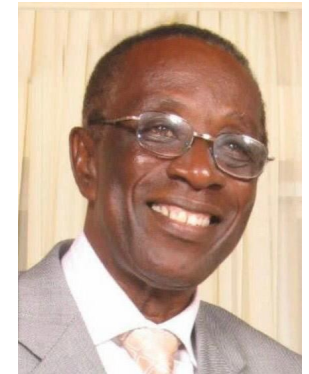




His Excellency
Judge Thomas A
Mensah



Gershon Edward
Kwami
(aka Kukulenu)



Ebenezer
Nii Otu Djan
Tetteh
(aka Alatee - Don
Bonano Tettesia)



**TRIBUTE TO AKORA DR THOMAS MENSAH
(OAA 1951)**

(By Ken Agra – OAA'71)

Akora Dr Thomas Mensah was the chairman of the OAA-UK from April 2009 to April 2012. During that time, I was lead trustee of the now defunct Achimota Trust UK, the then charitable arm of the OAA-UK. So, I, representing the trustees, worked in collaboration with him, in the interest of the association, and by extension, the alma mater, Achimota School.

Uncle Thomas, as he was affectionately called, became chairman during a period when the OAA UK was going through difficult times. Using his experience in arbitration skills, he was able to steer the association to reconciliation in a calm and thoughtful, but authoritative manner, with wisdom and empathy, building on the good work of his predecessor, Akora Professor Felix Konotey-Ahulu. He was a great support to the Achimota Trust UK in clarifying its relationship with the OAA-UK.

Uncle Thomas was a diplomat, an intellectual, and the world's leading judge, adjudicator and arbitrator in the settlement of international maritime disputes. Despite his very busy and hectic international duties and assignments, he never missed any of the OAA UK annual reunion and lunch meetings on the first Saturday after Easter each year, during his three year term of office. In fact, so committed was he to the role that he hosted a couple of extra committee meetings in their beautiful home in Finchley. His lovely wife, Akora Mrs Akosua Mensah, popularly known as Auntie Akos, gave him her full support. I cannot forget the sumptuous meals Auntie Akos provided during those meetings in their home.

In spite of him being held in very high esteem and being in demand across the world for his knowledge of maritime law, Uncle Thomas remained such a humble man, with no airs around him. He was a gentleman, very friendly and very easily approachable, pragmatic and principled. He stood for the truth and was never afraid to say what was right.

Akora Dr Thomas Mensah was living water to a very thirsty land. Achimota and Ghana have lost a great and illustrious son. Gone, but not forgotten.

Rest in perfect peace, Uncle Thomas.

**TRIBUTE TO UNCLE TOMMY
(From the Kwapong Girls)**

Judge Thomas Aboagye Mensah was our Uncle Tommy. He was our mother's classmate in Achimota and they formed a strong bond which lasted till she passed away in April 2019.

Their friendship spanned almost seven decades, throughout their travels and relocations all over the world. It encompassed their spouses, children, immediate and extended families as well as the members of their beloved OAA 1951 year group.

Uncle Tommy had been our father, Alex Kwapong's student twice; at Achimota and at Legon and they too developed a strong and unique bond. When we were sent abroad to our various schools in England our parents asked Uncle Tommy and Auntie Akosua to be our unofficial guardians. We will always have the strongest and most enduring memories of our time as teenagers at their home in Golders Green, and of the countless times when we returned as adults. We always looked for-

other by Zoom , we heard that he had been taken from us.

Ebenezer Nii Otu Djan Tetteh, made an impression very early on as he chose to be known to his classmates as Nii Otu rather than by his Christian name. However, in time, we all came to know him as Alatee, or Latee for short. In his early years in

Achimota he was carefree, cheerful and always ready with an impish smile for Father Collishaw when he was caught causing mischief in class – and there was plenty of that! Those of us who shared a classroom with him remember that face well – the gentle, but mischievous smile, the dimples, his eyes animated as he hopped from desk to desk at prep time generating endless rounds of laughter and bewilderment.

As a nino boy in September 1972, he was placed in Aggrey House, where only the tough made it through their first term unscathed. It was within this crucible that his character was forged and enduring memories of him formed. To those of us close to him, he was always a dependable dear friend, around whom laughter was a constant. To those more distant, however, the impressions may have bordered more on notorious than popular.

