

Of Meekness And Majesty
A Centennial Tribute To Pa. Chief Reuben Famuyide
Fasoranti OFR, CFR, The Leader of Afenifere And
Asiwaju Yoruba
By Chief Ademola Folarin - Secretary General of Afenifere

It is a rare privilege and opportunity to present a centennial tribute in honour of a personality, who has come to exemplify the distinguished attributes of The Master, whose divine path and image, we are enjoined, by the Holy Scriptures, to emulate.

I met Pa Fasoranti for the first time, in 1974 (52 years ago) at Christ's School Ado Ekiti, where he was posted as principal. I was then a student approaching my final year. My first impression of Baba was that of a man imbued with unusual calm, uncommon discipline and forthrightness.

My first encounter with him was short-lived, as I departed the school barely one year after he became the principal. I was to meet him again 41 years after in 2015, by which time, he had become the leader of Afenifere. On our second meeting, my first impression of him, 41 years earlier, was again confirmed and reinforced.

He had remained a man of few words, with a disciplined, austere disposition. He exuded a simplicity and a meekness, so stark, that it became a paradox within the milieu of splendor and grandeur of respect, adoration and love, that he instantly attracted.

Baba was never a typical politician. Definitely not in the Nigerian hue. And although he became politically active, and actively engaged in the entrenchment of political and ideological purity within the polity, right from very early age, he consciously avoided the shiny political limelight. You will expect that this will dim his political stature and brilliance. Not so.

His calmness in the face of turbulence, his courage in the face of adversity; his love, even in the midst of enmity, his readiness to forgive, even when he is the victim; his generosity even when it means self-denial; his loving kindness that instantly disarms the enemy – all combine to make him a magnetic rarity, drawing all people to him and placing him on a leadership pedestal, that very few can deservedly mount.

Very much in the image of The Teacher, Pa Fazoranti is a man of peace, and his entire political career, is distinctly remarkable for the absence of acrimony, conflict or needless controversy. His presence at any gathering naturally doused imminent or apparent tension. As the leader of Afenifere he presided over caucus and general meetings with characteristic studied silence. He listened attentively, took in all the details, said very little, and intervened only to break a deadlock.

A great consensus builder, and a faithful adherent to the hallowed ethos of Afenifere, he will never impose his views (except to demand strict adherence to Afenifere values and tradition) but rather submit to consensual decisions. He directed the affairs of Afenifere in its traditional collegial fashion, and treated every member, old or young with due courtesy and respect.

Baba harboured no ill will. I have never seen him display any aggressive mannerisms, either physical or verbal. And his spirit of forgiveness, is legendary. He was always driven by the ultimate goal of serving the best interest of his people, over and above his personal interest. And so, when we proposed to him that Afenifere should support Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Now President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) in 2023, he jettisoned all acrimonious antecedents, embraced the proposal and gave us marching orders to ensure the success of the project.

A steadfast, and consistent campaigner and reformer, Baba has been in the leadership of the vanguard of progressive forces since 1952. And he has persistently championed the clamour, along with his colleagues in Afenifere, for restructured Nigeria. And within six years of his leadership

of Afenifere, the restructuring campaign culminated in the Afenifere – inspired 2014 National confab. It is to his credit and that of his colleagues in Afenifere and other socio – political organisations that a veritable template for the restructuring of Nigeria has been created, even if yet to be implemented.

At 100, Baba remains mentally alert, and socially and politically connected. Although, he has pulled back from the day – to – day activities of Afenifere, he remains its highly revered leader, a source of inspiration and a fountain of wisdom.

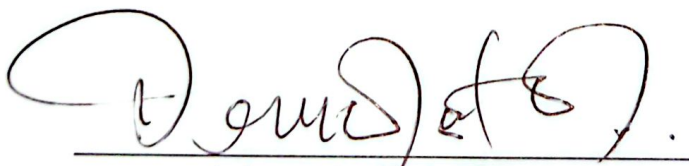
Baba loves and lives Yoruba unity and progress. And nothing brings a glow to his face and happiness in his heart, more than the prospect of a united, safe and prosperous Yorubaland, within a fair, just, peaceful and progressive Nigeria. We are lucky to have him.

Here is wishing Baba a happy centenary birthday, and a further healthy term of glorious service to the fatherland.

Viva Pa Fasoranti! Long live the leader! long live Afenifere! long live Nigeria!

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Dated this 10th Day of April, 2026.



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