



RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY

NKPOLU-OROWORUKWO, PORT HARCOURT.



TOPIC:

EDUCATION: THE GOLDEN PATH TO FREEDOM



THURSDAY
14th December, 2023



12:00 noon



Dr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike Senate Building

His Excellency

Mr. Donald Duke (CON)

Former Governor of Cross River State



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



HIS EXCELLENCY
SIR SIMINALAYI FUBARA,Ksc, GSSRS
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, RIVERS STATE

VISITOR



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



HER EXCELLENCY
PROF. NGOZI NMA ODU,^{DSSRS}
DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RIVERS STATE

SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



DR. SAMUEL OGBUKU

MANAGING DIRECTOR NDDC

CHAIRMAN OF THE OCCASION



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



**PROFESSOR
NLERUM S. OKOGBULE**,*DSSRS, FCI Arb*

LLB (Hons) Ife, B.L., (Lagos), LL.M. (Ife), PhD (Glasgow)

VICE CHANCELLOR

CHIEF HOST



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



EDUCATION: THE GOLDEN PATH TO FREEDOM

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SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES

S/NO.	ACTIVITY AND OFFICER	DURATION
1.	ARRIVAL OF GUESTS	11:00AM- 12:00PM
2.	OPENING PRAYER BY THE REGISTRAR	12:00PM- 12:05PM
3.	UNIVERSITY ANTHEM	12:05PM- 12:10PM
4.	OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN	12:10PM- 12:25PM
5.	ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR	12:25PM- 12:45PM
6.	CITATION ON GUEST LECTURER BY THE UNIVERSITY ORATOR	12:45PM- 12:55PM
7.	CONVOCATION LECTURE: " EDUCATION: THE GOLDEN PATH TO FREEDOM " BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. DONALD DUKE, CON	12:55PM- 1:55PM
8.	SPEECH BY THE SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR, HER EXCELLENCY PROF. NGOZI ODU, DSSRS	1:55PM- 2:00PM
9.	SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY THE UNIVERSITY MASS CHOIR	2:00PM- 2:05PM
10.	VOTE OF THANKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE LECTURES COMMITTEE, PROF. N. HUDSON UKOIMA	2:05PM- 2:20PM
11.	CLOSING PRAYER BY THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN	2:20PM- 2:25PM
12.	UNIVERSITY ANTHEM	2:25PM- 2:30PM
13.	ANNOUNCEMENT IF ANY BY THE PRO	2:30PM- 2:35PM
14.	DEPARTURE	2:35PM- 3:00PM



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



PROTOCOL

HIS EXCELLENCY
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HIS EXCELLENCY
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FORMER GOVERNOR, CROSS RIVER STATE
GUEST LECTURER

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Deputy Vice-Chancellors
Principal Officers of the University
Provost, College of Medical Sciences
Deans of Post-Graduate School and Facilities
Heads of Department
Distinguished Professors & Scholars
Staff, Alumni & Students of the University
Distinguished Guests
Gentlemen of the Press
Ladies & Gentlemen



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CITATION ON
HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. DONALD DUKE
FORMER GOVERNOR, CROSS RIVER STATE

Donald Duke can be described as a thorough-bred Nigerian and a citizen of the world. He was born in Calabar on September 30, 1961. He attended Corona and St. Mary's Private School, Lagos from 1964-1972; Federal Government College, Sokoto, Federal Government College, Ilorin and Federal School of Arts and Science, Lagos from 1973-1979; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he obtained a Law Degree in 1982; the Nigerian Law School (1983); and the University of Pennsylvania in the United States of America (1983-1984), where he obtained an **LLM** Degree with specialty in International Business.

He had a brief partnership stint as a Corporate Lawyer with Onyia & Duke (from 1985-1988) and a full fledge business career by 1988. He was the Managing Director, Hegeds International Limited (1988-1991); Director, Heisler Resources Limited (1991-1992); Director, Stonehedge Investment Limited (1991-1992); Member, Board of Directors, Voice of Nigeria (1991-1992); and Chairman, Allied Merchants & Brokers Limited (1994-1999). Based on his exemplary performance in the business world, he was appointed Secretary, Cross River State Government Transition Committee (1991-1992); Commissioner for Finance & Planning, Cross River State (1992-1993); Chairman, Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (September, 1993); Chairman, Cross River State Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (1993); Member, National Economic Intelligence Committee, The Presidency (1997); Member, Federal Economic Council (1997); Chairman, Privatization Committee for the National Fertilizer Company (NAFCON) (1998); Member, Federal Capital Budget Monitoring Committee (1998).

