

## **HISTORY OF IGBOBI COLLEGE NORTH AMERICA (ICOBANA)**

It all started on the weekend of October 1, 2005, in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. Mr. Goroye Tytler had invited a few of his friends, mostly Igbobi College old boys, to Phoenix, Arizona, to celebrate his wife's 50th birthday. As it will become an ICOBANA tradition, guests started to arrive a day early. Some arrived so early the hotel would not allow them to check-in. So, they sat in the hotel lobby waiting for the 3:00 PM check-in. Unfortunately, some of the Old Boys had not seen each other in over 30 years of leaving Igbobi College (I.C.) and did not recognize each other.

As a gracious host, Mr. Tytler went to the hotel to welcome some of the early arrivals, and he noticed that they were sitting by themselves quietly like strangers. He had expected to see and hear the loud, noisy and disruptive celebrations Nigerians are renowned for when they gather together, especially when they had not seen each other in decades. He then realized that it had been so long, and they did not recognize each other. Then, the introductions began, and so did the noise, and so did the reunion. At the Friday night reception, the noise and chatter were so loud, boisterous and distracting that at one point, Mr. Gboyega Delano, an Old Boy from Government College Ibadan (GCI) and Mr. Chukwuma, another King's College (K.C.) The old boy started to complain to Mr. Tytler that this was a celebration of Mrs Tytler and not an I.C. reunion.

At the Saturday night party, the I.C. Old Boys in attendance naturally gravitated together on two tables. They continued their reunion, telling stories about their days at I.C. as well as fond memories of each other.

After everyone returned to their bases, Old boys who had attended, including Mr. Yinka Gbajabiamila, Mr. Kayode Akiwowo, Mr. Akinola Akiwowo, Mr. Sunny Agbede, Mr. Taiwo "Baba 70+" Ayankoya, reached out to Mr. Tytler and impressed on him that it was time to form an Old Boys Association. He should do whatever it takes to create one. With the assistance of Mr. Agbede and Mr. Kayode Akiwowo, they started to reach out to other known Old Boys in the USA and Canada, inquiring about their interest in coming together to form an association. The response was very positive. Mr. Sunny Agbede volunteered to host the boys in Los Angeles the last weekend of June 2006.

At that 1st reunion, which was attended by an overwhelming number of old boys, Igbobi College Old Boys Association of North America (ICOBANA) was formed. In attendance was the President and General Secretary of what used to be Igbobi College Old Boys Association (ICOPA), Mr. Tunde Dabiri and Engineer Ipaye, respectively. Consequently, an election was held, and Mr. Kayode Akiwowo was elected the inaugural Chairman, Mr. Taiwo Ayankowa was elected Treasurer, Mr. Goroye Tytler was elected Secretary, Mr. Gboyega Odunlami was elected Assistant Secretary. Since 2006, reunions have been held in Las Vegas, Houston, Los Angeles (twice), St. Louis, Cleveland, Toronto, Calgary (twice), Indianapolis and Atlanta.

One of the goals of ICOBANA is to help restore I.C. to its glory days. As such, ICOBANA led the effort to create an I.C. masterplan; a plan of infrastructure projects on the I.C. Campus. Some of the notable projects ICOBANA has completed from the masterplan include the complete restoration of the dilapidated dining room – home to many great memories, the Basketball courts, and playing a major role in the upgrade on the Chapel. After seeing how successful ICOBANA had become, the late Dr Olumide Awe, who always attended most of the reunions and few Old Boys in England, decided that it was time to resuscitate the defunct ICOPA UK and as such ICOPA Europe was formed.

Under its current chairman, Mr. Wale Gbalajobi, ICOBANA continues its tradition of giving back by raising funds for educational and infrastructure projects as well as improvement of students' academic results and standards. Programs like the Success Tablet Initiative which provides educational laptop/tablets for students, Excellence in Teaching Award – a teachers reward initiative, and the complete overhaul and reconstruction of the Multi-Media and Library Center.

The ICOBA Wives North America (ICOBA Wives NA) can also not be left out. In support of their husbands Alma Mater, they attend the annual reunions, participate actively, and bring a family atmosphere to the gatherings. ICOBA Wives NA also raised funds in support of the dining room project as well as various other student activities at Igbobi College, including the donation of four dozen engraved basketballs with Igbobi College logos.

As the school motto goes, Omnes Unum in Domino – All are one in the lord. Up I.C.