

Metro

Posers over death of club member at tennis court

By Bose Adelaja

HIS death remains a mystery among friends and relatives, especially those who saw him few minutes before his untimely death on Thursday April 23, 2015. Alhaji Mubarak Lawal was a regular face at Ikeja Country Club, especially at the table tennis section where he usually went to unwind.

Not only that, the 63-year-old was a respected horologist in Ikeja and its environs apart from his kin interest in other businesses which has endeared him to many. No wonder he was often referred to as an authority on business matters.

The father of seven was well respected among family members and friends. The only slur associated with him is the fact that he had parted ways with his first wife and hooked up with a woman who became the centre of attraction for him.

His unexpected death has thrown up a puzzle with many in the neighborhood questioning the rationale behind it. According to findings, Mubarak had left the comfort of his home for the Country Club in company of his wife. Unknown to him and others, it was to be a journey of no return. Prior to that fateful Thursday, he had fixed an appointment with one of his business associates. But unfortunately he could not honour the appointment as he died few hours after eating some fruits.

Alhaji Lawal was said to have eaten the fruits in the company of his wife before proceeding to the table tennis section of the Club where he complained of a stomach disorder and died on the way to the hospital.

He has since been buried according to Muslim rites. But his death has not a few eyebrows among friends and relatives who suspect he might have died as a result of food poisoning.

Vanguard Metro, VM, gathered that before his sudden death, he was planning to put up property in Epe and other parts of Lagos. This has been confirmed by some estate valuers among his numerous friends who bemoan the fact that death had robbed the respected Alhaji to achieve his dream.

But while many expected family members to be in a mourning mood during the period leading to his eight days Fidu prayers, they were shocked to be confronted by the fact of the family being torn apart over the sharing of the deceased's property. VM gathered that the first son who was said not to be in good terms

• Alhaji Mubarak Lawal

with his father, suddenly formed an alliance with his step mother to take stock of the deceased's property, a move which was not supported by the deceased's friends who have been suspecting foul play over the death of Alhaji.

Also, the second wife was said to be mounting pressure on friends to declare the deceased's assets. This also has raised

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suspicion, prompting some people to claim the father of seven might have been poisoned overnight.

Presumably based on this development, his 7, Faith Close, Morekete-Ikorodu residence appeared abandoned as only few people bothered to come around since his death.

During Vanguard's visit to the neighbourhood, some residents claimed Alhaji Lawal's death has a spiritual undertone especially with the way and manner members of his family have responded to it. An acquaintance who pleaded anonymity queried why the first born and his step mother who were usually at loggerhead with the late Alhaji would suddenly unite after the death of the head of the family.

VM gathered that both the first son and the second wife, have been sending messages to Mubarak's friends and business associates to retire whatever property the deceased had put in their care. But a source in Ikeja Country Club said apart from an office in Ikeja and an uncompleted apartment in Ikorodu, he was not aware the deceased had other properties in other parts of the state as claimed in some quarters.

A resident who pleaded anonymity said the deceased was contracted to market some landed properties in a Lagos suburb after which he would be entitled to an acre of land but he did not meet up with the terms and conditions until his untimely death. But members of his nuclear family never knew the details of this arrangement and thought he owned a vast piece of land, unaware that he did not own any other property apart from his residence.

