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When he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
— William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

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In Memoriam

Sebastian Michael Chuwa

June 11, 1954 — April 8, 2014

On April 8, 2014 our beloved friend and co-worker, Sebastian Chuwa passed away due to complications following a stroke four days previously. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, four children, Margareth, Michael, Flora and Cyril, his 96-year old mother Sabina, brother Paul and sister Anna.

The ABCP has lost its inspirational founder and the world has lost a true champion of the environment. Before many others could envision the impact of human activities and climate change, Sebastian sounded the alarm by noticing the unwanted

changes to the environment in which he lived. He dedicated his life to efforts to insure a sustainable future for his children and felt the same dedication to all the children of the planet. He gained international recognition of his accomplishments in environmental conservation, receiving awards and support from several influential organizations. His philosophy of conservation was based on two pillars: youth and public education and active personal involvement in remedial action.

He described himself as a “bushy” man, noting his love of the wilderness of the African bush, and had a long career as a safari guide. In that capacity, he made many friends from around the world, impressing all with his incomparable knowledge about the plants, animals, insects and natural history of northern Tanzania.

He was a masterful story teller, taking delight in mimicking wild animals, able to mouth a lion’s roar when so inspired. He entertained many around the campfires with his stories of life in the bush. He joked about watching “African TV”, as his audience sat around a roaring campfire staring at the flames and embers spiraling up into the night sky, blending into the limitless depths of stars overhead in the consummate darkness of a Serengeti night.

A botanist, Sebastian discovered several new species in early work at Ngorongoro Crater. He was familiar with scientific names for all the flora of Tanzania, as well as local names given by the various tribes who made up the complex mix of people in the country. He was fluent in English, Kiswahili, Chagga (the language of his tribe), Masai, and numerous other local dialects. He established credibility with local people as one who knew intimately how their lives were lived.

As a man who felt so at home in nature, having now shed his earthly bonds, he lives on in the hearts and memories of all who loved him and is now one with that starry African night.



Elizabeth Chuwa delivers address at Tanzania Police School Moshi on July 23, 2014 at ceremonies memorializing the life and contributions of Sebastian Chuwa. Seated to her left is her brother, Dismas Macha and Police School Commandant Matanga Mbushi. Elizabeth and Dismas have agreed to take over Sebastian’s capacity as coordinators for the ABCP in Tanzania.



Tanzania Police School Moshi and Clarinets for Conservation coordinated a public ceremony honoring Sebastian's legacy.

Tanzania Police School Ceremony

The Tanzania Police Academy Moshi (TPS) has worked in close cooperation with the ABCP in instituting replanting programs for mpingo in the several acreages it controls and utilizes. On July 23, 2014, a ceremonial event to promote conservation and honor the memory of Sebastian Chuwa was held at the academy. Musicians from Clarinets for Conservation participated in providing music and leadership for the event, playing alongside the TPS band.

Staff officer T. T. Nyangasa delivered an address on behalf of TPS Commandant Matanga Mbushi. Following are excerpts: "As we are gathering here today for environmental conservation...we must take our time to remember some of our fellows who made some remarkable effort to conserve nature. One of them is our beloved the late Sebastian Chuwa. His contribution was beneficial not only for Tanzania but for the entire world. Three days before he passed away, he was at TPS together with his wife Elizabeth and their son discussing with the management about development of mpingo trees which were planted a few days ago at the TPS compound. He had provided us with some trees including mpingo, which we planted together; hence he was and still is, a real hero in environmental conservation. He was and still is a real teacher in nature conservation as he spent most of his time in disseminating education to the young and he really believed that in order to conserve nature, the young generation must be focused.

"From his deepest heart he declared that: 'I consider it noble and at the same time an obligation on my part to share and pass on to the younger generation the need and value of loving and conserving nature and its environment.'

"What should be done, as the only way to honor all the good that Mr. Chuwa has done, is to ensure that we continue keeping our environment most beautiful especially by planting mpingo trees in cooperation with the ABCP. I want to assure you that the TPS will pay maximum cooperation to the team members as we did during the life of the late Chuwa."

