

LAW, LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
HONOURING SERVICE BEYOND THE BAR



THE SERVICE EDITION



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HONOURING SERVICE BEYOND THE BAR



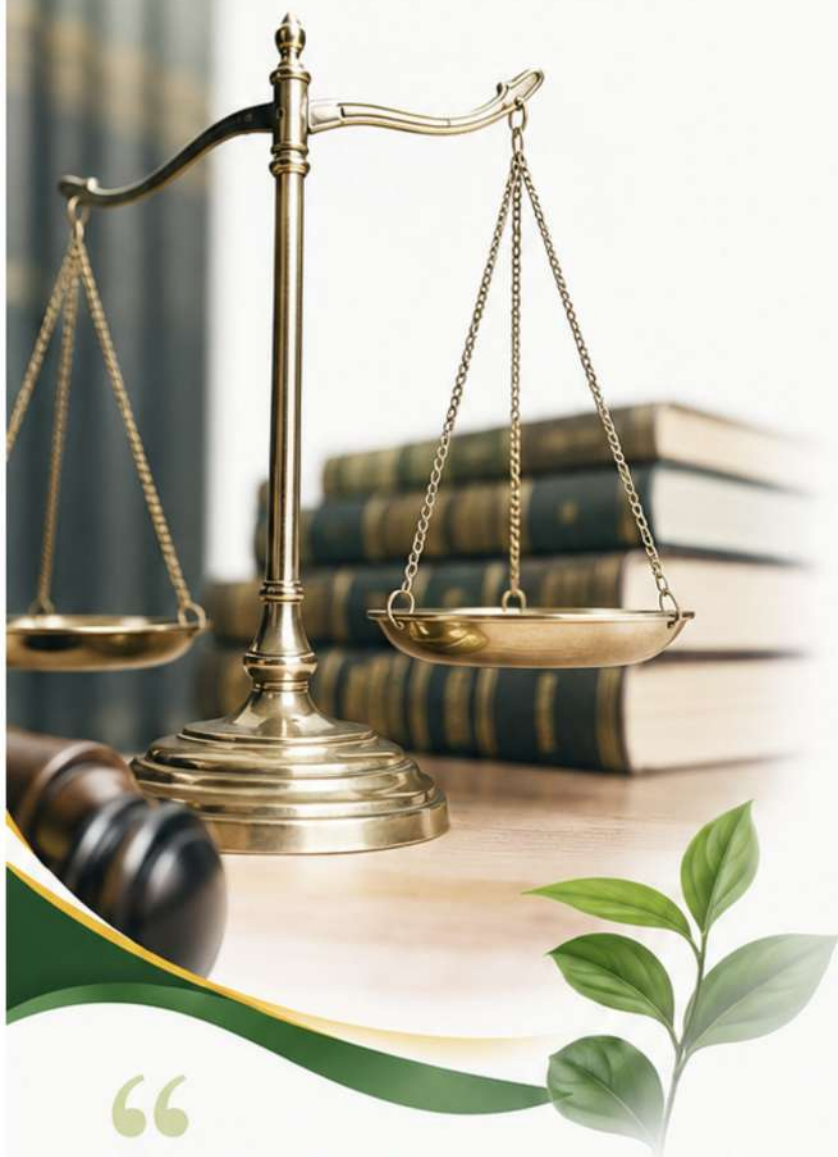
PLALAWSA MAGAZINE 2025

2025
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2026
EDITION



PLATEAU LAW STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION (PLALAWSA)
MAGAZINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

*Beyond the Pages,
Beyond the Bar*

There are moments in every journey when we pause to reflect, not necessarily because the journey has ended, but because we need to appreciate how far we have come. This edition of the Plateau Law Students Association Magazine, aptly titled **"THE SERVICE EDITION,"** is one such moment.

As I write this note, I am reminded that being a Law Student is much more than lectures, examinations, cases and statutes. It is a period of formation a time when we are not only learning the law, but also discovering the kind of professionals, leaders and citizens we hope to become.

This is the inspiration behind our theme:

"Law, Leadership and Community Development: Honouring Service Beyond the Bar."

The theme challenges us to look beyond the traditional image of the lawyer. The law does not exist in isolation; it exists within communities and affects real people. Consequently, the responsibility of a lawyer should not end with professional competence. It should extend to leadership, advocacy, community development and the willingness to use knowledge and influence in the service of others. As students, we may still be on our way to the Bar, but our responsibility to serve has already begun.

This edition therefore seeks to celebrate that spirit of service in its various forms. Through the voices and experiences contained in these pages, we explore leadership, professional development, community engagement, student experiences and the contributions of individuals who continue to demonstrate that meaningful impact is possible even before one earns the title of "Barrister."

As Editor, it has been both a privilege and a responsibility to help bring this edition to life. A magazine is ultimately a collective expression, and this edition would not have been possible without the contributions of our writers, contributors, photographers, designers, editors, members of the Association and everyone who gave their time, ideas and support.

To the leadership of PLALAWSA, thank you for entrusting us with the responsibility of documenting this chapter of our Association's story.

To our contributors, thank you for lending your voices to this conversation.

To our readers, I invite you to do more than simply turn these pages. Engage with the ideas. Question them. Learn from them. Share them. Most importantly, allow them to inspire you to think differently about what it means to be a law student and, ultimately, a lawyer.

The Bar may mark the beginning of our professional journey, but service should be part of our journey long before we get there.

Welcome to **THE SERVICE EDITION.**

Welcome to a celebration of Law, Leadership and Community Development. Welcome to the stories, voices and ideas that remind us that beyond the Bar, there is a world waiting to be served. Enjoy the read.

“

The Bar may mark the beginning of our professional journey, but service should be part of our journey long before we get there.

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The Triad of Impact: Law, Leadership, and Service in the Modern Era

By **Hon. P. A. Daffi, Esq.**

Hon. Attorney General & Commissioner for Justice, Plateau State

Introduction

It is a distinct honour to contribute to "The Service Edition" of the PLALAWSA magazine. As we gather to celebrate your Annual Dinner & Awards Night, the chosen theme of "Law & Leadership" could not be more timely.

Throughout my journey, from the rigours of private legal practice to the profound responsibilities of public service, I have come to realize that our profession, at its core, is a divine mandate. The scriptures remind us in Micah 6:8 of what is good and what is required of us: "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." This tripartite divine injunction perfectly mirrors the triad of Law, Leadership, and Service. They are not separate paths, but a single, interwoven calling to transform society.

Law: The Instrument of Societal Transformation and Divine Equity

The law is far more than a collection of statutes, procedures, and precedents; it is the ultimate tool for social engineering. Just as the Mosaic laws provided a framework for a functioning, equitable society, our modern laws must be living covenants with our people. As legal practitioners, we are the earthly custodians of divine justice.

In our ongoing work within the Plateau State Ministry of Justice, under the visionary administration of His Excellency, Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutswang, we recognize that the law must constantly evolve to meet the lived realities of our citizens. This understanding drove the recent passage of critical legislation, including the Plateau State Law Reform Commission Law and the Plateau State Citizens Mediation Centre Law. The establishment of the Mediation Centre, for instance, reflects the biblical principle of "just balances and just weights", ensuring that the scales of justice are never tipped against the vulnerable simply because they lack the means to wage lengthy legal battles.

Leadership: Vision, Modernization, and the Nehemiah Call

True leadership within the legal profession requires the moral courage to innovate. It is never about maintaining a comfortable status quo; it is about challenging systemic bottlenecks.

When I assumed office, I viewed our task much like Nehemiah's calling to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem. Rebuilding a justice system requires that same resilience in the face of daunting challenges. A primary goal was the modernization of our sector. By integrating virtual hearing equipment and expanding Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, we have actively reduced the burden on our conventional courts, ensuring that justice is delivered swiftly.



Hon. P. A. Daffi, Esq. — Attorney General & Commissioner for Justice, Plateau State.

