



THE CITADEL

A Great Ife Alumni Association DFW Magazine

Vol 4 Issue 4 Dec 2024

Tosin Olopade

Our Suave Membership
Committee Chairman

GIAA: The Power of Alumni Bonding

OAU Weighs Waivers for Extra Year
Students Amid Suicide Concerns





GREEEEAT IFE! Welcome to the latest edition of your Citadel Newsletter. Happy Holidays!

AS WE CLOSE OUT A transformative year, I'm delighted to report that our beloved association is thriving! It's been just a few months since our new executive committee took office, and we've moved swiftly to reinforce our standing committees. I'm incredibly proud of how our teams have responded, sharing bold visions and renewed energy for the future. Together, we continue to set a high standard for all GIAA branches.

One of our standout achievements this year is the launch of the Dallas Scholars initiative, through which we awarded scholarships to 52 deserving students in February. I'm excited to say that we're on track to double this impact, with our Scholarship Committee working tirelessly to kick off the next round by the end of November.

As we look forward to 2025, all our committees are actively shaping ambitious plans, and we'll finalize our roadmap in the leadership meeting this December. We're eager to present this vision to the general body at our January 2025 meeting.

This season of gratitude is the perfect time to recognize each of you who contributed to our success in 2024, whether through generous donations, volunteer work, or hosting our meetings. Your support has been invaluable, and we are deeply thankful. May God bless you all for your dedication.

I'm beyond proud of the positive impact we continue to make within our association, across the DFW community, and most importantly, for our alma mater. United in purpose and ready to face the challenges

of the 21st century, we are building a legacy that will inspire future generations.

A special thank you to everyone who contributed to this holiday edition. We're thrilled to introduce our new look Citadel Magazine, and I encourage you to explore it and share your feedback.

I hope you also enjoy the wonderful moments captured from our recent Holiday Party, beautifully organized by our Events Committee.

Lastly, I'm pleased to welcome back Tayo Olajide as our Editor-in-Chief. We wish him and the editorial team every success as they continue to elevate this newsletter.

Happy New Year! Wishing you all a blessed and prosperous 2025. May God bless the Great Ife Alumni Association DFW Branch!

Warm regards...

Dolapo Ajayi

President, Great Ife Alumni Association
Dallas-Fort Worth Branch, USA

The Editor's Desk

- continued from cover page

Why the Alumni Relations' Office Must do more to Advance Obafemi Awolowo University

UNIVERSITY ALUMNI Relations form the backbone of a university's development, driving both its growth and impact on current and future students. Alumni offer inspiration, mentorship, and invaluable resources, sustaining the legacy of their alma mater during both prosperous times and moments of challenge. At Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), the contributions of

alumni shine particularly bright, distinguishing them as steadfast champions of the institution and setting them apart from their peers nationwide.

OAU alumni have left an indelible mark on campus infrastructure and student welfare. From the construction of lecture theatres, hostels, and roads to donations of hospital equipment, boreholes, books, and compu-

ters, their support has enhanced educational resources in extraordinary ways. Notable contributions include the recently established Tosin Eniolunda IT Lab for Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing, as well as the transformational renovations by other Alumni, who have revitalized lecture theatres and funded significant infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the Accounting Department alumni recently gifted 50 laptops to support student development, and the Dallas chapter of the OAU

In this Edition

OAU News

According to our OAU Campus correspondence, the school's management is compelled to reach a compassionate decision, offering course waivers to struggling students due to a dangerous rising trend of students attempting suicide 6



COVER : In this Edition, our Celebrity Chief Customer Champion, Tosin Olopade, is blazing hot on the cover with amazing personality

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Alumni Association awarded scholarships of N200,000 to 52 deserving students—an initiative they intend to continue.

While these remarkable acts of social investments are commendable and should be celebrated, they represent only part of what a great university should aspire to achieve. Beyond improving facilities and providing scholarships, the university's mission must focus on advancing knowledge and innovation that address societal challenges. To cultivate a legacy of intellectual leadership, OAU should expand its focus to include fostering research and sponsoring professorial chairs across disciplines that drive progress in science, technology, and the study of critical societal issues. These efforts not only raise academic standards but also affirm OAU's status as a premier institution, inspiring others by conti-



nually advancing the frontiers of knowledge and impact.

