

HISTORICAL PUBLICATION: SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE MAGAZINE

CREATIVE FOUNDATION MANITOBA

KENNY DAODU
RECEIVES AWARD
ON BEHALF OF DAUGHTER
DR. TITO DAODU

**15-YEAR-OLD
TANMAY BAKSHI**
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
EXPERT RECEIVES
LIFE MENTOR AWARD

INSIDE

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- Tribute to sculptor Leo Mol
- Creative Foundation History

Our Best Future Lies in the Hands of Today's Youth

A bright future is one that values art appreciation and technological innovation as equally important to a balanced education. To develop the creativity necessary for future advancement, we need to teach these two disciplines to today's children.

www.creativefoundation.org



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Anniversary Committee:
Yisa Akinbolaji, Babatunde Akinjo, Dr. Sunday Akin Olukoju, David Fatimehin, Garry Green, Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji, Afeez Ismail and Abby Akinbolaji.

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PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

2019

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Creative Foundation.

Founded in 1999, the Creative Foundation is dedicated to fostering critical and creative thinking in youth. This milestone offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon the foundation's history, to celebrate its important role in the community, and to set goals for the future.

I would like to offer my congratulations to this year's Creative Foundation Life Mentor award recipients, Tanmay Bakshi and Dr. Tito Daodu. This year, the foundation also paid tribute to the late Dr. Leo Mol. Their hard work and dedication make them most deserving of this special recognition. I would also like to thank everyone associated with the Creative Foundation for helping young people reach their full potential.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I offer my best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada



MESSAGE FROM

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF MANITOBA

As the Queen's representative in Manitoba, I am pleased to extend vice-regal greetings to the volunteers, board members and staff of Creative Foundation Inc. as you come together to mark 20 years of service in helping young people achieve their fullest potential.

Through effective mentoring programs, your organization has inspired many young Manitobans to find their passion and develop their talents, thereby enhancing their chances of success, personally and professionally. This evening's honoured guests are indicative of the value of empowering youth through inter-generational partnerships that enrich participants and our entire community, present and future.

Congratulations to the award recipients, as well as to everyone whose dedication and hard work has made this evening – and Creative Foundation Inc. – possible. As today's youth are the leaders of tomorrow, your organization is making a genuine difference in young lives in a way that will have positive ripple effects for many years to come. I wish you continued success.

The Honourable Janice C. Filmon, C.M., O.M.
Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba





Mayor's Message

I am delighted to congratulate the members and supporters of Creative Foundation as you celebrate 20 years of the power of creativity, empowerment, and collaboration.

Founded in 1999, Creative Foundation has done great work over the last 20 years to encourage young people in Winnipeg to pursue all forms of creativity, from arts to science, and expose participants to the many unique cultures represented in this organization. From interactive sessions to workshops to hands-on projects, young people involved with Creative Foundation can explore their own creative spirit — through visual art, poetry, human rights activities, and more. I want to recognize the contributions of the community organizations, schools, and supporters of Creative Foundation. Winnipeg is a growing city — well on our way to a million people strong — and your strong commitment is helping us to build a foundation for a creative and progressive city that we are all proud to call home.

On behalf of the City of Winnipeg, I would like to thank the volunteers, sponsors, advocates, members and others who work tirelessly to support the goals of Creative Manitoba — a creative, harmonious and prosperous Winnipeg. Happy 20th Anniversary!

Warmly,

Mayor Brian Bowman
City of Winnipeg



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November 26, 2019

Yisa Akinbolaji
Chairman and Coordinator
Creative Foundation Inc
cfiwpg@gmail.com

Dear Yisa Akinbolaji:

On behalf of the Minister of Education, I am responding to your November 1, 2019 email regarding the September 18th gala celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Creative Foundation Inc (CFI). Thank you for sending a link to the event's photos.

Congratulations on CFI's two decades of service to Manitoba. Manitoba Education values the many learning opportunities that your organization provides to youth in this province. Because of CFI, these young people are encouraged to discover their creativity and celebrate diversity. CFI's activities and events allow young people to connect with one another and deepen their knowledge and understanding of what it means to be Manitoban. CFI is empowering youth to become leaders in their communities, thereby helping to build a brighter future for Manitoba.

I would like to thank you for your enduring commitment to fostering the potential of youth in our province. We wish you continued success.

Sincerely,

David Yeo
Acting Assistant Deputy Minister

c. Minister of Education



Tanmay Bakshi, recipient of Life Mentor Award of the Creative Foundation with the Hon. Janice C. Filmon, Lt. Gov. of Manitoba.

Creative Foundation Inc Board 2019

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 Babatunde Akinjo – Secretary and Financial Secretary
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 Garry Green – Advisory
 David Fatimehin – Provincial Outreach
 Afeez Ismail – Treasurer
 Larry Partap – Advisory
 Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji – Advisory
 Beatrice Watson – Advisory
 Yisa Akinbolaji – Founder/Chairman and Coordinator





The Honourable Janice C. Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba presenting greetings at the 20th Anniversary of the Creative Foundation in Winnipeg, Manitoba on September 18, 2019.

Building the Future Together

by Dr. Sunday Akin Olukoju

Twenty years of Creative Foundation's constant and persistent empowerment of young people was celebrated in September of 2019. The brilliance of the night shone like trillion stars. The tenacity and the elasticity of the two decades of relentless investment in future leaders brought the glow to show in the faces of those who are still eager to grow. It was a September to remember, the 18th day, a Wednesday, when enthusiastic people from diverse backgrounds gather together to celebrate imagination, ingenuity, creativity and priceless investment.

The atmosphere was electrified by the presence of The Honourable Janice Filmon, the Lt. Governor of Manitoba; His Honour, the Honourable Gary Filmon; Honourable MLA Jon Gerrard; and the Deputy Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, Hon. Councillor Markus Chambers, among many other dignitaries in attendance. It was a night to recognize the selfless hard work of Mr. Yisa Akinbolaji, the insightful Founder of Creative Foundation Inc. He worked tirelessly, labored selflessly, mobilized vigorously, envisioned insightfully, and organized strategically. His passion is boundless. His creativity is priceless. His commitment is limitless. And so is the greatness of a fantastic future that Creative Foundation Inc. is charting!

