

**THE PLACE OF RASHEED ABIODUN GBADAMOSI IN THE
HISTORY OF LAGOS, NIGERIA (1943-2016)**

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ABSTRACT

Diverse circumstances have offered many opportunities and privileges for individuals' professional, economic, and socio-political growth. Many people have been endowed with wealth and other treasures, including good names, only for them to ruin these heritages later. While some prominent individuals had risen from grass to grace, others rose on solid templates to higher grace. This article uses a biographical sketch of the life, strides, and forays of Chief Rasheed Abiodun Gbadamosi, an illustrious son of the entire country. To this end, the study examines the versatilities and multi-dimensional socio-cultural, political, and economic dispositions of the biographee. The paper maintains that Chief R. A. Gbadamosi was able to utilise the opportunity of his prestigious background to make history for himself. Against this background, this study adopts the historical methods of data collation, relying on media reports, internet materials, and extant literature.

Keywords: Gbadamosi, Socio-Economic Background, Career Growth, Lagos History.

INTRODUCTION

It is incontestable that the Lagos City-State is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. The estimates of its current demography and the level of its commercial and industrial activities reflect what is characteristically obtainable in some other advanced cities across the globe. The City-State has the potential to emerge as an African Model of a Mega City and remains the economic nerve of Nigeria. From its nucleus as a traditional and agrarian society, the City-State has gradually morphed into a modern, industrial, and cosmopolitan society. However, the gradual evolution into this status combines several factors ranging from geographical, economic, and socio-political perspectives. The strategic location of Lagos State has continued to provide enormous advantages for the time being. For instance, the Lagos port became one of the most patronised ports in Africa during the epochs of slave and legitimate trades. This assisted in laying the foundation for its future economic prosperity. In another vein, its status as the administrative capital of Nigeria for several years contributed immensely to its continued industrial and population growth.

Apart from the above factors, however, the contributions of exceptional individuals towards the transformation of the City-State cannot be overemphasised. Lagos' history is replete with numerous examples of individuals who assisted in laying the foundation of its modernisation. Oba Akinsemoyin, for instance, reigned in eighteenth-century Lagos as a great architect of commercial and economic prosperity.¹ His reign witnessed the beginning of active participation of the

Europeans and people from the hinterland in the economic transitions within Lagos. During the nineteenth century, some colonialists further assisted to galvanise the prominence of Lagos in the socio-economic history of Nigeria and West Africa. Governors J. H. Glover and G. T. Carter, for example, engaged in socio-economic and political strategies that assisted in expanding the frontiers of Lagos.² Post-colonial administrators such as Brigadier Mobolaji Johnson and Alhaji Lateef Jakande also exhibited unparalleled administrative acumen towards the foundation of a prosperous Lagos State.³ Also, the efforts of industrialists and entrepreneurs such as Alhaji Iyanda Folawiyo, Chief Molade Okoya-Thomas, Chief Rasak Okoya, Alhaji Aligo Dangote and numerous others towards the socio-economic development of Lagos State cannot be underestimated.

The Ikorodu Division where Chief R. A. Gbadamosi had his ancestral links, officially evolved as an administrative part of Lagos in 1894.⁴ Furthermore, the area emerged as an administrative division in Lagos State in 1968. From the colonial era, however, people of Ikorodu origin have contributed to the transformation and development of the Lagos City-State. While a good number of them dominated the Lagos textile markets, others such as Chief T. O. S. Benson (a Mayor of Lagos during the colonial era), Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya (the first Commissioner for Education in Lagos State), Governor Gbolahan Mudasiru (a military governor of Lagos State, 1984-1986), Alhaji S.O. Gbadamosi (the first Treasurer of the Action Group and a business mogul par excellence) were able to craft niches in the historical trajectory of Lagos State. In addition, academics of repute like Professor Ayodele Awojobi, Professor Nimbe Adedipe, and Professor Kunle Ade Wahab from Ikorodu Division were able to give credence to the growth and development of education in Lagos State. This same Ikorodu Division produced the subject of this biographical sketch, Chief R. A. Gbadamosi, whose contributions to the historical transitions of Lagos State and Nigeria demand some narratives.