Mr Boafor (aka Zors), his housemaster, had many encounters with Latee. As the stories go, Zors often addressed him by his now legendary nickname Alatee, to the chagrin, then, of all the other boys in the house. That generation of Aggrey House boys are of the unshakeable belief that GX51 (Zors's brand new Renault 4 at the time) was fitted with Alatee sensors! On a visit to Achimota in 2017, a classmate was introduced to a teacher, who turned out to be Mr Boafor's daughter, born during Alatee's time in Aggrey House. When the visitor identified himself as a member of the '77 year group, she immediately made the connection with Alatee. It was obvious that her father had

recounted stories of Alatee to her.

Alatee loved English Literature and could easily lose himself in the world of the books he read, inhabiting their times, spaces and personalities. Thus it was that in time he acquired the name Don Bonano Tettesia from his reading of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. Even as a teenager, he clearly saw himself as a man of considerable influence and control.

It is interesting that Alatee returned to the school for a brief period as a teacher in training.

There are people whom one grows up with and one remembers just as the person in front of them. With Alatee, it is difficult to put into words the presence he has amongst his peers. Everyone has a story to tell about him – and some more.

For those of us who met him in London after school, we were treated to an ever-evolving version of the man, though the young person we remembered never left our minds. He spent several years enjoying a heady lifestyle of work, international travel and socialising. Unfortunately, these gave way to periods of isolation, as the trauma of life and health issues took their toll, causing him to withdraw.

Throughout these life challenges, Nii Otu, gentle as always, maintained a dignified and respectful persona. For many of us, it is his intellect, generosity, sense of humour and altogether "larger-than-life" presence that remain.

We are so blessed to have known Alatee and our lives have certainly been touched by him. Within our Jubilee Year Group family, he will always be missed, and affectionately remembered.

Alatee – Don Bonano Tettesia – may your gentle soul forever be at rest.

ward to visiting them. Their home in Golders Green was a true refuge and sanctuary. It was warm and welcoming, a home away from home, full of love and affection for us as well as many other friends, relatives and their children who over time passed through London.

Uncle Tommy was somewhat quiet, but had a wicked sense of humour. He was an incredibly kind and generous man who loved to take us all out to lovely restaurants on special occasions. He was also a very witty conversationalist, who always took the time to listen to our views and ideas.

When we lost our Dad in 2014, Uncle Tommy stood with us through the various events as a calming and comforting influence; his help through it all was invaluable.

We are blessed and fortunate to have known and been loved by Uncle Tommy and welcomed into his family circle.

We were devastated by the news of his passing, but comforted by the knowledge that he is in a better place. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Auntie Akosua, Victor, Frances, Peter, Afrakoma and Akwasi.

Rest in Perfect Peace Dear Uncle Tommy

Korantema, Oseiwa, Opokua, Adumea, Faake and Kweiki

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES IN TRIBUTE TO MR GERSHON EDWARD KWAMI FROM HIS STUDENTS

(From Justin V.E. Williams – OAA '78)

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kwami almost at the beginning of my seven years in Achimota School. He was the choir director for the Roman Catholic Choir at the school, which I joined in Form 1 and stayed in until Form 3. I remember his faithfulness to the choir and dedication to the quality of the songs we produced. Even though we were sometimes troublesome and intentionally mispronounced some of the songs we did in Latin, he patiently corrected us, although at the time we mistakenly did not think he was patient. I personally owe a significant portion of my continued interest in singing to him.

Always seeking to encourage the development of talent, he sought me and others to join the Aggrey Memorial Choir to celebrate the school's 50th anniversary in 1977. Thinking I was too busy, I did not join then, to my regret today. That in itself has taught me not to let an opportunity pass me by when offered by someone older and more experienced!

Not one to relent in inviting others to the world of good music, he re-extended the invitation to the choir when I returned for sixth form, which a changed boy with even more responsibility gladly joined this time. I thoroughly enjoyed this time when he adroitly balanced keeping a bunch of near-to-post-teen children on task while teaching and directing melodious but sometimes difficult songs with complex arrangements, especially when preparing us for the School's annual Nine Lessons and Carols. I personally think his arrangement of the ending for "We Wish

You a Merry Christmas” for the Christmas of 1979 was a class act. Now that I have had to teach and direct choirs of my own, I have a new and greater appreciation for this man we sometimes took for granted.

Mr. Gershon Kwami is dear to my heart and will be missed.

(From William Chapman-Nyaho – aka Chappie – OAA ‘75)

As the years pass by, I grow more and more acutely aware of the teachers and mentors on whose shoulders I stand. One of these teachers was Mr. Kwami, wonderful violinist, dedicated teacher, mentor and all around, one the most jovial faculty members at Achimota during my time as student. Mr. Kwami was so kind to me, so encouraging, he always had a wonderful smile for me. The impact Mr. Kwami had on my life remains to this day, half a century later.

