

**MAIDEN WHITE COAT CEREMONY FOR NEW CLINICAL STUDENTS OF  
MBBS/BDS OF UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES ONDO, HELD ON  
THURSDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY, 2018**

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir,  
The Deputy Vice Chancellor Admin and Clinical Services,  
Deputy VC Academics Prof Arogunjo  
The Registrar of the University  
Commissioner of Education, Science and Technology  
Deans,  
Parents  
White Coat Inductees

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir, permit me to start by thanking GOD, the Father Almighty the creator of heaven and earth and the one who holds the breath of our lives in HIS hands for the wonderful gift of life. We definitely would not be here but for HIS grace which I acknowledge every second of my life.

I consider it a singular and very rare honour to be invited to give the maiden speech of the White Coat Ceremony of the University of Medical Sciences of Ondo State. Permit me to also say I consider it an honour to be associated with Nigeria's First Medical University. You will all wonder why? This is because I got my Dr.(Med)Sci. in Pharmacology from the Karolinska Institute which is a purely Medical University in Sweden. You can now all understand my sentiments for UNIMED Ondo. You have scored some firsts.

Let me congratulate the young men and women who will don the traditional White Coat today. This coat which has a very long tradition is the hallmark of the physician and all those who work in the health

sciences. My younger colleagues; you now belong to a long line of some of the finest professionals in the world albeit you are still in training. In my unreserved opinion, today you have crossed the red line, and there is no going back but you must do all you can to earn the professional Doctoral title of “Doctor of Medicine”. I have deliberately chosen my words because that is how the WHO will describe you when you achieve the MB.BS or BDS.

Now that you have crossed over into the clinical side of medicine, you must remember that Medicine is both a calling and a profession. I have been qualified for over forty years. Let me assure you that if the hands of the clock went backwards I would do the same things but in a more efficient manner. There is nothing more satisfying professionally than successfully treating an ill patient. Permit me to say it is exhilarating.

The moment is what we get from life. The terminus is death. It is a finality. It is the reason why you as doctors and health care workers must do all you can to ensure that you keep your patients or clients alive. Please note that it is only the person who is alive that is useful to us. It is only the person who is healthy that can contribute to the economy of the country and assist the country to move forward. Indeed, much of the advancement of what we would experience in our great country will depend very much on some of the things you do.

I was team leader that visited a country that had invited WHO to evaluate in part its malaria program and in part its Health Systems. I was shocked when in the very first line of its policy document, that country asserted that they were moving towards excellent health systems and a malaria free country simply for economic reasons. That single statement changed completely the way I saw my research and the way I relate to patients. The passion to do my best to keep every individual patient alive burned more in me. The passion to do all I can for that individual patient was more. This is because if by my actions I

deny a patient the best and the outcome is not good then I am denying this country or any country I am working in economic advancement. Indeed, WHO in its Health Systems document asserted that good health is the basis of country development.

The long-term dictum in Medicine has been "*Primum non nocere*" this simply translates into "first, do no harm". As you move into the clinics and start seeing patients understand that it is a very big privilege that this country and this University is giving you to take care of its citizens. Always remember that the person you are seeing is actually your Nigerian relative. Thus, respect of patients, their privacy, confidentiality of the patients, and modesty with your achievements are all the ethos and standards by which we measure good clinical practice.

Remember that in all societies, the Doctor or Health Care worker has a unique place in society. That place has been well earned by the hard work of the professionals who have gone before you. Remember that you belong to a wonderful group of people. It is no accident that the law refers to us as "Good Doctors". They expect us to do good. It is therefore no surprise that when the public gets hold of a practitioner who has erred, the person is torn to shreds. It is like as if they wish to unmask these people who think they are the "do gooders" all the time.

Therefore as you go into practice integrity is the watchword. Please as a Doctor you are not to be caught on the right side of the law. In this society we live in where money is worshipped I plead with you to please RESIST the temptation. As a Doctor you cannot starve because your place in life is secure. It is what you contribute to society that matters and not what you take out. Your legacy is too precious to play with.

While I have talked about the individual doctor/dentist let me emphasize here that the practice of medicine has come a long way. In modern medical practice we are a team. The apex of this team is the Doctor. However, we equally contribute to the well-being of the patient. After the surgeon has done his wonderful surgery of skin graft after burns, the people who make sure the wounds are well taken care of and do all to prevent infection are those wonderful nurses. What will we do in medicine without them. We belong to the same team. We equally contribute to the lives of our patients. In modern medical practice the issue of superiority is gone. It is what you place on the table. You will be respected not for your degrees but for your competence and what you contribute to patient care.

During your clerkship years in the clinical postings open your eyes wide, listen and respect your teachers and imbibe as much as is possible. I can attest to the fact that these teachers have experience beyond what is written in the text books because experience cannot be bought in the market. You must understand that the medicine of today may not be good enough for the practice of tomorrow. I am a clinical pharmacologist. I am amazed at the progress that has been made in fields like the treatment of hypertension and cancer compared to what I learnt in school. Reading and improving one-self is a *sine qua non* for the practicing physician.

Finally, I will enjoin you to be good friends with your classmates. Sitting here today is Joshua Owa whom I have known for over forty-five years. He is still the same gentleman whom we all knew in our class. These people are the same people who will support you later in life. I also wish to acknowledge publicly the quality life that your DVC Admin Professor Oluwatosin and his family have infused into my life and that of my family. Sir how can I forget your Christian brotherly love.

Young people as you go into practice start thinking of what you can do to improve medical practice and science in Nigeria. Let me assure you those who will survive after medical school are those who have an entrepreneurial approach to the practice of medicine in the future. If you think it is after graduation you will start thinking of this, you are wrong. I had decided to be a Clinical Pharmacologist since I was in third year MB.BS. The late Dr. Awojobi had always been impressed with rural surgery since we were in school.

Finally, I want you all to think big, dream big and believe GOD that the world is just a stage for you and you will get to places.

I do wish you all the best and good luck.  
GOD bless you and forever be with you