EARLY LIFE: PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

The lineages of Chief R. A. Gbadamosi are traced to Ikorodu and Isale Eko areas of Lagos State. His father, Alhaji Sule Oyesola Gbadamosi (S.O.G), whose paternal and maternal origins are traced to Ikorodu (Lagos State) and Ode Remo (Ogun State), respectively, was a foremost industrialist and a frontline politician of the colonial and post-colonial Lagos and Nigeria.⁵ His father's contributions to the formation and growth of the Action Group (AG), which dominated the political space of the Western Region of Nigeria during the First Republic were enormous. Apart from being one of the very few pioneering members of the Action Group, S.O.G. was the first national Treasurer of the party. Furthermore, S.O.G. was among the distinguished business mogul of the twentieth-century Lagos State and Nigeria. In conjunction with a business associate, S.O.G established the Ikorodu Trading Company (IKOTRACO) Limited in 1935.⁶ The Company created employment opportunities for people. In a nutshell, S.O.G. was a man of affluence and influence within the socio-political and economic landscapes of twentieth-century Lagos,

Western Region, and Nigeria. In 1934, S.O.G established a garment manufacturing company that produced abundant cheap under-wears favourably competing with the multinationals such as the United African Company (UAC). In addition, he was a significant shareholder in the establishment of the National Bank of Nigeria (now Central Bank of Nigeria), which competed favourably with the likes of Standard Bank (now First Bank), Barclays Bank (now Union Bank Plc), and the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA).⁷

On the other hand, Chief R. A. Gbadamosi's mother, Alhaja Rafatu Asabi Gbadamosi (nee Ogungbile), was a scion of the Eletu-Odibo royal lineage of the Isale Eko (i.e Lagos Island).⁸ Precisely, she was a descendant of Oba Eshinlokun of the eighteenth century Lagos. In other words, his paternal and maternal lineages conferred on him the status of a full-blooded Lagosian. During the colonial period, Ikorodu indigenes had to sojourn to Lagos for livelihood and economic prosperity.⁹ During this phenomenal exodus, S.O.G crossed the Lagoon from Ikorodu to Lagos where he later got betrothed to R.A.G.'s mother. This scenario is not peculiar to the Gbadamosi family alone; some other Ikorodu indigenes who sojourned to Lagos during that era chose their spouses from there. However, one of the blessings of the marital relation was the birth of R.A.G on December 7 1943 at the famous Massey Hospital in Isale-Eko (downtown Lagos). At birth, he was christened Rasheed Abiodun Oladosu Gbadamosi (Gbadamosi being the family's brand). The Yoruba people attach much importance to names because it is believed to reflect circumstantial events in the past or present and a projection into the future. While "Rasheed" reflected the Islamic religious persuasion of the parents, "Abiodun" (meaning "born into the festive period") reflected the mood of the period in which he was born, which coincided with the 1943's Ed-I-Kabir, the highest ranked Islamic Festival. Thirdly, "Oladosu" (meaning "wealth turns to the moon") was adorned on him by his maternal grandmother, who was strongly convinced about the brightness of Chief R. A. Gbadamosi's future.

It was at the Isale-Eko, the heart-beat of Lagos, that Chief R. A. Gbadamosi grew up, making him a living witness of the various activities and agitations that culminated in the creation of Lagos State. As an adolescent, he actively participated in socio-cultural activities like the Egungun and Eyo traditional festivals within the Lagos metropolis. He later became a staunch member of the organisers of the famous Eyo festivals and later emerged as the Chairman of the Eyo Agere Group. The import of this is that R.A.G was a "street boy" during his adolescence and not the "get-inside" type. At age 4, R.A.G was enrolled with the Patience Modern School located in Enu-Owa area of Isale-Eko, where he acquired his kindergarten and primary school education.¹⁰ He attended the famous Methodist Boys High School (MBHS), also located on the Island, from 1956 to 1960.¹¹ MBHS was a missionary school, and this did not deter his father, a revered Muslim in the country, from sponsoring his child there. In fact, R.A.G. was resident at the school principal's (Reverend Samuel Ayodele Osinulu) house. These situations not only explain the liberal atmosphere about the religion of that epoch but also provide the opportunity for R.A.G to

addappreciable knowledge about Christianity to the Islamic knowledge he was born into. Moreover, he was inclined to traditional socio-cultural festivals. His understanding of these religions assisted in shaping his worldview and interpersonal relations. At

