

CHIEF FOLA MEADOWS

(THE BALOGUN OF IKIJA CHRISTIANS, ABEOKUTA)

Bro. (Chief) Fola Meadows is the second son of BRO. (CHIEF) VICTOR OLOYEDE MEADOWS-OGUNBONA (the Balogun Onigbagbo of Ikija) who was the 1st Secretary-General of the JIBOLU-TAIWO FAMILY, a post he held for about four decades.

Fola is a grandson of late Chief (Mrs) Patience Subulade Meadows (Mama Iberekodo), the Iyalode of Egba Christians, who died May, 1934.

He had his primary education at Oke-Ona United School, Iberekodo, Abeokuta and the Anglican Central School, Iporo-Ake also in Abeokuta; because in those days, primary class four was the highest in the basic primary schools, so the pupils had to move on to the Joint Central School to read classes five and six.

For his secondary education in 1948, he gained admission to Abeokuta Grammar School, which was then one of the very few secondary schools in town with high discipline and moral upbringing. The Principal of the school at that time was Rev. Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti who was the first student to be enrolled in Abeokuta Grammar School, hence he got the appellation “Daodu” (the first son in a family). Fola’s father, Bro. (Chief) V.O. Meadows-Ogunbona was also one of the very few students that were enrolled with “Daodu” – Ransome-Kuti in 1908.

During Fola’s secondary school days, he had as some of his teachers people such as – Mr. Olabode, Mr. Ogunniyin, Mr. Sodeinde, Mr. Oduntan, Mr. Ogunsanya, Mr. E.E. Efiok, Mr. Bassey, Mr. Bamodu, Mr. Odebiyi (who later became a Minister in the old Western Region), the Oyewole twin brothers, Mr. S.K. Olu Tomori and others.

Fola made his mark in the academic pursuits and received various prizes in his favourite subjects – English, Science and of course Music, which made him a favourite of “Daodu”, the Principal.

After his secondary education, he had a stint of Civil Service experience between 1955 – 1957 with the old Lagos Town Council (Accounts Section) which later became Lagos City Council along Catholic Mission Street, Lagos.

It is very interesting to note that he influenced Fela Ransome-Kuti’s interest in rudiments of music. Fola was Assistant Organist of St. David’s Anglican Church, Lafiaji, Lagos between 1956 and 1958.

In 1957, he joined the then Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (N.B.C.), where his voice was one of the few prized ones that reigned supreme on the airwaves of the corporation. Fola was exposed to training in broadcasting by world acclaimed broadcasters like Michael Ashbee and August Sinclair of the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.). He became a senior service staff in 1964.

Fola is married with children and grandchildren right now. In his late seventies, he leads a quiet life as a pensioner of the Radio Nigeria. Chief Fola Meadows is today one of the pillars of the Kemta House of the JIBOLU-TAIWO FAMILY of Egbaland and the current Treasurer of the illustrious family.