

# Houston International Festival (iFest)

## WALL OF FAME AFRICA, 2008

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# A TRIBUTE

**T**his work is a tribute to those who have helped and continue to help the continent of Africa as well as other African people

**T**he list is not exhaustive but it comprises of heroes that are known worldwide as well as those who are yet unsung.

**P**lease take the time to read the biography. You will find that their lives have touched your life in one way or the other.

King Jaja of Opobo  
Emperor Tewodros II  
Emperor Yohannes IV  
Emperor Menilik II  
Emperor Haile Selassie I  
Queen Amina  
Queen Nzinga  
Kimpa Vita  
Empress Taitu Betul  
Albert C. **Achebe**  
Mohammed H. **Al-Amoudi**  
Kofi **Annan**  
Obafemi **Awolowo**  
Benjamin Nnamdi **Azikiwe**  
Abubakar T. **Balewa**  
Christiaan **Barnard**  
Mongo **Beti**  
Abebe **Bikila**  
Stephen Bantu **Biko**  
Ras Alula **Engida** Aba Nega  
Dr. John **Garang**  
Marcus Garvey  
Dr. Tewolde-Berhan **Gebre-  
Egziabher**

Danny **Glover**  
Abebech **Gobena**  
Kenneth David **Kaunda**  
Jomo **Kenyatta**  
Dr. Martin Luther **King**, Jr.  
'Mickey' **Leland**  
Solomon Popoli **Linda**  
Patrice Emery **Lumumba**  
Prof. Wangari **Maathai**  
Samora Moisés **Machel**  
Miriam **Makeba**  
Nelson R. **Mandela**  
Robert 'Bob' N. **Marley**  
Dikembe **Mutombo**  
Kwame **Nkrumah**  
Mwalimu Julius **Nyerere**  
Judge Omotola **Oresusi**  
Rosa **Parks**  
'Wole' **Soyinka**  
Zersenay **Tadesse**  
Derartu **Tulu**  
Mohamed **Warsame**



King Jaja of Opobo (1821-1891) Born in Igboland and sold as a slave to a Bonny trader at the age of twelve, he was named Jubo Jubogha by his first master. In the nineteenth century—after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807—the trade in slaves was supplanted by the trade in palm oil, which was so vibrant that the region was named the Oil Rivers area. Astute in business and politics, Jaja became the head of the Anna Pepple House, extending its activities and influence by absorbing other houses, increasing operations in the hinterland and augmenting the number of European contacts. He established a new settlement, which he named Opobo. He became King Jaja of Opobo and declared himself independent of Bonny. Lured into a meeting with the British consul aboard a warship, Jaja was arrested and sent to Accra, where he was summarily tried and found guilty of ‘treaty breaking’ and ‘blocking the highways of trade’. He was deported to St. Vincent, West Indies. Four years later, he died en route to Nigeria after he was permitted to return. King Jaja's downfall ensured a victory for British supremacy, paving the way for the eventual imposition of the colonial system in this region by the end of the century.



## Emperor Tewodros II

(1818-1868). Born Kassa Haile Giorgis to noble family, he was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia (r. 1855 to 1868) largely by dint of his personal qualities: sense of mission, military skills, and extraordinary intelligence. Kassa was born into a country torn by rampant civil wars. After subduing several provincial warlords to ascent into King of Kingship, Tewodros II was the pioneer modern Emperor who restored a semblance of Ethiopian unity after nearly two centuries of political disintegration. Tewodros' dream to realize Ethiopia's renaissance brought him into conflict with the British. Eventually, the conflict developed into full-scale war that led to his martyrdom on Apr. 13, 1868.



## Emperor Yohannes IV

(1837-1889): Born Kassa Mircha to family of nobilities was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1872 to 1889. He crowned King of Kings on January 12, 1872 at the historic city of Axum.

Emperor Yohannes regarded himself as *primus inter pares*, providing legitimacy to provincial kings. The reign of Yohannes IV was characterized with wars in Ethiopia's northern frontier. Interestingly Yohannes had annihilated every other enemy at every other battle. Emperor Yohannes helped end the theological dispute in the Orthodox Church in 1878 at Boru Meda, Wollo. Emperor Yohannes martyred at the battle of Metema fighting against the Mahdists on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1889.



**Emperor Menilik II (1844-1913):** Born Sahle Mariam to King Haile Melekot was Emperor of Ethiopia (r. 1889-1913). He was crowned King of Kings shortly after the martyrdom of Emperor Yohannes IV in May 1889. His signing of the Wuchale Treaty in 1889

got him into conflicts with Italy that led to the famous Battle of Adwa (Mar. 1896). Emperor Menilik II was the commander-in-chief of the mighty Ethiopian army that turned Italian colonial ambition into myth and the dream of reclaiming the freedom of the Black Race into reality. Menelik's Ethiopia became the beacon of independence and dignity for Africans. Emperor Menilik II introduced modern governance and infrastructure.