This is indeed a September to remember as the eminently gifted Tanmay Bakshi, the Artificial Intelligence expert joyfully unpacked a great deal of revolutionizing information for today and tomorrow at the event. He challenged listeners to imagine, plan, position oneself strategically, and maximize all legitimate opportunities for the community good. It was also a night of recognition as CFI gave awards to Dr. Tito Daodu, a Surgeon; Tanmay Bak-



Dr. Sunday Akin Olukoju

shi, an internationally respected Artificial Intelligence expert; as well as a posthumous award to the late Leonid Molodoshanin, known as Leo Mol, OC OM RCA, a great supporter of Creative Foundation and a highly respected Ukrainian Canadian stained glass artist and sculptor.



Creative Foundation board welcoming dignitaries.

Investing in the future continues to be the focus of Creative Foundation. In that future is computer coding for more children. In that future is a safe place where children can congregate to be trained in the artistry of modern technology. In that future plans are many good things too numerous to mention here due to lack of space. Join the Creative Foundation team to keep on making greater things happen in our community! We need your support!! Contribute today!!!

Sunday Akin Olukoju, PhD.
President, Creative Foundation Inc.



Bolá Mary Oriyomí

Bolá Mary Oriyomí (nee Olúkojú) is the founder and director of Ariya Afrika Cultural Dancers, established in 1994. The group comprised of dancers and drummers whose ages range from 11 to 40-years-old. Over the years, this group has featured in several Folklorama festivals, Fusion Dance Theatre and the Creative Foundation events. Bolá's storytelling has been featured on CBC Radio and local television stations. Her performances include singing, storytelling, theatre, drumming and dancing. She has performed at various locations in Manitoba, other parts of Canada, and around the globe. With a background in Theatre Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Yoruba from federal university in Nigeria, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Winnipeg, Bolá is well-versed in African folktales and traditional culture. She coordinates and conducts workshops regularly.

As a storytelling queen, Bolá Mary Oriyomí has also authored books on African Folklore, one of which is, *Thirty Fabulous Yorùbá Tales*. Bolá is blessed with four adult children.

Message from Creative Foundation 20th anniversary committee Chairman



Garry Green.

This year marks the 20th anniversary since the beginning of Creative Foundation and to celebrate, we invited speakers, special guests, sponsors and supporters to our 20th Anniversary Gala Event. We were graced with the presence of Her Honour, Janice Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba. Our keynote speaker, 15-year-old computer expert and author, Tanmay Bakshi, thrilled us with his powerful presentation. Manitoba artist Leo Mol was honoured with a special award. We were entertained with music and storytelling. To all who showed their support, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude. A special thanks to the Chris and Jeff Fettes Family Foundation for their generous contribution. For twenty years, Creative Foundation has brought together youth to provide unforgettable interactive experiences with lasting benefits. Going forward, Creative Foundation events will inspire innovation and creativity that will facilitate learning, encourage academic growth and self empowerment. Scientific research and discovery, artistic creativity and expression, these are the hallmarks of a free thinking and forward moving society. To inspire and enable the leaders of tomorrow to tap into their own inner resources is the goal of Creative Foundation. I believe this vision will continue to bring us together in harmony and the shared understanding that by helping young leaders to excel and achieve their goals, they will be well equipped to lead us into bright future.

Thanks to our sponsor:



Bolá Mary Oriyomí presenting storytelling, "Head Master".

The Story of the Creative Foundation

by Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji

The year is 1994.

A young professor of Art at Lagos State Model College, Badore and College of Education, Ijanikin has an inspiring vision for the future. Yisa Akinbolaji envisions an organization that helps to foster creativity and innovation in young people. With the encouragement and support of School Principal B.A. Gbadamósi, friends and colleagues, Yisa founds the Creative Foundation in Lagos, Nigeria. Educational seminars and workshop are held at Lagos State Model College and city community centres.

The year is 1997.

Yisa Akinbolaji has immigrated to Canada to continue to establish himself internationally. While pursuing further education and exhibiting his art, he shares his vision of the Creative Foundation with Canadian friends and professional colleagues.

The year is 1999.

Knowing that Manitoban youth will benefit greatly from Yisa’s initiative and dream, Larry Partap and Barbara Dixon of Red River College team up to find space to host the first Creative Foundation event. Yisa, with the help of college friend Eleanor Coopsammy, contact various schools and ultimately fill three classrooms with enthusiastic high school students.

The first event takes place at Red River College. The keynote speakers are Dave Williamson and Larry Partap.

The first workshop presenters are:

Samuel Afolayan, PhD	Madeline Coopsammy
Kiram Dharamsi, PhD	Dr. Mitzi Essat
Rosie Hernandez	Frank Riemer

To mark the occasion, Ariya Afrika Dancers participated.

The year is 2001.

At this year’s event, Dr. Jon Gerrard is the keynote speaker and the presenters include:

Pat Burns	Kay Stone, PhD
Segun Olude	Bolá Oríyomí

The Creative Foundation board consists of:

Yisa Akinbolaji	Beatrice Watson
Bolá Oríyomí	Dr. Adeyiza Momoh



Standing from right, Mr. Oladeinde Agoro, Mrs. F. A. Awe, Mr. B. A. Nigwo, Mrs. E. Olu-Akin, Mr. Z. P. Ajasa, Mrs. H. K. Oyedeji, Mrs. O. Ayinla and Kunle Adeyemi, PhD.



Larry Partap, Red River College.



Barbara Dixon, RRC.



Yisa Akinbolaji, Leo Mol and art teacher Paula Leighton.



A group of students from over 200 attendees in 1999.



Advisory board member, Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji speaking at the 20th anniversary.



From left: Tito Daodu and Ajoke Olorundare of Ariya Afrika.

memorative magazine marks the occasion and is sent to supporters, schools, selected offices and clinics in the following year. This continues to spread the good work of the Creative Foundation and acknowledge sponsors of the gala and of the anniversary publication.

The year is 2024.

The Creative Foundation space has grown into a lovely and lively place. After school classes for young people in creative arts and computer coding are offered weekly and there is a thriving mentoring program that partners professionals and aspiring youth. At the Creative Foundation, art and technology do more than co-exist, they collaborate in creating “A bright future that values art appreciation and technological innovation as equally important to a balanced education.”

More historical photos on pages 71 - 77

The year is 2015.