Furthermore, leadership demands accountability and repairing the breaches in our institutional integrity. We made it a priority to clear a massive ₦673 million in inherited judgment debts against the state government, some of which had been lingering since 2002. True leadership means ensuring that the government obeys the rule of law and honours its obligations just as stringently as it demands compliance from its citizens. It never means that because it is your turn, you can exploit the system.

Service: The Heart of the Profession and Servant-Leadership

Service is the ultimate expression of our legal training. The greatest model of leadership is found not on a throne, but with a towel and a basin. Christ washing the feet of His disciples established the eternal standard for servant-leadership. Whether you find yourself in a corporate boardroom, a courtroom, or a government office, your ultimate client is justice itself.

Our push for the Office of the Public Defender's Office and our deep investments in capacity building are rooted in one core belief: access to justice is a fundamental human right. Public service is about building institutional capacity to fiercely protect the rights of the people. It is a direct response to the biblical injunction in Proverbs 31:8 to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute."

Discipleship and Mentorship: Passing the Mantle

The strength of any generation is measured by the investments made in the next. In the biblical narrative, the anointing and wisdom of Elijah were sustained and multiplied in Elisha through intentional discipleship. Similarly, the Apostle Paul poured his life and experiences into young Timothy. In the legal profession, pupillage and mentorship are our sacred forms of discipleship.

To the senior members of the Bar, we must be willing to pass the mantle. We must disciple these young minds not merely in the mechanics of drafting pleadings or moving motions, but in the ethics, integrity, and resilience required to stand for truth.

To the youth of PLALAWSA, I challenge you to seek out your "Pauls." Allow yourselves to be guided, corrected, and moulded by those who have walked this path before you. The Plateau State justice system needs young lawyers who are well-disciplined in the noble traditions of the Bar, who value integrity over quick wealth, and who understand that a good name is to be chosen over great riches.

A Charge to the Next Generation

As you stand on the threshold of this noble profession, preparing to transition from the classroom to the courtroom, I urge you to view your legal education as a mandate. Do not merely seek to be brilliant lawyers; strive to be empathetic leaders and dedicated public servants.

Be the salt of the earth and the light of our judicial system. Let your careers preserve the integrity of the Bar and illuminate the dark corridors of injustice. I commend the editorial team of PLALAWSA for highlighting this vital theme. As you celebrate this year, the achievements thus far, let it serve as a renewal of your commitment to Law, Leadership, and Service.

The future of Plateau State's justice system and indeed the entirety of Nigeria and beyond belongs to you, and I am highly confident that, by the grace of God, it will be in exceptionally capable hands.

THE MAN BEHIND THE OFFICE

BEYOND THE BAR

A journey of law, leadership & service

Hon. Amb. John Kyohroh Christopher, Esq.

Executive Chairman, Jos North Local Government Council

From the humble classrooms of Ekan Primary School, Chwelyap, to the hallowed corridors of the University of Jos, the Nigerian Law School in Lagos, and now to the seat of leadership at the Jos North Local Government Council, the journey of Hon. Amb. John Kyohroh Christopher, Esq., is a story of ambition, grit, public service and an unflinching perseverance to his people.

Born into the noble families of Pozoh and Ahwo in Nasarawa Gwong, Jos North, John Kyohroh Christopher began his educational journey at Ekan Primary School, Chwelyap, before proceeding to Government College Pankshin for his secondary education. His passion for law developed at a very young age.



PLALAWSA: A Foundation for Service

His relationship with PLALAWSA remains one of the defining chapters of his early public life. As a student, Christopher experienced firsthand the strength that comes from unity — PLALAWSA gave Plateau law students a collective voice to protect their interests, support one another academically, and participate meaningfully in faculty affairs.

One of his most cherished memories from that period was the role he played in securing educational support for Plateau students in law school, many of whom were struggling to cope with the financial burden of Nigerian Law School fees and upkeep. Determined to change that, Christopher joined other PLALAWSA leaders in engaging the Plateau State Government, advocating for scholarships and allowances.

The effort yielded results: full payment of allowances to Plateau students at the Nigerian Law School. Christopher credits the success to the administration of Governor Jonah Jang, and to the support of key individuals within government — among them the late Senator GNS Pwajok. For Christopher, PLALAWSA was never just about student politics; it was a training ground for advocacy, a platform for solidarity, and his first real taste of service to his people.



In office — the discipline of legal training carried into a career of public administration and community advocacy.

THE LEADERS WHO INSPIRED HIM

Christopher points to the late Senator GNS Pwajok as one of the most defining influences on his journey — a servant leader who reshaped his understanding of what public service should look like.

“He believed that the interests of the people must always come first. He believed that you must seek the consent of the people before you can lead them.”

That principle has stayed with him. It continues to guide how he relates with constituents, how he makes decisions, and how he views the responsibility of leadership. For Christopher, leadership is built on a clear set of values: service, humility, courage, trust, responsibility, and the protection of the interests of the people.

FROM PLALAWSA TO PUBLIC SERIVE

With a clear goal in mind, the young Christopher deliberately chose subjects that would lay the groundwork for a legal career: Literature, English, Government and History. But the road was not without hurdles.

Armed with the right qualifications, he gained direct entry into the Faculty of Law, University of Jos, and graduated with an LL.B in 2010. Not one to rest on his laurels, he returned to the same university for an LL.M, which he completed in 2018. Today, he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Law at the University of Jos, with research interests centered on governance, constitutionalism and grassroots justice.

His journey through legal education was deeply intertwined with a growing passion for politics, governance and public affairs — a combination that would later define his leadership style. Even before stepping foot on a university campus, Christopher was already familiar with the rhythm of politics. As a teenager, he took part in voter registration exercises and followed his uncle, the late Hon. Frank Tardy, on the campaign trail during the 1998 chairmanship race for Jos North Local Government.

The disputed outcome of that election further shaped him. He found himself drawn to the election petition tribunals that followed, sitting in and observing proceedings. For him, it was the moment law and politics became inseparable. Between 1999 and 2001, he spent valuable time in the chambers of the late John Bala Magaji, Esq., one of Jos' respected legal minds — taking notes, filing processes, and watching how cases were argued.

At the University of Jos, his visibility in student affairs grew rapidly. He became an active member of the Plateau State Law Students Association, PLALAWSA — a body formed to unite Plateau law students across institutions and advance their academic and welfare interests. For Christopher, PLALAWSA was more than a social platform; it was a training ground for unity, negotiation, and leadership.

His commitment did not go unnoticed. He emerged as PLALAWSA's consensus candidate for the office of President of the Law Students' Society, LSS. Though he did not win the presidency, the experience taught him lessons he still carries today, about democracy, humility, and service.

"I accepted the verdict of the people. You cannot lead people without their consent."

THE CHAIRMAN • LAW & LEADERSHIP • PLALAWSA

"I think it started even from primary school. I was hoping I was going to be a lawyer."



Called to the Bar: the culmination of years spent in pursuit of a childhood dream of practising law.

ACADEMIC TIMELINE

2010 — LL.B, University of Jos

2012 — Called to the Nigerian Bar

2018 — LL.M, University of Jos

Ongoing — Ph.D in Law, governance & constitutionalism

Selected Projects & Interventions

Under the leadership of Hon. Amb. John Kyohroh Christopher, Esq., the Jos North Local Government Council has embarked on a wide range of projects and interventions aimed at improving security, healthcare, education, infrastructure, youth empowerment, and overall service delivery across the 20 wards of the LGA.

SECURITY & JUSTICE

New Police Station constructed at Dong; 30 security motorcycles distributed for surveillance and rapid response; the Jos North non-conventional security outfit reinvigorated to complement conventional forces.

HEALTH

Primary Health Centres renovated at Babale, Kabong, Angwan Rogo, Angwan Rimi and Kwanga. New clinics under construction at Furaka and Garba Daho to expand access to quality care.

EDUCATION

Renovation of seven classrooms at LEA Angwan Rogo, six at ECWA Primary School, and more. New toilets, a mechanised borehole, and perimeter fencing added across school sites.

