

Celebrating an accomplished Nigerian

Only a few Nigerians have made discoveries that have had significant impact on the development of mankind. One is Philip Emeagwali, and another that is worthy of celebrating is Peter U. Nwangwu, a professor of pharmacology, executive assistant to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as well as the chief development officer. His achievements in the field of medicine and pharmacy are worthy of celebration, writes CHRIS OKEKE

In an article titled, "Nigeria And Her Insincerity To True Nation Building," published in the August 26, 2006 edition of "Nigerians in America," Ossie Ezeaku, a metallurgist and public commentator who lives in Belgium, examined some of the problems confronting true nation building in Nigeria. He placed the primary problems in Nation building on the habit of enthronement of mediocrity by past leaders, instead of recognizing and harnessing the endowments and ingenuity of very accomplished Nigerians.

He quoted Nuhu Ribadu who stated that Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was the second best thing that happened to Nigeria after Obasanjo. He stated that there are so many Okonjo-Iwealas out there in different professional fields, but regretted that Nigeria will continue to lose the rare services of many such professionals because our leaders do not make sincere concerted effort to find and use prime materials in the task of nation building.

The author then focused on Peter Nwangwu, and stated, The contributions of Nigerian born geniuses, such as that of, Peter Uchenna Nwangwu, would continue to elude Nigeria. In documenting some professional history and achievements of Nwangwu, the author stated, "Nwangwu is widely regarded as one of the top ten most educated pharmacists/pharmacologists in the world. Nwangwu invented a screening methodology for anti-arrhythmic drugs. The invention, which can identify drugs that can cure irregular heartbeat, was created by Nwangwu in 1976. In 1981, Nwangwu also invented a methodology for identifying myocardial infarction, also known as heart attack. Both methodologies are being used across the world. Nwangwu also invented seven drugs used for correcting irregular heartbeats. In addition, Nwangwu is the first scientist in the world to document and publish the first in vivo murine ventricular tachycardia in a single surface electrocardiogram lead. Scientists all over the world, including scientists at Harvard Medical School, quote Nwangwu in their research publications in this area of medical research".

This commentator from Belgium denounced the role of federal character and political favours/considerations in the enthronement of mediocrity in nation building, when God has endowed and blessed Nigeria with very accomplished and prime materials for nation building. He concluded that our leaders are insincere to true nation building, and therefore the contribution of Nigerian born geniuses like Peter Nwangwu will continue to elude Nigeria.

We at Business Day share in the sentiments expressed by the Belgium commentator about Nigerian government utilizing accomplished people like Nwangwu in the important task of nation building. Other societies recognize and reward merit and



Peter U. Nwangwu, Executive Assistant to the VC, UNN

accomplishments, and would generally attempt to use their best talents to build their nation for benefit of posterity.

Nwangwu made significant contributions to the American society in the 34 years he lived in America, before returning to Nigeria last year to serve his fatherland. To reward and recognize his contributions to the American society, in September 2006, Nwangwu was honoured in the United States as the recipient of "The 2006 Congressional Medal of Distinction". In 2005, he received three meritorious and coveted awards in the United States: "The 2005 President Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal", by the National Republican Congressional Committee, Washington D.C., "Man of the Year 2005", by the American Biographical Institute, Raleigh North Carolina, and "Businessman of the

Year 2005", by the United States Business Advisory Council, Washington, D.C.

A review of his academic and professional history, through his 19-page curriculum vitae, or looking at the documentation of his achievements on the worldwide web, will show that Nwangwu is eminently qualified to serve this nation in many capacities, including Education Minister, Health Minister, Minister of Science and Technology, Minister of National Planning, NAFDAC Director General, etc. Currently, he serves as Chief Development Officer and Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and also President and Chief Executive Officer of the University of Nigeria Research and Economic Development (UN-RED) Foundation.

In my opinion, the most vital

and interesting thing about Nwangwu is the character history. The consistency and stability of his character are preeminent. Furthermore, his creativity, courage, integrity, and humility are exemplary. Business Day had the rare opportunity to capture the written opinions of 15 leaders and statesmen in America who assessed Nwangwu's character and work ethics over a period of 29 years in America, beginning from when he was a post graduate student at the University of Nebraska. Here are the excerpts from these experts about Peter Nwangwu.