MBHS, Chief Gbadamosi was a brilliant young sharp with a special admiration for the English Language. Though he was about the youngest in his class at MBHS, he was simply one of the brightest.¹²

It must be reiterated that the MBHS had a quantum of successful products like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Brigadier Mobolaji Johnson, Professor Ola Rotimi, Oba Michael Sonariwo (a late Akarigbo of Remoland), Oba Festus Omolaja Ogunlewe (a late Adeboruwa of Igbogbo) and many others who made remarkable impacts in various fields of human endeavour in Nigeria. Judging by the samples of its products, there is no doubt that Chief Gbadamosi's tutelage at MBHS contributed to his emergence into prominence. Therefore, many of his later accomplishments were during his period as a student at MBHS. The school offered a series of activities promoting sports development among the boys, in which the R.A.G was successful. From secondary school onward, he became much more interested in sports such as Table Tennis, Badminton, and Swimming. He was reported to have provided some financial support to many talented footballers as early as the late 1960s. It was also at MBHS that his interests in literary and art practices were cultivated. He was an active member of the school's Dramatic Society and participated in several plays, including the famous Shakespearean play Macbeth. These participatory activities assisted in preparing his later emergence as an outstanding playwright of repute. He graduated from MBHS in 1960 with a class of prospective Nigerian technocrats in the like of Chief Olusegun Osoba (a former governor of Ogun State), Prince Abiodun Ogunleye (also of Ikorodu origin, former Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development, and former Deputy Governor of Lagos State), Dr. Ore Falomo (a personal physician to late M.K.O Abiola and former Medical Director at Maryland Specialist Hospital, Lagos), Aremo Adeniyi Ogunsanya (also of Ikorodu origin and a frontline Insurance Practitioner in Lagos State) and a host of others.

Another everlasting imprint of MBHS on Chief Gbadamosi was that it allowed him to meet his heartthrob Miss Tinuade Adedoyin, a student of the sister school of MBHS, the Methodist Girls High School, MGHS. Their love affair later translated into matrimony in 1971 against all probability of dissuasions that may arise from ethnic biases and persuasions. His wife was from Offa, Kwara State, where the Ijebus of those days were not traditionally inclined to choose their wives. However, blessed the marriage with four children, all of whom except the eldest daughter.¹³ On the other hand, Mrs. Tinuade Gbadamosi became a committed Chemistry Teacher at her husband's alma mater, the MBHS. Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi later emerged as a Chairman of the "Liberation Set" of MBHS. During his tenure as the Chairman, the Set was responsible for constructing modern staff quarters at electricity works at MBHS.

AN ECONOMIST, A MERCHANT PRINCE, AND AN INDUSTRIALIST

The first step towards attaining professionalism in the contemporary world is certification, though this does not negate the fact that some levels of practical professionalism attained without formal certification. For example, even after a Master's Certificate, R.A.G. still had to obtain some practical lessons about writing business letters from his father, who only had a secondary school education.¹⁴ The journey to becoming an accomplished professional economist began immediately after R.A.G. graduated from MBHS in 1960. His initial ambition was to go into the highly revered medical practice; he wanted to become a Medical Doctor. This ambition was naturally not in tandem with the wish of his father, who had wanted him to study a business-related course that would imbue him (R.A.G.) with the requisite knowledge and competencies that would make him competent enough to sustain the industrial and business legacies and heritages of the S.O.G's business kingdom.

The opportunity eventually came accidentally when R.A.G. needed help to make a strong grade in Biology which would constrain his chances of securing a course of study in the medical sciences. At this juncture, the father seized the opportunity to broach the idea of reading economics to him. For any other factor, Chief Gbadamosi was enthused by his father's proposition that he would proceed to England for further studies in Economics. Therefore, he immediately jettisoned the idea of becoming a medical doctor and studying Economics in England. However, the philosophy behind his father's choice for him to replace him in the business world instead of other siblings is still shrouded in uncertainties. In any case, two major factors may have influenced this decision.