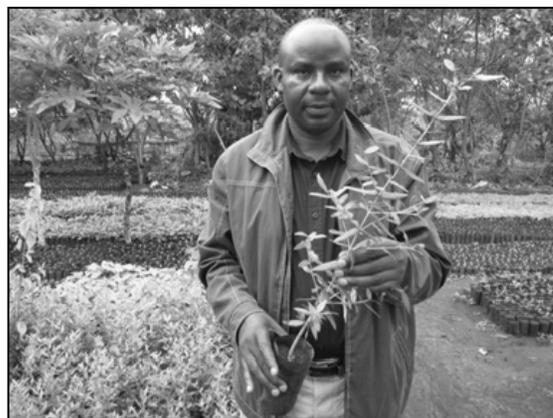
Elizabeth Chuwa

Elizabeth Chuwa and her brother, Dismas Macha, will take over the leadership of the ABCP in Tanzania. Elizabeth is the principle of Sungu Primary School in Kibosho East and an environmentalist in her own right. She graduated from Kleruu Teacher's College in 1983 and previously taught at Olmwingoni School in Arusha and Ngorongoro Primary.

Throughout the years of their marriage, Elizabeth worked side by side with Sebastian in initiating and implementing tree planting programs and educational activities for conservation. Because of her close connection with the school system, she was able to implement many far reaching changes. She has taken a lead in her district in introducing environmental studies into the school curriculum, establishing programs for tree planting, recycling and environmental beautification, as well as enrolling students in the youth conservation organizations, Malihai Clubs of Tanzania and Roots and Shoots. One special emphasis has been to instill a love of domestic and wild animals into her students.

Elizabeth and Sebastian have 4 children, all inspired by the cause of conservation and eager to see their parent's work continued so that the ecology of their homeland will be preserved for future generations.

Dismas Macha



Dismas Macha, Elizabeth's brother, has academic credentials and working experience in the field of environmental conservation. He has obtained a BA in Natural Resources Management from coursework taken at North Dakota State in Fargo, N. Dakota/USA and Egerton University in Nakuru, Kenya. He earned a certificate in forestry from Olmotonyi Forestry Training Institute in Arusha and has participated in numerous training programs relating to environmental conservation.

Since 1990 he has worked with the Natural Resources Department at Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) as a Senior Assistant Conservation Officer, supervising the Northern Highland Forest Reserve, covering 60% of the Crater area. In this capacity he collects and monitors plant species, conducts ecological monitoring and institutes programs for wildlife protection and forest renewal.

Also at Ngorongoro he works with resident Masai groups and residents of 13 adjacent villages to teach conservation awareness and help advance local living conditions. Dismas and his wife Beatrice, a school teacher, have two children.



Elizabeth is explaining the importance of mpingo trees to the environment to youth development officer, Irene Kiata.

Mpingo Planting

On May 29, Elizabeth led a planting effort for mpingo in Moshi, educating personnel and distributing trees at three locations. First visited was the Moshi Regional Council Office. Irene Kiata, youth development officer, Nestory Mushi, Roots and Shoots Coordinator, Anderson Audax, Mwenge University student, and John Minde, University of Dar-es-Salaam student, participated in the planting. At Kiusa Secondary School students were instructed about the importance and care of mpingo and helped plant seedlings in open areas of the school grounds.

At Korongoni Secondary, the ABCP is working with the music-conservation group Clarinets for Conservation (C4C) in supplying mpingo seedlings and providing guidance and instruction on its cultivation and care. Michele Von Haugg, director of C4C, along with a number of musicians, travel to Tanzania every summer to instruct Korongoni students in the clarinet and enlist them in planting programs for mpingo, of which clarinets are made. Elizabeth participated in a planting day with Korongoni students.

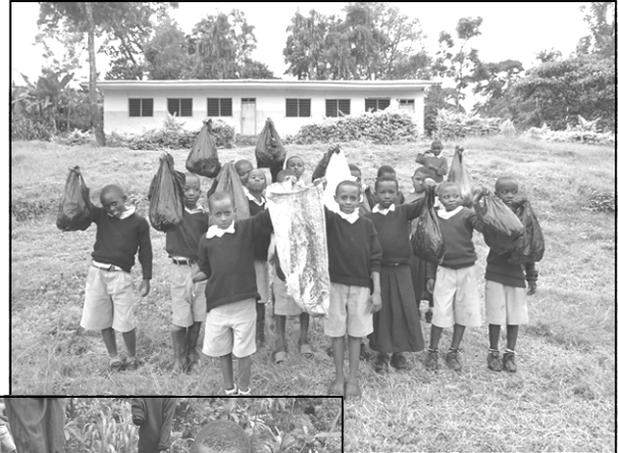
World Environment Day at Sungu School



Elizabeth and students celebrate World Environment Day 2014 at Sungu School.

The event were Elizabeth Chuwa, Dionis Munishi, Magreth Anga and Witto Msafiri. Students from Mweka College of African Wildlife Management attended and assisted in instructing the students in conservation and tree planting techniques.

One activity of the day was to sponsor a clean-up project in the neighborhood. Sungu is located one mile high on Mt. Kilimanjaro, so students also planted trees of indigenous species in targeted areas for environmental restoration.



