

## MABEL SEGUN'S CITATION AND SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Mabel Segun (OFR) was born in 1930 in Ondo town. Her parents, Reverend Isaiah and Eunice Aig-Imoukhuede were from Sabongida Ora in Edo State. She had her primary education in Edunabon and Akure. From 1942 – 1947, she attended the oldest girls' secondary school in Nigeria- CMS Girls' School, Lagos, founded in 1869 - and was in the second set of the oldest university, the University College, Ibadan, affiliated to London University where she graduated in 1953 with a second class London Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, Latin and History. At the university, she showed early promise both as a writer and sportswoman. She was deputy editor and advertisement manager of the *University Herald*. In 1954, a short story which she wrote in the year of her graduation won the maiden edition of the Nigerian Festival of the Arts Literature Prize.

Mabel Segun has had a varied professional career as Hansard Editor, Education Officer, Information Officer, magazine editor, book editor trained in the USA, broadcaster, Book Development Secretary, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO, Chief Federal Inspector of Education and Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

Mabel Segun has written, co-authored and edited eleven children's books including the classic autobiography *My Father's Daughter* and its sequel, *My Mother's Daughter* both of which have formed the subject of university theses and literary articles in Nigeria and overseas. She has published four books for adults including a poetry collection, *Conflict and other Poems*, a collection of short stories titled *The Surrender and Other Stories*, and a selection of her radio talks under the title *Friends, Nigerians, Countrymen*, later re-titled *Sorry No Vacancy*. Her stories and poems have been published in over 30 anthologies in Nigeria and abroad. They have been translated into German, Danish, Norwegian, Greek and Serbo Croat. Two of her children's books have been translated into Swahili and Arabic, respectively. She has also contributed entries to world encyclopaedias, surveys and bibliographies, and published numerous papers in learned journals and international conference reports. She also has chapters in books.

Segun is regarded as an expert on children's literature as well as the doyen and champion of children's literature in Nigeria through her literary and academic writings and on account of the promotional activities of the Children's Literature Association of Nigeria (CLAN) which she founded in 1978 and the Children's Documentation and Research Centre (CLIDORC) which she set up in Ibadan in 1990.

A fellow of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany, she was on the children's books review panel for African Book Publishing Record (ABPR) published in Oxford, England, for ten years and has been an assessor for Noma Award for Publishing in Africa. She has also collaborated with the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) based in Basel, Switzerland, in its promotional work. Mabel Segun's promotional efforts were acknowledged in 2007 when she was nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award instituted by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs. In the same year, her innovative children's book, *Readers' Theatre: Twelve Plays for Young People*, was joint winner of the LNG Nigeria Prize for Literature and received honourable mention from NOMA Award for Publishing in Africa.

Mabel Segun's works have secured her a place in Nigerian literature with contributions spanning decades and covering the major literary genres of children's literature, poetry, prose and the essay. Her legacy and accomplishment as one of the pioneer female writers in Nigeria and champion of children's literature have been widely acknowledged by the literary and academic community through numerous awards and distinctions, the most recent being the LNG Nigeria Prize for Literature 2007.