

# Nigerians at Yale University

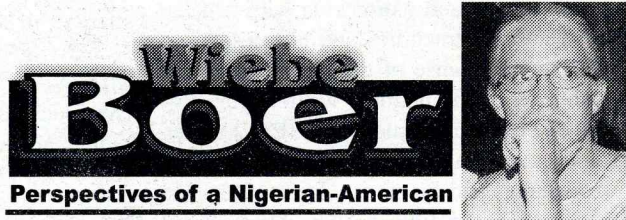
YALE University, where I am presently pursuing a Ph.D. in African History, is one of the most renowned universities in the United States and is held in high esteem around the world. Nigerians are well represented at Yale, not only as undergraduates, but also as students in various graduate and professional programs.

This article is a brief introduction of a cross section of Nigerian students at Yale University. My hope is that such an introduction will offer a window into the diverse backgrounds, lives, and perspectives of up and coming young Nigerian men and women who hope to one day make a contribution to their country.

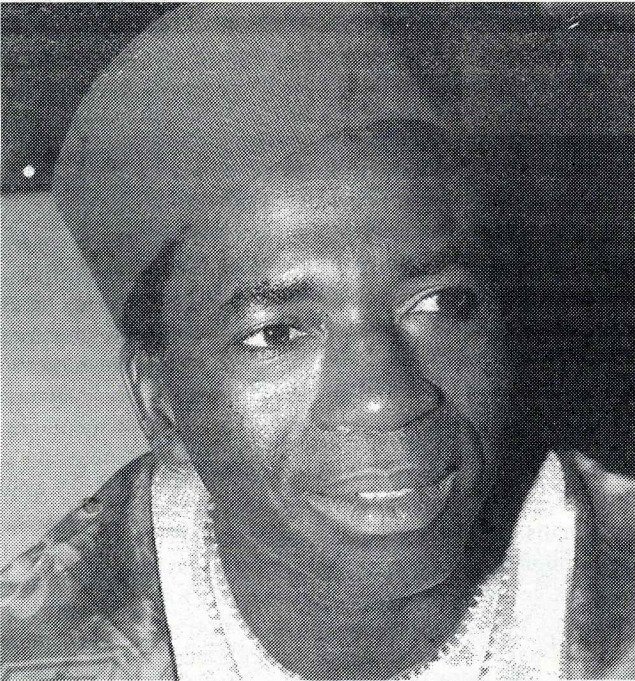
Lola Ogunkoya spent most of her upbringing in Lagos, but attended secondary school at F.G.G.C. Sagamu. Lola is now at Yale studying Computer Science, a field in which she hopes she will one day be able to be of service to Nigeria.

Eyi Tuakli-Wosornu and her twin sister Yetsa grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts and attended the elite secondary school Milton Academy before coming to Yale to pursue an undergraduate degree. Although she does not have immediate plans to live or work in Nigeria, Eyi is committed to following her mother's example of raising children who know and love the rich heritage of the country from whence they came.

Adesuwa Ighodaro grew up partly in Benin City where she attended Word of Faith



**Wiebe Boer**  
Perspectives of a Nigerian-American



•Prof Tunde Adeniran, Education Minister

College and partly in the United States. She is studying Political Science at Yale, but plans to go to medical school after completion of her undergraduate degree. Adesuwa, who served as the secretary of the Yale African Students Association for three years, is optimistic about Nigeria's future, and hopes to one day contribute either in the academic sector or in the formation of national health policies.

Kristina Weaver only lived in Nigeria for three years while her father was working with the United States embassy in Lagos, but the experience was so positive that she contin-

ues to hold a strong affinity to Nigeria. A young woman with a very activist orientation, she hopes to one day write about the Western misconceptions of Africa and work toward creatively addressing the problem.

Then there is Nneka Onyezia. Nneka grew up in Chicago, Illinois, but remains very oriented towards Nigeria. A student with a wide variety of interests, she hopes to contribute to Nigeria both by helping to uplift her relatives living in Nigeria as well as by serving as an ambassador or as an economic expert focusing on how to improve the economic situation of Nigeria.

Her namesake, Nneka Mobisson, formerly of F.G.C. Enugu and MIT, is now a medical student at Yale's prestigious medical school. She feels that the Nigerian government is finally making a concerted effort to address the HIV/AIDS problem and hopes that some of the policies and programs being developed to address this specific issue will also target the larger problems of health care in Nigeria.

Nneka is not one to just talk about problems without doing anything herself and plans to contribute to improving Nigeria's healthcare system. In fact, her very reason for going to medical school is because of her passion for Nigeria. Ministry of Health, please take note.

Louis Ifeguni is within a month of completing his MBA at Yale's School of Management. Hailing from Ndokwa LGA of Delta State, Louis attended Jibril Martins Memorial Grammar School and the University of Lagos. He plans to contribute to Nigeria both through his own scholarship fund for Nigerian students as well as by establishing and running businesses within Nigeria that offer world class professional work experience.