## Emperor Haile Selassie I

(1892-1975): Born Tafari Mekonnen in Harar (Eastern Ethiopia) ascended to emperorship: Emperor Haile Selassie I (r. 1930-1974). Before crowned King of Kingship, He led Ethiopia into the membership of the League of Nations (1924) to which independent nations were eligible. Emperor Haile Selassie I introduced written constitution (in 1931), modern governance, and established the autocephaly of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. In 1963 Emperor Haile Selassie I presided over the establishment of AOU (later AU). His roles in making peace among African brothers made him a defining figure in African history. His famous idiom: 'God and history will remember your judgment', in his address to the League of Nations in 1936 at Geneva is considered to be prophetic. Emperor Haile Selassie I was the recipient of over 75 honors from different organizations all over the world.



**Queen Amina Known as Queen Amina of Zaria. In the sixteenth century, Queen Bakwa Turunku built the capital of Zazzau at Zaria, named after her younger daughter. Eventually, the entire state of Zazzau was renamed Zaria, which is now in present-day Nigeria. However it was her elder daughter, the legendary Amina (or Aminatu), who inherited her mother's warlike nature. She honed her military skills and became famous for her bravery and military exploits, as she is celebrated in song as 'Amina daughter of Nikatau, a woman as capable as a man.' The objectives of her conquests were twofold: extension of Zazzau beyond its primary borders and reducing the conquered cities to vassal status. Sultan Muhammad Bello of Sokoto stated that, 'She made war upon these countries and overcame them entirely so that the people of Katsina paid tribute to her and the men of Kano [and]... also made war on cities of Bauchi till her kingdom reached to the sea in the south and the west.' Likewise, she led her armies as far as Nupe and, according to the Kano Chronicle, 'The Sarkin Nupe sent her [the princess] 40 eunuchs and 10,000 kola nuts. She was the first in Hausaland to own eunuchs and kola nuts.'**



## Queen Nzinga Queen Anna

Nzinga (circa 1581-1663) of Angola fought against the slave trade and European influence in the seventeenth century.

Known for being an astute diplomat and visionary military leader, she resisted Portuguese invasion and slave raids for 30 years. A skilled negotiator, she allied herself with the Dutch and pitted them against the Portuguese in an effort to wrest free of Portuguese domination. She fought for a free Angola until her death at age 82, after which weak rulers left the country open for the Portuguese to regain control. Nzinga's rise to power was due to her personal capabilities that overcame the limitations of gender. She displayed practical maneuvers, such as her alliances with the Jaga and Dutch, as well as self-sacrifice during her exiles. Willing to fight for freedom alongside her warriors, Nzinga demonstrated bravery, intelligence, and a relentless drive to bring peace to her people.



**Kimpa Vita** was a popular female prophet in the Kingdom of the Kongo, a precursor of the prophetic figures of the independent churches, and the creator of a movement that used Christian symbols but revitalized traditional Kongo cultural roots. The latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was one of cultural disintegration and political disarray in the Kongo (which included parts of present-day Congo, Zaïre, and Angola). She began preaching in the Kongolese city of San Salvador, which she said God wished restored as the capital. Her call to unity drew strong support among the peasants, who flocked to the city, which Kimpa identified as the biblical Bethlehem. Kimpa conspired with the general of Pedro IV, one of the contenders for the throne, but she was captured. Both Kimpa and her baby—conceived by her ‘guardian angel’—were burned at the stake for heresy, at the instigation of Capuchin missionaries. Her ideas remained among the peasants, appearing in various messianic cults until, two centuries later, it took new form in the preaching of Simon Kimbangu.



## Empress Taitu Betul (1851-

1918): Empress of Ethiopia (r.1889-1913), Taitu's genealogy is a knot of many Ethiopian nobilities, ethnicities, and religions. Empress Taitu, the wife of Emperor Menilik II, was the most influential female politician of her times. She was one of the pan-Ethiopian nobilities opposing a modernist group who promoted the idea of developing Ethiopia through western style. Empress Taitu was a key player in exposing the sinister objectives of the infamous Treaty of Wuchale with Italy that led into Adwa war, culminated by an African victory. She was one of the giants commanding a cannons army command at the historic Battle of Adwa.



Albert C. Achebe was born on November 16, 1930, in the Igbo village of Ogidi in South East Nigeria. Achebe gained worldwide attention for his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in the late 1950s. The story of a traditional village 'big man' Okonkwo, and his downfall has been translated into some 50 languages. His later novels include: *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of values during and after the colonial era. His style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. Achebe's satire and his keen ear for spoken language have made him one of the most highly esteemed African writers in English. Achebe said 'I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past—with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.'