This year’s event is honoured to have Douglas Riske of the Manitoba Arts Council as the keynote speaker. And the Creative Foundation Board now includes:

Sunday Olukoju, PhD	Malinda Lee
David Fatimehin	Don Amero
Beatrice Watson	Yisa Akinbolaji

The year is 2019.

The Creative Foundation celebrates its 20th anniversary as a charitable organization in Canada with a celebration gala. The event is attended by very special honoured guests, past and present supporters, sponsors, the Board of Directors and friends of the organization. A beautiful full-colour com-

The year is 2002.

Bruce Waldie is one of the event’s keynote speakers, as well as the esteemed artist Dr. Leo Mol. Papa Leo Mol, as he is called by Yisa, is honoured at the event for his valuable work and contribution to Manitoba. Dr. Mol becomes a trusted advisor for the Creative Foundation.

The year is 2004.

The Creative Foundation events have grown in size and this year’s presenters include:

Rick Baverstock	Kenton Larsen
Chris Brower	Garry Moir
Dean Cooper	Steve Vogelsang
Justin Deeley	Forde Oliver



▲ Anna Blackmore on Saxophone.

Thanks to our sponsor:

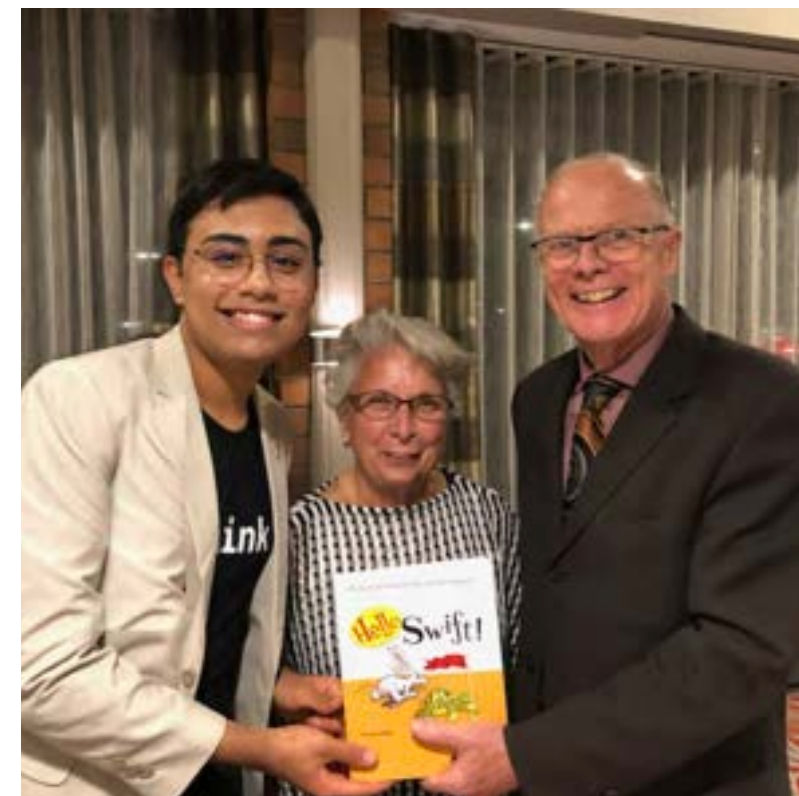
Winnipeg Free Press





▲ Markus Chambers, Deputy Mayor for the City of Winnipeg with Dr. Sunday Akin Olukoj, President, Creative Foundation Inc.

▼ Dr. and Mrs. Jon and Naomi Gerrard purchased Tanmay Bakshi's book "Hello Swift!" for their granddaughter so she can create her own Apps.



◀ Dr. Jon Gerrard, speaking at the 20th anniversary. As guest of honour in 2001, he presented a keynote for the seminar & workshop.





▲ From left: Tanmay Bakshi, Mrs. Beth Bell and Mr. Brian Bell.
 ▲ Tanmay Bakshi and parents meeting Hon. Gary Filmon.





▲ Markus Chambers – Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg speaking at the 20th anniversary of Creative Foundation.



▲ David O. Ogungbemi, President, Egbe Omo Yoruba of Manitoba.



▲ Abby Akinbolaji, youngest member of Creative Foundation.





Thanks to our sponsor:





▲ *Mr. Markus Chambers, Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg, Her Honourable Janice C. Filmon and His Honourable Gary Filmon.*



Thanks to our special guests, patrons and supporters

▼ *Mr. Sudhir Sandu with Mr. Chambers, Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg.*

▼ *Mrs. Peggy Hobson, Principal, École Charleswood School.*



► *From left: Yisa Akinbolaji and Mrs. Rebecca Momoh.*





Anna Blackmore

Anna Blackmore studied music at the University of Manitoba for a major in Jazz Saxophone Performance and a minor in English. Her main instrument is the baritone saxophone, and also plays bass clarinet, clarinet, flute and alto saxophone. Anna started playing clarinet in middle school. When she was fifteen, she began attending the University of Manitoba Summer Jazz camp for high school students.

Anna is highly influenced by famous jazz musicians of the West Coast cool jazz era, the bebop era, and the hard bop era. Anna leads her own trio for corporate functions, teaches private lessons, plays locally and tours nationally with local funk/rock fusion group Apollo Suns. Anna hopes to one day produce an album, and play in famous jazz venues internationally. When she is not working on her music she enjoys reading and watching classic movies.



Thanks to our sponsor:





▲ Puneet Bakshi, Sumita Bakshi, Tanmay Bakshi and His Hounarable Gary Filmon.



▼ Barabara Dixon, Yisa Akinbolaji, Markus Chambers and Tanmay Bakshi.





▲ Yisa Akinbolaji, Abby Akinbolaji, Catherine Rust-Akinbolaji, Naomi Garrard and Dr. Jon Gerrard.

September 18, 2019, we joined many others in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Creative Foundation. It was an exciting evening with the exceptionally gifted 15-year-old Tanmay Bakshi talking about teaching young people how to learn about and use augmented intelligence. Congratulations to Yisa Akinbolaji and all involved with the Creative Foundation on a very successful 20 years. – Dr. Jon Gerrard.

