

TWINS AN EXAMPLE IN DILIGENCE

With the alarming rate of Black on Black violence, especially among young Black males in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, some have wondered if anything good could come out of the Black communities in these cities.

Well, I have news for the doubting Thomases; there are still many vibrant, energetic, enterprising and law-abiding young Black men who are taking charge of their future and serving as role models for their generation.

Among them are the Olalere brothers Taiwo and Kehinde, identical twins.

The two 29-year-olds are lawyers. Kehinde is a legal counsel with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and Taiwo is in private practice.

Taiwo opened his private immigration law firm exactly seven days after he and his twin brother were called to the Bar of Ontario on September 23.

Since moving to Ottawa at the age of 18 in 1993, they have been a positive force in the Black community, using their free time counseling Black kids and young adults, especially the new immigrants.

Born in Montreal on February 8, 1975 to Remi and Tayo Olalere, the twins spent the first three years of their

lives in the Montreal West/NDG area before being taken to Nigeria, the home country of their parents.

At 11, they attended boarding schools there before returning to Canada in 1993.

With family and friends all relocated to Nigeria and the U.S. they knew that they were on a life mission which they couldn't fail. They had only \$500 each in their pockets.

Unwilling to deal with Quebec politics of separation, they joined the rush down Highway 417 to Ottawa, carrying with them the words of their father: "if you are my children, you won't bring shame on the family. We've trained you enough to survive on your own."

Survival is imprinted in the

charge of their life and realizing their dreams.

"Our mother told us at an early age that anything is achievable with determination, hard work and prayers, said one of the twins.

"She also taught us that it is important to treat anyone we meet with respect because every human being deserves it."

"Our father also emphasized the importance of education to us at an early age and always supported our educational pursuits."

However, success didn't come easily.

The twins got the biggest shock of their lives when they sought admission to university in Ottawa; their high school diploma and qualifications from Nigeria, which is equivalent to the Canadian high school grade 12 diploma, were not accepted.

The Olalere twins were asked to go back to Grade 10 but that was a "no-no" for the determined twins. They convinced the administrators that their diplomas from Nigeria were equivalent to a Canadian high school Grade 12.

But they had to agree to a compromise; to repeat in Grade 13. They scaled through the courses and were admitted to an undergraduate

programme in political science and law at Carleton University in fall 1994.

Upon completion of the undergraduate program in 1998, Kehinde interned at department of justice and Taiwo interned at the Department of Public Works.

To add to their challenges, their mother suffered a stroke and passed away in Nigeria on July 9, 1998 at the age of 43.

The loss of mom was too much for the boys to bear and they considered walking away from their life's dream, law.

"We had no motivation after suffering our biggest personal loss, the death of our mother,"

they said. "We wanted to change our academic concentrations, but our father sat us down and convinced us to stay focused and pursue our dream, law."

"We heeded his advice. Today we thank him for his guidance."

In fall 2000, they started law school at University of Windsor. Four years later, they are fully qualified lawyers.

"Our advice to the youth is that they stay focused," say the twins.

"Have a plan, pursue it and pray. Don't let any obstacle stop you from achieving your goals. Anything worth having does not come easy."

MY SAY



**Tokunbo
OJO**



Taiwo and Kehinde Olalere

characters of the Olalere twins. Which for them means taking