**Mohammed Hussein Al-Amoudi (1946-):** Born and raised in

**Wollo, Ethiopia, Sheikh Alamoudi is one of the richest black persons in the world. He made his fortune in construction, real estate, and oil business in Europe and Africa. Sheikh Alamoudi is the largest investor in Ethiopia with a myriad array of business worth over a billion dollars. He is the recipient of Honorary Doctorate in Philosophy from Addis Ababa University. He has also been honored with the Swedish Royal Order of the Polar Star. At the dawn of the Ethiopian Millennium, Sheikh Alamoudi is the sole recipient of the Millennium Gold Medal. His philanthropic deeds are countless. He sponsored the CECAFA Cup for three consecutive seasons.**



Kofi Annan of Ghana was the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations. Mr. Annan gave the priority to revitalize the United Nations through comprehensive program of reform; strengthening the Organization's traditional work in the areas of development and the maintenance of international peace and security; advocating human rights, and the rule of law. Born on April 1938, Mr. Annan studied at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi and completed his undergraduate work in economics at Macalester College in the United States in 1961. Calling the HIV/AIDS epidemic his 'personal priority', the Secretary-General issued a 'Call to Action' in April, 2001, proposing the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund, which has since received some \$1.5 billion in pledges and contributions. Kofi Annan is fluent in English, French and several African languages. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.



**Obafemi Awolowo:** A native of Ikenne in Ogun State of Nigeria, started as a regional political leader like most of his pre-independence contemporaries. He traveled to London to earn a law degree. He was the first indigenous Premier of the Western Region under Nigeria's parliamentary system, from 1952 to 1960. Chief Awolowo would be remembered for building the first stadium in West Africa, first television station in Africa, introduction of free primary education in the Western region of Nigeria, and his leadership of the Action Group political party. He was the author of several publications on the political structure and future prospects of Nigeria. These works include *Path to Nigerian Freedom* and *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution*. The University of Ife, Nigeria, was re-named Obafemi Awolowo University as a posthumous honor. His portrait adorns Nigeria's one hundred Naira currency note.



## Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe

Usually referred to as Nnamdi Azikiwe, and, informally and popularly, as Zik, was the founder of modern Nigerian nationalism and the first President of Nigeria. Azikiwe went to the United States where he attended Howard University, Washington DC, before enrolling in and graduating from Lincoln University, Pennsylvania in 1930. He obtained a masters degree in 1933 from a prestigious Ivy League institution, the University of Pennsylvania. Azikiwe co-founded the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. In 1952, he moved to the Eastern Region, and was elected to the position of Chief Minister. In 1954 he became Premier of Nigeria's Eastern Region. He later became the Governor General, and with the proclamation of a republic, he became the first President of Nigeria in 1963. He passed away on May 11, 1996 at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu State, after a protracted illness.



Abubakar T. Balewa (1912-1966) was a Nigerian politician, and the first prime minister of an independent Nigeria. Originally a trained teacher, he became a outspoken leader for Northern interest as one of the few educated Nigerians of his time. He was also an international statesman, widely respected across the African continent as one of the leaders who encouraged the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In 1944, along with some teachers from the north, he was chosen to study abroad for a year at the University of London, Institute of Education. He was elected in 1946, to the colony's Northern House of Assembly, and to the Legislative Assembly in 1947. As a legislator, he was a vocal advocate of the rights of Northern Nigeria, and together with Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, who held the hereditary title of [Sardauna] of Sokoto, he founded the Northern People's Congress.



**Christiaan Barnard (1922–**

**2001): Was a South African cardiac surgeon, famous for performing the world's first successful human-to-human heart transplant operation at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa. The son of a missionary, he was born into very modest circumstances in 1922 in Beaufort West on the edge of South Africa's arid interior region called the Great Karoo. Barnard performed the world's first human heart transplant operation on 3 December 1967, in an operation assisted by his brother, Marius Barnard, lasting nine hours and using a team of thirty people. The patient, Louis Washkansky, was a 55-years-old grocer, suffering from diabetes and incurable heart disease. Barnard later wrote: 'For a dying man, it is not a difficult decision because he knows he is at the end. If a lion chases you to the bank of a river filled with crocodiles, you will leap into the water, convinced you have a chance to swim to the other side.'**

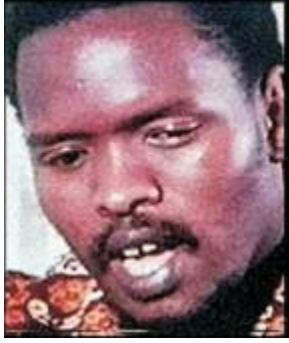


**Mongo Beti (1932-2001):** Born

Alexandre Biyidi Awala, Mongo Beti, was a Cameroonian writer. Though he lived in exile for many decades, Beti's life reveals an unflagging commitment to improvement of his home country. As one critic wrote after his death: 'The militant path of this essayist, chronicler, and novelist has been governed by one obsession: the quest for the dignity of African peoples.' He wrote regularly for the journal *Présence Africaine*. Among his pieces was a review of Camara Laye's *Black Child*, which criticized Laye for what Beti saw as pandering to European tastes. It was, however, in 1956 that he gained a widespread reputation; the publication of the novel *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba*—The Poor Christ of Bomba—created a scandal because of its satirical and biting description of the missionary and colonial world. He died of Kidney failure on October 8, 2001.



