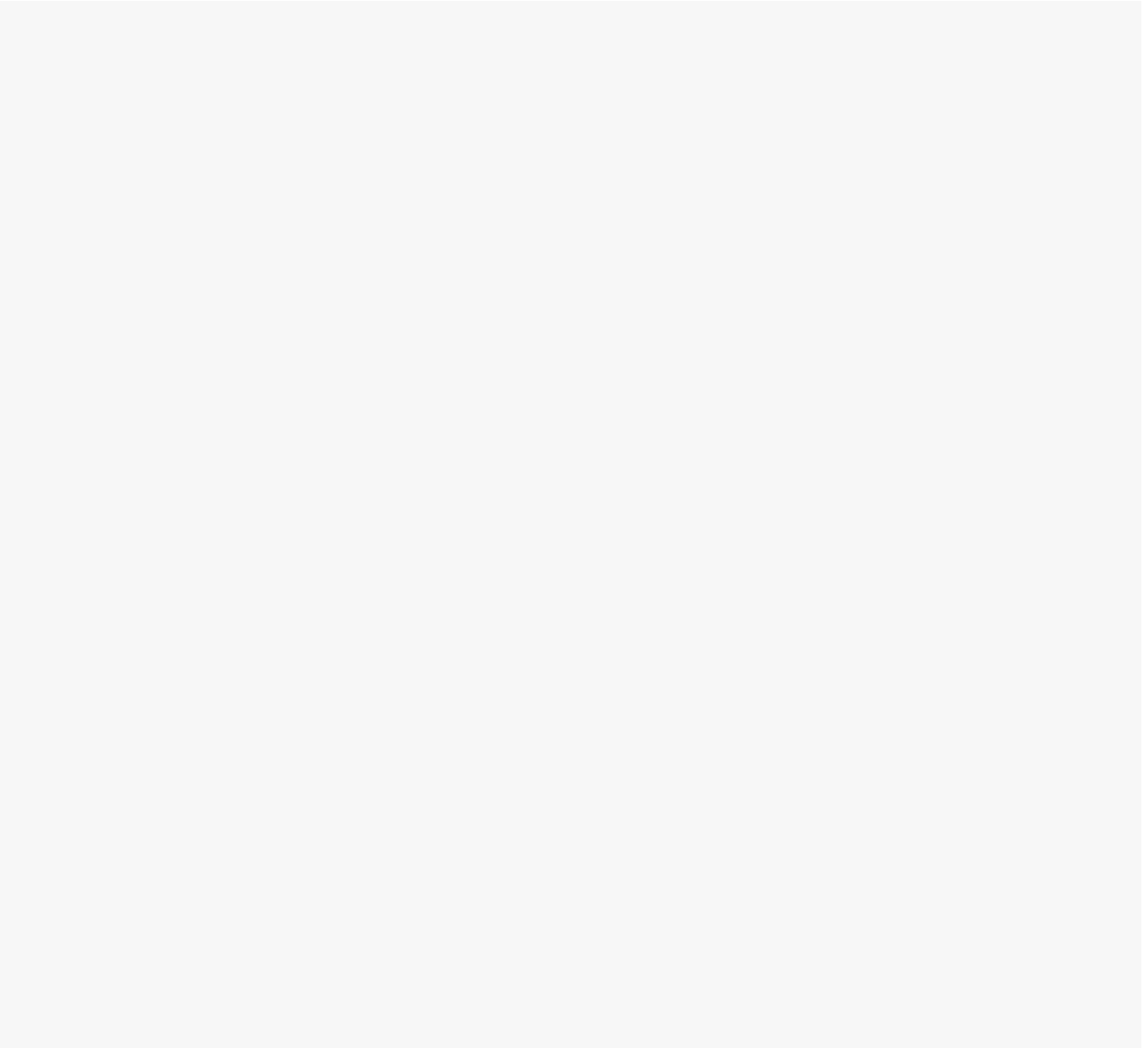


Critically injured survivor of auto crash that claimed 28 lives set to wed heartthrob

• 'Why I stuck to her in spite of her condition'

December 7, 2019



1. *Sunny Nwankwo, Umuahia*

On October 21, 2018, Laretta Mkpuruoma Levi, an indigene of Umumba-Ahiaba Okpuala in Isiala Ngwa North Local Government Area, Abia State, was involved in a fatal auto crash that claimed about 28 lives. She was on her way to Umuahia, Abia State capital after attending the child dedication of a relation in Aba, the commercial nerve centre of the state when two commercial buses had a head-on collision along the ever busy Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway.

