MEMORIAL SPEECH

FOR

BOLA AKANBI

Hello everyone. Today we’re here to celebrate the life and memory of (**full name**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It’s hard to believe that 10 years have already passed since (**first name only**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ left this earth, but he was a very special human being and his light lives on in all of us. (**if he was still married at the time of his death, mention his wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lives on through the connection and love he shared for his wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, through the light in the eyes and mannerisms and memories of his children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, his way with people-the way he so freely shared his humor, intelligence and caring, the love of his country and its citizens, and the contribution he made to the culture and heritage of Nigeria. He was a real “people magnet” and all who met him were naturally drawn to his charismatic and engaging personality. And to me, most of all, he lives on through the memories I have of our life together. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was 18 years older than me, but he was so much more than my older brother. He was my friend and at times, he was also my guardian, my mentor, and a really important father figure to me.

A lot has happened in the past 10 years since \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has passed. The world is a different place. His children \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are now adults and they are taking his inspiration to live their lives as fully and richly as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lived his. The world goes on, but there is a term used in art called “pentimento,” and it can also be used to describe life. Pentimento refers to the layers of paint that one sees when someone is painting a canvas. The under layers of paint are covered, but they never go away. They leave a lasting impression on the painting. The same applies in life. Even though people move on, the impression each one of us leaves on the “canvas of life” never disappears. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s influence and example is with each one of us every day.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was my older brother. I cannot remember a time in life when I didn’t admire him and all that he represented. He was an outgoing, friendly, intelligent person who had a real passion for life. He loved people, he loved sports, especially cricket and racquetball, and soccer, and he loved to read. As I said, he was always a positive influence on me, and when I was in high school, I lived with him and had the privilege to have this wonderful father figure watch over me at very close range. He watched over all of his siblings with the same care, in fact he was so kind to everyone, it seemed like he was truly “related” to everyone he met. As we both got older, fortunately he travelled a lot to the US, and I had the honor to reciprocate his hospitality, friendship and brotherhood, as he would stay with me on those trips. Our visits are, to me, unforgettable and were always richly filled with memorable moments together. We played golf, we visited bookstores, and we talked and talked and talked about everything-politics, life, and culture. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ loved life and he loved knowledge. There was rarely a lull in conversation when we were together, and if there were a slightly silent period, it was because we were both absorbing the mutual appreciation and admiration we had for each other. I remember how \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ disliked television because according to him, it prevented intelligent conversation-and let me remind all of you who knew him well-he REALLY loved to be engaged in **intelligent** conversation!

Here we are, 10 years later. It is a tribute to the man that shows how he is still so loved and respected. He has left his mark of grace, intelligence and caring on this world. From the smiles on the faces of his loved ones to the contribution he made to Nigerian culture as the director of the National Museum of Natural History of Nigeria, he will be remembered and he lives on through all of us. The impression he left on this world is a great one. He is truly an integral part of all that he had met and inspired, and I am proud to carry his legacy with me and share the heritage of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**full name**) with me always.

Thank you all.