



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

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25TH

An Interview with Engr. Mrs. Mayen Adetiba (FNSE): On The Consulting Engineering Activities

E-Newsletter: Good afternoon Madam. Our reading audience would like to know about you, bearing in mind that you are one of the first female engineers in this country.

Engr. Mrs. Adetiba: My name is Mayen Adetiba. I graduated from a University in New York City in 1975 for my Bachelor degree and Connell University for my Master degree in Structural Engineering in 1976. I am a Nigerian from Akwa Ibom State, but married to an Ekiti man. I started my career as a journalist but moved unto computer science and eventually ended up being an engineer. I have absolutely no regret about that.

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much. That's quite a lot of experience. How do you rate our Engineering Consulting Firms with other Engineering design groups in other parts of the world?

Engr. Mrs. Adetiba: Really I believe that Nigerian engineers are as good as engineers anywhere in the world because we are trained properly. But the problem we have is this Re-training, Continuous Professional Development activity which I know that Tech Grade Consulting tries as much as possible to carry out. But you see the problem is with us. We do not believe in going back to school. We don't believe in up grading our knowledge. We don't believe in improving on whatever we had had before. Most of us forget that engineering is not static. That is our problems. So we end up having very old and obsolete information and knowledge which we use in doing our work. I am as guilty as everybody and again, I think it is the society. The environment is not being created to take care of this problem. For instance, in America, you can go to the university without necessarily having anything. This is because the environment allows that and the society encourages it. So they are able to up grade their knowledge. There are new ways of doing designs in engineering. We need to know them, we need to be abreast with every new method. When I was President of ACEN, I saw that as our major failure on our part because we believe we know everything. After all we have been in school with those in the 1970s and we were beating them, forgetting that knowledge is changing and there are new ways of doing things. I decided that what I wanted to do was capacity building. I went to organize training program. My perception was that if I had two or more persons, consulting engineers accepting to attend courses, I would have achieved our objective. I was having friends and company friends who were picking up the bills, so we were bringing in people to impart the knowledge for our engineers. This is to show that Nigerian engineers need to retrain themselves, and that there is a need to continuously upgrade their knowledge. So for my two years in office as Association of Consulting Engineers of Nigeria (ACEN) President, that was a big focal point for me. As a matter of fact, the very big



Engr. Mrs. Adetiba FNSE

workshop we had early this year was what took me about one year to plan with the British Association of Consulting Engineers in UK. They came in as a team; we had a 5-days workshop. I believe we need Hands-on-Training on the latest design methods and we are brilliant enough to assimilate those things. I believe it's essential and I want to thank Tech Grade Consulting for what they have been doing along that line. But I think our members should appreciate the need to up grade their knowledge. I feel bad sometimes and I said look, I am looking for an opportunity where I can go for three months training, I want to see a better way of designing structures.

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much. Most Consulting Engineers in Nigeria are causing a lot of embarrassment to the profession as a result of the obsolete codes they apply in modern design. What is ACEN doing to monitor these Engineering personnel so that they could stop bringing shame to the professional body?

Engr. Mrs. Adetiba: As a matter of fact, yes I am still in the system. First I am still in the EXCO and council. Being a past president, I will probably be in the council till I die, that is for ACEN. Luckily again for me in Tunisia last two months, I was elected president for the African Consulting Engineers for the entire African Region. We were talking to African Development Bank in Canada about two weeks ago on this. We needed them to support Africans in terms of capacity building. It is important. The problem is, if you manage to finish school, you thank God because you are lucky. The next thing is how to make the money, but we should drive home the fact that we need to continuously train ourselves. Particularly to the old ones they are afraid to touch the computer. I am speaking to NDDC now, I said "I think we need to retrain some of your consultants". Money should not be the problem because compare to what you get in returns. When you get a good design as an engineer, you design optimally thereby saving cost. I am glad that the current president of ACEN is building on what I left because in two weeks or three, they are going to have the manufacturer of one of those software to come and teach members on the application and usage of these and then sell at a discounted rate. That is what we want. We should not feel shy of gaining more knowledge because we want to be able to take over the jobs in Nigeria. It's embarrassing that, today what is ours, is being managed by the foreign consultants and what is theirs is theirs. How many times have you seen a Nigerian engineer go to UK and do design and

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collect money and come back? I am also appealing to our government, if you are not financially strong, probably wouldn't be able to fund some of these retraining programs or capacity building programs. I am glad that we have stopped thinking that we know everything, we don't need to retrain, we don't need to up date on so many things, we don't need to go back to school and update our knowledge. I am also glad that we are beginning to cry out and are eager to know all these things we despised. I saw that when I attended the workshop the current president of ACEN heard people demanding for the real thing, practical experience.



