

June's Thank You Speech for The UIS Alumni Humanitarian Award,

November 7th, 2014 at Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum

First of all, I'd like to give praise to God, Almighty for allowing me to be considered for this prestigious award!

I have a confession to make...I almost tore up the letter notifying me about tonight's award!

Before you think badly of me, let me explain.

We had just returned from a mission trip to Ghana and I saw the letter from UIS Alumni. My first thought was, I just sent a donation to the Alumni Association so, why this? I almost ripped it up, but I read it and, I couldn't believe my eyes.

Do you remember the story of Abraham & Sarah in the Bible, Sarah laughed when the angel said that she will give birth to child in her old age! When I opened that letter, I must have laughed harder than Sarah, did!!

I felt that I was not worthy to be the recipient of this award. I knew someone had made a terrible mistake but, after much investigating, I finally discovered who was responsible for nominating me..

I share this award with many. When I mention you, please stand: **My wonderful husband, Dr. Edem Agamah, the man to whom I owe everything I value most in my life**

. *Pause for clapping*

You are the one who, though tired from work, took care of the girls while I went off to grad school at night. You've given me the courage to believe in a dream that's bigger than myself! You've always been the fearless rock, my cheerleader and partner in faith! An example of your selflessness is demonstrated tonight: You are also the recipient of the ACP Community Service Award but you chose to could to my award ceremony! You are amazing!

Will my three lovely daughters, Sarah, Aseye and Miriam please stand. *Pause*

Thank you for sacrificing your vacations to spend most of your summer breaks packing and repacking suitcases, traveling across the world, battling air sickness (looking at you, Aseye, darling), all to be part of incredible teams that work to serve those in need. Ladies, you are some of the hardest working people that I know!

UIS alumna Roberta Volkmann, please stand. *Pause*

You are the accused! You're guilty as charged! Thank you for believing in IHDN, and for always facilitating many opportunities for us to share about mission work in Africa with others.

May the rest of my invited guests please stand! I could not be here without your hard work: You are the part of the fabric of the IHDN network! Among you are volunteers who left your families to travel to Africa to share your LOVE, the greatest of all gifts, with the people of Ghana! Also among you are the volunteers who helped to send us off on these trips. Thanks for staying up all those crazy hours consolidating medicines in our basement, packing and labeling medical supplies for shipment, and driving the mission teams to and from O'Hare twice a year, to name a few things. Pastors from Hope Church, thank you for your endless prayers and financial support—your partnership with us is invaluable.

I must also thank a young man, who is not here tonight, Mr. Mark Dedzo, Administrator of IHDN Mission Hospital. He caught the vision of IHDN at the tender age of 19yrs, and has carried the burden of wearing many hats in order to supervise the ongoing work in Ghana.

And now, a big thank you to the University and Alumni Association leadership team. University of Illinois President Bob Easter, UIS Chancellor Susan Koch, UI Alumni Association President Loren Taylor and Roger Plummer, volunteer chair, and the Alumni Association Awards and Recognition committee. You've truly demonstrated what can happen when leadership is lived. You've brought forth a great sense of vibrancy and have embraced the spirit of cohesiveness as you work with teachers, students and staff to create a meaningful campus life here at UIS.

You and your team have done amazing work!

In closing, I want to accept this award in honor of one of my favorite UIS professors, and biggest supporters, Dr. Remi Imeokparia. After I received the award letter, I texted her to ask whether she was the 'culprit' that recommended me for this prestigious award. While she wasn't directly involved with my nomination, her support and encouragement has meant the world to me. I am so grateful for her belief in me.

So, thank you all, once again for honoring me with this prestigious award. May God grant us more volunteers and supporters to continue to grow the work of IHDN.

Thank you! And God Bless!