

GAME CHANGERS ISSUE

EMV AFRICA

M A G A Z I N E

MAY 2021



Dave Acheampong
Prince Larbie
Yaw Sakyi
Damola Roberts

GAME
CHANGERS

Nii Quaye Brown
Botsyo Nkegbe
Vida Anim
Juliet Bawuah

FOR THOSE THAT RISE

STEPHEN APPIAH | AZUMAH NELSON



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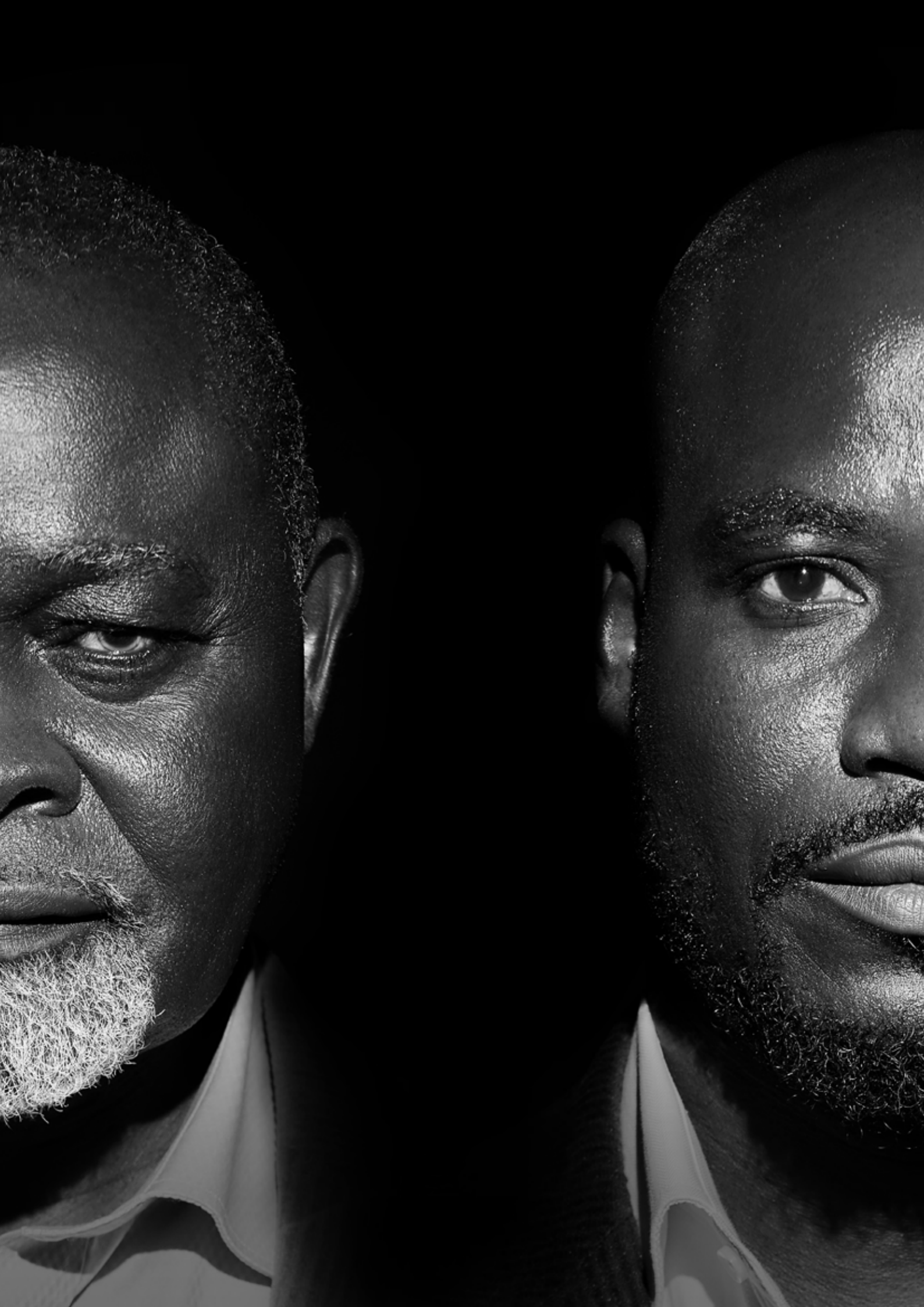
M A G A Z I N E



AZUMAH NELSON
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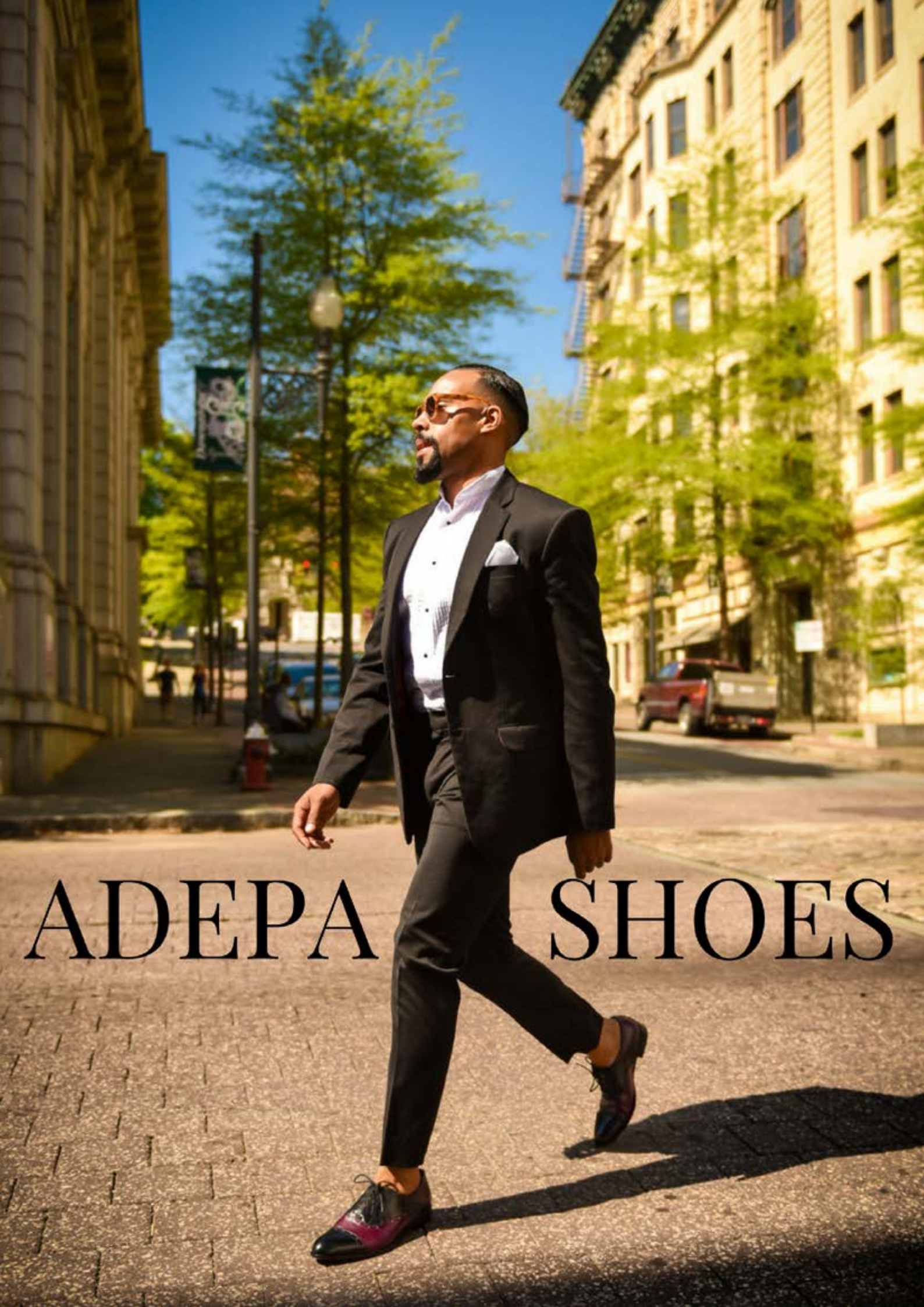
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FROM THE EDITOR



It was one of the seminal experiences of my formative years – Stephen Appiah scoring the winner against team USA and doing his signature ‘mind-twist’ celebration. The whole nation was roaring. It’s a memory I’ll never forget.

Over the next few years, Stephen would become one of my favourite footballers. There was just something different about him. It’s the way he united and galvanised the rest of the Black Stars team to put aside their egos and work together for the love of the game. Deservedly, he became the first team captain to lead the Ghana men’s national team to the World Cup.

People like Stephen are what I call: game changers. They come along every once in a while, and forever alter how things are normally done...much like the EMY Africa Magazine.

The magazine’s horizons are broadening as we launch our third issue. The Game Changers issue, as we call it, features legends like the cover duo – Azumah Nelson and Stephen Appiah, as well as up-and-comers: Prince ‘The Buzz’ Larbie and Dave Quansah Acheampong. Photographers, Gilbert Asante and Sylvernus Komla Darku dropped by to capture beautiful photos of these people, to add to the insight into their fascinating journeys.

Focusing on sports, we drew a lot of inspiration from people who’ve embraced different challenges to do what they love.

Between the portraiture and recounting, some of these game changers’ reasons for doing what they do really stuck with me. Raphael Botsyo Nkegbe, who’s representing Ghana at the Tokyo 2021 Paralympic Games, wants to use his talent to inspire the next generation and change the perception that Ghanaians have of people living with disabilities. Damola Roberts wants to make his family and country proud. Yaw Sakyi wants to provide opportunities he did not have growing up.

Stories like these are just what we need to hear. They represent trudging a road of destiny, making an impact, achieving goals and the passing of time that we all hope to experience. These values are what this magazine has stood for from the very beginning – re-enforcing our collective capacity to do good, to support one another, to inspire greatness in others, to lead by example and to leave a legacy. It also helps a great deal that we can learn all these lessons while giving a guard of honour to these game changers.

Enjoy the issue!

A stylized, handwritten signature of Albert Chris Soboh in black ink.

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Fent, as he is affectionately called, is rarely far from where the action is – and, even when he is, you can be sure he's keeping up from behind some screen (that is, if he isn't watching his other love, Lewis Hamilton, screech and speed Mercedes to another F1 triumph).



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is a journalist and writer with a keen interest in telling stories. Yaw is on a mission to tell Ghanaian stories the Ghanaian way - stories that demystify the stereotypes of our continent. If Yaw is not writing, he is reading or having a drink in a pub near you.



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Culture

Above And Beyond | Here They Come... | The Right To Dream

Above And Beyond

Sportsmen – Raphael Botsyo Nkegbe, Nii Quaye Brown, Damola Roberts and Akwasi Frimpong – go above and beyond challenges to do what they love.

BY FUI CAN-TAMAKLOE

When I began preparations for this article, it was supposed to be about the stories of some outstanding West African athletes. At best, my vision extended to an article that highlighted their exploits, bringing them to the fore of news today. These athletes had shown, and I was to be one of the many voices that told. But during my interactions with each personality, I was impacted in several ways. Every interview inspired something in me, and as they did, the vision for the article evolved.

A year ago, the Coronavirus became a global threat and halted life as we knew it. At that time, there was no end in sight. Now, a tumultuous year later, with vaccinations taking effect and restrictions being lifted, there is cautious optimism in the air as we slowly try to re-engage with the normal. But there also seems to be a significant loss of motivation due to the year we've suffered, the aftermath of which is still very present in our lives. This is an article that seeks to inspire through some of the lessons I learned while interacting with such great talent. And we shall begin these lessons with the life of Raphael Botsyo Nkegbe.

Excel

After a bout of polio left him incapable of using his legs from a young age, Raphael grew up learning to approach life differently from his peers. Things changed significantly for Raphael when in 1996 his talent as a para-athlete was unearthed by Jean Driscoll, an American wheelchair racer famed for winning the Boston Marathon Women's Wheelchair division eight times. In Athens 2004, he made history as being the first male Ghanaian to compete at the Paralympics.

One of Africa's most experienced para-athletes, he has since been to two other Paralympic events, and is currently training for his fourth in Tokyo. In 2019, Raphael won the T54 World Wheelchair 100m race at the Desert Challenge Games in Arizona, USA with a new personal best of 14.22s. This broke the African record, making him the fastest T54 wheelchair sprinter in Africa, and 6th fastest in the world. In 2020, the wheelchair sprinter was awarded both 2019 Sports Personality of the Year, and 2019 Para-Athlete of the Year, by the Sports Writers Association of Ghana (SWAG) Awards.

I caught Raphael for an interview as he was visiting family in

Sunyani, a short visit before heading out for residential training in Cape Coast in preparation for Tokyo 2021, the Paralympic event that was postponed in 2020 due to the global pandemic. Despite almost four hundred kilometres between us, I felt Raphael's infectious personality as I conducted the interview. We spoke about his career; from his proudest moments to how he felt when he became the first para-athlete to win the SWAG Personality of the Year award. When we spoke about his motivation, Raphael's answer hit me square in the chest. "I want to use my talent to change the perception that Ghanaians have of people living with disabilities, and also inspire the next generation of para-athletes to come after me."

Ghanaian society truly does not make space for persons living with disabilities. You can feel it in our architecture, in how we talk about such people, and the coarse language we use in describing disabilities. This discrimination is something that Raphael seeks to challenge every time he is on the track. And, achievement after achievement, he is doing just that.

Perhaps what is most inspiring is that Africa's fastest wheelchair sprinter isn't just all talk. In 2012, he founded the GoGetDem Wheelchair Racing Club, with ten members across the country. The aim of the club is to improve the lives of disabled youth in rural areas, using sports as the tool to create opportunities. As can be guessed from its name, the club is set to inspire the next generation of para-athletes. And so far, a few prominent names are coming out. Maclean Atsu Dzidzienyo, Yakubu Abubakari, and Ayishetu Seidu are a few of the names mentored by Raphael who are making waves in the Ghanaian para-athletics scene. GoGetDem is not just Raphael's contribution to the nation, it's also his contribution to himself. His ambition is to move on to a full-time coaching career as his athletic career comes to a graceful end.

Dare

My first impression of Nii Quaye is a man who hates to be idle. I catch him on his off day, and we talk about life in general. He tells me how he is sort of like me, a media person, and works with a community radio station - Radio Emashie - in Pokuase, where he has a show on Thursdays talking about driving with drivers. And when he tells me his reason for starting judo, this impression is cemented firmly in my head.



Raphael Botsyo Nkegbe
Para-athlete



“I want to use my talent to change the perception that Ghanaians have of people living with disabilities, and also inspire the next generation of para-athletes to come after me.”



Nii Quaye Brown
Visually Impaired Judoka



“I started Judo because I wanted to try my hands on something different. To add it to my list of sporting activities.”

I find this answer as honest as it is impressive. When I want to try something different, I download a new word game, or read a book by a new writer. For Nii Quaye, trying something new means picking up skills in a martial art. Interestingly, while he is just partaking in a sport he’s come to love, Nii Quaye is creating some waves about town. Why is this? Until recently, very few African countries have shown interest in visually impaired judo, despite it being a Paralympic Sport since Seoul 1988. For example, during the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016, only one African Country participated (Algeria) with 3 judokas out of 132 from around 50 participating countries. Therefore, being the only visually impaired judoka in Ghana, Nii Quaye is Ghana’s best bet at qualifying for visually impaired judo in the Paralympics and proving points to himself, to the country, and to the world.

While we spoke about his training schedule, Nii Quaye confided in me how hard it had been keeping to the task at hand. Moving from his home in Nima to the Accra Sports Stadium for training sessions with his coach Ezekiel Nii Darko Doodoo, one challenge he faced was the significant cost of transportation, something his coach occasionally had to foot. But even in expressing his complaint, it

was apparent how undeterred and determined he was to stick to his schedule and his vision.

“One thing about me is that, when I start something, regardless if I win or lose, I do it with my heart.”

Persevere

In 2003, when Nigeria made its debut at the Special Olympics World Games, eighteen-year old Adedamola ‘Damola’ Roberts represented Nigeria as a 100m sprinter and got disqualified for crossing lanes. 18 years later, as I interview Damola, he’s now a renowned Olympian with five Special Olympics gold medals, and one bronze, in swimming.