The transformative potential of education lies in its capacity to challenge norms and introduce bold, new ideas that elevate society. To continue fulfilling this purpose, the OAU Alumni Association must play a

leading role, setting an example for other institutions and rallying around initiatives that can drive meaningful, sustainable development. Alumni Relations Officers, in particular, hold a key responsibility: they must identify impactful research areas and endowed positions, promote these opportunities, and connect alumni with the vision for further engagement and support.

As proud members of the “Great Ife” family, OAU alumni have long considered themselves leaders in the landscape of Nigerian universities. Now is the time to reaffirm that distinction by championing the research and innovation that can elevate society and create lasting change. Through this commitment to academic excellence and societal advancement, the legacy of Great Ife will continue to shine—lighting the way for generations to come.

Tayo Olajide, Editor, GIAA, DFW, USA

NEW MEMBERS



Tope Williams-Adewunmi

BSc. Economics, '02 set. Ex accountant turned Fashion Entrepreneur & now turned Financial Operations and Process Improvement Expert (and probably soon to be a Data Privacy Expert as well). Avid lover of Generative AI.

Olumide Omotere

With a background in geography, and a masters degree in applied geography, Mr. Omotere is currently a PhD candidate (ABD). Married and work professionally in research and analytics.

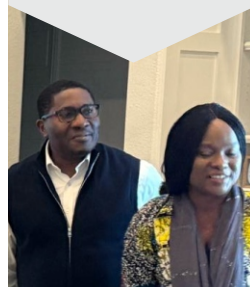


Ronke Filani

Happily married and a proud mom of three wonderful kids, Mrs. Filani is a Counseling Psychologist, and currently work as a Customer Experience and E-commerce Lead.

Gbenga and Lola Babarinde

While Gbenga is a proud 2001 Mechanical Engineering graduate; Dr. Lola graduated from Medicine in 2006. They now call Frisco home.



Edosa Ogieguata

A 2002 graduate of OAU with a BSc. in Economics, Mr Ogieguata has an MBA from Kellogg School of Management, and currently a finance executive. He's married with 3 boys and lives in Allen, TX.



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Inside OAU: Tales and Struggles of Road 7 Commuters

MAJORITY of students at Obafemi Awolowo University are living off campus and the process of getting to and from campus is daunting.

Omisore Kehinde, a Pharmacy student explained that 'Going in and out is so stressful and time-consuming'. She explained that she must wait sometimes more than an hour for someone to give her a lift.

There have been reports of long queues, standing in the hot African sun, to catch transportation to campus.

OAU Weighs Waivers for Extra Year Students Amid Suicide Concerns

▶ From Our Campus Correspondent

ACCORDING to reliable sources, the management of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, has announced plans to support struggling extra-year students by offering compassionate academic waivers. This decision follows a suicide attempt by a 200-level student facing academic challenges. For any alumnus of the OAU, the issue of extra year(s) will not be strange. For several reasons, some students are not eligible for graduation and may need to repeat certain courses. This trend seems to be on the ascendancy.

An internal memo dated November 1, 2024, and obtained by our source, revealed that the university's Committee of Deans proposed the measure during a special meeting. The memo, signed by Deputy Registrar M.S. Oluwajoba, noted that the student, who had transferred from Pharmacy to Biology Education, attempted suicide on October 16 due to academic stress. The matter is being investigated, and the alleged student is being kept under scrutiny.

The university emphasized its commitment to creating an enabling environment for student support, urging staff and faculty to help. A previous circular had recommended that students with one or two outstanding courses required for graduation be allowed to graduate on compassionate grounds, provided it does not alter their degree classification. OAU's spokesperson, Abiodun Olanrewaju, confirmed the decision, highlighting the need to prevent suicide stemming from academic pressure. "This move is to reduce suicide cases tied to academic stress, especially for final-year students delayed by just one or two courses," he said.

This action on the part of the university authorities is commendable, and it is hoped that the process will not be abused. While the decision is not yet official, sources within the university indicate it is a compassionate response to the rising mental health challenges among students. Hopefully, with the approval of the University Senate, students will be more relaxed in the pursuit of their academic goals and objectives.



