

'How am I going to start again?'

•Dad mourns two students who died in road accident

THE community was mourning. It reflected in virtually all the households where the tragedy, which hit the Ofobuike family, was being discussed. Being a small community, news, whether tragic or comic, travels fast in Ezioko in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Last weekend, the community mourned with the Ofobuikes who lost two children – Daniel (21) and Ginika (18) – in a road accident. They were going to visit their cousins in Nnewi when their bus caught fire.

The deceased, who were students of the Federal Polytechnic in Oko (OKO POLY), Anambra State, had been at

'If there had been no strike, my cousins would not have died... Daniel was such a wonderful guy who was always lively and polite; Ginika was very intelligent and sociable'

home since the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic (ASUP) strike began.... When the hearse conveying their

remains arrived in the community, family members, friends and sympathisers wept uncontrollably.



•The late Daniel

Their father, Mr Ugochukwu Ofobuike, in tears, muttered: "How am I going to start again?" Perhaps, his children would not have died if polytechnics had not been closed because of the ASUP strike.

The late Daniel and the late Ginika were National Diploma (ND) 1 students in the Department of Science



•The late Ginika

and Laboratory Management at Oko Poly.

Moments before the accident, *CAMPUSLIFE* gathered, the deceased were lively when they spoke on telephone with their cousins, whom they were going to visit in Nnewi.

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After the call, they left for the journey.

On Nnodi Road, a few kilometres to Nnewi, the bus in which they were travelling crashed following brake failure.

Eyewitnesses said the vehicle somersaulted severally before it fell into a drainage. It caught fire immediately.

Our correspondent learnt that the occupants struggled to get out of the ill-fated vehicle after the crash.

In the commotion, some of them were trapped. The late Daniel and Ginika were among those trapped.

Their colleagues thronged the Ofobuike compound for the funeral. They were led by Abel Abba, president of Science and Laboratory Students Association.

Abel, who spoke on behalf of the students, described the death of Daniel and Ginika as pathetic, saying the department has lost great students.

He said: "When I learnt of Daniel's and Ginika's death, I was shocked and speechless for minutes.

"I could not believe it until we came here to see their parents. Today's ceremony confirmed that what we heard is the truth. So, we are here to pay the last respect to both of them as their presence in our life will not be forgotten till we meet again."



• Students carrying the remains of the deceased to the burial ground

He added: "Both of them were friendly to every student in the department. Ginika played with all manner of people without discrimination. She was very quiet and gentle. She was a friend to everyone in the class."

Nwajiaku Kenekwuwu, a cousin to the deceased, said they were victims of ASUP strike. "If there had been no strike, my cousins would not have died," he said, adding: "Daniel was such a wonderful guy who was always lively and polite; Ginika was very intelligent and sociable."

Martins Ogbonna, their classmate, recounted how he met the late Daniel and Ginika. "We met in a tutorial class. Both of them were welcoming and polite in their approach. But I was shocked to hear that they died in such a horrible manner. I could not sleep for days because we were close, especially Daniel who usually came to me for practical work and assignment."

Another student, Nathaniel Ezeokoli, said the growing list of students' death through accidents and other preventable causes should send a signal to the striking lecturers and the government to reach an agreement and call off the strike.

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