"His character traits and reliability as an individual are impeccable. He is well liked by all those with whom he works. Peter has achieved an outstanding academic record with us at the University of Nebraska, and we are indeed most fortunate to have him as one of our students".

In 2005, he received three meritorious and coveted awards in the United States: "The 2005 President Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal", by the National Republican Congressional Committee, Washington D.C.

Kenneth L. Bader, Ph.D Vice Chancellor, University of Nebraska
(From a letter written on July 12, 1976)

"Nwangwu is a very unique individual. He is a very gregarious person who shows considerable potential for leadership. His continuous smile reflects his love of life and his optimism. His behaviour exemplifies his belief in the Christian faith. Of all the students with whom I have worked, I would rate Peter as showing the most promise of making an impact on his fellow man both through his professional competencies and his personal style."

Larry A. Braskamp, Ph.D, Assistant to the Chancellor University of Nebraska

(From a letter written on July 12, 1976)

"I can assure you that he is a most sincere young man. Peter has been a student in my classes and he has served as my lab technician. I think I know him quite well. His character is of the highest order. He is extremely reliable and I look for him to succeed in whatever he undertakes. His prime goal is to serve his native Nigeria".

Wendell Gauger, Ph.D Professor, School of Life Sciences, University of Nebraska

(From a letter written on July 9, 1976)

He is enrolled as a graduate student and is a teaching assistant in our Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy at the University of Nebraska. I have found Nwangwu to be a reliable and sincere individual. He is a diligent worker and a fine student. I like his enthusiasm as well as his ability to generate ideas and to organize his research. I am sure that you will find him to be a very friendly and pleasant person, truly a fine gentleman.

L.D. Small, Ph.D Professor, College of Pharmacy, University of Nebraska

(From a letter written on July 9, 1976)

"He is an outstanding student and he has made significant contributions to our research program. He will be the first student to receive both the graduate Ph.D and professional Pharm.D degree from our college simultaneously. He is proceeding on schedule, and he has never had any academic or other difficulties here. He is conscientious, and I know that you could depend upon him to devote himself to any responsibility that he assumes".

L. Kirk Benedict, Ph.D Associate Dean, College of Pharmacy, University of Nebraska Medical Center

(From a letter written on September 5, 1979)

"Peter is an extremely industrious individual. He sets high goals for himself and schedules for achieving his objectives. One might consider Peter to be an extremely aggressive individual. He has been extremely successful in meeting his goals". Sidney J. Stohs, Ph.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Biomedical Chemistry, University of Nebraska Medical Center

(From a letter written on September 6, 1979)

"Nwangwu recently joined our faculty from Nebraska as the director of our clinical research program. Nwangwu is a diligent worker and a very capable young man. His character is impeccable and above reproach. He has extremely good rapport with both the faculty and the students. His great energies, clear insight, informed enthusiasm, and yet great modesty and sensitivity combine ex-



Peter U. Nwangwu

tremely well with the outstanding native abilities of this young man to make him a truly unique individual, and I look for him to succeed in whatever he undertakes".

Charles A. Walker, Ph.D, Dean and Professor of Pharmacology, School of Pharmacy, Florida A & M University

(From a letter written on February 27, 1980)

"Peter is a gentleman and a scholar in all respects. He is incredibly bright and well informed about issues relating to pharmacy and the pharmaceutical industry. He has excellent human relations skills and a real pleasure to be associated with. He can be expected to be honest and persevering in all that he does. While I do not need to restate his academic credentials here, you obviously see that he has too much education. His book on clinical trials continues to be my basic text on the subject.

B. Wayne Kong, Ph.D., J.D., Chief Executive Officer, Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc

(From a letter written on October 6, 1997)

"For one thing, his positive attitude is very infectious, and he exudes confidence and unfeigned commitment. Hard work and encouragement, plus a sincere respect and concern for those with whom he is engaged, are examples of how he leads. One of the best things I like about Nwangwu is his manner of dealing with people. He is quite approachable and accessible to work with because of his innate sense of courtesy and congeniality. While he maintains a firmness of purpose and, if necessary, strongly defends his position, he does so with grace and respect for others, yet being open-minded to new and opposing viewpoints.