Town-Gboro Buses Suspend Operation, Students' Union Intervenes



RECENTLY, THE ASSOCIATION OF Bus Drivers, popularly known as Town-Gboro suspended the operation

of buses on Obafemi Awolowo University Campus and throughout Ile-Ife. Students and other passengers were

left stranded at Campus Gate of the University.

Recall that, on the day preceding the action, the Great Ife Students' Union through its press release informed the students of a temporary halt of operation of buses throughout Ile-Ife.

That was as a result of allegations that the Chairman of the Osun State Park Management System, Mr Nurudeen Iyanda was shot by the Nigeria Police while he was in custody.

As an act of intervention, the Great Ife Students' Union provided its buses to convey students to campus in order for them to attend their classes. Some were seen trekking from their residential areas to campus.

In response to this development, lecturers also postponed their classes to ease the burden on students who may be coming from far distances. However, some other lecturers held classes as scheduled.

It is noteworthy that the strike action included buses which operate under the aegis of the Osun State Park Management system and was effective for 24 hours.

Trivia & Jokes

By John Oluwagbemiga

Why did the sun skip college?

It already has a million degrees

College student: Hey, Dad, I've got some great news for you!

Father: What, son?

College student: Remember that \$500 you promised me if I made the Dean's list?

Father: I, certainly, do,

College student: Well, you get to keep it!

Employer: Forget everything you learned in college. You won't need it working here.

Potential employee: I never went to college.

Employer: Oh, sorry. Unfortunately, you're not qualified to work here.

The dean of a college told the auditorium, "The female dormitory will be out-of-bounds for all male students, so too the male dormitory to female students. Anybody caught breaking this rule will be fined \$20 the first time. Anybody caught breaking this rule the second time will be fined \$60. Being caught a third time will incur a hefty fine of \$180. Are there any questions?"

At this, a student in the crowd raised their hand and asked, "Er... how much for a season pass?"

A young man was putting himself through college as a waiter. When he gave one diner the bill, the diner asked, "What is the usual tip?" "Well, this is my first day here, but the other guys say if I get a quarter out of you, I'll be doing great," the college student replied. "Is that so?" snorted the diner. "Well, just to show them how wrong they are, here's \$5. "Thanks!" replied the student. I'll put this in my school fund."

"What are you studying?" asked the diner. The student smiled and said, "Applied psychology."



THE CITADEL

CREATIVE TALENT HUNT (CCTHunt)

What is this initiative seeking to accomplish?

The Citadel editorial team aims to engage and develop creative talents among the children of our Alumni members through a talent hunt competition. This initiative provides an opportunity for these young creatives to learn more about the GIAA organization, our Alma Mater, and the unique Nigerian and Great Ife spirit. As participants explore older Citadel magazines to inspire their designs, they might also develop a deeper appreciation for the organization and its legacy.

What does the initiative entail?

The Citadel editorial team will share detailed guidelines once the competition is ready to launch. For now, the expectation is that participants will review past editions of the Citadel magazine to inspire their designs. Using content from the

editorial cloud drive, they will craft their own pages of the magazine. The planned rewards include:

1. Featuring a photo of the best designer in a small section on the Citadel's cover.
2. A \$200 gift card for the winner, with potential additional awards for runners-up if more donations are received.
3. The winning design will be used for the Citadel publication for that quarter.

Who can participate?

Any teen-aged child of an Alumni member or any teen-aged protégé being mentored by an Alumni, whether in the USA or Nigeria, is eligible to participate. Consideration may also be given to opening the competition to Alumni outside the DFW chapter, further promoting the Citadel publication to a broader audience.

Please share your feedback through the
GIAA DFW members' WhatsApp group, and
include #CCTHunt in your comments.

By **John Oluwagbemiga**

Texas Hospitals Now Require Immigration Status

WITH EFFECT from November 1, 2024, Texas hospitals will have to ascertain the immigration status of their patients. This is a move designed by the state government to start tracking how many patients are in the country illegally.

An executive order recently signed by Gov. Greg Abbott requires hospitals to start tracking that information by Nov. 1. Hospitals will also have to track how much money they spend on care for undocumented immigrants.