On the one hand, his father's choice may have been spurred by his brilliant performances in school, S.O.G. may have been convinced by the prophecy of R.A.G.'s maternal grandmother that he (R.A.G.) was going to excel in whatever choosing career. The sojourn to England in 1960 was Chief Gbadamosi's first move outside the shore of Nigeria and his first experience in air flight. In England, R.A.G. attended the City of Westminster College, where he passed through an Advanced Diploma in Economics (Economic Development) between 1961 and 1963. He then proceeded to the University of Manchester for a degree programme in Economics (BA, Economics) between 1963 and 1967. Upon graduation from the University of Manchester, Chief Gbadamosi instantaneously proceeded to the University of New Hampshire in the US in pursuit of a Master Degree also in Economics between 1967 and 1969.¹⁵ Thus, by 1969, Chief Gbadamosi had obtained the necessary certifications which could substantiate his professionalism in Economics, thus, fulfilling his father's desire of having a worthy successor bstantive heir apparent for his business empire was almost achieved.

Ordinarily, with his level of education and with the political weight of his father, R.A.G. could have easily secured an attractive placement with any of the government parastatals. Another possibility for him after his studies was to stay

abroad like other people and continue to develop his career. But because of his status as a Merchant Prince, he returned to Lagos to start a professional career as a Manager of the firm of Ayinla and Oyesola Limited (a distributor of the Nigerian Tobacco Company Products) between 1969 and 1971. The firm was a joint venture of S.O.G and his very close business associate, Alhaji Rabi Ayinla Allison, who was also an indigene of Ikorodu. Still as a Merchant Prince, R.A.G moved from the joint venture into another firm which was established by his father and two of his close business associates (Alhaji R. A. Allison and Alhaji Amusa Erogbogbo). He therefore became the manager of the famous Ikorodu

Trading Company (IKOTRACO) between 1971 and 1973.¹⁶ In the course of his managerial positions in these firms; Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi brought his wealth of knowledge and experience to bear on them.

Apart from riding on the legacies of his father to effectively coordinate the affairs of the aforementioned companies, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi crafted a gargantuan niche for himself within the commercial and industrial landscapes of the country. He catapulted himself from a merchant prince to becoming an industrialist of international repute where he served in the boards of many local and transnational establishments either as Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, Managing Director, or Director. His business and managerial ingenuities were exhibited across various sectors of the Nigerian economy ranging from construction, engineering, metal works, textiles, insurance, agriculture, health, pension and to computers.

One of the products of his initiatives was establishment of the RAGOLIS Waters Limited, a brand which was coined from his name's initials. The company was incorporated in 1981 by the Chagoury Group in partnership with the *Societe Des Eaux De Volvic* (a respected French mineral water company).¹⁷ RAGOLIS Waters started production in 1984 as a pioneering and pacesetting water bottling company in Nigeria. It enjoys a nationwide patronage and has depots in major Nigerian cities such as Abuja, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, and Port Harcourt. The company supplied bottled water to major catering firms in Nigeria such Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos, Hotel Presidential in Port Harcourt amongst others. The total output of the company was once put at 2 million litres per month. To this end, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi replicated the contributions of his father towards the economic development of Ikorodu and Lagos State. This is because the headquarters of the company is located at Ikorodu, just like his father's IKOTRACO. Another initiative of R.A.G was the establishment of the Rabaka Grosbo Works Limited, makers of quality doors. The company was sited at Owode-Ibeshe, a suburb within the Ikorodu Local Government Area.

An assessment of Chief Gbadamosi's professional profiles will not only reveal his versatility but his quintessential contributions to the economic development of Lagos State and Nigeria. He was also able to combine serious corporate assignments alongside highly demanding public responsibilities. He was a Chairman at the Commercial Scientific Computing Nigeria Limited which was located around Ikeja, the capital of Lagos State. It majorly engaged in computer accessories,

