

How Edwards found his calling in the USA

As a physician, a US Air Force Colonel select, and an award-winning poet, he has built a career defined by excellence and anchored in humility.

BY PHILIP MATOGO

Dr Ivan Edwards stands at the intersection of medicine, military service, and the arts, carrying each identity with a sense of purpose shaped by his Ugandan roots and his American journey. His life reflects discipline, compassion, and creative expression, woven through decades of service to patients, communities, and the broader human story.

As a physician, a United States Air Force Colonel select, and an award-winning poet, he has built a career defined by excellence and anchored in humility. Dr Edwards was born in Uganda to biracial parents of mixed Ugandan and settler European ancestry. His Mityana relatives gave him a traditional name, Miro, which he later abandoned after childhood teasing, though its meaning remained a quiet reminder of origin and identity.

His father, the late Teddy Edwards, was an influential entrepreneur whose circle included national figures such as former presidents Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa as well as Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga. These early encounters with leadership and public life shaped Dr Edwards' understanding of responsibility and service.

He attended Buganda Road Primary School, then known as Norman Godinho Primary School, spent a year at Bat Valley Primary School to align his age with his grade level, and later joined Old Kampala Senior Secondary School for his O-Level. He completed a year of A-Level study at Makerere High School. He often recalls that he did not take school seriously in those early years. Uganda was under Idi Amin's rule, and the national decline in education reflected the instability of the times. Teachers were underpaid, resources were scarce, and the future felt uncertain.

Dr Edwards witnessed the Asian expulsion of 1972, the imprisonment and torture of his father, and the turbulence of those challenging years. A home invasion in February 1983 nearly claimed the lives of his



FUTURE PLANS, CONTINUING LEGACY

Professionally, he plans to expand his clinical impact, explore international medical opportunities, and deepen his work in rehabilitation and pain medicine. Personally, he is focused on mentorship, community engagement, and the values that guided his journey from Uganda to the US. Artistically, he plans to continue writing, support the Uganda Poetry Society, and develop new creative projects

he carried from home, including dignity, empathy, and the belief that every person's story matters. He pursued higher education with a seriousness he had not known in his youth. When some doubted his ability to become a physician, it was his sister who anchored him with a simple truth. She told him that he could do anything he set his heart to do. Those words became a compass.

Dr Edwards earned his medical degree from Midwestern University after completing undergraduate studies at Rivier University. He then interned at Eastern Virginia Medical School before specialising in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. He later received advanced training as a Flight Surgeon at the United

suffering, and helping patients reclaim their independence. He has built a practice in San Antonio, Texas, grounded in patient-centred care. His approach blends scientific rigour with human connection, recognising that healing is not only physical but emotional and social.

His reputation extends beyond the clinic. He is an ordained minister, a public speaker, and a recognised public figure. His multi-domain career reflects a rare combination

States has given Dr Edwards a unique vantage point on the complexities of modern healthcare. The American system is technologically advanced and capable of extraordinary innovation, yet it is also fragmented and often overwhelming for patients who struggle to navigate its layers. In this environment, he has learned that the most powerful tool a physician can offer is presence, the willingness to listen, to slow down, and to resist the pressure of a hurried world.

Dr Edwards' clinical philosophy is rooted in listening. He believes that every patient carries a story, one that shapes their pain, their fears, and their hopes for recovery. In a system where time is limited and pressures are high, he makes space for those stories. He treats not just the spine, the joints, or the nerves, but the person behind the symptoms.

Serving in the US military

Col Edwards' military career is one of the defining pillars of his life. Serving in the United States Air Force has shaped his character, strengthened his leadership, and deepened his commitment to service. As a flight surgeon trained in aerospace medicine, he has supported aircrew, safeguarded operational readiness, and navigated the demanding intersection of medicine and military discipline.

His selection for promotion to colonel is a milestone that reflects decades of dedication, resilience, and excellence. It is a rank attained by only a small percentage of officers. The promotion is a recognition not only of his technical expertise but of his integrity, judgment, and ability to lead others. In the military, rank is not simply a title. It is a responsibility. It signifies trust, stewardship, and the expectation that one will mentor, protect, and guide those who serve under them.

Artistic career

Long before he became a physician or a military officer, Dr Edwards was a storyteller. Poetry was his first language of introspection, a way to process memory, culture, and the quiet emotional landscapes of life. Writing allowed him to explore themes of identity, spirituality, and the human condition, weaving together the experiences that shaped him.

His poetry collection, *Resonance of the Soul: Flowers and Harmonies*, introduced him to a global audience and earned critical acclaim, including the Literary Titan Gold Book Award and the Independent Press Award for Distinguished Favourite. The poems are known for emotional clarity, cultural resonance, and spiritual depth.

His involvement with the Uganda Poetry Society is one of the most meaningful aspects of his artistic journey. The Society honoured his contributions by establishing the Dr Ivan Edwards Poetry Award, now one of the highest value poetry prizes in East and Central Africa.