INFRASTRUCTURE & MARKETS

Smart Neighbourhood Market (Rishari Rutura) under construction at Angwan Rukuba; road surfacing at Tudun OC; vehicular bridge at Russau/Farin Gada; pedestrian bridge at Kabong.

WATER & POWER

Over 200 boreholes renovated across the wards; a mechanised borehole at Chwelnyap Primary School; eight 500KVA transformers acquired for distribution to communities.

GOVERNANCE & ICT

Remodelling of the Jos North LGEA Secretariat and Legislative Arm; a new Jos North ICT Centre; official council website launched to enhance transparency.

YOUTH, WOMEN & WELFARE

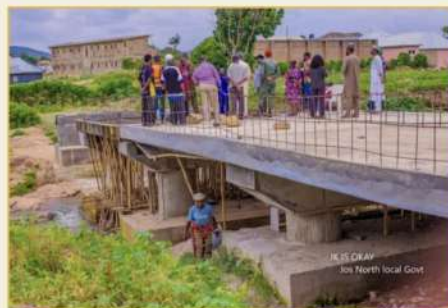
Youth Digital Skills Programme benefiting 200 young people; renovation of the Skills Acquisition Centre for Persons with Disability at Busa Buji; support for Hajj seats.



Commissioning a completed project – ribbon-cutting at one of the LGA's renovated public facilities.



Health infrastructure under construction – expanding access to primary care at the grassroots.



A vehicular bridge project under construction, improving connectivity across Jos North's wards.

"Our desire is to continue to make great impact, our desire is to continue to make great sacrifice as far as the local government is concerned. It's our determination to leave a mark in the sands of time."





A Year of Service, Growth & Legacy

Reflections from the 2025–2026 administration, on the theme “Law, Leadership and Community Development: Honouring Service Beyond the Bar.”

As I look back on the 2025–2026 academic year, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude, reflection, and fulfilment. Serving as President of the Plateau State Law Students Association (PLALAWSA) has been one of the most remarkable chapters of my journey — not merely because of the position entrusted to me, but because of the people, experiences, challenges, and lessons that came with it.

Leadership, I have come to understand, is not defined by the title one bears, but by the lives one touches, the problems one attempts to solve, and the legacy one leaves behind. When this administration began its journey, we carried with us hopes, aspirations, and a genuine desire to contribute meaningfully to the welfare and development of our students.

The year was not without its challenges. Like every meaningful journey, our administration encountered moments of uncertainty, limited resources, competing demands, and difficult decisions. Yet, through every challenge, we remained guided by one principle: service must remain at the heart of leadership.

Throughout the year, we sought to promote an association that was more engaged, more inclusive, and more conscious of its responsibility to its members — from academic and welfare concerns to social engagement, professional exposure, cultural activities, and meaningful interactions with members of the legal profession and wider society.

One of the greatest lessons this administration has taught me is that student leadership is itself a school of law. It teaches negotiation, advocacy, accountability, diplomacy, patience, resilience, and, most importantly, responsibility. Every meeting, every disagreement, every successful programme, and every difficult conversation became an opportunity to learn.

Our engagement with legal practitioners, public officials, academics, institutions, and other stakeholders also reminded us that the journey to becoming a lawyer extends far beyond the walls of the lecture theatre. This understanding is at the heart of the theme of this edition of the PLALAWSA Magazine.

As I prepare to hand over the affairs of the Association to the next administration, I do so with humility and great optimism for the future. Whatever successes this administration recorded were never the achievement of one person — they were made possible by the dedication of members of the Executive Council, our representatives, committees, volunteers, advisers, supporters, and, most importantly, the students who entrusted us with the responsibility to serve.

To my Executive Council, thank you for walking this journey with me. To the members of PLALAWSA, thank you for your trust, your criticisms, encouragement, patience, and participation. To our lecturers, alumni, legal practitioners, public servants, sponsors, partners, and friends of the Association, your support has reminded us that student development is a collective responsibility.

And to the incoming administration, I leave you with one simple charge: serve. Lead with courage, but also with humility. Listen before you decide. Remember the people behind every policy and programme. Protect the dignity of the Association. Build upon what you inherit, correct what needs correcting, and leave PLALAWSA better than you found it.

The office may be temporary, but service is timeless. Positions will change hands, administrations will come and go, but the impact of genuine service has the capacity to outlive its moment. It has been an honour to serve. It has been a privilege to lead. And it will forever be a source of pride to have been part of the PLALAWSA story.



Precious Dashi Ladat

President, PLALAWSA
2025–2026 Administration

“With gratitude, humility, and hope for the future.”

To the Great Students of PLALAWSA

On behalf of the Executive Council of the Plateau Law Students Association, I bring you warm and heartfelt regards. It is with a deep sense of pride and gratitude that I, as your Treasurer, and the entire executive council, address you today.

This association is not merely a body; it is the heartbeat of our shared journey in the legal profession. PLALAWSA represents our collective ambition, resilience, and the unbreakable bond that ties us together as Plateau students. As the Executive Council, we have been privileged to serve you — to guide, support, and stand beside you through the highs and lows of law school life.

As your Treasurer, I have been entrusted with the responsibility of helping to manage the Association's finances, a role I take with great seriousness and accountability. Every contribution and resource reflects your trust and plays a part in achieving our shared goals.

On behalf of the Executive Council, I extend our profound appreciation to every single student of PLALAWSA. Your unwavering support, active participation, and relentless spirit have been the driving force behind our successes. You have shown that together, we are stronger; that as one body, we can overcome any challenge and achieve greatness. Your trust in us has been our greatest motivation, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

As we continue this journey, we hope our tenure is remembered not just for our projects, but for the unity and resilience we have built together. The legacy we seek to leave is one of a united Association where every voice matters, where excellence is our standard, and where we carry the spirit of Plateau with pride wherever we go.

"To the distinguished students of Plateau State — you are a source of great pride in our heritage and will play a leading role in the future of the legal profession. Keep aiming at excellence, support one another, and carry the banner of our Association higher and higher. We stand with you always."

With deepest respect and gratitude,

Samuel Ajija Keren-Happuch

Treasurer, Executive Council, PLALAWSA



GALLERY OF PLAAWSA ACTIVITIES

Courtesy Visits & Stakeholder Engagement



Members of the PLAAWSA Association paid a courtesy visit to Mr. Dauda Ezekiel Daschen, Director of Treasury Operations, Office of the Accountant-General of Plateau State. The visit strengthened professional relationships and exposed members to the workings of public service and financial administration.



A memorable engagement with Mr. John Dayong, Director of Finance and Supply, Plateau State — fostering professional relationships and offering valuable exposure to public administration.



Members of PLAAWSA Executive paid a successful courtesy visit to Hon. Maiyaki Theodore, SAN, Member of the Plateau State House of Assembly representing Qua'an Pan South, on 12th January 2026.



PLAAWSA Executives paid a courtesy visit to Rt. Hon. Yusuf Gagdi, Member of the House of Representatives representing Pankshin, Kanke and Kanam Federal Constituency, in December 2025.

Leadership, professional growth, and networking — PLAAWSA's commitment to service beyond the classroom.

Plateau's Colours, Proudly Worn

From the proud green-and-white stripes of one community to the bold reds of another, Cultural Day 2026 came alive with the diverse tribes of Plateau — Qua'an Pan, Berom, Shendam, Tarok, Ngas and more.



Pictured (left to right): Magaji Samuel Esq, Mr Paul Dawap Esq, the PLALAWSA Staff Adviser, Hon. J.K. Chris Esq (Executive Chairman, Jos North Local Government Area Council), and Dr Tobias Ngufwan.

The colourful celebration reaffirmed the Association's commitment to preserving cultural identity while inspiring the next generation of legal minds.



Students and guests turned out in full traditional splendour, transforming the Faculty of Law into a living showcase of cultural pride.



