

# **GCLOBA** **MICROSCOPE**



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**V001**

**FELA BANK-OLEMO**



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**Femi Oladejo**  
Photographer  
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## SCHOOL ANTHEM

Our dear College we're proud of thee  
We pledge our loyalty to thee  
For making us all what we are  
We sing aloud to honour thee

Our dear Government College Lagos  
Through thee our young boys are nurtured  
To labour to attain success  
For the pride of our fatherland.

Our dear College, we sing thy praise  
We'll for aye uphold thy virtue.  
To be honest, hardworking and  
Forever ready to serve thee.



## SCHOOL PLEDGE

I pledge myself to remember that at all times and in all places,  
I am the school's representative.  
I will strive to refrain from any word or action  
Which may bring discredit upon it or tarnish its image.

I would ever seek to be worthy of the school,  
To add to its fortune and to maintain its traditions.  
I will play my part in transmitting it to others, not less,  
But greater and better than it was transmitted to me.  
So help me God.





# About **FELA BANK-OLEMOH**

I am a strategist, entrepreneur, public speaker, leadership coach and public servant with a verifiable track record of impact in almost 25 years of professional and social service engagements.

Representing a new generation of Nigerians, I am passionately committed to the realization of the “New Nigeria”.

As a coach and public speaker, I publish a weekly video and podcast series titled, “90 Seconds with FBO,” which is distributed via my digital media platforms.

In September 2019, I was appointed the Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Education Interventions.

I was privileged to served as the Special Adviser to the Governor on Education, Lagos State, under the mandate of His Excellency, Governor Akinwunmi Ambode (2015 to 2019), where I spearheaded the implementation of several human capacity development initiatives including ReadySetWork, CodeLagos, Eko Nke Koo (Lagos is Learning) and many more.

Many years ago, my entrepreneurial spirit was nurtured at SystemSpecs Limited - the leading provider of software solutions for the Nigerian and the African Market, where I was enlisted as a graduate trainee and eventually rose to become Senior Manager (International Sales) before resigning to pioneer and co-found MediaVision Limited in 2003. I led MediaVision as Chief Executive Officer until I assumed public office in 2015.

Having obtained a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree in Accounting from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in 1997, I later participated in the OMP Entrepreneur programme at the Lagos Business School of the Pan African University in 2007 to deepen and entrench my entrepreneurial orientation. I am also an alumnus of the Business School Netherlands (BSN), where I obtained a Master in Business Administration in 2012.

For service to humanity, I have received numerous awards, including the Lagos State Merit Award for my contribution to the education sector in 2014.

I am happily married with children and committed to Faith, Family, and the development of Nigeria.



# Microscope Interview with **FELA BANK-OLEMOH**

**Congratulations on your recent appointment as a Senior Special Assistant to the President Sir. Kindly give us a reflection of your life from your days as a GCL student to the Fela today as a Senior Special Assistant to the President?**

Thank you so much. The appointment as the Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a privilege I do not take lightly at all. About GCL, my days as a student in GCL was very memorable. You know, I got into GCL at age 10 and left at 15 and that was a critical stage of my life. The fact that it wasn't far from home made it possible for me to walk to school and that was part of my experience too. Most of the things happening in my life today were nurtured in GCL. I was exposed to the fundamental principles of life and made some of my close friendships which still exists till today. The common values we learnt have kept us together. In GCL, I was privileged to be in the Literary and Debating Society. I started debating in form 1 and began to represent the school in form 2. By form 4, I became the chief speaker of the debating team of the school and later emerged the President of the Literary and Debating Society. After my time in GCL, I got admission into University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife) to study Accounting. Upon graduation, I was privileged to work as a Youth corp member in one of Nigeria's biggest tech companies - SystemSpecs Limited. My time in SystemSpecs was another milestone in my life. My entrepreneurial skills were groomed there and I grew to become a Senior Manager of International Sales. I later resigned after 8 years to start my company (MediaVision) which is still running till now even though I left it over 5 years ago to work with the Lagos State Government.. My life has been a journey has been a testimony of God's goodness and mercies, I am thankful to Him everyday.

