

TheMetroSection

Died for lack of oxygen

• How wife of ex- Chief Press Secretary to former Imo governor, Ohakim, died in hospital after car accident

From Charles Ogugbuaja, Owerri

UNTIL December 28, 2014, Mrs. Chizoba Epke, 33, was vibrant and exuding in worthwhile life. A graduate of Banking and Finance of the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, with admirable academic performance, she was married to Henry Ekpe, erstwhile Chief Press Secretary to the immediate past governor of Imo State, Chief Ikedi Ohakim.

Their marriage has been blessed with four fine children- three boys and a girl.

In Owerri city, every journalist knows the affection between the couple. That probably informed their decision to use the last Christmas festive period to stroll down to a known sit-out relaxation joint in Emekuku, Owerri North Local Council of the state to eat a local delicacy, *Nkwobi*, with festive drinks on December 28 last year.

They also never expected that it was going to lead to a tragic end for one of them. The story line, as told by the widower, Ekpe, was that they were seated comfortably outside discussing as they were eating, one of the fun-seekers who had been with them in a different corner of the location, wanted to drive away, when he suddenly misapplied by accelerating instead of reversing his Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). The result of the misapplication led to the vehicle knocking down the lady who was sitting in front of the vehicle, with her husband and another young man. As soon as the SUV accelerated, it ran over Chizo, while Ekpe and the other man were pushed to the wall.

The deceased had had another mind-boggling experience early last year at the popular market in Owerri "Relief Market", when she had gone to buy some foodstuff for the family in her Toyota Camry. On coming out of the market, an unknown person had opened the car and driven it away. She had to return home in a commercial transport. The car is yet to be found till today.

Ekpe said: "The man, who was said to have come from Thailand to celebrate his Christmas and New Year festivities, started his Lexus SUV. Instead of reversing, he accelerated in our front where we were seated, leading to it running over my wife while I had an injury on my knees.



The late Epke

The other man was also hit and is currently in the hospital. The issue is that initially, I thought my wife escaped as we did, not knowing that she was under the SUV lying on the ground as the vehicle hit her. We immediately took her to Holy Rosary Hospital, Emekuku Owerri North for initial medication. They could not immediately handle her after the doctors had assured me that all was well. She was taken to the Imo State University Teaching Hospital (IMSUTH), Orlu."

At IMSUTH, Ekpe said his wife was placed on oxygen to revive her, regretting that she gave all necessary assurance of survival, but this was short-lived when the oxygen was exhausted and all efforts to replenish

it was futile none could be procured anywhere. Efforts made by some medical personnel to get it at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), was also unsuccessful.

He stated: "My wife was alive and talking with me. At IMSUTH, we interacted so well before she was put on oxygen. At a point, she requested for water and when they offered her sachet water, she rejected it because for some years, my wife stopped drinking pure water, having suffered from typhoid disease in the past. I had to go and look for bottled water. I was happy that she was improving. After drinking some water, the oxygen was fixed again. But when it finished, there was no more oxygen in the entire IMSUTH and we

could not get it elsewhere. I could not believe it, she passed on in December 29, 2014 after jerking."

The irony of the issue, he regretted, is that the killer-driver, comes from the same Naze community, the same area his late life hailed from, in the outskirts of Owerri metropolis.

Her body, *The Guardian* gathered, was deposited in a morgue. According to Ekpe, her remains were committed to mother earth in January 30, at the country home of Epkes in Umuechem, Umuhu in Ngor Opkala Local Council of Imo State.

The late Chizo, as fondly called by friends, would be remembered by her admirers for her jovial, sociable and humble disposition.

Briefs

Former Ekiti Information Commissioner loses wife

MRS. Funke Ekundayo, wife of the immediate past Commissioner for Information and Civic Orientation, Mr Tayo Ekundayo, has passed on. She was aged 57 years.

According to a statement by the family, Mrs Ekundayo died in Ado-Ekiti on Saturday, January 31.

She was until her death a senior Education Officer with the Lagos State government. She is survived by her husband and children.

Burial arrangements will be announced by the family later.



Ekundayo

Awonuga for burial

FUNERAL rites for Pa Moses Adetola Awonuga who died on Thursday, October 23, 2014, began on Wednesday in Lagos. Commendation service holds today at his residence, Adetola Awonuga Drive, off Awolowo Road, Odogbolu, Ogun State at 7.30p.m.

He will be buried tomorrow, after a funeral service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, Odogbolu, Ogun.

Guests will be entertained at St. Paul's Primary School, Sabo, Odogbolu after interment. A thanksgiving service holds on Sunday at the same church at 10.00a.m.



Awonuga

Julianah Folorunsho, 74, for burial