When at the age of 36, he decided to run for the office of Governor of his state, no one gave him a chance. Considered too young at the time and something of an outsider, a 'Lagos boy', he approached the challenge of elective office with great caution and even trepidation. He took his time, learnt the ropes and plotted a strategy. When he eventually confronted the reality of the elections, it was with such fierce determination that from the outset, victory seemed assured. For, not only did he go on to win, he has gone on to become one of the most successful, elected officials in the history of our country. He successfully completed his two-term in 2007 and has been in private enterprise since then. Always devoid of pretensions, yet acutely aware of his place in the evolving scheme of things, Donald Duke is a reminder that



even in the midst of all our problems and difficulties, the future of our country looks good. Mr. Duke became the first Governor to have successfully completed a mapping project in the country. With that, he was able to execute the first Cable Car in the country at Obudu Cattle Ranch as well as complete the TINAPA project.

Being a firm believer in a private-sector economy, Donald Duke as Governor of Cross River State led a team of dedicated men and women, sought to transform Cross River State from a largely rural and economic backwater into Nigeria's pre-eminent and preferred tourism destination, such that today, in Nigeria, Calabar and Obudu have become Nigeria's flagship vacation destinations. Under his leadership, Cross River State created the **Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort**, reputed to be the biggest integrated business and leisure hub in Africa. When compared with his neighbouring colleagues, his achievements assume an even greater dimension. During the eight-year period of his tenure, Cross River State was adjudged the cleanest, the most peaceful, and crisis-free state, not only in the Niger Delta, but also in the entire country. Yet, it is not readily appreciated that in terms of monthly allocations and receipts from the Federal Government, Cross River ranked 30 out of 36 states. Undoubtedly, his record of achievements as Governor in practically all spheres of governance, provision of infrastructure, roads, social facilities, empowerment initiatives and even style of governance, belies the meagre resources at his disposal. In spite of all his achievements, Donald Duke is far too firmly grounded in reality to know that his influence and power are like a loan. For him, public office is a trust. And as he said in his May 2003 second inaugural speech "there is not, in all creation, a greater responsibility bestowed on an individual than to put him in a position in which by his actions he can affect the lives, hopes, circumstances and destiny of millions of people".

In recognition of his service, Mr. Duke received the National Honours Award of **COMMANDER** of the **ORDER** of the **NIGER** (CON) from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in December, 2008. He is a **Fellow of International Studies**, George Town University, Washington DC. **Member, American Bar Association** and was conferred with **Doctorate of Science Degree (Honoris Causa) in Environmental Management** by the **Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife**. He is also a **Fellow of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, FNIS, 2011**. He also bagged the **Doctorate Degree of Laws, (Honoris Causa)** by the **University of Port Harcourt** and **Babcock University** respectively and **Doctor of Laws, University of Calabar**

A well sought after speaker, he has over the years been called upon to deliver insightful lectures at national events and at various institutions of higher learning, some of which are - the 37th Convocation Ceremony/Founders day lecture of University of Benin, 4th Convocation



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lecture at Benson Idahosa University, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Veritas University, Abuja and the 4th National Environmental Society lecture. Recently, he has also been called upon to speak to Executive Council Members of both the Edo and Rivers State governments during their annual strategy review and planning retreats. on the International scene, Mr. Duke was a guest speaker at the International Forum of Cities (FORUM AFRICA) held in Madrid, Spain.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the singular honour and the rare privilege to present to you, His Excellency Donald Duke, former Governor of Cross River State, a great achiever, an urbane lawyer, a distinguished technocrat, statesman, bureaucrat extraordinaire, shrewd manager of human and financial resources, creative and intuitive leader, loving father and husband of one wife, consummate artist and musician and a distinguished leader of men for the award.