A striking portrait in beaded traditional attire — celebrating the depth and artistry of Plateau's cultural heritage.



Colourful head-wraps and beadwork on display as members celebrate the rich diversity of Plateau State.



A joyful group portrait — unity in diversity, as members from different tribal backgrounds come together in celebration.



Green never goes out of style at PLALAWSA Cultural Day — members pose in coordinated traditional wear beneath the Cultural Day backdrop.



More vibrant colours and warm smiles — a snapshot of the camaraderie that defines PLALAWSA's Cultural Day.

A living showcase of cultural pride, unity, and identity across the Faculty of Law.

A Celebration of Heritage & Unity

At the PLALAWSA Cultural Day held on 3rd July 2026, students and dignitaries turned out in vibrant traditional splendour, honouring Hon. J.K. Chris, Esq., Executive Chairman, Jos North Local Government Council.



Hon. J.K. Chris, Esq. formally launches the cultural dishes at PLALAWSA Cultural Day 2026, opening the culinary showcase of Plateau's rich cultural roots.



A Moment of Leadership and Inspiration – the Chairman delivers an admonition encouraging unity, leadership, service and responsible citizenship.



Pannok Iero Esq. Faculty Examination Officer, stands tall in full Magavul traditional attire – a vibrant reminder of the cultural diversity that strengthens the Faculty of Law community.



Rt. Hon. Gabriel Dewan, former Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly, graces PLALAWSA Cultural Day 2026 with thoughtful admonitions on excellence, unity and purpose.



Members in vibrant traditional attire mark the official opening of the culinary showcase – a delicious celebration of the culture that shapes the Association's identity.

Moot Competition & Debate Championship

PLALAWSA continues to excel beyond the lecture hall – bringing home honours in advocacy, mooting and inter-state competition.



1st Place, Plateau State Law Students Association Moot Competition – Philimon Audu Daffi and team, awarded N75,000 for outstanding advocacy in full court regalia.



Champions on the national stage: PLALAWSA's team celebrates victory at the Maiden Inter-State Law Students' Debate and Quiz Championship, organised in collaboration with BENLAWSA.

"Every trophy is a testament to the discipline of preparation, the confidence of advocacy, and the pride of representing Plateau State law students on a national stage."

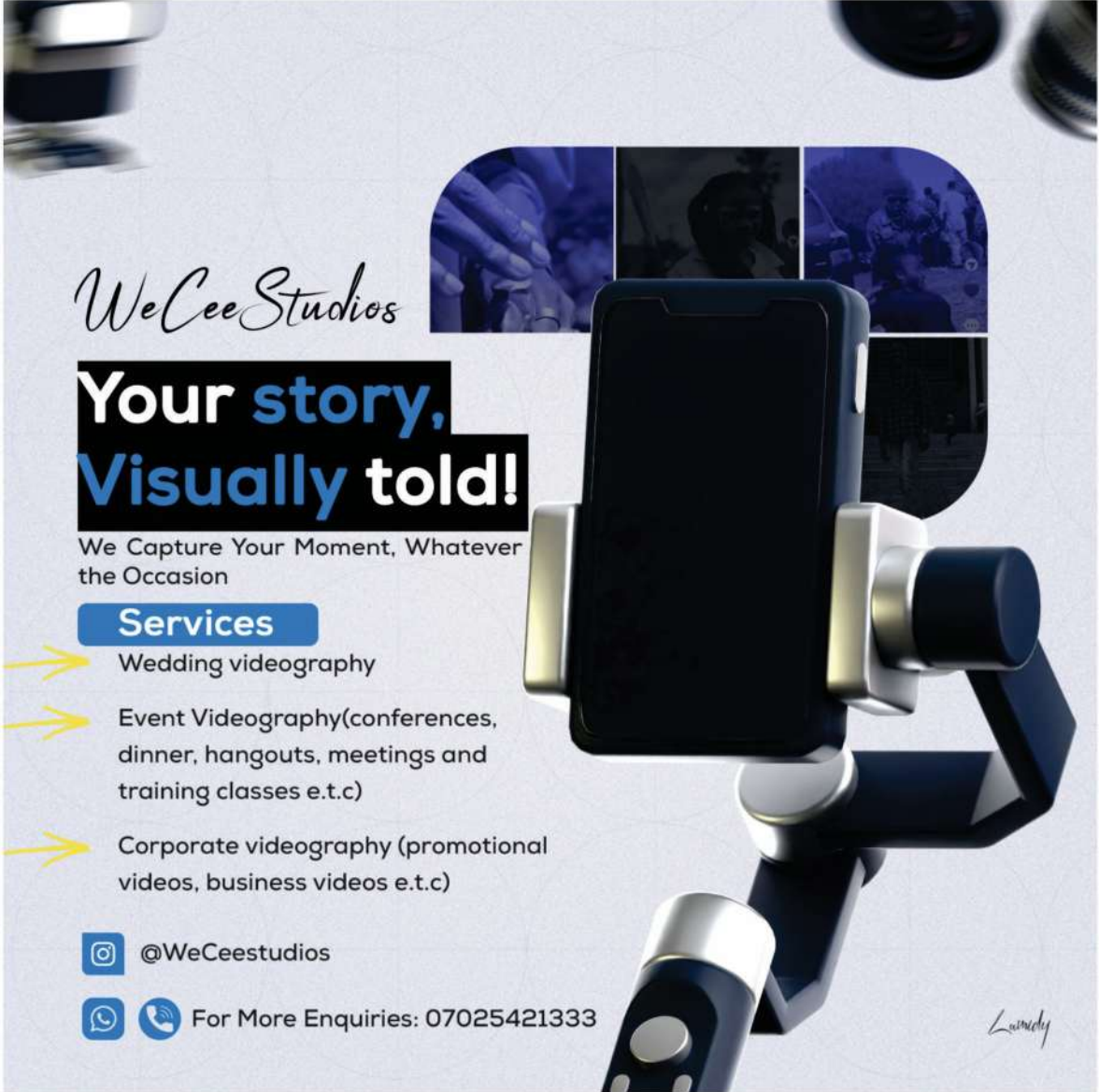


Students of the Faculty of Law stand tall in full court regalia after the PLALAWSA Moot Competition, powered by Hon. Audu Philimon Daffi, Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Plateau State.

Featured in the photo are the AG's representative, Siman Luka Esq., Samuel A. Anthony Esq., outstanding participants from 400 Level and 500 Level, and the President of PLALAWSA a proud moment celebrating advocacy, excellence and the future of the legal profession.



The 500 Level team emerged victorious as first-place winners of the PLALAWSA Moot Competition held on 17th July 2026. Siman Luka Esq., representative of the Honourable Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Plateau State, presents the N150,000 prize cheque to the triumphant advocates – a well-deserved recognition of their outstanding performance in the competition powered by Hon. Philimon Audu Daffi.



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Lamidy

ALUMNI TRIBUTE

A Legacy Of Leadership, Advocacy & Community

The Plateau State Law Students' Association (PLALAWSA) has always been more than a student body. To me, it was a family, a training ground, and a platform where I discovered the transformative power of collective action. It gave me a sense of belonging and the privilege of serving as President during my time at university.

My most cherished memories of PLALAWSA are those spent organising student-centred events, debating issues that mattered, and witnessing our collective efforts create tangible impact. Those moments shaped my confidence, sharpened my sense of responsibility, and taught me that true leadership is rooted in service.

Over the years, PLALAWSA has grown into a dynamic force for academic, professional, and social development — a bridge between classroom learning and real-world practice, offering students moot courts, legal debates, and mentorship. Socially, it has fostered unity and camaraderie, reminding us that the university journey is not meant to be walked alone — hence its motto: *Learning in Unity*.

For more than two decades, PLALAWSA has instilled discipline, resilience, and a spirit of service — qualities essential for aspiring lawyers to thrive both in the profession and in society. Many alumni have gone on to contribute meaningfully to the legal profession, public service, and society at large.