The order requires hospitals to report its findings to the state's Health and Human Services Commission four times a year starting March 1. Immigrant advocacy groups like Texas Rising are opposed to this measure, but there is little they can do unless they seek judicial adjudication. The major worry is that the new law will make people think twice about seeking treatment in hospitals.

Prior to the enactment of this new Executive Order, immigrant families already have a hard time navigating the health care system.

As noted in the executive order, patients won't be turned away because of their immigration status. Abbott argues that since the state is paying for treatment through Medicaid funding, it has a right to try to recoup the cost from the federal government. While hospitals can ask about immigration status, legal experts say you're not required to answer. Experts argue that even if people don't say if they're in the country illegally, you can make a



The order requires hospitals to report its findings to the state's Health and Human Services Commission four times a year...

reasonable deduction here. If people don't have a valid ID. The executive order doesn't spell out if that will be an acceptable way for hospitals to gather data. The Order is already being executed. The wife of a member of the Great Ife Alumni Association had a medical emergency recently, and she was queried about her status. Although she received the necessary

medical attention, it was observed that the medications which would normally have been given to her in the hospital were prescribed to be picked up at an approved pharmacy. She was comparing her experience with a previous visit to the hospital about a year ago in a similar situation. Needless to say, the immigration status of alumni spouse is yet to be regularized.

By **Yemi Oteyowo**



The 12th Annual GIAA Reunion in Toronto Canada was Lit



12TH INTERNATIONAL REUNION | **OBIFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CANADA**

TORONTO CANADA

AUGUST 30 to SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Venue: Sandman Signature Hotel
Mississauga 5400 Dixie Road,
Mississauga ON L4W 4T4.

DAY 1
Registration
Variety Night

DAY 2
Plenary Session
Gala Night

DAY 3
Picnic

Early Bird Registration (ends Dec. 31, 2023) - Expired

| | |
|--|---|
| Regular Registration (Jan. 1 - Mar. 31, 2024) | Late Registration (starts April 1, 2024) |
| Alumnae: \$300 USD (\$400 CAD) | Alumnae: \$275 USD (\$425 CAD) |
| Alumnae Spouse: \$200 USD (\$260 CAD) | Alumnae Spouse: \$190 USD (\$285 CAD) |
| New Alumnae: \$275 USD (\$375 CAD) | New Alumnae Spouse: \$275 USD (\$375 CAD) |
| New Alumnae Spouse: \$275 USD (\$375 CAD) | Gala Night Guests: \$100 USD (\$130 CAD) |

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IT WAS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR again in September, with a wave of nostalgia sweeping through the city of Toronto as Great Ife Alumni Association (GIAA) members from across the world gathered for the much anticipated 12th international reunion.

Held at the Sandman Signature Hotel Mississauga, the event was a celebration of shared experiences, lifelong friendships, and the enduring impact of the Great Ife spirit.

From the moment attendees arrived, the atmosphere was electric. Old friends embraced, shared laughter, and reminisced about cherished memories.

The reunion event kicked off on the first day with the registration of attendees, and a red carpet photo-shoot followed by an exciting



variety night which featured the arrival of distinguished alumni, enjoyment of a variety of food, dances, open mic comics, karaoke session, and a game time filled with friendly minglings and laughs.

The plenary session on the second day was equally very enlightening with attendees meeting in small groups and sharing memorable times with one another. This was later followed in the day by a glamorous gala dinner in a lively cocktail party

setting, which allowed attendees to reconnect and create new bonds.

As the reunion concluded with a picnic event on the third day, attendees departed with their hearts full of joy, merriment and a renewed sense of community. The event will undoubtedly be remembered for years to come, a testament to the enduring power of friendly Great Ife spirit and the impact of a shared educational experience among the ever distinguished Alumni members.

Monthly Meetings

October Meeting



Monthly Meetings

November Meeting



BIRTHDAYS

A KEY EVENT at every monthly meeting is the birthday celebration of members within that meeting month. This is usually coordinated by the Membership Committee and the Office of the Welfare Secretary, **Mrs Vera Edebiri**. Birthdays for registered members, on the registration portal of

the Association's web-site, are always announced on the WhatsApp platform, and collectively celebrated at the monthly meetings. For **September, October, November and December 2024**, the usual celebrations were held. Celebrants for this quarter are shown below.