**What are the fond memories you have from your days in GCL?**

They are many. But I can't forget those times I represented the school at debates, I remember the researches and several rehearsals. I liked the challenge and the competition. I relive those memories again and again. On a lighter note, I still remember when we used to eat bread and ewa-agoyin (beans). We had a name for it, can't remember again...Agoyin burger or so. We had lots of fun back then.

**What quality will you say you picked from GCL which still guides you till this day?**

There are a number of them but one that sticks out is the ability to accommodate our differences and diversity. You know we had a unique diversity in GCL back then. Students from various backgrounds; economic status, ethnic groups, religions and so

**business administration, but you seem to have keen interest in IT and coding for teenagers how did that come about Sir?**

You see, I have always been interested in finding ways to impact people. Having studied Accounting in Ife, I went on to Business Administrations for my MBA and later deepened my Entrepreneurship knowledge



on had to get along with each other and make solid friendships regardless of our differences. That has been helpful till date.

**You studied accounting as your first degree and have series of degrees in**

and capacity at Lagos Business School. All these prepared me to be a problem solver. Starting my business was another learning experience for me. It opened my eyes to a lot of things. Then coming into government gave me the platform to create solutions that would develop our strongest asset which is human resource. Looking back, I also think that my experience in a tech company like SystemSpecs helped me to know that technology is the way to go as far as solving our local challenges is concerned.



So that advised my decisions and the kind of solutions that I led in government.



**You also run a sports marketing firm. How did you get into sports marketing Sir?**

Oh sport has always been my passion. I love sports. When I resigned from SystemSpecs I had 3 business ideas; one was Financial consultancy, which relates to my accounting background; another was IT. Having worked in an IT firm and grown through the ranks, I learnt the ropes. Sport was the third option and I followed sports which is my first passion. Obviously, sports pulled me in. The decision was a big challenge though, people thought I was crazy to leave a company like SystemSpecs to do sports. It was not as glamorous as it is now but that was my passion and I can say we were one of the pioneers in the Sport Business. We made people believe that it's a serious business that can be successful too. Seeing the business that others thought would not thrive do well till

date makes me very proud about my decision.