2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



PATH TO FREEDOM

**Being the 35th Convocation Lecture of the
Rivers State University, Nkpolu Oroworukwo
Port Harcourt.
Delivered By His Excellency Mr. DONALD DUKE
(Former Governor of Cross River State)**

PROTOCOLS

As a proud in-law of Rivers State, I join all other citizens of our state, men and women of goodwill to congratulate our graduands. This is a momentous day in your life's calendar and marks the starting date in a pivotal phase of your life's journey. From this day henceforth, if you were not already developing a strategy to navigate and achieve your dreams and life goals, the count down is now. So I have a few words for you. Firstly, be clear in your head and mind what you wish to be, regardless of what you studied. A university education affords you at best the confidence to strive. Secondly, develop a strategy towards achieving this goal and third, attach a timeframe to accomplishing it. However, never be rigid on either of these set points. What you wish today may not be so appealing tomorrow, the world is evolving, and in its evolution dynamics change. Strategies are dynamic and ought to evolve according to circumstances and time is an element you have little or no control over, but never fail to seize the moment. What is most important is you have a career plan, no matter how humble or lofty, it is your plan and like the lens of a glass, keep your thoughts and aspirations focused therein, sooner or later, you will generate enough heat and light a fire. As in a lens, there is no time frame when the heat would generate a fire, the clouds could cover the sun momentarily but eventually it will pass. The winds could cool the heat or rains may fall but all these shall come to pass in time, let not your desire to accomplish wane. Nurture strength of spirit, believe and focus on yourself, you have no time to indulge on others, be Thankful for Gods Grace upon your life, He that brought you thus far, shall never forsake you. What we term as misfortunes and setbacks only strengthen you, for what does not eliminate strengthens. Fear is your greatest enemy, for he who dares wins. Be bold and daring, you are a stakeholder in this country, this continent and the world, not a tenant. Globalize your aspirations where possible, but also be content with your humble strides, what is important is do positive things no matter how modest it may seem. Attitude in numerology is 100, imbibe the *CAN DO SPIRIT*, if I can think it, I can do it, or how else could the Wright brothers have developed the aero plane? Consider where the world would be today without the daringness of those two brothers. Do not for once think there is someone out there looking out for you, or bail you out in your times of need, you are now OYO, on your own.



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Unfortunately, governance and caring do not correlate in Nigeria. Aspire for what will bring the greatest good to yourself and society, for if theoretically, each one of you impacts positively the life of ten persons and they in turn impact a further ten and thereon, in 6 short years we should impact the lives of millions of people. That may sound absurdly impossible and impracticable, only because we have not made giving the creed in our lives. In tough times, develop the resilience to overcome, nobody said it would be easy, but never lose focus, always look at the sunnier side to life. For me, when the times are rough and tough, I take to music. I learnt how to play the saxophone in a tough period in my life, do what you enjoy, to keep you in such sane moments, never allow disquietude overcome you, that is a sign of despair and the beginning of failure, remember, quitters never win, and winners never quit. Personally, I will respect you if you aim high and miss, rather than aim low and hit. Be of self discipline, for if you are unable to discipline self, which is self conquest, how can you conquer the world? Ego is a diabolical weakness not a strength, it's size corresponds to your weakness. Samson was a conqueror until he lost self discipline. Be punctual in your affairs, it's better to be an hour early, than a minute late. Rather be the hammer than the nail, but never fail to show compassion in all your affairs for you are not just a human being, but a human being. Surround yourself with people you can learn from, not those that entertain you for they are of transient value. Study and understand your failures, it's telling you something. Pace yourself, we all have our race to run. It's not necessarily for the swiftest. Always remember the Nokia phone. One of the first cell phones in the market but where is it today? Remember Kodak, they invented the digital camera, but failed to understand the digital revolution, always improve and keep abreast of advancements, it's an ever changing world. Never stand still, time is the greatest and scarcest resource in the world, but, remember as Martin Luther King said, "if you can't fly, run, if you can't run, walk and if you can't walk, crawl, but by all means keep on moving". Your watch phase should be "good better best, won't you ever rest, nay, until my good is better and my better is best.

Let DESIDERATA by Max Erhmann be your creed to life, it goes this way;

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.
As far as possible without surrender
be on good terms with all persons
Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even the dull and the ignorant;
they too have their story.
Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are vexations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter;



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for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.
Keep interested in your own career, however humble;
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.
Exercise caution in your business affairs;
for the world is full of trickery.
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is;
many persons strive for high ideals;
and everywhere life is full of heroism.
Be yourself.
Especially, do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love;
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.
Take kindly the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.
But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.
Beyond a wholesome discipline,
be gentle with yourself.
You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.
Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.
With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful and strive to be happy".

In all frankly, self first, for if you are of no use to yourself, you can hardly be of value to others.
So set forth, your time is now.

