

Lady Kofoworola Ademola MBE (née Moore, English, 1932)

1913-2002



Lady Ademola was a lifelong advocate for women's education and social reform. She was the first black African woman to achieve a degree at Oxford.

Born in 1913 in Lagos, Nigeria, Kofoworola was educated at CMS Girls' School in Lagos, Vassar College in New York, and Portway College in Reading, UK. She came up to St Hugh's in 1932 to read English, determined to pursue a career in teaching. While at Oxford she was a member of the African Society, the English Club and the Labour Club.

On graduating, she became a teacher in English and Civics at Queen's College, Lagos, of which later became the headmistress. She also co-founded the Oriel Girls' School in Lagos and the New Era Girls' School, becoming its first Principal.

She was the first Nigerian woman to be appointed Secretary of the Western Region Scholarship Board, a department of the Ministry of Education. She also became Director of the Western Region of the Red Cross, and the first President of the National Council for Women Societies in Nigeria, a pioneering organisation that worked for advocating and developing the human capital vested in women, when it was established in 1958. The Council awarded scholarships for girls in secondary schools, ran classes in traditional crafts, set up village craft shops, and founded a family planning centre and SOS Village for children in need.

Kofoworola was also the author of children's books, many of them based in West African folklore.

She was appointed MBE in 1959 recognition of her life-long support for the Red Cross and her work with women's organisations. She was also made an Officer of the Federal Republic by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa's administration.

A picture of Lady Ademola was unveiled in the main entrance to St Hugh's in March 2020 at an event in celebration of her life and work. At that event a fund was launched in Lady Ademola's honour to support Black graduate students and visiting scholars from Africa. If you would like to support the College's efforts to encourage greater participation and representation from Africa, please contact the Development Office on development.office@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk.



Lady Ademola pictured during the visit to St Hugh's College of Oba Alaiyeluwa Ademola in 1937.

Sources

Roberts, Pamela, 'The remarkable story of Kofoworola Moore', *St Hugh's College Chronicle 2019*, pp.8-9

Soutter, Ann, and Mary Clapinson, eds, *St Hugh's College Register 1886-1959* (Oxford: St Hugh's College, 2011)

Tarrant, Dora 'Kofoworola Ademola (Moore)', Obituary in *St Hugh's College Chronicle 2001-2002*, no. 75, pp.60-62