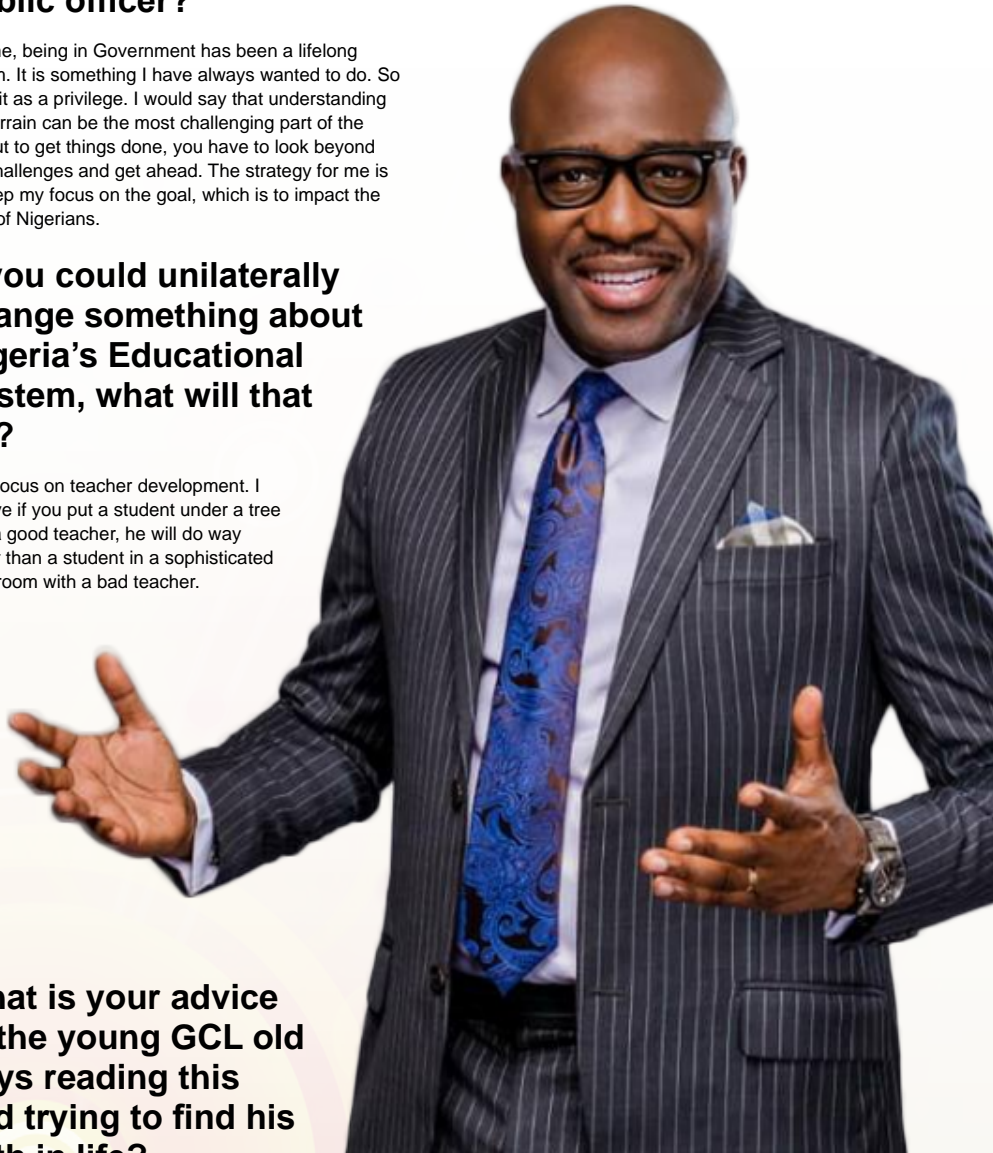
**What is the most challenging thing you've faced as a public officer?**

For me, being in Government has been a lifelong dream. It is something I have always wanted to do. So I see it as a privilege. I would say that understanding the terrain can be the most challenging part of the job but to get things done, you have to look beyond the challenges and get ahead. The strategy for me is to keep my focus on the goal, which is to impact the lives of Nigerians.

**If you could unilaterally change something about Nigeria's Educational System, what will that be?**

I will focus on teacher development. I believe if you put a student under a tree with a good teacher, he will do way better than a student in a sophisticated classroom with a bad teacher.

Soft skills. You must understand that the world places more value



**What is your advice to the young GCL old boys reading this and trying to find his path in life?**

I will advise them to discover and understand their purpose in life. They need to ask themselves why they are here on Earth. Once that is sorted, pursue it passionately!

on soft skills like communication, critical thinking, problem solving, emotional intelligence etc.

**And to the GCL students reading this and thinking about what awaits him in the future, what skills would you advise him to equip himself with?**

So they must be deliberate about acquiring and developing those skills. Technology is also a big thing now, you must be tech savvy to be relevant and get ahead in this time and age.

**Mr. Obafela Bank-Olemoh**  
SSA on Education Interventions  
to the President of Nigeria  
GCL '89 set



# MY GCL EXPERIENCE

## *The Compendium*

...Yes! In diversity, we remained uniquely united. In adversity, we continued strong. In scarcity, we learnt to share generously. The veracity of our leaders gives us hope and contributes to the overall tenacity of the entire GCLOBA Community and this is something we should all treasure.....