computer hardware, computer software and sales of computer keyboards, laptops, Microsoft office software and the like. Other companies which he once served as Chairman include the Vono Products Plc which is a leading manufacturer of wooden and metal furniture in Nigeria, Benson & Hedges Nigeria Plc, a transnational firm which deals in tobacco products, Syndicated Metal Industries Limited which is a leading manufacturer and installer of aluminium building products, and the Secure Electronic Technology Plc, a gaming and lottery firm.¹⁸ The list of companies where he served meritoriously at the top echelon level further include the Thai Farm International, Flour Mills Nigeria Limited, Sparnoon Nigeria Limited, American International Insurance Company (AIICO) Plc, AIICO Pension Managers, Lucky Fibres Nigeria Plc, Cappa & D'Alberto Plc, Fountain Trust Bank Plc, Tolaram Clay Bricks (Nigeria) Limited, Blackwood Hodge Nigeria Plc, Premium Health Limited, R.A.G & Company Limited, amongst others. The pedigree of these companies in the corporate world conferred a quantum of credence on the business and industrial acumen of R.A.G. In addition, the headquarters of most of these companies were located within Lagos State and by extension; it is assumed that their corporate taxes would have been paid into the purse of the state government.

VOYAGES IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Chief Gbadamosi's landmark managerial and administrative strides were unlimited to the realm of businesses and industries; he equally had some voyages and milestones in the politics and governance of Lagos State and Nigeria. For more than four decades, he had unbroken active participation in government and public administration in Nigeria. His state-wide limelight came in 1973 when he was appointed as the Commissioner for Economic Development and Establishment, where he served diligently before the coup d'état of 1975. His record of being selected as a commissioner under age-30 has been unbroken in the annals of Lagos.¹⁹ To this extent; he was part of the Executive Council that laid the foundation for today's "Centre of Excellence". However, apart from politics and administration, the R.A.G's contributed to the development of education in Lagos State. On November 14 1984, he was appointed, a member of the inaugural Governing Council of the Lagos State University (LASU).²⁰ During his three years of membership at the Governing Council, he donated enormously to reposition the institution's library. He gave financial and moral support to the production of the first edition of the LASU Journal of Humanities.²¹ For his soaring interest in arts and music, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi later assisted in sponsoring the Department of Theatre Arts and Music of the Lagos State University in producing several plays. It was partly because of this meritorious commitment to the development of the institution and the socio-economic development of Lagos State that Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi bagged a doctorate (honorary causa) from the Lagos State University in 2005.

Though Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi had always contributed to issues of national magnitude in dailies since the 1960s, his actual projection into the nationwide scene came in 1975 when one of his plays, "Trees Grow in the

Desert”, was aired over a national radio.²² The play’s introductory part which was based on a “military take-over of power” sent shivers down the spines of the ruling military government and this led to the incarceration of those associated with the broadcast of the play including the author. The advantage of this scenario was that it, in the real sense, catapulted R.A.G into nationwide limelight. Immediately after his release from detention, he was co-opted into the membership of the Constitution Drafting Committee which produced the 1979 Presidential Constitution for Nigeria. Having finished his duties as a member of the constitutional drafting committee, he was immediately appointed as a director at the defunct National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA).

As part of his voyages in national politics and governance, he was appointed the Chairman of the National Committee on Industrial Development (NCID) in 1984.²³ This committee was to work in conjunction with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to generate a master plan for Nigeria's Industrial Development. In another vein, he was appointed as a member of the National Committee on Investigation into Counter-Trade in 1985. Furthermore, in recognition of his prowess and a relentless interest in national economic growth and development, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi was appointed as the Chairman of the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank Ltd (now Bank of Industry) in 1986. His tenure at the bank lasted between 1986 and 1994 and was remarkable in Nigeria's industrial development history. For instance, several Nigerian textile mills received financial support from the NIDB. The textile mills, in return, were reported to have created employment opportunities for about 250, 000 Nigerians during this period.²⁴ NIDB was reported to have also invested in nearly 900 companies in the industrial sector during his tenure as the Chairman. After his services at NIDB, the federal government appointed Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi to membership of the Advisory Board on Public Policy Research and Analysis Centre in 1995. He also on the membership of the Nigerian Debt Rescheduling Team between 1986 and 1998.

