

# Photo Exhibit of Dr. K. A. Busia

Please enjoy this prolific collection of photographs, provided by the Busia Foundation International, of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, educator, sociologist, anthropologist, politician, statesman, and Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana. These photographs will be on display from Monday April 7 through Friday, April 11 as a courtesy of Alexander Library in association with the April 9 documentary film screening of "The Prof: A Man Remembered, The Life, Vision, and Legacy of Dr. K. A. Busia" in Alexander Library's Teleconference Lecture Hall at 7:30pm.

The screening is free and open to the public.

Sponsors: Center for African Studies, Department of Africana Studies, Academic and Public Partnerships in the Arts and Humanities, Alexander Library and Busia Foundation International.

## "The Prof: A Man Remembered" Documentary

### Screening Wednesday, April 9, 7:30pm, TLH, Alexander Library

The Prof. A Man Remembered: The Life, Vision and Legacy of Dr. K. A. Busia is a moving documentary of the extraordinary scholar, statesman and man of God who rose from humble beginnings to become Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana. In a narrative composed entirely of interviews with widow Mrs Naa Morkor Busia and other family members, President J.A. Kufuor and other political colleagues, students and friends; rare documentary footage, and extracts from speeches and tributes, this film covers Dr. Busia's life and times from the moments of his birth in Wenchi, Brong Ahafo to his unexpected and sudden death in Oxford England sixty-five years later. In between the story of his life mirrors the turbulent history of his country, the recollection of his vision inspires the people of his country, and the recognition of his legacy becomes the foundation of the flourishing democracy of his country today. This heartfelt tribute is written and directed by film maker daughter Akosua Busia, whose other works include the screenplay adaptation of Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison's Pulitzer prize winning novel *Beloved*, directed by Jonathan Demme and starring Danny Glover and Oprah Winfrey; writer director of feature film *Ascension Day* about Nat Turner who organized the first slave rebellion in US history; writer of best selling novel *The Seasons of Beento* lackbird; and as actress best known as Nettie in Steven Spielberg's feature film of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The film is co-produced by her sister renowned poet Dr. Abena P.A. Busia, an Oxford scholar like her father, who is Professor of English, Women's Studies and Comparative Literature at Rutgers the State University of New Jersey.

### A Short Biography of Dr. K.A. Busia

Born in Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo on 11th July 1913, Kofi Abrefa Busia was the eldest of thirteen children. With an early appetite for education, Busia began his schooling by accident. While his mother and stepfather worked in the fields near Bechem, Kofi, then a toddler as attended to by a school teacher's wife, and thus hanging about the local school, was noticed to be picking up lessons better than the officially enrolled pupils. As the expected successor to his uncle the Omanhene of Wenchi, Busia was not slated for classroom education. But being informed of the young Busia's brilliance, the chief agreed to allow him to formally enroll in the school. When Busia was eight years old, amazed by his learning abilities, visiting missionary Reverend William Whittle and his wife Alice, stationed in Wenchi, requested that he stay with them in order to master the English language and further his education. Although treated more like a son, Busia became their houseboy, working hard in order to further his education. When later re-stationed, the Whittles took Busia with them to Kumasi.

At age nine, then living in Kumasi, Busia was chosen to hand-over a golden trowel to his Excellency, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Gold Coast Colony, and also make a speech at the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone for Wesley College. Speaking on the public platform, Busia's brilliance, eloquence and fluency in English, such as had never been witnessed before in the Gold Coast in one so young, spread through the nation and he became famous as 'the prodigy bush boy from faraway Wenchi'. The road for Busia however, was not always easy. On returning to England, the Whittles left Busia in the care of Reverend Waterworth, who then exchanged places with and handed Busia over to Reverend and Mrs Arthur H. Mildren. Realizing the Mildrens were less interested in his academic aspirations than their predecessors, Busia eventually left the house. Determined to continue his education, Busia persevered and was eventually taken in by Rev. Armstrong, the head of the Methodist mission in the Gold Coast, who enrolled him at the Wesleyan mission school in Kumasi. Making a trip with his new ward to Cape Coast, Busia visited the prestigious Mfantipim school, and hoped to return one day as a student. His family, however, did not have enough funds to afford the costly fees required. At age thirteen, Busia sat for the Methodist Synod scholarship examination, and won honors for the entire Ashanti region, facilitating his opportunity to attend a secondary school. He chose Mfantipim. Once there, Busia excelled in his studies. At home with his mother, he vowed three things; to build a house in his beloved Wenchi, to go to Oxford University which he had heard so much about from the Reverend Whittle, and to make his country a better place, not just for the fortunate, but for the poor and disenfranchised. On completing his schooling at Mfantipim with characteristic excellence, Busia then attended teacher training at Wesley College, Kumasi, in 1931, and taught as a student/ teacher at Achimota College in 1935. Busia was then selected for an Achimota Council scholarship, and after sitting for an external BA Honors Degree in Medieval and Modern History from London University, he was able to travel to England and study for his BA Honors in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at University College, Oxford. After studying for two years, instead of three, Busia received his degree in 1941, his MA in 1946 and his D.Phil in social Anthropology in 1947, all at colleges in Oxford. Dr. Busia was the first black man to attend University College, Oxford. His distinguished career also saw him become the first of two Africans appointed to the British Colonial Service as District Commissioner. He was the first African professor at the University of Ghana; the first African to hold a professorship at the University of Leiden in Holland, since Johannes Capitein in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century; the leader of opposition at the time of independence and the first and only Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana. Dr. Busia entered formal politics in Ghana in 1951 when for the first time in our history national elections were held to choose African legislators. He had earlier indicated his natural concern for the interests of our rural folk by encouraging farmers in the Western Region to form cooperatives to press for fairer prices in the 1940s when he was a District commissioner.

