

Tribute to Papa Senator Michael Atijosan Emmanuel Onunkun OON

I happened to have known Papa as far back as the time he was the Secretary at Ekiti North Local Government in the early 1970s. This was when the issue of the call for the emancipation of the Eka Mefa group of towns, which included my hometown, Ilasa, from under Ikole Ekiti in Ekiti North Local Government to join with other towns to form Ekiti East Local Government came up. At the time, I was the leader of the group agitating for freedom from the repression of Ikole Ekiti, but the people of Ikole did not want it. Papa arbitrated between both sides in such a fair, impartial and equitable way, recognising the right of the people to demand self-determination, that the people of Eka Mefa group of towns were impressed by his drive to see that we were not cheated or repressed. Papa was a virtuous and upright man of integrity, a good man, and his role during the meetings we had with him back then played a pivotal role in the pulling away of Eka Mefa group of towns from under Ekiti North to form Ekiti East Local Government.

The second time I got the opportunity to engage with Papa was when he and his family turned up at my door to ask for the hand of one of my daughters in marriage to one of his sons. It was a pleasant day for me to meet Papa again on that joyful occasion, and it made me happy to know that my daughter was being taken into a good family. Papa, we miss your fatherly love, your love for the community and your love for everybody. We miss you very much, now that you have left us. However, God loves you better. Adieu, Papa.

- Hon Chief Alfred Wale Akinlabi
Fmr Chairman Ekiti East Local Government,
Omuo Ekiti.