I thank him, I shall miss him.

(From Nicky Coker – OAA ‘77)

As time goes by, memories fade, but nearly 50 years after we had the honour and privilege of meeting and living with Mr G E Kwami in Achimota School, my memories of him are as vivid and fresh as ever. I was a scrawny teenager in McCarthy House and “Kukulenu”, as he was affectionately nicknamed, was our housemaster. To this day I have no idea what the nickname meant or stood for. It wasn’t a name you dared call him to his face, but it invoked in us, his wards, a feeling of someone we could trust and feel at ease with.

Mr Kwami was a great housemaster on so many fronts. He instilled in us a sense of brotherliness, be it on the sports field, man-

aging the grounds and gardens, or by just stopping over for a friendly chat. He was also a brilliant musician and choirmaster and I have fond memories of him directing and conducting singing competitions, carol services and those iconic Gilbert and Sullivan operas. He nurtured and saw us through those most important formative years of our lives.

The old boys (and girls) of McCarthy House thank you, Mr Kwami! Rest in perfect peace.

(From Abraham Hodgson – OAA ‘77)

Mr Kwami was our House Master (McCarthy House) at Achimota School from 1972 to 1979.

He was a father figure who encouraged us to be well behaved and to take our education seriously and live as a family, accepting one another as family members.

He was very much involved in house activities especially gardening and even though we did not win the gardening competition, we were singled out as the house that had made the greatest transformation to its grounds.

He paid regular visits to the House to see how things were going on and how we were faring. He took special interest in the wellbeing of students in the house especially those with medical conditions.

He kept an open door and students were welcome to his house to discuss issues of concern. He always had a cheerful smile and a welcoming voice. He once jokingly said at a house meeting that he was aware that he had been given a nickname which had a lot of K’s and L’s in it!

As a music master, he guided us in our preparations for the inter-house singing competition and the song we learnt, Sumsum sori, we

are informed it continued to be sang at house devotions long after we had left school.

We will remember him for his fatherly love, care and guidance which has contributed to our achievements in life.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.

(From Richard Nartey – OAA’77 & Maca House Boy)

I was introduced to Mr Kwame from way before I actually came to form 1, as he was next door neighbour to family friend Mr Hanson Nortey, Achimota School sports master. Mr Kwame was a true gentleman, tough with the “hard boys” but commanding all our respect with his calm composure and inclusive manner.

We are eternally grateful to the one and only “Kukulenu” we know for the opportunity to enjoy being a student under his care.

(From Ama Ackah-Yensu – née Ackom-Mensah – OAA 1977)

In the last few years of his life, I was hugely privileged to have spent some time with Mr Kwami. I had heard that he’d lost his sight but tried not to dwell on it. I turned up unannounced on his doorstep in Winneba and as I waited patiently (and more than a little anxiously!) for him to come to the living room, I just did not know what to expect. And then there he was. I called out his name and he exclaimed in return, “Ama, is that really you?”.

Caring as ever, even before he sat down, he was asking whether I’d been offered a drink etc. He also wanted to know how I was coping with my mum’s recent death (he’d heard about it and had asked his wife to represent

him at her funeral). That was the measure of the man.

We reminisced about the good old days in Achimota – music appreciation (do we even have such subjects anymore?) singsongs in his home, trips to the British Council for concerts, the Aggrey Chapel choir, the school’s Golden Jubilee..... and then he asked me to help him up and to my surprise, he went and sat at his piano, started playing and invited me to sing with him. We went through hymns, folk songs, a bit of Gilbert and Sullivan... The joy he felt was palpable. His face was beaming; his voice boomed and his fingers flew effortlessly over the piano keys – he had lost none of his verve. It was as though he’d been transported back to his living room in Achimota, surrounded by his students, friends and colleagues. For me, it was the most precious of times. If only we could have captured the magic of that moment and bottled it! All too soon, it was time to go. When I returned to London, we kept in touch, although it shames me to say he phoned me more often than I did him.

I never saw him again, but I am forever grateful to God for our paths having crossed and I’m certain that Kukulenu is making His mark in the Heavenly Music School!

TRIBUTE TO AKORA EBENEZER NII OTU DJAN TETTEH
(From the ‘Jubilee ‘77 Year Group)

Losing one of our own this year has hit us hard and, for it to be someone of such unforgettable temperament, a character who created such laughter wherever he went, is doubly painful.

Alatee had just entered his 60th year. Just as we were getting used to celebrating each