For today's law students, the qualities most needed are integrity, empathy, and courage. Integrity ensures justice is upheld; empathy allows connection with those they serve; and courage empowers them to speak truth to power. In law, success is not defined solely by intellect but by character.

Mentorship plays a critical role in this journey — guidance that textbooks cannot offer, and networks that open doors long after graduation. Personally, I have benefited immensely from mentors I met through PLALAWSA, many of whom continue to provide counsel and support to this day.

To current members: seize every opportunity. Participate actively, volunteer, and challenge yourself to lead. Distinguish yourself not only by grades but by character, service, and initiative. Leadership is not about titles; it is about impact.

Looking ahead, I envision PLALAWSA establishing a sustainable legal aid programme to complement initiatives such as the Law Clinic — extending justice to those unable to afford it, and cementing PLALAWSA's reputation as a force for good beyond the university walls.

To present and future generations of PLALAWSA members: cherish this association, for it is more than a student body. It is a legacy. Lead with courage, advocate with passion, and serve with humility. Remember that the law is not merely a career; it is a calling to uphold justice and protect society. Carry the torch of PLALAWSA proudly, and let your time here be the foundation of a life dedicated to service and excellence.



"PLALAWSA was not only preparing us for academic and professional success but was also building lifelong connections that continue to add value long after our student years."

Your friend,

Johnson Joseph Penlong, Esq.

President, PLALAWSA, 2022/2023

In Conversation with a PLALAWSA Alumnus

Eight questions on identity, growth, mentorship and the road ahead.



Usman Gwadabe, ESQ

Q1. Looking back, what does PLALAWSA mean to you personally?

PLALAWSA means a great deal to me personally. It is an Association with which I identify with immense pride, courage, and a deep sense of belonging. To me, PLALAWSA represents a home for everyone, irrespective of their background, tribe, or place of origin. It has consistently fostered a genuine spirit of unity, friendship, and shared purpose.

One experience that stands out vividly was our visit to Ibrahim Pam, Esq. His warmth and willingness to interact with us made the visit especially memorable, and reinforced my appreciation for the important role PLALAWSA plays in shaping its members.

Q2. How has PLALAWSA evolved in academic, professional and social development?

PLALAWSA has evolved remarkably, achieving significant milestones across three fronts. Academically, its tutorial programmes have strengthened students' understanding and confidence. Socially, it remains inclusive and vibrant, giving Plateau's culturally diverse students a platform to build friendships. Professionally, it bridges the classroom and legal practice through internships, webinars, and engagement with practitioners.

Q3. What makes PLALAWSA's community particularly valuable to aspiring lawyers?

The community gives aspiring lawyers the opportunity to build meaningful relationships that extend beyond university — sources of support, guidance, and professional collaboration throughout their careers. By fostering unity, mutual respect and a shared commitment to excellence, PLALAWSA prepares members to succeed individually while supporting one another.

Q4. What qualities do young law students need to become responsible leaders?

Integrity, commitment, consistency and strong character, alongside mastery of legal research and public-speaking skills. Integrity and character matter because the profession demands trustworthiness; research and advocacy skills help a lawyer analyse issues and represent clients responsibly. With these qualities, one becomes more than a lawyer — an exceptional professional whose contributions are remembered.

Q5. How important is mentorship in preparing students for life after university?

Its importance cannot be overstated. Mentorship provides guidance, encouragement, and practical insight students may not gain in the classroom. Interaction between students, alumni and practising lawyers helps them understand the realities of the profession and make informed career decisions — raising confident, professionally grounded young lawyers.

Q6. What advice would you give members who aspire to distinguish themselves?

Remain grounded, focused and intentional. Do not lose your values in the pursuit of success. Take advantage of networking and mentorship, and be willing to learn from those who have gone ahead. Do not limit yourself to being a local champion; aspire to make an impact beyond your immediate environment.

Q7. What would you like to see PLALAWSA achieve in the next five to ten years?

Even greater unity and excellence. A united Association, driven by a shared commitment to academic achievement, professional development and service, will be better positioned to make a lasting impact on its members and on society at large.

Q8. What message would you leave for present and future PLALAWSA members?

Society believes in you, so do not let it down. Believe in yourselves, uphold the Association's values, and pursue excellence in every endeavour. And finally — always prepare before you appear, or you may disappear ahead of time. Preparation is essential to excellence and lasting relevance.

Reflections on PLALAWSA: A Journey of Growth, Service & Legacy

PRESIDENT, 2021–2023

"True leadership is not about positions, but about the positive impact one leaves behind."

There are some institutions that leave an enduring mark on our lives, shaping who we become and influencing the paths we eventually take. For me, the Plateau State Law Students' Association (PLALAWSA) is one of those institutions.

My relationship with PLALAWSA did not begin with my election as President while I was still a student. Long before I had the privilege of serving in that capacity, the Association had become an important part of my journey as a law student. It provided more than a platform for engagement among Plateau law students; it fostered a sense of identity, community, and belonging.

The opportunity to serve as President of PLALAWSA from 2021 to 2023 remains one of the most defining experiences of my life. Beyond the title and responsibilities, it was a period of tremendous learning and personal growth — invaluable lessons about leadership, service, teamwork, resilience, and accountability. More importantly, it reinforced that true leadership is not about positions, but about the positive impact one leaves behind.

One of the greatest benefits of my involvement with PLALAWSA has been the relationships and networks it helped me build. The Association connected me with remarkable individuals from different institutions and backgrounds,

many of whom have remained friends, colleagues, mentors, and professional contacts.

It is therefore particularly heartwarming to witness how much the Association has evolved. Seeing PLALAWSA continue to grow and make meaningful impact under the leadership of Precious and her team fills me with immense pride and joy. Their commitment, vision, and dedication are evident in the strides the Association has made.

As we celebrate the journey of PLALAWSA, I am filled with optimism about its future. I firmly believe that the Association will continue to reach greater heights, create more opportunities for Plateau law students, and further establish itself as a model of unity, excellence, leadership, and service.

I will always be grateful for the role PLALAWSA has played in my life and honoured to have contributed, in my own way, to its story. As an alumnus and former President, it is deeply fulfilling to see the Association thriving, and I remain confident that its finest days are still ahead.



Mathew Mangkazuk

Associate, Udo Udoma & Belo Osagie • President, PLALAWSA 2021–2023

BEYOND THE BAR: THE KIND OF LAWYERS WE ARE BECOMING

There is a certain irony about studying law. We spend years learning about rights, duties, justice, institutions and the responsibilities of those who hold power, yet sometimes forget that we are already being prepared to exercise those same responsibilities ourselves.

Before we become Counsel, we are students.

Before we stand before the Bench, we stand among our peers.

Before we argue cases, we learn to advocate for one another.

And before we occupy positions of influence, we are given smaller opportunities to learn what it means to serve. That, for me, is one of the most important lessons of student leadership.

My experiences as a former Financial Secretary of the Students' Union Government of the University of Jos in the SUG Senate have given me an appreciation of representation, accountability and the responsibilities that come with leadership. Today, as a student and an active member of the *Plateau Law Students Association (PLALAWSA)*, I continue to see those lessons from a different perspective.

I have come to appreciate that leadership is not simply about occupying an office. It is about understanding people, accepting responsibility and being willing to contribute to something larger than oneself and sometimes, leadership is also about discovering that the person who said, "I have a simple question" actually has seventeen questions waiting for you!

But beyond the humour and the demands that come with student leadership, there is a serious lesson: people are at the centre of every meaningful leadership experience.

LEADERSHIP BEYOND TITLES

My previous experiences in student leadership taught me that representation is a privilege, but it is also an obligation. A position does not automatically make anyone a leader. It merely creates an opportunity to demonstrate leadership. The real test is what we do with that opportunity. As students, we may occupy different positions or none at all. We may belong to different Tribal houses, Chambers, committees and Societies. Yet leadership should never be limited to those whose names appear on an executive list.

There is leadership in volunteering.

There is leadership in mentoring a junior colleague.

