

# Ultimate Search: Deceased's Family Threatens Legal Action

By Onoja Audu (Jos) and Francis Onoiribholo (Warri)

Family of the *Gulder Ultimate Search* contestant, Anthony Mudiaga Ogadje, who drowned last weekend, has threatened to sue sponsors of the television reality show, Nigeria Breweries Limited, if it fails to disclose the actual cause of their son's death in a lake at the Shere Hills in Jos.

In an exclusive interview with *Saturday Independent* in Jos, Mrs Elizabeth Akpamie, elder sister to the late Anthony's father, Eric, said the family suspects foul play, as the company was allegedly in a hurry to bury the deceased without getting to the roots of his death.

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Ambassadorial

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The woman, who said she personally brought up late Anthony in Jos, informed that his father also died in the tin city in 1983 shortly before he was born.

The former student of St Murumba College, Jos, and Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka, was to have proceeded for the one-year mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in September before his untimely death.

Madam Akpamie recalled how the late Anthony phoned her last Tuesday to inform her that he was in Jos.

"I asked him to come home but he said no, that they were in Jos for the *Gulder Ultimate Search* competition," she said, adding that Anthony asked her to pray for him to win the competition.

She lamented that with Anthony's death, they had nobody to carry on the family's name.

"How can we lose the hope of the family at a time the

young man was full of life?" she asked, just as she faulted claims by the organisers of the reality show that they had life guards at the lake site.

The mother of 12 children claimed the late Anthony was said to be in the water for about 20 minutes before his lifeless body was brought out, a claim corroborated by one of her sons, who also alleged negligence on the part of the sponsors. She insisted that her family wants the brewing company to provide the video clips on how the incident occurred or they will head to court, as "Anthony is the only son we have both on the mother's side and the fathers side."

Anthony's mother, who she said lives in Warri, collapsed on hearing the death of her son and was still in a state of shock.

According to her, the autopsy on the late *Gulder Ultimate Searcher* took place on Wednesday at the University of Jos Teaching Hospital (JUTH).

"We must know the cause of his death," she insisted.

The shock is also in DELSU,

where Anthony read geology and graduated in the 2005/2006 session.

Edwin Adaikpo, a lecturer in the Department of Geology said his death was a "big shock" as Anthony was known as "an excellent swimmer."

He recalled how Anthony represented the institution in swimming on three occasions and came back with laurels, adding that he was very brilliant academically.

Nigeria Breweries however said it was in contact with the deceased's family.

Its Media Relations Manager, Mr Edem Vindah, told *Saturday Independent* on phone that the late contestant's uncle linked the company to his parent and that they have been in contact since the unfortunate incident happened.

"We have been holding discussions with his parents. In fact, his uncle led us to his parents. As I talk to you, we held discussions with them today (Thursday, August 9). I can tell you that we are okay with them, at least as of today," he said.