"I have known Nwangwu and worked with him over a period of seven years. During this time he has helped us tremendously on different phases of Kingdom Development, particularly with health care development in the Kingdom of Polynesia

Larry M. Barber, J.D, Attorney-at-Law, Houston, Texas

(From a letter written January 15, 1999)

"Nwangwu is a natural leader and indeed a consensus builder, with a refreshing work ethic. He has served as a fine role model for many, including me. He is dominant, direct, daring, caring, enthusiastic, persuasive, practical, passionate, influencing, gentle, and dynamic. There are few people like him I have known in my personal and professional life that are able to effectively manage multiple tasks comfortably.

John T. Nwangwu, Dr. P.H, Professor of Public Health and Epidemiology

Yale University
(From a letter written October 26, 1999)

"I first met Peter U. Nwangwu in the fall of 1981 when he joined the faculty of the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, as Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, at St. John's University, New York. In the drug industry he demonstrated superior skills in building effective management systems and work teams, which included extensive administrative and budgetary experience. I served on the advisory board of his company and was very impressed by his commitment to quality, his ability to plan, organize and direct, and his capacity to initiate and manage change. Nwangwu is a warm, delightful, and personable gentleman with incredible charm and very fine manners. He is intelligent and articulate, and can therefore represent your university well in cultivating activities that enhance university visibility. He has excellent contacts with senior manage-

ment in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry nationwide. In addition, several of our former graduate students at St. John's University New York are now Presidents, Chief Executive Officers, and Vice Presidents of several pharmaceutical companies out here in the east coast of the United States. Therefore, Nwangwu has a large pool of executives to call upon in his duties at UCSF".

Charles I. Jarowski, Ph.D, Founding Director (in 1946) of Pharmaceutical Research and Development, PFIZER (From a letter written October 26, 1999)

"I knew Nwangwu through a mutual friend who introduced us to each other about ten years ago. I served as Attorney General of the State of Texas at that time. Before then, I had the opportunity to serve, for several years in Washington D.C. as US Congressman from Texas. I can say to you that in my many years in elected office I did not meet anyone who is as versatile as Nwangwu. He is an exceptional scientist, excellent academician, and brilliant entrepreneur. In addition to these, he is politically astute and very well connected".

Jim Mattox, J.D Former U.S Congressman, and Former Attorney General, State of Texas.

(From a letter written October 27, 1999)

"I have known Nwangwu and worked with him over a period of seven years. During this time he has helped us tremendously on different phases of Kingdom Development, particularly with health care development in the Kingdom of Polynesia. I have found Nwangwu to be very capable and extremely diligent in his efforts. He has excellent analytical skills and the ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written formats.

Calvin Buehrer, His Excellency, Prime Minister, Kingdom of Polynesia

(From a letter written November 2, 1999)

"Nwangwu and I have known each other for about two years. I have visited his home in Sugarland, Texas, and we spend ample time together each time he comes to Berkeley to visit his two children who are students at the University of California, Berkeley. Nwangwu is a distinguished and experienced administrator with high energy, integrity, excellent interpersonal skills, and a high capacity for motivation. He communicates effectively, and with proper sensitivity among all people. He is an enthusiastic and confident scientist and entrepreneur. Not only does he possess a strong ability to bring creativity to assignments; Nwangwu also has the gift and ability to create an atmosphere that encourages hard work, innovation, and creativity."

Tom Holmoe, Head Football Coach, University of California, Berkeley

(From a letter written November 1, 1999)

"He is a resourceful and creative entrepreneur who is pragmatic, proactive, and practiced in the art of creative initiatives. He is a very diligent and resilient worker who is both innovative and energetic, with highly developed visionary talents. I know that he will bring productivity, efficiency, creativity, credibility, and the professional respect required by the position of President at Albany State University".

Willard P. Conrad, J.D Attorney-at-Law, Houston, Texas

(From a letter written June 24, 2005)