There is leadership in organising an academic initiative.

There is leadership in standing up for fairness.

There is leadership in choosing integrity when nobody is watching.

In that sense, every member of PLALAWSA has the capacity to contribute to the Association and to society.

A RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER

As members of PLALAWSA, we have a responsibility to support one another. The journey through legal education is demanding enough without making it unnecessarily difficult for those walking beside us. We should celebrate one another's achievements, share knowledge, encourage those struggling, create opportunities for one another and build a culture where excellence is pursued collectively rather than competitively. Our success should not be measured only by how far one person rises; it should also be measured by how many people rise because we were willing to extend a hand. That, in my view, is leadership at its most meaningful.

SERVICE IS THE LEGACY

One day, our time as students will end. The examinations will be over. The campaigns will end. The meetings will become memories. The offices we occupy today will eventually belong to others. But the values we develop and the impact we make can outlive our tenure. That is why service matters, positions are temporary, titles are temporary, applause is temporary, **Impact is not.**

As a student and member of PLALAWSA, I believe our responsibility is not to wait until we become lawyers before we begin to serve. We must begin now within our Association, our university, our communities and wherever our abilities can make a meaningful difference.

The lawyer we hope to become tomorrow is being shaped by the choices we make today.

So, while we prepare for the Bar, let us also prepare for the responsibility that comes with it.

Let us learn not only to know the law, but to understand people.

Let us learn not only to lead, but to serve.

Let us pursue not only professional success, but meaningful impact.

And when our journey eventually takes us beyond the walls of law school and into the wider world, may we carry with us the most important lesson of all:

The greatest measure of a lawyer is not merely how well they know the law, but how well they use it and their leadership, influence and humanity to serve others.

That is the kind of lawyer I hope we are all becoming.

And that is the kind of legacy worth building.

Joshua Turna Lumi



LAW, LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: HONOURING SERVICE BEYOND THE BAR

INTRODUCTION

The legal profession is more than the practice of interpreting laws, representing clients and appearing before courts. At its highest level, law is an instrument of justice, social order, accountability and human development. The lawyer, therefore, has a responsibility that extends beyond professional practice to leadership, mentorship, advocacy and community service.

The theme “Law, Leadership and Community Development: Honouring Service Beyond the Bar” reflects this broader understanding of the legal profession. It recognizes that the true measure of a lawyer's contribution is not only professional achievement but also the lives touched, institutions strengthened and communities transformed through service.

LAW AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Law provides the framework within which society functions and develops. The rule of law protects rights, promotes accountability, facilitates peaceful dispute resolution and provides the stability necessary for social and economic progress. However, legal rights are meaningful only when people can understand and enforce them. Lawyers therefore have an important role in promoting access to justice through pro bono services, legal education, advocacy and alternative dispute resolution. A community that understands its rights and has practical access to justice is better positioned to protect its interests and resolve conflicts peacefully. Community development is consequently not limited to physical infrastructure. It also includes the development of institutions, protection of human dignity, empowerment of citizens and creation of a just society.

LEADERSHIP AS SERVICE

Leadership should not be measured merely by titles or positions. True leadership is demonstrated through responsibility, integrity, influence and service. Within the legal profession, leadership may be expressed through ethical practice, public service, institutional development, mentorship and advocacy for the vulnerable. A senior practitioner who guides young lawyers, a judge who remains impartial, an academic who inspires students, or a lawyer who provides assistance to those unable to afford representation is exercising leadership. Professional success should therefore create opportunities for giving back. The most meaningful legacy of a legal career may be found not in personal achievements alone but in the people who were empowered and inspired along the way.

MENTORSHIP AND THE NEXT GENERATION

One of the most enduring forms of service is mentorship. Every generation inherits knowledge and institutions from those who came before it and has a responsibility to improve them for the next generation. Young lawyers and law students require not only technical legal knowledge but also examples of integrity, professionalism and service. A mentor can influence a career through guidance, encouragement, opportunities and personal example. The greatest measure of professional success is therefore not simply what one achieves individually, but also the capacity to prepare others to succeed.

Nigeria continues to face challenges relating to poverty, inequality, insecurity and limited access to justice. While lawyers cannot solve all these problems, they possess knowledge and skills that can contribute meaningfully to addressing them. Through legal aid, public-interest litigation, community education, mediation, law reform and civic engagement, lawyers can help bridge the gap between legal rights and their practical enjoyment. This responsibility is particularly important in relation to vulnerable groups, including children, persons with disabilities, indigent persons and victims of abuse and discrimination.

The credibility of the legal profession depends significantly on the character of its members. Professional competence without integrity cannot sustain public confidence in the justice system. Ethical leadership requires lawyers to remain faithful to the principles of honesty, fairness, professionalism and respect for the rule of law. The lawyer's responsibility is not merely to win cases or advance personal interests but to uphold the integrity of the justice system. In this regard, service beyond the Bar must also mean character beyond reputation.

"Beyond the Bar" does not mean abandoning legal practice. Rather, it recognizes that legal education and professional experience can be used in many ways to serve society. A lawyer can simultaneously be a practitioner, mentor, mediator, philanthropist, researcher, community educator and advocate for reform. These roles demonstrate that professional achievement and social responsibility are not competing values; they can reinforce one another. The lawyer who assists someone who cannot afford representation, mentors a young student, supports institutional development or contributes to peaceful dispute resolution is extending the value of legal practice into the wider community.

Law, leadership and community development are closely connected. Law provides the framework for justice and social order; leadership provides direction and responsibility; while community development translates these principles into improved human conditions. The legal profession therefore carries an obligation to look beyond professional advancement and embrace the wider responsibility of service. The most enduring legacy is not necessarily the number of cases won, positions occupied or honours received, but the people empowered, institutions strengthened and communities transformed.

To honour service beyond the Bar is to recognize a vision of legal practice founded on competence, integrity, leadership and service. Ultimately, a lawyer's greatest legacy may not be what the law has enabled them to achieve for themselves, but what their knowledge, leadership and service have enabled others and their communities to become.

By
Muhammad Hauwa Amin



BEYOND THE GOWN, BEYOND THE BAR: Who Are We?

On knowledge, responsibility, leadership and the purpose of service



We spend years learning the language of the law, its sections, its principles, its precedents, its procedures.

We learn how to stand.

We learn how to speak.

We learn how to argue.

And eventually, we wear the gown.

But beyond the gown, beyond the Bar, who are we?

When the gown comes off,
when the wig is placed aside,
when the judge is not seated,
and the echoes of "My Lord" fade...

Who are we?

When there are no cases to argue,
when there are no statutes to cite,
when the courtroom is empty,
and there are no approving nods from the audience...

Who are we?

Who are we when there is no examination to pass?

Who are we when there is no certificate on display?

Who are we when there is no title beside our name?

Who are we when no one is watching?

Do we remain lawyers?

Do we remain leaders?

Do we remain learned?

Do we remain advocates?

Perhaps most certainly that is where the true test lies.

We are taught to read,
to memorise,
to learn.

We have been taught to understand and to pursue knowledge.

For knowledge, they say, is power.

But I beg to differ.

What is power that cannot lift another?

What is knowledge if it sits within us quietly, watching someone grope in the dark?

Of what use is this knowledge if it cannot dispel the gloominess cast by its absence?

What is a title?

And what is a degree if it only speaks volumes of our achievements and barely whispers of the help we have rendered or the change we have made?

Beyond the gown, there is first, a person.

Beyond the Bar, there is a community.

And beyond the title lies responsibility.

Perhaps the greatest thing we can do with this knowledge is to give it out, not keep it.

Give it to the woman who knows she has been wronged.

Give it to the man whose circumstances have carved an unwanted path.

Give it to the child with questions unanswered.

Give it to the community that shrugs helplessly at the problem.

A lawyer can argue for justice but can also teach someone their rights.

A doctor can cure an illness but can teach how to prevent it.

A leader can sit at the head of a table, but a true leader remembers to make room for someone else.

