

Chapter Four



THERE ARE MANY MEMORIES: A TRIBUTE FOR PROF. JOE TOR IORAPUU

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Like a joke, it is slightly over three decades that we have worked together as colleagues and friends in the University of Jos, Faculty of Arts. There are many memories of these years.

I cannot remember exactly how we met, but what cannot be lost was our experience as Level Coordinators (processing examination results) in our respective Departments. In those days (the 1990s), what we today in the University of Jos call 'Senate Format Results' were called 'Grids'. They were worked manually, as computers and excel packages did not exist. I remember how we used to piece together foolscap sheets, how we used to find rulers and create boxes for each course and for each student and then manually calculated Grade Point Averages and also manually enter the individual results in each student's column. We would supervise Departmental Secretaries and Typists to process the results on stencils, and also supervise messengers to roll them out on duplicating machines. Finally, we would arrange the results in sets and give our Examinations Officers to present at full Faculty Board. Thereafter, we would make corrections and give our Heads of Department to present at Senate. The job required the highest level of

trust and total dedication; Moreover, it was for free; responsibility allowance did not exist. Yet we were happy doing it (and with integrity), often buying and sharing groundnuts as our lunch.

The difficult task of examination processing was not the only responsibility you accepted. I remember how you were dragged into Departmental Headship. It was a difficult moment for you and for some of us also. It took Chris Kuju and I two weeks to officially accept the position, when we were appointed the first time. In your case, you had already started exploring the NGO world and the position of Head of Department was a huge distraction, as you needed to write grant-winning proposals, manage the staff and monitor the implementation of the projects and as well administer your Department. From this position, you became Faculty Dean and member of the University of Jos Governing Council, and in 2020, came the capstone in University Administration and Management - being appointed Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University. The Deanship and Vice-Chancellorship positions are competed for. What I learned from you in these two processes is that you never give up on a struggle you firmly believe in. As Dean, you were known for defending Faculty staffers' promotion cases. At one Faculty appraisal exercise, you said (and we totally agreed with you) that any dispute in the interpretation of guidelines should be resolved in the interest of the candidate.

You do not know this because I never told you. Your excellent PhD thesis was debated at the Faculty Management meeting which I attended as Head of my Department. Professor John S. Illah was Dean. The debate was about which thesis in the Faculty to choose and recommend for a University award. Your thesis and that of another colleague in Religion were selected. Choosing one was a problem because both were highly rated. We only resolved it by gambling. The names of two of you were written on two separate but similar pieces of paper and thoroughly folded by a clerk. They were placed in a plate and the Dean was asked to pick one. The one picked was the one submitted to the University for the Award. That was like a penalty kick in football: Luck, rather than merit was the arbiter.

You are also a very sociable and generous person. On several occasions, you took me and other friends out and treated us to pounded

yam and bush meat, which we washed down with various types of water resources of individual choices. During the last accreditation exercise in the University of Jos, you generously supported various Departments and the Faculty office with your personal funds to adequately make preparations. All the programmes assessed got full accreditation. Oga, thank you very much. Your rise from Level Coordinator to Head of Department, Dean, Council member and Vice-Chancellor confirm Shakespeare's famous statement about celebrated people's rise to greatness: birth circumstance, societal assignment, and hard work. Bravo, my brother, friend and colleague, now my oga. More grease to your elbows and best wishes for more future achievements.