SEPTEMBER CELEBRANTS



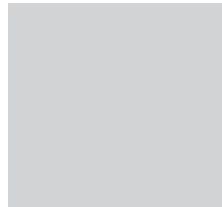
Mr. Seyi Adeyemo



Ms. Omowunmi Fagbile



Mr. Ayokunle Ayowole-Obi



NOVEMBER CELEBRANTS



Ms. Gloria Abolaji



Mr. Tokumbo Adejuegbe



Ms. Clara Iyere



Mr. Segun Adetola



Mr. Oluwatosin Olopade



Ms. A. Rotimi-Ogunsola



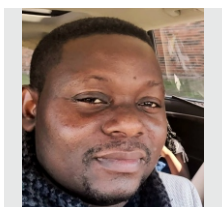
Mr. Oluwaseun Olanipekun



Ms. Olanrewaju Awotona



Mrs. Kemi Ajayi



Mr. Yemi Oteyowo



OCTOBER CELEBRANTS



Hon. Taiwo Igbinyemi



Dr. Oluwaleye Oluwatula

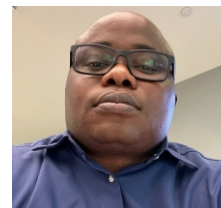


Ms. Modupe Uwe-Sweet



Mr. John Oluwagbemiga

DECEMBER CELEBRANTS



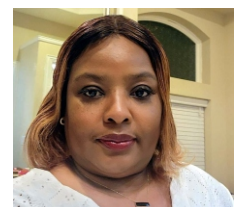
Mr. Omololu Omitiju



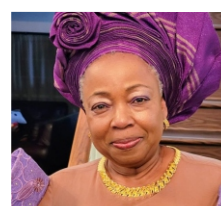
Mrs Oluwatosin Adewumi



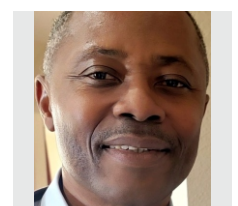
Dr. Ibidunni Ukegbu



Mrs Ugo Olutunla



Mrs Vera Edebiri



Mr Emmanuel Mordi

THE CITADEL

Introducing Email Subscriptions

- a) Wider reach
- b) Expanded access
- c) Citadel Summaries for each publication to accompany e-mails/WhatsApp broadcasts:
- D) What are we going to do? Nothing, once we sign up on the website we would have opted to receive email and if you have not signed up yet, make sure you do so today.

Introducing Picture Perfect front covers - Featuring one special member

Five-year anniversary plans, Members index, a glossary of all the past editions

- a) Hip hip hooray, *The Citadel* is 5 (five);
- b) Printed Edition with all past editions (Memorabilia).

Volunteers Needed

We are in need of volunteers, we need more members to sign up today.

The Mordis

QUESTION 1: Please introduce yourself. (Name, marital status, country of birth, country of citizenship, current location, educational status, profession)

RESPONSE: Emmanuel Mordi, married for 33yrs to Carol Mordi. Born in Benin-City, Nigeria and currently lives in Plano, Tx. I graduated from Ife in 1987 with a B.Sc, Statistics.

Describe your educational development journey. (Kindergarten to Post-Graduate).

I had most of my growing up education in the then Mid-Western State, then turned Bendel State and then Edo State. I attended several primary schools starting with St. Peters, Benin-City. I attended Ika Grammar School, Agbor and then transferred to Eghosa Anglican Grammar School, Benin-City and then to Edo College Benin-City before gaining admission into the then University of Ife to study Statistics. University of Ife was renamed Obafemi Awolowo University when I was in my final year.

Provide us an insight into your days at the OAU. (Not more than 100 words)

Did you know at Oduduwa Hall there are other entrances you can take to get in if you don't want to pay a gate fee? We used to sneak in to watch movies free of charge. We used to climb up the fire escape access and walk right above everyone watching the movie and then all of a suddenly "wala" we appear from

the upper rear of the movie theatre. Now you know!

I have always loved and been proud of my alma mater. It was always a breath of fresh air whenever I was on campus with all the facilities and academic options that were available to molding me to who I am today.

Which teacher or mentor has impacted you the most and how?

