

CELEBRATION OF LIFE



Christabel Ouko

December 25, 1942 - August 21, 2017

The Life of Mama Christabel Ouko

We are here to pay our tribute to a woman who was not only a pillar and an oasis of calm to her family but a great leader, a friend, a mentor, a visionary to many. She always had a bright smile on her face and her laughter was described as infectious.

Early Childhood

Mama Christabel was born in 1942 to the late Leah Odolla and the late Ishmael Odolla, the last born girl in a family of 5 brothers and 2 sisters in the village of Lusi in Asembo, Siaya County. Her parents were known as God fearing disciplinarians who passed on key values such as a deep respect for elders. These values shaped Mama Christabel's life so much that she told us how when they were running to school, they would have to stop and greet any elders on the road and then continue running. As one of the youngest children of the family, Mama Christabel was raised by her brother Douglas Oyieng, and financially supported and mentored by her eldest brother John Okara.



Education

She was a bright young girl who had fond memories of her primary education from Standard 1 - 5 in Chianda an Anglican Mission School, the most memorable being the caning by the teachers. She later moved to Ngiya girls' boarding school and she remembers how they used to sing the British National Anthem cluelessly during the pre-independence days as "God shave our gra-aki". Her passion for education made her excel in her primary school exams and she was admitted to Butere Girls from 1955-1962 for her O-levels.

While in Butere she not only did well in her education but also was involved in extra-curriculum activities. She was in the choir, played hockey, netball, and was the School Captain. She studied Latin, Math, English and Biology in 'O' -levels. Kiswahili was never taught in school which was evident if you heard Mum speaking Kiswahili. She got a first division in 'O' - levels and was admitted to Alliance Girls High in 1964 to study Literature, Geography and History. Mrs. Bruce was the headmistress at Alliance and the environment was different and special as she met people from other parts of the country. They were treated well though occasionally, the expatriate teachers would lament at the ignorance of the village girls who knew nothing of international events, such as Hiroshima, and authors Chaucer, Tolstoy, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare that they were being taught. This education, though frustrating at times, gave her a tremendous edge in her home and in the public life that she would later lead. An example is the Latin which made her a master crossword and scrabble player, and her tailoring skills which resulted in her four daughters often being dressed in identical cute sundresses.

Work Life

After A-levels she worked as a trainee income tax officer with the East African Community. In 1966, she joined the University of Nairobi to study English, French and History. After Nairobi University, she joined the civil service in the immigration department.

Christabel's Life with Dr. Robert Ouko

Christabel first met Robert Ouko while she was in Butere through her brother John Okara who was his teacher and friend in Ogada School. When he would visit Butere with his friend from Addis Ababa University, whose wife worked there, he would also visit with her. At that time, Robert Ouko was just a family friend known by the Odolla family. He continued visiting her when she was in Alliance and later at the University, and eventually his particular interest in her became evident. Behind her back, he visited her parents, paid dowry, and made all the necessary

marriage arrangements. He then came and picked her up from the halls and the rest, as they say, is history.

He was loving, considerate and supportive of her ambitions. They were very well suited, communicated on par intellectually and shared strong interests in travel, debates and reading books on broad subjects,. She said that he was very fun to be with. They first lived in Kileleshwa where Dad taught her to drive and bought her a Volkswagen Beetle to go to work with. Maurice Seda (Wuon Bob) and William Ogendo (Wuon Atieno) were the two, as young men in the mid 1960's, who went to take cows for the marriage of Mama Ken, they were happy to welcome her to their home. Due to the great respect they all had for her, they all called her "Mama" ever since. Following the passing of Dr. Ouko, they remained close and engaged with her and participated in all family engagements both in Koru and in Nyahera.

She worked after their first-born son Kenneth was born in 1967 until the family moved to Arusha in 1969. Their children came in rapid succession with the births of Susan, Winnie, Lillian, Carol, Andrew, and Charles. Although she took on homemaking full-time, her husband kept the world open to her through his work and their lengthy discussions every day. They shared all aspects of their lives together. She lived a fulfilling life as the "Minister of Home Affairs, Finance and Administration" in her home and was grateful to be able to raise her children.

