



SPECIAL FEATURE:
LATE KANGE RAYMOND KAHNGE
 (1973-2019)

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Biography

Birth

Shortly after graduating from the Nigerian Police Academy in Kaduna in 1959, and eventually getting enlisted into the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), as it was then referred to, a call of duty took Mr. James Yuwa Kange to Gboko, a part of the then Tiv Native Authority. He would go on to serve as an undercover agent in the 'Tiv Riots of 1963', one of many political crises that engulfed Nigeria at the time. It was while on active duty that his 'sharp and active' eyes beheld a

beautiful damsel. In April 1966, Mbayiman Rachel Tolough, having completed her year seven (7) the previous year, got married to James Yuwa Kange. The young couple were blessed with their first child the following year.

It was the wish of Kange Atsu, the grandfather, knowing he was terminally ill, that should the baby his son and wife were expecting turn out to be a boy, he should be named after him. On December 8th 1973 when they gave birth to their fourth child, a son in Obalande, Lagos, James and Rachel did Kange Atsu, who had passed earlier on in the same year, the posthumous honour of naming him 'KANGE'. Kange later adopted an additional name, 'RAYMOND', following his baptism and acceptance into the New Church of Christ of the Sudan Amongst the Tiv (NKST), also referred to as URCC,

in 1990.

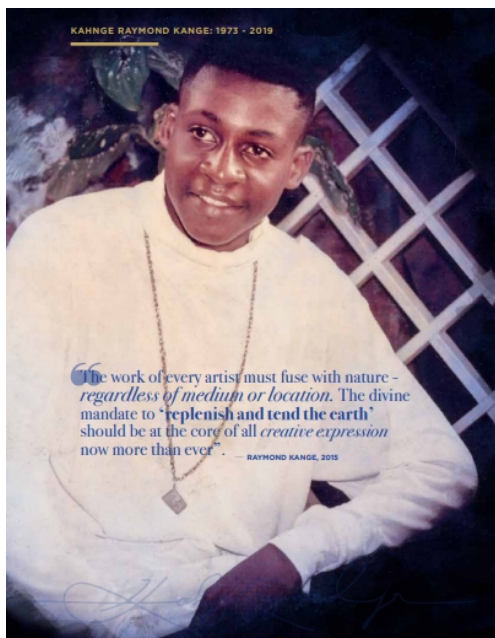
Education, Practice and Experience

Kange Raymond 'Wanbaba' Kange Jr got enrolled into Victory Home School, Ikeja, Lagos in 1979. Following the demise of James Yuwa Kange on August 6th 1981, the young family he left behind relocated to Gboko, Benue State. As a result, his schooling, just like that of some of his siblings, was partially disrupted. After a single term at St. Francis Primary School, Gboko, he was enrolled into Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Memorial Nursery & Primary School, Gboko in 1982. After graduating from RFK in 1985, he proceeded to W.M. Bristow Secondary School, Gboko. While at Bristow, he was the Director, International Relations, Interact Club (the most junior version of Rotary Club International) and also Chief Cartoonist, Press Club. When he graduated in 1991, he did so as the Overall Best Fine Arts Student, carting away prizes and awards meant for such a graduate accordingly.

It is pertinent to note that Raymond's talismanic gift for visual and creative arts started manifesting at quite an early age. As Mama would later narrate, she would ignorantly scold and discourage little Wanbaba from tracing his Fine Arts homework, despite his insistence that he drew them live. It was on one of those occasions when she would supervise the homework of her children, that Mama, in retrospect, not only expressed regrets

over her previous 'harassment' of Raymond, but fully accepted and embraced the fact that her little son was naturally artistically gifted.

When Raymond missed the chance to start his higher education at University of Nigeria, Nsukka following his success at JAMB, he sought and got admitted into College of Education, Katsina-Ala, Benue State to read Fine Arts, Education in 1992. For the entire period of his studies between 1992 and 1996 when he graduated, he was also involved in some extra-curricular activities. He served as Secretary General, Association of Fine Arts Students. He did his mandatory teaching practice at Queen of the Rosary Secondary School, Gboko in 1994.



In 1996, out of a desire to be self-sufficient and also further hone his skills, he went into full time practice as an artist and creative consultant by immediately registering a company with the Corporate Affairs Commission, Atsu Ventures Design Firm, Gboko. Between this period up to 2000, he designed and produced letterheads, logos, cards, calendars, complimentary/business cards, billboards, signposts, magazine covers for individuals, schools, corporate bodies and government agencies. He did not only conceptualise and develop landscape designs for residential and recreation centres, but also completed several portraiture commissions in wood etching, pencil and various painting media.

