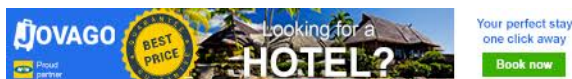
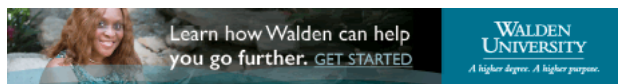


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## A failed search for the golden fleece (/failed-search-golden-fleece)

Written by: Olayinka Olukoya - Abeokuta



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OUU students protesting the death of their colleagues

By February this year, Olatunji Dairo had finished his final exams at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State hoping to go for national service soon afterwards. The graduate of Physics Electronics waited patiently for his call-up letter, but when the letter came, there was an error. The letter indicated that he studied Physics instead of Physics Electronics. He made up his mind to visit his institution to effect the error. It was a fatal journey.

After some days of trying, he eventually corrected the error and was billed to go back home to his waiting parents but there was a heavy rain. That was penultimate Thursday, the day before the black Friday when eight students of the university lost their lives in a fatal accident. Fate could not have been more cruel to Olatunji because except for the rain he could have escaped. But it was not to be. Returning finally on Friday, 26 June he was involved in the ghastly accident. It was the end of a dream, a dream that started years earlier expected to culminate in a highly paid job in one of the leading blue chip electronic companies.

If Olatunji Dairo completed his course of study before his demise, Aminat Adebayo did not even have any chance of starting. As a fresh student of the university she was on her way back home having just finished the admission process she had earlier embarked upon.

These two instances symbolise the tragedy of the accident which claimed the lives of the OOU students penultimate Friday. They boarded the bus at Lagos garage, Ijebu-Ode to Sango-Otta area of Ogun State for different reasons, but unfortunately they could not reach their destinations due to the recklessness of a truck driver (names withheld) whose container-laden truck fell on an 18-seater commercial vehicle at Ilishan end of the Sagamu-Ore-Benin Expressway that fateful afternoon.

Many of them had put a call through to their families, friends and acquaintances that they would soon be together having embarked on a journey that could not have lasted more than an hour and half.

But alas, the unfortunate happened as the driver of the ill-fated truck who failed to obey traffic regulations cut short the dreams and aspirations of the occupants of the commercial vehicle.

Eight of the occupants (OOU students), the driver of the vehicle, Lukman Ola Adekeye and three other occupants whose identities were yet unknown died in the accident. The were not even half way through the journey when the unexpected happened.

According to investigation by the Students Union Government (SUG) led by Comrade Adegbesan Adenola and the chairman transport committee, Comrade Olowo Rasheed, the victims were Odubanjo Eunice Oluwadamilola (Pol. Science, 200 level), Ogunnoiki Omolade Mariam (EFM (History), 100 level); Aribiola Yetunde Elizabeth (Biochemistry, 100 level); Adams Suliat Oluwatobi (Accounting, 100 level); Pampam Funmilayo Latifat (Chemical Science, 100 level); Asade Christianah Ibukun (Law, 200 level) and Dairo Olatunji Michael (Physics electronics, Graduate).

The only survivor of the accident, Akinbo Laughter Ibukun, a Chemistry undergraduate was first admitted at a private hospital in Sagamu for medical treatment before being taken away by her family to an undisclosed hospital for further treatment.

The institution's SUG declared a one-day mourning in honour of their dead colleagues while academic activities and business activities in any form was put on hold. The day (last week Monday) was described as "Black Monday" while a candle-light procession was also held in memory of the departed ones.

When the news broke penultimate Friday about the tragic accident, families and relatives of the victims had stormed the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH) morgue that same night and early penultimate Saturday morning in search of the remains of their beloved ones.



The institution's management, through the Dean, Students Affairs and Chief Security Officer, Professor Lekan Arikewuyo and Mr. Rasheed Adekunle respectively also went in search of the victims as soon as the news filtered into the university community.

However, the relations were shocked to the bone marrow when they were told that the bodies of the victims were not deposited at the Anatomy and Morbid Department of the hospital.

The bereaved and grief-stricken relatives besieged other private morgues in the town. Some of them could not hold back their tears on sighting the mutilated bodies of their wards.

It was tears and wailing galore when the students' leaders of the institution "hijacked" the bodies of their departed colleagues, following a demand by the operator of the private morgue that a sum of N20,000 each must be paid before they could be released. The students were also

infuriated when they learnt that a police officer at a station close to the accident scene demanded N5,000 for police report on the accident before the corpses of the students could be collected.

It took the intervention of security agents to put the situation under control.

Speaking with newsmen, the Chairman, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Ogun State, Comrade Okikiola Ogunsola, described the incident as a tragic one for the students body in the state. He said that the identities of the deceased were made easy through their school identity cards, voter cards, textbooks, and school receipts among others.

Meanwhile, eminent Nigerians have also sympathised with the deceaseds' families and school management.

Former governor of Abia State, Dr.Orji Uzor Kalu; the governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in Ogun State, Prince Gboyega Nasir Isiaka and a House of Representatives member, representing Ijebu-North,Ijebu-East and Ogun Waterside, Honourable Segun Adekoya, described the incident as avoidable if the driver of the truck had obeyed traffic regulations.

They added that the agency saddled with the responsibility of managing traffic on the nation's highways should be alive to their responsibilities in order to avoid this kind of calamity.