

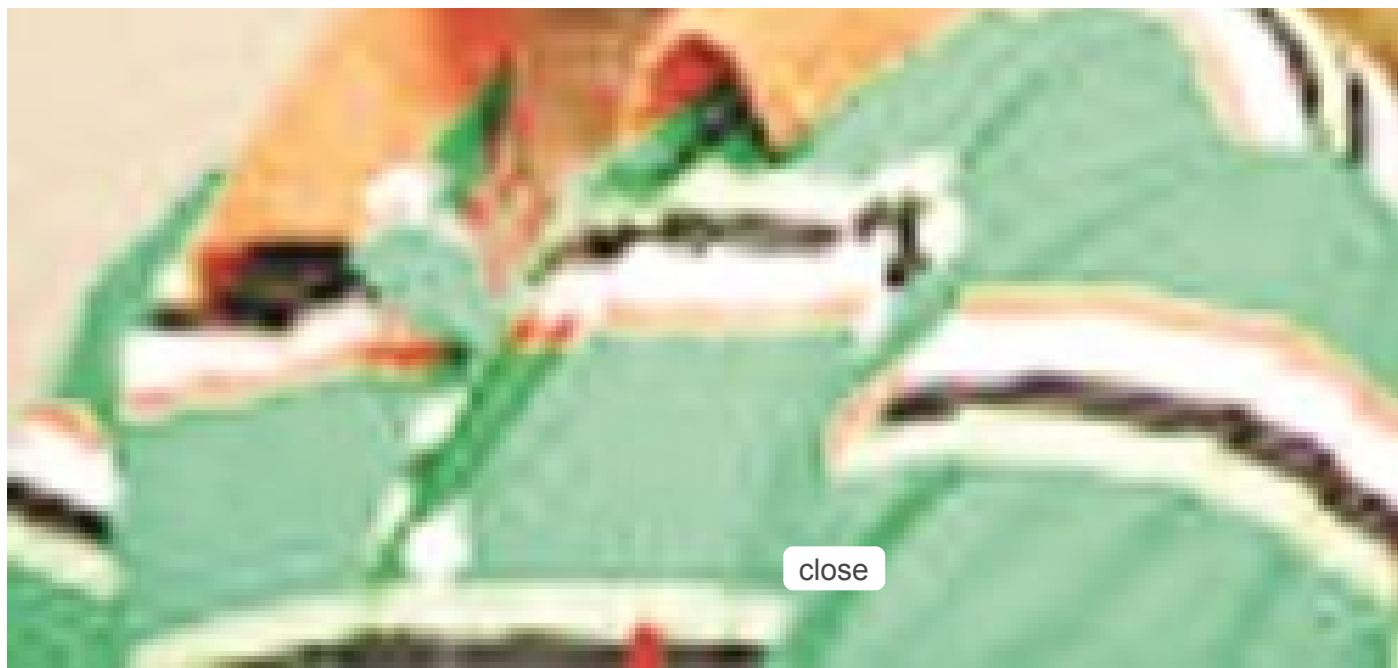


SANs, lawyers pay tribute to Akinwale

May 12, 2020 in **Law**

0





By Adebisi Onanuga & Robert Egbe

Lawyers, journalists among others, have been paying tribute to the late Judiciary Correspondent of *This Day* newspapers, Akintunde Akinwale.

He died on Monday May 4 at the Lagos Island General Hospital, Lagos, where he was rushed to after a truck hit the commercial motorcycle that was taking him home after the close of work.

Akintunde produced the Tuesday, May 5 Law pages of *This Day* newspapers on Monday night and had set off for home but never made it back to his son and pregnant wife.

Lagos State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Moyosore Onigbanjo (SAN) described Akinwale as “an uncommon, versatile and a gentleman journalist.”

Onigbanjo, in a “Letter of Condolence” said the sad news of his unfortunate transition came to him as “a rude shock.”

“I recall vividly, though sadly, our last interaction sometimes last December, when as a leading member of NAJUC, he led other members of the association to my office for an end of the year

media chat.

“ His contribution and commitment to judicial reporting and passion for the pen profession, I believe, will never be forgotten. He will be sorely missed by all of us at the Lagos State Ministry of Jesus”, he lamented.

Sylva Ogwemoh (SAN), who was chairman of the wedding ceremony of Akintunde to his beau, Happiness, in a tribute said he found it difficult to believe that he has passed on.

He described his death as “untimely and unimaginable loss of a calm, calculated and gentle friend and reporter.”

close

Ogwemoh said: “I first met Mr. Akinwale Akintunde (whom I fondly called Akin Akin) in 2011 when I was counsel to one of the defendants in a high-profile criminal trial before the Ikeja Division of the Lagos High Court. After each day’s court proceedings, most of the reporters would swoop on me with a barrage of questions about the trial. On some occasions, I would decline to answer the series of questions, and at some other times speak to some of the issues raised by the reporters about the criminal trial.

“Akin’s style was remarkably different, he would first calmly seek my consent to speak with me before raising any questions or issues about the trial. In some other instances, he would quietly say to me that he would call me later to fix a date for an interview. Akin was easygoing, calm, gentle and dedicated to his profession.

“As Chairman of the National Association of Judiciary Correspondents (NAJUC), Ikeja, Akin would always insist on my being present at every of the association’s event.