The question is, how did this athlete move from crossing lanes at his first Olympic event to winning five gold medals? Diagnosed with Down Syndrome at an early age, Damola had to learn how to survive in a country that can be hostile to persons living with learning disabilities. He was no stranger to challenge. And when the Nigerian Special Olympics team expanded its list of events to include swimming, Damola, who already knew how to swim, rose to the challenge.



Adedamola 'Damola' Roberts
5-Time Special Olympics Gold Medallist



It's one thing to swim for pleasure, and another thing to swim at the Olympic level. But Damola's dedication is not in question.

“Early morning treadmill runs, and then swimming training at the Ikeja Airport Hotel from 9am till after lunch time. All with my teammates Teju, Treasure, and Biyi.”

Damola describes his training routine to me. I find his answer particularly interesting because he casually throws in the names of his teammates - Tejumoluwa Ogundele, Treasure Chidi-Ofong, and Adebisi Olatunji.

Together with Damola these people formed Special Olympic Nigeria's swim team at the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi. His answer provides some insight into who Damola is. This is a man who understands the universal truth that no one person is an island. When I ask him what his motivation is, he tells me it's to make his family proud. When I ask him what it feels like to represent Nigeria in competitions, he answers that for him it isn't just about representing Nigeria as some abstract concept. For him it's a blessing to represent his family, his swim team, and Team

Nigeria as a whole.

“When my father acknowledged me, his first born, for being the one to bring national recognition to the family,” was Damola's answer when I asked him what his proudest moment as an athlete had been. And, despite some challenges with financial support, Damola's plan to make sure the Roberts' name keeps flying high means he has set his sights on the 2023 Special Olympics World Games to take place in Berlin.

Adapt

In writing this part of the article, I sought an inspired angle. I didn't want to just write from my interview notes and research. I decided to understand what it means to be a skeleton athlete first. In classic millennial fashion, I googled skeleton athletes.

And the first person I noticed was Akwasi Frimpong, smiling proudly. At first, I thought this was an SEO fluke because I had spent the better part of the day researching on Akwasi. I texted a friend to google the same thing and report on what she saw.



Akwasi Frimpong
Skeleton Athlete



“How does a Ghanaian become an athlete in a sport like that?” she asked incredulously when she also saw Akwasi’s face.

The answer isn’t so easy.

Akwasi started running in 2001 at the age of fifteen, seven years after emigrating to the Netherlands for a better future. Two years later, he was crowned the Dutch National Junior Champion in the 200-meter sprints and earned the nickname ‘Golden Sprint’, growth that can only be described as phenomenal. From there, he went on to win other medals and achieved a lot of success in various competitions, despite a period where he had a very bad ankle injury. Akwasi’s dream to become an Olympian was derailed again in 2012 when he suffered yet another injury, this time in a tendon.

From track, he was recruited to the Dutch Bobsled team. Bobsledding, a winter sport, combined the basics he knew of sprinting, and a new element: ice. Akwasi’s speed and strength made him a perfect candidate for the team. Yet again, his Olympian dreams were halted when only one sledder from the Dutch team qualified. Akwasi, being a second alternate brakeman, did not get to go.

In a testament to his resilience of spirit, Akwasi did not falter in his dreams of becoming a Ghanaian representative at the Olympics. After bobsledding had given him a taste of the ice, he sought to dominate it. And this is how Akwasi became Africa’s first male representative in ‘skeleton’, a sport that had hitherto been the domain of cold countries.

Skeleton is a winter Olympic sport where athletes race along ice by lying face down, headfirst on a skeleton bobsled. It combines some of Akwasi’s formidable talents like sprinting, and other skills

that he possesses. Transitioning from one sport to the other is no small feat; something that many athletes try and fail at. But for Akwasi, it was easy. It’s becoming clearer that moving from track to winter sports may have been the best decision of his career. In track, Akwasi would have joined the long line of great talent to have come out of Ghana, and Africa. But in Winter sports, he is offered the rare chance to be a pioneer; to set the template for future Africans and Ghanaians looking to enter Winter Sports. This was true when he became the first skeleton athlete to represent Ghana in the Olympics as he competed in the in the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics, South Korea. In Pyeongchang, he was also Africa’s sole male representative. Despite not winning any medals, Akwasi’s appearance at the Olympics was, to put it mildly, very impactful. And this impact is something he only wants to see grow.

To be a skeleton athlete is to decide that hurtling across ice, headfirst, at speeds often exceeding 100km/h, is not as scary as not achieving your dreams. It’s knowing that the ultimate challenge is not just dominating the ice, it is leaving behind a legacy. When I ask him over the phone what the next challenge for him will be, I hear the determination in his voice when he tells me:

“The next challenge is to qualify for the winter Olympics again, and this time win Africa’s first medal in the Winter Olympics.”

He says this as a promise to me, a Ghanaian who believes in talent, and also as a promise to himself. His favourite thing about being an athlete, he goes on to say, is the fact that he has a platform to reach and inspire many young Ghanaians in and out of sports.

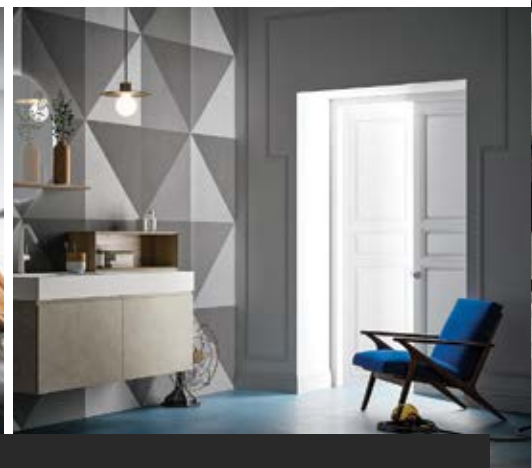
My mind goes briefly to the image of him on the google page, and I comment that he definitely was doing a good job of that. EMV



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Here They Come...

Ready or not, here they come! These are some of the finest sport talents on the come up. Remember their names. We have a feeling you'll be hearing them much often in the coming years.

BY FUI CAN-TAMAKLOE





Hor Halutie
Sprinter

Ghana is home for talent, this much is clear according to recent history. With such personalities as Abedi Pele, Azumah Nelson, Stanley Allotey, and Alice Annum, Ghana's history in athletics and other sporting competitions is coloured by great performances, and near-misses, testament to the undisputable talent the country has. Though attention for sports in this country is predominantly occupied by football, exploits are being made in other fields as well. And by young people, no less.

This article seeks to highlight the achievements and potential of some of Ghana's finest young sportsmen and women.

Hor Halutie

On April 4, 1999, Ghana's sprinting future was born in Nmanduono in the Upper West Region. Hor Halutie, the burgeoning star, started running at an early age and was discovered at age 14, when she was representing the Upper West Region in the Inter-Regional Basic Schools Athletics Competition in the Volta Regional capital of Ho. Anselm Nyavedzi, Physical Education Teacher for T.I. Ahmadiya Senior High School - popularly known as AMASS - in the Ashanti Region, scouting for talent at the event, saw Hor running and immediately identified her potential.

Hor moved from the Upper West to secondary school in Kumasi where she dominated the track in district and regional sporting competitions. As the school invested in her training, Hor showed her worth by winning both 100m and 200m titles for AMASS in the

Ashanti Regional Inter-Schools athletics competition in 2016 and 2017.

In 2018, nineteen-year-old Hor, ranking third in the country by then, competed at Gold Coast 2018 - the Commonwealth Games held in Gold Coast, Australia. She competed in the 100 metres, and 4x100 metres relay alongside more seasoned sister athletes Flings Owusu-Agyapong, Gemma Acheampong, and Janet Amponsah.

In the 4x100 metres relay, Ghana's team of four sprinters came in fifth. In the 100 metres, Hor qualified for the final, placing eight. Finishing at 11.54 secs, Hor, the youngest sprinter and possibly the most inexperienced, was 0.44 secs shy of gold medalist, Michelle-Lee Ahye from Trinidad and Tobago. While many may consider this failure, it remains a significant moment for the talented sprinter from Nmanduono.

I didn't get a chance to speak to Hor but I still feel a sense of kinship with her. Hor has a lot of growing to do, but at her rate of improvement and with constant support from appropriate authorities and mentors, her growth potential remains massive.

Currently, the world record in women's 100m sprinting is 10.49 secs held since 1988 by American legend Florence Griffith-Joyner. This is who Hor has to beat in order to be considered the best. And the twenty-two-year-old, carrying the hopes of thirty million people on her back, is working hard at that.



Dave 'Chief' Quansah Acheampong
Africa's Under-9 Chess Champion



Dave 'Chief' Quansah Acheampong

When the pandemic forced schools to close down in Ghana, some people got busy doing what they loved with the unexpected free time. For eight-year-old Dave Chief Quansah Acheampong, this moment was to get better at the game he had grown to love since the age of four: chess.

And it paid off. Last year, Dave Acheampong was declared Africa's Under-9 Chess Champion, in an online competition that saw participants from the length and breadth of Africa; some of whom had been playing longer than Dave, had more experience, and came to the tournament with strong FIDE-ratings while Dave had no official rating. But he won, against favourites from Egypt and South Africa, claiming the title of Africa's Under-9 Chess Champion, a feat which had hitherto never been achieved by a Ghanaian.

"When we realised he had won, we started shouting and jumping in the other room. It was amazing."

David Acheampong, father to the chess genius and founder of Mentors Chess Academy (@MentorsChess on Instagram and Twitter), spoke to me over the phone. David spoke to me about how he learned chess, of long walks to the famous, now demolished, Shangri-La Hotel at Shiashie, of how there had been few people to play against back in the day.

"The growth is slow, but more people are getting interested in the game."

For David, passing down his love for chess to his children had been a matter of passion. And this inherited passion for the game has paid off in and out of tournaments.

"He's improved a great deal in class. I'm sure we would have seen more improvement in his academics if the pandemic hadn't put schooling on hold for a while."

As we spoke, I could hear noise in the background. Father and son had just finished a Mentors Chess Academy session and were packing up. Chief took the phone when I directed a question at him. Speaking slowly, and very confidently, he told me that his motivation was to become the best. Not the best in Ghana, or Africa. The best. A challenge he will have to face later in May at the World Schools Individual Chess Championships in Greece.

The looming tournament ahead poses a new challenge for Chief, one that he is itching to surmount. But for them to truly excel, the family would have to rely on support from the public, sponsors, and the government. Greece is a long way from home, and training and traveling require money. But the family remains optimistic, and are considering options. With a GoFundMe page set up, as well as hoping against hope to hear good news from the government, they hope to achieve their goal of raising money for the event.



Prince 'The Buzz' Lardie
Boxing Prodigy



Prince 'The Buzz' Larbie

"All the young boxers are running away, nobody wants to fight him." If Greater Accra were ancient Greece, the Jamestown/Bukom area, sometimes referred to as Ga- Mashie or Old Accra, would be Sparta. Known for producing world class boxing talent like David 'DK Poison' Kotei, Azumah 'The Professor' Nelson, Ike 'Bazooka' Quartey, and Joshua Clottey, the stretch now houses several boxing gyms that hone Ghana's future stars in boxing. Noteworthy among these young boxers is Prince 'The Buzz' Larbie.

The moniker is apt, I think to myself as I watch a video of the eight-year-old boxer throwing more punches than my eye can follow. To me, the speed and explosiveness of his punches remind me of America's Floyd Mayweather in the ring. The Buzz is named after the bee, and with his speed there isn't any doubt why. Also, true to his name, Prince's talent has created a significant buzz around his career. Speaking to him and his father, I got a sense of how Prince's journey into boxing began.

"He used to follow me to the gym," Daniel Larbie, Prince's father and manager, reveals to me. "At first I didn't want him to learn boxing. When you've been a boxer before, fighting is not something you want to teach your children."

But Prince was stubborn, Daniel says proudly, and so he eventually caved. And in time he saw that his son was a talent to be reckoned with. Quick to take to new techniques, and quicker on his feet, the

young man soon made a name for himself among his peers and seniors in other gyms. And now, nobody wants to fight him.

"The boy is good. He takes his training seriously, and he doesn't complain. Even Azumah Nelson said if there's ever going to be a boxer like him coming from Ghana, it will be Prince. He's going to be world champion someday."

Prince is lucky to have the support of a loving family and a community that wants the best for him. When Daniel tells me how he quit his job selling land, and even put on hold chieftaincy duties in Manhia, a town on the outskirts of Accra, just so he could focus on training the prodigy, I'm surprised by the dedication. But Daniel is determined, and so far, this determination and confidence in his son has paid off. He even quips that his wife, Prince's mother, who was very much against her child becoming a boxer is firmly a believer now.

"He's the juvenile champion now," Daniel says proudly.

Five days in a week, and always after school, Prince trains for a minimum of two hours at the Willpower Gym in Jamestown, a gym which was owned by Napoleon Tagoe, yet another Ghanaian boxing champion and trainer, who passed away in 2017. Prince carries the mantle of a gym that has, in recent times, produced boxers like Emmanuel Tagoe, Obodai Sai and Albert Mensah.

And he carries it well.[EWV](#)

The Right To Dream

This is what the academy has stood for for many years – being able to give young children a chance to showcase their football talents and connect them to clubs and universities abroad where they can decide for themselves if football is still the way to go.

BY YAW OFOSU



Abuesi is a small fishing community along Ghana's west coast. It is approximately 26km from the Takoradi, the capital of the Western Region and home of Patience Kum. Patience is one of the first members of the girls' section of the well-thought-out football scouting program at the Right to Dream Academy. "They had a trial in Takoradi. I used to play for a young local team, 'The Formidables'. And then my coach told me about Right To Dream. I didn't know what it was at that time. I had never heard of it. So, I went to Takoradi and the scouts came in for us. I was about 10 years at the time. The scouts talked to my coach but they didn't come for me until after about 3 months. We had another trial in the Academy too," Patience reminisces.

This is what the academy has stood for for many years – being able to give young children a chance to showcase their football talents and connect them to clubs and universities abroad where they can decide for themselves if football is still the way to go. The facility runs on principles, and topmost of them is discipline. There have been many graduates from the Right To Dream Academy but it is easy to make them out because of the upbringing, and values they learnt during their time there. "We had a very tight schedule that made all of us disciplined because you had to wake up at 5:30 in the morning, do your chores, morning devotion. We have practice, shower, breakfast then classes. It was a very tight schedule but we

had to keep it going," Patience says.

Now at Taft High School in Connecticut, Kum is still on her way to being one of the best football stars from here. The Academy has opened up an opportunity where she can harness her skills and be the best she can be. It is a far-cry from how she lived here. At Abuesi, she lived with her grandmother and a long line of extended family members who were more interested in getting fish from the ocean than acquiring formal education. Her life could've progressed differently if she had not found football and qualified to stay at the academy. "My grandma really believed in education. She wanted me to go to school. I would've finished university but it would've been really hard. Getting into RTD took that pressure off of her..."

There are many kids like Patience who have either graduated from the Academy or are still there seeking to learn the rudiments of the game. Many of them from areas like Obuasi, Nima, Fadama, Sekondi and the Bono region.

The investment in young children mainly from age 10 is making huge gains. The Academy started on the veranda of its owner Tom Vernon in an apartment in Dzorwulu and 20 years on, the Right To Dream facility in Old Akrade, a few kilometres from Ghana's famed hydroelectric dam in Akosombo in the Eastern Region has become



Patience Kum

one of the best in Sub-Saharan Africa. The facility has eight grass pitches and the only residential girls' academy in Africa, where Kum was a graduate from. There is also a Cambridge-accredited school that runs programs in language skills and robotics.

The scouting process is well-thought-out. Every year, kids from across the country converge at various scouting trial sites to showcase their skills and enter into a five-year scholarship that caters for everything from food to university opportunities in the some of the world's best universities. But in all of this, only about 15 or 20 make it to join the academy.

Since the academy began in 1999, there have been over 140

graduates, 61 of whom have played professionally including the Major League Soccer, the Champions League, the World Cup and the Ghana Premier League. There are currently 82 children at the academy – all of whom are hoping to make it at the top of world football in years to come.

Right To Dream's expansion from a small football academy growing talents to a multi-million dollar facility is a case study. The values they imbibe in the children, the work ethic and an intrinsic system of raising professionals. "The values were particularly important for us. We were taught how to be disciplined, to give back, to be socially intelligent, be passionate, have a winning mentality, initiative and integrity," Kum who, was Right To Dream's first girls' team captain tells me.

In 2015, the Right To Dream Academy acquired Danish top flight club FC Nordsjælland with its owner, Tom Vernon becoming its board chairman. In these five years, they have made huge strides and the club has been a mainstay for many young Ghanaian talents. It has already produced talents like Kamaldeen Sulemana, who is one of Ghana's brightest spots and Kudus Mohammed who moved to Ajax just in the summer of 2020. Since the acquisition of Nordsjælland, the club has always finished in the top 6 with a solid base of young players with an average age of 22.

The module got multinational acceptance when Man Capital, a UK based investment group and an arm of the Mansour Group, announced a \$120 million partnership offer to expand the academy to Egypt. The first project is to start an academy for boys and girls in Egypt, particularly in West Cairo. The Academy will receive its first entrants in the North African country in 2022.

After 22 years, the academy can boast of some great graduates. Godsway Donyoh, David Accam, Godfred Saka, Mohamed Abu, King Osei Gyan, Abdul Majeed Waris and Ajax young star, Kudus Mohammed. Like Kum, many of these young people are grateful for a system that has helped them realise dreams that would've otherwise been impossible to achieve.^{BNW}

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The Woman Not Playing The Woman Card

For Juliet Bawuah, putting in the work and making sacrifices to improve one day at a time is all that matters. For this game changer, playing the Woman Card is a non-starter.

BY YAW ADJEI-MINTAH





Australian Liz Mills is a game changer and a trailblazer on the African continent. As Head Coach of the Kenya Senior Men's Basketball Team, she became the first woman to lead a men's team to the FIBA African Nations Basketball Championship (AfroBasket) after guiding the East African nation to its first AfroBasket appearance in 28 years. Her players call her Liz or Coach Liz and those who call her "ma'am" do pushups as punishment, she revealed in an interview. Coach Mills is definitely not playing the woman card in her line of work. Tucked away in one of the many office spaces of Media General in Ghana's capital, Accra, a young woman is changing the game, shattering the mould and not playing the woman card.

Nollywood Reinvented (NR), a movie review website based in Nigeria, rated it 4 out of 5 stars and added "Say what you may against the movie, you cannot deny, however, that this was an interesting story." The movie in play here is Princess Tyra and aside bagging a high rating from NR and two awards at the 2008 Africa Movie Awards, it was also the start of an interesting journey for Juliet Bawuah who is at the top of the tough Sports Journalism industry.

A classic tale of love, betrayal and power set in an opulent Ghanaian setting fit only for royals, the movie is still considered as one of the best made at a time Ghana transitioned into a new age of acting. Lighting up the screen were veterans Rama Brew and Kofi Adjorlolo flanking the most in-demand actors at the time Jackie Appiah and Van Vicker.

It also proved to be Yvonne Nelson's launch into stardom as the success of Princess Tyra made Nelson the hottest prospect in Ghanaian and Nigerian movie circles. Lost in the mountain of praise and awards for Princess Tyra including Best Costume and Best Make Up category win at the 2008 Africa Movie Awards is Media General Head of Sports Juliet Bawuah's mainstream screen time debut.

Playing the minor role of a royal escort, Juliet was one of the ladies who wore some of the award-winning costumes in the very likable movie. "It (acting) wasn't really anything serious," Juliet says giggling the whole time. "There was a short stint in modeling too. Getting into acting was more or less a step to get somewhere and that's exactly what I did".

A lead role in sports journalism, an industry Juliet describes getting into as "not an easy decision because you have absolutely no idea what to expect, how people are going to treat you especially when you are a woman", was the next step for her. How Juliet journeyed from an upstart in the very competitive industry to Media General's Head of Sports required four traits from the Cardiff University Masters Degree holder; "passion, knowledge, resilience and consistency".

Juliet's passion and resilient traits were highlighted in her decision to carry on as a sports journalist in the face of relentless criticisms and name calling during and in the immediate aftermath of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. She was able to overcome the overzealous naysayers however, by keeping her head down and

OUTFIT BY ANKU
STYLED BY KELVIN VINCENT
MAKE-UP BY JAY SLAYS MAKEOVER



plunging deeper in perfecting her craft. “The only way you can turn negativity into positivity is to let your work speak and I decided that I will do less of the talking and let my work do more of the talking, so it’s been like that till now.

Juliet interviewed FIFA Boss Gianni Infantino in Mauritania and worked in Congo for two years where she interviewed then Presidential Aspirant George Weah ahead of Liberia’s National Elections. Weah was elected President after a runoff and sworn in as President of Liberia in 2018 after bossing world football with his immaculate, supreme skills on the pitch during his playing career.

Having worked at CITI FM, ETV Ghana, Metro TV and Goal.com and gathering skills that made her versed in all phases of media work including script writing and editing along the way, Juliet moved to Congo to work for Euronews’ sister station in Africa – Africanews.

“In all of those months, I knew I wanted a new challenge. My mother didn’t understand why I had to go to Congo. And it wasn’t just because of the money. Fine, the money was good, but when I went there, the experience was humbling because you are in a newsroom with

so many colleagues from around the world – Senegal, Cameroon, Guinea, Gabon...everywhere. So you get to adapt to doing things differently because you pick off the many people you have to work together with. It was a good experience.”

Juliet and her Media General team live by the tenet that journalism has gone beyond just doing the everyday stories. She explains that she and the team look at journalism as “using our voice, influence and power – as a medium – to impact the lives of people and to project the right things.” This has led to the production of highly praised documentaries on a goalkeeping marvel in Nsawam Prisons, the first female footballer to play with a Hijab in Ghana’s top-flight Women’s League, and Tamale’s rapid development in football under the tutelage of former national hero, Mohammed Gargo by the Sports Department.

On a personal level, belief in using media platforms to impact lives led to the creation of the African Women Sports Summit that has in the past couple of years brought together lead female sports journalists and Executives from the continent to promote greater female inclusion in the industry. Since its inaugural summit in



2019, FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura, South Africa's Carol Tshabalala, Uganda's Usher Komugisha and Ghana's Nana Aba Anamoah have spoken on topics such as "Starting Out and Surviving Stereotypes" and "Making the Decision: Specialise or Not".

Knowledge is power and knowledge of the industry's disciplines is the key message the Summit delivers and preaches. "You might have the passion but if you don't have the knowledge, it doesn't work. The passion should be there, fantastic, but you have to have real knowledge about the game. That's the only way when you get up in a room full of men, full of 1000 sports journalists they won't say you are a female sports journalist. They will say you are a sports journalist because when you get up to speak, the knowledge radiates by itself. That's where we want to get to."

2020 was a hectic year for all the wrong reasons as the coronavirus pandemic bottled human living as we know it. Moreso for Juliet, as more responsibilities piled on her plate with her climb up the ladder in Media General and her appointment as Berekum Chelsea's Brand Strategy and Relations Manager a few weeks apart in the latter half of the year.

Premier Football League side, Berekum Chelsea is one of the better run teams in Ghana's top tier men's club football competition, but Juliet who isn't satisfied with what was done before is hell bent on doing things differently because "it can be better".

Basketball legend Allen Iverson's greatness wasn't limited to his production on the court. His legendary quotes embellished his greatness. While his infamous post game conference "practice" rant is bound to stay with him forever, his "I play every game like it's my last" statement will live long after he is gone. Juliet has the same mentality. "I'm looking at giving off my best in the role that I'm in. I always say that everyday should be like your last day of work. So, if you are on air presenting, you have to work like that is your last day of work."

For Juliet Bawuah, putting in the work and making sacrifices to improve one day at a time is all that matters; for this game changer, playing the Woman Card is a non-starter. [EMW](#)

Forging A Dynasty Amid Adversity

On 24th December 2003, a young man decided to challenge the status quo. In the end, Yaw Sakyi Afari has pretty much shifted the paradigm as far as basketball in Ghana is concerned.

BY VICTOR TAMAKLOE



“They took his life. No. They murdered him, leaving his lifeless body in a pool of blood. As my senses began to process the ghastly scene, its implications became even more profound,” he tells me. At this point, Yaw Sakyi Afari breaks eye contact with me. He stares intently at his desk. But it is not the desk he sees. He sees something else. He time-travels to the very beginning. To Anum-Boso, a town in the Eastern Region.

“This wasn’t a movie or one of those horror stories I heard while growing up. This was real life,” he continues. “This was my father whose murder I had just witnessed. It changed my life. Even as a kid, the full implications of what I had just witnessed was not lost on me,” he says. He would later learn that the murder was a result of a chieftaincy dispute over the Anum-Boso stool.

“Many years later, I would realise that I could not live an ordinary life.” Yaw says, almost remorsefully. The effects were immediate and brutal. From a living in relative comfort, the Afari’s were forced into austerity. From being just a child, whose only duty was to study, Yaw Sakyi became an active investor, not only in his education but of his siblings’ as well.

Without my father to support, the responsibility of providing for the entire family overwhelmed my mum. So sacrifices had to be made and one of the first was to change schools. We could no longer afford the cost of tuition in the private school we were attending. We had to enrol in a public school because they were cheap in those days. But that was not enough. My mum was a civil servant and she had to resign because of her meager salary. She started selling clothes



at the Makola Market,” he says, finally making eye contact with me again.

From age ten to his late teens, Yaw would sell fabrics, bread, doughnuts, and newspapers. Life was difficult. But amid that adversity, Yaw was being prepared for what today has all the makings of a dynasty.

In 2003, Yaw, then the Event Manager at Choice FM, made his first foray into sports. And when he did, he took to it like a duck to water. “Choice FM was not the market leader in terms of events and brand activations. Our forte was the content we sold on air. So my job was to excel against established brands in previously uncharted waters as far as Choice was concerned. Research had shown that our listeners were diverse. So you had the older folks, the corporate and working class, and the youth. We came up with different events for each group of listeners. For the youth, particularly in high schools, we decided to try sports; basketball. The Choice Ball,” he says.

“Although the idea was good, all our sponsorship proposals were rejected. To the companies, it was too big a risk. Which parent or school would let their kids out on Christmas eve when the entire family normally goes out on Christmas day?”

They were probably right. Christmas in those days and even now is family time. Families go to church together. Those who do not, either attend musical concerts, go to the cinema, or to comedy shows. There is the small matter of commercial interest in sports. There was no prior record of a successful basketball event of such magnitude. Not any that guarantees the kind of numbers that would give sponsors mileage. Put these together, and you can understand why, in the mind of these companies, the numbers did not project a happy ending.

Sponsors or not, Yaw proceeded. And oh boy, did he succeed! Let’s just say Choice Ball became the latest illustration of the Latin proverb ‘fortune favors the brave’. It was a resounding success. Thousands came to support their participating schools. The following year, Yaw did not need to convince sponsors. The numbers did the talking and ‘corporate Ghana’ did not only respond, the numbers moved them from their previous nonchalance to open one-upmanship. Typically. For four years, Choice Ball on Christmas Eve was a goldmine for the company and its sponsors. But the biggest winner was the sport. It had the capital’s attention in a season when even the most popular sport in the country – football – would often make way, rather meekly, to social events. Bit by bit, the sport was winning to its side, a passionate, resourceful, and youthful constituency.

And it owed it all to one man – Yaw Sakyi Afari. Out of nothing, Yaw had given life and meaning to what was hitherto a dormant space. But as it is with all originals, they can only enjoy the success of the same kind for so long.

“After four years and a half, it was no longer challenging. It was no longer fun. It was just tedious. So in 2006, I left Choice FM. By that time, I had gained a deeper understanding of the basketball culture, enhanced my relationship with the schools, understood the talents,

the conveyer belt, and even the global investors of basketball,” he tells me.

One of the biggest at the time, was the American multinational beverage company, Coca-Cola. However, their interest in the NBA was no guarantee of a similar interest everywhere. Just like any investor, the beverage maker’s decision to invest would be informed by several factors; market demand, purchasing power and life span of the purchasing class, the life span of the product, etc.

Being no novice, Yaw knew this as he walked into Coca-Cola’s head office at Spintex Road in Accra. Here, his storied past of persuading hitherto disinterested people to buy his mother’s wares, and his formal education would prove crucial.

“I went to Coca-Cola after I researched which regions had the similar infrastructure to support the sport, a constituency, talents, and other relevant factors. I told them that it would be in our shared interest to support basketball,” he says with a relaxed look on his face.

But it would take more than just ‘shared interests’ to convince the beverage maker. They wanted a product that was bigger than Choice Ball. They wanted more numbers, a sustainability plan, and a product that met the ever-changing taste of its consumers.

“Having agreed, we started the ‘Sprite New Year Ball’ on January 2nd, 2007. We started on a relatively smaller note but by the second year, I proposed to make it a national competition and they agreed. So in 2008, we added one more region. We did 6 regions in 2009, 8 in 2010. So we could now play regional qualifiers but before we realised it, the hype around Sprite Ball was something else.”

“The brand now attracted old students in the corporate world and their interest in it helped on so many levels. They would talk about it on social media platforms and that gave us organic numbers there. They invested in their teams, some bought kits, and motivated the players. Others would donate basketball courts to their alma mater so the kids could train well. You even had various Student Representative Councils, dedicating some of their resources to such projects. It was amazing,” he says with delight.

In effect, Yaw and his Rite Sports Limited created a quasi-self-sustaining basketball culture. Yet, just like before, Yaw was already thinking of improving what now looked like a value chain. Next, they focused on the tier below. With the same template, Yaw and his team started a championship for Junior High Schools.

This then became a talent factory for Senior High Schools.

Perhaps the most significant innovation yet would be his next product. And here, we would see a common trait in all successful businessmen; finding problem-solving ideas and adding value. In 2011, there were only two multi-sports events in Ghana’s tertiary institutions; the Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA) and the Ghana Polytechnic Sports Association (GAPSA) Games. However, these were biennial games. The format then was an encumbrance



STYLED BY KOJO SOBOH
MAKE-UP BY JAY SLAYS MAKEOVER

particularly for first and second-year students. This is because continuing students had the advantage in terms of selection. For students who gained admission in non-competition years, their only realistic chance of playing competitive basketball would be in their final year. There was therefore the need for a competition that would offer equal opportunities to all players; an annual competition. What's more, the new competition would feature both private and public universities, as well as polytechnics. Thus, the Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges (UPAC) Basketball Championship was born.

Out of nothing, Yaw Sakyi Afari had given life to basketball culture. More than that, the competitions at the Junior, Senior High Schools, and the tertiary level are now self-sustaining brands that offer value for money to their partners and investors. If he were to draw the curtains on this adventure today, he would look back on what he has built with a sense of pride and accomplishment. For most businessmen, this would be the time to spread his tentacles, Leverage the resources in the industry to build a conglomerate that would thrive on the synergy existing between allied agencies.

But that is not Yaw. It is not what drives him. But what drives him? What fills his sail?

"Impact," he says. "Being able to influence the growth of kids through education and sports. Knowing that our great country counts on us to offer a platform for kids to hone their talents, to improve their career alternatives is what keeps me going. If I wanted

money, I would have gone into talent development in football. It is a gold mine, a thriving industry that would not require as much work. And at this stage in my life, I have the goodwill and trust to do this. But who takes care of the talented basketball kid? Someone has to," he tells me.

When Yaw uses the phrase 'takes care of', that is exactly what he means. Before Rite Sports Limited entered the space, there were no scholarships for talented basketball players. Ghana's Scholarship Secretariat and the Ghana Education Service only gave scholarships to football players and athletes from selected disciplines. Even then, it was mostly the schools' decision to roll out such scholarship schemes. Today, however, schools at Ghana's high school and tertiary level, scramble for the best talents available, and at the beginning of each academic year, scores of students gain admission on full scholarships to schools in Ghana and the world over.

There is even a community tournament for talents who have had little or no education. This also exposes them to schools that may want to offer scholarships to deserving talents.

"Players who are fortunate enough to win scholarships do not have to sell newspapers while their mates learn in school as I did. If their families can't support them, their talents will level the playing field through our platforms. This is what keeps us going," he says with an unmistakable sense of pride.

In more ways than one, this is a symbolic revenge of sorts, if not



actual revenge. Yaw is making available to kids, opportunities he never had.

“And it feels good every year. When I get a phone call from any school asking about any of our players, the joy is priceless. Priceless because I’ve been there. I know what it feels like to wish I would wake up one day to a happier, richer home where I didn’t have to sell to go to school. There were many days I wish God would just change things in a flash. But I had to go through it because God was preparing me for this. So I know how the kids are going to feel when I tell them there is a scholarship award.”

