



TRIBUTE: MCANTHONY KORNAH KEAH

*Veronica Fynn Bruey**

Journal of Internal Displacement, Volume 11, Issue 2, July 2021, pages 2-5

Published 24 August 2021

Link: <https://journalofinternaldisplacement.org/>

Abstract

McAnthony and I go way back as school mates in the late 1980's just before the inception of the Liberian civil war. We both survived the civil war and reconnected twenty years after in Toronto, Canada in 2009, when I was studying at York University. Then, I was in the process of establishing the Journal of Internal Displacement (hereafter, the JID). Given McA's lived experience as a war survivor, his passion for social justice, and his expertise in international development, there was no hesitation with inviting him to be a founding editorial board member of the JID. Until his passing, he was an integral part of the JID actively contributing to its development, growth, and sustenance. Over the past 12 years, McA peer reviewed and copyedited many manuscripts submitted to the JID. He helped draft call for papers for special issues while working with the advisory board members, editors, reviewers, and authors to ensure that the JID maintains the highest of academic standards in its publication and delivery. Unfortunately, this space would not allow for the many rich experiences McA and I shared. From attending conferences in Canada, to organising events at the National Democratic Institute in Liberia, to sharing a good laugh at my wedding ceremony, McA was brother, colleague, partner, and friend. There are absolutely no words to express my gratitude, appreciation, and connection to one of the most kind, caring, humble, humorous, and beautiful soul human being I was blessed to call a friend. McA, you will be sorely missed!

The Journal of Internal Displacement (JID), established July 2009, is the only scholarly journal committed to all displacement concerns worldwide. Thanks to the generous voluntary contribution from the advisory board and editorial team - manuscript submission, peer-review and publication of the JID is **FREE OF CHARGE**. The JID does not charge authors to submit articles.

Email Alerts/Reprints/Permission: internaldisplacement@gmail.com

Subscription: JID is a Free Open Access Journal.

Archives: <http://www.journalofinternaldisplacement.com/apps/auth/login?why=pw&try=1&wp=1&next=archive>

Submission (July 2021 Edition): <http://journalofinternaldisplacement.com>

Author's Institutional Affiliation and Correspondence

*Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Internal Displacement and Assistant Professor, Legal Studies, Athabasca University. Correspondence: vfynnbruey@athabascau.ca

TRIBUTE: MC-ANTHONY KORNAH KEAH

Veronica Fynn Bruey

I worked closely with McAnthony on various initiatives in a Small Island Developing State in the Pacific. At that time, Mc-Anthony was a United Nations representative stationed at the Parliament of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, working on development and reform projects to assist the legislature in providing good governance for the people of this nation which has a long history of impacts both positive and negative by foreign rulers. I can say without a doubt that Mc-Anthony is a very devoted, astute, intelligent, thoughtful and genuine professional. He cares deeply about his work and the people he is serving, wherever he is. He can be counted on to always seek and find sustainable intelligent solutions to problems and to carefully and thoughtfully choose and deliver what is needed in any given situation. He is committed to making positive contributions to communities even under the most difficult and trying circumstances, as one finds in the developing world and in politically unstable regions. I would recommend McAnthony wholeheartedly. Carolyn Laws, LinkedIn Recommendations

On 3 February 2020, I received an email from Mc-Anthony Kornah Keah, while he was working as a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) consultant in N'djamena, Chad. The email reads:

Dear Veronique!
 Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you. I have been ill. Still not too well but better. Here is what I have written (attached). I am thinking to make this short, maybe 10-12 pages. Let me know what you think.
 Regards!
 McAnthony

Before the above email, McA (as I fondly called him) had asked me on 22 January 2020 to be a co-author of a paper he was writing, entitled: *Executive Dominance and the Battle for Legislative Confidence in Liberia*. Sadly, we did not complete the writing of the paper because he passed away on 20 June 2021.

McA and I go way back as school mates in the late 1980's just before the inception of the Liberian civil war. We both survived the civil war and reconnected twenty years after in Toronto, Canada in 2009, when I was studying at York University. Then, I was in the process of establishing the Journal of Internal Displacement (hereafter, the JID). Given McA's lived experience as a war survivor, his passion for social justice, and his expertise in international development, there was no hesitation with inviting him to be a founding editorial board member of the JID. Until his passing, he was an integral part of the JID actively contributing to its development, growth, and sustenance. Over the past 12 years, McA peer reviewed and copyedited many manuscripts submitted to the JID. He helped draft call for papers for special issues while working with the advisory board members, editors, reviewers, and authors to ensure that the JID maintains the highest of academic standards in its publication and delivery.

