

# **Liberia's 164th Independence Celebration**

## **Keynote Address**

by



**Honorable Emmanuel S. Wetee**  
**Former ULAA National President**

**“Honoring our Past and Securing the Future”**  
Event: Liberia's 164th Independence Celebration  
Venue: Columbus, Ohio

Mr. President  
Mr. Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Members of the Ministerial Council  
Friends of Liberia  
My fellow Liberians

I am deeply touched by the honor bestowed on me by the Liberian in Columbus, Inc. (LIC) and the Liberian Community in Columbus, Ohio, to be the Orator for the 164th Independence Celebration of our dear country, the Republic of Liberia, the African Continent's oldest independent Republic. I have had opportunities of performing similar functions in other states and now today, I find great pride in returning to my State of residence to do the same for my community.

As the oldest independent African Republic, Liberia was the reservoir, fabric and pillar of the African struggle for political and economic emancipation and independence. Liberia provided legal resources to the people of South Africa to support their fight against apartheid, a system that separated the majority South African black citizens from the white minority. Not only that Liberia was a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now transformed into the African Union (AU), but one of the key contributors in the embryonic development and evolution of the OAU. The same can be said about Liberia's role in the emergence of the sub-regional grouping, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).



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**Orator, Liberia's 164th Independence Celebration  
Columbus, Ohio, on July 23, 2011**

Outside of the continent of Africa, Liberia was a founding member of the United Nations (UN). At the UN, Liberia produced the first African female President of the UN General Assembly in the person of the late Mrs. Angie Elizabeth Brooks. At the United Nations, when the world body distanced itself from the idea of an independent Palestinian State, the late President William Richard Tolbert addressed the UN General Assembly, daringly promoting such an idea. US Ambassador Andrew Young lost his job at the UN in August 1979 when he met with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representative. At the time it was a standing U.S. policy not to talk to the PLO.

Today, the U.S. and world are following the dream of Liberia (President William Richard Tolbert) and are now speaking to the PLO. The Republic of Liberia is a great country. The Republic of Liberia is a world leader. That is the very reason why the world was not

surprised when Liberia elected Africa's first Female President, President Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

Our greatness and leadership roles in the world were negatively impacted by a self-inflicted 14 year barbaric civil war in Liberia. My fellow Liberians our better days are ahead and in the not too distant future we as a people and nation shall reclaim our leadership role in the world. Honoring our past and securing the future are the paths to reclaiming our leadership role.

In addition to names a few of Liberians who have shaped world politics, little is mentioned about Samuel Morris, a Liberian whose spiritual power saved Taylor University located in Upland, Indiana, from bankruptcy. On the campus of Taylor University, the name Samuel Morris is part of the campus culture. Due to time limitation I will not venture to explore the details of that history but to simply refer you to [www.taylor.edu](http://www.taylor.edu) to read more about Samuel Morris, a Liberian.

In securing our future, we need to develop new ideas, be innovative, take an inventory of our values, be proud of ourselves, redefine our processes of gathering information and consider all factors before making a conclusion. And above all let us respect each other by accommodating every Liberian irrespective of his or her job, educational background or personal issues. Let us put our resources together to promote our one community.

Having lived here for about 20 years, I am have for some time now been witness to Liberians hiring Liberians and Liberians providing spiritual support to Liberians. To secure the future for Liberia, Liberian businesses in Ohio need to establish The Liberian Business Council to provide employment opportunities for Liberians, thus helping to make Liberians financially independent. Additionally, The Liberian Business Council and Liberian Ministerial Council could work together to develop a Liberian Daycare Center. A Liberian Daycare Center shall provide employment opportunities for Liberians and have our children growing up, knowing and loving each other.

Paraphrasing from Albert Einstein, the knowledge you used to create a problem can't be the same knowledge you will use to solve the problem. Remember, my fellow Liberians, one who controls your stomach most likely will control how you think. As we Liberians create new ways to be economically independent at home and aboard we should honor our past and secure our future.

May God Bless Liberia

May God Bless the United States of America.