

# Nigerian Women in **POLITICS**

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF NINA EMMA MBA



Edited by  
**Olufunke Adebayo**  
**Bolanle Awe**

# NIGERIAN WOMEN IN POLITICS:

Essays in Honour of  
Nina Emma Mba

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**Bolanle Awe**



Nina Emma Mba

In memory of  
**Nina Emma Mba**

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## Foreword

WE are profoundly honored to write this foreword in memory of our late mother, Nina Emma Mba.

The role and participation of women in politics in Nigeria, and Africa at large, still falls far short of their representation relative to the general population in the continent. Understanding the complexities that have caused the lack of representation, particularly in contemporary Nigerian politics, is crucial in raising public awareness, and more importantly, in promoting discourse and mobilization in readdressing the political imbalance. These complexities, which embody cultural practices, are further accentuated by a lack of general awareness of the role women have historically played in politics.

Exploring the reasons for this under-representation begins with an understanding of the historical contributions women have made to political discourse and evolution of the Nigerian state. The publication of our mother's first book, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*, was the most notable historical perspective of women's contribution to the political evolution of our country. This galvanised gender studies in politics and led to numerous other scholarly publications in the field, highlighting the influence and contributions of women, across all levels of society, to the political landscape of Nigeria.

This book, *Nigerian Women in Politics*, presents several essays that build on the scholarly work of our mother, and presents contemporary scholarly understanding of the influence of women in the Nigerian and African political landscape, covering pre-colonial and post-colonial times. It is particularly pleasing to see essays that present the wide-ranging historic account of the participation of women in politics across all geographical regions, including market women in Aba, Calabar and Abeokuta, and resistance to colonialism by women in Northern Nigeria.

Whilst recent scholarly work has highlighted the significant influence of women, the current political theatre in Nigeria shows that



much more mobilisation is required to achieve a truly gender representative political landscape in Nigeria.

We are very thankful to Professor Bolanle Awe and Professor Olufunke Adeboye as editors of this book. Both are leading internationally renowned Nigerian historians, who have numerous scholarly outputs covering politics, gender and culture. The curation of the collection of essays presented speaks to our mother's core values – emancipation and empowerment of under-represented groups.

The historic significance of the contributions of women to politics over generations must be celebrated in spurring the future of gender equity in the political sphere. We recommend this book to all interested in addressing the political deficit in gender representation within Nigeria and Africa.

**Professor David Mba**  
**Professor Benjamin Mba**  
**Dr. Nnenna Mba-Oduwusi**  
**Mr. Adinweruka Mba**

January 2022

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THE editors hereby wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following people to the success of this project in honour of Nina Emma Mba. First on the roll are members of the Mba family who commissioned this festschrift to commemorate the scholarship of their matriarch. Professor David Mba and Mrs. Nnenna Mba-Oduwusi were particularly helpful in granting access to family sources in their custody. We also appreciate the contributions of Professor Benjamin Mba and Mr. Adinweruka Mba to the success of this project.

The various contributors to this anthology are also appreciated. Many of them had known Dr. Nina Mba professionally while others knew her through her publications. All the authors were enthusiastic about the project and religiously complied with the editors' deadlines. Their interest in this festschrift went beyond the usual commitment to academic research, and reflected their individual passion for the cause of women in Nigeria and their deep respect for the scholarship of Nina Mba.

A number of individuals also enhanced the production process. These include Ayomide Ojo and Mr. Wasiu Amoo, Research Assistants to both editors. Dr. Kofoworola Adedeji of the Department of English, University of Lagos converted all submissions into elegant prose through her copy-editing, while the page planning and design were done by a team of Mr. Akinlolu Ajao at Niyinola Enterprises.

Finally, we thank the Almighty God for prospering this project and making it see the light of day.

