

# End of a dream

## • Lawyer dies in generator fire

Kome Mesiri was a successful lawyer and Director, Finance and Administration of the Initiative for Community Development, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), but his life was cut short in a fatal generator explosion. The popular thinking: another death owing to the inefficiency of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), SHOLA O'NEIL reports

**P**RESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo has accepted that his administration has failed woefully in power supply.

"Improved electricity within two years" was one of the key campaign promises of Mr. President in 1999. If anything the situation has worsened.

But the revelation, made by Mr. President at one of his ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) rally, sounded more like a broken record to most Nigerians.

It has no consolation for a young woman prematurely thrown into widowhood and her one-year old daughter rendered fatherless by the inefficiency of the nation's power supply; the feeling expectedly is of anger and grief as they mourn a loved one. They are not alone in their moment of sorrow; they grieve with men and women who lost a benevolent friend, counsellor, motivator and source of inspiration in 48-year old Kome Mesiri.

Life for Mesiri was looking only in one direction - upward. His first child after nearly 12-years of waiting, a cute little daughter, just clocked one and the prospects for his business and other endeavours were very bright - until death came calling.

Our correspondent learnt that

the deceased had waited for over 10 years for a child after marriage and the fruit of his patience, a baby girl, had only clocked one year a week before the unfortunate incident that led to his death.

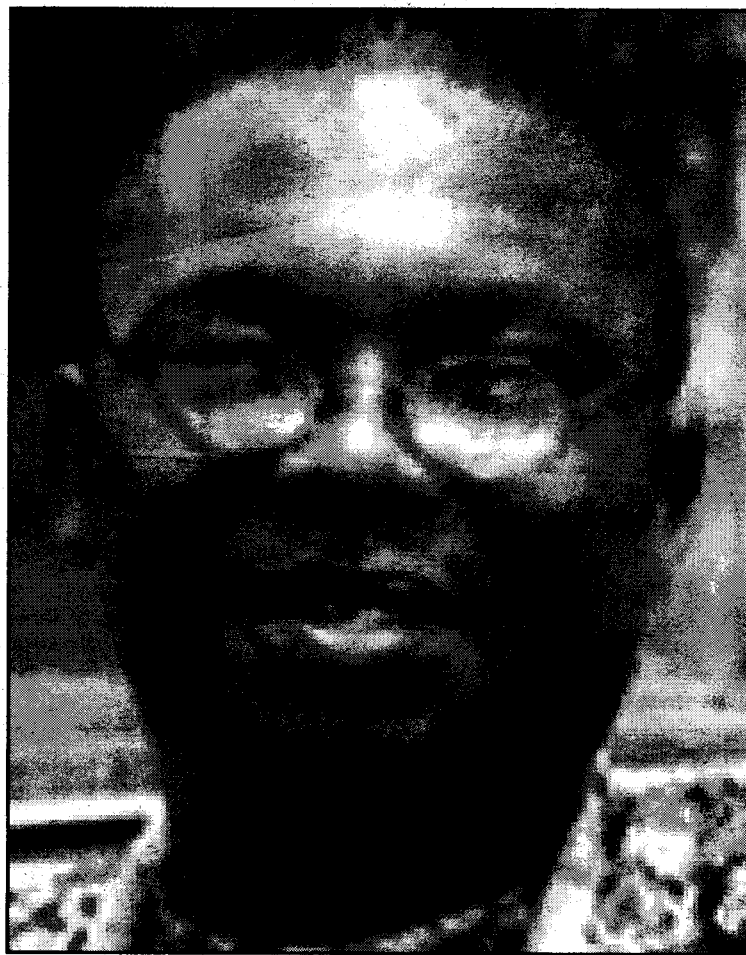
He was awoken from sleep early Monday, April 2, following another power outage in the area. Mesiri and other residents of Tom Ifie Close, off Airport Road, Effurun and indeed, the entire Delta State, live at the mercy of an inefficient PHCN.

So, when power went off, as it constantly does all over Nigeria, Mesiri decided to save his family the discomfort of a few hours of heat before the break of dawn, a family source told *The Nation*.

"He went to the generator house. There were three generators. But he settled for the smallest, a Yamaha 900VA because what he wanted was to power the fans because the weather was hot and his family members were sweating," a source told our correspondent.

That was the last decision the 48-year old lawyer and Finance Director of NGO, Initiative for Community Development (ICD) would take.

It was gathered that the generator exploded, shortly after he pulled the ignition and caught



• The late Mesiri

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—Eyewitnesses told our corre-

spondent that Mesiri suffered severe fire burn from the incident after the flame consumed his py-jamas and the light clothing items he had on at the time. He was rushed to a private hospital in the oil city of Warri, but was referred to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Benin-City, Edo State.

Barely 24 hours after he was rushed there, Mesiri died.

Amidst misty eyes and quaky voice, Mr. Friday Akpomera, a close friend of the deceased and Programmes Manager, ICD, told our correspondent: "Kome could not hurt a fly; he epitomised the words gentle and humble to the last letter."

The entire Tom Ifie Close was thrown into mourning when *The Nation* visited the area on Saturday morning. The ICD head office was closed down, leaving a number of staff lurking around and discussing the unfortunate incident in hush tones.