

## **TRIBUTE TO OUR FRIEND AND PATRON, MRS. EDEM IKOKU, FROM THE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

It was with heavy hearts that we in the University Women's Association (UWA), University of Nigeria received word of the passing of our dear friend and former Patron, Mrs. Edem Ikoku. Edem Ikoku was one of the most supportive Patrons UWA has had, serving from 1987 to the early 1990s when her husband was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nigeria. One of her first steps after arriving at the University was to mobilize the women to revitalize UWA and then to work actively with the newly elected executive of Ebele Maduewesi in restoring the Association to its full glory. She was also instrumental in organizing the ceremony for naming the Children's Centre building after Madam Hulder Iwuanyanwu, mother of our donor Chief (Dr.) E. C. Iwuanyanwu, in 1992. Edem further assisted in presenting our proposals to her husband, the Vice-Chancellor. Worthy of special note in this regard is the joint proposal from the President of UWA and Head of Library Science, which established the Children's Centre Library as a teaching laboratory of the Department and led to a mutually beneficial relationship that has done much to sustain both partners to the present day.

While offering this special leadership, Edem was also notable for her willingness to serve at the "grassroots" level. She regularly attended Children's Centre Committee meetings and served as a volunteer at the library desk on Wednesday evenings. In this way she got to know many campus children during her time in Nsukka. During vacation programmes, she taught sewing lessons and invited children to the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge for cookery classes. She equally served as a judge for creative writing programmes organized at the Centre. She and Prof. Ikoku could be counted on to come out in support of Children's Centre activities and to grace our occasions with their presence.

This life of simplicity and unpretentious service was evident in all Edem Ikoku did. She pointed with pride to her mother's contributions as a community leader and political activist and held her up as a model worthy of emulation. While holding high position in the University community, Edem continued to pursue her career as a dedicated pharmacist, driving herself to work at the General Hospital in her blue Volkswagon Beetle. She also felt comfortable receiving friends, members of UWA and children in her home, always entertaining them with a personal touch. Edem was such a warm and caring person, one always felt at home.

We in the University Women's Association feel honoured to have enjoyed the friendship of this beautiful person and feel ennobled by her exemplary life of service. While saddened by her passing, we can take solace in our many fond memories of her time with us. Gentle Edem, rest in perfect peace!

Prof. Virginia Dike  
Chair of the Children's Centre Committee  
University Women's Association