In 1998, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi was appointed Minister for Economic Planning by the federal military government.²⁵ As the Minister of Economic Planning, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi was a member of the people that produced the present 1999 Constitution, coincidentally after his Constitution Drafting Committee membership twenty years earlier. Also, as the Minister of Economic Planning, he led the Nigerian delegation to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting during the 1998/99 annual meeting. During his tenure as the minister of the federal republic, he assisted in the relocation of sixteen agencies of the United Nations to the new Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. This relocation became necessary for administrative convenience as Nigeria's seat of power had moved to Abuja in 1991. He also chaired the committee on restructuring the management and operations of the Nigerian Railway Corporation during his tenure as the Minister of Economic Planning. In May 1999, General Abubakar Abdulsalam's regime relinquished power to President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration. The new administration still found in him valuable assets. He was therefore appointed

as a member of the Special Committee on Petroleum Products Selling and Distribution before he was also given the Chairmanship of the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) in 2000.²⁶ In 2001, Chief Gbadamosi assumed the chairmanship of the Governing Council of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) where he was till 2004. The Institute remain a very important Think Tank as far as Nigerian economic landscape and repository of cut-edges research are concerned. As a result of his quantum contributions to national development, Chief Gbadamosi was conferred with a distinguished national honour as an Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) in 2006.

Despite his giant strides in public administration, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi forays in politics did not materialise into holding any elected post. Gbadamosi's father did not support his engagement in partisan politics because of Chief Gbadamosi's temperament vis-a-vis the intricacies of the Nigerian political landscape. Notwithstanding, he became a member of the "The Hope" caucus of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) during the aborted third republic general elections. A golden opportunity came for him to vie for the gubernatorial seat of Lagos State in 1990 when the two leading candidates (Femi Agbalajobi and Dapo Sarumi) of the most favoured party (SDP) were at loggerheads. Arising from the intractable imbroglio between the Agbalajobi and Sarumi, there was a consensus within the party to find a neutral replacement for the duo, and the name of Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi rang the bell. Before Chief's official acceptance, however, some volunteers had begun to spread his candidature posters across the State. This information got to his father, who immediately left Ikorodu for Ikoyi and persuaded Chief Gbadamosi to drop the idea. At that meeting, his father persuaded him to script a disclaimer published in the national dailies.²⁷ Be that as it may, some commentators were concerned about the Chief's seemingly lukewarm disposition to his party predicament during the June 12 general election annulment debacle.

AN EXCEPTIONAL PLAYWRIGHT, LOVER OF MUSIC, AND ARDENT ARTWORKS COLLECTOR

Undoubtedly, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi was a man of many parts. This is substantiated by the number of professional activities he engaged in. At Manchester University, he belonged to several art societies and was a regular visitor at the Drama Department and various galleries. He belonged to the league of exceptional personalities who could craft a niche in artistic creativity. Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi wrote several full-fledged plays and several short stories, which included "Trees Grow in Desert," "Behold My Redeemer," "Children of Two Wars," "Echoes from the Lagoon", "Death by the Waterfall," among others. In the collection of his short stories were "Sunset over Nairobi," "The Mansion," "The Greener Grass," "Sing the Old Songs For Me," and a host of others. Aside from the fact that each of these works won him accolades, some were written to regenerate the socio-economic and political transitions from colonial and postcolonial Lagos. In contrast, others reflected issues of national concern. In addition, R.A.G was a regular columnist on national dailies,

discussing diverse budget and economic matters. He later joined the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA).

One of his short stories, *Sunset over Nairobi*, won the first prize in the 1971 Radio Netherland Golden Windmill Short Story competition for young African writers.²⁸ Conversely, *The Mansion* depicted a story of class segregation whereby the affluent were obsessed with their status. It prevented the intermingling of their children with the children of the underprivileged. The *Greener Grass* further depicted a situation whereby the rich wanted to keep the sanctity of their caste by being opposed to giving their children's hands in marriage to the poor. *Sing the Old Songs For Me* was also written in this message of rich and poor dichotomy. In the three short stories, young people of marriage age were deprived of getting betrothed to their preferred lovers simply because of class prejudice and arrogance. Furthermore, the plays specifically focused on the dispositions of the ex-Brazilians and Sierra-Leonean returnees who had come to dominate Lagos's economic and civil administrative aspects during the colonial era.²⁹ This made these returnees begin to constitute themselves into a distinct class in the society, though their soaring ego began to collapse from the twilight of colonial administration.