Rueben Nkemjika Obazi

### IN THE BEGINNING...

**H**ello son, what school do you attend?" and the boy briskly replied: "Government College Lagos (GCL), Surulere" then my dad queried further, "Where is this school? Please take me there!" This short conversation between my dad and a student he met on the road some years back led us into 6 years in the citadel of learning and delight of Lagos known as Government College Lagos. Within the first few seconds inside the premises of GCL, I noticed my dad was absolutely delighted at the ambience of the school, the large expanse of land upon which it rests, the plethora of class room blocks and tall structures, the magnificent school hall and the enchanting sights of a few students walking in white uniforms like snowflakes that fell from the sky. It was at this point that I understood the reason behind my dad's initial reaction in the first school we entered. The difference was crystal clear... GCL was simply prestigious and my dad ensured that I got admitted into this great citadel of learning.

Monday, November 3rd, 1997 happened to be my first day in school and it was both special and memorable. Clad in snow-white shorts and short-sleeved shirt with my neck tie and fez cap of gold and green strips, I stepped into the assembly ground and the sight was a beauty to behold! All the students were looking resplendently radiant in their crystal white uniforms. It was more like a procession of angelic armies waiting to be enlisted into the heavenly ranks! It was as though I was standing on a holy ground and as I stealthily blended into the throng, I instantly felt like a demigod!

### REALITY CHECK

As I drooled over all the fantasies and fairytale thoughts that played out in my mind, it wasn't long before I realized that there was a whole lot more than just academics that I stood to learn during my potential six-year long expedition at my beloved GCL. These extra lessons came in the form of real life experiences that I either underwent personally or observed and I implore you to please join me as we explore them together.

- 1. Self-Discovery:** At GCL, boys were moulded to become real men, free from pretense and hypocrisy. I learnt to stand up for and believe in myself and also to face my challenges head-on. The extra motivation lies in the fact that we were all boys and as such there were no ladies to impress but to be true to oneself. The general reasoning then was: "if your mate can do it, then why limit yourself when you haven't even tried?" Go for it... Give it a shot... Discover your true self!
- 2. Security Consciousness:** The love for GCL among parents was so much that most times the School ends up admitting more students than the number of seats and lockers available and this trend ignited the battle of scarcity and demand. In view of this, among the many things to be safeguarded jealously were one's seats and lockers as failure to do so may result in its loss and when that happens it will be practically difficult to recognize your missing seats even while it's in front of you. Either it has been re-painted or dismantled to fix the broken parts of other students' seats. Therefore students who valued their desks and seats usually lock them

**"If you value it, safeguard it!"**



# MY GCL EXPERIENCE

## *The Compendium*

up with chains or at least ensure that door to the classroom was always locked at the end of each school day. The lesson? If you value it, safeguard it!

**3. Discipline:** Renowned for her well-trained and skillful teachers who have what it takes to impart light-like knowledge to the students, the Great GCL also prides herself with teachers who are experienced in meting out the right dosage of discipline that should be just enough to make even the most obstinate hearts malleable. Men like Mr. Adeniyi, my Chemistry teacher back then, whose "rod of God" must first touch the roof of the classroom before landing thunderously on an erring student's bent over waist clearly comes to mind. I also vividly recall the flexible "S- Shaped" cane of Mr. Faleti, our Biology teacher back then. Any student he flogs usually ends up screaming aloud and wriggling like someone being exorcised from some evil spirit. And lastly, you don't want to be in the bad books of the Mathematics teacher, Mr. Owoeye (a.k.a Fako), who you would rather sent you home than be a recipient of his comically crafty but painful style of discipline. All these were done with love in order to reprove us and mould us into responsible adults.