Then Dr. Fagbohun was my favorite lecturer. I actually had others including Prof. Imoru, Dr. Afuakpe. I lost touch with all of them. I believe some became professors later on. Dr. Fagbohun would take the time to put me through many





FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

statistical concepts and theories I struggled with and took genuine interest in seeing that my understanding was foundational.

If you could change one thing about your personality, what would that be?

I try to be too thorough; sometimes it is a pain. I am learning how to calm my nerves, relax and breathe.

What hobbies or sports are you involved with outside of work?

I like going to the gym where I get my mind and body in unison. I love raising Dobermans, meat goats and farming.

What drives you in your professional life?

I want to be the best at anything I do. This keeps my fire burning. I can't stop.

say I am comfortable somewhat in my new culture. But my approach was to take it one day at a time, making myself available, keeping an open mind and learning from everyone I meet.

Describe your experience as a member of the Great Ife Alumni Association, Dallas Branch.

I am always amazed at the energy of this group. I admire the positivity, camaraderie and relationship building opportunities within the body. There's no other like the GIAA DFW. I say kudos to everyone!

Tell us about a goal you set for yourself, and how you went about accomplishing it.

I am always throwing carrots ahead of me. When I got to America, I realized I

opportunity back at Ife to get savvy. (We had only one desktop PC in the computer lab then). I graduated from Bellevue College, WA with a degree in Computer Science back in 1995 and was the best decision I ever made in my life.

Tell us about how an unexpected problem derailed your planning. How did you recover?

You never ever want to lose a child. When Carol and I lost our oldest son to an accident, it was devastating in all ways; unreal! I still haven't recovered; we will never recover from it but are learning to cope and live with the acceptance of the reality.

Tell us about your proudest accomplishment.

My proudest accomplishment is still in the making. The person who I am today, putting myself through school and moving up in the information technology industry. I am amazed with my love for farming, raising animals and the skills I have acquired over the last 2 decades to be a handyman.

Give us an example of a time when you were able to be creative with your work. What was exciting or difficult about it?

Building automated processes at work is always gratifying. I recall a while back when I was on a contract at The Boeing Company I was responsible for the development of an assessment process for management trainees. This was a process that handled scanning of documents and retrieval of data points on the documents that were automatically fed through complex scoring algorithms that graded the trainees and automatically scored them and generated notification letters that was automatically sent to the post office and mailed to successful candidates. The architecture was complex and intricate. Even worse was the validation process, which was extremely sensitive and had company-wide visibility, with no tolerance for error. I felt like "I had arrived" when this was all done and completed.



Describe a time when you dealt with change?

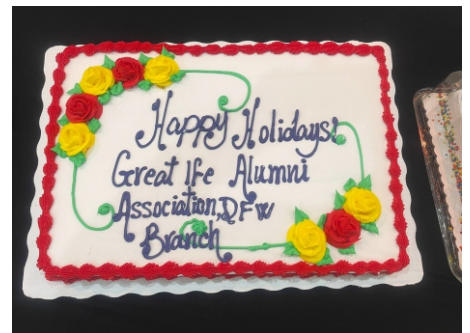
Coming to America was very challenging. I had to evolve from my African cultural ways and embrace a completely different culture. It took me probably 10yrs going through so many learning experiences to get a point where I could

needed to acquire further education if I wanted a break in my career and future. My credentials from Nigeria wasn't quite convincing enough. I decided to go back to school to bolster my position here in America.

I was always intrigued by computers especially as I never really had the



Christmas fun fair in pictures







Succeeding in Corporate America 1

THE MEMORY IS STILL FRESH, like it was yesterday. The IT Director at my first job in Toronto had come visiting from Montreal during my first week. He took a glance at me and asked (again) “when did you say you arrived in the country”? His look was that astonishment as I replied again, “three weeks ago”. Of course, it was not lost on me why he was so surprised. This was July 2001, right in the middle of the Dot-Com Recession, the economic downturn that rocked the IT industry, sending shockwaves across the business world and carting away many jobs. Securing a new IT position, especially for a fresh immigrant, seemed impossible. And with such bewilderment, I began my career journey in North America.

