



## CENTRAL BANK OF KENYA

### Tribute to Dr. Geoffrey Mwau, EBS

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*As Prepared for Delivery*

*Madam Joy Mukiri Mwau; Ian, Alan, Ngina, and Kawira;  
Members of the family, distinguished friends, and fellow mourners.*

It saddened me deeply when I learnt of the passing away of Geoffrey Mwau. He had been ill for some time, and we held out hope that he will bounce back and win this battle. But that was not what God ordained. I wish to convey deepest condolences, on my own behalf, and that of Management and the entire staff of CBK.

I have known Geoffrey since 1980, when I was a first-year student at the University of Nairobi and he was in his second year. He was brilliant, and we were among a handful of students that were lucky enough to work during the long holidays as Research Assistants for the professors. This was before the invention of the category *interns*. We were both tall, thin, and lanky. He coined a nickname for me, that stuck all these years, and I also used that nickname to address him. We were that close.

It is impossible to summarize 42 years in just a few minutes. But I will mention a few things. He was a gifted student. His Master's Thesis in 1984 on the "*Impact of Foreign Capital Inflows on the Kenya Economy*" should be required reading for Kenya's policy makers. Subsequently he attended McGill University for a second Master's degree and then his PhD in 1994. We interacted closely during this time though infrequently as this was before the advent of instant communication.

He was a consummate professional and an economist in every respect. We had millions of conversations over these years, invariably about economics. Both of us were interested in theoretical issues but our conversations were almost always about applied economics. We never really disagreed but we also never really agreed. Each pushed the other, and I never felt that I had lost or won an argument. In fact, I had learnt something from his keen observation and clarity of mind. Every discussion ended with his characteristic laugh—I can hardly imitate his laughter, but it now seems I am adopting his hairstyle.

He was a true friend, over all these years. In Nairobi, Washington, and back again in Nairobi. His humor and optimism was infectious, and I wish more of us could learn this from him.

But what really mattered to him was his family. I remember discussing weighty career decisions, which he struck a balance in favor of his family. Yes, he loved his family.

The last time he visited me in Washington, in 2014 or early 2015, we had lunch together and discussed Kenya's economic trajectory and other matters. But the highlight of the lunch was when he fired up his iPad and showed me videos of his daughters. In one of them they were singing, I believe with their cousin. He was beaming, smiling from ear to ear. This was before Tik Tok.

Kenya has lost a worthy hero, we have lost a friend, and the family has lost a husband and a father. And you carry the heaviest burden. We pray that Almighty God grants you strength, comfort, and peace.

*Mathai, you have completed your race! May the angels lead you into paradise.  
May choirs of angels welcome you. And may you rest in eternal peace. Amen. Amen.*