A student can serve. No doubt, we are the leaders of tomorrow, but tomorrow is not an excuse to do nothing today.

Why wait for the gown before serving?

Why wait for the Bar before acting?

Why wait for the title before accepting responsibility?

Why wait until we become who we dream of becoming before helping someone?

Why don't we start with who we are?
With what we already carry?
Maybe, just maybe, this little knowledge,
this little influence,

this little voice
is the answer to someone's prayer.
Let us move beyond the gown,
beyond the Bar,
beyond the titles,
beyond the certificate,
beyond the applause,
and beyond the position.
And let us become a people whose
knowledge leaves fingerprints—
on the lives we touch,
the doors we open,
the communities we strengthen,
and the voices we amplify.
Because one day,
this gown will come off.
This title will fade.
This certificate will gather dust.
And the courtroom will be empty.

And when all that is left is the person
beneath it all, may we not wonder:
"What did we become?"
May the answer be found in—
the knowledge we shared,

the hands we held,
the doors we opened,
and the people we pulled along.
For what is knowledge if it cannot lift
another?
What is knowledge if it does not serve?
What is leadership if it cannot become
sacrifice?
What is a profession if it is bereft of
purpose?
And what is the gown when the courtroom
is empty—
if beneath it all, there is no heart willing to
serve?
So I ask again...
Beyond the gown, beyond the Bar, who
are we?

Written by:
Nanman Joy
300 Level Student



Unpopular Impacts of AI on an Average Lawyer

The 21st century has birthed a significant disruption. The prominent factor for this disruption is “Artificial Intelligence (AI)”. Just like most concepts, Artificial Intelligence is bereft of a universal acceptable definition. However, it could be best described as man-made technology built to do tasks that usually need human thought.

AI over the years, have significantly made imprints in different fields of life. Be it Medicine, Law, Agriculture. Etc. Concerns have also sprouted up as to the redundancy of certain offices essential for professions where AI has taken over key roles.

This is also true for the legal field. The issue of displacement has in fact, span through the core of the judiciary which is courtroom adjudication. Some Technologically advance countries such as China have introduced the use of digital courts into their legal systems. This has orchestrated panic in the heart of many as the future of the legal profession looks uncertain.

However, plethora of literature has postulated that it is an unrealistic quest for AI to totally get rid of the “human factor” in the scope of judiciary. It has been argued with evidence and logic that AI will merely supplement the efficiency, accuracy, and speed of handling legal matters. The human factor remains indispensable; specially on aspects of operating the algorithm, need for sound Judgement, complex negotiations, empathy during client counselling, courtroom litigation and other key aspects of the profession.

This perspective is apt. Because no matter how powerful AI could be, it does not have a will of its own. It merely responds to data fed into it. Hence, there must be an individual always facing the screen and tapping the keyboards. Interestingly, this individual must not be a random person with a surface or no level of law at all. But an individual that has got himself acquainted with the relevant laws. This will grant such person good judgement to the accuracy of the outputs of AI on legal matters.

It is from this established fact that the major concerns arise.

First is the Significant knowledge shift expectancy that comes with using AI:

Most people believe AI will creates laxity in lawyers. However, reverse is the case. For instance , a hammer as an effective tool for carpentry is only useful in the hands of a very skilled carpenter. AI is a tool that consolidates the skills of a lawyer. As such, the lawyer is saddle with continual learning. The crux of this postulation is that the lawyer should be more vast and intelligent than the AI machine. This is because he is vested with the responsibility of reviewing the drafted documents created by AI in order to spot errors and outdated laws. This will require in-depth knowledge from the lawyer.



However, a significant question is: *“Is the contemporary world lawyer ready for such a big bang shift?”* An answer to this question will determine whether the legal profession will be plunged into the AI black-box problem; that is, where occasional findings made by AI could not be traced to any legit sources. In the case of **Mata v Avianca**; U.S lawyers fell into the trap of the Black-box problem and submitted fictitious cases generated by chatGPT. However, such unprofessional act was caught by the court where the legal practitioners were sanctioned. The question now is: *“What if the court was lackadaisical towards verifying every single case submitted?”*. This is a major concern as most of the Gen-z in different professions including law, tend to rely heavily on AI.

Secondly; the unfair advantage tech-acquainted lawyers will have over Non-tech lawyers:

The traditional legal practice does not require so much prowess in navigating technological innovations. However, this position has changed. The sad part is that this change has not been incorporated into the curricula of law students. These will surely have a debilitating effect on less exposed and economically disadvantaged students.

The economically advantaged ones tend to have an upper hand in learning and adopting to this change. Meanwhile, others that solely rely on classroom knowledge may end up becoming unproductive in the labour market.

The gap between a traditional lawyer and a tech-acquainted lawyer is very wide. Creating no room for a middle ground. A shallow lawyer will find it very hard to thrive in a society as this. Sadly, most lawyers/law students have not taken cognizance of this reality. The system is going to brutally punish those that are not technically advanced.

Conclusively, my major concerns arise from the additional workload that is required of a lawyer following his already bulky scope of work. This is not unachievable but is the Gen-z lawyer ready to level up to this standard? Another concern emanates from the inability of Nigerian Universities to yet incorporate this into the curricula of law students. This will subsequently create a deficiency in students with humble beginnings resulting to dominance of AI elites in the legal field.

By **Selzing Nantip Dashe**
300 Level Student



BEYOND THE WIG AND GOWN

WHY LAW STUDENTS MUST BECOME NATION BUILDERS

ABSTRACT

Legal education is often perceived as a pathway to professional qualification, symbolized by the privilege of wearing the wig and gown. While these symbols represent honour, discipline, and professional excellence, they also embody a deeper responsibility to society. This paper argues that the true purpose of legal education extends beyond preparing students for legal practice; it is fundamentally a process of cultivating ethical leaders, responsible citizens, and nation builders. Drawing upon Nigerian constitutional principles, judicial authorities, and the enduring legacies of distinguished legal practitioners, the present study demonstrates that law students possess a unique capacity to strengthen democratic institutions, promote the rule of law, and advance national development. It further contends that the values acquired during legal education—integrity, critical thinking, public service, and respect for justice—must find expression long before admission to the Bar. Ultimately, this paper concludes that the wig and gown are not merely symbols of professional achievement but enduring reminders that the study of law is a public trust, and that the highest calling of every law student is not simply to practise law, but to use it in the service of humanity and the building of a just society.

INTRODUCTION

The law has never existed for its own sake. It exists to preserve order, protect human dignity, resolve conflict, and secure justice. Consequently, those who study the law inherit a responsibility that extends beyond mastering statutes and judicial precedents. They are entrusted with knowledge capable of shaping institutions, influencing public policy, and transforming society.

Against this background, this commentary argues that legal education must be understood not merely as preparation for professional practice but as preparation for nation-building. It contends that while the wig and gown remain enduring symbols of honour within the legal profession, their true significance lies in the ideals they represent—service, integrity, justice, and responsibility. Using constitutional provisions, judicial authorities, and historical examples, this paper demonstrates why every law student must aspire to become not only a competent lawyer but also a committed nation builder.

THE WIG AND GOWN AS SYMBOLS OF PUBLIC TRUST

Every profession is remembered by its symbols. The physician has the white coat, the soldier the uniform, and the lawyer the wig and gown. Yet symbols are never honoured because of the fabric from which they are made. They endure because they embody values greater than themselves. The wig and gown are not merely the outward marks of a profession; they are enduring reminders that the law is a public trust and that those privileged to learn it are called to something greater than personal success. To many law students, the wig and gown represent the fulfilment of a dream—the reward for years of relentless reading, sleepless nights, and unwavering determination. Yet if legal education ends with the privilege of wearing them, then we have misunderstood their meaning. They were never intended to be the destination of legal education. They are its beginning.