Even for a booming economy, securing a white-collar job within two weeks of immigrating to North America was a rarity. Also, at the time, not many people that I knew within



my immediate immigrant community worked corporate jobs. And so, my high-speed learning to fit in at work began. In the beginning, it was even the most basic, inconsequential

stuff like getting a joke or deciphering a common idiom that were the challenges. Therefore, looking back on the past twenty something years, it certainly feels quite a journey, one

with several valleys and mountains, lessons and learnings, and a whole lot of figuring things out as you go. So, I thought with such a humble background, I am as close as it gets to some-one who has experienced it all, when it comes to navigating your way success-fully in Corporate America. Now a Managing Director at a Big 4 consult-ing firm, my hope is to share some of the most effective tools I have acquired over the years. When I was asked recently to speak on a similar topic, I shared the following tips, which I will be expanding upon in this series:

1. Adopt a growth mindset
2. Define your vision and set goals
3. Learn continuously
4. Be adaptable and resilient
5. Build relationships and network

1. Adopt a Growth Mindset

This first tip, which was made popular by psychologist Carol Dweck, suggests that one could positively make progress through dedication and learning. It is founded on the core tenet of improving versus proving oneself and could be contrasted with another type of mindset; the closed (or fixed) mindset.

Having a growth mindset means espousing the following qualities:

- a) Improving yourself;
- b) Developing your skills;
- c) Comparing yourself today to yourself yesterday

On the other hand, the following are the hallmarks of a closed mindset:

- a) Proving yourself;
- b) Demonstrating your skills;
- c) Comparing yourself to others

- a) **Improving yourself vs. Proving yourself** - It is important to realize that the interview process that got you that job is over, and you should no longer make it your primary duty to prove yourself. You already did that, which is why they offered you the position.



Photo - Courtesy: The Internet

Making it a duty to always prove yourself to your co-workers comes from a fixed mindset and will only put you under continuous stress and will prevent you from having the confidence you need for success. Instead, you should realize that now is the time to focus on contributing value to that organization, and the best way you can do that is by adopting a growth mindset and working on improving yourself daily.

Like used cars, we all could potentially become outdated and lose value in the marketplace. The moment you got hired your absolute value could begin to diminish if your competencies are frozen in time. Which means your overall value to that organization starts to ebb. Well, no organization values employees who do not contribute meaningfully to its progress and the opposite is true. And one way to achieve that is to constantly improve yourself. Spending energy proving yourself, without working to improve, is the quickest path to obsolescence, not only at your current job, but also your career. The question we must regularly ask ourselves is:

am I improving in ways that are bringing value to my organization? Answering that question sincerely and working on ways to constantly improve will place you on the path to become an MVP in that organization and secure your upward mobility.

- b) **Developing your skills vs. demonstrating your skills** - Another way to make a distinction between having a growth mindset or a fixed mindset is whether one focuses on developing core skill sets versus being encumbered by demonstrating your skills. This is branding yourself versus parading yourself. You might ask: in what area(s) should I develop my skills? Well, areas of development could be quite broad and will depend on where you are in your career. For example, in the early part of my career, I found that developing strong technical, hands-on skills was crucial. However, this later changed to being more of the softer skills. Whatever stage you are though, my general advice to everyone is to develop both technical and soft skills.

- continued next edition

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TECHNOLOGY

By Adeolu ESHO



Photo - Courtesy: The Internet

Can Technology Be Used to Combat Mental Health Issues?

Mental Illness is real folks!!!

I SPENT THE BULK of my productive life in technology, and specifically its applications to the extremely large global wide area networking aspects of a major US-based telecommunications company. Never in a million years did I ever envisage that I would find myself picking up interest in the health sector, let alone, in the Mental Health area.

As fate would have it, years after I semi-retired myself from my job in 2018, I got drawn into the field by a friend needing assistance in building

up his business as a Provider Agency for the Home and Community-Based Services – Adult Mental Health (HCBS-AMH) in the State of Texas.

My involvement has opened my eyes to an aspect of human struggles that would have been totally lost to me. I discovered instantly that most people have a total misconception of mental health and secondly, that a lot more people are dealing with chronic mental problems than most folks realize.

Mental illnesses come in different shapes. This ranges from anxiety

disorders, bipolar disorders, psychotic disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, depression, substance use disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, eating disorders, and so many more. Some folks actually suffer from a combination of two or more of these illnesses.