After a highly mobile and nomadic life as a practising artist and consultant, Raymond once again thought to further his education. He gained admission into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 2000, where he read Industrial Design (Bachelor of Science) and graduated in 2004 as 'The Best Graduating Student, Department of Industrial Design. He also got the 'President's Award, Society of Industrial Design Students, ABU Zaria'.

He would once again venture into full time practise as an artist and consultant after his first degree by joining Hassan Balarabe Design Nig. Ltd, Zaria, Kaduna, a company established by one of his mentors and lecturer. Here too, they executed a number of projects, not limited, but to include: billboards; cautionary and directional signs for Gombe State University; billboards for Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Shika; over four hundred (400) assorted traffic and advance directional signs for Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), Abuja; over four hundred (400) traffic and information signs for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; two (2) directional signs and twenty five (25) street name signs for NITT, Zaria; and passenger tickets, jackets and luggage tags for Guinea Equatorial Airline.

It was during his second stint into full time practice that he proceeded for his Master of Arts degree in Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University where he graduated with a distinction. Before completing his studies in 2011, he took up an appointment as Lecturer III, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Federal College of Education, Zaria in October 2010. As a lecturer, he taught a number of courses to include: Computer Graphics, Basic Photography; Graphics; and Advanced Graphics. He also served as the Department's Assistant Examinations Officer, Project Coordinator & Examinations Officer at different periods respectively. In 2015, Raymond transferred his services to the Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State. He continued as a Lecturer in the Department of Visual and Creative Arts. Until his demise, he was Head of Section, Graphics. He was also the Assistant Editor of 'Resonance', a bi-annual publication of the Department of Visual and Creative Arts, Federal University of Lafia.

Publications, Conferences Attended, Art Exhibitions, Other Awards, Professional Memberships

As a teacher and consummate academic, Raymond had a myriad of publications to his name, majorly “Exploring Medical Pictograms For Effective Hospital Signage: Implications For Practical Application”, published by Lambert Academic Publishing, Saabruken, Germany; and “The Underrepresentation of Female Characters In Nigerian Cartoons”, published in International Journal of Comic Arts, Temple University, USA. Raymond also had a number of published and unpublished poems and prose to his name. Raymond participated in numerous indigenous and international conferences, the last of them being 'Nigerian Christian Art Workshop' at Bethany Resort, Gboko, Benue State. He also participated in numerous art exhibitions to include: EDSA Week Exhibition, 2010; Scopes & Forms, 2011; and Exhibition By Final Year Students, November 2019, being the last of such he would participate in. His last official and professional appearance was with colleagues at the Board Meeting of the Faculty of Arts, Federal University of Lafia, which took place last week of November 2019.



Kange Raymond Kahnge, *Pictographic Directional signs with Bilingual Inscriptions for Hospital Communication System*. Modified 2016. Source: Kange Raymond

Raymond won other awards due to his creativity and writing. They include: 'Creative Writers' Club Award for Poetry' (1st Prize), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2010; and 'ABU 50th Anniversary Commemorative Stamp Competition' (1st Prize), ABU Zaria, 2013. Raymond was a member of the Society of Nigerian Artists; and Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA).



Kange Raymond Kahnge, *Lassa Fever Awareness campaign poster Designed for Nasarawa State*. Year: 2017. Source: Kange Raymond



Kange Raymond Kahnge, *Lassa Fever Awareness Campaign Poster*. Year: 2017. Source: Kange Raymond

Marriage

During his postgraduate studies in 2010, and just when the executive of the Postgraduate Fellowship, ABU Zaria, of which he was a member (General Secretary), was on the verge of handing over to an incoming executive, his paths would cross that of a delectable lady from Igumale, Ado LGA of Benue State. She was also a member of the incoming executive, and was pursuing her Masters in Architecture. Those paths that crossed would later blossom into some form of mutual affection. It didn't take very long before the lovebirds crisscrossed Gboko, Igumale, Abuja and Kaduna on



With Wife and Children in 2018

a 'familiarisation tour'. In May 2011, all appropriate cultural rites relating to a union between an Idoma lady from Igumale to her better half, were conducted.

On November 5th, 2011, at All Nations Christian Assembly in Kaduna, Ogola Lois Onazi married Kange Raymond Kange Jr in a memorable wedding ceremony, which had in attendance family, friends, neighbours and many well-wishers. By the following year, precisely September 17th, 2012, the couple was blessed with their first child, Kadoon Hadassah (Daughter). God would later 'add to their quiver' with the arrival of Kator Hanani (Son) on May 10th, 2014 and that of Kavnen Habib (Son) on February 13th, 2017. Raymond shared a deeply affectionate, unique and special bond with his kids and wife respectively.