**4. Desire for Freedom:** As boys metamorphosed from adolescents to teenagers, the cravings to think, decide and act autonomously without restrictions became increasing compelling. While the freedom to choose is not bad in itself as demonstrated when some new senior students had to choose to either be in Science or Arts class in line with their preferred future career dreams, such freedom, however if not properly regulated can be detrimental. This quest for freedom was catalyzed by the rapid physiological changes that came along with puberty and

this resulted in a heightened awareness of our cleanliness, grooming and environment. Clearly, there was a conspicuous attitudinal change. Like the Biblical Adam felt after eating the forbidden fruit, the eyes of Boys became opened up to the fact that they could either get or offer advances to students of the opposite sex. Students, who ab initio were unkempt in junior class, started paying closer attention to their physical appearance. The emergence of facial and pubic hairs along with deep-sounding voices suddenly made Boys start feeling like men. It wasn't long before they started to rebel against parents, teachers, school authority and even against God. Nearly everyone wanted to decide how best to live their lives; they wanted to party, revel, play video games, gamble, smoke, control money, air their views freely and even experiment with sex! Indeed, the zest to explore was irrepresible! The discovery for some was worth it, for many others, it was regrettable. But for me,

I was just glad that I refused to grow up too fast along that path and most notably, I learnt a vital lesson that absolute freedom can be destructive. What the imperfect man really need is relative freedom – the freedom that is restricted by balanced and relevant regulations, laws and principles from a much higher authority.

**5. Take Responsibility:** One of the most glaring ways to display that you are growing into a responsible adult in GCL was to aspire for leadership positions and the School Prefect role presents a perfect opportunity for that. The selection of Prefects in GCL is usually very rigorous and competitive with series of screening routines, assessment of the physical, moral and mental abilities of aspiring students and the much dreaded interviews with a panel of top ranking officials of the School which usu-







ally includes the Principal and seasoned English Teachers to assess the quality of your use of English. I could still feel the shivers that ran through my spine as I sat before that elite group of scholars to explain to them why I should be given the noble badge of the Health Prefect. That experience gave me all the confidence I needed to overcome any face-to-face job interview that I took part in later on in life, till date. In the end, before the entire school, along with other successful prefects, I was adorned with the unique GCL badge as the Health Prefect 2 and I watched gleefully as the students cheered us on as the latest "Ambassadors" of the Great GCL! I eventually went on to occupy several other leadership positions spanning from my University days, to my NYSC year and down to my secular job while impacting positively on the lives of the people I lead.

- 6. Control of Power:** Back in my GCL days, there was always this endless insidious rivalry between SS2 and SS3 students. While the SS3 students still feel they are the most senior set and should be respected accordingly, the SS2 students on the other hand feel they are the latest sheriffs in town as the SS3 students only have a few months to graduate and so why can't they start wielding their powers already. Well, such would have been the shameful case when I was in SS3 as the SS2 students would have claimed the bragging rights from us and taunt us until we graduate. It happened one day that a certain NGO visited our school to sensitize all senior secondary students on HIV/AIDS. After the lecture, they set quiz questions to all with prizes to be given out to the top three students. That same day, most of the other prefects have gone out to represent the School in a spelling competition leaving behind myself a few other prefects. The onus was now on me especially to deliver as the Health Prefect of the School. After the quiz, the winners were announced starting from the 3rd position which happens to be an SS2 student. The 2nd position was announced and it was yet another SS2 student and before long, the hall was in great uproar as the SS2 students present started bragging that they will claim all the prizes because

the SS3 students are not as intelligent as they were. Finally, the 1st position was announced and you just can't imagine the heavy sigh of relief that heaved as I walked up majestically towards the podium to receive my prize. It was an impeccable vindication! The experience taught me that if you are a leader, always try to know more than your subjects or subordinates. Be a step or more ahead of them, for the moment they know even as much as you do, then you stand a risk of losing full control of your authority and powers.

## THE CONCLUSION

Sweet reminiscence flowed through my mind as I reflected on the fiercely contested Principal Cup, the Induction Ceremonies of various Social Clubs and the fun that went along with it, the drama in the examination hall during our WAEC and NECO exams and the bitter-sweet feelings of our most memorable Valedictory Service, where we bade farewell to our mates and the College that have shaped us formidably to face the challenges that lies ahead of us. Feelings of nostalgia enveloped me as I thought all these friends and memories will gradually attenuate with the passage of time.

