. Additionally, we would work with the web site designer, a distinguished old boy, Charlean Kayode Abiola currently based in the United States towards the site enhancement, development and regular updating.

Still under networking, we shall focus on reactivation of moribund stanzas, formation of new ones as well as collaboration among stanzas and branches across the nation through contacts and scheduled meetings of Stanza/Branches Chairmen and Presidents with the National President and possibly the National Executive Council. We would enhance the data base of Charleans towards engendering more active participation in the Association's activities by old boys. Towards enhanced bonding, an annual Reunion Dinner will be institutionalised.

6. **Charleans Social & Welfare Support.** It is the desire of our administration to practicalise the old saying of “being our brother’s keeper”. To this end we shall put in place processes, procedures and strategies towards addressing issues of welfare, entrepreneurial and social support among deserving Charleans.
7. **Revenue Generation.** At this juncture, I wish to most heartily appreciate Charleans who have donated generously to the development of the school, its students and the old boys association. We really appreciate you and pray that God will continue to prosper you all. I must however add that it is not yet *uhuru*. Like Oliver Twist, we ask that you kindly note that there is still so much to do. Our articulated programmes will require huge funding to achieve, through generous donations, sponsorships and other forms of financial support both from individual Charleans, Stanzas and Corporate Institutions. We seek your continuous financial support. Also, we shall put in place fund generating mechanisms which would include fund raisers as may be expedient, and subscriptions to the National Body, possibly directly or through check offs with the stanzas and branches.
8. **Charleans Hall of Fame & Awards Designatory Letters.** It is our conviction that we must appreciate and celebrate our heroes, particularly Charleans who have served and continue to serve selflessly and sacrificed financially towards the success of our Association and development of our dear school. Our administration would therefore institute a Charleans Hall of Fame in the Alumni Hall of the Old Boys in the school premises when completed. Also, to recognise deserving Charleans, designatory letters of Awards given shall be added after the names of such Awardees, when addressed as Charleans, for example Charlean Adetunji Adepeju, CONSA, our own version of GCFR. Other designatory letters including COSA, DCA, CEA shall be used as appropriate. Awards will be given to deserving Charleans at the Annual Reunion Dinner.

In the light of the above, which should be seen as broad guidelines and which are by no means exhaustive, Committees to be set up will be required to fully articulate their respective programmes and activities, with timelines and responsibilities to be considered and approved by the National Executive Committee. In this regard, towards effectively driving the above focused programmes, as earlier stated, the following Committees will be set up and be inaugurated to commence work latest by March 2010.

- **Infrastructural Development Committee**
- **Infrastructural maintenance & Control Committee**
- **Boarding System Introduction Committee**
- **School’s Return /Academic Excellence Committee**
- **Charleans Welfare & Social Committee**
- **Networking/Collaboration Committee**
- **Finance & Fund raising Committee**
- **Programme Monitoring & Evaluation Committee**

Suffice it to state that it shall be the responsibility of the Programme and Evaluation Committee that will be chaired by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Association to strategically coordinate and monitor effective implementation of all programmes. Where any of the Committees to be set up is headed by a non-member of the National Executive Council, such person shall be co-opted into National Exco meetings for effective collaboration and feedback.

Distinguished Charleians you will no doubt agree that we have set for ourselves lofty goals towards taking the giant leap into the golden years. It is our firm belief that these programmes are achievable. We would be able to go far and once again, in the words of our founding father Russell Macfarlean "Ad multos annos", that is "keep going for many years", only if we rekindle our commitment and passion in support of the ideals of our dear Old Boys Association. We would therefore appreciate volunteers by Charleians to serve with us in any of the Committees. Where any of us is considered worthy to serve and is so nominated, your unalloyed commitment and selfless service would be most appreciated.

I can assure you that the new Executive Committee is determined to achieve its objectives. I assure you of my personal commitment, passion and determination to take the lead based on the confidence you have reposed in me as the president. Our vision of returning St. Charles Grammar School Osogbo to the days of glory, of scoring 100% in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations must be achieved, the dignity of our good old school must be restored, our current students and generations of coming students must remember the school's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and this day as we take the giant leap into the golden years. We must continually exceed the dreams of our founding fathers and predecessors. This is a call to service for all of us. Together we can, yes together we will. I want to believe we have the assurance of all Charleians that together we will. When we call on you, you will be there for us.

In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. The never-say-die spirit of Charleians tells me, yes we can!

Once again I appreciate you all our elders, my seniors, classmates, juniors and indeed all Charleians both in Nigeria and the diaspora for the trust and confidence in me and this golden team of the 2010 National Executive Council. By the grace of God we will work assiduously with you and for you towards achieving our set objectives and by the grace of God, we will not disappoint you.

Thank you for your kind attention and God bless.

**Tayo Orekoya,**

**National President,**

**20 February 2010.**