

TRIBUTE TO BA ANTHONY MULENGA ZIMBA

Ba Anthony Mulenga Zimba was something else. I remember him as very friendly, always smiling, active man when I first met him in Singapore in July 2007 at the 27th International Epilepsy Congress. I had gone to that meeting with another Ugandan colleague to inaugurate the Epilepsy Society of Uganda as a Chapter in the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).



Dr. Angelina with Ba Anthony at the Singapore International Epilepsy Congress July 2007

Ba Anthony was very excited that Uganda had become a Chapter of the ILAE since he was aware that it was already a Chapter of the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE). He expressed to me his desires that his country Zambia would soon follow suit but still had some hurdles to overcome. Over the years Ba Anthony became a good friend, and advisor to me since he had been longer in the African cause for the persons with epilepsy. We met regularly at several other epilepsy congress meetings and he was one of the members that was instrumental in contributing to the establishment of the first Commission on African Affairs (CAA) of the ILAE held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2010. Ba Anthony had Africa at heart and the people with epilepsy always on his mind. This was obvious even when he was sometimes misunderstood for being obstinate and pompous when he spoke his mind about what he felt was the best approach to handling contentious issues. He often told me "Look Angelina my sister, as Africans we know our issues, and these are best solved by us, Africans".

The epilepsy world has lost a good father for its cause, especially for the African continent. I have felt a deep vacuum overwhelm me since I learned of his passing. But I'm getting through with time by reminding myself of the enthusiasm that Ba Anthony left behind, and the many lives he touched not only in Zambia where he practiced but internationally with whoever he interacted with. This memorial is a time for happiness, a time to celebrate his life, but that doesn't mean it isn't depressing. Ba Anthony could best be described as a torch, which is a stick with combustible material at one end, that is ignited and used as a light source. In ancient Roman times some torches were made of Sulphur mixed with lime which meant that the fire it emitted would not diminish after being plunged into water. We wish to keep a similar torch that Ba Anthony set aflame for Africa burning, and also

ensure that it be a source of hope and enlightenment for the struggle for improved epilepsy care in Africa.



Dr. Angelina with Ba Anthony and other colleagues from Kenya at the Budapest International Epilepsy Congress, July 2009. (From left, Dr. Anthony Ngugi, Dr Caroline Mbuba)

I hope you will join me in remembering and celebrating Ba Anthony today and always. Today is our chance to say thank you for the way he brightened our lives, with his humor, stories and passion for the cause that no person's life is limited by epilepsy.



Dr. Angelina with Ba Anthony at the 1st International Workshop on Onchocerciasis-associated epilepsy held in Antwerp, Belgium, October 2017

May you rest in eternal peace, comrade Ba Anthony Mulenga Zimba.

Dr. Angelina Kakooza Mwesige
Chair, ILAE-Africa,
Past President Epilepsy Society of Uganda.