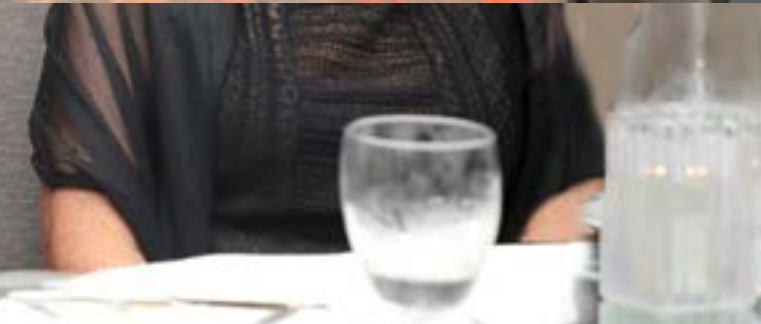


▲ Congratulations to Yisa and the Creative Foundation on your 20-year Anniversary! The Gala celebration was filled with inspiring speeches, artists, and the keynote from Tanmay Bakshi was world-class. I wish you and the Creative Foundation many more years of success! – Jason Charney –



▲ 'Segun Olude, Yisa Akinbolaji and Mrs. Suenita Maharaj-Sandhu.



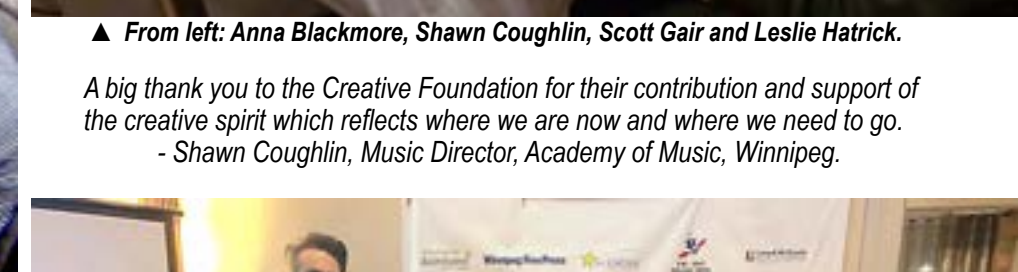


▲ Mr. & Mrs. David Loch.

▼ Mr. Kunle Fatimehin & Mr. David Ogungbemi.

▼ Mr. & Mrs. Jacob & Kenny Daodu.





▲ From left: Janeen Junson, one of Creative Foundation supporters & Yisa Akinbolaji.

Right: Mr. Folayemi Akindahunsi ▲

▲ From left: Anna Blackmore, Shawn Coughlin, Scott Gair and Leslie Hatrick.

A big thank you to the Creative Foundation for their contribution and support of the creative spirit which reflects where we are now and where we need to go.
- Shawn Coughlin, Music Director, Academy of Music, Winnipeg.

Mr. Yisa Akinbolaji and the Creative Foundation team deserve the highest commendations for an exquisite 20th anniversary celebration. The event will no doubt remain indelible in the memory of all the distinguished personalities that graced the occasion. I will share the news - it is worth the trip from Nigeria with Mr. Bernard Aina.
- Dr. Adeola Balogun. ▼



▲ Diandre Douglas, Brittany Hildebrand & Owen Blanchfield.



▲ From left: Kate Moulden & Ken Reimer.



▲ From left: Tamara Ingram, Kylie Jacobs, Regan Bell & Diandre Douglas.



▲ From left: Keely Haight & Cassandra Grosenick.



▲ Sideways on the right: Jason King & Jheric Maranan.



▲ From left: Jason King, Regan Bell, Autumn Yee & beside her is Riviera Cianflone.



▲ From left: Matthew Ramjiawan & Olivia Roch.

"Congratulations! Amazing opportunity to learn about the Creative Foundation and Tanmay Bakshi"
- Tamara Ingram, EdSA Vice-President 1,
Education Students' Association, University of Winnipeg.



"Wonderful night with lots of wonderful people. The Creative Foundation is doing amazing things for the world" - Kylie Jacobs. ▲



▲ From left: Olivia Roch & Kaitlin Link.