Eureka! That was not to be as 17 years after graduating from GCL, most of us are still in active contact, not just with our classmates but a strong network of GCL Old Boys (GCL OBA) Community that cuts across several continents of the world. All thanks to digital technology – we evolved!

Yes! In diversity, we remained uniquely united. In adversity, we continued strong. In scarcity, we learnt to share generously. The veracity of our leaders gives us hope and contributes to the overall tenacity of the entire GCL OBA Community and this is something we should all treasure.

I find great felicity to be among this invincible group of erudite brothers and to be given the rare privilege of lending my expertise in the maiden edition of the laudable project.

UP SCHOOL!

Reuben Nkemjika Obasi  
GCL 2003 set

# In the Know...

Quick tips and Access to valuable information

Those who will be competitive tomorrow can learn new skills, while still in school.

## Learn New Technical Skills while still at School

1. **Udemy**
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We all love food as they are essential to our body and wellness. Likewise are books which are crucial for the consumption of information and knowledge. Information and knowledge can be packaged and deployed through books. Today we have electronic books that have the ability to store multiple books in a library in a small device that can be carried around in the palms of our hands.

In recent times, multiple e-Readers have been created to provide means to read and consume book content on the go. At home, work, on the road and just anywhere. Carry a whole library of books and information materials with you.





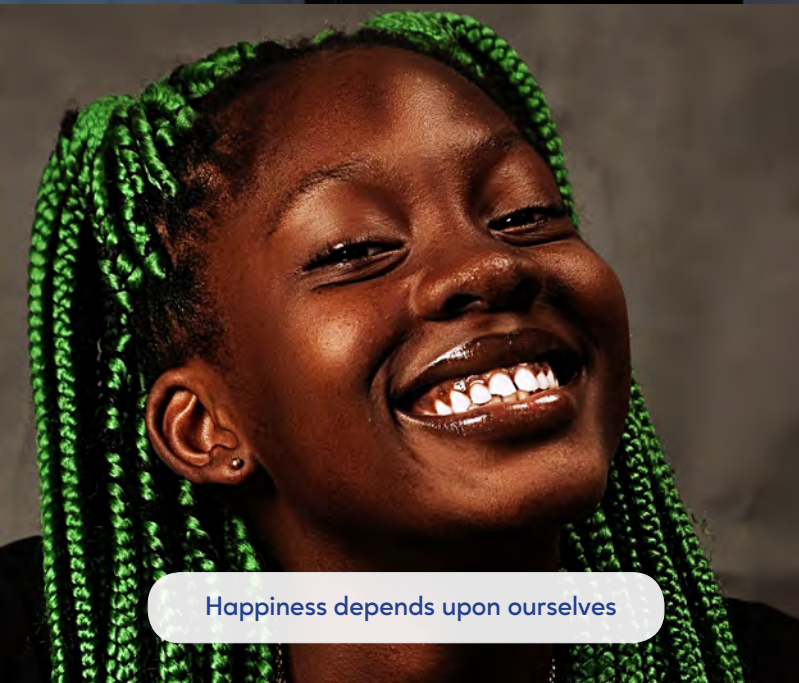
Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last, you create what you will.



FEMI VISUALS  
PHOTOGRAPHY

The joy of dressing is an ART.

FEMI OLADEJO  
GCL 2018 set



Happiness depends upon ourselves



Were it left to me to decide if we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.





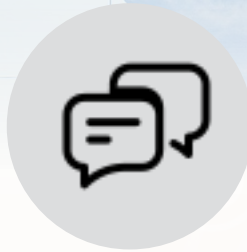
# GET READY

Don't just be a student, be a great GCL student ready to take on the world



## LIFE COACH

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## LIFE CHATTING

Get one on one with GCL Old boys. Gain insights, learn from the experience of our school's forebearers.



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