

PROGRAM BROCHURE

MAIDEN LECTURE

GENERAL IGNATIUS KUTU ACHEAMPONG PUBLIC LECTURES

SPEAKER:

Nana Kobina Nketsia V

Paramount Chief of Essikado Traditional Area; Author and Cultural Historian

TOPIC:

Aberewa and Ancestors will Absolve Me: A Reflection on General Acheampong from Public Memory and Ghana's Leadership Historiography

DATE:

Tuesday 25th November 2025

TIME:

5:00 pm

VENUE:

Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) Conference Hall, University of Ghana

INTRODUCTION TO THE LECTURE SERIES ON GENERAL IGNATIUS KUTU ACHEAMPONG

“I intend to set the men who tried to assassinate me free. For hate destroys and love builds”

This was a poignant and defining decision, conveyed in the General’s letter to his spiritual advisor as he searched his soul to do what was right in the sight of God. That was the true character of the man from Hweddiem who occupied the highest state office in Ghana from 1972-1978.

This reflective lecture series is dedicated to the life and legacy of General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, a pivotal figure in Ghana's checkered history. During his tenure as Head of State, General Acheampong’s leadership was marked by a unique blend of patriotism, compassion, and visionary policies aimed at fostering national self-reliance.

As we delve into his remarkable life journey, sadly obscured from today’s generation by time and circumstances, we will discover the complexities of his character—a man of deep Christian faith, who sought to unite a nation during turbulent times. His profound belief in the power of love over hate, as expressed in that emotional letter to his spiritual advisor, underscores the ethos that guided his decisions and actions.

This series aims to uncover not only the triumphs of General Acheampong's administration but also the challenges and adversities that ultimately led to his tragic downfall. Through thoughtful analysis, we will reflect on the lessons learned from his policies and the implications they hold for Ghana today. We invite you to engage, question, and reflect as we honour a true son of Mother Ghana and seek to understand the intricate tapestry of his legacy.

The devout Christian that he was, General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong’s faith in religion was a guiding force that significantly influenced his actions as a soldier and later as the Head of State. In hindsight, his execution alongside other military leaders of his time was both tragic and unnecessary. This reflection encourages us to interrogate his background and the era during which he lived—a time marked by patriotic nationalism.

As we unveil his humble beginnings as the second-born child of Osei Kutu and Akua Manu, participants in this lecture series, as well as the public at large, will discover the selfless, compassionate, and peace-loving personality of Ignatius Kutu Acheampong. He abhorred conflict and bloodshed, most notably demonstrated during Ghana's peacekeeping efforts in the Congo in 1962 and his solitary vote as a panel judge that stayed the execution of mutineers in Trinidad and Tobago in 1971. His remarkable strategic mind and charitable spirit were instrumental in his bloodless coup of January 1972 and the subsequent implementation of his non-toxic nationalistic policies.

The prevailing uncertainty in the global economic and political landscape plagued the Acheampong regime throughout his term in the 1970s. Against the backdrop of a not-so-friendly stance from Western creditors, Kutu's resolute stand, encapsulated in the house slogan "Yentua," galvanized nationalistic support for his policies. The 'Yom Kippur War' and the resulting decisions by OPEC to regulate production and control crude prices did not bode well for an import-dependent country like Ghana.

Despite these headwinds, Kutu Acheampong's administration championed a non-toxic, patriotic nationalistic agenda, with self-reliance as its mainstay. Initiatives like Operation Feed Yourself and Operation Feed Your Industries ignited the patriotic spirit of Ghanaians, garnering accolades from UNESCO and positioning Ghana as a model for other developing nations.

General Acheampong believed in the ingenuity of Ghanaian entrepreneurs, supporting successful businesses such as Tata Brewery, Kowus Motors, Boakye Mattress, Pioneer Tobacco, and Pambros Salt, among others. He truly believed that with a can-do mindset, ***"Ghanaians must capture the commanding heights of the economy"***. As a Pan-Africanist and a firm advocate for the regional integration of West African economies, Kutu, with the support of General Gowon, established ECOWAS. This ambition was further demonstrated when Ghana adopted the metric system and switched to right-hand driving.

Kutu's impact on the social fabric of the country was significant, with notable improvements in public housing, education, irrigation systems, and more - efforts that rekindled hope and a strong sense of patriotism among Ghanaians.