She enjoyed travelling all over the world with her husband during in his career. The highlights of their travels were the pomp and ceremonies of Head of State events. Dr. Ouko's transition from civil servant to politician was difficult for Mrs. Ouko, but she supported him fully and appreciated his integrity in office. Following the tragedy of her husband's death in 1990, many marveled at how she coped. She credits her resilience and resolve to the characteristics she learned from her husband during his political career and her strong faith and reliance on God. Following many years when the investigations and commissions of his death cast a shadow over the family, she was determined to find positive ways to celebrate his remarkable life and keep his values alive in his community. She has over the past 30 years transformed from being known primarily as the wife of Dr. Robert Ouko, to being a respected community leader in Muhoroni and a successful businesswoman and farmer of sugarcane, trees and dairy cows. She has been fully engaged with the community and the AIC church in Koru. She was the chair of the development committee in the Koru AIC church, board member of Koru Girls High School, treasurer of Marrum welfare self-help group, member of Mnara Women Group, and deputy patron of the Ouko Community Initiatives.

Her Drive

Her passion has been to serve her community, especially in the area of education. Her activities in the past years have shown how she has run with her vision. She has personally sponsored many needy children through school. When she noticed that there were very few options available for young children in the area she did what she could and started a small kindergarten near her house in a mabati room. This school has morphed into a large, multi-storied school that is complete and fully operational. The first class who sat the KCPE exams in 2016 came first out of approximately 400 schools in the sub-county. (NB: Matiangi exams)

She also kicked off a library project in memory of Dr. Ouko which fit perfectly with the family tradition of voracious reading. The library was officially opened in 2014 and is run by the Kenya National Library Services. It won the best library in Kenya award in the 6th edition Maktaba awards 2015. The library sparked other projects through the Ouko Community Initiatives (OCI) bringing E- learning tools, and educational enhancement programs into local schools. These projects have been a powerful unifying force for the community and the family.

Her greatest wish is that members of her community would appreciate the power of education and learning in improving their lives just as it did hers.

Her children and her grandchildren have been her pride and joy. She has 13 grandchildren: Angelica Akumu, Nicole Mugure, Kristen Akumu, Alex Ngare, David Robert Onyango, Jonathan Benjamin Osimbo, Amanda Hawi Akinyi, Mailu David, Wanjiku, Amora Akumu, CJ Khaemba, Renee Naliaki, Anika Yuna, Seda Wema.

She could not have gone this far without her network of family and friends and her deep faith in God which has given her the quiet confidence to act fearlessly in all things important. She lived with no regrets. Mama Christabel lived a full life of joy, laughter and peace. One of the final statements she made last Sunday was: this world is not our home. We are on a pilgrimage not knowing time nor day. We just need to trust, obey and wait patiently.

Mama Christabel has gone to her true home.

Rest in Peace our Dear Mum, Sister, Aunty and Friend.