Behold, My Redeemer, was published in 1978 by Oxford University Press (Nigeria). The play was worthy enough and was staged at the National Theatre Lagos in October 1970, performed in London in 1973, and performed at the Nigerian Law School Auditorium, Lagos, in 1992.³⁰ The theme of the play centred on the conflicts that emanate in the face of a generational shift. *Echoes from the Lagoon* was published in 1973 by the Onibonoje Press and appeared in the fifth African Literature Series. The play also focused on class relationships and was a recommended text for Junior Secondary School students in Lagos State in the 1990s. It was later performed to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Lagos State and to honour the memory of Chief Gbadamosi. *Trees Grow in the Desert* was aired on the frequency of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (now Federal Radio Corporation) in 1975. The broadcast earned him the military's displeasure because the play's message was misconstrued as a real occurrence.³¹ But on the other hand, the import of the saga was that it assisted in thrusting the literary image of Chief Gbadamosi into national prominence.

The biography of Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi can only be rendered with references to his soaring interests in music. To this end, he was a founding member, a director, a chairman, and a trustee of the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Centre, Lagos.³² The society was committed to promoting and preserving Nigerian highlife and old indigenous genres. As a chairman of the MUSON Centre, he brought innovations into the center's activities, such as the introduction of Life Theatre Performance. He enjoyed foreign and local classical music and drafted members of his immediate family into the music world. His wife and children are reported to have expertise in different aspects of music, such as classical piano, guitar, and violin.³³ Chief Gbadamosi's unrelenting passion for music drew him closer to the late Afro-Beat Maestro, Fela Anikulapo, whom he earlier met in London during his sojourn

overseas. He was a regular face at Fela's *Afrika Shrine* and generously contributed to the reconstruction of the Shrine after the death of Fela. Chief Gbadamosi and Fela Anikulapo, Wole Bucknor, and Naiwu Oshaon, founded the Nigerian Association of Patriotic Writers and Artistes (NAPWA) in 1970. The association usually holds its meetings at the Yaba College of Technology's Football Pitch, and Fela always seizes the opportunity to have a free concert after the sessions. To this extent, Chief Gbadamosi's contribution to the growth of the vibrant Lagos music industry is remarkable.

Apart from playwriting and music, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi was an ardent arts and sculpture collector. This passion for art collections influenced the construction of a tower in his Ikorodu country home, where more than a hundred artworks were housed. He named the edifice "Yusuf Grillo Pavilion" after a staunch artist Yusuf Grillo whose artwork titled "Awopa Procession," which replicated the traditional rituals of a powerful Lagos classic cult, gave him a strong impression.³⁴ In the Pavilion are such collections as works of art on the old palace of the Ayangburen of Ikorodu and the magnificent building of the colonial multi-millionaire Da Rocha. The *Yusuf Grillo Pavilion* is a vast exhibition gallery that painters, artists, and students from near and far visit regularly for research. The Pavilion also hosts an annual well-attended arts fiesta in honour of great artists. It is indisputable that Chief Gbadamosi was an outstanding financier and promoter of the visual arts in Lagos and Nigeria; he was one of the pioneering and later the Vice Chairman of the Visual Art Society of Nigeria (VASON). In recognition of his contributions to the visual arts industry, the Lagos State Government organised a Three-Day arts exhibition tagged "Eko Arts Expo" in January 2017 in honour of Chief Gbadamosi and also to promote the industry in the light of the economic diversification attempts of the Lagos State government.

A SOCIALITE AND COMMUNITY MAN

Riding on the platform of his prestigious background, Chief Gbadamosi grew into a wholly urbane and metropolitan personality. There is no gainsaying that he was a socialite par excellence who could wine and dine with the cream and the top echelons of the country. His presence in various distinguished social functions across and beyond the Lagos City-State further reinforces this. Another factor reinforcing his active social life was his membership in major elite social clubs within the city-state. He was a prominent member of such exalted clubs as the Lagos Metropolitan Club, Lagos Island Club, Ikoyi Club 1938, and Lagos Lawn Tennis Club, amongst others.³⁵ he was also one of the pioneering members and a former president (2000-2002) of the Oriwu Club, one of the most famous elite social clubs in Ikorodu Division. Apart from the social interaction that is promoted among members, the economic and political aspirations of individual members are wittingly prioritised by these clubs. Furthermore, the outlook of his apparel completely reflected his background in arts and Ikorodu genealogy; he was always well-dressed.

