

## SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

WHEN HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Tutu Ajiḃose



A walk inside the elegantly decorated Maurya Ballroom in Queens New York, on Saturday, September 11th 2010, unveiled the extraordinary aftermath of hard work and dedication. 23-year-old University of Pennsylvania Alumni, and Miss Independence pageant winner 2010, Feysisola Ogunfemi was the mastermind behind it all. Her unyielding passion for community service and pursuit of education specifically as it relates to Science, Technology and Entrepreneurship, is what encouraged her to host the first ever Miss Nigerian Independence Scholarship Ball. Feysisola strongly believes that education has the power to lift up a nation, therefore it is essential to encourage our youth to strive for academic excellence by awarding two scholarships to youth who have plans to use their education in science and entrepreneurship to make a positive change in the Nigerian community.

The support received was so overwhelming that the two recipients, Olamide Akanmu, the Collegiate Scholar and Ibironke Otusile, the High School Scholar were awarded double the amount in which they initially applied for. Olamide received \$1000 for her notable achievements and plans to develop a center which focuses on both Math tutoring and cultural enrichment, while Ibironke received \$500 instead for her outstanding academic achievements and plans to become an otolaryngologist in Nigeria. The surprise didn't stop there however; each girl was also presented a net book in courtesy of Applause Africa magazine, a gift certificate to Buka restaurant and a free tax return courtesy of IncomeTaxCPA.com.

The evening was hosted by upcoming artist Terry G, and Stony Brook graduate Yemi Akanmu. Amongst those present was Mr. Lot P Egopija (Head of Chancery: Nigeria's Mission to the UN), Angelea Preston (America's Next Top Model), and Michael Adeniyi (Director, Organization for the Advancement of Nigerians).

The boundless support from her parents, family and organizations such as the Organization for the Advancement of Nigerians, Applause Africa Magazine, The Nigerian Nurses Association, C.A.C. 1st in the Americas, Abundant Life Christian Center and CUNY Student Council added to the night's outstanding achievements.



## MY VISION FOR AFRICA

By The Banda Sisters

Today our country, South Africa is hailed for its Noble Price winning Presidents and Politicians. Its successful World Cup hosting; as well as having survived the Apartheid era emerging ever so truthful and reconciling as a nation despite speculations of a civil war.

We cannot, however mention our success without acknowledging our struggles. As in any battle for freedom, blood was shed, young men imprisoned for over a quarter of a century all in the name of freedom so that the coming generations will have a better standard of living, have bigger dreams and take the country to unprecedented heights.

Today, when I look at our young people and think about how lucky and blessed we have been to not have had to fight as hard as our parents did to get a basic education. I am filled with nothing less than hope – Hope that our current and future leaders can recognize that we are now faced with a totally different battle. That of steering our continent forward and grooming the young people to become agents of positive social change.

We now seek future leaders who can represent us in the world in a classy manner, yet still maintain pride in their African roots.



My vision for my country moving forward to the next 50 years is that we understand that the fight we are now facing, no longer involves an enemy. It now deals directly with individual choices and how we choose to involve ourselves with other Africans and learn to find ways to get around mental boundaries.

As an African continent, we can no longer accept being led by the same people who were responsible for the struggle. Their mentality no longer serves our continent's current issues and interests. You cannot expect a soldier who knows more about a gun to run a corporate institution successfully without the necessary skill set.

We as young educated people who have seen the world, need to confront the current leadership and make them understand we are no longer willing to stand by while they destroy our economies by putting money in their own pockets while the rest of the continent is left to bleed.

Our natural resources are enough to feed the world, yet our people are the ones having to ask for handouts from other nations while our resources are depleted.

We need to groom our young people with positive images and motivation because no one can become what they have neither seen nor heard of.

Most importantly we need to go back to our values and understand that in order to be productive as a continent, we must make a choice between taking a high or low road with an understanding that whatever choice is made, it will either make or break us as a nation.