

ARCHIBUILT IN HISTORY

Following the election of a new Executive Council of the Nigerian Institute of Architects in November 1998, the Executive led by Arc. Mbanefo as President with Arc. Okah-Avae as Hon. General Secretary, had a retreat in February 1990 at the River Motel, Abraka, Delta State. The entire executive and a few other select senior architects (like arc. Adukwu, then immediate PPPIA) were hosted free of charge by the proprietor of the hotel, Arc. Charles Majoroh.

The primary philosophy of the retreat was to re-strategize and adopt a new focus for the profession and the Institute. The broad aims and objectives was to create a platform where one, those in the building industry can see developments in materials, equipment and method exhibited from time to time; two, where such developments can be documented and published periodically for the use of those in the profession and other stakeholders; and three, create an enduring avenue where the finances of the Institute could be enhanced and sustained.



Our host, Arc. Majoroh, ensured that we had adequate relaxation during the retreat at Abraka

It was decided at the retreat that the implementation of this decision should commence immediately. The name ARCHIBILT EXHIBITION was suggested and adopted and the implementation committee was immediately set-up and empowered to ensure that the inaugural exhibition was held later that year. The inaugural exhibition committee had Arc. Justus Okah-Avae as Chairman and Arc. Jimoh M. Faworaja (then 2nd Assistant H.G.S.) as Secretary.

Several other members were coopted into that committee and they all worked assiduously to guarantee the success of the first exhibition which was fixed for August 1990. The major challenge of the committee at that time was from members and stakeholders who were skeptical about the success of such a novel idea.

Special mentioned of some members of that inaugural committee who worked hard to confound skeptics must be mentioned. Charles Majoroh (then 3rd Vice-President), Dele

Adeyemi, Chima Chijioke, Tony Nkwonta, Jimoh Faworaja (who designed the Archibuilt logo – still in use), Umaru Aliyu (who used his presence in government to ensure a heavy government involvement), Paul Okunola (then in Guardian Newspapers, who harnessed the media to be well involved) – all these guys and others who I may have lost memory of, deserve honorable mention. The success was largely due to their general and collective effort.

The Exhibition held as planned in August and it was declared open by Major General Mamman Kontagora, of blessed memory, then Federal Commissioner of Works. It was held at the National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos.

The success was massive and beyond all expectations. This was in terms of exhibitors, professional attendance and the general public. The financial returns were also impressive for the period.

I will also like to mention the role played by the following major exhibitors: Nigerite, Tower Aluminum, Berger Paints – before all of them became Plc. Their deep involvement from day one meant they saw a future in the novel idea.

As we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Archibuilt, let me salute all those who have over these past years kept the dream alive. Amidst toil and tribulations the Archibuilt dream has become a brand in the Nigerian building and construction environment and some of us are happy to be alive to be witness to this.

Congratulations to the Nigerian Institute of Architects for starting and sustaining ARCHIBILT.

Arc. Justus O. Okah-Avae

Inaugral Chairman