Outside of the JID, McA was a passionate social justice advocate. Around the same time the Journal of Internal Displacement was being set up, McA founded the Good Citizen Project (hereafter GCP) with the vision of "fostering knowledge and empowering all Liberian children irrespective of their gender and background through reading and learning about their history, culture, and country so as to enable them face the future with boldness in creating a better Liberia¹." Together with Pastor Dan Brown, a fellow Liberian and I, McA led the GCP

¹ Extracted from the Good Citizen Project Strategic Plan (2009).

to release its first children's book, *Miatta and Kiazulu Want to Have a School in their Village*², prior to leaving Canada for Liberia in 2011. The GCP will go on to print and distribute hundreds of notebooks with excerpts from the *Liberian Constitution* and the *United Convention on the Rights of the Child* printed on the back cover to grade school children in Liberia.

As a Master of Science graduate of the International Development Program in the Political Science Department of University of Guelph, his thesis, *Rehabilitating Child Soldiers and War-Affected Children in Western Africa: A Study*³, examined the effectiveness of institutional rehabilitation programs and community approach to de-traumatizing war affected children in West Africa. He would later transform his master's thesis into a book, *Growing Up Naked: The Untold Stories of Children at War*⁴ of which I was grateful to write a review⁵. The introduction of the book review gives an incline of McA resolve to be a children's rights advocates:

For an academic to translate complex research findings entangled with intricate traumatic real life stories of one of the most troubled sub-groups of children in the world – child soldiers – do not only require special talent but also unique skills that only very few authors like McAnthony Keah can display. With tact, exactitude, and sobriety Keah enters the psyche of two dissimilar individuals Cindy, a Canadian psychology student in need of research data, and Oldpa, a traumatized child soldier in Liberia struggling to survive amidst indelible remiscences of familial loss, torture, discrimination and loneliness. *Growing Up Naked*, a glossy slender 54 page paperback, uses existential philosophy (Oldpa) and phenomenological framework (Cindy) to ignite and converge these two worlds of incongruities in ways that are beyond one's imagination⁶.

While in Liberia, McA shifted his focus to legislative development, electoral reform and the rule of law expert in contributing towards strengthening and reforming the democratic and constitutional reform process in Liberia. An expert in researching, reviewing, and effecting changes to elections and elections related laws, he designed modules and implemented training programs for parliamentarians, government officials, community service organisations, donor agencies, and various United Nations organisations in Liberia.

Unfortunately, this space would not allow for the many rich experiences McA and I shared. From attending conferences in Canada, to organising events at the National Democratic Institute in Liberia, to sharing a good laugh at my wedding ceremony, McA was brother, colleague, partner, and friend. There are absolutely no words to express my gratitude, appreciation, and connection to one of the most kind, caring, humble, humorous, and beautiful soul human being I was blessed to call a friend. McA, you will be sorely missed!

References

Fynn, Veronica, *Miatta and Kiazulu want to have a School in their Village* (Victoria, BC: First Choice Books, 2011).

Keah, Mc-Anthony, *Growing Up Naked: The Untold Stories of Children at War* (Baltimore, MD: Publish America, 2009).

² Veronica Fynn, *Miatta and Kiazulu want to have a School in their Village* (Victoria, BC: First Choice Books, 2011).

³ Mc-Anthony Keah, *Rehabilitating Child Soldiers and War-Affected Children in Western Africa: A Study* (Master of Science, University of Guelph, 2003) [unpublished].

⁴ Mc-Anthony Keah, *Growing Up Naked: The Untold Stories of Children at War* (Baltimore, MD: Publish America, 2009).

⁵ Veronica Fynn, "Growing Up Naked: The Untold Stories of Children at War" (2010) 18:3 *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 475–477.

⁶ *Ibid* at 475.

———, *Rehabilitating Child Soldiers and War-Affected Children in Western Africa: A Study* (Master of Science, University of Guelph, 2003) [unpublished].

Fynn, Veronica, “Growing Up Naked: The Untold Stories of Children at War” (2010) 18:3 *The International Journal of Children’s Rights* 475–477.