

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE REV. BENJAMIN AKINSHOLA WILLIAMS (5142)

{(By: Israel Ojekeh Parper Snr Founder Member SLGS OBA (UK) – 09 Oct 2020)}

Good Afternoon Church.

I stand here today in grief to represent the members of the Sierra Leone Grammar School



Old Boys Association (United Kingdom) and that of my family. I feel humbled and honoured as a founder member to come and share our feelings of pain, and in the process, find the strength to bear our sorrows, and the courage to look for the seeds of hope.

Would it not be nice if death is that singular process of leaving the stage long enough to change costumes and return as a new character...? Would you slow down or speed up any unfinished work-in-progress, so you would not be found wanting or, would you rather be ready at all times and observe one of the Pythian Odes (518-436 BC) which says:

“STRIVE NOT MY SOUL FOR AN IMMORTAL LIFE.

BUT MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE”!

“No one is the proprietor of anything! The Lord is the original creator for he ‘pours life into death, and death into life’, without a drop being spilled” (unknown)

The SLGS OBA (UK) was born in 1984 through the share tenacity of **four** fellow Regentonians: The **Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams**, whose passing we are honouring today; Mr **Johannes Fowler** - the very first Chairmen, (whose funeral is to take place next Friday), **Mr Emile Carr**, the first Treasurer who is now residing in Freetown Sierra Leone, and (myself) **Israel Parper**, the very first Secretary General (and seventh Chairman).

It will however be remis of me if I fail to mention the (“5th Beetle”) member of the group, the late **Mr Abdul Macauley**, who was our first Vice Chairman.

With an evocative and naturally combined instinct, our policy and nutshell purpose were promulgated by the desire to provide, utilise and maximise the opportunities hitherto available for the benefit of present day and future pupils of the (of the SLGS) and also, for promoting Social contacts among old boys in the UK, an act which inspired our compatriots in the United States of America to follow our footsteps.

Within this body, we as fellow Regentonians, have from time to time recalled our past experiences during our diverse days at the school, discuss, and attend to the needs of present interests, projects and pursuits that the school needs. Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams was fully a part of the pillar and epitome of success of this UK Association. In his usually quiet mood, which is normal, he will listen as if in a trance and he will make his discursive contributions without the semblance of any drama, whether he agrees or disagrees with the issue(s) on the floor.

Rev Benjamin Akin Williams has always demonstrated that philosophy of the Regentonian:
“MENS SANA IN COPORA SANO”!

“A sound mind in a sound body”!

As a proud Regentonian, Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams carries that emblem of the pursuit of knowledge enshrined in the school’s motto – **Διώκω – TO PURSUE!** Or, as St. Paul puts it, ***Forgetting those things that are past and looking forward to those things that are to come: I PRESS ON TOWARDS THE MARK...***! And so, did he!

Like the other great older Regentinians during the infancy of this Association – the likes of: The late **Rev. M G M Cole**, Our Chief Patron; The **Rev. Cole -Wilson**; his own Principal, The **Rev E D C Clarke** and our own first Grand Chief Patron, **Dr Robert B Wallesey-Cole**, he moved on and became a clergyman and served this Association’s Chaplaincy well with other members. Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams was an epitome and valued exemplar to younger folks of our conclave when it comes to meeting the requisite responsibilities of belonging to a group of like-minded individuals. Not only did he join in, in the initial seed finance in the setting up of the Association in 1984, but he had been consistent in providing practical and financial support as were deemed necessary.

The founding of the school was an **“act of faith”** by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1845 and so was the founding of this our Old Boys Association (UK). Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams’ pride for his Grammar school, goes beyond the reference in the school song That Great and Massive Building stands in Regent Square - the former residence of the Governor of the Colony up to 1845 when the CMS took it over and made it to a school for education. The key to success as a quality educational institution was then established with all the advantages of a British Grammar School for about 200 boys and became **“THAT GREAT AND MASSIVE BUILDING”** which is highlighted in the school song for us the fortunate **“BANDS OF COMRADES TRUE...”!**

Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams was one of our **“Band of Comrades True”**, but we are here today to bid him farewell. **“A Band Of Comrades True”**, whose passion for traditions is second to none; and, it is a duty of every Regentinian to glorify and protect those Godly traditions, some of which we cannot provide in these strange times on his behalf today.

To the family and to all fellow Regentonians Rev. Benjamin Akin Williams has left behind, I SAY:

...Take courage all you Saints,

...Hold on to his blessed words and Memories.

***...Let us send him forth with the Regentonian spirit, and never to
be down hearted!***

...For one day, we will meet again as Saints, to reign,

...Never to Part again!

MAY THE SOUL OF REV. BENJANIN AKIN WILLIAMS

REST IN PERPECTUAL PEACE! AMEN!