**Abebe Bikila (1932-1973):** Born near Debre Birhan (Central Ethiopia) was a legendary Olympic athlete the world had ever seen. Abebe Bikila completed church schooling at early age and hired at the Imperial Bodyguard by 20. He was married to Yewoubdar Wolde Giorgis in 1954 and fathered four children. In the 1960 Rome Olympics, Abebe became the first African to win Medal setting a new record. Asked why he ran without traction, Abebe replied, 'I wanted the world to know that my country Ethiopia has always won with determination and heroism'. In 1964, Abebe won the Tokyo Olympic breaking his own record—a history *Homo sapiens* are longing to see it happening again.



**Stephen Bantu Biko:** Born on 18 Dec. 1946, Biko was a famous antiapartheid activist in South Africa in the 1960s and early 1970s. A student leader, he later founded the Black Consciousness Movement, which would empower and mobilize much of the urban black population. He was arrested on the outskirts of the Eastern Cape Town of Grahamstown on 18 August 1977, and taken to apartheid security police headquarters in Port Elizabeth. On 12 Sept. 1977, Biko died at the age of 31, after a severe beating while in police custody. His death—for which the authorities denied responsibility—drew worldwide condemnation of the repressive laws and practices of apartheid South Africa. Steve Biko became not just a hero of South Africa's liberation, but also a universal symbol of resistance against oppression. His life and death fundamentally altered the political landscape.



## Ras Alula Aba Nega (1847

- 1897): Born Alula Engida in Tembien (N Ethiopia) to a peasant family with no ties to autocratic families, ascended to Ras against odds. He was both a military and administrative genius. As

a governor of Mereb Milash (present day Eritrea) he was the mightiest guardian of Ethiopia's northern frontiers from foreign invaders. He executed and won several battles against colonial aggressors that propelled him to be the first and ablest army general Africa has produced. Among others, Ras Alula was one of the outstanding war stratagems in charge of the security operatives at the Battle of Adwa.



**Dr. John Garang:** Was the first Vice President of the Sudan. A member of the Dinka ethnic group, Garang was born into a poor family in Wangulei village, Bor, upper Nile region of the Sudan. In 1962 he joined the first Sudanese civil war, but because he was too young, the leaders encouraged him and others his age to seek an education. Garang had brought over 3000 rebel soldiers under his control through the Sudan People's Liberation Army/ Movement (SPLA/M), which opposed to military rule and Islamic dominance of the country, and encouraged other army garrisons to mutiny against the Islamic law imposed on the country by the government. This action marked the beginning of the Second Sudanese Civil War. On July 9, 2005, he was sworn in as Vice President. He also became the administrative head of a Southern Sudan with limited autonomy for the six years before a scheduled referendum of possible secession. In late July 2005, Garang died after the Ugandan presidential Mi-172 helicopter he was flying in crashed. He had been returning from a meeting in Rwakitura with long-time ally President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda



**Marcus Garvey (1887-1940):** Is a Jamaican activist and African Nationalist. Marcus Mosiah Garvey of the West Indies was the first black man to forcefully speak about the concept of African nationalism—of black people returning to Africa, the continent of their forefathers, in order to build a great nation of their own. His writings and ideas would inspire many leaders of the civil rights movement during the second half of the twentieth century. In 1914, from England, Garvey formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). These organizations were intended ‘to work for the general uplift of the Negro peoples of the world,’ and would become the centerpiece for his life's work. In 1916 Garvey went to the US to raise funds to carry on the work of his Jamaican organizations. In stirring African-Americans with his message of pride in ancestry and prospects of self-sufficiency, he prefigured a later generation of African-American leaders.



Dr. Tewolde-Berhan Gebre-Egziabher. Born in 1940 in Adwa, Ethiopia, Tewolde-Berhan graduated with PhD from the University of North Wales one year shy to turn 30. Dr. Tewolde-Berhan has served within the academia in teaching, research, and leadership. He helped in development of National strategies to sustainable use of biodiversity. Dr. Tewolde-Berhan took part in many international forums on biodiversity and served as chief negotiator of Africa and Like Minded Group during the development of Biosafety Protocol on the Convention of Biodiversity. Dr. Tewolde-Berhan was a key player in the development of the African Model Law for Safety in Biotechnology. He is the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award (2000) for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people. Dr. Tewolde-Berhan was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science *Honoris Causa* from Addis Ababa University (Jul. 2004). He was also named as one of the 2006 UN's Champions of Earth.



**Danny Glover** is the dean of African American character actors. Glover also has established a reputation as an outspoken political progressive, appearing in such productions as the stage production of Howard Zinn's 'Voices from a People's History of the United States' and lending his voice to the aspirations of black folks in Africa and the Americas. In addition to his five Emmy nominations, Glover has won the NAACP Image Award five times. Widely respected both inside and outside the United States, both as an actor and as a humanitarian, Danny Glover has been an ambassador for the United Nations Development Program since 1998. Glover chairs the board of the TransAfrica Forum, a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that is trying to elucidate the economic and political effects of American foreign policy on Africa and among the children of the African Diaspora in the Caribbean Basin and Latin America.



**Abebech Gobena (1938-):**

**Born in Selale (Central Ethiopia) lost her father during the Ethio-Italian war. She was raised by her grandparents and married at 10. Abebech left her marriage and moved to Addis Ababa. She earned basic education and secured an employment in a public company. Abebech latter remarried and lived a typical Ethiopian life. During her local religious pilgrimage in the 1980s, Abebech came across drought stricken communities, and witnessed immense human suffering. She immediately decided to do something. Later, Abebech single-handedly established Abebech Gobena Yehsanat Kebekabena Limat Dirigit—an organization focusing on protection and development of children. She is the CEO of her quarter of a century old philanthropic organization.**



## Kenneth David Kaunda

(1924-). First President of Zambia (1964-1991). In 1953, Kaunda moved to Lusaka to take up the post of Secretary General of the ANC, under the presidency of Harry Nkumbula. The combined efforts of Kaunda & Nkumbula failed to mobilize Africans against White dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Kaunda later broke from the ANC and formed the Zambian African National Congress (ZANC) in Oct. 1958. While he was President, economic troubles and increasing international pressure forced Kaunda to change the rules that kept him in power. Kaunda voluntarily yielded and called for multiparty elections in 1991, in which the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won. He was the second mainland African head of state to allow free multiparty elections and to have relinquished power when he lost: the first, Mathieu Kérékou of Benin, had done so in March of that year.



Jomo Kenyatta is considered the founding father of the Kenyan nation. He was the focus of the freedom fight in Kenya for over half a century to dispel the darkness and injustice of colonialism. In the process Kenyatta suffered imprisonment and alienation from his people. When Kenya received its independence from England on December 12, 1963 he became the first Prime Minister. A year later the country became a Republic, with Kenyatta serving as the first President until his death on Aug. 22, 1978. Kenyatta is credited with founding the Pan-African Federation with Kwame Nkrumah in 1946 to promote independence for African nations.



## Martin Luther King, Jr.

(Jan. 15, 1929 – Apr. 4, 1968) was one of the pivotal leaders of the American civil rights movement. Dr. King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956) and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (1957), serving as its first president. His efforts led to the 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. King delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech. He raised public consciousness of the civil rights movement and established himself as one of the greatest orators in U.S. history. In 1964, Dr. King became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end segregation and racial discrimination through civil disobedience and other nonviolent means. Dr. King was assassinated on Apr. 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Jimmy Carter in 1977. Martin Luther King Day was established as a national holiday in the United States in 1986. In 2004, King was posthumously awarded a Congressional Gold Medal.



**'Mickey' Leland** Born Nov. 27, 1944 in Lubbock (Texas) died Aug. 7, 1989 in Gambella (Ethiopia). George Thomas 'Mickey' Leland, a favorite son of Fifth Ward, a dedicated humanitarian and civil rights leader, served as a Texas Legislator and Congressman from the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Texas. 'Mickey' Leland became famous for his leadership in civil and human rights for all people. His tireless crusade to provide food for poor people in the United States, Haiti and Africa, his leadership in obtaining effective sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa ultimately led to the freedom of Nelson Mandela and the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa. As a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Mickey Leland successfully forged African-American and Hispanic alliances, and he more than most leaders was able to effectively work bipartisan coalitions to pass legislation that dramatically improved the lives of millions of Americans.



Solomon Popoli Linda (1909–1962) was a South African Zulu musician, singer and composer who wrote the song ‘Mbube’ (translated The Lion) which later became the pop hit ‘The Lion Sleeps Tonight’, and gave its name to a style of Isicathamiya a cappella popularized by Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Solomon Popoli Linda was born near Pomeroy, in the impoverished Msinga rural area of Zululand and attended the Gordon Memorial mission school. Influenced by the new syncopated music that had swept across South Africa from the US since the 1880s, he worked it into the Zulu songs he and his friends sang at weddings and feasts.



## Patrice Émery Lumumba

(1925–961) is African nationalist leader, the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Jun.-Sept. 1960). Forced out of office during a political crisis, Lumumba was assassinated shortly. He

was born in the village of Onalua in Kasai province, Belgian Congo. In Oct. 1958, Lumumba founded the Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais; MNC), the first nationwide Congolese political party. Lumumba was a man of strong character who intended to pursue his policies, regardless of the enemies he made within his country or abroad. The Congo, furthermore, was a key area in terms of the geopolitics of Africa, and because of its wealth, its size, and its contiguity to white-dominated southern Africa, Lumumba's opponents had reason to fear the consequences of a radical or radicalized Congo regime. Moreover, in the context of the Cold War, the Soviet Union's support for Lumumba appeared at the time as a threat to many in the West.



## Prof. Wangari Maathai

is a Kenyan Environmentalist & Human Rights Activist. She is the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Known both as a pioneering academic & environmental campaigner,

she has fought tirelessly to ensure a sustainable environment and better quality for women and the citizens of Kenya. Prof. Maathai said this in her 2004 Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech: 'I would like to call on young people, in particular, to take inspiration from this prize. Despite all the constraints that they face, there is hope in the future in serving the common good. What my experiences have taught me is that service to others has its own special rewards.'



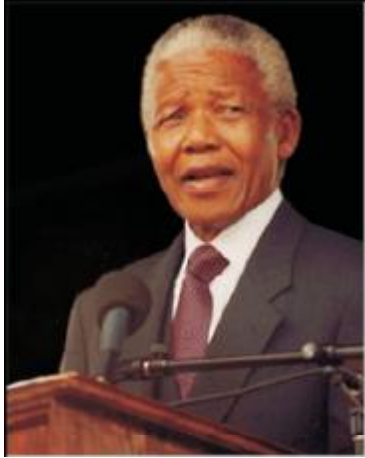
## Samora Moisés Machel

(1933–86): Machel was a military commander, revolutionary socialist leader and eventual President of Mozambique. Machel led the country to independence in 1975 until his death in 1986, when his presidential aircraft crashed. He was attracted to Marxist ideals and began his political activities in a hospital where he protested against the fact that black nurses were paid less than whites doing the same job. His grandparents and great grandparents had fought against Portuguese colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, it was not surprising that in 1962, Machel joined the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), which was dedicated to creating an independent Mozambique. By 1970, Machel had become commander-in-chief of the FRELIMO army, which had already established itself among Mozambique's peasantry. His most important goal, he said, was to get the people 'to understand how to turn the armed struggle into a revolution' and to realize how essential it was 'to create a new mentality to build a new society.'



**Miriam Makeba** Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Miriam Makeba has a long and dramatic career, both as a singer and human rights campaigner. She was the first vocalist to present African music

onto the international audience in the 1960s. She began to sing professionally as far back as 1950. In 1959 Miriam Makeba took on the female lead in the musical 'King Kong', about a boxer who kills presenting a film in Italy. South African authorities railed against the negative attention they received through the presentation of the film. She decided not to return to South Africa where she got little or nothing in terms of payment for her performances. The South African government revoking her passport, denying her the possibility of ever returning to her homeland, Makeba met Harry Belafonte in London, who helped her to emigrate to the USA. There, she built up her career again. She was the first black musician to leave South Africa on account of apartheid, and over the years many others would follow her example.



Nelson R. Mandela (1918-)

was an anti-apartheid activist & leader of the African National Congress. He spent 27 years in prison, much of it in a cell on Robben Island & the remainder in Pollsmoor Prison, on convictions for crimes that included alleged sabotage committed while he spearheaded the struggle against apartheid. Among opponents of apartheid in South Africa and internationally, Mandela became a symbol of freedom and equality. Following his release from prison in Feb. 11, 1990, he led the transition to multi-racial democracy in South Africa. Since the end of apartheid, he has been widely praised, even by former opponents. Mandela is a former President of South Africa, the first to be elected in fully representative democratic elections. He is currently a celebrated elder statesman worldwide, and continues to voice his opinion on topical issues. In South Africa he is often known as Madiba, an honorary title adopted by elders of Mandela's clan. The title has come to be synonymous with Nelson Mandela.

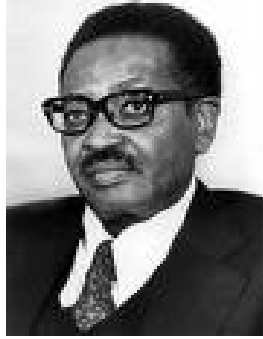


## Robert 'Bob' N. Marley

(1945-1981) was a Jamaican singer, songwriter, guitarist, and activist. He was the frontman, lead singer, songwriter and guitarist for the ska, rocksteady and reggae bands. He is the most widely known performer of ska/reggae music, and is often credited for helping spread of Jamaican music to the worldwide audience. Marley's best known hits includes: 'I Shot the Sheriff', 'No Woman, No Cry', 'Exodus', 'Could You Be Loved', 'Stir It Up', 'Jamming', 'Redemption Song', and 'One Love', as well as the posthumous releases 'Buffalo Soldier' and 'Iron Lion Zion'. Bob Marley played his final concert at the Stanley Theater in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on September 23, 1980. The live version of 'Redemption Song' on Songs of Freedom was recorded at the show. Marley afterwards sought medical help for his cancer, but his cancer had already progressed to the terminal stage



Dikembe Mutombo, an NBA All-Star has long been dedicated to improve health, education, and quality of life for the people in his birth country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His Foundation is working to eradicate many childhood diseases that have virtually disappeared in developed countries while those diseases are still life threatening to children in the Congo everyday. Giving back has always been a trademark of Mutombo. In 1997, he began plans to open a \$29 million, 300-bed hospital on the outskirts of his hometown, the Congolese capital of Kinshasa. It opened in February 2007 as the first modern medical facility to be built in that area in nearly 40 years, with full telemedicine capabilities with the United States and Europe through the network established by Medical Missions for Children.



Agostinho Neto was born in the village of Icolo in Bengo province, Angola, to a Methodist pastor father. Neto was educated to high school level in Luanda and then worked for the Portuguese Colonial Health Service until 1947. Provided with funds by his home village, he traveled to Portugal to study medicine. In Lisbon, he collaborated with others and formed an Africa cultural society (known as the Anti-Colonial Movement)—developing what they termed ‘the re-Africanization of the Mind’, a process which they compared to the French movement Négritude. Many from the society became leaders of anti-colonial movements back in Africa. Neto was not only Angola's first president but he remains its most prominent poet, with his work published in several languages. Neto's poetry deals with the quest for freedom, and several of his poems were converted into liberation anthems. Neto's birthday is celebrated in Angola as National Heroes Day.



**Kwame Nkrumah, Ghanaian**

**Prime Minister (1957–60), & President**

**(1960–6), was born in Nkroful, South**

**West Ghana (formerly Gold Coast). He**

**studied in the USA (Lincoln University)**

**and the UK, returning to the Gold Coast**

**in 1947, and in 1949 formed the nationalist Convention**

**People's Party. In 1950 he was imprisoned, but elected to**

**parliament while still in jail. Called 'the Gandhi of Africa',**

**he was a significant leader both of the movement against**

**white domination and of pan-African feeling. He played a**

**key role in the formation of the Organization of African**

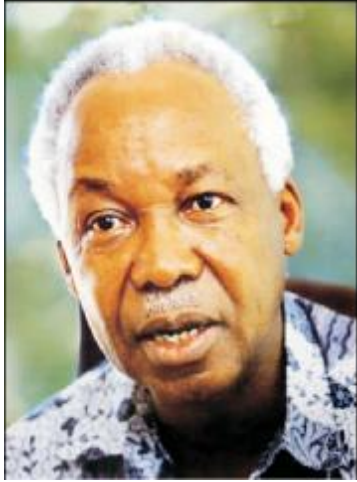
**Unity in 1963. Overthrown by the military in 1966, with**

**the help of western backing, he spent his last years in exile.**

**He passed away in Bucharest, Romania, on Apr. 27, 1972.**

**Nkrumah was the motivating force behind the movement**

**for independence of Ghana..**



## Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

First President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Nyerere, along with several other Pan-Africanist leaders, founded the Organization of African Unity in 1963. Nyerere supported several militant political movements active in African colonies, including the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) of South Africa, FRELIMO when it sought to overthrow Portuguese rule in Mozambique, and ZANLA in its war with the Smith government of Rhodesia. From the mid 1970s on, along with President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, he was one of the leaders of the Front Line States, which campaigned in support of black majority rule in southern Africa. In Tanzania, Nyerere is referred to as Mwalimu—which means teacher in Kiswahili. He united the peoples of Tanzania across tribal and religious boundaries. Because of that, Tanzania is one of the most peaceful and stable democracies in Africa



## Judge Omotola Oresusi

popularly known as Tola was born in Lagos, Nigeria. It was during the boarding school days at Fiditi Grammar School in western Nigeria that attributes of leadership was beginning to be apparent in him. He was considered then as a fair-minded young boy always ready to fight for the rights of others. In 1988, he fulfilled his cherished dream with a Doctor of Law from the Armstrong College of Law, Arizona State University. He was president of African Students Association in Arizona State University (1986-87), founding member and executive of African Bar Association in America; volunteer for many organizations, including Houston Volunteer Lawyers Inc. He was Founding Member and Secretary of the Board of Directors of African Coalition PAC and now a current member of Democratic National Committee and Board Member, City of Houston Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council. Tola is in private practice. Appointed by Mayor Bill White as Associate Judge for the Municipal Court System, he became the first African Immigrant Judge in the city of Houston.



Rosa Parks (1913–2005) was an African American civil rights activist whom the U.S. Congress later called ‘Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement’. On Dec. 1, 1955, Mrs. Parks became famous for refusing to obey bus driver James Blake's order that she give up her seat to make room for a white passenger. This action of civil disobedience started the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which is one of the largest movements against racial segregation. In addition, this launched Martin Luther King, Jr., who was involved with the boycott, to prominence in the Civil Rights Movement. After her arrest, Parks became an icon of the Civil Rights Movement but suffered hardships as a result. She lost her job at the department store, and her husband quit his job after his boss forbade him from talking about his wife or the legal case. She has had a lasting legacy worldwide.