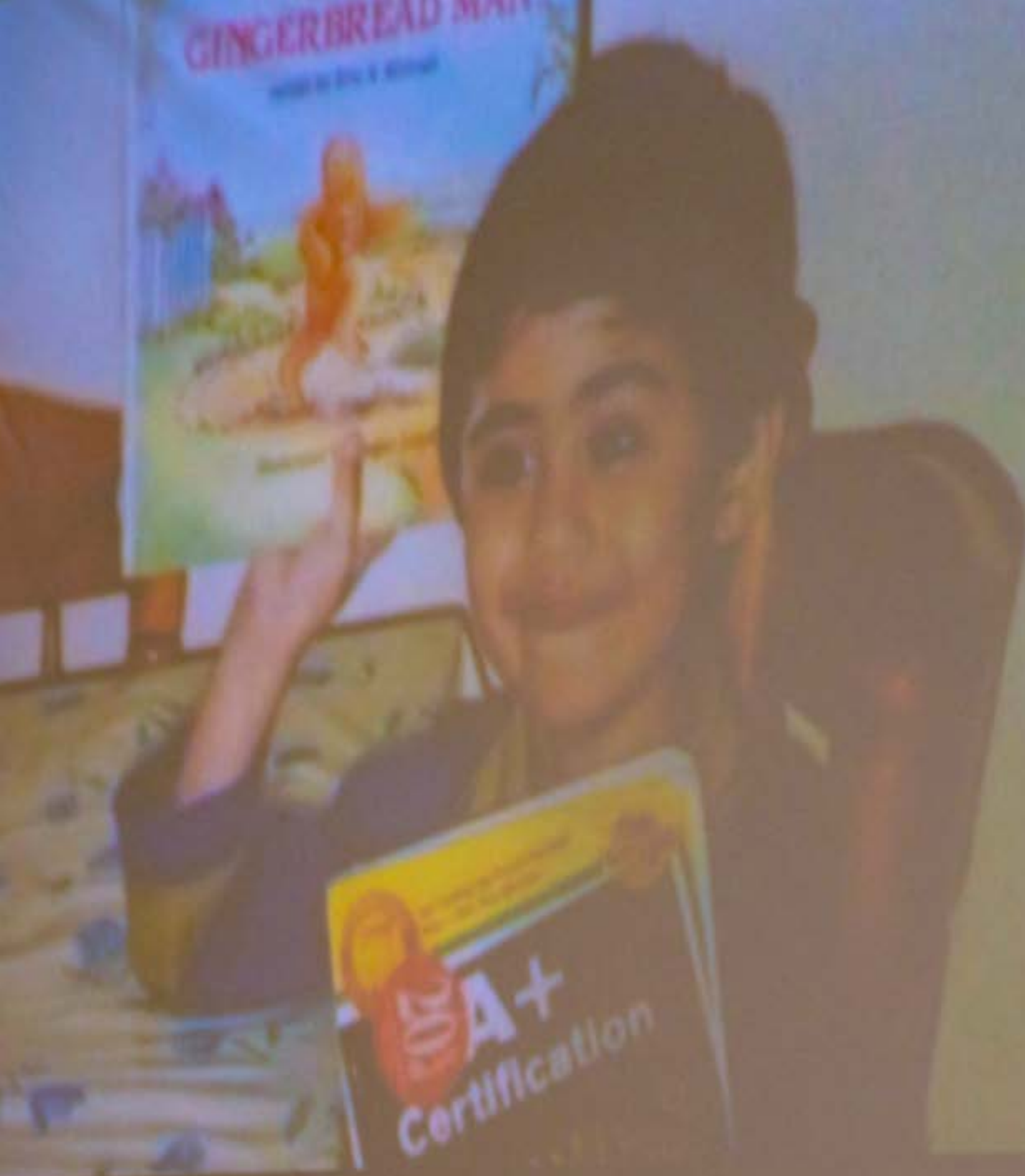
Tanmay Bakshi

Tanmay Bakshi, coding since the age of 5, is a Canadian author, an Artificial Intelligence expert, TED & keynote speaker, and a media personality who has appeared in CNBC, Forbes, Bloomberg Businessweek, New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, just to name a few. He has addressed over 200,000 executives, leaders, and intellectuals at international conferences, universities, and multinationals worldwide. His passion to develop algorithms and to work with machine learning lead him to apply this expertise mainly in the fields of education and healthcare. His goal is to help at least 100,000 aspiring coders in learning how to code and innovate and he does this through his books, workshops and seminars. Tanmay's YouTube channel called "Tanmay Teaches" and his consistent work towards his goal for the past 8 years has earned him numerous recognitions like The Knowledge Ambassador award, IBM Champion, Google Developer Expert, Twilio Doer award, and Global Goodwill Ambassador at LinkedIn, just to name a few. And he is - just - 15 - years - old!!! Tanmay Bakshi is a Life Mentor Award recipient of the Creative Foundation.

Dr. Tito Daodu

Tito Daodu is currently a Pediatric Surgery Fellow at Alberta Children's Hospital. She finished medical school at the University of Manitoba in 2013 and completed her residency in General Surgery in 2018 at the University of Calgary. She was heavily involved in traditional African cultural dance and played a major role in Folklorama as a youth and young adult. Over the years, Tito has strived to faithfully serve her community through volunteer work and social endeavors. In Winnipeg, she has worked with West Broadway Youth Outreach as a mentor and leader as well as with several other community organizations. She has returned several times to her home country of Nigeria to work with hospitals and conduct research in child health and surgery. She continues to work with young people and acts as a mentor and speaker. Tito is excited to begin the next chapter of her career and looks forward to continuing to work with her community and focus on surgical research in underserved populations. Dr. Tito Daodu is a Life Mentor Award recipient of the Creative Foundation.







▲ From left: Cassandra Grosenick, Jheric Maranan & Tamara Ingram.

"The Creative Foundation Gala was truly incredible - we all had an amazing time! The event was well coordinated and I would love to attend an event by the Creative Foundation again". - Cassandra Grosenick, President, Education Students' Association, University of Winnipeg.



*One of the best evenings
of the year well spent.
Tanmay Bakshi is the
now and future, what a
lovely event. the Creative
Foundation and the
event team deserve a
golden accolade!*

- Abraham King. ▼





The Gala Nite was fantastic. Thanks to Creative Foundation for organizing it. I was inspired and greatly motivated by the presentation of Tanmay Bakshi. I realized that there is nobody too small to impact his or her world positively, I believe I can too. Tanmay Bakshi is one of my role models. Thank you. - Ewaoluwa Oluwasegun.





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The Olukoju Family



Congratulates & Rejoices
With **THE CREATIVE FOUNDATION INC.**

ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

The Olukoju Family also congratulates and celebrates all Award recipients at the CFI 20th Anniversary Gala Night

Dr. Oluwatolayo Tito Daodu (Surgeon) **Tanmay Bakshi** (Artificial Intelligence Expert)

Posthumous Awardee – Leonid Molodoshanin (Leo Mol) (Internationally acclaimed Stained Glass Artist & Sculptor)

*Wishing Creative Foundation Inc. CFI
endless years of selfless and relentless service to the world!*









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Akin & Yemi Oladele
Family

Congratulates & Rejoices
with the
Creative Foundation Inc
and our darling niece,
Dr. Oluwatolayo Tito Daodu (Surgeon)

an award recipient at the CFI 20th Anniversary Gala Night
on Wednesday September 18, 2019

*May your sun never wane, and may your light never dim
- may you continue to soar on wings like the Eagle's.
Forward Ever!!!*



Bóla Mary Oriyomí
Storyteller, Performer,
Singer, Drummer, Author
Founder, *Ariya Afrika* Cultural Dancers

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Rev. (Dr.) Deborah Olukoju & Rev. (Dr.) Sunday Akin Olukoju

Congratulations & Rejoices

With the CREATIVE FOUNDATION INC.
 on the 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SELFLESS SERVICE to the Community
 We congratulate and celebrate all award recipients at the CFI 20th Anniversary Gala Night

Dr. Oluwatomilayo (Tito) Daodu (Surgeon),
 Tanmay Bakshi (Artificial Intelligence Expert)
 Posthumous Awardee – Leonid Molodoshanin (Leo Mol),
 (Internationally acclaimed Stained Glass Artist & Sculptor)

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CREATIVE FOUNDATION INC
 ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

The Management and Staff of JD Transit also congratulate and celebrate all award recipients at the CFI 20th Anniversary

- Dr. Oluwatomilayo (Tito) Daodu (Surgeon)
- Tanmay Bakshi (Artificial Intelligence Expert)
- Posthumous Awardee – Leonid Molodoshanin (Leo Mol), (Internationally acclaimed Stained Glass Artist & Sculptor)

Congrats to you all!
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Kenny Daodu Organization congratulates and celebrates the Creative Foundation Inc., and all award recipients at the CFI 20th Anniversary Gala Night

Dr. Oluwatomilayo (Tito) Daodu (Surgeon)
 Tanmay Bakshi (Artificial Intelligence Expert)
 Posthumous Awardee – Leonid Molodoshanin (Leo Mol)
 (Internationally acclaimed Stained Glass Artist & Sculptor)

Congrats on your Selfless Service to the Community

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We invite schools that are interested in partnering with Creative Foundation to email or call us at cfiwpg@gmail.com or (204)942-7245

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CREATIVE FOUNDATION
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▲ Chief Mrs. Lola Omoniye, Creative Foundation supporter with her husband, Chief Isaac Omoniye on the next page.



