

## Inside Nigeria's Oldest Newspaper Library: Retracing Fuji History and Print Culture with Elder Dayo Odeyemi

Until his passing in 2010, only Elder Dayo Odeyemi was qualified to write about Barrister. A veteran journalist who worked as Assistant Editor and a very prominent columnist of the "Entertainer," the first entertainment magazine in Nigeria, Elder Odeyemi authored two of the five non-academic books on Barrister written by journalists. He is more than Barrister's only authorized biographer-- he was also his public relations consultant and confidant. Few people knew Barrister like Odeyemi who witnessed and actively participated in major turning points in the history of popular culture and print culture from the early 1970s. Entertainment journalists, like Elder Odeyemi, wielded enormous power as creators and legitimizers of artistic stardom. Hence, interviewing him and shooting the documentary inside the oldest surviving newspaper library in Nigeria is symbolically, historically, and aesthetically important for my project.

Beyond the relationship between art and print culture, Barrister's and Tribune owner Obafemi Awolowo's history interfaced many times. In 1980 and 1983, two developments involving the national ruling party NPN and Awolowo's state-level party UPN, almost ruined Barrister's career. At the center of it all was the newspapers power as the shaper of public opinion towards artists and the politicization of popular culture. Having used the newspaper to promote Barrister to true stardom from the mid-1970s, in 1980, Nigeria's most famous globe trotter Olabisi Ajala tried to use the same mechanism to put a halt to Barrister's unending fame. The rest they say, is history!

### Appreciation

After I wrote the official letter to shoot at the Tribune library, final approval was granted because my very good friend, Dr. Segun Onakoya, a law lecturer at the University of Ibadan, called the powers that be for me. I'm grateful to Mr. Edward Dickson, the Managing Director of Tribune and Librarian Mrs Oyedele Adeyinka for making this happen. Shooting altered the operations of the library. Some library users excused us as we frequently interrupted people's movement and conversation to enhance decorum. University of Ibadan graduate students Tosin Adeyemi and Adeola Adeyemi joined Busuyi Adeleye and Tolani Onike in moving heavy furniture to give room for six different camera angles and postures for the shooting. Without Elder Dayo Odeyemi, the shooting wouldn't have happened. For 10 hours, divided over two days, he allowed me to probe his memory for events of the past, complied with my directorial instructions to perform his own text in voice and bodily action, and changed clothes—all without asking for or expecting a kobo. A BIG THANK YOU is not enough to show my gratitude. Baba's birthday is in a few days. Happy birthday The Encyclopedia of Barrister!

Yours Sincerely in Fuji:  
Emperor Saedo Okola and His International Fuji Lions