Now let's talk about Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world. Our population, resource base and positive aggression make it imperative that we play a dominant role in the black world or at least in Africa. That we claim we are the largest economy in Africa is akin to dwarfs arguing who is taller. The size of our economy which is hardly \$500b is equivalent of perhaps 2 persons in the United States, several companies in the United States are far larger in worth



than all of Nigeria, we need to contextualize ourselves vis a vis the rest of the world. We still remain one of, if not the poorest nation on earth per capital. Ours is the typical "in the abundance of water the fool is thirsty". But there's a new sound bite in the air. A trillion dollar economy in the next couple of years. But how do we achieve this and how does it better and prosper each or majority of us? What are our strengths that we can build upon that makes us as a collective, participants and beneficiaries in the overall upbuilding of our country.

But a nation with the right plans can help catalyze this. And the proposition is based on four anchors, **SKILLS, HEALTH, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TECHNOLOGY.**

Our world today is skills based. Automation has over the past 200 years been replacing labor and over the last 50 years this pace has accelerated. It is automation that saw to the irrelevance of slave labor in the West and not morality and is currently leading to higher than required production levels that require unsophisticated markets for dumping. That explains the selling of good quality cheap products to the less developed world, making it unattractive for this world to become productive entities in themselves. To bridge the productivity gap, we urgently need to bridge the skills divide. I am not referring here to education *per se*, we have a sizable number of those. I am referring to a system of education that impacts on an individual a unique ability that is contributory to the overall beneficial growth of society, in other words, functional education as distinct from communicative education as we now have, that enables us read and write. The Germans have by their educational system articulated this perhaps more than any other country on earth with its high content of vocational studies and practical exposure during training, allowing and indeed encouraging innovation. It is hardly conceivable that an automobile engineering student would not have dismantled and rebuilt an entire car by date of graduation and his final year thesis being on how to improve some system within the vehicle. And to aid this further, German manufacturing and businesses are an integral part of the educational system. The Chinese have recently adopted a similar system.

Our inability to develop and implement a functional healthcare delivery system, has led nationally to both physical and economic haemorrhage. Physically, our productivity is one of the lowest on the continent and indeed the world. Malaria as a single scourge accounts for no less than 15 to 20% decrease in workers output, not to talk about poor nutrition and its impact on physical and mental health development. Besides, the amount spent as international funds transfer around the world on healthcare and the attendant high cost for healthcare locally, it is nightmarish to fall sick in Nigeria. Stating broadly, until functional medicare is available within 5 minutes walk from our places of residence, as do churches, universal healthcare delivery will remain a mirage.

One of the great mitigations to achieving our full potential as a people and a nation is the near absence of infrastructure. The paralyzing road, rail, air and seaport infrastructure mitigates the rapid movement of goods and persons. The poor communication system does not help



either, this mitigates the provision of services. Let me remind this audience that to date our telecommunications system is a cellular one, which is a secondary means of communication with very limited data ability as against trunk lines with fiber optics with much larger data band width, what we call landlines, are indeed primary communication systems. I need not talk about power or energy infrastructure. Ironically, Nigeria remains the single largest petroleum gas pollutant in the world. Until recently flaring approximately 25 billion cubic ft. of gas daily, an equivalent of 25 million liters of diesel, an amount that could fuel enough turbines to power the entire continent. Imagine if we piped the gas to every part of the country and made subsidized gas our stimulant to industry in our quest to achieving global industrial competitiveness, after all we flare the gas. You have to use what you have to get what you want.

And embracing technology would be the catalyst. Technology and particularly information technology is the growth trajectory for the next 50 years. As sophisticated as it may seem already, it is still in its infancy and the only way to bridge the development divide between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres is to expedite our knowledge in this sector. It is indeed more crucial in today's world than the study of English as a language and matched only by mathematics. (Truth is to study IT one must have a reasonable command of the language of instruction).

The usual refrain when I so postulate on what ought to be done is, and where is the money coming from? My answer is simple, several sources of financial engineering could bring this about, however, one obvious low hanging fruit, is amortizing our oil resources. With an estimated 40 billion barrels there must be a way to leverage on the short term this resource, indeed, it's not so much the resource but rather our credibility as a nation that is hampering our collective access to capital. The true challenge is not finding the money, but its maximum, prudent utilization and this has thus far eluded us. Recent budgetary allocations betray succinctly this statements.

