

PRESS RELEASE



Dr. John Clarence Yaskey, II

11 February 2011

TO: THE LIBERIAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

Fifteen (15) months ago, I came to most of you with a proposition and solicited your support in my bid for a position on the governing board of directors of our umbrella organization, the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota (OLM). At that time, I offered my vision for the OLM and urged you all to believe in my leadership. I promised to serve with distinction, humility, dedication, and honesty. I also volunteered the use of my professional experiences, leadership skills and administrative acumen to ensure the realization of the service delivery mission of the OLM.

Today, I write to inform you that our OLM has made modest progress in its quest to become a viable non-profit outfit and we have a few accomplishments to speak of. I am very proud of what we've achieved collectively, as a board, considering where we came

from and the acrimonious circumstances that gave birth to our leadership and subsequent tenure as Chairman of the Board of Directors. At no fault of ours, other than inheriting a deeply divided community, this board endured eight (8) months of mudslinging, unimaginable debates and personal attacks. All of these occurred in the midst of the difficulties associated with establishing and implementing a plan of action for our virgin non-profit organization. To make matters worse, the board was challenged to prove our legitimacy and this gravely affected our ability to source funding for the organization's work. This community infighting consumed a lot of our time and energy, and left little or no room for us to do 'the people's work'.

On the other hand, the honor to serve on the OLM Board of Directors, offered me a unique opportunity to peek into the psyche of our souls - as Liberians. My fellow supporters and friends, I must confess to you all that our community is so divided to the extent it undercuts our capability to become a prominent immigrant community in this state. This continuous division amongst us explains why other new arrivals have accomplished more than the Liberian Community in Minnesota. This division has not only stagnated our progress, but it has prevented us from realizing the many opportunities for the community and accounts for all the infighting that pervades all sectors of our community. Our community is imploding from within and we all are responsible for why this community has underachieved in comparison to other immigrant communities.

After serving on the Board for nearly fourteen (14) months, I regret to report that principled discussions and decisions have been made personal, and charting a vision based on constructive planning are sacrificed for political gamesmanship and vitriol. We have a situation where ineptitude and dismal performances are rewarded by a pat on the back, while re-election consideration upends making a decision in the best interest of the organization. The entrenched nature of these tendencies in our organization saddens me a lot and it is painful to see an organization/community with a membership of "twenty-five thousand" sitting on an uncertain future.

Seventy-two (72) hours ago, I resigned my position as Chairman of the OLM BOD. My decision to resign did not come easily, but I sincerely believe that my preferment as Chairman demanded that I uphold the honor of the office and represent our community with distinction. I've already offered my heart-felt apologies to the OLM Board of Directors for the events that ensued after our last board meeting. I take full responsibility for my inability to walk away from the incessant provocation and stalking. And I accepted, wholeheartedly, the decision of the Board and immediately sent in my resignation as Chairman.

Now, to the larger Liberian community, I want to express how deeply sorry I am for everything that happened. I also like to take this time and offer particular apology to my many supporters within the following communities and organizations:

- The Grand Gedeh Association in the Americas, Minnesota Chapter.
- The Minnesota Chapter of UNICCO.

- The Minnesota Old-timers Association (aka AHBLAWOE).
- The Maryland County Association of Minnesota.
- The Liberian Association of Catholic Brothers and Sisters in Minnesota.
- The United Sarpo Association, Minnesota Chapter.

I will remain indebted to you all for the support and confidence reposed in my ability to represent the interest of our community.

After much thought and consideration about the direction that the OLM is taking, I beg your indulgence to disembark from the Board of Directors, at this time. I am resigning my membership from the OLM Board because my moral and professional predisposition will never allow me to subscribe to the tenants of maintaining mediocrity, institutionalizing professional laziness and lack of accountability, or glorifying a state of inertia in any organization that I associate with.

The next twelve (12) months will compel the OLM to measure up to the minimum benchmarks expected of a non-profit entity. And if our organization hopes to realize its service-oriented vision, it is imperative that it undergoes capacity-building for staff members/board members, and re-position for realignment of our programmatic focus with the demands of our grantors. With these thoughts in mind and my experiences over the last months, I have decided that my time on the OLM Board must end! Please let this communication serve as my official resignation from the OLM Board of Directors effective today, February 11, 2011.

Kindly accept my appreciation for all your support and encouragement.

With sentiments of the highest esteem,

I remain,

Dr. J. Clarence Yaskey, II

Your Humble Servant

Yaskey

"...the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die." - Ted Kennedy