When I first arrived in Canada in the near-winter month of September and beheld the dormancy of the trees with the general lull that pervaded my new environment, compared with the fast-paced and inherent restlessness of life in Lagos, it did not feel like anything other than buildings and people could grow here. Interestingly, I now encourage the newcomers on how to start and propel forward, with many opportunities to give back.

Dreams can grow

even in the cold Canadian winter

by Yisa Akinbolaji

Coming to Winnipeg, with a population of just over 600,000 in 1997, from Lagos (Èkó ò ní bàjẹ), estimated at well over 10 million people, and with the experience of the harsh weather here in my first week, I felt I had made the most terrible travel decision. In less than three years, however, I had grown in my career while the not-for-profit organization I founded, the Creative Foundation, had continued to attract established professionals who began to embrace my vision of investing in our future leaders, the youth. What was quickly achieved was as a result of the welcoming spirit of Manitobans, my immediate adjustment to my new society and finding a strong support team that could play significant role in my burning desire to make a positive impact.

As a former educator and realizing the benefit I received from the mentorship by generous individuals as a curious youngster, I believe that established professionals have important role to play in motivating the youth by sharing from their knowledge. The best pathway to a better world and bright future is by giving a little of our time, providing positive nurturing to the youth so they may also become successful.

The Creative Foundation organization explores practical methods to make youth succeed using collaboration and determination which are essential to learning. Lagos, Nigeria was where I first started the organization in 1994, and over 95 percent of the youth it served are now successful in their various careers. Most of them have spread across the globe and involved in different types of charity work. The most credit for this success should be given to their parents who sought out additional opportunity which the Creative Foundation offers and supported the children throughout their formative years. When there is peace and cooperation in a society and among families, children are more likely to become successful regardless of their career choice later in life.

The undertaking of the Creative Foundation is to advance education in an empowering environment by providing mentorship and workshops on arts, human rights, technology, positive racial relations, time management and other relevant educational topics, in order to develop their personal confidence and improve their academic success. The organization encourages children of different and all races to grow and learn together. These experiences are facilitated by mentors who have great professional



Yisa Akinbolaji.

qualifications or creative achievements. The professionals also reinforce the teachers' instructions in a manner like that of the teachers who reinforce the useful instructions offered by parents, which children might otherwise ignore.

The board of the Creative Foundation believes that a bright future is one that values art appreciation and technological innovation as equally important to a balanced education. To develop the creativity necessary for the future, we need to teach these two disciplines to today's children. Mentors and students are partnered by the Creative Foundation according to students' interest and aptitude. Our organization plans to continue to partner with junior high and high schools across Manitoba and engage with colleges and universities within the province.

Our board have had the privilege of hearing from many that have experienced the organization's activities in their formative years. We have been assured that a lifelong impact is ongoing in their professional and personal lives. Some of the youth have gone on to be educators, technologists, scientists, surgeons, artists and CEOs who are now established globally. They have cited the benefits of creative thinking and the value of networking they have learned from the

Creative Foundation mentorship as fundamental.

Since realizing that the underprivileged will unfortunately always be with humanity, the Creative Foundation contributes to the success of young people to build their capacity and passion to help others. Whether it is the challenge of climate change, disease, social injustice, racism or poverty, the best future lies in the hands of the youth that will bring positive changes. As such, if today's youth are given adequate education and nurturing, the future will be better for it.

I would like to commend and thank Mr. & Mrs. Jacob & Kenny Daodu and Mr. & Mrs. Puneet & Sumita Bakshi for the enabling environment they provided for their children to succeed and for the nurturing they have given to our Life Mentor awardees, Mr. Tanmay Bakshi and Dr. Tito Daodu. These brilliant minds have received many other recognitions for their exceptional accomplishments and the contributions they are making across the globe. I'm sure they will make us all very proud for many years to come.

For our 20th anniversary, we featured a tribute to the late artist, Dr. Leo Mol. Dr. Mol supported the Creative Foundation in 2002 with his motivational keynote address at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and later provided advice to the organization for several years. There was a guided tour of the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden for fifteen of our local and international guests in the morning of our anniversary, on September 18, 2019. The tour was organized to make our international guests become familiar with the work of Dr. Mol ahead of the posthumous tribute. We are grateful that accomplished African sculptors, Prof. Bernard Aina who was involved with the Creative Foundation when the organization was in Nigeria, and Dr. Adeola Balogun came from Lagos to attend the anniversary events.

As philanthropists or art patrons, the likes of The Aspers, John & Bonnie Buhler, Marla Dan, Chris & Jeff Fettes, Richard Ivey, Walter & Maria Schroeder, David Laird, Eric Sprott and many others contribute to make our world a better place, we believe that every country will in the future benefit from the good children we

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Posthumous tribute to Sculptor Leo Mol

by Yisa Akinbolaji

It was a shock when I met Papa Leo Mol whom I previously was told had already passed away. I did not meet him until my third year in Canada.

Canadian artist and curator Ray Dirks, a recipient of the Lt. Governor's Award of Manitoba for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding is the person whose exhibition guest in 1998, Peter Von Kampen later introduced me to Papa Leo Mol. I met Ray in November 1997, just two months after I arrived in Winnipeg. By November 1998, after Ray had secured approval from the Conference of Menno-

nites in Canada to establish the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, he organized an inaugural exhibition which featured his works and eight pieces of my largescale paintings. A number of Manitoban artists attended the exhibition. Peter who was member-at-large of the Manitoba Society of Artists (MSA) also a colleague of Leo Mol related his immigration stories from Ukarine to my work, hence the private meeting he later invited me.