So my dear friends, distinguished ladies and gentlemen this treatise summarizes what you, we, can do for ourselves and what the country can do for itself and us as a people. Is it easy, NO, and it should not be. The bumps and hiccups along the way only help to sift the boys from the men, the girls from the ladies or better put, determine the entrepreneurs from the flock, thereby improving and putting focus on the productive gene pool. But this would require tremendous discipline, fastidiousness and for us an uncommon drive. But bear in mind, **HE WHO DARES WINS!!!**

Thank you.



PROTOCOLS

- * As a proud in-law of Rivers State, I join all other citizens of our state, men and women of goodwill to congratulate our grandaunts.
- * This is a momentous day in your life's calendar and marks the starting date in a pivotal phase of your life's journey. From this day henceforth, if you were not already developing a strategy to navigate and achieve your dreams and life goals, the count down is now. So I have a few words for you. Firstly, be clear in your head and mind what you wish to be, regardless of what you studied. A university education affords you at best the confidence to strive. Secondly, develop a strategy towards achieving this goal and third, attach a timeframe to accomplishing it.

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- * Aspire for what will bring the greatest good to yourself and society, for if theoretically, each one of you impacts positively the life of ten persons and they in turn impact a further ten and thereon, in 6 short years we should impact the lives of millions of people. That may sound absurdly impossible and impracticable, only because we have not made giving the creed in our lives. In tough times, develop the resilience to overcome, nobody said it would be easy, but never lose focus, always look at the sunnier side to life. For me, when the times are rough and tough, I take to music. I learnt how to play the saxophone in a tough period in my life, do what you enjoy, to keep you in such sane moments, never allow disquietude overcome you, that is a sign of despair and the beginning of failure, remember, quitters never win, and winners never quit. Personally, I will respect you if you aim high and miss, rather than aim low and hit.

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* Our population, resource base and positive aggression make it imperative that we play a dominant role in the black world or at least in Africa. That we claim we are the largest economy in Africa is akin to dwarfs arguing who is taller. The size of our economy which is hardly \$500b is equivalent of perhaps 2 persons in the United States, several companies in the United States are far larger in worth than all of Nigeria, we need to contextualize ourselves vis a vis the rest of the world. We still remain one of, if not the poorest nation on earth per capital.

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2023 CONVOCATION LECTURE



* One of the great mitigations to achieving our full potential as a people and a nation is the near absence of infrastructure. The paralyzing road, rail, air and seaport infrastructure mitigates the rapid movement of goods and persons. The poor communication system does not help either, this mitigates the provision of services.

* Let me remind this audience that to date our telecommunications system is a cellular one, which is a secondary means of communication with very limited data ability as against trunk lines with fiber optics with much larger data band width, what we call land lines, are indeed primary communication systems. I need not talk about power or energy infrastructure. Ironically, Nigeria remains the single largest petroleum gas pollutant in the world.

* Until recently flaring approximately 25 billion cubic ft. of gas daily, an equivalent of 25 million liters of diesel, an amount that could fuel enough turbines to power the entire continent. Imagine if we piped the gas to every part of the country and made subsidized gas our stimulant to industry in our quest to achieving global industrial competitiveness, after all we flare the gas. You have to use what you have to get what you want.

* And embracing technology would be the catalyst. Technology and particularly information technology is the growth trajectory for the next 50 years. As sophisticated as it may seem already, it is still in its infancy and the only way to bridge the development divide between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres is to expedite our knowledge in this sector.

§ It is indeed more crucial in today's world than the study of English as a language and matched only by mathematics. (Truth is to study IT one must have a reasonable command of the language of instruction). The usual refrain when I so postulate on what ought to be done is, and where is the money coming from? My answer is simple, several sources of financial engineering could bring this about, however, one obvious low hanging fruit, is amortizing our oil resources.

§ With an estimated 40 billion barrels there must be a way to leverage on the short term this resource, indeed, it's not so much the resource but rather our credibility as a nation that is hampering our collective access to capital. The true challenge is not finding the money, but its maximum, prudent utilization and this has thus far eluded us. Recent budgetary allocations betray succinctly this statements.

§ So my dear friends, distinguished ladies and gentlemen this treatise summarizes what you, we, can do for ourselves and what the country can do for itself and us as a people. Is it easy, NO, and it should not be. The bumps and hiccups along the way only help to sift the boys from the men, the girls from the ladies or better put, determine the entrepreneurs from the flock, thereby improving and putting focus on the productive gene pool. But this would require tremendous discipline, fastidiousness and for us an uncommon drive. But bear in mind, HE WHO DARES WINS!!!

THANK YOU



NOTE

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