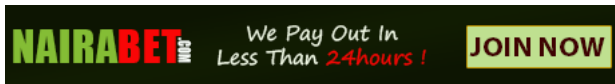


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Family laid foundation for their house, returned 8 days after to bury breadwinner... (/family-laid-foundation-for-their-house-returned-8-days-after-to-bury-breadwinner%E2%80%A6)

February 14, 2016

Written by: Oluwatoyin Malik



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ON Tuesday, February 2, 2016, a member of staff of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Mrs Deborah Falola and her husband, Mr Moses Falola laid the foundation for their house at Adaba area of Apete. Bought through the institution's cooperative society some years back, the couple had hoped that they would gradually complete the structure.

On Sunday, February 7, the husband was back at the site and had marked out a space for the construction of a shop for his wife to do her business when they eventually move to the house. But that dream was broken less than 24 hours after as Mrs Falola and five others, lost their lives in the ghastly accident which occurred on Oyo-Ibadan Expressway on February 8.

The Falolas, Sunday Tribune gathered were preparing for the wedding ceremony of their first child, Omowumi, which would be coming up in April this year. Omowumi and her fiancé, Dayo, held an introduction ceremony at the end of 2015 in preparation towards the April wedding, before the sudden death of the bride-to-be's mother.

Forty-five-year old Mrs Falola, secretary, Department of Quantity Surveying, Ibadan, The Polytechnic, had gone with some staff and students of the department to the naming ceremony of the child of one of the lecturers of the department. The group was on their way back to Ibadan when the incident occurred.

In Yoruba culture, wailing of dogs is perceived as ominous. And this was the feeling of Falola Oladeji, first son of the deceased, on February 8 at about 1a.m, when the wailing of dogs woke him from sleep.

Recalling the incident when speaking with Sunday Tribune after his mother's burial on Wednesday, Oladeji said: "Before her death, what I observed was that at about 1a.m. on Monday, dogs around our apartment started wailing. I woke up and asked what was going on. She replied that it might be that they noticed something. I said it was unusual and we went to sleep.

"Usually, I was the one that used to take her to the office, but on that Monday, I was late for work so she said I should not bother taking her, as she would find her way to the office. I told her I needed some money and she gave me two N500 notes."

According to Oladeji, he was unaware of his mother's intended journey but learnt that she told his father that she might likely go for the naming ceremony of the baby of one of the lecturers in the Quantity Surveying Department.

"I believe she eventually made up her mind to go because of the free transport that was made available," the young man stated.

By the time the news of Mrs Falola was broken within the polytechnic campus, Oladeji was one of those consoling students, unknown to him that his mother was also a victim. "As I was consoling the students, I overheard someone say that the affected persons were from the Department of Quantity Surveying. I immediately put a call through to my mother to know if she was aware of the incident. But her phone rang continuously without her picking it.

"I called my sister, Omowumi, to know if my mother was at home, but she said no. I saw my boss's vehicle at the health centre of the institution and he asked me to ask another boss to call my father. Instead, I called my father to know if someone called him but he said no. I returned to the health centre, only for people that I know to start moving away from me.

"I became suspicious that something must have happened. I called my boss, but he did not pick the call. When he called me later, he said that my mother was involved in the accident, but assured me that she only had fractures and would be well. I left for our church and called my boss again. That was when he broke the news that my mother was dead," the young man narrated.

Sunday Tribune gathered that the deceased left behind six children, the eldest of who is about 24 years old, while the youngest would be seven in April. The names of the children were given as Omowumi, Oladeji, Hannah, Emmanuel, Darasimi and Eniola, according to their seniority. The seventh child reportedly died in 2011 at the age of seven.

Fearful farewell...

Tears flowed freely at the graveside. Pastor Matthew Effomah, admonished mourners to live their lives for God because no one knows when death would come knocking, making reference to the plans of the Falola towards the wedding ceremony of their first child.

As the husband was being led to the vehicle that brought him to the graveside, he looked back and suddenly shouted: "Ah! I was on our piece of land on Sunday, February 7, and it was this very spot that was dug as my wife's grave that I pointed out that I would use to construct a shop for her. My plan has been overturned, and a shop- to-be has now become a grave." Many wept uncontrollably as the widower muttered these words, just as the men consoled him.

Many of the sympathisers wept uncontrollably as they spoke glowingly of the deceased, who was described as kind-hearted.

Buttressing this, Oladeji told Sunday Tribune: "My mother was good and caring. She was always after the well-being of not only her children but everyone in need of help.

"The youngest of her children will be seven years old on April 6. I am a student of The Polytechnic, Ibadan, running a part-time programme in Electrical Engineering. My sister, Omowumi, who is getting married in April, is also running her part-time HND programme in Accountancy."

He confirmed that his mother was the breadwinner of the family who had been helping her husband in taking care of their children. He also said that his parents were soulmates. "They usually went out together. If she went to the market to buy just onions, she would call my father to come and pick her, just for them to be together," he said.

Sunday Tribune learnt that Mrs Falola started working with The Polytechnic, Ibadan, in 1998 before she converted her appointment to being a secretary in 2007. She was said to be hardworking and industrious.

The Public Relations Officer of the institution, Alhaji Soladoye Adewole, who spoke on the tragic incident, enjoined members of the public to join the institution in prayer during this trying period, said that a prayer session was being planned for the entire polytechnic community.

Information gathered by Sunday Tribune indicated that the six accident victims included two female staff, three male and a female students. The driver, who is also said to be a student, survived.

The names of the deceased female staffers were given as Mrs Deborah Falola and Mrs Akintayo while the students were Ajao Segun, Yaya Raji, Hameed Abideen and Zainab Oladiti. Four of them had been buried as of the time of writing this report.

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