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Yisa Akinbolaji acknowledging Leo Mol in 2002.



Lumberjacks by Leo Mol was featured on a Canadian postage stamp in 2002.



In 2000, I was inducted to the membership of Manitoba Society of Artists. The tradition of MSA is that new members present slides of their works at the society's end of the year gathering - usually in December. After my presentation, Peter introduced me to Leo Mol. I restrained my tongue from telling Leo I had been told he had died. As Leo had also experienced the turmoil of war during German occupation of Ukraine, I noticed that *The Wind of Destiny*, one painting in which I depicted the military brutalities of market women on the streets of Lagos made an impression on him.

Leo gave me his telephone number and invited me to visit. His wife, Margareth was very gentle and loving. Papa Leo and his wife emigrated to Winnipeg in 1949 from Saskatchewan where both had first settled in Canada. At nearly 80 years when we met, Leo laughed and felt loved when I first addressed him as Papa as a matter of my culture and regards for the elderly. He said no one ever called him Papa. I did not know that Papa Leo had no children

until he told me. Not that that mattered much to him, he left a legacy in bronze and stained glass for Manitobans and across the globe. Leo and his wife loved listening to my immigration stories as much as I loved to listen to theirs. Since I realized how comfortable they were with my stories, I could not resist telling them how I first found out about the Sculpture Garden.

At my visit to Artists Emporium where professional artists acquire art materials was where I heard about the Sculpture Garden. It was a Wednesday, my second week in Winnipeg. An artist who engaged me in discussion recommended that I should visit the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden. The next Saturday, I was at the park. From a distance, the number of bronze sculptures standing in the garden made it feel there were so many people, though there were not more than ten visitors. I had forgotten I was not in Lagos, where every corner was always jam-packed. One of the women at the park explained that the garden is mostly busy in the summer warmer weather.

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Leo was always happy to share the story of how he made his international breakthrough after a decade in Manitoba. He had won an international competition to create a bronze monument for Embassy Row in Washington, D.C. Leo said it was initially difficult for him to sell his ceramic

figurines in Winnipeg for even \$5 before the recognition. However, when things changed, he paid off his mortgage in one day with the shock of his bank manager who humorously asked if he had become a farmer. He said that the unveiling of his 14-foot statue of Taras Shevchenko, Ukrainian

poet in 1964 attracted a crowd he could never have imagined. He was later offered an American citizenship, but due to his love for Canada that first welcomed him after he fled from Europe in the wake of the Second World War, he decided to stay in Winnipeg.

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From left: Barbara Cook Endres, Leo Mol and Bill Birtles (sitting).



From left: Leo Mol, Ken Hildebrand and Mrs. Hidegard Sen.



Trevor Clearwater, VP Guest Services of Assiniboine Park Conservancy receiving a plaque presented during the Posthumous tribute to Sculptor Leo Mol.



Leo Mol loved seeing visitors enjoying looking at his works at the park. They are his best legacy!

Leo donated to Winnipeg his collection of more than 300 bronzes, terra cottas, stained glass, paintings and drawings valued at \$4 million in 1990. Everyone can now enjoy these gifts at the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, with an indoor gallery where his paintings are on display.

During my time as president of the Manitoba Society of Artists (MSA), 2001 – 2003, I found out that Leo had been president in 1957. For the 100th anniversary of the society in 2002, I arranged the pickup and return of his two paintings to make his participation in the anniversary exhibition easy, for which he was happy. I coordinated the same for all aged artists, including Bill Birtles and Jan Boning to reduce their worries. Barbara Cook Endres was the longest serving secretary of MSA until her passing.

If one had visited the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden before the mid 2000s, one is likely to have seen him, though some might not have realized he was the artist who created the works even



From left: Leo Mol with schoolteacher, Paula Leighton during CFI visit to the artist.

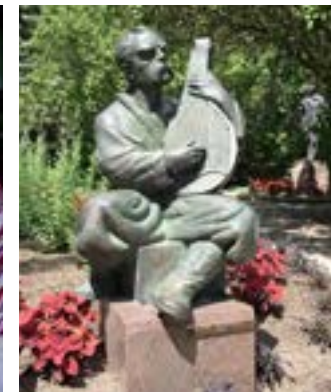
when they sat next to him. He told me he liked seeing visitors enjoy viewing his works at the park.

The Creative Foundation invited Dr. Leo Mol as the keynote speaker for the workshop and seminar at the Winnipeg Convention Centre in 2002. Over 250 students, parents, and teachers attended the highly inspiring presentations. He later provided

advice to our organization for several years.

Leo's life conveyed that the best gift one can give is one that brings smiles and joy to others. He was such a funny, highly talented and generous man whose impact in the art terrain remains indelible.

Dr. Leo Mol died at age 94 on Saturday, July 4, 2009.



LEO MOL GALLERY

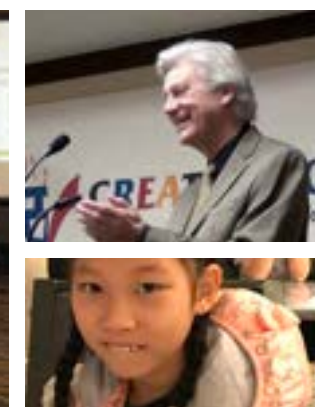




▲ Hon. Rochelle Squires, keynote speaker at the CFI workshop in 2017.



▲ Douglas Riske, CFI keynote speaker of workshop in 2015.



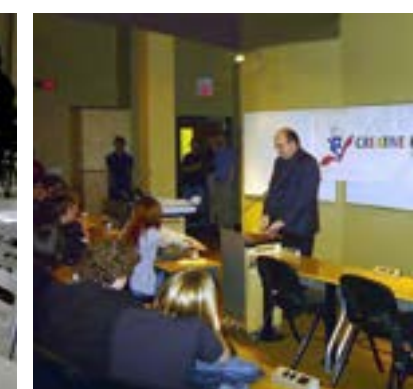


▲ From left: Peter Von Kampen, Luther Pokrant, Leo Mol, Jim Ogunnoiki, 'Segun Olude and Beatrice Watson.

▲ Bruce Waldie, Assistant Superintendent, Louis Riel School Division.



