

THE OBAFEMI AWOLOWO FOUNDATION

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LOYALTY IN EVERY SEASON **(Tribute to Otunba Gbenga Daniel at 70)**

At seventy, it is fitting to celebrate a life marked not only by public service, but by loyalty and a constancy of conviction that has endured across the decades.

My association with His Excellency, The Senator Otunba Gbenga Daniel is one that has been enriched by a shared reverence for the legacy of Papa Obafemi Awolowo. I first came to know him through Mama, Yeye Oodua H. I. D. Awolowo, whom he and his dear wife doted on with extraordinary devotion. They took remarkable care of her, and she returned their affection in full measure.

At one point, Mama co-opted him into a quiet but determined campaign to persuade me to return home to Nigeria from the United Kingdom. True to form, he embraced the assignment with characteristic dedication. He came all the way to the UK to visit me and my family and, later, invited us on an official visit to his state in his capacity as Governor. All of this he did with great warmth and hospitality, but without expressly revealing the true purpose of his mission, which, of course, was to bring me back home and make Mama happy.

What made the entire enterprise even more amusing is that I never told him that I knew exactly what they were up to. So, we both played our parts faithfully in that gentle charade, each indulging the other out of respect for Mama.

His loyalty to the ideals and legacy of Awo has never been in doubt. He remains an unapologetic, unabashed, and steadfast supporter of everything connected to Awo. Over the years, that loyalty has translated into tangible support for the work of the Obafemi Awolowo Foundation.

This was especially evident during the celebrations marking the centenary of Awo's birth in 2009. The Foundation's year-long programme of commemorative events was made possible in no small measure by the support of his administration. Beyond institutional backing, he gave generously of his personal presence, attending many of the events and lending them the dignity and encouragement that only a committed friend of the cause could provide. Notably, he was present at the book launch co-hosted by the Foundation at the SOAS University of London, demonstrating once again that his commitment extended well beyond Nigeria's shores.

During his tenure as Governor, his administration also made admirable efforts to revive and make functional the Dideolu Specialist Hospital, a gesture that spoke volumes about both his sense of duty and his deep respect for Mama.

But beyond titles and offices, what we celebrate today is a man whose loyalty has been unwavering, whose friendship has been sincere, and whose commitment to the ideals of Awo has remained steadfast.

As you mark this significant milestone, we wish you robust health, renewed strength, and many more years of purposeful engagement. May the years ahead bring you abiding joy, deep personal fulfilment, and the continued respect of all whose lives you have touched. And may you long continue to stand, as you always have, as a loyal friend, a steadfast ally, and a proud standard-bearer of the enduring ideals of Awo.

I seize this opportunity to warmly congratulate your dear wife, Yeye Olufunke Daniel, and your entire family, whose committed support have served as a steady anchor for your many accomplishments over the years.

Have a wonderful celebration!



Ambassador Dr O. Awolowo Dosumu & Family