In 1952, upon the dissolution of the United Gold Coast Convention, he became the leader of the new party, Ghana Congress Party. In 1956, he was elected the leader of the parliamentary opposition to the CPP Government. Even in opposition, his views on parliamentary democracy, human rights and the rule of law were adequately reflected in the 1957 independence constitution. He went into exile in 1959 and returned in 1966 after the overthrow of the oppressive Nkrumah regime and was appointed the Vice Chairman of the Political Committee of the NIC government. The following year, he was appointed Chairman of the National Advisory Committee and in June 1967 made the Chairman of the board of Trustees of the Centre for Civic Education. In 1969 he became a member of the Constituent Assembly which wrote the 1969 Constitution and was elected Prime Minister on August 29 of that year. In January 1972, he was overthrown in a coup d'etat. By the time of his death in 1978, Busia was regarded as one of Africa's most influential scholars whose parallel academic and political careers were shaped by an abiding and consistent concern for the people of Africa and the



## Timeline of Dr. K. A. Busia's Life

### **Presidency**

October 1969 – 13th January, 1972 : Prime Minister

### **Personal Information**

Date of Birth : 11th July, 1913.

Place of Birth : Wenchi B/A

Date of Death : 28th August, 1978.

### **Educational Background of Dr. K.A. Busia**

Methodist School, Wenchi Brong Ahafo Region

1927-30 :Methodist Synod Scholar, Mfantipim College Cape Coast.

1931-32 :Teacher Training, Wesley College, Kumasi Ashanti Region

1932-34 :Staff, Wesley College, Kumasi Ashanti Region.

1935-39 :Achimota Council Scholar, and Staff Achimota College, gained first degree with (Hons) in Medieval History from the University of London.

1939-41: Achimota Council Scholar, Oxford University – BA (Hons.) (Oxon) Politics Philosophy and Economics, the first African to get a degree from University College, Oxford.

1946-47: MA (Oxon) DPhil (Oxon) Social Anthropology.

### **His Political and Public Life**

1942-49 : Appointed First African District Commissioner, Gold Coast Colony, Officer in Charge of Sociological Surveys for Gold Coast Government 1947-49

1949-54 : Appointed first African Lecturer at University College of the Gold Coast, Senior Lecturer 1951

1954-59 : Appointed first African Professor at University College of the Gold Coast, Department of Sociology

1951-57 : Member of Legislative Assembly, Leader of the Ghana Congress Party 1952

1954-59 : Leader of the United Party, and Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly and Parliament

1959 : Went into Exile

1959-62 : Professor of Sociology and Faculty Chairman, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands

1960-62: By Royal Appointment, Professor of Sociology and Culture of Africa, University of Leiden, Netherlands, the first African to hold a Professorship at a Dutch University since Johannes Capitein in the 1740s.

1962 : Inaugural Professor, Center for African Studies, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City

1962-64 : Director of Studies for World Council of Churches, Birmingham, England

1964-66 : Professor of Sociology, Senior Member, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, England

1966 : Returned from Exile

1966-67 : Chairman, Political Committee of the NLC, Ghana

1967-68 : Chairman, National Advisory Committee of the NLC, Ghana

1967 : Chairman, Centre for Civic Education, Ghana

1969 : Founder and Leader of the Progress Party, Ghana

1969-72 : M.P. Wenchi West Constituency, and Prime Minister of the Second Republic of Ghana

Overthrown in a Coup d'Etat by Colonel I.K. Acheampong

1978 : Died in Exile in Oxford, England, his body returned to Ghana for a State Funeral in Accra and burial in Wenchi B.A.