

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

AT THE 5TH ANNUAL REUNION OF
OPASS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA
SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2010
IN MERIDEN, CT

Mr. Chairman, Prof. Alberta Yeboah, (our keynote speaker), executives and members of the Planning Committee, my fellow OPASSIANS, friends, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of your executive officers and on my own behalf, I welcome you all to tonight's function – the 5th Annual Reunion of '*mpaninfo*' in North America. We've traveled from far and near to be here tonight for various reasons...to renew and strengthen old friendships; meet and socialize with our high school classmates, and schoolmates. But above all, I hope that the primary motivating factor for us to assemble here tonight is to share ideas, develop plans and strategies that will help make OPASS - our alma mater – the best senior high school in Ghana.

Ladies and gentlemen, a year ago, you honored me by electing me as the second president for our beloved association. You gave me the mandate to lead this organization and build on the solid foundation that had been laid by "*Opanin*" Ben Awuah (our first president) and his executives during the first four years. You made my job easier by electing other, capable leaders who you believed will serve this association diligently and selflessly during our 2-year term. I'm delighted to say that, so far, they have lived up to your expectations. On your behalf and on my own behalf, I wish to express our sincere thanks to our executive officers for their commitment and dedicated services to our organization during the past year. I am optimistic that I can continue to count on them during our second year in office.

Date: 05/27/2006

This evening's function would not have been possible without the diligent planning, backed by the untiring efforts, of the Planning Committee consisting of Sam Agyei and his wife Edith, Alex Anim Mensah, Albert Bernard Modey, supported by Dr. Kwame Asamoah, Dr. Kingsley Lartey, Doris Darkwah Korang, Prof. Alberta Yeboah, and Franklin Agyekum. During the past six months or so, these "*mpaninfoo*" spent several hours participating in joint bi-weekly conference-calls with your executive officers as we planned and prepared for this event - our 5th annual reunion. We owe them our gratitude and sincere thanks. May I please ask those I've mentioned, and are here with us, to stand up and be recognized.

Tonight, as we proudly and joyfully celebrate our 5th milestone, I stand before you to report that the state of our organization is quite strong. Very shortly, I will highlight some of the major accomplishments during the past year, the challenges we've faced and lay out plans and strategies for our 2nd year in office.

However, before I do so, please allow me revisit May 27, 2006 the day we inaugurated this association. It was an honor and a distinct pleasure for me to have been asked to be the keynote speaker on that historic occasion. For those who were present at the inaugural ceremony, or later read my speech at our website, let me recap on some of the salient points of my speech. I drew attention to the fact that this association, unlike most other Ghanaian associations in this country had been formed specifically for all "*mpaninfoo*" in North America to do whatever we can and give back to our alma mater (OPASS) - the school that gave us a solid education and prepared us to become who we are today. I urged all members of the association to come together and collectively, through our concerted efforts help make OPASS an outstanding institution for teaching and learning. I suggested that our greatest satisfaction for being members of this association should be derived from the knowledge that we are contributing to make a difference in the life of current and future OPASSIANS

Date: 05/27/2006

I cautioned that this association will have a bright future only if we were able to sustain our enthusiasm and excitement as we showed that day. Finally, I reminded *mpaninfoo* that this organization will place additional burden on each of us; it would demand our time, our financial resources and, above all, our total commitment if we were to accomplish our objectives. I still believe that those factors hold true and I hope you're too.

Five years in the life of any organization generally falls into the short-term category. That's a period for the organization to find its feet, establish a solid foundation, make mistakes and learn from them. Starting from tomorrow, when we begin the next chapter of our association, we lose our grace period. Going forward, much more will be expected from us. We'll have little or no excuse to justify why we cannot make this association the best it can be and should be. Neither can we find any tangible reason to justify why we cannot accomplish the primary objectives we set for this association. We simply cannot meet annually and eat, drink, dance, and socialize but little else. That's the challenge and I trust that we're all up to it.

Major Accomplishment - Last November, the association presented ten new computers, a network printer and their accessories worth over \$7,000.00 to our school. The PCs have been installed for use by the students and plans have been made for the networking of the computers. Your executives recently decided to propose to the school administration to name the Computer Lab after Mr. S.T. Ampofo, in recognition of his many years of dedicated leadership of the school. We hope that our proposal will be accepted and carried out. Considering the fact that our organization has been in existence for only five years, we all have every reason to be very proud of this humble accomplishment. I expect more positive developments to continue in the coming years.