(Above) Sungu students held a clean-up day on Mt. Kilimanjaro. Here they proudly display the results of their efforts.

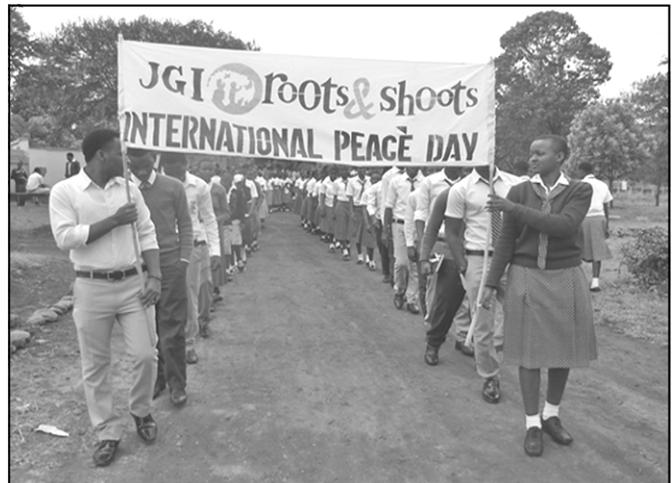


(Left) Mary helps by planting a tree.

UN International Day of Peace

On Sept. 21, Elizabeth was the guest of honor at Kibosho Secondary School for a ceremony held in unison with the UN International Day of Peace. The annual event is held to recognize the efforts of individuals, organization and governments to end conflict and promote peace.

Roots and Shoots, the youth environmental group founded by Jane Goodall, sponsored the occasion, which included a parade of students and teachers (below), entertainment events and activities geared to awareness of climate change. Elizabeth addressed the gathering about the importance of activity-based programs in protecting the environment.





Planting Project at Nyerere Secondary School

Elizabeth is expanding on a tree planting initiative begun several years ago at Nyerere Secondary School in Mwanga. The school has available a large area of land and is presently dedicating three acres for the cultivation of mpingo and other indigenous species. Pictured to the left are Head Master Mr. Mmbuji and Sister Rose, an environmental teacher, receiving a mpingo seedling to be planted in the designated area.

Elizabeth has many contacts with like-minded teachers throughout northern Tanzania. All are working to instill a love of nature and determination to protect it into their students, who live in one of the most beautiful ecosystems on earth.

The lay missionaries who work with Sister Rose are members of The Grail, a Roman Catholic secular institute for women established in 1921. Its members work for social justice and human welfare and have missions in North and South America, Australia, Europe and five countries of southeast Africa.

Retrospective

Sebastian Chuwa was born on June 11, 1954. His birthplace was the ward of Kibosho East on the southern slope of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. His father, Michael Chuwa, was a well-respected local herbalist who shared his knowledge with his son through many years. After a childhood education in Tanzania and Kenya Sebastian studied at Mweka College of African Wildlife Management where he earned a certificate in Wildlife Management in 1974.

After graduating he found employment with Ngorongoro Crater Conservation District, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Africa. He quickly established a reputation as an astute botanist, environmentalist and community organizer. Collecting botanical samples within the District, he established a herbarium for park visitors and sent specimens in duplicate to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England. He ultimately identified four new species; two were named in his honor.

Working to protect the endangered black rhinoceros he instituted a monitoring program that has been duplicated within other national parks on the continent. Organizing communities surrounding the Crater area, he assisted them in setting up tree nurseries and instituting educational and environmental programs. During this period he assisted Mary Leakey, world-renowned paleoanthropologist, in documenting plant species in nearby Olduvai Gorge. In 1990 he received a scholarship to study at Kew Gardens, where he earned an international diploma in botany.

In 1991 Sebastian left employment at Ngorongoro to work as a safari guide for Wildlife Explorer-Tanzania. He and his wife, Elizabeth, moved back to the Chuwa ancestral home on Mt. Kilimanjaro. Elizabeth secured a job as a primary school teacher and together they began to institute a focused program for environmental conservation. The task was formidable—to reverse decades of environmental degradation that had begun to deleteriously affect ecosystems on the mountain and thereby the lifestyles of millions of people living on its slopes and within its vast watershed area downstream.