However, Ghana's economic hardships were not isolated, and Acheampong's government felt the brunt of it. The referendum on the Union Government idea ironically became the catalyst for Kutu's exit from power. The paradox of Acheampong—a unifier, an empathetic leader who ultimately faced resentment from the very people he sought to uplift—is a powerful reminder of the complexities of leadership.

The palace coup of July 5, 1978 could not shield him or his fellow soldiers from the harsh realities of the times. The tragic end of these leaders and the senseless atrocities that ensued, should serve as a stark warning to future generations about the importance of learning from the past.

This lecture series therefore, endeavours to dissect the era and personality of General Kutu Acheampong. His selfless leadership qualities and love for his country warrant reflection and study. Together, we will explore what went wrong and the valuable lessons learned as we honour this true son of Mother Ghana.

Isaac Kyei-Mensah

Leader of Mrs Faustina Acheampong's erstwhile 'Agromma Cultural Troupe'

GENERAL IGNATIUS KUTU ACHEAMPONG PUBLIC LECTURES

Maiden Lecture

Topic:

Aberewa and Ancestors will Absolve Me: A Reflection on General Acheampong from Public Memory and Ghana's Leadership Historiography.

Chairperson:

Professor Yaw Adu-Gyamfi

Consultant & Professor of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care, UG Medical School

Speaker:

Nana Kobina Nketsia V (Speaker)

Paramount Chief of Essikado Traditional Area; Author and Cultural Historian

PROGRAM OUTLINE

TIME: **5:00 pm**

VENUE: **ISSER Conference Hall, University of Ghana, Legon**

- Arrival and Seating of Guests and Dignitaries
- Opening Prayer by **Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Markwei**
Head Pastor, Living Streams International
- Introduction of Chairperson & Other Dignitaries by **Dr. Felicia Owusu Ansah**
- Chairperson's Acceptance Remarks by **Prof. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi**
Consultant / Professor of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care, UG Medical School
- Welcome Address by **Anthony Acheampong** (Son of General Acheampong)
- Introduction of the Speaker by **The Chairperson** (Prof. Yaw Adu-Gyamfi)
- Seprewa Rendition by **Osei Korankye**
- Lecture by **Nana Kobina Nketsia V** (The Speaker)
Paramount Chief of Essikado Traditional Area; author and cultural historian.
- National Pledge by **Grace & Gladys Acheampong** (Daughters of General Acheampong)
- Reflections on the Lecture:
 1. *Baffour Prof. Agyemang-Duah*
 2. *Prof. Yaw Sekyi-Baidoo*
- Honorary Presentation by **Mrs. Faustina Acheampong**
- Chairperson's Closing Remarks
- Vote of Thanks by **Nana Serwaa Acheampong Esq** (Daughter of General Acheampong)
- Closing Prayer by **Imam Mukhtar Iddrissu**
Imam, East-Legon Central Mosque
- Photograph and Departure of Guests

MC: Jerry Adjorlolo

General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong – Maiden Public Lecture

PROFILE OF SPEAKER

Nana Kobina Nketsia V (born Kojo Baffoe Maison) is the Paramount Chief of the Essikado Traditional Area in the Western Region of Ghana, and a noted scholar on African culture and governance, and a Pan-Africanist. Old student of the Mfantshipim School (Secondary education). He holds degrees in History from the University of Ghana and a PhD in African History from the University of Calabar. He is the author of *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghanaian Paradigm* and has chaired several cultural and public boards. Nana is the President of the Western Region House of Chiefs, a respected intellectual voice in Ghana and across the African Diaspora. He is widely recognized for his influential commentary on African identity, nation-building, and sustainable development rooted in cultural values. He is an outspoken advocate for cultural heritage, good governance, and environmental protection. Nana is also a published essayist, keynote speaker, and contributor to academic and civic dialogues globally.

Nana Kobina Nketsia V served as Chairman of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board in the early 2000s and contributed to heritage mobilization efforts in the Western Region, including the inauguration of the Fort Orange office in 2021, and was appointed Chief Patron of the Ghana Chamber of Events Management (GCEM). In February 2025, he was nominated President of the Western Regional House of Chiefs.”

Nana is the speaker of this maiden public lecture under the General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong Public Lectures and will be delivering under the topic ‘*Aberewa and Ancestors will Absolve Me: A Reflection on General Acheampong from Public Memory and Ghana’s Leadership Historiography.*’