That is not the only success story. Some, like Ben Bentil, won scholarships to study abroad and have made the big leap to become professional athletes.

At just 15 years old, Bentil won a scholarship to the Haverford School in Haverford, Pennsylvania before leaving for St. Andrew’s School in Middletown, Delaware. Bentil earned a basketball scholarship at Providence College and in 2016, got drafted by the Boston Celtics to the NBA. He has remained a professional since then. Last year, Bentil won the Greek Basketball league with Panathinaikos.

His is not the only success story. There are Amida Braimah of the Fort Wayne Mad Ants and Reggie Agbeko — Villarrobleto in the Spanish LEB Silver League. There are others, like Nathan Mensah, who is currently at the San Diego State University, Joel Mensah of the

James Madison University, and the Florida International University’s James Ametepey, who are waiting to make the big leap.

If only Yaw was not so constrained by the government’s nonchalance in developing the sport, the successes could have been on a much larger scale.

In most sectors in Ghana, the government offers tax waivers to some investors. In return, investors contribute to improving the human resource and even in some cases, build infrastructure to support the industry. This is possible because there is a working policy in such industries, backed by enforceable laws that protect the public interest. The local content laws in the oil and gas industry are an example. Beyond that, the state on its part builds infrastructure.

That’s what the government does for the industries it is so minded to.

For all else, there is nothing. Zilch. The Sports Ministry offers little or no support in the training of coaches/trainers. This directly affects the development of basketball players since they get next to zero technical and tactical education. Talent development is therefore stunted and delayed. The officials (basketball referees) face the same fate. In terms of infrastructure, there is some support from the Ghana Education Service. However, the courts are often donated by Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Student Representative Councils (SRC), or by various old student associations.

But Yaw remains unperturbed. If anything at all, he is gladdened by the country’s dependence on the industry he has created.

“We cannot complain too much. It would have been nice to see an actionable policy for basketball development, state investment, and a deliberate plan to support talents. After all, it’s the Ministry’s responsibility. But the fact that there isn’t, doesn’t excuse us of ours to the state. To be very honest with you, we at Rite Sports Media are proud that the nation can count on us to offer viable career alternatives to kids, be it education or sport. But we hope that the National Basketball Federation will at least grow to the point where what we do becomes part of a wider system and not what the country depends on.”

Regardless, Yaw remains hopeful.

“We’re taking baby steps. Steps that in the end should produce a national basketball league. You know, registered clubs running as semi or full business entities, players on professional contracts, etc. That’s an industry on its own. That should be the next level. But we would need help. The Ministry must be willing to create an enabling environment for that to happen. For example, we need at least one indoor facility in Accra and another in Kumasi.”

Today, basketball, just like football, is changing lives, offering opportunities that previously did not exist. And it is all because, on 24th December 2003, a young man decided to challenge the status quo. In the end, Yaw Sakyi Afari has pretty much shifted the paradigm as far as basketball in Ghana is concerned.^{BW}



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Vida Anim: Sprinting To Greatness

Call Vida Anim the finest female sprinter in Ghanaian history, and not many of her compatriots would offer a contrary opinion.

BY FENTUO TAHIRU

Little Norbert, just about two years old, runs around his home somewhere in Germany, and his mother watches with pride. She's seen it all before.

Actually... she's been there, done that, and won plenty at athletics' biggest events.

Call Vida Anim the finest female sprinter in Ghanaian history, and not many of her compatriots would offer a contrary opinion.

These days, Anim is living the quiet life of a mother to Norbert, helping him take his first steps, and, sometime in the future, maybe his first steps on the tracks, too.

And if he does end up there, Norbert would have extra help from his father, Harry Adu Mfum, an athletics coach who also once represented Ghana. But, of course, this is neither Norbert's story nor Harry's.

It's Vida's, and it begins in Atebubu-Amantin, somewhere in Ghana's Bono East Region.

"In that town," she recalls, "there were two major basic schools, one ran by the Roman Catholic Church, the other by the Anglican Church."

The two schools shared a healthy rivalry in athletics, and the former enjoyed some superiority – until one young girl appeared on the scene, disrupted the status quo, and changed the game.

"I was involved in quite a few of the track and field events, high jump, long jump, etc, and helped the school rack up enough points to break the Anglican dominance," she says.

Anim even went on to represent the school at the regional games, but, in those early days, she considered her involvement in those competitions as little more than extra-curricular activities she happened to have an aptitude for.

A move to Ghana's Ashanti Region, the country's sports hub, if you like, to join her father soon changed all that, however.



"At the Konongo-Odumase Senior High School (KOSS)," she told EMY Africa Magazine, "there was a slot for a relay runner and the authorities inquired if I might want to take it up."

"I did, drawing on my little experience from basic school, and by the end of the race – during which I made up ground and eventually overtook the sprinter ahead of me – I was the toast of the school." Things were getting really exciting, really fast.

It was obvious to whomever saw her in that race – students, tutors, and even her own dad – that Anim's talents were special, her potential vast; if developed, she could go all the way.

Before long, her fame had spread far beyond the walls of KOSS, attracting better-placed suitors.

Osei Kyeretwie Senior High School (OKESS), another of the region's elite second-cycle institutions, and one more reputed for grooming



future sporting talents (former Ghana football stars John Mensah and Sulley Muntari are just two of several examples), whisked Anim away to take her development up a notch.

“At OKESS, I had the opportunity to train at the Baba Yara Sports Stadium, where the national team and its coaches were often present for their own training sessions,” she says.

Inevitably, a gem as bright as Anim was always going to catch the eye, and especially when she had become a regular feature at the regional inter-school games, where the platform was bigger and the pressure higher.

“That was my ticket to joining and competing with the national team,” Anim says, “topping the juniors, and performing creditably among the seniors.”

Academics, at this time, were beginning to take a back-seat, as maintaining a balance became harder. But Anim wasn’t overly concerned. Her future, clearly, lay on the tracks, and she was racing towards it.

Her first major step in that pursuit? A place in Ghana’s team at the 1999 All-Africa Games, in what was only her first year in high school, aged 16.

No pressure...

“That was some experience,” Anim recalls, the nostalgia rippling through her voice, going on to explain what accounted for an 8th place finish in the 200m race.

“I was only just embracing that level of competition, remember, and my start wasn’t – and hasn’t ever been – exactly strong. It didn’t

help, either, that this was the very first time I was running in spikes and off blocks.”

It wasn’t so difficult, then, for Anim to shrug off her rough international debut; she was just warming up, after all. And it was just as well that she did, given how busy – and how eventful – the schedule would get in the very next year.

Anim was still in school when, in 2000, she traveled to the World Junior Championships in Chile. There, she finished third and fourth in the 100m and 200m respectively (both won by a young Veronica Campbell Brown), but Anim had already made greater waves earlier that year, as part of a brilliant 4×100 m national relay team.

Along with the more experienced trio of Vida Nsiah, Mavis Akoto and Monica Twum, Anim sprinted to gold at the African Championships in Algiers (her future husband, Harry, would mirror that feat at the same event).

A month later, at the Olympic Games, the team ran even faster, and it didn’t even matter that they had no medals to show for it.

The time clocked, 43.19s in the semi-finals, was a national record that, remarkably stood for 16 years. That success, though, wasn’t exactly surprising. Ghana, regardless of the form of its individual sprinters at any point in time, is used to seeing the pieces fall into place in the relay.

Anim has an idea why.

“In the relay, the flaws of each sprinter, my characteristic poor start, for instance, are minimised, as, aside the starter, we all enjoy a running start,” she explains.



“It is more about teamwork and the collective, not the individual.”

Four years later, at the next Olympics, it was all about the individual: Anim, lapping up the praise and plaudits for breaking a national record (11.14s) that had been set at the preceding Games.

“That was an exciting feeling,” she says, “when it dawned on me just what had been accomplished. I was overjoyed beyond what words could describe.

“It was, I think, in the heats that I made that mark, and I was raring to go even better in the semis – which I just might have, but for an injury suffered.”

The record Anim smashed (11.18s) had belonged to her namesake, Nsiah (mentioned earlier), whom Anim has always held in the utmost regard.

“Going into the Sydney Olympics, I had one of the best times among the potential candidates for the relay, yet there was strong agitation from some of the seniors to knock me out of contention,” Anim says. “But Nsiah argued my case, securing a role for me in that historic, record-breaking quartet. She really looked out for me, I must say.” That was, unarguably, in 2006, her annus mirabilis, when everything she touched turned to gold. Or thereabouts.

At the African Championships in Mauritius, Anim won all three events she participated in; 100m, 200m, 4×100m; and, at the IAAF World Cup, she finished on the podium in all three events. Vintage Anim, surely? She nods.

“I was coming from a deep place of despair and disappointment, following the aforementioned injury I suffered in Athens. I hadn’t competed for two years, and so I was quite surprised about the numbers posted that season. It felt like a grand reward, for all that I’d been through.”

That year, Anim heard Ghana’s national anthem played six times, after each of her medal-winning performances – a sound she never got tired of soaking in.

“The atmosphere...the joy is different. The knowledge that it was because of my performances that the anthem was being played on such grand stages. Wow!”

As incredible as that feeling was, Anim was almost lured into turning out for another country, Germany, where she was based and is now settled.

The best, though, was still to come for Anim.



“It was at a time when Ghanaian athletes were increasingly frustrated by financial challenges,” Anim explains.

“We were not being treated fairly, expected to foot bills that weren’t ours to deal with in the first place, and promises were being broken.” “And so, switching nationality – or, at least, threatening to do so – was certainly en vogue. Ignatius Gaisah, my colleague, eventually went through with it [now representing the Netherlands], and I was tempted to do same, as I was eligible.”

Not giving in to that urge wasn’t such a bad thing, given that Anim was yet to feature at the competition she picks out as the most memorable of her career. Surprisingly, it came when her powers were supposedly waning.

“Ahead of the 2011 All-Africa Games, there was talk of me being on the decline, especially after I struggled in the Kumasi Grand Prix,” she says.

“What many, even among the national officials, didn’t know was that I was battling an injury at the time. And yet they wrote me off, in

favour of the younger faces, so I was determined to prove in Maputo that I wasn’t quite done.”

And she did just that, winning silver in the 200m, proving to herself and her doubters that she was still capable.

In truth, though, Anim’s body was already beginning to fail her; it wasn’t going along, certainly not as quickly, as she would have wished.

One year and two events – the last of which was an underwhelming outing at the Olympics in London – later, she crossed the finish line for one final time.

Norbert is at that age where he requires constant monitoring, so there isn’t much time for Anim to follow the world of athletics. She’s not exactly enthused, however; by the little she is able to observe.

“Athletics has become too complicated,” she says. “The false start rules are now very harsh, and the relay is much harder. Generally, things are way more difficult, compared to what they were back in the day.”

And she is even less excited about the state of affairs in athletics back home.

“I don’t think much has changed,” she says, and it hasn’t escaped Anim’s attention that she remains the last female Ghanaian sprinter to win a solo gold medal.

“We have a lot of athletes going to the USA for school,” she explains, “and the nature of the track and field seasons there leaves them handicapped.

“In my time, we competed in both European and American events, affording us several opportunities to fine-tune our preparations for the major competitions ahead.”

A return to that approach, coupled with some extra work, Anim believes, could take Ghanaian athletics beyond heights even she, in all her glory, wasn’t able to scale.

“Anything – even Olympic triumphs, of which Ghana has been starved – is possible” she opines.

“Our athletes are just as talented, but we lack the facilities. Africans are naturally strong, and that’s already a significant advantage, so we only need to get all the other factors right to get there.”

And that generation might just be Norbert’s, you know, with Anim, even as she does now, watching with pride.^{bnw}

Second To None

Victor Kofi Owusu Ampofo, AKA Van Damme, went from winning TV3's Ghana's Strongest in 2019 to placing second at the Africa Strong Man Competition in South Africa. He's currently training at Fitrip to take part in more international competitions.

BY RACHID H. ASCHKAR



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When I was first prompted to create a mascot for the team, I had never heard of Victor Kofi Owusu Ampofo. Nor had I heard of anything remotely related to the famous Strong Man Competitions worldwide even existing in Ghana.

A mascot... any human, animal, or object thought to bring luck, used to represent a group with a common public identity. And in this case, a brand image for a team on their way to South Africa to support and cheer this uprising star athlete.

An elephant has more than hundred thousand muscles as opposed to the paltry six hundred and thirty-nine humans have. To put that into perspective, in brute strength, elephants are the strongest land mammals that can carry up to ten tons, somewhat the weight of over hundred humans put together. So, it was only natural I would choose this majestic animal to represent this gentle giant on his way to the land of the Cape of Good Hope where he placed 2nd in the recently held edition of Africa Strong Man Competition.

When queried about his reaction when he was picked to represent

Ghana in SA, he admitted, “I had mixed feelings. I was glad I finally had the chance to travel outside of Ghana to compete with contestants from other countries... although I didn’t know the people I was competing against and most of the events were new to me.”

Master Ampofo graduated from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and went on to compete in and won TV3’s Ghana’s Strongest reality show held at the Jubilee Park in Kumasi back in 2019, proving that mental acuity or intelligence and great power or physical strength — brains and brawn can go together.

Popularly known as Van Damme to his friends and family, and soon to the world, Kofi was now hungry for more. And striving for excellence and greatness, decided to spend his time, last year in confinement, perfecting his skills, honing his powers to become the superhero we all know at Fitrip – one of the biggest gyms in Ghana that has “some of the equipment which really helped me,” says the champ.



He goes on to add that, “Unlike Ghana where we perceive stout men as a menace. Out there, it’s a profession. People do this full-time because they understand the sport.”

Back from his trip, with a trophy and a title in hand, Kofi told us, “it was a great experience. I met nice people with similar mindsets. Regardless of the fact that we were competing against each other, contestants cheered and helped one another which was surprising to me.”

Van Damme also confessed that the competition really taught him to be tougher than he’s always been. “I’ve come to the realisation that the more I get serious, the higher I go and the better I become. So, I’m more focused now, and with Fitrip I will surely take part in more international competitions with the next being The World Strongest Man 2021, Arnold’s Classic held in South Africa in May.” He also reiterated that this experience has helped him grow in this

sport and he would use all that he has learned to improve his skills. The bushido of an athlete is to always trust his instincts and listen to his body, and Van Damme has done nothing less since his return.

On his way to fame and stardom, this athlete has not forgotten to give back. Training other young amateurs to also become strongmen, Kofi also calls upon the leaders of Ghana, government and corporate organisations to support this lucrative sport just like how it’s done with Formula 1 and other sports in other countries. He believes that taking part in any of these relatively new sports would put Ghana on the map. He hopes more private companies provide brand ambassadorial deals to motivate others to join the sport and support those already in it.

“Fitrip – Fitness Community has supported me in this journey and I look forward to other gyms doing the same for aspiring athletes.” **EMV**

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A close-up, three-quarter view portrait of a middle-aged Black man with a short, grey beard and mustache. He is wearing a light brown corduroy suit jacket over a light blue dress shirt and a dark blue bow tie. A patterned pocket square is visible in his jacket pocket. He is looking slightly off-camera to the left with a serious, contemplative expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

For Those That Rise.

Step Up To The Challenge | Making A Difference, Inspiring Hope



STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE

Perhaps the biggest lesson Appiah learnt in his formative years, was that to succeed, he needed more than just talent.

BY VICTOR TAMAKLOE

To my left, was a bottle of Masseto Toscana, resting in a wooden wine rack. Right next to it, were two Giuseppe Quintarelli's and some other vintage I couldn't recognise.

It was the kind of bar, accomplished folks would come home to, open a bottle of a vintage and share tales of their journey with whoever cared to listen.

And the owner of this one, has quite a bit to tell. From the rowdy streets of Chorkor in Accra, through the cold of Emilia-Romagna, the dark moments under the bright lights of the Delle Alpi to the deafening noise of the soccer city, Stephen 'Tornado' Appiah had quite the journey.

A journey, Appiah says, which would have been impossible but for the orientation he had.

"You'll leave home on Friday afternoon and will not return until Monday and it's all because you want to play Monnkye ndi." Monnkye ndi is an Akan expression which means 'share and enjoy'. "By 7 o'clock on Saturday morning, I'd be ready for the first match in Chorkor. Now, because I registered for different teams for different tournaments, I moved around a lot. So, after playing the first game in Sheabu, I would join the next available bus to Maamobi. From there, I had to go to Odorkor for the next match. In the end, I could not play every game for every team but I made sure my performance would force them to call me for the next tournament."

This was before Appiah turned 15. In more ways than one, these mini

tournaments prepared him for the life ahead. The crowds were very hostile and they didn't care that these were kids. All they wanted was to see their teams win.

"When money is involved, people can be unforgiving. But if they can trust your ability to win games for them, they will support you," he says. At that early age, Appiah understood the essence of winning fans and having them on your side. "It could be a shot from distance in the opening minutes of the game, a slide tackle or even a pointless dummy/dribble that does not progress play."

Perhaps the biggest lesson Appiah learnt in his formative years, was that to succeed, he needed more than just talent.

"The system then demanded more than just talent. There were so many gifted players around, different profiles too. To stand out, you needed more. I was fortunate in some ways but I think being disciplined and hardworking, as much as being passionate for the sport made me stand out. Maybe my background had a lot to do with it. When you come from Chorkor, your chances of obtaining a first degree are quite limited. So, you have to make tough choices and whichever choice you make, you have to give it your all because that's your future. So, when you're playing at the competitive level, you can't behave like a kid who went to Accra Academy and can get a scholarship to University of Ghana. This is all you have, you know," he tells me.

It is this orientation, as much as his talent, that made his rise so rapid. Aged just 14, Stephen Appiah got his first taste of international



success when he won gold with the Black Starlets at the FIFA U-17 World Championship in 1995. That, and his remarkable performance back home with continental giants Accra Hearts of Oak earned him a trial with Turkish side Galatasaray a year later. It was unsuccessful. Still, Appiah lost no step. Immediately he returned, he made the jump from a precocious talent to a bona fide star.

It didn't matter that there were other stars. He blew them out of the water with performances that would later win him the best player in the FA Cup, winning the competition with Accra Hearts of Oak. The following season, Appiah upped the ante. Aged just 17, he was the standout player in the Hearts team that won the league.

As it was with many before him, and dozens after him, the Ghana Premier League often loses its stars. But it was not the last we would see of him on Ghanaian soil or in Ghanaian colors. In that same year, Appiah was part of the National Under-20 team – the Black Satellites – that finished in fourth place at the FIFA World Youth Championship held in Malaysia.

Two years before that, there was a seminal moment in Ghana's history.

The scene was set in Cotonou where the Black Stars were playing Mozambique in a four-nation tournament. After 74mins, and with Ghana leading 2-0, a young Stephen Appiah who coincidentally, was celebrating his birthday on the same day, came on for the legendary Abedi Ayew with ten minutes to go.

It was a bit *recherché*. Before then, Abedi Ayew had never been subbed off in any Black Stars match. And even after this, he did not get substituted more often. Not even when he was in the twilight of his career. Seeing Abedi Ayew subbed was as scarce as a hen's teeth. This moment, as was proven by the events of the next decade, meant more. It was the transfer of power from the old to the new. The passing of the torch, from one torchbearer to the other.

Perhaps even more; the ethos of the team, its spirit, its rich footballing heritage and along with its failings and mistakes from a storied past.

But it was not until six years later that Appiah would begin to show shades of his other self; the leader.

Appiah, along with 22 others, had been called up for a friendly with Slovenia on Friday 17th May 2002, in Ljubljana. The day before the match, Appiah, while at breakfast, decided it was about time the players looked uniform. Those were the days when the four-time African champions were without a kit sponsor as the previous deal with German kit manufacturer Adidas, was only for the Mali 2002 AFCON.

A few months prior, Bayern Munich defender Sammy Kuffour had been expelled from the team's camp at the Cup of Nations in Mali for complaining about the quality of kits provided by sponsors. Yet, here they were in Ljubljana two months later, the situation worse. They didn't even have any official apparel, let alone to complain about its quality.

· For Those That Rise ·



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In a spur of the moment, Appiah, who at the time was a registered Nike athlete, dialed up the rival brand and placed an order for jumpers and bomber jackets for the entire team. The thoughtfulness. The selflessness. Appiah's consciousness that the image of the Black Stars was suffering. After all, this was the national team of a gold rich country. A true African footballing royalty.

Before the game, the coach announced that Stephen Appiah would captain the team for that match. Appiah stood up and challenged the decision. His reason was that, there were a few more experienced players in the team. He felt he was further back in the line of succession. But he would be impressed upon by his roommate and goalkeeper Richard Kingson to accept the role, promising him of his, and the 'elder statesmen's' support.

But there was still no substantive captain after the game. The sun had set on Charles Akonnor's international career and with it, his time as captain. However, and as fate would have it, the next in line for the captaincy, Sammy Kuffour, had rejected it. Later, president of the Ghana Football Association, Kwasi Nyantakyi led a delegation to Appiah's house in Osu, explaining why they wanted him to take the captaincy.

"It was a difficult decision for many reasons. For one, I didn't want to betray Kuffour, a man I had admired for so long. He had accomplished so much and had sacrificed a lot for the good of the team. Some of the things he had done for the team were also the reason why some people didn't like him. It could have been part of

why he didn't want the captaincy. So it was difficult for me. But I accepted after speaking with Sammy. He encouraged me to take it and assured me of his support. I realised I had started leading the team anyway and the armband was only going to legitimise what I already was," he said.

"Together with the players, we decided to scrap the existing bonus structure. It didn't make sense to me that bonuses had to be paid based on seniority and status. The Black Stars had a history of disunity and everyone knew this. So I felt we needed to shift the paradigm."

Appiah did more than just unite the team. But regardless of what he and the team did, there was one major box that remain unticked; the FIFA World Cup.

The global football festival remained elusive.

Ghana had never qualified for the World Cup despite having generations of incredibly talented players. There may have been an abundance of talent in the past, probably more than the Appiah generation. But there was something about this team. Something previously not seen with the Black Stars; unity of purpose, incredible focus and remarkable self-belief. Perhaps the most important of them all, was the unity in the team. Although the quartet of Michael Essien, Sulley Muntari, Laryea Kingston and Stephen Appiah formed the nucleus of the team, there was no prima donna. They worked together and had mutual respect.

“The watershed moment for me was the qualifier versus South Africa at the FNB Stadium. When we came out of the tunnel for the warm-up, the atmosphere was incredible. It was a carnival. There was so much music. The decibel level was insane. But it wasn’t good for us. It was a distraction. By the time I realised, Michael Essien and Sulley Muntari had joined the party and were dancing. Others did too. Laryea Kingston was then standing by me. So I got closer and told them that we have to be focused, do the job and party later.”

Ghana won 2-0, with Appiah setting up the goals for Michael Essien and Matthew Amoah. “When I left the dressing room, I knew we were going to qualify. It couldn’t have gone wrong from there. These guys had a different mentality. They just wanted the next game to come around. But more importantly, we were playing for something more. You see, Ghana has always had great players, far better than us. So even if we had won the AFCON, we would have been just another group of AFCON winners. There has been four already. It wouldn’t be special. But the World Cup. That was the real deal,” he says.

In the end, they finished the job, amassing 21 points to finish top of their group. Stephen Appiah, though a midfielder, finished as Ghana’s joint top scorer in the Qualifiers with four goals.

He would go ahead to score one more at the FIFA World Cup – the winning goal in Ghana’s 2-1 win over the United States of America. It was coincidentally the goal that sealed Ghana’s place in the second round.

In all, Appiah scored 14 times in 67 appearances for the Black Stars, retiring in August 2010.

There are many who believe Ghana could have won the AFCON in 2008, if Appiah had been fit for the tournament. But as it turns out, Appiah missed out agonisingly due to an injury before the tournament. Totally unfair.

But perhaps the greatest injustice of all, was that Appiah’s career was sacrificed on the altar of dedication.

In July 2004, Stephen Appiah was preparing for what was supposed to be the season he becomes a bona fide star in Turin. After making 30 appearances in the Serie A in his debut season, he was ready to take the next step. However, that did not happen.

Appiah was called into a meeting after training one day.

“I was told the club had received a letter from the Ghana. Even before I went in, I knew that it was about the Olympic Games. I went into the Sporting Director’s office only to see three men; Luciano Moggi – Juventus Director of Football, Geraldo, the club’s lawyer and the legendary Bettega himself. Without even asking whether I wanted to go or not, they explained at length how much they needed me. They suggested I stayed and not represent my country at the Olympics. I asked for time to think about it and decide. They gave me three

days,” Appiah says.

What Moggi did not know, was that Appiah’s mind was made up long before the Sports Ministry drafted the letter, requesting the Old Lady to release its illustrious son. “I had previously spoken to some teammates who had been to the Olympics and what they described was unmissable. Beyond the immeasurable sense of pride of representing your country at the multi sports event, it was a festival. The description of the Games village, getting to see other world class athletes up close and in action was indescribable, they said. This was better than the World Cup. So I had to be there. And on a personal note, I had played at the FIFA U-17 World Cup once, twice at the U-20 but never at the Olympics. This was my chance. And as a matter of principle, only injuries or suspensions could stop me from representing my country. That was non-negotiable,” Appiah concluded.

72 hours later, the 23-year-old sat in the intimidating presence of the trio. Now, Moggi wasn’t just a director at Juventus, he was potentially the most powerful man in Italian football at the time. Others, like Appiah, believe his influence transcended the confines of Italian football.

“People don’t know Moggi. Not even the investigators. He was the most powerful man at the time. Look, he was even more powerful than Sepp Blatter at the time. He did things even Blatter wouldn’t dare do. Milan and Inter were our biggest threats at the time. Lazio and Roma were good but they didn’t have any pedigree. So, Milan and Inter, basically. Yet, Moggi could influence our rivals and their matches. It could be through their opponents, refs. I mean the Calciopoli lifted the lid on some of that. But that was only as much as Moggi allowed. The world knows only as much as Moggi allowed to be known about Moggi.”

If he could influence matches involving the Italian Prime Minister’s club (A.C Milan), then you can imagine the punishment he could visit on Appiah if he were so minded to. As it were, Appiah refused to stay and asked to be permitted to leave.

“I know they valued me. I was one of the more talented midfielders there. But this is Juventus where there are always options.”

And there were lot of them. In that season, Juve had the gifted Adrian Mutu, Rubén Olivera, Mauro Camoranesi and the uber-talented Pavel Nedved among their midfield options.

As fate would have it, Appiah would not only leave, but also score a howitzer in Ghana’s second group game at the Olympic Games. The whole world watched in admiration as Appiah set the tournament alight. The whole world but Italy. They were at the latest casualty of Appiah’s deadly right foot.

The following day, the Italian Newspapers had berated him. He was

OUTFIT BY CUT OUT
WATCH BY CAVEMAN WATCHES
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the black boy who run away without telling Juventus. “I don’t know where that came from. Juve know I asked permission and Moggi and Capello allowed me to go. They did so hesitantly but they gave me written permission to go,” he says regrettably.

When Appiah returned from the Olympics, Capello suddenly no longer trusted the man who had played 30 matches in his debut season. Despite the fall out, Capello had no doubts about Appiah’s ability. Appiah managed to play 18 Serie A matches in the 2004/05 season. But no matter how well Appiah played, the decision to move him on had long been made. In came Patrick Vieira from Arsenal in July 2005.

For Appiah, Turin was no longer home and no matter how many times La Curva Sud (Juve’s Ultras) chanted his name, he knew the true power bearer in town was Moggi and once he crossed him, and Geraldo and Bettegga, he had to go. There were a number of offers but the one Appiah’s entourage found most attractive, was Fenerbahçe’s. The Turkish giants paid €8 million and off he went.

In Turkey, a chronic knee problem hampered his progress in the three years he played in the Super Lig. Two unsuccessful moves to Bologna and Cesena followed before he signed for Vojvodina in 2011. In the Serbian SuperLiga season, he made 11 league appearances. Fittingly, his only goal came in the deciding last- round home 2–1 victory against Red Star Belgrade. The win put Vojvodina on a final third place in the league and guaranteed a spot in next season’s UEFA Europa League.

The term special, generational talent has often been used loosely. But Appiah’s rare mix of strength and technique, power and elegance made him a truly special player. Wherever he played, he left no doubt about his ability to entertain while being a ruthlessly efficient too.

Much like the Toscana or the Quintarelli vintage, Appiah’s legend lives on long after his retirement. For he delivered that which Ghana will never forget.[EMV](#)



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE, INSPIRING HOPE

“Boxing wasn’t just something I did for a living. I loved it!”

BY FENTUO TAHIRU

A zumah Nelson, a man of few words and seldom without a smile to share, looks like he spent his entire working life in the wrong business.

Behind that affable veneer, though, is a man who could pack a hefty punch – literally – and talk up a storm in his heyday.

“It was just the job,” the sexagenarian says of a lengthy boxing career that propelled him into the pantheon of the sport’s greats. “A man’s got to do what a man’s got to do.” A man...

The Asante/Akim Twi translation of that phrase – Barima – was one of the many flattering and fitting nicknames Nelson bore throughout his career, and still responds to these days.

It’s a reputation he earned and honed through many nights and many fights – some straightforward, some grueling – against the biggest names in the weight divisions he contested. That’s a life he almost didn’t have, however.

Growing up as the firstborn child in a family of six – and of limited means – Nelson’s position among his siblings (the eldest of six) made him, by default, a ‘third parent’.

“I had to, at age 13 or 14, get out there and contribute my quota to the family’s upkeep, doing whatever I could.”

And, given his heritage, there was no shortage of trades for him to

learn, one of which – tailoring – his father practised.

Nelson is a descendant of an Afro-Brazilian band of former slaves who returned to the coasts of West Africa in the 19th Century following the Malê rebellion of 1835.

Those that settled in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), arriving in Jamestown, Accra, were led by Nii Azumah Nelson (sounds familiar?), and came to be known as the Tabom people.

Through inter-marriage, they were gradually absorbed into the native Ga tribe, but it was their industry that really endeared them to the locals.

They introduced new skills in agriculture, architecture, smithing, and carpentry that improved the quality of life of the community in which they settled.

Their claim to fame, though, was in cloth-making, where they opened the first tailoring shop in the country, tasked, notably, with providing the then national army with uniforms.

Nelson did pick up his father’s work for a while, also selling coconuts on the streets of the capital, but he had his sights set on loftier targets by age 15: to be a boxing world champion.

His start, as an amateur, was unsurprisingly inauspicious, but it wasn’t very long before he started gaining recognition – and prizes.



Nelson won, in 1978, gold at the All-Africa Games and the Commonwealth Games — a month apart — and looked to build on those successes, putting in the work required to become Ghana's first Olympic gold medallist.

But that chance, at the 1980 edition of the quadrennial global festival, was denied Nelson.

"Few months to the Games in the Soviet Union," he explains, "Ghana [along with over 60 allied nations, including the United States of America] boycotted it to express opposition to the ongoing Soviet-Afghan War."

Disappointing as that turn of events was, Nelson couldn't just sit around and moan and wait another four years.

He decided to step it up a notch, punching his way into professional realms — but only after nearly taking a decision that could have seen him do battle on a different sort of field, and win medals of a different sort.

"I almost took a detour that would have led to a career in the military," Nelson says.

It's hard to fault a young Nelson for harbouring such ambitions. Being a soldier in that period was certainly exciting, if not necessarily attractive. Soldiers, at the time, called the shots politically and enjoyed greater prominence than, perhaps, at any other point in Ghanaian history.

Incidentally, it was arguably the most famous Ghanaian soldier of

them all — the late Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings — who persuaded Nelson to stick to fighting with his arms, not the arms.

"It certainly proved the more rewarding, more fulfilling choice," Nelson gladly concedes. "If I had joined the military, I realise, with the benefit of hindsight, the highest honour I could ever have retired with was probably the title of a 'general'."

Instead, Nelson, by the time he quit boxing for good — in 2008, a decade after he first hung his gloves — had achieved far more than he might have in army fatigues, with more to show for his troubles, too.

In June 2004, he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and his image now decorates the WBC super featherweight belt (one of two titles he won). Nelson's pension, too, seems much more comfortable than what the average 'old soldier' might be entitled to.

Needless to say — and he'd be the first to admit that — Nelson owes much of those accomplishments to Rawlings, the former Ghanaian head of state who passed away late last year.

To most of his countrymen, Rawlings was just a leader — of whom memories are either fond or sour, depending on one's experiences of his regime — but, to Nelson, he was much more: a friend, mentor, and benefactor.

"There were times when even the most basic food items were scarce in Ghana, yet Rawlings ensured that I always had enough to eat," Nelson says, "and of this I would only learn years later."

· For Those That Rise ·

OUTFIT BY JENNIS & WARMANN
WATCH BY CAVEMAN WATCHES
SHOES BY PHIL & JOE
STYLED BY KOJO SOBOH
MAKE-UP BY JAY SLAYS MAKEOVER



Those, indeed, were incredibly tough times. The eighties, especially, brought some very challenging years, hardened by drought, economic sanctions, and a mass deportation from neighbouring Nigeria.

There weren't many sources of relief and belief for Ghanaians as they stumbled through that seemingly never-ending dark tunnel, and Nelson provided some of the rare moments worth cheering.

Entire villages would keep wake, gathering around black-and-white TV sets powered, in some cases, by car batteries, in the middle of the night to watch this son of the land make Ghana proud overseas. Not many, at the time, must have known that Nelson himself secured the rights for some of those fights to be broadcast on Ghanaian television; not that he was bothered, anyway.

"Knowing that the entire nation was behind me, watching and praying, was why I did everything to win my fights and put all I had on line," he says.

"I will love Ghanaians until I die."

Nelson's voice, in every syllable, reveals how much he thrived, and still thrives, on the love and affection of his people. It was as though, even when up against some fierce opponent several miles away from

home, he could feel those emotions; as though it all made blows easier to take and, more crucially, easier to land.

Throughout his career, Nelson never cut the umbilical cord through which that support was supplied. It is the norm, among boxers, to move from their homeland to the sport's 'Mecca' — America — or somewhere closer to the action, and where life would certainly be easier.

That easy life, though, wasn't for this patriot.

"I would go fight, win — or, rather rarely, lose — and return home," he says, with a glint in his eye.

"I believed in staying in my own corner, Ghana, and controlling the world from there."

Fame and affluence, as those who have enjoyed either or both would tell you, wield an axe capable of swiftly cutting one off from his roots. But Nelson wasn't the type to be carried away by his newfound status. It wasn't just his country that he refused to leave behind; he remained strongly attached to those in his immediate circle, the people he grew up with, even at some personal cost.

He married one of those, Beatrice, who lived only a couple of houses



away from his. Together, they had three children; before Nelson's teenage sweetheart lost a battle to cancer (he now has three more kids, with current wife Peggy).

He also tried, in vain and in pain, to lift some of his earliest friends out of poverty. "I bought a number of long vehicles with which they could transport fuel for sale, but their nefarious activities forced the end of that endeavour," Nelson, with disappointment etched on his face, narrates.

Later, I started another business – production of an alcoholic beverage, Zoom Zoom Gin – to help them put food on the table, but bad nuts among them made a habit of stealing raw materials and even some of the revenue generated."

Ultimately, though, that enterprise was collapsed by something else: Nelson's realisation that the abuse of the beverage, powered by his brand, was driving many a youth wayward.

He cared too much — far too much — to profit at the expense of their well-being.

Another thing Nelson has always cared about is his faith in God, of which he speaks whenever the occasion presents itself.

"In a sport where many rely on the supernatural for success — and I did encounter a fair few of such experiences in my time — I genuinely believed only God could see me through," he shares.

"Quite often," Nelson claims, "I'd have visions of how fights would play out, even down to the very round and the exact manner in which my opponent would succumb — and it would, without fail, come true!

"It's why they called me 'prophet' nearly as often as they called me 'professor'," he recalls with pride.

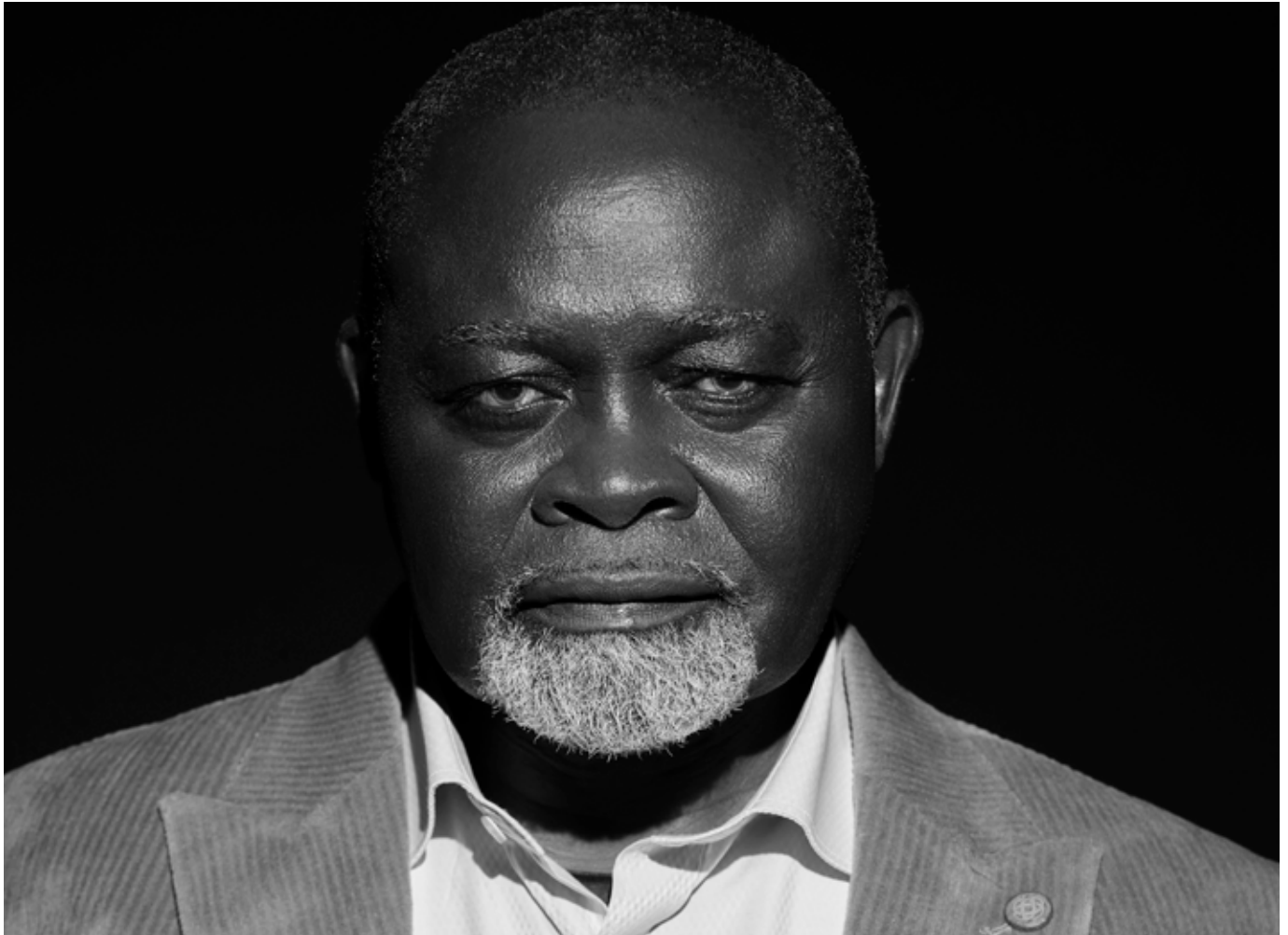
And it is with pride, really, that Nelson looks back on all he has achieved, none of which was offered on a silver platter.

"It was all about sacrifice — training, eating properly, and even refraining from pleasures like alcohol and women, and then some," he says.

It never felt like too much, such was Nelson's passion for what he did.

"Boxing wasn't just something I did for a living," he says.

"I loved it."



And it's a lesson he wishes everyone, boxer or not, would learn.

"Anything that you do, whether as your own boss or for another, just do it well. Just do it well, and you'll see the glory of God."

But, of course, money mattered, and Nelson always demanded his due, like on that occasion when he had to stand up to the great boxing promoter Don King.

Notorious for, among other things, underpaying some of his clients (for which he was sued more than once), King tried that trick on Nelson, and the latter fought back.

"For one fight," Nelson recalls, "he offered to pay me an amount that was less than what I believed I deserved. When he insisted on having his way, and promptly departed, I got upset and decided to leave camp.

"Somebody quickly called King and informed him of my threat. Before long, King returned and persuaded me to stay, acquiescing to my request."

Further proof that Nelson was no softie and would eliminate potential obstacles in his quest to succeed?

Well, he once sacked one of the coaches in his own corner at the

famous Madison Square Gardens, mid-fight, because he persisted with questioning Nelson's methods and belief that he'd knock an opponent out in the second round... which, he assuredly did.

Renowned as one of Ghana's greatest ever sportsmen, and arguably the finest boxer to emerge from Africa, Nelson has created a legacy for himself, into which many have tapped to build their own success stories.

Before Nelson, Ghana only had one boxing world champion; in the 37 years since he bruised and battered Puerto Rican Wilfredo Gomez to join the legendary David 'Poison' Kotei in that elite club, there have been six more.

Nelson, clearly, changed the game as Ghanaians knew it. His was a career that was spent defying stereotypes and odds, rising from nothing to everything, making a difference and inspiring hope.

Even now – with the strands of grey in his hair steadily catching up with those in his beard – he continues to inspire, primarily, with his foundation, going about his work with those traits that have always endeared him to Ghanaians and the world.

And, yes, even now, it's still hard to believe that this man, soft-spoken, gentle, humble, and graceful, once punched others for fun.^{BMW}



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Digest

It's About Time | EMY Recommends | The Peugeot 508
Unveiled | Building A Green Business Culture |
RMB Assists the Republic of Ghana | The Reproductive
Health Family Says Goodbye to Dr. Mensah |
We Do Life | A True Definition of Luxury | EMY Emporium

It's About Time

Find out which affordable watches can still get you 'Mr Nice Watch' compliments.

BY ALBERT CHRIS SOBOH





For men, picking out a new watch can be tricky. The sheer volume of brands out there can be overwhelming. While nice watches can be expensive, a lot of them are affordable. What's nettling however, is that some men still opt to buy replicas of expensive watches instead of just buying what they can afford. So, which affordable watches can get you 'Mr Nice Watch' compliments? Which ones actually matter? EMY's Gentleman Guide has gone through the trouble of identifying a few of those affordable watches worth your attention, so you can leave the replicas alone.

Across this article, you'll find different types of watches – dress watches, field watches, chronographs – whatever you're looking for. Below are some of my favourite affordable watches.

STORM

Storm Hydron V2 Rubber Grey 47462/GY is an amazing and attractive gents' watch from AW19 collection. The bezel and lug are made of stainless steel, which accounts for the high quality of the item. The mixture of analogue with chronograph, grey dial and blue hour marker give it a futuristic look.

The dial features of the watch include a date function, 24hr time functions and minimal markings. The open case design is 50-metre water resistant. For anyone looking to make a striking fashion statement, this Storm watch is the perfect choice.

Best for: business casual, casual wear and sport wear.

From **GH£1270** on **www.stormwatches.com**



ROTARY

This Rotary men's watch is the perfect watch for the big occasions. It features a Miyota quartz movement with a stunning white dial. This watch has a PVD rose gold plated case and black alligator leather strap. It's water resistant to the Rotary Dolphin Standard so you can take a dip whenever you please.

Rotary is a household name in the UK and for good reason. A number of their timepieces are water resistant, unwaveringly reliable, and feature classically beautiful designs. For a stunningly vintage timepiece, leather strap design in soft blacks with a gold bezel and nice dial, this is your best bet.

Best for: black tie, business formal, business casual, casual wear.

From **GH£920** on **www.hsjohnson.com**



TISSOT

Tissot Everytime T1094101107200 is an amazing and classy unisex watch from T-Classic collection. It's made of stainless steel with a rhodium dial, black hands and Arabic numeral hour markers. The watch is water resistant at 30 metres. It can withstand brief immersions or splashes but is not suitable for swimming or bathing.

Tissot continues to push the limits of both fashion and timepiece development, creating watches that are reliable, luxurious and, of course, truly beautiful.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear.

From **GH£1850** on **www.tissotwatches.com**



ACCURIST

A brave choice in all black, the London ceramic watch from Accurist will look bold on anyone's wrist. The strap, ceramic in material, comes in glossy black and the unique rectangular-shaped dial amalgamates this timepiece as a true standout. Its features include scratch-proof ceramic bracelet strap, powerful quartz movement for superb time accuracy and a unique rectangular dial.

English watch manufacturer Accurist has made itself a household name thanks to its production of high-quality, attractive wrist wear. Their delicate and innovative watches are encrusted with stones to catch the light and add timeless glamour to your outfit.

Best for: black tie, business formal, business casual, casual wear.

From **GH£900** on **www.thewatchhut.co.uk**

COACH

Coach 14602401 is a functional and very impressive men's watch. It's made of stainless steel with a blue dial. It's water resistant up to 30 metres – it can be worn in scenarios where it is likely to be splashed but not immersed in water. A Coach watch stands for relevance, innovation and authenticity and each individual design remains true to this core identity – aiming to provide a new, affordable and accessible form of luxury.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear.
From **GH¢1190** on **www.thewatchhut.co.uk**



CITIZEN

Citizen Axiom's refined yet sleek tank design offers a different look for the avid trendsetter. It combines a black ion-plated stainless-steel case, mesh bracelet and black dial with the intriguing feature of edge-to-edge glass and 4-piece diamond indices to create the perfect wrist-wear. It's my personal favourite. With the watch's Eco-Drive technology (powered by light), you never need a battery. Innovative, technologically advanced and award-winning, Citizen has been an iconic name in watches for years, and for very good reason. The brand offers best value for money.

Best for: black tie, business formal, business casual, casual wear.

From **GH¢1500** on **www.citizenwatch.co.uk**

VIVIENNE WESTWOOD

Vivienne Westwood Lexington VV177GDBK is an outstanding analogue men's watch designed by Vivienne Westwood. This retro styled timepiece is crafted in stainless steel with a gold PVD plating. The piece features a contrasting black textured dial with gold plated luminescent hour markers, hands and the Vivienne Westwood Orb.

The 50-metre water resistance ensures that the watch is protected and allows it to be submerged in water. It can be used for swimming and fishing.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear, sport wear.

From **GH¢2373** on **www.beaverbrooks.co.uk**



CAVEMAN

Borne of the Kingsman line, the Kingsman Turbo is a watch manufactured by a respected Ghanaian brand, Caveman Watches. This watch is more sustainably and economically focused. Helps that it's nice to look at too. This marque rethinks performance. Instead of just standard dials, this piece flaunts golden ones with a semi-skeleton surface that sits under sapphire glass and operates using automatic movement caliber. If you want to flaunt throughout 2021, the Caveman Kingsman Turbo is an excellent watch to kick off proceedings.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear.
From **GH¢1800** on **www.cavemanwatches.com**

VITAE

The Vitae Ada Midnight, named after a town in Ghana, pairs minimalist design with stylish modernity. The watch features include a stainless-steel band, a black dial, golden markers and is equipped with elegant scratch-resistant sapphire crystal glass. The 42mm face is ideal for men.

Because the Vitae London brand was birthed out the need to create stunning watches at affordable prices, it is not surprising it's on this list.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear.
From **GH¢1650** on **www.vitaelondon.com**



EMPORIO ARMANI

Emporio Armani Aviator AR11201 showcases a beautiful 43mm stainless steel case with scratch-resistant mineral glass and a stunning blue-coloured dial featuring Baton hour markers, protected by a smooth set bezel.

Other features include an elegant stainless steel bracelet, a reliable movement, and a secure deployment clasp for added protection. This watch is also water resistant up to 50 metres, which means you can go for dip without worrying about causing damage to it.

Bold and stylish is exactly what you would expect of Emporio Armani. Specialising in high-fashion and crafted from quality materials, Armani watches showcase beautiful aesthetics and elegant engineering to offer a range of timepieces that will transcend each season.

Best for: business formal, business casual, casual wear, sport wear.

From **GH¢1450** on **www.watchshop.com**

B E R E M E M B E R E D



CAVEMAN

KINGSMAN TURBO

When class meets finesse



EMY Recommends

So many African, particularly Ghanaian fashion and self-care brands are churning out world-class products. You should give some a try. Don't worry if you don't know where to look. EMY's got you covered.

BY GRACE DORCAS ANNAN





**ATTO TETTEH MULTI-COLOURED
SILK TOP & CHOCOLATE URBAN
PRINT TOP**

These picks are perfect shirts to master the smart-casual dress code. You can't go wrong pairing these with shorts or trousers. They are the fashion-forward street style looks to rock this season



HORSEMAN FORMAL BROGUES

It's officially brogue season, and we're here for it! Whether you're dressing for a smart casual event or a semi-formal function, these shoes can perfectly complete your look.

To dress up in a pair of brogues, try wearing them with a stylish pair of suit pants or trousers, a shirt and blazer.



**BROMMON DOUBLE
BREASTED SUIT**

Refined and elegant as always, the double-breasted piece is constructed from the finest fabric, making it lightweight and comfortable. When it comes to modern suit style, we know this piece will make sure you're catching everyone's attention.



EMY RECOMMENDS

HEEL THE WORLD | CAVEMAN WATCHES TOKYO JAMES | THICK TALL MAN



HEEL THE WORLD ADINKRA ENVY

Ready to step out in your own customised shoes? Then HTW's got you. Choose every single element of your HTW Adinkra Envy, from the leather to colours, sole and other embellishments such as a personal monogram. Sounds like a cool deal to me.



TOKYO JAMES STRIPE KNIT POLO SHIRT

Since 2021 colour trends are skewing toward bright and eye-catching hues, the strip knit polo shirt by Tokyo James is perfect for the season. It features all the colours such as bold red, aqua blue and bright blue and orange. You're sure to turn heads with this.



CAVEMAN HERMIT WATCH

The Caveman Black Hermit watch easily adds a touch of class to any outfit. This timepiece has a relatively flat case and a subtle yet sophisticated minimalist design with a triple plated rose-gold bezel and crown. The design makes is easy to dress with. If you're looking for fine jewellery to complement your outfit, this is your best bet!



THICK TALL MAN FEDORA

Ever since fedoras appeared in 1882, they have been in and out of fashion, but fast forward to 2021, Thick Tall Man unisex fedora is reigning supreme. It easily elevates a boring outfit to a statement piece. Just don't forget to purchase doubles because your partner might be interested in borrowing yours.

TALATA BE CALM HAND MOISTURISER

Be Calm moisturiser by Talata is specially formulated for men's skin. With calming notes of lime, jasmine and lemongrass, it is easily absorbed, leaving less residue on the skin's surface for a shine-free appearance. We recommend using this after every hand wash.



R&R SHEA OIL

As you get older, your skin starts to change and look a little less vibrant than it used to. You can no longer just wake up, splash some water on your face, and go about your day. This is where R&R shea oil comes in. It's guaranteed to keep you looking young and fresh if you incorporate it in your daily routine!

SKIN GOURMET COFFEE & MORINGA SCRUB

Skin Gourmet's Coffee & Moringa Scrub is a must-have for all skin care enthusiasts. This is not ordinary scrub. It doesn't just remove grime and dirt. It also repairs your skin by rejuvenating your skin cells, reduces acne breakouts and eventually gives you a spot free clear skin. Who knew all your skincare wahala could be solved under 60 cedis?



BÔHTEN ARISTOTLE GOLD ROSEWOOD CLASSIC

These Bôhten eye glasses are a symbol of confidence, style and creativity. They are designed to look timeless and classic. Must cop!





AJ VANUSH

BESPOKE

**PRT RABBIT FUR TASSEL -
TONGUE LOAFER**







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The Peugeot 508 Unveiled

The Peugeot 508, winner of the 'Style Award' at the 2018 Car Awards, is radical saloon that doesn't compromise on design.



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The Peugeot 508 is a mid-size/large family car and winner of the 'Style Award' at the 2018 Car Awards. The Peugeot 508 is a radical saloon that doesn't compromise on design.

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Active Bonnet

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- Anti-lock brake system/Electronic Brake force Distribution/Emergency brake assist
- Passenger airbag deactivation switch to allow for child seat fitment
- Rear three-point rectangle seatbelts (3x) with pre-tensioners and force limiters in outer rear seats
- Indirect tyre under inflation detection
- Electric Child Locking functionality on rear windows and doors
- Adaptive driver and front passenger airbags with passenger airbag deactivation function
- Electronic parking brake+ Hill assist
- Front and rear curtain airbags
- Seatbelt warning & monitor
- Electronic stability program

Convenient Packages:

- Driver attention alert system
- 3D connected navigation
- Bluetooth telephone facility
- Multi function trip computer
- Service Interval indicator
- Electronic power assisted steering

Exterior

- Radiator grille chrome facets and gloss black edge trim · LED daytime running lights

- Power folding door mirrors with blind spot detection indicator
- Front windscreen wiper with magic wash cleaning system
- LED side indicator lights integrated into door mirrors

Interior

- Driver and front passenger seat electric lumbar adjustment
- Dual zone automatic air conditioning
- Peugeot i-Cockpit compact sports steering wheel
- Wireless smart phone charger
- 10.0" high definition (HD) capacitive touchscreen with Mirror Link, Apple Carplay and Android Auto
- Piano Key chrome plated
- Toggle switches to access touchscreen functions
- Voice recognition
- Peugeot i-Cockpit with configurable 12.3" Head up digital instrument panel
- Push to start button start
- Front central console
- Electric power steering with reach and rake adjustable steering column
- Automatic gear lever

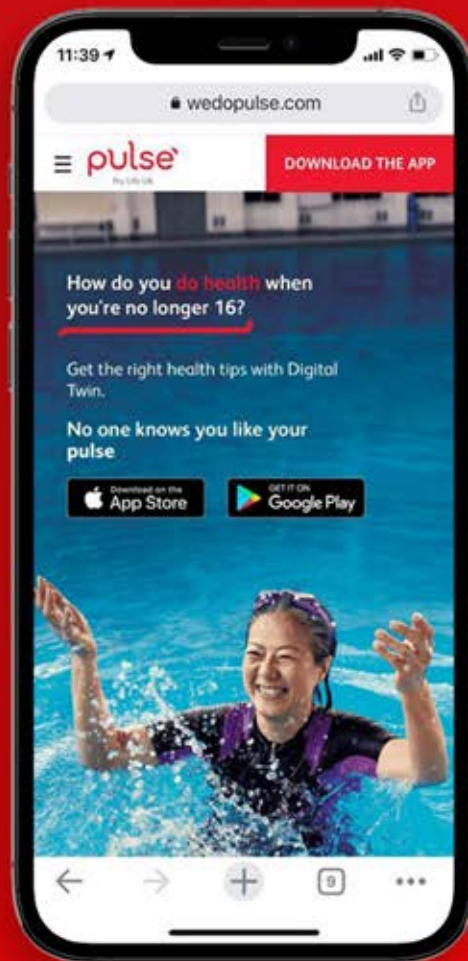
Rear

- LED tailgate
- Motorized tailgate
- Hands free tailgate opening
- Convenient door lock knob integrated with boot controls
- 487 boot volume increased to 1,537 when rear seat is collapsed
- Heated rear windscreen with integrated antenna
- Rear fog lights
- 6 speed 3 drive mode (Normal, Eco & Sport)
- Sunroof



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Building A Green Business Culture, Contributing To Global Recovery

A business entity can truly transition only if, it has institutionalised sustainability into its operations that is, making sustainability a culture and not just a mere act of Corporate Social Responsibility.



If you are familiar with the current corporate environment, you may have noticed that common to all corporate sustainability discussions, is the term green economy. This term or concept may sound very technical and complex to achieve as a business entity. Yes, it may call for certain operational transformation and change in business strategies and models that may not necessarily come

at a cost or otherwise. However, an objective look, at the green economy only proves that it is an economy that pushes businesses to institutionalise organisational cultures and to develop business models which are sustainable and resilient, with a key focus to enhancing environmental assets, goods and services rather than driving the destruction of the environmentally beneficial resources.



It fundamentally secures the future of businesses that comply to its tenets.

According to UN Environment Program (UNEP), a green economy is a macro-economic approach which focuses on green economic activities, infrastructure and skills. It can also be defined as an economy that aims at achieving sustainable development by identifying growth opportunities for regenerative processes while reducing environmental risks and impacts and ecological scarcities. The 2011 UNEP Green Economy Report argues that “to be green, an economy must not only be efficient, but also fair. Fairness implies recognising global and country level equity dimensions, particularly in assuring a just transition to an economy that is low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive.” Therefore, a green economy is a regenerative economy whereby businesses are environmentally, socially and governmentally conscious and responsible. Within such an economy, businesses have in- depth understanding of their relationship with nature in terms of impacts and dependencies as well as the risks and opportunities. Thus, decisions are made with full consideration of the value of natural capital and ecological services to the businesses.

The relevance of a green economy is that it promotes a triple bottom line: sustaining and advancing economic, environmental and social well-being. Investing in a green economy promotes the development and implementation of sustainable business models, investments, trade, economic, environmental and social projects and policies. Also, it contributes to minimising direct environmental impacts and risks by reducing industrial pollution, vulnerabilities to climate

change, deforestation and carbon footprint.

The observance of sustainability principles and environmental responsibility in the everyday business actions of an enterprise, can lead to savings on many levels, so that in a very short period of time, some former costs can slowly transform into cost savings and profit (e.g. waste as a source of income). Thus, leading to a green business having a comparative advantage over a business that is not green. Additionally, sustainable models and operating systems lead to supply chain resilience, brand enhancement, business continuity, regulatory compliance and employee and customer satisfaction.

For a business to remain relevant within a green economy and contribute to such an economy, it should internalise the transformative green operation systems and models. The internalisation of these systems and models is what is termed as building a green business culture or sustainability culture.

The transition to green operation systems and models may lead to a heavy disruption in existing business strategies and operations. It is worth noting that the transition process is often slow and may result in businesses being reluctant to transition. It is pertinent to stress that a business entity can truly transition only if, it has institutionalised sustainability into its operations that is, making sustainability a culture and not just a mere act of Corporate Social Responsibility. A corporate entity builds a green business culture or sustainability culture by establishing goals and values as well as forming beliefs systems that reflect a respect for and commitment to the promotion of environmental sustainability.



How can an enterprise build this culture, one may ask? First and foremost, a business should understand its relationship with the environment and the natural resources. By conducting an environmental assessment, businesses are able to identify their impact and dependencies on nature and the associated risks. Such assessment enables businesses to appreciate the relevance of environmental sustainability to their own survival. The information gathered at this stage can therefore be used to set clear green goals for the business. The goals should provide the business a clear picture of how management intends to reposition the business in this era of environmental consciousness and social responsibility which is the new normal and crucial for recovery from the impacts of the covid pandemic and the climate emergency. These goals must have measurable targets that can aide in proper reporting and building on progress. Again, the set goals must align with the vision and mission of the business. It should be understood that change is effective when it is coming from within. Therefore, setting goals that conflict with the vision and mission of the business may result in no transition at all in the long run. Green economy is not about closing out of operations but rather, operating in a responsible manner. Another crucial thing to do is to put all the goals and strategies into a written policy document that can be referred to when necessary. This will serve as a reference for both present and future members of staff.

Creating a policy document for your green strategy is relevant but not putting whatever is in the document into practice is a waste of the business' resources. The green culture of a business may include but not limited to;

- Integrating renewable energy such as installing solar panels;
- Using energy efficient equipment and bulbs;
- Ensuring zero waste within your premises if not, make room for

waste separation to encourage recycling and reuse;

- Reducing your packaging waste and use materials that are environmentally friendly for your packaging;
- Sourcing your raw materials sustainably. Make sure that the entities within your supply chain are meeting the global Environment, Social, Government (ESG) standards;
- Digitalisation of its operations by leveraging on existing technologies
- Awareness creation on sustainability for your staff and consumers;
- Lobbying for policies on sustainability

It can be noticed that most of the practices listed above can be done at a minimal cost. Though seemingly less valuable, they can go a long way to reduce industrial pollution, climate change, deforestation and carbon footprint. At the business level, it may lead to brand enhancement, employee and customers satisfaction and attraction of investments. Businesses are therefore, entreated to invest in research and development in order to design and build transformative and competitive solutions that are affordable and accessible to consumers with minimal or no threat to the environment.

To conclude, internalising sustainability stewardship by building a green business culture is a sure way for a business to transition to the new normal of doing business and staying relevant in the green economy. Although, it may seem to put some businesses at a comparative disadvantage in the short run, in the long run it is the ideal way to building a sustainable and a resilient business. Irrespective of how slow and costly the transition process may be, simple acts like separating waste, using energy efficient bulbs and awareness creation on environmental sustainability and responsibility can be a good step forward. [BNW](#)



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RMB Assists The Republic Of Ghana To Issue Usd 3bn+ Multi-Tranche Eurobond

Africa's largest Eurobond issuance since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic

RMB assists the Republic of Ghana to issue USD 3bn+ multi-tranche Eurobond, including an inaugural Zero-Coupon tranche.

In Africa's largest Eurobond issuance since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Rand Merchant Bank (RMB), the corporate and investment banking arm of FirstRand Bank Limited, acted as Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner (JLM), alongside other transaction parties, in the Republic of Ghana's four-tranche Eurobond. RMB also acted as Dealer Manager on Ghana's Tender Offer on its 2023 maturity. RMB is proud to have assisted Ghana to issue a new money Zero-Coupon Senior Unsecured Eurobond, the first of its kind by an Emerging Market (EM) sovereign.

Ken Ofori-Atta, Ghana's Minister for Finance, who was sworn in on 30 March, 2021, has in the past made a case for the creation of an "inclusive global forum to rebuild the international financial and economic architecture and a new ability to respond equitably and rapidly to such a catastrophe." The effective execution of the zero-coupon Eurobond tranche is another step towards achieving this vision and helps to create additional fiscal space to assist Ghana Build Back Better post the Covid-19 impact on the economy. RMB is pleased to have been able to assist the Government to achieve



Dominic Adu
CEO, First National Bank

its goal on this transaction. The issuance further demonstrates the RMB Debt Capital Markets Team's expertise, innovation and ability to execute amidst a volatile market backdrop.

This issuance enables the Ministry of Finance to raise funds to refinance more expensive shorter-dated debt with affordable term debt. This transaction was preceded by a 3-day virtual deal roadshow, where Ghana presented its impressive credit story to global fixed income investor base, whilst emphasising the government's focus on fiscal consolidation, completion and continuity as the economy recovers from the impact of the pandemic.

Commenting on the transaction, James Formby, Global RMB CEO, says: "Ghana has always been a trailblazer as an issuer in the capital markets and was the first Sub Saharan African Sovereign to issue a 40-year Eurobond. RMB is delighted to have been appointed by Ghana to jointly lead the execution of this Eurobond, especially the novel Zero Coupon tranche. The appointment of RMB as Joint Lead Manager and the successful outcome of the transaction can be attributed to RMB's commitment to Ghana through our on the ground presence, and the continuous investments we have made in our global credit distribution platforms."

"Our agility in turning around the transaction within a short period enabled Ghana to navigate the choppy waters in the markets and achieve the government's objectives in terms of their debt management strategy. The services of RMB's leading Debt Capital Markets Team, based in London, a key financial hub, and remains available to African issuers to help them direct capital into the continent for investment, growth and development." adds Dominic Adu, CEO of First National Bank Ghana.

Sharing their views on the deal, Eytayo Netufo, Head of International Debt Capital Markets and Harris Hadjitheoris, Head of Bond Syndicate at RMB, say: "It was a pleasure working with the market astute Government of Ghana deal team as they expertly executed on the advice of the bookrunners on the transaction which enabled a very successful deal despite the volatile market backdrop."

RMB and First National Bank, members of the FirstRand Group family, remain committed to Ghana and are proud to have been able to assist the Ministry of Finance with this transaction.

End.

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Delali Dzidzienyo | Head, Marketing and Corporate Affairs | FNB Ghana DDzidzienyo@firstnationalbank.com.gh

About First National Bank

First National Bank Ghana is a subsidiary of South Africa's FirstRand Group which is the largest bank by market capitalisation listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange – Africa's largest bourse. First National Bank Ghana has a total of 11 branches in the three key regions in Ghana and is determined to bring its reputation of innovation and superior products to Ghanaians.

The bank, headquartered in South Africa, also has a presence in Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, Kenya, Angola and Tanzania.



