

RESPONSE BY HON. JUSTICE J.U. OYOMIRE ON THE OCCASION OF THE VELEDICTORY COURT SESSION HELD IN HIS HONOUR UPON RETIREMENT FROM THE SERVICE OF EDO STATE JUDICIARY ON TUESDAY THE 22ND DAY OF MAY, 2018

PROTOCOLS:

May I be permitted to quote from the Book of Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 Verse 1 New World Translation which says:

**“For everything, there is an appointed time,
even a time for every affair under the
Heavens.”**

I remember with fondness and nostalgia the very first time that I set my foot into this hallowed Chambers of Justice in 1986 as a grey hound Magistrate. The occasion was the Opening Ceremony of the Legal Year. As a Magistrate Grade III, I was the most junior Magistrate in the State except the late James Ozekhome who was appointed at the same time with me.

I sat at the very last bench in this hall on account of my again service. Every year, I noticed that as I was moving on the ladder in the Magisterial bench, I was also moving forward whenever there was a function to attend in this Chambers. Even when I was elevated to the High Court Bench in 2012, I was No. 2 from the rear. So my position moved me to the front row right from the back row where I was in 1985.

The journey from a back bencher to the front row was not easy. It was full of challenges, obstacles and hiccups. From 1991-1999, I was stagnated in the rank of Senior Magistrate Grade II. This was not due to any fault of mine but because there was Government embargo on promotions. Even when we

were promoted Chief Magistrates in 1999 the financial benefit for the rank was to take effect six months after the promotion!!

To make matters worse, appointments were made and vacancies were filled to the detriment of those in service whose promotions were put on hold. In some cases, people who were many years younger as Lawyers were appointed as our seniors to our disadvantage. The issue of quota system or senatorial district balance also came into play to delay one's elevation to the high Court bench. But these are all now history. What will be must be. There is no doubt about that.

I want to appeal to the Honourable Chief Judge of Edo State and to the Government of Edo State to do something urgent about my primary constituency- the Magistracy. The Magistracy has been referred to as the Judicial beast of burden. Their working environment is nothing to write home about. Their welfare needs urgent improvement. A situation where many Magistrates Courts do shift duties is unhelpful to the system.

The Edo State Judiciary needs to borrow a leaf from the Lagos State Judiciary on how the Magistracy should be treated and handled for maximum productivity. Vigorous attempts should be made to elevate deserving Chief Magistrates to the higher bench. A situation where a generation of Magistrates fails to be elevated and are retired upon attainment of the statutory age of 60 years does not inspire the junior ones to work hard.

My stint in the Judiciary where I spent half of my 65 years on mother earth have been rewarding. I have learnt great lessons in the Judiciary- lessons of hard work, diligence, perseverance, tolerance, integrity, honesty and trust among all other virtues. Above all, I have learnt about the universal brotherhood of mankind. I have learnt that irrespective of who you are, the

office or position you hold and the power or influence you wield, you are just a human being. God owns all the powers, influence, position and wealth you think you have and make you think that you are different from others.

We must, therefore, desist from treating our subordinates as nobodies. They are somebodies in the sight of God. Treat your staffs well including your drivers, security men, maids and gardeners. They are all made in the image of God. Live by the golden rule which enjoins us to do unto others as we want done to us. Put your trust in God completely and He shall not fail you.

**"1" Peter 2 : 17 18 admonished
us thus:**

**17: Honour all men, love the
brotherhood. Fear God. Honour
the King.**

**18: Servants, be subject to your
masters with all fear; not only
to the good and gentle but also
to the difficult."**

In closing, I want to give thanks, glory, honour and adoration to the Almighty God the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords for seeing me upto this day and upholding me by the might of His hands. I also wish to thank late Hon. Justice J. A. P. Oki of blessed memory who saw something in me and appointed me a Magistrate in 1985. I also thank all those destiny helpers God has used to bless me throughout my service.

I wish to thank the immediate past Chief Judge of Edo State and members of the Judicial Service Commission, Edo State for appointing me as Chief Registrar and recommending me for appointment as a Judge. I also wish

to thank the Hon. Chief Judge, the Hon. Justice E.F. Ikponmwon for the way she has built a very united body of Judges by her unique leadership style. I thank the Government and people of Edo State for giving me the opportunity to serve.

I thank my Royal Father, His Majesty, Omo N' Oba N' Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II (Ogidigan) for honouring me with his distinguished presence. I recall that his very illustrious father- Oba Erediauwa 11, CFR sent high powered delegation of Chiefs to my Swearing-in ceremony on 28th February, 2012.

To my wives, children, grand children and my entire family I could not have done all I have done without your support. To all the staffs that had worked with me all these 32½ years I say thank you. To all members of the bar (inner, outer, private and official), I doff my hat.

I want to acknowledge with thanks the quality representation of my **Ife** family and **NLS 84** classmates at this event.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY.