

The History of the Accra Academy Old Boys' Association

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The 20th Century

1940s & 1950s

The Accra Academy Old Boys Association was in existence as of 1947 and represented on the School's Board of Management by Mr. Ajobu Osah Mills. At the time reunions for old boys were organised at Ellen House in James Town. Mr. A. O. Mills represented the alumni association on the School Board for nine years. Mr. Allotei Kobina Konuah and Mr. H. A. A. Ankrah were among some of the pioneer students that were members of the association. They both served on the staff of the school. Mr. A. K. Konuah was appointed Headmaster of the Accra Academy at the end of 1952. As of the 1950s, the first known Secretary of the association was Mr. John Class-Peter, then Senior Executive Officer of the Ministry of Local Government Training School. Other active alumni were Mr Harry Dodoo, Dr Ebenezer Ako-Adjei and Mr Samuel Azu Crabbe.

1960s to 2000

By the 1960s, the association was hosting an annual reunion for its members at the Cocoa Marketing Board in Accra. In 1967, Mr. Jacob Korley Okine, an alumnus and a former Mathematics teacher at the school, was appointed Headmaster. By the 1970s, Messrs Emmanuel Jellicoe Quaye and Michael Bampoe-Addo were among the active members of the association. The latter was the president of the Association. It could be said that Mr Jellicoe Quaye was the first President of the association.

In 1976, members of the 1951 year group organised a "grand and well-attended dinner" at the School's assembly hall to mark their Silver Jubilee of graduating from the school. The School had then relocated to Bubiashie. That night, after several years apart, members of the 1951 year group resolved among themselves to stay united. After the reunion they began to organise alumni meetings at Texaco House on Derby Avenue around the Royal Cinema in Accra.

In 1981, the association played a central role in organising the School's Golden Jubilee which birthed the School's song and anthem. In the late 1980s, Prof. Richard Oracca-Tetteh was President of the association and he was instrumental in the transfer of Mr. Vincent Birch Freeman, an alumnus, from Ebenezer Senior Secondary School to head the Accra Academy in 1986. Mr Freeman made a conscious effort to involve the association in the activities of the school such as the introduction of the Foundation Lectures in 1991.

Dr. Emmanuel Canacoo became President of the association in the late 1990s, during the tenure of Mrs Beatrice Lokko. At the time the Association was referred to as the Accra Academy Old Students Association. Dr. Canacoo suggested the formation of decade groups from the association, and he and Mr. Ayaa Kojo Armah formed a Decade Club on 30 November 1996, for alumni from 1970 to 1979. The Club elected Lt. Col. George Partington as President and Dr. Emmanuel

Canacoo as Secretary. Dr. Canacoo continued to serve as President of the Association. Other prominent members of the group were Messrs Eric Amuah and Prosper Gawu. The Club was intended to serve as a channel through which the younger generation of alumni would be encouraged to take part in the activities of the larger Old Students' Association. Messrs Sydney Casely-Hayford, Abednego Botchway, and Samuel Victor Quao were among some of the alumni who later joined the Club. Nii Maale-Adsei, then president of the 1980 year group, also joined the club and became one of its active members.

In 2000, the 1980 year group marked the silver jubilee of their admission into Accra Academy. As part of the celebrations, the 1980 Year group, financed by Mr. Robert Kofigah, organised a dinner dance party for staff and students of the School. The 1980 year group, with the financial backing of Mr Kofigah began to sponsor all alumni activities. The Old Boys association was rejuvenated in 2000 when Mr Peter Ala Adjetey, then President of the African Bar Association, drafted its constitution. Per the constitution, the association functioned as an alumni network open to any student who had been enrolled in the School for more than a year. Accordingly, the association was to provide an avenue for alumni to maintain a cordial relationship with the School and their fellows. It provided a platform for all alumni to assist the School in overcoming its challenges and to promote the general well-being of its staff and students. The constitution provided for the creation of a governing body consisting of: President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations Officer, all of whom were to be elected at an annual general meeting, to run the affairs of the association for a fixed term. Mr. E. N. O. Doodoo was subsequently elected president in 2000 and shortly thereafter the association became dormant and was on the verge of collapse. The decade club, however, remained vibrant and very much involved in the activities of the school.

The 21st Century

2001 to 2010

In 2001, Nii Maale-Adsei was tasked with drawing up a programme for the first ever alumni homecoming in the 21st century. In his submission, he proposed that the event be held over a period of three days, the first of which would be used to host alumni at the boarding house in preparation for the remaining two days which would be characterized by fun activities and games. His programme was duly accepted and he was entrusted with its implementation. In an effort to generate mass publicity for the event, Nii Maale-Adsei and Mr. Robert Kofigah devised a strategy to invite members of the various media houses to participate in the homecoming activities. The maiden homecoming attracted several enthusiastic alumni back to the school and galvanized them. Although alumni did not take up residence in the boarding house as was intended, they nonetheless participated actively in the various programmes which were organised.

In 2001, Mr J. A. Okai, replaced Mr. Doodoo as President of the association in an acting role. In 2003, Mr S. V. Quao took over from Col. George Partington as President of the Decade club and he was likewise appointed as the acting vice president of the association. Later on, Mr. Quao changed the name of the Decade club to the 70-80 Club to accommodate active members of the 1980 year group within its ranks.

At the 2003 Homecoming, Executives of the Decade Club mooted the idea to construct a new dormitory block for the school in response to the deterioration of the dormitories due to overcrowding. They comprised Messrs Victor Quao, Louis Nortey, Quansah Abbey-Ashong, David Laryea, Maale-Adsei, Cyril Barnes, and Kingsford Ashong. The alumni association agreed to support the project with an amount of C4 billion through a minimum levy of C1 million per alumnus. Other sources of funding considered for the project were corporate organisations, the PTA, and fund-raising activities.

A 12-member Project committee, chaired by Nana Akuoko Sarpong was formed and entrusted with the project. Other members of the committee were Messrs Samuel Victor Quao, Vincent Birch Freeman, Ebenezer Frederick Korsinah, Alexander Nii Ankrah (formerly Alexander Gary Louis Oko Ankrah), Jonathan Awuley Odonkor, , Alex Aryeetey, J. A. Okai, David Laryea, Quansah Abbey-Ashong, Jonathan Ayitey-Stephens and Mrs Beatrice Lokko. In April 2004, the Accra Academy Old Boys' Secretariat office was created to facilitate the collection of contributions for the Old Boys Dormitory Project. The secretariat was established after members of the project committee agreed to finance its operations with voluntary monthly contributions of C50, 000 paid into a fund. Mr. Jonathan Odonkor volunteered to serve as secretary and offered his services pro bono. Upon the commencement of its operations, the Secretariat made several appeals to the USA alumni group to contribute towards the refurbishment of the secretariat office. From January 2005, members of the Old Boys' Project Committee began to make regular monthly contributions to the dormitory fund. No further contributions were made from July 2005 when Mrs Lokko was to be transferred from the school. Other alumni projects that were to be undertaken focused on improving the landscape and drainage system of the school.

In 2006, the 1979 Year Group suspended its incinerator project in order to renovate the secretariat. The refurbished office was handed over during the 75th Anniversary celebrations of the school. The secretariat made a subsequent appeal for a fax machine, photo copier, answering machine and scanner.

In 2006 an alumnus based in the USA by name, Mr Richard Antwi-Boasiako, decided to bear the cost of creating and hosting a website for the association i.e. www.accraacaalumni.com. He liaised with the School and alumni comprising, Messrs Belloc Tackie, Gilbert Osei Boateng, David Laryea and Victor Quao for information about the School, which he then uploaded to the website. He also created an avenue for alumni to register themselves as well as search for other alumni.

On 27 May 2006, final year students were inducted into the Old Boys' Association for the very first time. The new inductees were presented with a group membership certificate by Mr. J. A. Okai in his capacity as acting president of the Association. By 2007, Mr. S.V. Quao became acting president of the Association.

In 2008, the 1977 Year Group became the first alumni year group to sponsor the annual Speech & Prize-giving Day.

2011 to 2020

In 2015, Mr. S.V. Quao convened a special general meeting of alumni, dubbed Bleoobii Umbrella Meeting (BUM), at the K. G. Konuah Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to present a report on the Homecoming, discuss the Old Boys' Constitution, schedule meeting days for representatives of alumni year groups and to elect Interim Executives for the association. For lack of attendance by constitutionally-elected executives of the alumni association (from Mr Dodoo's period), their prolonged years of inactivity and lack of their contact addresses, an agreement was reached to hold a constitution review meeting on 19 September 2015 at the K. G. Konuah Hall. It was also agreed that an announcement to that effect would be advertised in the Daily Graphic newspaper and on social media. After the constitutional review meeting organised on 19 September 2015, a 5-member interim executive chaired by Mr S. V. Quao was constituted and mandated to:

- i) Review and amend the constitution;
- ii) Manage the affairs of the association in the interim; and
- iii) Organise an election for executives of the association during the 2016 homecoming summit.

The Accra Academy Old Boys' Association elected nine national executives to a 3-year term at an election organised at the K. G. Konuah Hall on 11 February 2017. Over 100 members of the association participated in the exercise and it was the first time that the association elected its national executive via electronic voting.

The new national executive were: President, Mr Emmanuel Bruce-Attah (Bleoo 1973); Vice-President, Mr Michael Nartey (Bleoo 1984); Secretary (unopposed), Nii Quansah Abbey-Ashong (Bleoo 1975); Assistant Secretary (Popular acclamation), Miss Rebecca Yeboah (Bleoo 1996); Treasurer (unopposed), Mr Ebenezer Ntow Lartey (B. 2008); Assistant Treasurer (unopposed), Mr Francis Kojo Bimpong-Botha (Bleoo 1999); Public Relations Officer (unopposed), Mr Edward Lawson (Bleoo 1984); Executive Member I, Mr Albert Quartey (Bleoo 1997); Executive Member II (unopposed), Mr Emmanuel Kodjo Kusi (Bleoo 1996). The interim national executive of the Accra Academy Old Boys' Association (AAOBA) were sworn into office at a handing-over ceremony organised at the K. G. Konuah Hall on 8 April 2017. Mr Emmanuel Bruce-Attah in his inaugural address pledged to grow the association through the formation of nine committees to facilitate the work of the association namely: Organizational, Structures / Systems (Administrative and Accounting), Accra Aca Excellence, Publication, Professional Networking and Youth Mentoring, Events / Media / Protocol, Alumni Club House and Secretariat, Endowment Fund, and Constitutional Review.

The Accra Academy Old Boys' Association Newsletter, dubbed AAOBA News, was the initiative of the AAOBA President, Mr Emmanuel Bruce-Attah (Bleoo 1973), and intended to provide Bleoobii information on the activities of the association and year groups on a quarterly basis. The newsletter was accessible on the internet and was created by Mr Simon Ontoyin (B. 2006) who became its first Editor. The maiden issue of the newsletter was posted on 8 January 2018.

The Accra Academy Old Boys' Association (AAOBA) organised its maiden Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the K. G. Konuah Hall on 24 March 2018. The event was chaired by the AAOBA President Mr. Emmanuel Bruce-Attah (Bleoo 1973) and was organised under the theme; 'What will be your Bleoo Legacy?'

Mr Bruce-Attah used the occasion of the AGM to launch the Bleoo Legacy Fundraising Initiative (BLFI). He noted that the BLFI offered Bleoobii and year groups alike with an opportunity to make lifetime contributions as their "LEGACY" to the school. Mr Edward Lawson (Bleoo 1984), the AAOBA PRO, also called on Bleoobii and year groups to contribute to the amendment and adoption of a new AAOBA constitution.

A meeting of Bleoobii Presidents' was organised under the auspices of the AAOBA National Executive from 26 May 2018 to 16 June 2018 at the Ghana Armed Forces Mess in Accra. Forty year-group presidents were invited, out of which seventeen attended in person or were represented. The weekly meetings which were held by decade groupings were convened and chaired by Mr. Emmanuel Bruce-Attah (Bleoo 1973), with Miss Rebecca Yeboah (Bleoo 1996) as Secretary. The maiden meeting was organised on 26 May 2018 for year-group presidents of the 1970s and concluded on 16 June 2018 with a meeting of year-group presidents of the 2000s.

The objectives of the meetings were as follows: Brainstorm on how to improve Bleoobii participation in AAOBA activities, Review the key provisions of the proposed amended Constitution, solicit year-group contributions for the AAOBA Newsletter, Update year groups on the Bleoo Legacy Fundraising Initiative, Update year groups on the 2018 annual year-group levy, Discuss any other matters of interest to the various Year Groups.

The Accra Academy Old Boys' Association organised its maiden career and business networking event at the K. G. Konuah Hall on Saturday 28 July 2018, under the theme; 'Developing Careers, Building Businesses'. The special guest speaker for the occasion was Mr Alexander Kofi-Mensah Mould. (Bleoo 1978), a Financial and Energy Consultant. The event dubbed "Bleoo Connect" was organized to offer Bleoobii an avenue for business networking and insights into career development, and aimed at reducing the unemployment rate in the country and making indigenous Ghanaians businesses competitive in the global economy.

The Association organised an Expanded Executive Committee meeting on 15th December 2018 at the Interact Square to discuss proposed amendments to its constitution among other things. The maiden Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association was organised at the K. G. Konuah Hall on 6th April 2019 to adopt the amended constitution among other things. The amended constitution stipulated the creation of an Executive Council among other new provisions. After having amended its Constitution an election was held on 31st August 2019 at the Interact Square to elect new executives of the Association. Those so elected were as follows: President (Unopposed), Emmanuel Bruce-Attah (Bleoo 1973); Vice President, Reginald Niibi Ayi-Bonte (Bleoo 1982); Secretary (Unopposed), Nii Abbey-Ashong (Bleoo 1975); Deputy Secretary, Albert Quartey (Bleoo 1996); Treasurer (Unopposed), Isaac Adjin Bonney (Bleoo 1996); and Organising Secretary, Ampeh-Dow Daniel Matthias (B. 2008).