“He developed a special liking for me to the extent of insisting on my being the Chairman of his wedding reception when he got wedded to his lovely wife a few years ago. The marriage has produced a child with the wife pregnant with her second child when the cold hands of death snatched Akin away.

“Akin’s death raises several questions about infrastructural decay, indiscipline, and lack of respect for the rule of law in Nigeria.

“A once beautiful dual carriage way named Creek Road in Apapa has been turned to a parking lot for trucks waiting to make their way into the Ports in Apapa with little or no space left on the expressway for normal commuters. This situation has been left unchecked for several years by the government and its agencies and has become the norm rather than an aberration. This is probably

the only country in the world where the person who drives a vehicle sits on the driver's position on the left hand side of the vehicle but has another person on the right hand side of the same vehicle who has no control of the steering wheel dictating to the driver when to turn right or turn left. This is ridiculous!

"A normal vehicle must have all the features of a vehicle, like the side mirrors, brakes and indicator lights and all other features that enable the driver to drive smoothly without causing any obstructions or hazards to other road users.

"The procedure for obtaining a driver's licence in Nigeria is also fraught with all forms of malpractices and no one undergoes a written or practical test before he or she is issued with a driver's licence. Most of the drivers who ply the roads ^{close} Nigeria do not know what is contained in the Code for drivers. Today, it is Akin, tomorrow it may be another person.

"My heart aches at Akin's death, I am however consoled by the fact that heaven is one star brighter".

. Today, it is Akin, tomorrow it may be another person.

"My heart aches at Akin's death, I am however consoled by the fact that heaven is one star brighter. Rest in peace, Akin" Ogwemoh stated.

Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa (SAN) who in his tribute described him as "a thorough bred judicial correspondent" said "we have lost a gem in Akintunde Akinwale."

Adegboruwa said he tried to find his usual rhythm all day to no avail despite waking up so early on to try to do some work, that but things refused to flow in their normal course adding that he knew why much later.

"I was shocked to hear the news of his death yesterday (Tuesday) but I didn't have the details as at then.

" The usual Apapa gridlock, the crisis of transportation in Lagos and the danger of motorbikes called Okada, have all conspired to snatch Akintunde from us. He was a thorough bred judicial correspondent of Thisday newspaper, for years."

Adegboruwa further stated: "Very rare to have a man of his selflessness, humility and contentment. He would call me to find out the details of court cases and proceed to do the needful, without any prompting or expectation. He was so committed to the job, always moving from one court to the other, to cover the cases assigned to him.

“Could such a gentle soul go just like that? With a young son and a pregnant wife?”, he asked.

He added: “No doubt the judiciary and the legal profession have lost a rare gem, but more painful is the manner of his death, which speaks to the neglect of the health sector.

I pray that God will comfort the wife and family through His Holy Spirit.”

Lagos lawyer, Akeem Aponmade described Akintunde as “a brilliant, dedicated and focused journalist. Mr. Akintunde was a model journalist. I would always remember him for his impassioned argument about the judicial system and how far our nation still needed to go to achieve an effective and efficient justice delivery system.”

close

Aponmade said died before realizing his dreams for himself, his family.

He said Akinwale has become another victim of insane discipline among truck drivers in Nigeria. He said his death would be in vain if government continues to fail in its duty.

“The way trucks are parked at Apapa is not normal. A lasting and lawful solution must be found. Those involved in traffic management and road safety must think outside the box and come up with a sustainable solution. This is the only way that future senseless and avoidable deaths of Nigerians can be stopped and it is the most reasonable legacy that Akinwale’s death can give us”, he stressed.

Deputy Editor, This Day, Daily, Davidson Iriekpen, described Akin as one of the most peaceful and conscientious reporter in the newsroom.

“He was just too peaceful to face the kind of horrendous death that befell him. May his soul rest in peace,” he added

In his tribute, Olawale Olaleye, Deputy Sunday Editor of Thisday newspaper wrote “For now, I want to dedicate my space to mourn a colleague and friend, Akinwale Akintunde, our correspondent on the Judiciary beat, who passed on yesterday, in an accident with a truck in Apapa, while heading home from work”.

Chairman NAJUC Ikeja, Henry Ojeluh said: “I have sought words to fully express who you were to me, but my vocabulary fail me. You were more than a friend and a brother. You were a special breed of mankind. You were a gift from God. You lived your life for everyone. No one crossed your path without a sweet experience of your generosity.

“From that your old dairy which always had all naira denominations, you gave out to beggars and friends. Some even took advantage of your kindness and when I draw your attention to it, you would say ‘Henry forget them’.

“When I got married to the most amazing Akwa Ibom angel, Kate Bensiah, you secretly admired me and the sumptuous delicacies I was enjoying. Years after, you caught another Akwa-Ibom angle, (Happiness) and we both became family.

“I guess it is too late to tell you to your face now, that part of the reasons I held on to our over 16 years of friendship was because I secretly desired to have your kind of heart”, he added.

close

Previous Post

Lawyer seeks police protection for miner, Ado-Odo/ Ota residents

Next Post

NBA elections: Are regional groups still relevant?

Discussion about this post

ALSO ON THE NATION

a day ago • 2 comments

Umahi lifts ban on Churches, religious ...

19 hours ago • 1 comment

Ondo Assembly to probe N4.3bn ...

9 hours ago

Count of Biafi Odudu

0 Comments

The Nation



Login

Recommend

Tweet

Share

Sort by Oldest

Start the discussion