**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**KAZEEM AJALA**

Hello everyone! Today is a wonderful day for our family and in particular for my sister, Abiola. She has achieved a great distinction and although she is never one to boast, today is an exception as we "boast" for her. She has earned this celebration and all of the good cheer and praise she receives today upon the completion of her studies for her Master of Nursing degree.... and while I want to speak about my sister and the impact she has had on my life, There are two people to whom we both owe our lives, our gifts, and our successes, and that is our parents. Although our father, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was not able to make the journey from Nigeria to attend this celebration, I am honored to represent him in acknowledging my sister's achievements. Abiola, I'm sure you know how much (**do you call him Dad? Father? Please use the term your sister uses**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wanted to be here to honor you in person. Please know that he is thinking about you at this moment, his heart is with you and he is extremely proud of all that you have accomplished. He congratulates you and knows you will continue to find ways to serve your community and your patients as you continue to practice and learn more and more about the noble field of nursing. I also want to pay respect to our mother, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Although she is no longer with us, you have inherited some of her best traits and characteristics (**mention two or three ways that your sister is like your mother**). So many of her best qualities can be found in your character. When I think of you, I see our mother's strength, compassion, and the care and attention she paid to all of us. We were and are so blessed to have two fine parents and with accomplishments like the one we celebrate today, you continue to honor them as parents and people.

We have come a long way since we grew up together in Nigeria (**? Please change if not correct**) and we have both traveled a long way... both geographically and personally, to get to this day. Abiola, as the youngest of our six brothers and sisters, we all did what we could to pave the way and smooth the road that saw us from being children to becoming adults. I remember what it was like growing up with you so many years ago. We went to nursery school together... i remember the dormitories... you were five years old and I was the "big brother".... I was eleven. Even at that young age, as I had to look after you, I knew you were special... and although we separated after only one year, that memory and that sense of wanting to watch over you has stayed with me. Did we have any idea, back in (**name the school or the town.... whatever you think works best**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1977, that we would be here, in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, celebrating your Master of Nursing degree? Isn't life just amazing? Look how far we all have come!!

Over the years you've lived your life and found your way in this world. Although you were the youngest, you had a sense of compassion and duty. You never rested and were never content to have just what you had. You wanted to know more. You wanted to learn more. You wanted to **BE** more. Throughout your life you've been quiet, polite, accepting of situations, but no one should ever think that your nature means that you're not serious about your work. I am proud to see how determined and straightforward you are and I am even more proud that you know how to stand up, defend yourself when necessary, and make sure to let people know just how you feel. You have a special strength of character.... that's very admirable. It's been said that "The character of a nurse is just as important as the knowledge he or she possesses." Knowing your character, and honoring this wonderful degree can only mean that you, Abiola, are an unstoppable force in the world of nursing!

Mahatma Ghandi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." There is probably no other profession on earth that can compare to nursing when we discuss "losing oneself in the service of others." Abiola, the essence of who you are is **service**. Even before the schooling and the training and the master's degree, you were and are a very unique person... one who really appreciates kindness; one who will go any distance in order to assist or help a fellow human being. By dedicating yourself to your career and to your patients, you teach us what it means do be interested, compassionate, concerned, and professional. As a nurse you've made a difference in the lives of so many people, and whether you knew them for one encounter or tended to them for a longer time, your touch and your caring gave them comfort and eased their pain when they needed it most. In the nursing profession more often than not, you meet people at their worst... that can make for a very frustrating and challenging job for you but you take it in stride, you do your work, and you keep going back to learn more, do more, and make more of a difference in the lives of your patients, family and friends.

I am honored to be your brother. I am honored to congratulate you on behalf of our father and mother, and I look forward to celebrating more achievements that come from your character, caring, and dedication. Congratulations, Abiola! Thank you!