One of Ifeguni's colleagues at the Yale School of Management is Kevin Boer, my senior brother. Kevin attended Baissa Primary School, Taraba State and Hillcrest School Jos, before receiving his first degree at Calvin

College in Michigan. After eight years of working in Southern Africa, he returned to the United States to pursue an MBA. He hopes to one day give back to the country in which he was raised through business consulting, information technology development, and financial investment.

Ikenna Emehele is a law student at the world renowned Yale Law School, continually rated as the best law school in the United States. Ikenna grew up in Enugu and studied at University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, before finishing his first degree at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, USA.

In spite of being at such an elite institution, Ikenna, who was recently elected as graduate president of the Yale African Students Association, remains down to earth and committed to Nigeria. When asked if he hoped to one day return to Nigeria, he exclaimed, "I be Naijaboy through and through! I must come home one day."

Last, but certainly not least, Oghenovo Obrimah was born in Ibadan where he attended primary school and university. His secondary school, however, was F.G.C. Odogbolu, Ogun State.

He is now a graduate student in Economics at Yale University. Oghenovo feels that the new democratic government in Nigeria is a chance for Nigerians to build an enduring democracy and consequently create the kind of economy and prosperity that the average Nigerian deserves. He hopes to one day use his finance expertise to help build an effective and efficient financial services sector in the Nigerian economy.

Through the lives, experiences, hopes, and dreams of these ten Nigerians attending one of the world's great universities, one can see once again how rich Nigeria is in terms of human resources and potential.

These are just a handful of the thousands of young Nigerians now abroad who dream of one day going back to the country they love. I hope that their general optimism towards developments back home will be continually justified so that the opportunities for them to contribute meaningfully in future will grow larger every day.

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## 'Only deregulation can save NITEL'

diverted?

What the cloners do is to identify the line of a subscriber who wouldn't take note of his bill, somebody wealthy, clone their lines and connect with another line and then make the calls. It is very technical but the cloners know their business. We are creating devices to stop all these.

**What is causing the delay in the GSM auction procedure?**

The NCC board has just been created, the chief executive replaced and now work can begin. The delay was because there was no chief executive in place, there was no board and constituting the board was part of the legal requirement.

**What are the benefits of the GSM to the Nigerian economy?**

Where you have sound communication, you will have sound economy and free flow of information. Instead of travelling to London, you get it right here. You know in business, time is money. Good communication saves cost. Information transmission and dissemination all these work together to improve the economy of any nation.

**Is the interconnectivity review likely to force down the cost of services being provided by private operators?**

Definitely. The tariff will be reviewed downwards by NITEL, M-Tel and private operators. Eventually NITEL will have to be interconnected too. The second carrier will come up. So, if NITEL insists on high tariff, the subscribers will have a choice. When there is a sort of duopoly, tariff will come down.

For example, don't be surprised if M-Tel reduces the cost

of connecting people on mobile plus the hand set to N25,000. It has been worked out and a memo is going to the council on it by next week. Once you have your N25,000, you'll get a mobile phone, fraud-free with anti-clonic device. Before, when you make or receive a call, you pay but now you pay as you talk. Abroad, they now use same card and the same will happen here. And since you have many operators, of course you go to the one whose price suits you best.

**M-Tel does not have a statutory right to operate GSM services but is operating it now on experimental basis. What would be the status of M-Tel when the official operators of GSM take off?**

There is a sort of restructuring going on in NITEL and M-Tel. Probably M-Tel will not be M-Tel in the future and whatever name we give to it will be responsible for land line and M-Tel will continue to be the cellular operator. The idea of NITEL coming on is to rationalise the resources of government parastatal. M-Tel has got a licence to operate mobile system while NITEL is for landline. M-Tel has done the survey for 20 states in the country and is a member of the GSM association, so it has gone a long way but M-Tel may not have the capabilities of NITEL. But if the two come together, they will become vibrant and be in a better commercial position.

**How will the proposed increase in postal rate affect the common man?**

There is going to be a restructuring of the Nigerian postal system. For example, there is going to be more postal agen-

cies, new national mail routing to encourage efficiency in both rural and urban areas. When you get all that, you must be able to improve on what you are charging. Newspapers used to cost two pence, now they cost between N40 and N70, what percentage is that? For the postal rating, the cost is graduated for the amount of 20g of parcel you want to post, there is an amount to pay and there is price differential depending on whether it's inland or going overseas. If you move NIPOST charges to N50, they are not doing badly because they charge according to the weight you want to post.

**Is the EMS competing fairly with other operators of the courier service?**

Yes. Because our charges are lower, the people are under-rating EMS. That is psychological pricing; the higher the price, the better the quality but it is not so. The price is low because the government subsidises to help the masses.

**How are you going to checkmate fraud at NIPOST?**

Anybody we catch we send away. Recently, we have retrained, terminated or dismissed some NIPOST workers - some for fraudulent activities, old age or gross inefficiency. The place is being sanitised and I can assure you your e-mail is safe now.

**What is the present status of the post office savings bank and the post insurance?**

We are revisiting and reconsolidating all of them. We are also introducing departmental post offices. NIPOST has a lot of viable properties in Lagos, Ibadan etc. All of them will

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