A Life of Giving: Our Tribute to Mum

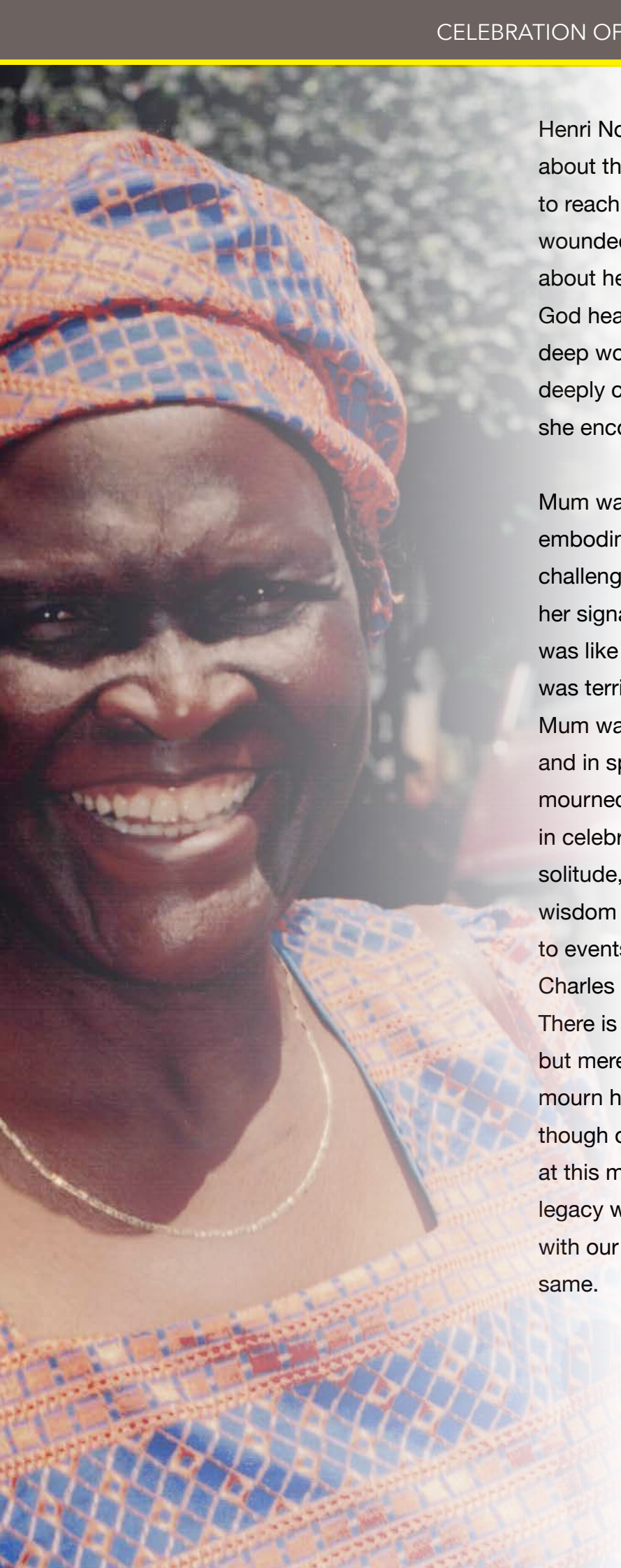
Generous, kind, loving, sweet, caring, honest, elegant, fastidious, brave, strong, bubbly, joyful, energetic, resilient, thoughtful, hopeful and selfless. These are a few of the words that consistently come up when people describe Mum. She was a fierce and formidable woman, our strength and anchor, our strict and loving mum when growing up and our friend and confidante as we transitioned into adulthood.

Growing up, Mum was a playful and kind mum. She played good cop to Dad's bad cop, but there was plenty of ear-pulling when needed. After Dad passed, we watched Mum overcome her natural quietness and unassuming nature to become our fiercest advocate, ensuring that we got all that we needed to have a good start in life. We remember her joy and relief when her last born, Charlie, graduated from University. She modelled to us what a real family was, by how she took care of our paternal grandma Susanna, and in how she related to all of our uncles aunts and cousins. Mum knew how to keep friends, and her dear friends from childhood and beyond are also our friends.

Mum gave birth to seven of us, but was a mum to many. She keenly followed each of our individual interests and knew all of our closest friends. Throughout her life, she bonded easily with people and took them into her heart, and into her home whenever they needed it. We've lost track of the number of people who've lived in our home (Mums home) for periods of up to months at a time. She helped our cousins and friends when they could not go to their own parents for help, or if they had lost their parents; Mum welcomed everyone without judgment. She simply loved being there for others and making their lives easier in any way she could. This was one of her greatest joys.

Mum dreamt big and for her, everything was possible. Although we embraced the library project we thought it too ambitious, but she rallied us, and kept us focused and encouraged when the task seemed overwhelming. As her children, we know from experience that once Mum set her mind on something, nothing would stop her.





Henri Nouwen, a renowned theologian, talks about the wounded healer, a person who is able to reach out to people from the place of their own woundedness. Mum would never have said this about herself, but she was a healer, she helped God heal wounded souls. She suffered some deep wounds in her life that allowed her to be deeply compassionate to the wounded people she encountered in the world.

