

AMBASSADOR CHIEF 'DEINDE FERNANDEZ.

Chief 'Dehinde Fernandez was a proud descendant of the Olumegbon Royal Family of Lagos Island, whose ancestry dates back to the 17th Century. The family are predominantly Moslems and this is obvious in the home and properties of the business tycoon, which are adorned with Islamic decorations and artifacts. He was born to Mr Gamut Akinwale and Mrs Juliana Fernandez in 1936 and he started his education at Holy Cross Primary School in Igboere, Lagos, from where he proceeded to the CMS Grammar School in Bariga and later to St Gregory's College, Obalende. His overseas academic sojourn was at Brooklyn College and St John's University in the United Kingdom.

He was until his demise the Apesin Ola (Onije Onimu) of Egbaland. His vast investment globally included a 340 Square Kilometer Diamond Plant in Angola and was the Ambassador-At-Large for Congo, Angola and Mozambique and also the United Nations Permanent Representative for Central African Republic. His numerous laurels and dignified titles are intimidating. He was the Grand Officer de l'Ordre, National du Leopard, Grand Officer de l'Ordre National du Merite du Gabon; Officer du Quissam Alaouile; Grand Officer de l'Order du Merite, Centrafricain, Ambassador , Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was an African per Excellence and exemplified one of the very best in the continent.

Chief Dehinde Fernandez was a tall, elegant, handsome and stupendously rich business magnate and tycoon who towered far above his compatriots and competitors. He commanded immediate attention everywhere and his appearance was quite intimidating. He cherished his walking sticks made of gold, white gold, coral, ivory, ebony and rubies, which was one of his trademark appearance. It is noteworthy that he migrated to the United States of America when he was barely 18 years old and made his mark early in life in importation of solid minerals from Jos, Plateau State to the USA. Unfortunately, he has limited investments in Nigeria, due to what could be ascribed to the bureaucracy entrenched in the system and other associated negative factors. However, he owned the prestigious edifice known as Fernandez Towers in Onikan, Lagos.

He owned the luxury yacht "Yemoja", which is a two-storey spectacular beauty both in its exterior and interior. He also owned 6 private jets (two Gulfstreamer G4 and 900 Boeing), which enabled him to travel globally to attend to his several investments, liaise with world leaders and still maintain a larger than life presence at the United Nations. He loved his vintage wine and was a great connoisseur of wines and he had a cellar with the best stock that can be found anywhere in the planet. He was also an Art Collector and he had a very good collection of artworks by Nigerian and globally celebrated Artists.

In the words of Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, who was formerly Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, "Chief Fernandez was a very devoted compatriot and a great Son Of Africa. My hope is that he will set up a solid Foundation for sustaining future leaders of the Continent in economy and public administration, the press and others to help all those institutions that help sustain Democracy." He was indeed in truth and decipherable facts a proud citizen of Nigeria and a son of Africa.

Chief Fernandez died on Day of. 2015, and was buried in. . He was survived by and children, which included our own adorable and elegant Chief Teju Phillips, who has and continues to make her mark in politics and business and can be appropriately described as "A Quintessential Business Woman of repute". She was. and. in the Institute of Directors (IOD), Nigeria and presently is the Vice President of Eko Foundation, which has continued to champion the cause of marginalization of Lagos State Indigenes within their socio-political geographical configuration.

We pray that the soul of Ajinijini Ogun Ambassadeur Chief Antonio 'Dehinde Fernandez will Rest-In-Peace, the Almighty God will forgive him his sins and his descendants will continue to excel in all aspects of their lives. Adieu, to an Excellent Lagosian, proud Nigerian and one of the very few that can be described as Citizen of the Continent of Africa.

'Kunle Uthman,
Gen. Secretary,
Eko Foundation.