

FORWARD

It is with immense pleasure and deep admiration that I write the foreword to the Festschrift honoring Professor Christopher Obilikwu Obute, KSM, MON—a distinguished personality whose life and contributions epitomize humility, excellence, dedication, and transformative impact. This book, "Socio-Political and Economic Issues in Contemporary Nigeria," stands as a testament to the profound influence that Professor Obute has had on the intellectual, economic, and social scenery of our beloved nation.

Professor Obute's academic journey is marked by outstanding achievements and an unwavering dedication. Beginning with his early education at Primary School in Orokam, he continued his educational endeavors at St Augustine's College, Jos, where we were classmates and shared the same residence. It was during this period at the College that he laid the groundwork for an extraordinary academic path. Subsequently, we both pursued higher education at the University of Ibadan, where Professor Obute not only made a First Class in Economics (B.Sc. in Economics) but also garnered numerous accolades and prizes. This university served as a witness to his brilliance, commitment, and unwavering dedication. His academic pursuit transcended borders as he proceeded for postgraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, earning a PhD in Economics in 1985—a testament to his commitment to global scholarship.

Professor Obute's professional journey has been marked by significant contributions to both the public and private sectors. From the Benue State Ministry of Finance to the University of Jos, the Central Bank of Nigeria, and NAL Merchant Bank Plc, his expertise and leadership were instrumental. Serving as Commissioner of Finance in Benue State under my leadership as the Executive Governor of Benue State from 1999 to 2007, he played a significant role in shaping fiscal policies that propelled the state towards development.

His academic prowess and commitment to education continued at Benue State University (BSU), where he held various positions. Beyond academia, Professor Obute has impacted his community in terms of

development and pursuant of collective goal for the community and Benue State at large, evidenced by his role as the National Chairman of his local community and Patron of student associations at the Benue State University. Recognizing all these qualities of a rare gem, the immediate past President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Rtd Gen. Muhammadu Buhari honored him with the prestigious National Merit Award of the Member of the Order of Niger (MON).

The enthusiasm exhibited with the accompanying contributions that various scholars have made to this Festschrift indicate that Professor Obute is acknowledged widely to have had a good touch of humanity through academics, public engagement, philanthropy, goodwill and charisma. He therefore deserves the honor for his commitment through this Festschrift. The essays are carefully and topically selected to provide a wide range of knowledge and benefit to the reader. No time could have been better for this honor than now that Professor Obute finally retires from the University! The efforts of the authors are highly commendable. The Festschrift deserves a most enthusiastic welcome by everyone.

Finally, let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to Professor Christopher Obilikwu Obute on this well-deserved honor. May his story inspire future generations to pursue excellence and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of Nigeria.



Distinguished Senator George Akume

*Secretary to the Government of the Federation
Nigerian Government*