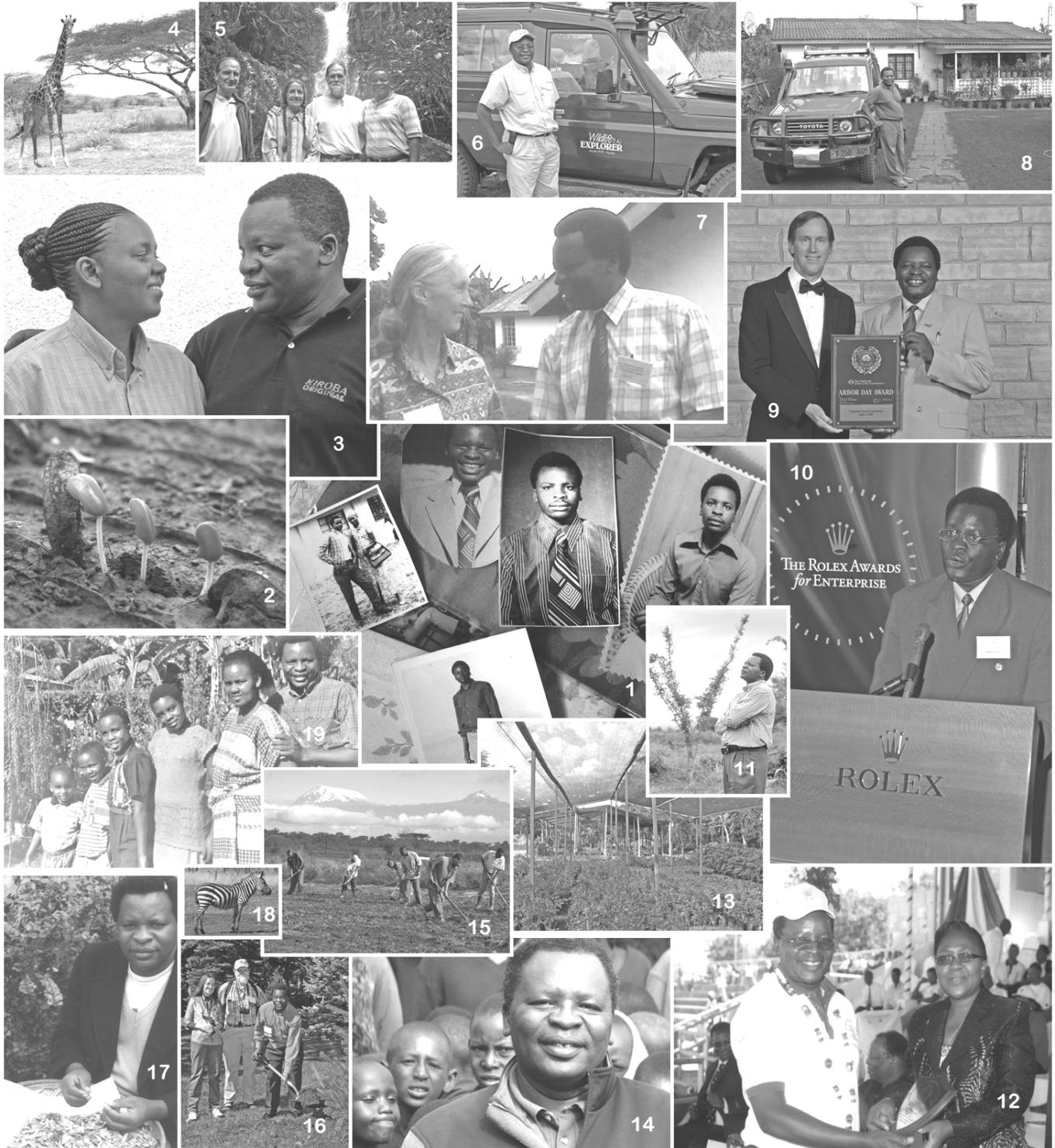
Since youth education was a primary focus, Sebastian and Elizabeth held teacher conferences to raise awareness and conservation studies were soon incorporated into the school regime. They teamed up with Malihai Clubs of Tanzania to establish youth conservation groups. They established tree nurseries in schools and community nurseries to provide trees for domestic needs and environmental repair. They traveled to schools and communities throughout the area to spread their ideas and find support for a more enlightened approach to environmental remediation.

Sebastian had long been concerned about the future of the African blackwood tree and in 1996, together with James Harris from Texas, USA, founded the African Blackwood Conservation Project (ABCP) to establish replanting programs and educational outreach to help insure the future of the threatened species. A nursery was established in Mijongweni for the cultivation and dissemination of blackwood and other indigenous tree seedlings.

Sebastian was also influential in the founding of a number of women's environmental groups, helped establish a biogas cooperative and worked with communities on Kilimanjaro (which is a major coffee growing area) in establishing nursery facilities to grow newly developed strains of disease-resistant coffee, thereby upgrading coffee farms in the area.

During his lifetime, Sebastian was responsible for the planting and distribution of five million trees: 1 million mpingo, 2 million coffee trees and 2 million other indigenous species. He helped establish 71 Malihai and 45 Roots and Shoots conservation groups. For these efforts he received the following awards:

- 2000 – Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation grant.
- 2002 – Spirit of the Land award, presented by the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee.
- 2002 – Associate Laureate Award from the Rolex Awards for Enterprise Committee.
- 2006 – *Conde Nast Traveler* magazine “World Savers” award.
- 2007 – J. Sterling Morton Award, presented by the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- 2011 – Malihai Clubs of Tanzania award for 30 years of service.

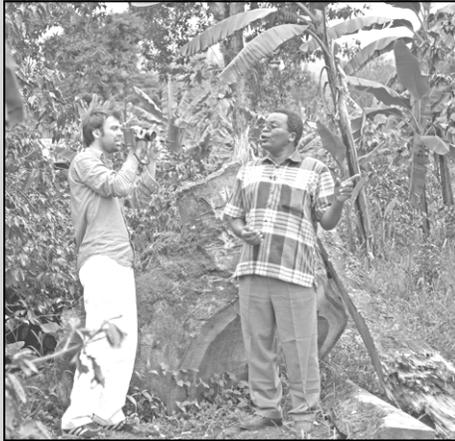


Remembrances of a life: (1) Family snapshots of a young Sebastian, (2) Mpingo sprouts in Sebastian's home nursery, (3) Sebastian and Elizabeth (2006), (4) Giraffe in Serengeti from 2006 safari with Sebastian, (5) Roger Stockbauer, Bette & James Harris & Sebastian at Kifura waterfall (2006), (6) Sebastian as safari guide for Wildlife Explorer and Wilderness Travel (2006), (7) Sebastian and Jane Goodall chat at environmental conference (2000), (8) Sebastian in front of family house at Sungu Village with the Toyota Land Cruiser purchased with his Rolex Award grant, (9) John Rosenow, President of the Arbor Day Foundation, presents J. Sterling Morton Award to Sebastian (2007), (10) Sebastian's acceptance of Rolex Award in London (2002), (11) Sebastian with mpingo tree he planted, (12) Accepting 30-year Malihai Club award, (13) Mpingo seedlings under nursery shelter at Moshi Mpingo Plot Nursery, (14) With children at tree planting project, (15) Workers preparing Makuyuni plot for planting using funding from Good Gifts Catalogue, (16) Bette & James Harris and Sebastian at Arbor Day tree planting ceremony in Nebraska (2007), (17) Sorting mpingo seeds for nursery planting (2001), (18) Zebra at 2006 safari, (19) Chuwa family (r-l): Sebastian, Elizabeth, Margareth, Michael, Flora and Cyril (1999).

This newsletter can be viewed in color on the ABCP website at www.blackwoodconservation.org.

An Appreciation to Those Who Helped Make Sebastian's Dreams Come True

The ABCP would like to extend its gratitude to all those individuals and organizations who helped actualize Sebastian's dreams during the past 20 years. Rafiki Friends Foundation was one of the earliest, sending educational materials, equipment, a Unimog vehicle and funding to build an infrastructure for conservation education. The ABCP followed, establishing a mpingo nursery in Mijongweni which has been the heart of the project, with continual expansion and large numbers of tree seedlings distributed every year. Many private individuals have supported the work of the ABCP, faithfully contributing every year since its beginnings.



Major foundation support for the ABCP has come from the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, Good Gifts Catalogue, Cottonwood Foundation, Wildlife Explorer, New England Biolabs Foundation, Lindberg Foundation and British Petroleum. The Arbor Day Foundation awarded Sebastian its highest honor, the J. Sterling Morton Award. The World Forum Foundation and Nature Action Collaborative for Children invited him to be part of their leadership teams. Through these connections both he and Elizabeth were able to travel to conferences around the world. A number of films were created featuring Sebastian's work, among them *Mpingo: The Tree That Makes Music* and *The Revival of Mt. Kilimanjaro* by David Castello-Lopes and Luc Ihaddadene (see image, David and Sebastian, left).

These people and organizations are similarly devoted to positive change and supported Sebastian in his efforts to make a difference within his beloved Africa. We can only trust that his legacy will be written in the millions of trees he planted and the thousands of students he inspired to follow his lead and leave the planet a better place for tomorrow's children.

African Blackwood Conservation Project
P. O. Box 26 Red Rock, TX 78662 USA



So that
 the song
 of the
 Tree of Music
 will not go
 silent...