

Paramount Chief of Buea

MOLATAKO – EYOLE - EJKKE NA MORZANGO (UNITY – PEACE – TRUTH AND JUSTICE)

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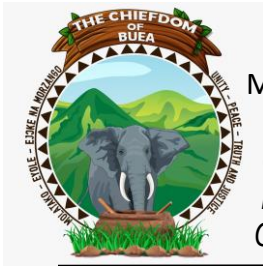
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EULOGY FOR MAYOR EKEMA PATRICK ESUNGE

The Patrick I Knew Before Politics.

The sky is crying, and the city of Buea is mourning. It is a sad, sad day. But it's all yours Patrick. I will miss your forceful and purposeful steps, stomping through the streets of Buea, pacing up and down the Buea Council stairs. You were not an ordinary child Patrick, no, you were not. You did not come with a regular nine-month pregnancy. You were born like an African Bush Elephant; 22 months of gestation. That is two full terms plus 4 months for humans. When you walked on the streets, people stopped to watch you. Your presence drew attention. Your regular walks shook the ground, and when you fell on October 27, the forest shook too. You were the mythical Elephant that the Bakweris call Epkek'a Njoku.

I knew you Patrick for as long as you lived. You and I wrestled on Sundays at the wrestling field in Buea Town as young men. You were a self-made man. I watched you beat the odds in life to arrive at the position you held before your demise. You fought your way through primary and secondary schools in Buea by digging and selling sand from the basaltic volcanic rocky pits around Buea. After obtaining your GCE Ordinary Levels, you landed a job at the University of Buea where you worked tirelessly not to only gain vertical professional mobility but academic mobility as well. By the time you left your position at the University as Faculty officer to become the mayor, you had served more Vice-Chancellors than the total number of children King Louis XVI of France had. I was privileged to be part of the delegation that went down to Bonjongo about 20 years ago to get you married to one of Bonjongo's gems, your beautiful wife, Catherine Ekema. I personally drove you in my old Volvo car that you termed "the community car" to your traditional marriage. Some of your children were born in my own hands. Even in all the turbulence in your political life and the disagreements we sometimes had, I could no more disown you than I could disown my own family members; my morality does not allow me to desert my friends. As imperfect as you may have been, you have been like family to me.



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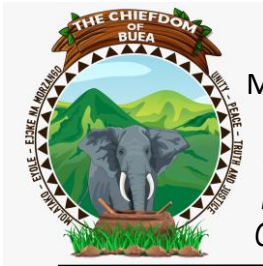
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The greater part of your life was quiet and peaceful; working at the University of Buea and raising a family as every other good father would do. Two Thousand and Fourteen (2014) marked the turning point of your life Patrick. The last five years of your life have been the most eventful and for lack of a better word, interesting. You came under the spotlight for more than one reason, but in all that you carved for yourself an imperishable niche and took responsibility for any and every one of your actions. In Dr. Martin Luther King's speech on the dignity of a man's work, he said: "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'" That is your legacy Patrick, you defended your city so passionately that we can confidently say today, here lived a man who defended his city like no one else. Like you had always said, paraphrasing Benito Mussolini of Italy, you preferred living for one day as a lion than a lifetime as a sheep; that, you did. You didn't live a long life, but you lived a meaningful life. Your life was distressingly small in quantity but glowingly large in quality.

Your path at the helm of the council in Buea reminds me of the question that Iraqis asked themselves after the rule of President Saddam Hussein: Was it Iraq that made Saddam become what he was or was it Saddam who made Iraq become what it is today? The answer may differ from one person to another, but I have known you for over 40 years; I certainly knew you before 2014, and between you and I Patrick, we know the answer too. Above all Patrick, you will not pass through this again. I believe you were planted on earth only to sprout; you were meant to bloom beyond the lands and seas of the earth.

I take pity on your wife and children Patrick. As a boy who grew up with a single parent, I wasn't hoping you would also rob your children of the joy of having a father as they grow up. I give my profound condolences to your mother who has lost 3 strong and able men in just 18 months. In English, we have the word widower, for men who lose their wives, the word widow, for women who lose husbands, the word orphan, for kids who lose parents, but no word for parents who lose children. I think the reason for that is because it isn't supposed to happen. It is not God's will for any mother to bury her child, Patrick.



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What is good about your death, I just cannot see it. But I pray that God will use this to bring about good. We shall all draw lessons from your life and hope it will make us better husbands, better fathers, better brothers, better sisters, better mayors, and better everything. I have the audacity to believe that we shall all be elevated in our humanity from lessons we draw from your life's story. We shall all learn that leadership is not a wrestling match; leadership is an opportunity to serve.

Take flight Patrick; soar. You had always wanted to fly and be above all and everything; now you have the wings you have always wanted. Go to that peaceful world that we will all one day come to know. I will join you someday, but not today. I still have a lot of love to give my children and yours alike.

To conclude, Shakespeare had Horatio say some beautiful words as he stood over the dead body of Hamlet, and today as I stand over the remains of the lord mayor of Buea, I paraphrase the words of Shakespeare: Good night, my dear friend, lay down and take your rest; and may the flight of angels take thee to thy eternal rest.

God bless you all.

Robert E. Endeley, Ph.D.
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