



**British Nigeria Law Forum**

c/o Tim Daniel, BNLF Treasurer  
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## **BNLF Newsletter, May 2009**

This is my first newsletter since my appointment as Chair in March and the formation of a new committee. So much has occurred that I can only give a summary of events that have taken place over the past couple of months.

The AGM was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2009, at the office of Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP (EAPD), where Tim Daniel is a partner. There was a good turnout by members. Oba Nsugbe, the outgoing chair presented his report and the accounts were made available to members present. I am grateful to Tim and his colleagues for allowing us to use their premises and providing refreshments on quite a number of occasions.

The current members of the Executive Committee are:

- Babatunde Akinyanju, Chair;
- Tim Daniel, Hon. Treasurer;
- Tope Ojikutu, Vice Chair;
- Oba Nsugbe QC SAN, Immediate Past Chair;
- Jonathan Akinsanya, Secretary;
- Seye Aina, Public Relations & Events Officer;
- Boma Ozobia, Nigeria Office;
- Nike Sonuga, Membership Secretary;
- Anthony Mordi, Coordinator, Legal Surgery;
- Wole Olufunwa, City of London Desk;
- Omosuyi Fred Omolajo, Student Affairs

The AGM was followed by the monthly networking session, at a new venue, **Brookes Brothers** Bar & Restaurant, Brooke Street, off High Holborn. We meet at Brookes Brothers, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, from 6.30pm.

This networking meeting was unique, as we said “Thank You” properly to Oba Nsugbe for his role in setting up BNLF and keeping it going, since 2002. Simply put, BNLF would not have lasted this long, without his unstinting efforts. Tim Daniel gave a moving tribute to Oba, in the format of ‘This is Your Life’, and on behalf of BNLF, presented him with a book on Benin Bronze and a bottle of champagne. We also recognised the sterling efforts of Remi Aiyela, who recently stepped down as Membership Secretary. Remi has been and continues to be a great asset to the Forum. Her superb organisational skills were amply demonstrated in the planning of the successful BNLF Gala Dinner Ball, which took place at the New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden, in May 2008. Tope Ojikutu presented Remi with a bouquet of flowers and a card signed by members present, as a token of our appreciation.

### **Workshops**

In March 2009, there was the Judicial Workshop, held at EAPD, where Mrs Justice Linda Dobbs DBE and Gill Sloan gave a talk on becoming a judge in England and Wales. They outlined the criteria required for various judicial posts, including the qualifying test, which has to be taken, before a candidate is invited for an interview and assessment.

On 29<sup>th</sup> of April another seminar was held at the offices of EAPD, entitled, ‘Prevention is Better than Cure: Ways of Working to Protect your Firm from the Solicitors Regulation Authority’. The event, which was well received, was delivered by Bhanvi Shah of DG Legal, experts in dealing with solicitors’ regulatory issues.



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### Visit to Alausa, Lagos

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April we paid a courtesy call to His Excellency, Babatunde Raji Fashola SAN, the Governor of Lagos State. This was an historic visit, as it was the first time the BNLF had been invited to such a grand occasion. The members who attended were Seye Aina, Jonathan Akinsanya, Nike Sonuga, Bimbo Badejo, Remi Aiyela, Femi Awodele and me. I gave a short speech and His Excellency responded. The event was covered by the major national newspapers and our pictures appeared in the newspapers, the next day. Images of this event are available to view on the website, [www.bnlf.org](http://www.bnlf.org). Full commentary, by Bimbo Badejo, will also be available shortly.

### Abuja in April

The 4<sup>th</sup> Nigerian Bar Association (Section on Business Law) Conference took place from the 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April, at the Transcorp Hilton in Abuja. As in previous years this was another well-organised international conference. Andrew Holroyd (Immediate Past President of the Law Society) was the keynote speaker. There were 18 BNLF members who attended this 4-day seminar. Oba delivered a paper on the Administration of Modern Justice and Remi Aiyela spoke about Succession in Family-run Businesses. I was interviewed for a local legal publication, known as 'ESQ'. This was followed by a BNLF Dinner reception for invited conference delegates. Some of the distinguished guests present included The Honourable Mohammed Uwais (Retired Chief Justice of the Federation) and his wife, Mrs Maryam Uwais. Also present were George Etomi, Chair, NBA, Section on Business Law, Chief Joe Gadzama SAN and Suraj Sundaram, General Manager, **Arik Air**, our business partners.

### Judges in Bloomsbury Way

For the third year running a number of Lagos State High Court Judges attended a weekly training visit at the Royal Courts of Justice and other judicial institutions, in London. Following the training session we hosted a dinner for nine eminent judges, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, together with the Hon. Attorney-General of Lagos State, Supo Shasore SAN and the AG's Associate, Oyinkan Badejo-Okusanya. The venue was the AH King Chinese Restaurant in Bloomsbury Way, Holborn.

### Forthcoming Events

**28th May:** A workshop on Solicitors Accounts Rules will be held at the Law Society in Chancery Lane. This is organised by the Law Society BME Forum, of which BNLF is a member.

**16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August:** NBA National Conference in Lagos. Details to follow shortly.

I will conclude by welcoming new members to the Forum. These are exciting times for lawyers and law students based in the UK and Nigeria. There has never been a better time to join BNLF. With sustained growth in membership and support from our corporate sponsors it will continue to be the premier organisation for legal development and networking.

Best wishes

Babs Akinyanju  
May 2009

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