

TRIBUTE TO A FELLOW REGENTONIAN: Mr. Frederick Jonathan Babatunde Macfoy (6398)

By Desmond Spain

Fredrick, Jonathan, Babatunde, Macfoy - The Man, Ferro, Mr. Macfoy.

When I referred to him as Ferro he would reply Usis, and when I called him Mr. Macfoy he would retort Mr. Spain.



He was quite simply, an outstanding gentleman- his behaviour was exemplary, and he was virtuous, respectful, kind, honest and modest. Prudence directed him, Temperance chastened him, justice was the guide of all his actions and he endured his illness with great fortitude. I know all his life he strived to excel in what was good.

I am not usually a man of many words and I am sure there are more apt adjectives and orators to do him justice, but, 'Honour's voice cannot provoke the silent dust, nor can flattery sooth the dull cold air of death. If it were so, my friend, will still be physically here with us.

We all know Ferro was friendly- I don't know anyone with as many God children as him and he played his part in all their lives, unlike some of us.

Ferro was not only nice, he was gifted in the art of conversation, although with me it was more like arguments. He always had time and an ear for all. He would talk with someone he has just met as if he had known that person for years. He was my housemate when I met my wife who later believed Ferro was her brother-in-law, they had a common interest - Coronation Street

I got to know Ferro over 40 years ago when we worked at the then Barclays Bank of Sierra Leone. Those were fun times, the good old days, most probably the best days of our lives. We went out virtually every day of the week to bars, clubs, and parties, drinking, dancing and having fun with no care in the world. In those early days the thought of coming to leave in England never crossed our minds. We had a Manager we would sometimes meet in the clubs and he would buy us drinks. On most occasions we were at our desk before the Manager, but come the morning after the night he had bought you drinks he would be the first man in the office looking for the late comers. We learned to respect our career and no matter how late we stayed out we turned up for work the next day and on time. I know Fred's colleagues from Camden Council are here, Fred developed his good work ethos from those Barclays days. He would never stay at home off work if he was not seriously unwell.

I have touched on the conviviality of Ferro- But that also suggests there are friends who would have known him far longer than me. I stand here today, to pay this last sad tribute of respect to departed merit, and say , that we are fortunate to have

known Ferro and to have been counted amongst his friends. I also pray that we will be able to emulate what was praiseworthy in him as we continue life without a dear friend, drawing something positive from this sad loss.

I have been referring to Fred /Tunde as Ferro. There are those who think he was baptised Ferro, others think it was Pharaoh as in the Bible. Indeed we have a friend who used to say 'Pharaoh Let my people go' implying that he was rather too prolific and he should leave the ladies alone. I must admit he was rather a ladies man and always scored leaving us jealous. To his defence he was just a nice guy. He was a very good footballer and got that name after a Brazilian footballer. He liked sports and was a good swimmer, played cricket, table tennis, volley ball and squash. I did not know him to play golf but I am sure as a kid he must have played botkidi and was good at it. A mutual friend taught us to play squash. I started playing before him, so he was playing catch up. To cut a long story short I never enjoyed playing squash with Ferro because he never liked to loose.

He loved his music. Those of us who grew up in Sierra Leone are quite versatile in our appreciation of a range of music style. He liked Otis Redding and I liked Percy Sledge, he was a reggae man, I was into funk. He was a Liverpool supporter and I am a Manchester united, sorry was a Manchester United now Crystal Palace and Leicester supporter, just a few of the subjects we would deliberate/ argue on. We spoke on the phone every day and I believe we found things to argue over as a way of keeping the conversation going. Sometimes it was a genuine difference of opinion, at other times it was made up, for e.g., if I say this is black he would say it looked more like grey. Even when we ended an argument with 'man you too lek for argue, the other would say 'you lek for argue pass me and guess what, the argument will start again.



Ferro was also very neat and tidy. When I visited and was served, drinks had to be on top of coasters. To provoke him I would take a drink and then put the glass down deliberately avoiding the coaster. He would not say a word, but will take a tissue which would be nearby, wipe the table and deliberately put the glass on top of the coaster.

Ferro loved people and he loved his family and friends. He lived his life respected, his passing has been a great shock to us, and has served to express that gloom which rests on the prospect of futurity. As Christians, we are taught to believe in the wise dispensation of divine providence and this belief strengthens our faith- so let us not weep as if we have no faith, for, as in 2nd Samuel chapt 12, we prayed and wept when Tunde was alive and in pain, and we had hope. Now that he has gone, can crying bring him back again? We shall go to him but he shall not return to us. He has gone to meet that merciful Judge, and we hope that his spirit will be raised to immortal life and everlasting bliss.

Ladies and Gentlemen this our transitory life shall pass away so let's live in peace with each other, and I shall leave you with the words of Gray's Elegy-

**'The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'**

Thank you