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The Reproductive Health Family Says Goodbye to Dr. Mensah



In trying to put this piece together in memory of Dr. Robert Kwesi Mensah, an enthusiastic advocate for reproductive health and rights, we asked ourselves, “Who is an advocate?”. Although we came across several definitions on the web, we believe this best suits him: “An advocate is someone who can help you speak up so that your needs are heard, your rights are understood and your problems are resolved.” Bob, as he was affectionately called by all colleagues, was a real advocate for reproductive health, and especially adolescent reproductive health.

Bob spoke about, wrote on, trained others, and acted in the defence of the reproductive health rights of young people. He also counselled the youth, as well as their parents, on the tenets of physical and emotional wellbeing of adolescents, and the possibility to prevent and avoid unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STIs (including HIV/AIDS), and all forms of sexual violence and coercion.

Dr Mensah could use his medical background to explain the subjects and their related issues such that you, the listener would fully understand and be so convinced to follow whatever he tells you to do. It was therefore of no surprise that he often volunteered with the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), for several years, just to ensure that young people are equipped with relevant information. He always maintained that young people face a range of health and social challenges such as initiation of sexual activity that needs to be addressed. He maintained that lack of adequate knowledge and skills for protection is what places the adolescent at a higher risk of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

In furtherance of his passions, Robert managed the African Youth Alliance (AYA), a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded programme, which was implemented in four African countries by the Government of Ghana, UNFPA, PATH and Path Finder International (both US NGOs). The AYA was a five-year partnership programme to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and prevent HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda. The AYA model was a five-year initiative to expand a comprehensive range of integrated interventions, implemented concurrently and at scale using a multi- sectoral approach. It targeted the youth (aged 10-24) and involved educating them on reproductive health matters, including HIV/AIDS prevention, and providing them with the necessary information and life planning skills. These were activities which Bob undertook with much zeal and precision.

Dr Mensah believed that every young person, if given the right information, services and guidance, could be empowered to resist negative influences which could lead to them becoming school dropouts, no matter the source. Thus, he dedicated his life work to reaching out to the young and vulnerable through his work with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

A call to Bob at any given time to speak on issues of comprehensive sexuality education on any media channel would see him deliver exceptionally, as if he had already prepared for it as one would prepare for an examination. His last public event was on 24th November 2020 where he went to the Upper East Region to train officers from National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) where he called on stakeholders and institutions to mainstream sexual and reproductive issues when preparing and responding to humanitarian crisis as reported by the Ghana News Agency (GNA):

<https://www.gna.org.gh/1.19257574?fbclid=IwAR1lIAxf7lxn11rZnfKMPsqF0w7con-bHkfEOnQo2r3u-jGsVY2RPhm7G4>.

In signing the UNFPA's Book of Condolence, the Deputy Chief of Police, DCOP Dr Chris Boamah -Mensah of the Ghana Police Hospital said, “Bob my mate and Gender Violence co-advocate, how are we going to train the CID training cadets?”. Indeed, this is one of the many questions on our hearts as we the Reproductive Health Family says goodbye to Dr Robert Mensah.

In the simple words of the UNFPA Resident Representative Niyi Ojuolape, “We will miss him”.

We Do Life

Prudential Life Insurance Ghana (PLIG) entered the Ghanaian life insurance industry poised to change the game.



Prudential Life Insurance Ghana (PLIG) entered the Ghanaian life insurance industry poised to change the game. With over 173 years of experience and heritage, as one of the world's leading financial services groups, Prudential plc, its parent company, set up roots by buying out Express Life in Ghana, its first entry into the African continent.

Within a few years, PLIG had chalked several successes making it a force to be reckoned with. From a previous 10th position in 2014 in terms of market share, the company currently ranks number 4 as at the end of the 2020 fiscal year.

This aggressive growth was propelled by its strategies which included a unique agency sales model, high compliance and governance standards, innovation in product design, a world class policy administration system and diversifying its distribution capabilities by entering into strategic partnerships with institutions such as Banks, Telcos, Fintech and an ISP to bring the benefits of life insurance to more Ghanaians by driving financial inclusion.

We DO Claims

While these remain important elements of any business model, Prudential's game changing strategy was to keep the customer at

the heart of its business by looking for reasons to pay claims instead of reasons why it could not. With a heritage of paying claims that dates back to 1912 where Prudential honoured its obligations to 324 insured lives that were lost aboard the Titanic, and being cognisant of the low levels of trust and credibility that characterises the industry, Prudential was adamant in projecting itself as the face of Prudence.

In recent years however, customer needs are evolving and Prudential is responding by changing the game yet again. It is moving from simply designing products that protect its customers from the risks of life and honouring claims, to protecting policyholders with preventive products and services that encourage wellbeing. Prudential is helping people to get the most out of life, by supporting them to be healthier and wealthier for longer to provide greater lifetime value to policyholders.

We DO Health

Prudential intends to make its stakeholders healthier and wealthier through its products, valued added services and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Prudential's flagship health product the Prudent Life Plan which was launched in 2016, led the market at the time with an unlimited

life cover and 100% return of premiums, allowing policy holders to recover all premiums paid, if they out live the policy term without making a claim. The product caters for total permanent disability, critical illness and death, it covers over 10 critical illnesses or dreaded diseases and entitles the policy holder to a free annual medical check-up.

Rising to the occasion during tragedies and pandemics such as the 1848 Cholera Pandemic, World War I and II, 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic, through the decade of the Great Depression and 2002 SARS outbreak, Prudential quickly responded to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, by being the first company to introduce a free COVID-19 benefit.

The Pru Covered-19, was introduced to support its new and existing customers last year with benefits that included, a Diagnosis Benefit which paid a lump sum once a customer received an official COVID-19 diagnosis, a Hospitalization Benefit due to COVID-19 that provided the customer with daily cash pay-outs for up to 30 days and a Death Benefit that paid a lump sum to the customer or their beneficiaries as a result of a COVID-19 related death.

We DO Good

In alleviating the impact of the pandemic in 2020, PLIG partnered with United Way Ghana, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the University of Ghana, School of Languages, to fund Covid-19 relief projects worth USD 80,000 that benefitted over 23,000 Ghanaians.

At the end of the 6-month project, 800 families were provided with food boxes and care kits every month till December 2020, PPEs were donated to a health facility (Ayeduse Health Centre in Kumasi) and 500 people received access to basic healthcare services. Home literacy programmes were implemented that benefitted 500 families with children at home due to schools being shut down.

500 kayaye received personal development, reproductive health and vocational skills training. Over 20,000 marginalised people mostly from the deaf community and minority local language speakers benefitted from translation of Covid-19 educational materials into sign language and 11 local languages. These were delivered via traditional media, social media and direct contact through posters and drama skits in communal places such as markets and churches to fight Covid-19 stigma and misinformation.

As part of PLIG's annual Valentine's Day festivities, the company has since 2019 visited the Narh-Bita Hospital in Tema and the Asokwa Children's Hospital and Komfo Anokye Hospital both in Kumasi to give away branded teddy bears and chocolates to the children on admission in the Children's ward and to some expectant and new mothers.

The brand also engages in active sports like the Prudential Greatness Walk and its PruRide Accra urban cycling race which it launched in 2019 at the Black Star Square with over 200 cyclists participating. The PruRide Accra cycling event is aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, highlighting cycling as a sport and also to raise funds for charity. Proceeds from ticket sales, donor and sponsorship contributions went to the National Cardiothoracic Centre at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital for the purposes of performing corrective open-heart surgery for children with congenital heart diseases whose families cannot afford the lifesaving surgery.

Prudential sponsors the 3FM Fat2Fit 60-day diet and exercise challenge and is big on Breast Cancer Awareness in the month of September, partnering with key institutions like the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and the 37 Military Hospital to drive awareness and early detection.

We DO Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stressful time for most people on many levels. Emotional wellness should therefore be at the forefront of most companies' plans. While businesses are grappling with how to sustain themselves, they should simultaneously be taking care of the mental wellness of their employees.

Prudential is at the forefront of a thought-leadership agenda providing simple initiatives that businesses of all sizes can take to start addressing mental wellness and it is leading by example.

To reduce stress and help staff achieve better work-life balance, the company launched an Emotional Wellness Policy in October 2020. This included a flexible and remote working policy to enable staff work from home and have access to a 24/7 mental wellness expert line to support themselves and their families through difficult times. The company's leave system was improved and staff are being provided with more bonding opportunities which may not necessarily be physical.

All managers have received professional training to help them create a conducive environment, identify stress and other mental wellness issues to equip their colleagues with the resources needed to give their best. Staff use Koa Foundations, a mental wellness app available to all Prudential employees and there is a recognition scheme in place to appreciate and reward staff performance. Emmanuel Mokobi Aryee, Chief Executive Officer at Prudential Life, sums up their business by saying, "At Prudential, we invest to improve relationships with our customers, partners and communities. We create innovative products, improve our operating platforms and capture new opportunities to build new relationships. We know that health is the ultimate wealth and that is what enables people to get the most out of life. We DO LIFE so that people can seize it to the fullest."

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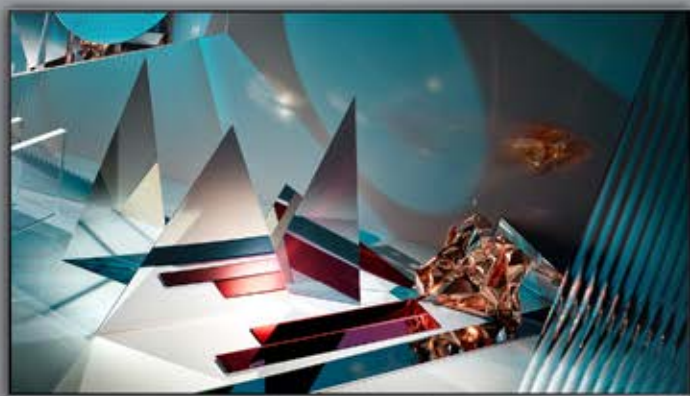
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Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City is a true definition of luxury embedded with authenticity and a rich history; a luxury lifestyle destination designed to offer traditional European luxury infused with warm, caring African hospitality synonymous with the Ghanaian culture.

As you walk into the lush expansive and interactive hotel lobby, you will be drawn by the cool colours, sparkling crystal chandeliers and walls dotted with great African art from some of the finest renowned artists on the continent. With inspiration from the warmth of the African sun, each room features an elegant hardwood interior, lush textiles and carefully selected artworks celebrating Ghanaian heritage and culture.

Just like the rest of the world, the Covid-19 pandemic affected the hospitality sector, and the traveller is more aware and conscious of the protocols in place to ensure their health and safety at hotels. We were curious to understand how Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast has managed to host heads of state, renowned celebrities, top businessmen and some of the most sensitive airline crew at the hotel during the pandemic.

At the onset of the pandemic, Kempinski's corporate office came up with a protocol guideline, adding to the WHO regulations. 'We took a step further in our operations to ensure the safety of both our staff and guests. That's how we came up with the Kempinski White Glove Service. This initiative details the guest's journey throughout their entire stay, ensuring safety measures are taken both by the guests and the staff. We had a thorough audit by Bureau Veritas, and this marks our second year of being vetted and certified by the world-recognised institution. It's not an easy process, and that is why we are the only hotel in Ghana with this accreditation,' adds the hotel's GM, Mr Manish Nambiar, 'We have also taken a step further to ensure all our staff are vaccinated against Covid-19. Though not in the medical field, hotel staff are frontliners. They are in contact with people from all parts of the world on a daily basis, serving them and cleaning up after them, and, therefore, it was paramount for us to ensure we took a step further to safeguard them.'

Does one have to stay at the hotel to experience this absolute luxury? Of course not. Walk in for a brunch, afternoon tea or regular lunch with your friends and you will have a taste of this unmatched hospitality.



A staycation over the weekend, a bridal shower or your anniversary, birthday or wedding will give you and your friends lasting memories. With an elegant ballroom, a beautiful garden and an expansive well-lit restaurant, treat yourself and your loved ones to an exquisite gastronomic journey, whether it is the famous 'seven touches' Kempinski breakfast, signature cocktails or succulent dining menu options.

Treat yourself to the best in remarkable luxury experiences with Kempinski Gold Coast City Accra, as you rediscover and travel in style again. Your health and safety are the hotel's priority.

About Kempinski

Created in 1897, Kempinski Hotels is Europe's oldest luxury hotel group. Kempinski's rich heritage of impeccable personal service and superb hospitality is complemented by the exclusivity and individuality of its properties.

Kempinski now comprises a portfolio of 76 five-star hotels and residences in 34 countries and continues to add new properties in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Each one reflects the strength and success of the Kempinski brand without losing sight of its heritage. The portfolio comprises historic landmark properties, award-winning urban lifestyle hotels, outstanding resorts and prestigious residences. Each one imbues the quality guests have come to expect from Kempinski while embracing the cultural traditions of its location. Kempinski is a founding member of the Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands.

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Chocolate Clothing is a lifestyle brand that's focused on creating a brand that transcends borders while maintaining and showcasing African style, creativity and culture to a global market. Clothing the Black Stars of Ghana during the 2014 World Cup was our entry point into the global space and we have received several features on platforms both local and international with endorsements from prominent individuals across the globe.

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BLACK IMAGE

Sylvernus Komla Darku is a Ghanaian visual artist who creates visuals in the form of motion and still photography. Komla is known for creating strong and emotionally immersed lifestyle and art portraits of his models to share authentic African experiences and stories. Komla is also co-founder of Team Black Image Studios Limited, a Ghanaian based creative studio he started with his twin brother to help brands and individuals share their stories through photography, videography, and design.

Tel: +233 276146912

Email: teamblackimagegh@gmail.com

Instagram/Facebook: @blackimagegh @teamblackimage



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Quophi Akotuah Ghana is an authentic unisex African fashion brand that champions creating the most daring and compelling looks with a streak of mystery and eccentricity for its clientele. We create many designs for A-list clients and the ordinary Ghanaian for various occasions and events, be it, bridal pieces, couture pieces and ready-to-wear pieces for male, females and kids.

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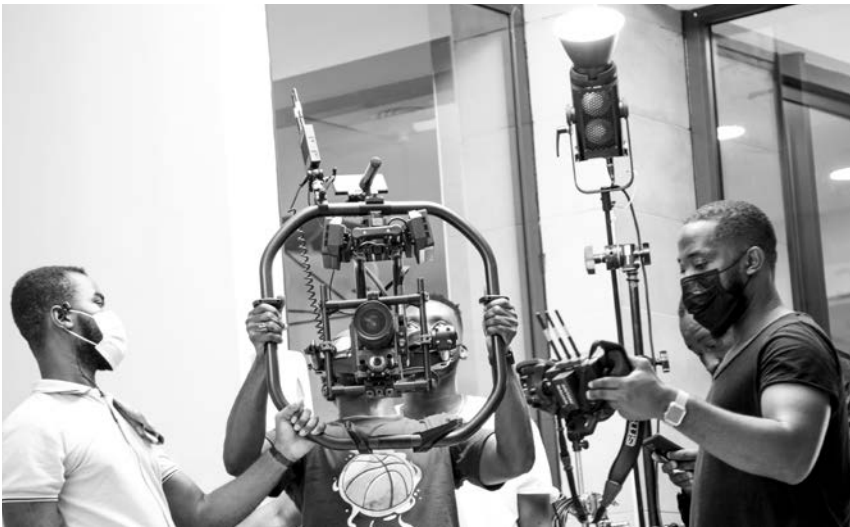


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KELVIN VINCENT

Kelvin Vincent, the creative director behind the multiple award winning Ghanaian fashion styling brand, KELVIN VINCENT. He's had the opportunity to work within, and outside of Africa. He's managed, both small and large styling teams and fashion houses, styled runway shows, glamorous celebrity red carpet events, music videos, magazines, major advertising campaigns etc. He was recently hand-picked and interviewed by Edward Enninful, the editor-in-chief of British Vogue after he entered a vogue challenge competition.

Tel: +233 504057300

Email: info.kelvincent@gmail.com

Instagram/Facebook: [@officialkelvincent](#) / [@kelvincentgh](#)

Website: www.kelvinvincent.com



PHIL & JOE

Phil & Joe is a formal men's shoe line based in Ghana. The brand is just over five years old and has picked up quite a lot of traction on social media since the turn of the year. The brand made its biggest mark to date when our pairs were featured on the runway of the State Dinner and Fashion Show in honour of Prince Charles' visit to Ghana in November 2018.

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