Date: 05/27/2006

Some Challenges and Concerns

And now, let me speak to some of the challenges and concerns:

- ▶ First, it's rather unfortunate that some "*mpaninfoo*" have not been able to sustain their enthusiasm and excitement for this association after the inauguration; they seem to have lost interest in the association for whatever reasons. To reverse this negative situation, one of my goals during the next twelve months is for all of us to embark on an intensive campaign to rekindle interest in this association and to enroll new members.

On paper, we have one hundred seventy-five "*mpaninfoo*" registered members but I suspect there are many more "*mpaninfoo*" in North America who are yet to join this association. Regardless, I find it a bit disheartening that of the 175 registered members, barely 40% attend our annual meetings. "*Mpaninfoo*", our work is cut out for us. Let's get to work as soon as we return to our home States tomorrow and begin mobilizing "*mpaninfoo*" for next year's meeting.

- ▶ My second concern is the failure of most of our members to pay their monthly dues and pledges they made during our previous meetings. Our records show that barely five percent of our members have paid their dues in full or partially during each of the first five years. Sadly, even a higher number of us who made financial pledges during our past meetings have failed to honor their promises. You'll agree with me that this is unacceptable. However, I suspect that a good number of those who, in good faith, made such pledges have genuinely forgotten about such promises. Therefore, after this meeting, I will request our secretary to send separate e-mails to remind each person who made a financial pledge and appeal to them to honor their pledges as soon as possible. We'll be counting on your cooperation in this all important matter.

Date: 05/27/2006

As most of you may already know, OPASS will be 50 next year and there are plans to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our dear school in grand style. The climax of the occasion will be in November. Just this month, the School Board of Governors was reconstituted and in due course, a National Planning Committee will be formed to plan and organize the anniversary. During the past several months, I have spoken with the headmaster, Mr. Kyei-Brobbey, a number of times. He has told me that he considers our association the most active of all the chapters of OPASS Alumni Associations. Therefore, he is optimistic that we will be heavily involved in the planning and actively participate in the celebrations.

In this regard, your executives have been proactive. A couple of months ago, we formed a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Ben Awuah (our VP) to plan and submit a report for the impending Golden Jubilee celebrations. The committee has submitted its preliminary report for discussions and input by the general assembly. Later tonight, we will share the report with you and seek your suggestions. We will eventually present our proposals to the National Golden Jubilee Planning Committee for their consideration.

For those of you who plan to visit home next year, I urge you, if at all possible, plan your trip to coincide with the climax of the celebrations in November so that you can participate directly in the activities and bring photos and videos of the celebration and share them with those who cannot be eye-witnesses to the big occasion. During our 6th Annual Reunion next June, we will sign up those who by then know they will definitely attend the celebrations and then we'll begin to coordinate our activities for the trip back home.

You've obviously noticed that the theme for this year's general meeting is "OPASS @ 50, My Roles and Responsibilities". Before, we conclude this meeting tonight, I urge each member to identify one thing you can do to make the

Date: 05/27/2006

anniversary a successful one or help to make life at the school better for current and future students. Each year, a number of us visit home briefly. As short as our visits are, I would like to encourage you to visit the school whenever you're back home. Speak to the school administration as well as some of the students and learn at first hand what's going on and what their basic needs are. At this point, I would like us to recognize and thank *Opanin* Robert Henking (Rash - our dynamic assistant secretary) for the excellent job he did in September when he visited the school. Rash brought back several photographs depicting the current terrible conditions in the school. I'm sure that those of you who have visited our website and seen the photos could not believe what you saw. The challenge for this association is what can we do to improve the situation? We need your input and concerted efforts to turn things around for the better.

I would also like us to recognize and thank our sister, Doris Darkwa Korang for her generous support of this association. In the last year she's donated \$600.00 to our coffers and for this meeting she donated several wood carvings to be raffled as a fundraiser for the association. "D.D", please stand and be recognized; accept our sincere thanks.

"Mpaninfoo", tonight I wish to challenge each of you to resolve here and now leave at the conclusion of this meeting with, at least, one goal in mind...to do whatever you can to vigorously advance the aspirations and objectives of this association. We need to see a practical demonstration of your support and cooperation as collectively, we move this association forward. We need your input, constructive criticisms, progressive ideas to advance the course of this association.

Finally, when this meeting ends tonight and we all return to our homes, let us remember always the solid education and morale foundation OPASS gave us that have contributed in no small measure, in making us who we are today. Then, let us resolve to give back and help to improve teaching and learning as well as student

Date: 05/27/2006

life in general for the current and future students of our beloved OPASS. That should be our goal; that will be our legacy to the school.

Long Live Mpaninfo!

Long live the OPASS Alumni Association of North America!

Long Live OPASS!

Dwen Na Som!

Thank you all!