Mum was the epitome of strength, the embodiment of resilience, who in the face of life's challenges, remained amiable and gracious with her signature smile that inspired many. Her laugh was like a burst of sunshine on a gloomy day and was terribly infectious. How we will miss this. Mum was our constant companion in person and in spirit. She walked with us in our success, mourned with us in our pain, danced with us in celebration, embraced us in quietness and solitude, rebuked us in love, counselled us with wisdom and many times simply accompanied us to events as our -plus-one. Our youngest brother Charles once described her as the perfect date. There is so much that can be said about our Mum, but mere words are woefully inadequate. We mourn her loss, but celebrate who she was. Even though our hearts are weighed down in sadness at this moment...hope rises within us. Mum's legacy will continue to live on. We will honor Mum with our lives, and we invite you all to do the same.

Memorial Service Programme

CITAM VALLEY ROAD, NAIROBI
WEDNESDAY 30th AUGUST 2017

- 08.00 Welcome Remarks
- 08.05 Processional Hymn - *"Higher Ground"*
- 08.10 Opening Hymn - "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross"
Opening Prayer
- 08.15 1st Scripture Reading - **Nicole Mwaura**
2nd Scripture Reading - **David Ogutu**
- 08.20 Reading of the Eulogy - **Charles Ouko**
- 08.30 Tributes from Family
Siblings (Asembo)
In-laws (Nyahera)
Children
Grandchildren
- 08.50 Tributes from Friends
Terry Onyango & Hellen Muga
Allison Gordon
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Representative
- 09.10 Congregational Hymn - *"It is Well with My Soul"*
- 09.15 Sermon - **Bishop Oginde**
- 09.35 Prayer for the Family - **Reverend Mbandu**
- 09.40 Offertory Hymns - *"Great is Thy Faithfulness"*
- 09.45 Vote of Thanks & Announcements - **Denis Randiak**
- 09.50 Commendation and Farewell - **Bishop Oginde**
- 10.00 Recessional Hymn - *"Nearer my God to Thee"*

Viewing of the body and departure for Koru

Burial Service Programme

KORU

THURSDAY 31st AUGUST 2017

- 10.00 Welcome
- 10.30 Opening Hymn - *“Areto Ka Awotho e Yoo”* (Church)
- 10.35 Opening Prayer - **Pastor Omwa**
- 10.40 Welcoming Remarks - **Reverend Were**
- 10.50 1st Scripture Reading - **Church Deacon**
2nd Scripture Reading - **Beatty Jamwaka**
- 11.00 Hymn - *“An Jawoth e Pinyini”*
- 11.05 Presentations - **Menara School & Dr. Robert Ouko Primary School Students**
- 11.15 **Tributes & Acknowledgements**
Kenya National Library Service
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science & Technology
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 11.45 **Speeches**
Ken Ouko
Allison Gordon
Maurice Seda
Martha Joseph
Douglas Oyieng
- 12.45 Choir - **AIC Koru**
- 12.55 Sermon - **Reverend Were**
- 13.00 Reading of the Eulogy - **Carol Ouko**
- 13.10 Prayers for the Family - **Reverend Mbandu**
- 13.15 Hymn - **Koru Girls School**
- 13.20 Prayers - **Reverend Omune** (AIC Ogada)
- 13.30 Vote of Thanks - **Denis Randiak**
- 13.40 Offertory & Last Respects
- 14.00 Burial Procession

Hymns

RUOTH TING'A MALO

Areto kawuotho e yo
Madhi malo ndalo duto
Kalamo pile mondo Ruoth
Oting'a malo molooyo

Ruotho, ting'a malo mond' achung'
Ka iye wecheni dutu
Med ting'a malo molooyo
Abed kapakoi pile

Chunya ok gomb siko e piny
Kama chich gi luoro nitie
To adwaro loyogi te
E malami ting'a malo

Adwaro loyo gik me piny
Ma Satani diwuondago
Loch mwaloyo go piny en yie
Genona ni kuomi pile

RUOTH NI KODA E YO DUTO

Ruoth ni koda e yo duto, Ere gi marem koro?
En Jatenda e piny kae, Nyaka ngimana duto
Kuwe gi hoch ayudo kuome; Awuotho kode pile;
Kata gi manade yuda, Yesu norita maber
Kata gi manade yuda, Yesu norita maber.