Hobbies, Interests, Community Service, Christian Life

Raymond's hobbies, as constantly indicated by him, included reading, drama, photography, poetry, listening to radio/music, drawing and painting. He was also in love with wildlife and nature, generally. His love for nature, which he saw as God's masterpiece, reflected in his personal statement: "The work of every artist must fuse with nature - regardless of medium or location. The divine mandate to 'replenish and tend the earth' should be at the core of all creative expression now more than ever". One of his poems titled "Breadth of The Stillborn" and written in 2017, is reproduced below:

"Breadth of The Stillborn"

*The medley of our tears and gaze
Kindled a scene for every eye to engage
As you suckled fresh milk from brimming glands*

*Your tiny feet tingled in gleeful dance
Then in retiring breath from a satisfied dose
You curled to sleep in foetal pose*

*Streaks of sunray danced across those ruddy cheeks
As morning broke with birdsong and cricket chirps
Primal suits fitted your flanges every curve
Tempting Mummy's lips to kiss every bulge
Then in quiet retreat stood my frozen face
Arching fear paralysed with heart thudding race*

*Countless kegs of drops I filled
As my tears would not be stilled
From a warm and tender first embrace
Came a cold and severing sudden daze
Farewell my dotting chubby champ
Far beyond mortality you remain a shining lamp
- 2017*

Having won many awards and prizes due to his outstanding creativity and academic excellence, he thought to and later sponsored "The Teraso Williams Award for the Best Student in Visual Arts, W.M Bristow Secondary School". The award was named in honour of his Fine Arts teacher and friend, Terfa Asough (Late), another creative genius.

Raymond, like the rest of his siblings and all those who found themselves in the Kange household, had his upbringing founded on strong Christian values and morals. Due to the nature of the job of the head of the family, the family moved around Nigeria a lot. Though both communicant members of the NKST, they also temporarily placed their membership with Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), especially in locations where NKST did not have any presence. In 1990, Raymond was baptised and became a communicant member of the NKST. He stayed committed to the Christian faith, worshipping and also serving, mostly in Christian Worship Centres wherever he found himself.

As he grew and walked in the faith, certain personal spiritual convictions would later make him offer himself for baptism by immersion. He was deeply committed to youth evangelism. His commitment saw him take up or had responsibilities assigned him in the Lord's vineyard at different periods: General Secretary, Postgraduate Fellowship, ABU Zaria, 2010;

President, Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, ABUTH / NAPRI Chapter, 2012-2013; Deacon, Chapel of Redemption, Zaria, 2015. Though mostly on temporary basis, he also served in different capacities at Peace House, Gboko.

While in Lafia, Raymond would worship with ECWA Goodnews on Sundays and attend mid-week activities at the Chapel of Light, Federal University of Lafia. He also remained a member of the Men's Fellowship, Christian Worship Centre, Kaduna.

Death

On November 30th 2019, Raymond embarked on a trip to Kaduna from Lafia. His trip was delayed following involvement in an accident around Kachia in Kaduna State. Unknown to many commuters who must have passed (approximately an hour after) and seen the wreckage of his car as it lay in the bush, Raymond lay unconscious in it. It took the instincts of one Rev. Emmanuel Bakut, who was on a commercial passenger vehicle, as they almost drove past the scene of the accident, to crave the indulgence of the driver to stop, so he could go check if there was anyone in the wrecked car. He found Raymond in the car, unconscious. He would use Raymond's phone to dial the last dialed number in his phonebook, being his wife's. This was immediately after bringing his journey to a temporary halt by taking Raymond to General Hospital, Kachia, where he later regained consciousness.

His wife who rushed to the hospital in company of her father, Mr. Godwin Onazi, sought and transferred her husband to Barau Dikko Teaching Hospital, Kaduna. Prognosis, after tests and examination carried out same day, revealed a dislocation of the bone which affected Raymond's spinal cord. As his case was being managed and monitored closely, he remained stable. Even as he lay in bed, he continued to communicate normally over the phone with family, colleagues, friends.

Based on the doctors' referral, all was set for Raymond to be taken to Dala Hospital, Kano for a

surgical operation on December 3rd 2019. The doctors noticed a rise in his blood pressure (BP) and advised that we suspend the trip till they are able to bring his BP under appreciable control. An hour later, he complained of severe chest pain and also shortage of breath. By 8:55am, after uttering his last words less than five minutes before, Raymond left to be with the Lord in the same manner he lived with the family: quietly, calmly and peacefully.

Ray as we fondly call him is survived by his wife, Ogola Lois, and three children, Kadoon Hadassah (Daughter), Kator Hanani (Son) and Kavnen Habib (Son); his amiable parents-in-law; siblings; relations; several friends and colleagues.