PEOPLE

# AMB. HAKIZA'S LIFE OF MANY HATS

BY HANNINGTON HAKIZA

Ambassador William Hakiza lived a long and illustrious life. Over the years, he wore many hats and nurtured families from different spheres of his life. Aside from his core family, he had the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) family, the Uganda sports fraternity, the wider Kisoro fraternity and the Uganda Foreign Affairs fraternity, among others.



Amb. William Hakiza's family during one of their get-together gatherings. He constantly reminded his children of the importance of knowing their forefathers up to the thirteenth generation in order to preserve their culture

## HIS EARLY LIFE

Amb. Hakiza was born on December 30,1935 to Kosiya and Efurasi Nkundizana in Kiburara village, Gisorora Parish, Nyakabande sub-county, in Kigezi district at the time. His father, Nkundizana, was a lay reader who deputised the Rev. Gihanga Andrew (RIP), the leader of the Anglican Native Church in Bufumbira. Having grown up in a home where both parents were instrumental in the early Christian revival, he developed deep faith and strong Christian values, which he later instilled in his children.

Amb. Hakiza grew up in a family of nine children: The late John Hashakimana (a one-time District Commissioner of Kisoro); Joyce Kabasa (RIP); Wilson Niyonzima (RIP); Naome Ntahorugiye (RIP); Amos Mutabazi; Eres Nyirandagijimana (RIP); Josyline Kaggwa and Emmanuel 'Vega' Hatega. There was a difference of three years between each sibling, an amazing family planning feat that was most likely influenced by the strict discipline of the church at the time.

He completed his primary education at Seseme Primary School in Kisoro in 1951, joined Kigezi High School and completed in 1954, and later went to Busoga College Mwiri, where he completed his secondary education in 1957. He often told stories about the gruelling walks from Kisoro to Kabale through dense forests that were sometimes infested with wild animals.

## WIFE AND CHILDREN

In 1968, he married Evanice Nyiramucyo, a young and nurse from Mulago Hospital and daughter of Mzee Paul Manjari (RIP) of Kabindi, Kisoro. They were blessed with six children: Helen, Hannington, Harry, Hilda, Humphery and Harriet. The family was later blessed with additional members: Vicky, Josephine, Andrew, Tina and Scott, and nine grandchildren: Eliana, Jeshiah, Nshuti, Nziza, Ganza, Emmanuel, Ebenezer, Kamanzi, and Manzi.

Hakiza strongly believed in education and ensured that all his children received a good education. His charisma and gift for winning friends endeared him to many school headteachers and as a result, his children often attended the same schools. They began at Hilda Mpairwe's Safari Kindergarten, then Kitante Primary School and Joseph Almeida's (RIP) Buganda Road Primary School. Four of them later attended Makerere College School, courtesy of his long-time friend, Emma Lugujjo.

In 1962, he joined the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) as a Telecom Technician. Over the next thirty-four years, he rose through the ranks, serving as a Senior and Principal Officer. UEB became his other family.

## LOVE FOR SPORTS

While at Busoga College Mwiri, Hakiza was a keen footballer and made the school's first eleven team. He also participated in tennis, cricket and athletics and was an active member of the school drama and country dancing societies.

As a sports enthusiast, he went on to excel in football. He became a member of the Busoga District football team, then the Eastern Province football team, and was eventually selected to play for the national team, the Cranes. He featured in the match played during Uganda's Independence celebrations in 1962. While studying in Madagascar, he played for the Tananarive University soccer team. He was also a member of the UEB darts team.

Hakiza's passion for sports greatly influenced his children. Hannington was voted best player at the sixth National Schools Table Tennis Championship in 1986 and was a member of Nkrumah Hall's soccer, athletics, and table tennis teams at Makerere University. Harry competed in darts for UEB in the National Darts League and earned a place on the National Junior Darts team. He also played basketball, rugby, and athletics for Lumumba Hall at Makerere University, and later rugby and basketball for Rhinos Athletics Club.

Humphrey played basketball, captained Nkrumah Hall's team at Makerere University, and, while playing for Rhinos Athletics Club, was voted Uganda's Basketball Player of the Year in 1997. Both Harry and Humphery served as Games Union chairpersons for Makerere University in their respective years.

Even after his formal retirement from UEB in 1996, he was recalled by the managing director at the time, Simon D'Ujanga, to manage the newly established UEB Sports Club. Because of their shared passion for soccer, together with colleagues like Terry Kahuma and Richard Anyeko (RIP), UEB FC quickly rose to the top of the Uganda Football League, competing with major teams like KCC FC, SC Villa and Express FC. In 1996, UEB FC won its first Uganda Cup, later renamed the Kakungulu Cup and came close to winning the league title on several occasions.

## RESPECTED CULTURE

Amb. Hakiza had great charisma, a heart of service, and a gift for attracting people and building bonds regardless of tribe, religion, or social status.

He also loved his culture and his roots in Kisoro. He constantly reminded his children of the importance of knowing where they came from. While many people do not know their family tree beyond the fourth generation,

Hakiza ensured his children knew their forefathers up to the 13th generation. Even in his advanced age, he could recite all 13 names flawlessly.

It was not unusual for one of us to be enthusiastically greeted by a street vendor simply because we were recognised as his son or daughter.

Even in advanced age, as his energy waned, he remained selfless. It was not uncommon to see him load firewood onto his pickup truck and personally drive it to deliver to relatives in Kiburara, Nyakabande – the village where he grew up before our grandfather Kosiya finally settled in Nyagichebe, off Bunagana road.

He will always be remembered for putting family first, touching many hearts, and impacting many lives. Rest well, dad.

## HAKIZA'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

After retiring from the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) in 1996, the late William Hakiza joined the diplomatic service and was appointed Ambassador to Libya, with Tunisia and Algeria later added to his area of accreditation. While serving in Tripoli, Libya, he became Dean of African Ambassadors and later Dean of all Ambassadors in Libya.

In 1989, he served as Chairman of the Kisoro District Development Association for four years. In 1994, he contested in the Constituent Assembly elections as a candidate for Bufumbira South. Though unsuccessful, this marked the beginning of his political journey. He also served for many years as LC I and LC II chairperson while residing on Elizabeth Avenue in Kololo, Kampala.

On Labour Day, May 1st, 2015, Amb. Hakiza received national recognition for his service to society and country and was awarded a Medal of Honour, alongside other notable individuals from Kisoro.