Ruoth ni koda e yo duto, Kata yo obet marach;
Nokonya e temruok duto; Nomiya chiemb chuny maler
Ka di po tienda dichwanyre, Enojuka gi luete;
Ka riyo oloyo chunya, Nomia pi mar ngima
Ka riyo ohewo chunya, Nomia pi mar ngima.

Ruoth ni koda e yo duto; An awuoro herane,
Mosesingona kar yueyo, Dala mar Nyasaye Wuora;
Anayud ngima mochwere, ka wuodha me piny rumo;
"Ruoth notelna yo duto," Nobed wenda nyaka chieng'
"Ruoth notelna yo duto," Nobed wenda nyaka chieng.



Pallbearers

Ken Ouko Ron Misiko

Andrew Ouko David Ogutu

Charles Ouko Jonathan Ogutu

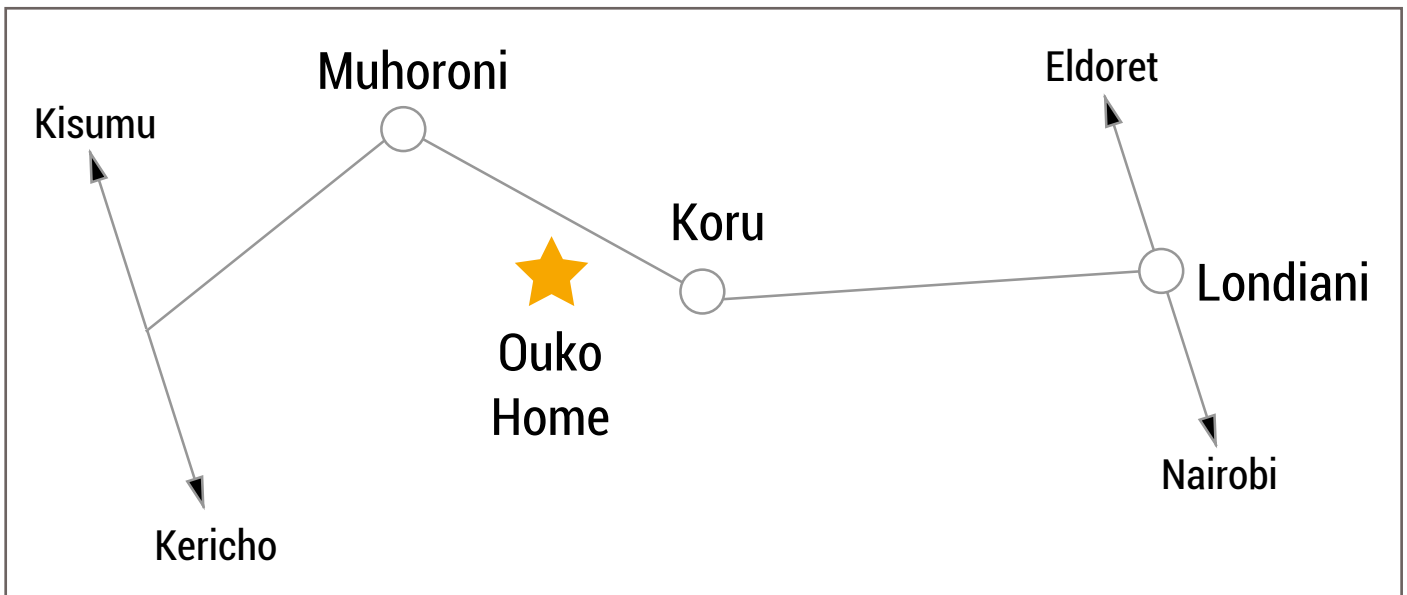
Bob Mwaura Mailu Musila

Francis Ogutu Christian John Misiko

Francis Musila Alex Mwaura

Seda Wema

Map to Koru



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For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

2nd Corinthians 5:1