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A predominant number of people attest to the fact that Chief Gbadamosi was a great philanthropist. He was a great promoter and financier of tradition and culture and was always ready to be identified with his community and the grassroots. This identification led to his selection for some important chieftaincy titles within and beyond Lagos. He was appointed as *Aro* of Lagos by the late Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II of Lagos while the late Oba Salaudeen Oyefusi Oguntade II (the Ayangburen of Ikorodu) also conferred on him *Otun* of Ikorodu, his home town. He was also adorned with the title of *Otun* of Ode Remo, his paternal grandmother's original base. His sartorial taste featured elements of a world-class exposure and indigenous dress sense. His attachment to his roots is reflected in his mastery of the Ijebu dialect and the location of some of his companies in Ikorodu. It was in recognition of Chief Gbadamosi's community development gestures that a group of Think Tank which is committed to the socio-economic development of the Ikorodu Division (the Ikorodu Division Resource Development Group, IDR DG) admitted him into the distinguished *Ikorodu Division Hall of Fame* on March 31, 2002. Chief Gbadamosi actively committed himself to the famous Eyo Festival in Lagos, later becoming a Life Chairman (*Baba Isale*) of the Eyo Agere Group.

Forty-Three years out of Chief Gbadamosi's Seventy-Two years earthly sojourn were massively devoted to professional growth and public services. It was based on this pedigree that he was appointed in 2016 as a co-chairman of the *Lagos@50* Planning Committee. He was appointed as a joint chairman of the committee with Professor Wole Soyinka. Two significant issues trailed his appointment into the chairmanship of the 12-Man Planning Committee: his failing health, which associates feared would be further undermined by the work's responsibilities. But Chief Gbadamosi saw the appointment as another clarion call to duty for the development of Lagos state. He insisted on being actively involved in every bit of the planning process despite the advice from the erudite Professor Wole Soyinka for him to relax. Secondly, there was also a sort of ethnic jingoism about his co-chairmanship with Professor Wole Soyinka. Some indigenous Lagosians thought that it was demeaning for the State Government to have appointed a full-blooded Lagosian (Chief Gbadamosi) as joint-chairman of a Lagos event with a non-Lagosian (Professor Wole Soyinka). Again, Chief Gbadamosi remained undaunted by this innuendo; rather, his response was that the paramount thing to him was the success of the ceremony and the continued development of Lagos.³⁶ However, he breathed his last during this service to Lagos State and humanity. He battled multiple strokes, necessitating his being flown abroad for medical treatments. But finally, on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, Chief (Dr.) Rasheed Abiodun Gbadamosi gave up the ghost at his Parkview residence in Ikoyi, Lagos. He was moved to Kunbi Haven and was laid to rest on Thursday, November 17, 2016 according to Islamic rites.

CONCLUSION

The fact that Chief (Dr.) Rasheed Abiodun Gbadamosi, OFR lived an exemplary life that would forever remain indelible. His voyages and explorations

have served and will continue to serve as models for generations. He was one of the founding fathers of the contemporary Lagos State because he contributed his quota to the foundation of the economic prosperity that Lagos has continued to witness and apart from his direct services to Lagos State, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi served as the representative of Lagos State in federal appointments such as member of Constitution Drafting Committee, Ministerial appositional Boards and Parastatals amongst others. Furthermore, Chief Gbadamosi's contributions to the Lagos State and Nigeria'sustrial development of Lot are underestimated. He was a pioneer and revolutionist concerning the packaged water industry in Nigeria, a venture that has become very prominent in the socioeconomic history of the country. As an industrialist, Chief Gbadamosi got engaged in diverse vital sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, construction, engineering, and computers, among others. The versatility of Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi also came to the fore as he ventured and made remarkable marks in the literary, drama, and music industries. His voyages in this regard won him a series of accolades. Chief Gbadamosi's impacts were also manifested in his grassroots, such as the Lagos Island, Ikorodu, Ode Remo, and the Methodist Boys High School (MBHS). In a nutshell, it would be a vacuum to have rendered the history of Lagos State and Nigeria in the twentieth century without devoting a portion to the strides of Chief Rasheed Abiodun Oladosu Gbadamosi, OFR.

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