It was gathered that her parents who travelled with her in the same vehicle could have been victims of the tragic incident if they had not alighted at Isiala Ngwa junction, a few kilometres to the scene of the accident scene.

More than one year after the accident, Laretta is yet to fully recover from it. She is still carrying iron in one of her legs to enable her broken femur to heal.

While the family has every reason to thank God for saving their daughter's life, the greater joy in the family is that their daughter will today walk down the aisle with her fiancée, Mr. Victor Nwaubani, a Superintendent of Police attached to the FCT Command.

Nwaubani did not only stand by her in those trying moments, he has elected to seal their love in Holy Matrimony. The wedding, our correspondent gathered, will be taking place at St. Michael's and All Angel's Anglican Church, Ahiaba Okpuala Ngwa-Ukwu, Isiala Ngwa North LGA.

The survival thanksgiving is also billed to hold on December 8 at the same wedding venue.

In an interview with our correspondent, the elated husband, Nwaubani, a lawyer and native of Umuaro village in Obingwa Local Government Area, Abia State confirmed the October 21, 2018 incident, saying it was a miraculous event.

He said: "On October 21, 2018, there was a fatal accident that took place at Ntigha Junction in Isiala Ngwa North LGA on the Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway. It was between 8pm and 9pm.

"My wife is a graduate of Computer Science. She is a staff of Physical Planning and Infrastructural Development Fund (PPIDF), Abia State.



“She was coming from a child dedication she attended with members of her family in Aba on that fateful day. It was the dedication of his immediate elder brother’s child.

“On their way back from the child dedication ceremony, her parents alighted from the bus at Isiala Ngwa junction while she proceeded to Umuahia because she had to go to work the next day, being Monday.

“Before they got to the popular Ntigha Junction, they met an oncoming Hummer bus. Because of the ongoing work on the Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway, motorists from opposite directions were using only one lane of the expressway.

“The two vehicles had a head-on collision with the two buses fully loaded with passengers. About 27 or 28 persons lost their lives that night, but she was among the few lucky survivors.

“They were rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia for urgent medical attention. But on getting there, she was no oxygen for three days before she was resuscitated by some good spirited doctors.

“Some of the survivors died in the hospital and were taken to the mortuary, but God saved her life.

“The accident happened while we were about passing out from training.

“Before the accident, we had known for about four years. So, when I met her, there was not any form of injury or deformity on any part of her body.

“Although she broke her femur and sustained injuries on other parts of her body, she has been operated upon and is currently walking with the aid of crutches. We are hoping that in no distant future, she will drop the crutches and start working properly.

“They fixed iron in her leg during the operation, and from what we were told, the iron will be removed after some years when the broken bone must have properly healed.

“We were still courting when the accident happened. At that time, family members and friends also were waiting to see what my next line of action would be; whether I would walk away from her or not. But being that she was someone I had known and became close to before the accident, I decided to stick around.

“My family too understood the situation. Thank God that the family that I came from is God fearing. They stood by me. Both families were praying together for the best.

“I never thought of quitting the relationship, but I felt bad that she was involved in an accident. I thank God for sparing her life, because like I said, most people who were inside the two buses died, but she only broke her femur and sustained injuries in other parts of her body.

“I know that there are men that would end the relationship when she had that accident, but I am different from them. I had to stick with her because I know that the injuries that she sustained in the accident are not going to leave her with permanent disability.

“For four years now, I have shown interest (in marrying her), but by then, I was in the police academy. So, we had to put everything on hold till I passed out from the cadet training.”

Asked whether they will start making babies immediately after marriage considering the pains associated with pregnancy, Nwaubani said: “Left for me, I will give her small time. But if it happens otherwise, God still knows how to take care of it.”

How they met

Asked how they met Nwaubani recalled that it was through Lauretta’s younger brother who was his course mate; one ASP Levi Philips.

He said: “We passed through the Nigeria Police Academy Wudi, Kano State. We passed out last year and he is serving in Ebonyi State as the PA (Personal Assistant) to the Commissioner of Police in the state.

“I was the President of Abia State Cadet Officers in the Police Academy and the brother was the Secretary. So, each time I come home, I do go to their house at Ngwa Ukwu Ancient Kingdom in

Isiala Ngwa North. During one of my visits, we met, and since then, the relationship blossomed till we decided to seal the love we have for each other before God and man.

“What I would tell other lovers is that when such a thing happens, they should not leave but stay by their loved ones. Your love, care and everything will go a long way in helping him or her recover quickly.

“Leaving the person at the time you are needed to be around him or her is not the best option, because you don’t know what might happen tomorrow. It could be anyone else’s turn tomorrow.

“Only God knows what the future holds.”



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