Engr. Dr. Ujile & Mrs. Adetiba

E-Newsletter: *Thank you madam. What do you think can be done to create awareness, so that people get to know the relevant continuous professional development and get involved?*

Engr.Mrs. Adetiba: We should know that not all consultants are members of ACEN. As a matter of fact, I think we have less than 10% who are members of ACEN. It's a shame because we don't have enough regulations. We are lawless here. In some civilized countries, you can not do some of these things, like stamping a drawing, carrying out construction, adding to already built structure without getting permission from the authorities. But it is not so here. Everybody does what he or she likes. As long as the government encourages that because they are the regulatory body we will continue to be where we are today. We are a lawless society. Look at even what we are talking about all these collapses. Everybody believes he is a builder. I can build it, after all that man used 300 center to center. Because they don't know that every project you carried out has a unique measurement. The conditions are different. These people don't see this because they can't comprehend. They can not comprehend because it is not their field. Not only that, the society encourages it. Most people don't know that when you add much water to cement mix, you are reducing its capacity, strength but today because water makes it easier to pour, it is now adopted. Until we start doing those things that will put things in place, we will remain far away from where we are suppose to be.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you very much madam. Finally madam, what advice do you have for trainers of our engineering students and personnel?*

Engr.Mrs. Adetiba: They themselves should get trained. They can't be teaching obsolete things. However, government on its part has to pay these trainers well and promptly so that they can carry out their work effectively. Thank you.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you very much for the audience you have given us.*

OJUM CELEBRATED GOLDEN JUBILEE WITH FUN FARE

On Saturday, September 20, 2008, Engr. Elder Beniah Elemchukwu Ojum, FNSE, rolled out the drums with his enviable family to celebrate his 50th birthday. The event which started with a thanksgiving service held at the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ikwere Road in Port Harcourt, terminated with a bounteous reception at the main Banquet Hall of the Hotel Presidential, Port Harcourt.

At the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Deputy Governor, Engr. Tele Ikuru MNSE, led other dignitaries in attendance including the NSE Branch Chairman, Engr. B. M. Ogariawo MNSE and Secretary, Engr. Denis Dania.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling and the launching of the autobiography of the celebrant, Engr. B. E. Ojum FNSE was written by his third son Ojum Chiwendu Beniah (Jnr.), a medical student studying in Russia.

It was a wonderful occasion and indeed a celebration of a beautiful family to the envy of all also the family of five boys, one girl, father and mother captivated the audience with a sonorous rendition of beautiful hymns.

The Bounteous reception held at the main Banquet Hall of Hotel Presidential had the Governor of River State Rt. Hon. Chibuiki Amaechi as Special Guest of Honour, while the first Governor of the old Rivers State, King Diète Spiff, as the Chairman of Occasion.



Engr. Tele Ikuru MNSE, Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Engr. B. E. Ojum FNSE and his wife during the church service



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INVITATION LETTER TO NSE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING "YANKARI 2008"

The National Engineering Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Society of Engineers will hold from **24th – 28th November, 2008** at the **Multi-purpose Sports Complex, Bauchi**.

The **theme** of the conference is **"Strategies for the Attainment of Vision 20/2020"** The Conference registration fee which also covers the Conference materials is N20,000 for Members who register before 31st August, 2008, and N25,000 after August 31st, 2008.

NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE PH should pay their **annual branch dues** of N4000 and **compulsory levy** of N5000 towards the Engineer Resource Center to **UBA ACC. NO: 0802080000194 (Port Harcourt main Branch)**. Also pay **National Annual Subscription** of N5,500.00 directly to **AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613** & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank