



Mfantsipim Old Boys Association (MOBA)

Tribute to the memory of HE Kofi Atta Annan (MOBA 1957) - A Noble Son of Kwabotwe

By the Mfantsipim Old Boys Association (MOBA)

The world remembers Kofi Annan as a great Secretary - General of the UN who dedicated his life and work to the betterment of the world. A reformer and a humanitarian par excellence who worked extra hard for the establishment of a peaceful world. A consummate diplomat, he is praised worldwide for his sterling performance as Secretary – General.

MOBA, particularly his mates of the 1957 Year Group, remember him as an impressionable teenager deposited on the Kwabotwe Hill in 1954 into the care of Francis L. Bartels to be molded into a humble, honest scholar to serve his nation.

He was placed in form two and assigned to Freeman House. He sailed through the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in December 1957 with ease and continued at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Kofi Annan was friendly, jovial and easy to get on with. Soft spoken, he loved debating and was a member of the Ghana United Nations Students Association (GUNSA). One of his favourite past times was giving out nick names not only to his mates but also to his teachers; several of the nick names which the boys “bestowed” on the girls from Wesley Girls’ High School who were doing their sixth form programme at Mfantsipim originated from his “fertile mind”. He in turn got the name “DOMO” from his interest in the affairs of the erst-while National Liberation Movement (NLM) of those days.

He was also a very good athlete and a member of the famous Freeman House 100 x 4m Relay Quartet of 1956 whose record performance stood unequaled for more than twenty (20) years in the School.

At Mfantsipim the students do not pass through the School; the School passes through them depositing and leaving in them the virtues of humility, honesty determination, hard work, and love for service to God and man. He is quoted as saying that Mfantsipim “*helped prepare me for my journey*” and also taught him “*that suffering anywhere concerns people everywhere.*”

Kofi Annan demonstrated his affection and loyalty to Mfantsipim by participating in events organized by MOBA in the United Kingdom, United States of America and here in Ghana.

In November 1996, when Mfantsipim celebrated its 120th Anniversary, together with Headmaster Mr. F. L. Bartels they joined the then MOBA USCAN (MOBA USA & Canada) at a Fundraising Dinner Dance as Special Distinguished Guests. Then in October 2008 the Mfantsipim Foundation UK & Ireland was formally launched at a Dinner Dance under the auspices of HE Kofi Annan.

For the 100th birthday celebrations for our former Headmaster Francis L. Bartels in March 2010, the Directors of the F. L. Bartels Foundation decided to invite Kofi Annan to deliver the public lecture. In response to an invitation letter, his long time and faithful secretary replied apologising that he already had an important international engagement on the said dates and therefore would not be able to accept the invitation. Nonetheless, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation took a chance, called and spoke to him directly to impress on him that the School, MOBA and Mr. Bartels himself who had been consulted before the invitation was sent, would be deeply disappointed if he could not honour Mr. Bartels on such a unique occasion. Of course, they were fully aware of his extremely busy schedule of international engagements since his retirement.



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He asked for a few days and then called back accepting the invitation. Kofi Annan had to interrupt the important engagement to fly to Ghana the day before and fly back the day after the lecture to continue his previous engagement.

In 2017, MOBA instituted the *“Ebusuapanyin’s Lunch”* an event aimed at raising funds for the MOBA Endowment Fund and also creating a forum for discourse on issues of national interest. More importantly it was to honour a personality of national and or international repute (not necessarily an Old Boy) with expertise and immense experience in his or her chosen field of service. The obvious choice was H.E. Kofi Annan!

He humbly accepted and together with his wife Nane worked tirelessly with us to organize the event which was held at the Kempinski Hotel, Accra on Thursday 10th August 2018. His excellent delivery on the topic **“Leadership and Public Service”** contributed immensely towards the success of the event.

A week later he opened an Art Exhibition at the Berj Art Gallery in Labone, Accra of 50 portraits of himself, gifts from artists all over the world which formed part of his personal collection. It also included some portraits of himself painted by his wife Nane. Kofi Annan and his wife Nane graciously donated these art works to MOBA to auction and help raise funds for the yet to be established MOBA Endowment Fund. This was a truly noble gesture demonstrating his generosity and his love for Mfantsipim. In his own words *“The gifts hold a special place in my heart and so does Mfantsipim which helped prepare me for my journey. That is why I would like this collection to benefit the students of today in the hope that it will support and encourage them as they embark on their own journeys with their own hopes and dreams”*

Kofi Atta Annan, we celebrate you for having lived the VISION of the Founding Fathers of Mfantsipim and the MISSION of the School. You are an epitome of the statement made by Rev Lockhart (Mfantsipim Headmaster 1925 to 1936) that “In a few years the people of this country will be amazed at the number of its influential citizens who owe allegiance to this school.”

Kofi, while we join other mourners “to praise great and famous men, the fathers, named in story” (MHB 896) of whom you are today singled out, we of MOBA sing our School hymn “For All the Saints” (MHB 832) and dedicate to you the sixth stanza.

*“The golden evening brightens in the west,
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest - Alleluia”*

Kofi Atta in your invaluable service to humankind you were a “golden” sun which though has now set “in the west” continues to “brighten”, and as a faithful servant of the Lord who bravely “struggled” through worldly challenges you now deserve “rest” in “calm” blissful “paradise”.

MOBA mourns with his wife, children, entire family, fellow Ghanaians and indeed the whole world.

Kofi Atta, Atta Opesaw, Abosom enu, fare thee well!