The HCBS-AMH program was the result of decades of research which established that some people who had been institutionalized in mental institutions could actually function well in a typical community if they have the right level of supervision by qualified

staff, that ensures they are medication compliant and that they receive adequate services such as, Nursing, Peer Support, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Community Psychiatry Supports & Treatment, among others.

I discovered that the focus of the program was not the belief that these individuals could be completely cured, but that with the right level of support services by trained clinicians and the right understanding, they could thrive in the community and live a fulfilled life, based on their individual expectations of themselves. An achievement that might look little in the eyes of some of us is a major achievement within this demographic.

As I began to deepen my engagement with people dealing with these illnesses as a Program Administrator, I started asking myself what role technology could play now and, in the future, to help these individuals, families and the society cope seamlessly with these debilitating illnesses, sources of which are multivarious. I realized that some of the stupid things some of us did while we were young, some other people did and they were mentally permanently damaged by them. And still, some of the illnesses are hereditary. It is by the grace of God that some of us got our acts together.

Now, it is incontrovertible that technology has significantly constantly played a transformational role

in the advancement of humanity throughout history, in all facets of life. Think telephone, think computers, think social media, think smart software helping to automate anything and everything one can think of, and think of the new world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that is revolutionizing the human experience. The possibilities are endless and limitless. But then the question is: How could the Mental Health field get the best of technology? One thing is true based on antecedents, if humans could think about it, sooner or later, they would make it happen. I am glad some folks are laser focused on this.

Today, there are technologies that have been deployed for digital therapeutics, some for intervention and some for self-management. Technology such as mobile devices are giving researchers, health care professionals and the public new ways to access treatments, access help, monitor progress, collect data for future improvement, and increase our understanding of mental well-being in general.

Other researchers are creatively using magnetic fields, closed-loop implants and deep brain stimulation (DBS) to treat mental illnesses like depression

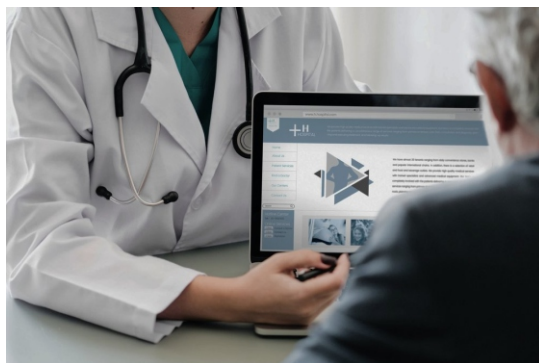
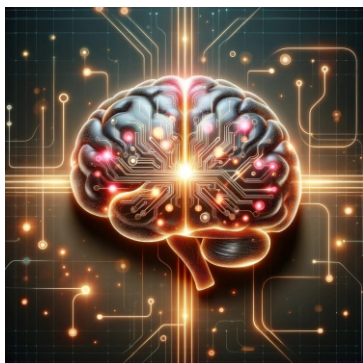
Beyond therapeutics, the interventions and the self-management technologies, and since some imbalances in the human brain are the major sources of mental illnesses, could there be opportunities for brain implants and brain stimulation therapies that could help to completely revolutionize the mental conditions of sufferers of mental illnesses? This has engaged my thoughts ever since I got involved.

The good news is that we do have researchers out there working diligently on this. They are developing the use of technology and engineering skills to build electrodes or computer chips that could be implanted in the brain or the human scalp to deliver electrical pulses that make the brain send out the right signals to the other components of the body. Other researchers are creatively using magnetic fields, closed-loop implants and deep brain stimulation (DBS) to treat mental illnesses like depression.

While most of these new innovations are yet to deliver on the full promises of permanently treating mental illnesses, it is encouraging to see the progress made so far. As more funding is made available to those championing the technological frontiers in the mental health ecosystem, the future looks brighter as things typically always get better when humans don't give up. There will always be new breakthroughs in ways of doing things. That has always been the hallmark of mankind's progression, and I don't see it being different in mental health.

As the new technologies mature, mental illness will no longer be a life sentence, and that to me is good news. It is just a matter of time, and we can take that to the bank.

Adeolu Esho was the first president GIAA, DFW Branch and currently the president of the USA Chapter





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