

October 3rd, 2019.

Nigeria at 59: To Rejoice or to Reflect



Hearty Cheers to the 'Giant of Africa' at 59. Why again are we called the giant of Africa? Is it because of our great achievements such as having the largest economy in Africa with a GDP of about \$380 billion or because of our enormous population of about 201 million with over 250 ethnic groups or because we are the one of the largest oil-producing nations? I'd leave that for you to decide.

Usually when an individual/organisation's birthday approaches he/she/they rejoice for a number of reasons, the first being that they are still alive and in business. The Second being that they have achieved some level of growth. When it comes to Nigeria's Independence, we celebrate because of the major obvious reason being that we're an independent nation! Oh great! That's fantastic,

Let me paint a scenario in your mind. If you graduated from the University and of course you're very excited because that is a huge milestone; say every year you celebrate the anniversary of the year you graduated but haven't exactly made good use of your degree, would that be wise? We know the obvious answer to that. Now let me bring it home. Are we celebrating our independence because we are free from the hands of the British Government and have actually progressed tremendously? or because hey, its just an obligation to do so regardless of whether we have progressed or not?

I could continue this article by listing the number of problems that we face as a nation, some of which are insecurity, poor healthcare system, a struggling educational system, high unemployment rate, poor infrastructure, high poverty rate, the list goes on. Instead of going that route however, I would like to first use this medium to appreciate our past heroes who were very instrumental in helping us gain our freedom; some of which include Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello amongst others.

Here is a list of Nigerians that have made great achievements. Our people are said to excel wherever they find themselves and this is absolutely true.

- **Olurotimi John Badero** - world's first and only fully trained cardio-nephrologist (heart and kidney specialist)
- **Chioma Ajunwa** - first Nigerian to win an Olympic gold medal .
- **Chinyere Kalu** - first Nigerian female commercial pilot
- **Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti** – An activist and the first Nigerian woman to drive a car.
- **Dr Stella Ameyo Adadevoh** – The brave Nigerian doctor who played a vital role in preventing the spread of the Ebola virus in Nigeria.

- **Wole Soyinka** – First Nigerian to be awarded 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature
- **Christopher Sapara Williams** - the first Nigerian lawyer to be called to the English bar .

I could go on and on. In fact the list of great strides Nigerians have made is endless.
Let's revel in how far we have come as a nation while we hope for greater achievements ahead.

Happy Independence Day, Nigeria!



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