▲ Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles, Executive Director of the Winnipeg Arts Council presenting a keynote in 2004.







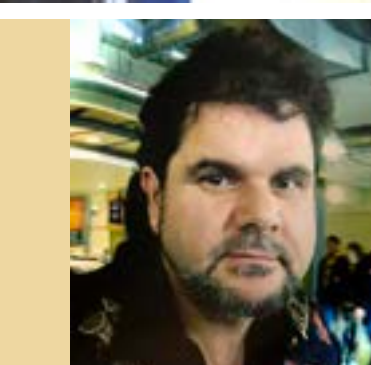
Dave Williamson and Larry Partap keynotes in 1999.

Dr. Mitzi Ezzat.

Gerald Folkerts and Eleanor Coopsammy.



▲ Barb Dixon
◀ Kenny Daodu
Frank Reimer ▶





▲ From left: Mr. Musiliu Obanikoro, Chairman, Lagos Island local Government. Next: Mr. B. A. Gbadamosi, Principal, Lagos State Model College, Badore, Nigeria.

My witness of Creative Foundation from two continents

by Bernard A. Aina



▲ Prof. Bernard Aina and Dr. Adeola Balogun - both sculptors from Nigeria.

Creative Foundation Inc (CFI) by Mr. Yisa Akinbolaji was immediately a big hit in the national news in Lagos in 1994. Most of the people who watched the reviews on national television or read about it in the newspapers wanted to be part of it, one way or the other. The organization inspired parents, teachers and students of Lagos State Model College, Badore, the first institution to host its event. Yisa was then an adjunct lecturer of Painting and Drawing at the Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin, as also the Art instructor at the Lagos State Model College, Badore. I was the Secretary General of the Society of Nigerian Artists (1996). Our team recognized

the CFI as the most active and resourceful organization of the year with an award. We were familiar with its positive force throughout all the states where the news had spread in Nigeria.

The event of the organization grew with the inclusion of students and some vibrant creative professionals across Lagos State. I was honoured to be invited as a presenter by Yisa in 1997. Over 500 people attended at the Lagos City Hall. His Royal Highness, Oba Adetunji Akinloye, was the special guest of the occasion. Other dignitaries were Mrs. E. OluAkin (Director of Education, Lagos Island), Mr. Musiliu Obanikoro (Chairman, Lagos Island Local Government),



▲ His Royal Highness, Oba Adetunji Akinloye (Sateru 2), the Ojumu of Ajiran land presenting keynote address at the Foundation event in Lagos, Nigeria in 1997.



Mr. Olusesan Kuti (Architect) and Dr. Kunle Adeyemi (Artist, and colleague who had also presented at the invitation of the organization in 1994).

Some of the youth who regularly participated in the event of the organization later won scholarships to study abroad. Almost all the young men and women of those years are now captains and leaders in major industries in Nigeria and across the globe today. It is



▲ Sculptor Bernard Aina presenting a paper at the Creative Foundation Conference in 1997. Dr. Kunle Adeyemi sitting to his left.



important for me to acknowledge Mr. B. A. Gbadamosi, the school principal of Lagos State Model College, as Yisa himself did acknowledge him in 1997 for motivating him to develop the idea which is now being celebrated in Canada.

Though Yisa had to relocate to a new country during the time of Military Head of State of Nigeria, General Sani Abacha, I am very pleased

present, and my first time in Winnipeg though not the first in North America. It is very interesting that Yisa's vision which received the praise and blessing of a royal highness in his home country of Nigeria in 1997, has attracted the presence and blessings of the Lt. Governor of Manitoba, Honourable Janice C. Filmon and her husband, Honourable Gary Filmon in Canada on the 18th September 2019. It was



▲ Right: Prof. 'Deinde Agoro, Mrs. F. A. Awe, Mr. B. A. Nigwo, Mrs. E. Olu-Akin, Mr. Z. P. Ajasa, Mrs. H. K. Oyedeji, Mrs. O. Ayinla and Dr. Kunle Adeyemi (1994).



that he is always making us proud by being active and consistent in whatever community he finds himself. To the Glory of God, 20 years since Yisa registered the organization in Canada, I'm glad that I could be

an honour for me and my colleague, Dr. Adeola Balogun, an accomplished sculptor and Head of Department of Fine Art, Yaba College of Technology who also traveled from Nigeria to be on the guided tour of the Leo Mol Garden organized by the Creative Foundation in the morning of the celebration. We were pleased to make the tour with the board of the organization and the 15-year-old computer genius, Tanmay Bakshi, the recipient of the Creative Foundation Life Mentor Award.

On behalf of our colleagues at the Society of Nigerian Artist, I congratulate the Creative Foundation on the 20th anniversary. The best is yet to come!

Bernard A. Aina FSNA, KSM.
Past Secretary General,
Society of Nigerian Artists (S.N.A.).

Dreams can grow *continues*

developed through the Creative Foundation as their humanitarian work will know no boundaries. Evidence of this is the good works which some of the youth who had benefited from of our previous activities now offer across the globe.

Gratitude:

The Creative Foundation is indebted to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, for the encouraging message and greetings for our commemorative magazine; and to the Hon. Janice C. Filmon, the Lt. Governor of Manitoba, for attending our gala and for the empowering message she delivered we are very grateful. The presence and support of His Honour, the Hon. Gary Filmon; Hon. MLA Jon Gerrard; the Deputy Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, Hon. Councillor Markus Chambers, and many other dignitaries added glamour to the success of the celebration for which we are very grateful.

The brilliant keynote presentation delivered by Tanmay Bakshi, received a standing ovation. Tanmay highlighted the role and future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and appealed to parents to encourage the youth in early learning of coding.



His presentation concluded with book signing of his latest book, "Hello Swift!". It teaches iOS app programming for kids and other beginners. Tanmay stayed in Winnipeg after the gala to conduct a 2-day workshop on machine learning for 129 computer students of Fort Richmond Collegiate.



On behalf of our board, I would like to thank all the supporters of the Creative Foundation's mission for the last 20 years, most of whom are photographed or documented in this magazine. I would like to apologize to so many that our cameras have unintentionally missed. This commemorative magazine is also to promote and introduce our mission to more people who may want to support. Canada is a country from where all of us can work together to prepare the youth for a better future and for global peace.

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