**'Wole' Soyinka (Akinwande Oluwole, born 13 Jul. 1934 at Abeokuta, near Ibadan, in W Nigeria) is a Nigerian writer, poet and playwright. Some consider him Africa's most distinguished playwright, as he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986, the first black African so honored. He was a dramaturgist at the Royal Court Theatre in London 1958-1959. In 1960, he was awarded a Rockefeller bursary and returned to Nigeria to study African drama. In 1960, he founded several theatre groups. Soyinka has published several books of drama, novels, and poetry. He writes in English and his literary language is marked by great scope and richness of words. He bases his writing on the mythology of his own tribe—the Yoruba—with Ogun, the god of iron and war, at the center. He received honorary Doctors (of Letters) from: the University of Leeds in 1973, Yale in 1980, Morehouse College in 1988, the University of Toronto in 1992, Harvard University in 1993, Emory University in 1996, UNLV in 2000, the University of Alberta in 2001, Addis Ababa University in 2003, and Princeton in 2005.**

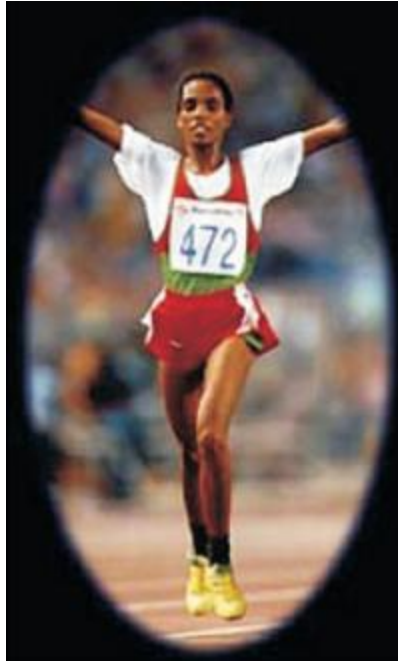


Zersenay Tadese (1982-) Is

the first person in Eritrean sporting history to win an Olympic medal.

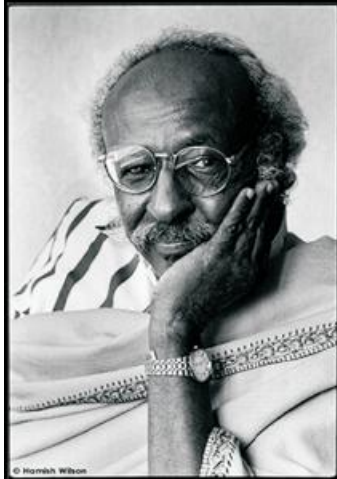
Zersenay won bronze in the 10 000m at the 2004 Summer Olympics in

Athens, Greece. In 2005, he won the Great North Run in Newcastle, setting a new record. Moreover, he won the Rotterdam Half Marathon (Oct. 2006), gold at the 2006 IAAF World Road Running Championships (Oct 2006), World Record 10km Road Race in the San Silvestre Vallenge, Midred (co-winner with Kipchoge, Dec. 2006), gold at World Cross Country Championships in Mombasa (Mar. 2007), the 10 000m title at the All-Africa Games in Algiers (Jul. 2007), the Dam tot Damloop 10 miles race in the Netherlands (Sept. 2007). On Oct. 14, 2007, Zersenay defended his title at the 2007 IAAF World Road Running Championships in Udine.



**Derartu Tulu (1969-):** Born in Arsi (SE Ethiopia), Derartu is the first Ethiopian woman to win Gold Medal in the Olympics. After she brought herself into national prominence in local competitions, she propelled her career by winning Gold medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. She won

over 60 medals in various competitions all over the world. Derartu won Gold in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and another in the 2001 Edmonton World Championship. Her thrilling smiles turn off during intense competitions only to be delivered afresh after her victories to make us break in tears with pride.



**Mohamed Warsame**, better known as **Hadraawi** is Somalia's most beloved poet. He was born in Togdheer, in N. Somalia in 1943. While at school, he became known for his wonderful storytelling about lions, jackals, & hyenas.

Known as an influential commentator on the political situation in Somalia, he became highly critical of the military regime of Siad Barre, who had taken power in 1969. In 1982, he joined the Somali National Movement that was based in London. In 1981, for refusing to praise the government, Hadraawi had to flee Somalia for Ethiopia. There, he joined other émigré members of his Isaaq Somali clan to work for independence from the military regime of Barre. When Barre was finally overthrown, in 1991, violent regional factionalism broke out and became the new threat to Somalia. Disappointed, Hadraawi moved to London. During the years 1991 to 1999, Hadraawi traveled throughout Europe, taking part in many poetry and folklore festivals. When a relative peace had returned to his homeland in Somaliland, he returned and settled in the now recovering and thriving city of Hargeisa.