

Kwaheri Nyerere

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He was an example to political leaders worldwide

My husband, Ron, and I were privileged to be in Dar-es Salaam at the time that Mwalimu retired as President of Tanzania. I shall never forget the friendliness, humbleness and chuckling laughter of that great man. He was an example to political leaders worldwide.

There was the afternoon when he and Mama Nyerere sat in two comfortable chairs in the garden of State House while the women of Dar-es-Salaam

came to say their 'goodbyes'. There were long chains of nurses in uniforms who clapped, danced and sang their way past. They were followed by hundreds of teachers; and women in army uniform and office workers; and, the most striking of all, the huge parade of market women in their colourful gowns. It seemed as though every woman had come to say goodbye to their much loved leader.

We were fortunate to be invited to the dinner that the President gave for the Diplomatic Corps. Afterwards the young wife of an Ambassador went up to ask him for his autograph. He looked up, surprised, burst into laughter and signed her programme. At once a group of diplomatic wives followed her. He signed them all, still laughing. I wonder if other Presidents have ever done this!

A third memory is of the very big reception given in the garden of State House. It was a wonderful evening under the stars. The President walked about completely freely, talking and shaking hands with hundreds of people. There were no orderly lines, no lists of people who should meet him, no signs of security officers; only the President, at ease with his people, saying his goodbyes.

Finally I remember the last day...a sad day. It was President Nyerere's farewell parade, and President Mwinyi's first parade and speech to his people. After a long wait in a packed stadium, we could hear the approach of outriders, the guard of soldiers, and Mwalimu and Mama Nyerere being driven in an official vehicle.

They circled the parade ground to prolonged clapping. People were trying to hold him there for as long as possible. Then another car entered the stadium. It looked lonely without the large escort that Mwalimu had. Out stepped Ali Hassan Mwinyi. The two Presidents embraced. We could see them chuckle over a secret joke. Then it was time for Julius Nyerere to leave. This he did in an ordinary car that circled the ground once and then left by a side gate, in the unassuming way that was so typical of him. It was time for President Mwinyi to make his speech and take his place in history.

President Julius Nyerere will never be forgotten by those who were privileged to be in Dar-es-Salaam during that last week. What an example he was for all presidents and leaders throughout the world. **F**

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and Mzee Rashid Mfaume Kawawa in discussion