The law is unlike most disciplines because it touches every aspect of human existence. It determines how governments exercise power, how businesses operate, how families resolve disputes, and how the rights and freedoms of citizens are protected. Every statute enacted, every judgment delivered, and every constitutional principle upheld shapes the direction of a nation. To study law, therefore, is not merely to prepare for a profession; it is to prepare for the responsibility of shaping society itself.

This understanding is especially important in an age where success is often measured by wealth, titles, and social recognition. It is easy to see the legal profession only through the lens of prestigious law firms, celebrated court victories, or influential public offices. While these achievements are worthy aspirations, they are incomplete if they are pursued without a sense of service. The true greatness of a lawyer is measured not simply by professional accomplishment but by the positive impact of that knowledge upon society.

History repeatedly affirms this truth. Christopher Sapara Williams, the first indigenous Nigerian called to the English Bar, did far more than establish a distinguished legal career; he used his position to challenge colonial injustice and advance the interests of his people. Chief FRA Williams strengthened Nigeria's constitutional development through exceptional advocacy, while Chief Gani Fawehinmi devoted his career to defending civil liberties, often at immense personal sacrifice. His unwavering commitment to constitutional rights found expression not only in public advocacy but also in landmark litigation such as *Fawehinmi v Abacha*, where the courts reinforced the protection of fundamental rights and the supremacy of the Constitution. Beyond Nigeria, Nelson Mandela transformed legal training into a weapon against apartheid, while Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated that the law could become a powerful instrument of peaceful resistance and national renewal. These men differed in background and circumstance, yet they were united by one conviction: legal knowledge finds its highest purpose only when it is placed in the service of humanity.

"Nigeria's present realities make that conviction more urgent than ever. Corruption, insecurity, institutional weakness, delayed justice, and growing public distrust continue to challenge the nation's democratic development. These problems cannot be solved by legislation alone. Strong institutions are sustained by principled people who understand that the rule of law is the foundation of every peaceful and prosperous society. As Lord Tom Bingham reminds us, the rule of law is not an abstract legal ideal but an indispensable condition for a just society. This principle has repeatedly been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Nigeria. In *Governor of Lagos State v Ojukwu*, the Court declared that neither governments nor citizens are above the law, while in *Attorney-General of the Federation v Abubakar*, it reaffirmed that every exercise of public power must remain subject to the supremacy of the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria reinforces this vision by declaring that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government while reminding every citizen that nation-building is a shared responsibility. For law students, these constitutional principles should never remain mere examination topics. They should become a personal commitment. To understand the law is to possess knowledge capable of defending liberty, strengthening institutions, and restoring public confidence in justice. Such knowledge should never become a private privilege reserved for personal advancement; it should become a public trust exercised for the common good.

This understanding resonates with Lon L. Fuller's conception of the "inner morality of law." Fuller argues that the legitimacy of law depends not merely upon the existence of legal rules but upon their fidelity to fairness, consistency, and justice. Legal education, therefore, must produce more than technically competent lawyers. It must cultivate men and women whose character is equal to the power the law places in their hands.

If that is the true purpose of legal education, then nation-building cannot begin after graduation or after the Call to the Bar. It begins in the lecture theatre where honesty is chosen over dishonesty, in the library where disciplined study prepares future leaders, and in every opportunity to use legal knowledge in service of others. Long before the wig and gown become visible symbols of the legal profession, the character worthy of wearing them must first be quietly formed.

LAW STUDENTS AS NATION BUILDERS

Character, however, is never formed in moments of public applause. It is forged in quiet decisions that often escape recognition—the choice to reject dishonesty when it offers an easier path, to defend what is right even when it is unpopular, and to pursue excellence without sacrificing integrity. These seemingly ordinary choices determine whether legal education becomes merely an academic pursuit or the foundation of a lifetime of public service.

This is why law students must see themselves as more than future litigators or corporate advisers. They are future judges, legislators, policymakers, scholars, diplomats, and advocates whose decisions will shape institutions and influence generations. Even while still in school, they can contribute meaningfully through legal aid clinics, public legal education, policy research, community engagement, and the defence of fundamental rights. Nation-building is not an event reserved for graduation; it is a habit cultivated through consistent acts of service.

The legal profession itself is changing rapidly. Artificial intelligence is transforming legal research, technology is redefining commerce, and emerging issues such as cybercrime, climate justice, and data privacy continue to challenge traditional legal frameworks. These realities demand lawyers who are not only intellectually competent but also innovative, adaptable, and ethically grounded. As Richard Susskind observes, the lawyer of tomorrow will succeed not simply because of legal knowledge, but because of the ability to adapt while remaining faithful to the enduring values of justice and professional responsibility. The future, therefore, belongs to lawyers who combine excellence with vision and integrity.

As I reflect on my own journey as a law student, I have come to appreciate that the greatest privilege of studying law is not the promise of one day wearing the wig and gown, but the opportunity to become worthy of what they represent. Every lecture attended with purpose, every principle understood with humility, and every opportunity to serve reminds me that the law is ultimately about people. Behind every constitutional provision is a citizen whose dignity deserves protection. Behind every statute is society's hope for order. Behind every case file is a human story waiting to be heard with fairness, compassion, and justice.

Perhaps this is the higher calling of legal education: not merely to produce lawyers, but to raise men and

women whose knowledge strengthens justice, whose character inspires trust, and whose service leaves society better than they found it. Professional success is commendable, but it is not the highest measure of a lawyer. The true measure lies in the institutions strengthened, the rights protected, the vulnerable defended, and the hope restored through the faithful application of the law.

CONCLUSION

History has never reserved its highest honour for those who merely possessed legal knowledge. It remembers those who used that knowledge to confront injustice, defend constitutional values, and improve the lives of others. Their legacy was not built by the titles they held or the robes they wore, but by the courage with which they placed the law in the service of humanity.

That is the challenge before every law student today. We must resist the temptation to pursue the law only as a means of personal advancement and instead embrace it as a lifelong commitment to justice, integrity, and national development. If our education equips us to strengthen the rule of law, defend the vulnerable, uphold the Constitution, and serve with honour, then we will have fulfilled the true purpose of legal education.

The wig and gown will always remain cherished symbols of the legal profession. They deserve our admiration because they remind us of the honour and responsibility that accompany the practice of law. Yet their greatest significance is revealed not when they are first worn, but in the lives of those who wear them.

When future generations look back, may they remember us not simply as lawyers, but as men and women who used the law to strengthen institutions, restore hope, and build a more just nation.

For the wig and gown may announce a lawyer to the world, but only service introduces that lawyer to history.

Sibyl Dung Jacob
200 Level Student



Advice to the Next Generation

To young lawyers and law students, Christopher's message is straightforward: find your path and pursue it with discipline. For those drawn to politics, he advises an open mind and the deliberate search for leaders who embody integrity and service. "Look for people you can learn from. Look for people who put the people first."

For those entering legal practice, he emphasises the importance of the first five years after law school — that, he says, is when the foundation is built. "You must be a good drafter. You must understand your tenses. You must master the tools that every good lawyer and advocate needs to defend their clients and their people."

He reminds students that the law opens many doors — litigation, corporate practice, company secretarial work, public service, politics, or another field entirely — but the standard does not change. "Whatever path you choose, learn it very well. Master it. Pursue it with vigour and excellence."



Addressing the Council — the discipline of advocacy carried from courtroom to chamber.

LEAVING A MARK

The story of Hon. Amb. John Kyohroh Christopher, Esq., is ultimately a story of law, politics, and service intersecting. It began with a young boy who dreamed of becoming a lawyer. It continued with a law student who found purpose in PLALAWSA and student leadership. It deepened through legal training, political engagement, and public administration. Today, it finds expression in the leadership of Jos North Local Government Council.

His experience has shaped a clear philosophy: leadership is not about holding office. It is about earning the trust of the people, listening to their needs, making sacrifices, and building systems and projects that outlive you.

"From a childhood dream of practising law to a life of leadership and community development, his journey has gone far beyond the Bar. It is now about service, and about giving back to the people who gave him his start."

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