

**Address By Chairman,
Body of Benchers At The Call-to-
Bar Ceremony on Tuesday,
20th November, 2012**

**BY CHIEF IDOWU SOFOLA, SAN
LIFE BENCHER**

Protocol

It is with great pleasure and hearty congratulations that I welcome you new wigs, your parents, guardians, friends, family and well wishers to this historic event in your lives.

This event; "YOUR CALL TO THE NIGERIAN BAR" is historic because this day, your dreams, hopes and aspiration are fulfilled. Indeed, several midnight candles had been burnt by you and with support from parents/ guardians right from your cradle to nursery, primary, secondary, university and the Nigerian Law School. I can imagine you had worked assiduously and endured in the study of law the years.

Now, what you had so longed for, for years is now being delivered into your hands. Surely, your parents are glad because you are achievers, and like the idiom say: if a horse is ridden in their hearts, it will definitely ride so smoothly without any hiccups.

For the forgoing reason, and for believing in yourself, and making your parents proud, I and the entire Body of Benchers sincerely congratulate you.

As you are aware, your call to the Nigerian Bar today is not just as a result of, excellence in your Bar exams. It is more than that! Your call today is made possible because you have been found suitable, fit and proper to be called to Nigerian Bar. I therefore hope that you will continue in this light, bearing in mind that there is a Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee saddled with, amongst other duties, to instil sanity in the legal profession and to sanction defaulters.

You have now been admitted into the noble profession of law. This is because we believe that you are fit and proper for the admission. The question now is: what next?

The world is full of various opportunities for you as young lawyers. I am sure that your courts and chambers attachments, while in law School, would have, to a very large extent, helped to channel your minds. You can decide to explore litigation (advocacy) or corporate and commercial law, realty et cetera. The bottom-line is, whichever pursuit, always keep up being fit and proper. Be good, hardworking, trustworthy, thorough, reliable and full of integrity. These and many more fine qualities will make you distinct lawyers. It will also earn you, over the years, trust and confidence, not only by clients, but your colleagues at the Bar and even the Bench/ Judges.

Be regular and prompt at work. Handle cases assigned to you with care, diligence, caution and confidentially. Dress neatly, decently and accurately for all occasions. Let your speech/expression be simple and clear and full of courtesies at all times. My advice on pupillage is for you to get all the experience you can patiently and do not let your focus be only on a huge salary for a start. Patiently and painstakingly, learn from older and more experience wigs. With all these ties, if strictly adhered to, the sky will not be your limit.

Remember, a good name is better than gold or frankincense. Ensure you live up to our expectation. Guard your name with due care. Do not meddle in things that can spoil your name or that of your parents which has been made for decades. Be on top of your case - clients will appreciate you for

good performance, colleagues, will respect you, the Judges will credit you.

Your call to the Bar today is not the end of it all. Note that legal education is a continuous exercise. Be at abreast of the new legal developments. I enjoin you to take the advantage of the Continued Legal Education (CLE) of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to keep you in touch with new areas of law. Active participation in NBA activities is hereby commended to you all.

I need to draw your attention to the common trend in our legal profession where cases are being run in the media. Avoid trial by media and shun the habit of granting interviews on the matter you articulate in the court rooms. Make the Rules of Professional Conducts (RPC) your daily guide. Doing this will make you not fall into what will or may diminish the honour and dignity of the noble profession. I charge my brand new wigs to join the struggle to eradicate corruption which has eaten so deep into the fabric of our society. Put all your attention and expertise to the service of your client because of the trust reposed in you.

Apart from the private legal practice or as a solicitor in corporate world, some of you will find yourself in position of decision making, or as adviser. Remember to give your best as a good ambassador of the legal profession which is your first constituency. Act fairly and with good conscience - knowing full well, that this is a NOBLE profession and only the NOBLES should be called to the Nigerian Bar.

Our call to Bar today is not the end of it all. Note that legal education still continues. Law is dynamic. You must keep up with the trend so as to be able to deliver to the clients that pay your fees.

Remember, we believe in you, so also your parents and guardians. Do not let us down, more, or most especially, DO NOT LET YOURSELF DOWN!!

Thank you all for your patience. Once more, all of us here (Benchers) congratulate you and wish you well.

CHIEF IDOWU SOFOLA, MON, SAN,

(Chairman, Body of Benchers)