

Tribute to a distinguished Regentonian, brother, father, cousin, and friend: Mr. Maitland Olumide Ekundayo Cole (6548) February 18, 1952- October 30, 2014.

By

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*“Begone Unbelief
My Savior is near
And for my relief
Will surely appear:
By prayer let me wrestle
And he will perform,
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm.”*

MAITLAND O.E. COLE

The words quoted above, coined by John Newton, so many, many years ago brought new meaning to me when I received the saddest news ever at 3:15 a.m. on Thursday, October 30, 2014. The melody of this powerful hymn still resonates with me as I struggle to find courage to acknowledge the inevitability of death.

I am paying this tribute etched with an intricate combination of emotions. My esteemed brother and best friend, Mr. Maitland Olumide Ekundayo Cole, was the product of Mr. Nathaniel J.O. Cole and Mrs. Betsy Mushopeh Cole; both of blessed memory. With Maitland’s passing, the world has been dealt a devastating blow.

Maitland, a man who will be famous for his charisma and social prominence, started his earthly journey on February 18, 1952. His educational trip included Holy Trinity Boys School, Samaria Primary School, Sierra Leone Grammar School, Fourah Bay College, Milton Margai Teachers

College, Friendship University in Moscow, and other reputable educational establishments in Cuba and Great Britain.

Maitland was talented, kind, compassionate and hardworking. Paradoxically, and especially as a student at the Sierra Leone Grammar School, even though he possessed those admirable qualities listed above, he, however, did not take any nonsense from anyone and had very low tolerance for disrespectful behaviours. He would set you straight in a minute and, as a matter of fact, after he has thoroughly dealt with you, you would wish you never started a fight that you could neither win nor finish. He wore the Grammar School colours proudly like his father and siblings did, including a sister, Ernestine, who completed her sixth form at this noble institution and four brothers: Nathaniel, Uchendu, Columbus and Desmond who all received quality educational experiences at the Sierra Leone Grammar School.

While pursuing his studies at the Milton Margai Teachers College, Maitland's political astuteness was publicly acknowledged when he was overwhelmingly voted in as President of the entire student body. He used that platform to promote his political aspirations and his philosophy reflected his belief in an inclusive society which would allow for meaningful, responsible, and purposeful living. He was quite sensitive to the fact that society is heavily laced with struggles of all sorts; hence his favorite maxim, "The struggle continues unabated." He relentlessly played a pivotal role in alleviating the "struggles" of many. I, personally give thanks for the fulfilling existence of a gentleman of whom I am proud to be able to call my "Big Brother." His bubbling personality complemented his passion for life and his unwavering faith in God.

As a teacher, Maitland was an instructional giant as well as a catalyst for change. He performed his professional duties and responsibilities according to practices that were consistent with established policies and procedures. He facilitated communication between the home and the school by being proactive and also advocated very strongly for his students in order to boost their self-efficacy, while demonstrating professional competence through collaboration as opposed to competition. He used a variety of performance-based tasks to design, monitor, and adjust his instructional paradigm to enhance the educational experiences of his students.

As a journalistic reporter with the Ministry of Information and Communications, Maitland was exceptional! He used the journalism pulpit to transform the information department by challenging his colleagues to deal more swiftly and transparently with controversial issues and concerns that surfaced. He was quite adept at gathering facts and organizing them in a way that was relevant, useful, and beneficial to various audiences. He demonstrated an excellent understanding of the asymmetrical relationship between journalist and audience, and always provided an accurate, well-balanced explanation of the stories he covered.

As an Information Attache in Moscow, Russia, Maitland was undoubtedly a resilient liaison, a respected representative, and an effective communicator. He possessed a wealth of knowledge about foreign policies and maintained strong personal and professional bonds among all stakeholders. He made several trips to Freetown, London, and the United States to check on

family and friends. His warmth, contagious laughter, outgoing spirit and keen sense of humour made so many people happy and may those personal attributes be the lasting impression in the minds of the people with whom he interacted.

Maitland was predeceased by some phenomenal people that meant the world to him. While this list is by no means exhaustive, the following are of utmost significance: his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel and Betsy Cole, his oldest sister, Mrs. Cleopatra Omobomi Cole, his infant son, one of the twins, Roland Cole, and his wife, Virginia Cole.

Among a host of friends, colleagues, associates, too numerous to mention, are Mary Johnson, his Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Rev. Wilfred Kabs-Kanu, Mr. Gabriel Johnson, Mr. Sylvanus Maddy and Mr. Prince Nelson Thomas.

Though last but by no means the least, he leaves the following awesome people behind to celebrate his fulfilling life and cherish his laudable legacy:

His sons:

Ronald, Ekundayo, Nathaniel, Aki and Joseph; please rest assured that your father loved you, cared about your welfare, and talked endlessly about his “boys.”

His siblings:

Mrs. Betsy Ayo Cole-Deen

Mrs. Ernestine Foster-Jones

Mr. Nathaniel J. O. Cole (Mrs. Mary Cole)

Dr. Uchendu David Akinola-Cole (Dr. Claudia Marcella Cole)

Mr. Columbus Cole

Mr. Desmond Cole (Mrs. Admire Cole); and

Mrs. Sylvia Sesay

We know that our brother was an amazingly charismatic individual who will be missed tremendously!

Other very close relatives include the Cole, Buck, Lisk, Deen, Foster-Jones, John, Thomas, Egbetayo, Williams, Duncan, Clarke, Taylor-Smith, Wurie and Johnson families.

To God be the glory and may Maitland’s gentle soul continue to rest in perfect peace!

Eternal Rest: November 25, 2014