



## Conference Highlight

### **Annual Conference for the Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) held 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, USA.**

The Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) has several divisions, divisional chairs and vice chairs. The Zoology and Entomology Division to which I belong, is one of them. The Division met in the morning and afternoon of February 23, 2012. During this seventy sixth annual meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, held at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, out of 13 oral presentations scheduled, 11 were presented as the presenter of 2 papers were unavoidably absent. There were 6 poster presentations. The students that presented papers were both graduate and undergraduate students. About 30 individuals attended the presentations. The papers presented were interesting, stimulating and informative and generated several questions and pertinent comments they dealt with public health environmental concerns, water quality and entomological problems.

The Division was, for the first time, joined by a team from Nigeria – **The Jobelyn Team**. The team was made up of a herbalist, Mr. Moses O. Okubena, the founder of Jobelyn, Dr. David Abia-Okon and Mr. Michael Okubena, the son of the founder. They came at my invitation to share with us important health information about Jobelyn, a food supplement made from sorghum or guinea corn which they said is an elixir of life; it can prolong life! Their coming added flavor to the Division's presentations. We were grateful that they could come. An interesting and informative special presentation titled "Hematological, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of a sorghum-based commercial herbal preparation, Jobelyn" was made by Dr. Abia-Okon on behalf of the team (see picture). It generated a lot of discussions and comments.

During the business meeting, a motion was made for Dr. Julius Ikenga to be the Chair of the Division for the next year while Dr. Alex D.W. Acholonu serves as the Vice Chair. The motion carried. So Dr. Julius Ikenga of Mississippi Valley State University has become the Chair of the Division while Dr. Alex D.W. Acholonu is the Vice-Chair. The membership of the Division increased with several new people signing up as members.

I am glad to have served as the Chair of the Division for two consecutive years and to be the lucky recipient of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences **2012 Outstanding Contribution to Science Award** – a very prestigious award. This is an honor for me, for the Division of Zoology and Entomology of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences and to Alcorn State University. This is the first time in the history of the University, which started in 1871, that a professor from this University was selected for this highly coveted award by the Mississippi Academy of Sciences. The attached photographs give a good idea about what transpired in the lively meeting we had.

**Prof. Alex D.W. Acholonu, FNSP, FAS, OON**

**Professor of Biology and Chair, Zoology and Entomology Divisions of MAS**



Picture shows some individuals that attended the session. Dr. Julius Ikenga,( 3rd from left) Mr. Okubena behind Dr. Ikanga, Dr. Sandra Barnes of ASU Chemistry Department (5th from left), Dr. Alex Acholonu (7th from left) and his brother, Dr. Wilfred Acholonu Jr.( Pharm D) next to him, Dr. David Abia-Okon (MD) is behind Dr. Acholonu to his left.



Picture shows Dr. David Abia- Okon (left) making a congratulatory presentation to Dr. Alex Acholonu (right) for the award given him by MAS and appreciation for the opportunity given the Jobeyln team to participate in the MAS annual meeting of this year.



Picture shows Dr. David Abia-Okon (MD) who presented the Jobelyn paper



Picture shows Dr. Alex Acholonu (Right) receiving the *Outstanding Contribution to Science Award* from Dr. Kenneth Butler, Chair of Awards and Resolutions Committee and Director of MAS.