

# Memory Lane

ainablankson

In the wake of the collapse of the 'Club of Nine' in London, the 'Magic Circle' firms emerged, which was, unlike its predecessor, not an informal grouping, but an aggregation of the five leading law firms with headquarters in London and offices around the world. Generally, the Magic Circle firms had strong corporate practices, international work and among the highest earnings per partner. Most of all, Magic Circle firms were respected by their peers and clients alike not just for the content of their work but also the color and style of their work. At birth, the entire ecosystem and essence of Aina Blankson was predicated on a culture of professionalism, impeccable style, decorum, character and integrity. The respectable and impressive global brand known as Aina Blankson opened its doors for business from a one-room office with nothing more than a desk and one single book to its name.

With no cash and no family lineage to draw on, Aina Blankson started from one of the remote reaches of Lagos in the early 1990s. The firm's founder, a young, determined and visionary law school freshman set out with one singular conviction; establish a law firm in Africa that could join the Magic Circle league, compete with them and excel beyond them. Established at a time when most firms in Nigeria were sole practitioners, the founding partner of Aina Blankson, was insistent on creating a firm which affords opportunity and path to partnership for all deserving fresh entrants. With meritocracy at its core, career growth in Aina Blankson was defined more by the quality of the mind and not length of practice which today has become the entrenched norm within Aina Blankson.

Our unflinching passion for excellence and selfless pursuit of common good as the collective compass always shone through. Even though clients and peers continuously applaud the quality of work from Aina Blankson and the sustained growth of the firm, our most cherished and priceless pride comes from the revolutionary change which our access to justice corporate responsibility has brought about. Today, Aina Blankson remains the first and perhaps only law firm recognized for its revolutionary efforts along with NCMG in promoting ADR which led to the

establishment of The Lagos State Multi-Door Courthouse, the first court-connected Alternative Dispute Resolution Center in Africa. Thereafter, Aina Blankson worked with the NCMG in the establishment of both the Supreme Court Mediation Center and the Court of Appeal Mediation Center under the leadership of Kehinde Aina, SAN.

*"There is absolutely no such thing as an overnight success. It just does not exist. Period!"* says Kehinde Aina, a lead partner with Aina Blankson. The Aina Blankson back-end story is one of relentless grit, dogged determination, sacrifice and numerous challenges and failures. That Aina Blankson has become one of the most sought-after firms for cross-border commercial transactions, international arbitration and litigation is no longer news. With Aina Blankson Global, a Swiss verein, as our parent firm, the vision of a leading global firm with distinctive world-class standards is today a work-in progress reality. Even though we have never been coy to celebrate and trumpet our string of successes, we are eternally grateful to our greatest asset of all, the Aina Blankson administrative and practice staff; both present and past, for without them all, especially our para-legal and administrative staff, there would be no Aina Blankson. The Aina Blankson story is an exciting playbook in selflessness, dedicated pursuit of its vision of becoming *"a distinctive leading global firm"* whose peculiar style, approach and panache is second to none. With "imaginative thinking" at the very core of every breath we take, every step we make and most of all, every client we serve, the future has never been more promising.

