

**M' LORD MY FRIEND - A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO HONOURABLE
JUSTICE IGNATIUS PATS ACHOLONU JSC CON.**

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I could have written ***“Our Lord our friend”*** but I would be usurping the role of a spokesman for the legion of younger folks like me, who can confidently His Lordship Honourable Justice Ignatius Pats Acholonu JSC CON as ***“M' Lord my friend”***. We are a Legion, the Guy, yes the guy was great. Now how does a “young” Lawyer like me ***“who ought to know better”*** after more than 22 years at the Bar get to call a Justice of the Supreme Court ***“a guy”***?

I will tell you anon; because you will marvel when you also hear that some of our Children actually believed that he was also ***“our god”*** in the sense that in their children’s mind they ***“rightly know”*** that Lord ought to mean God; and if somebody so close is ***my Lord”*** he must be ***“god”***; ask Dr. George Okpagus last child or Dr. ABC Orjiako’s twins.

Acholonu was a very special man rare with the uncommon gift to be charming, friendly, “mischievous”, dignified and reverend in an unbelievable mix and personal that was totally awaresome in its conviviality. The only other man I have known who was capable of this magic was the great Aka Aka-Barohonin.

I still cannot recall when I met him for the first time; all I remember is that I met his Lordship somehow and he adopted me and as Dr. Douglas Acholonu would describe me, I became his pet. In his eyes I did no wrong, he would indulge my rascality and pre-cautiousness with an amused smile, my Lord could always enjoy a good joke, he had an unmatched sense of sophisticated humour; he was a prince in very royal manner, he was suave, a connoisseur of fine wines, a man of culture an aficionado of sartorialhe could relax in good company and even though I was always overawed in his company, he was never intimidating.

As we celebrate his passage, I mourn a personal loss because I did not spend as much time with him as he made available; and I am the cause, because I somehow always felt guilty that I was taking too much of the time he gave, but alas, my Lord

always gave so much time to all of us, which makes me wonder how he got all the time to write his profound judgments, books and lectures.

M' Lord was cerebral without being pedantic or didactic; he would rather joust with you.

It is so sad that m' lord did not see his Seventieth Birthday none of us who know that his father His Royal Highness Igwe of Orlu X lived for more than 100 years and reigned as king for more than 60 years expected my lord to do any lesser; alas God knows best, my lord's father was not just an eminent king but the very first Senator for Orlu Zone in Eastern Region.

My lord was incapable of bearing a grudge; he empathized with our frailties and incapacitations. I recall that his father's funeral obsequies occurred during the primaries of most political parties prelude to the 2003 elections. As I was engaged in my political pursuits, I couldn't extricate myself to attend the funeral; my lord did not even await my apologies or excuses; he completely and totally understood my situation and evinced this by the great support he gave me when buried my father shortly after in May 2003. My Lord gave me financial and material support, coupled with moral and physical attendance throughout the entire ceremony with his amiable wife and consort, the personable professor Rose Acholonu.

Tomes will be written about Justice Acholonu's erudition and the magnificence and magnitude of his mind as a legal scholar and quintessential judge. I am probably not competent to do justice to such an exercise; but in the short time I know him he left indelible marks on me; I loved and admired his personable humility and camaraderie; I flourished under his encouragement and love; my lord was a good man, a very Goodman, a fantastic man, let others celebrate him as a judge and scholar, I choose to celebrate him as m' lord who was also my friend.

Adieu Great man.

Chief Chibuzo N. Ziggy Azike, KSC

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