

Chat with

## HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng

(Bricklayer turned politician)



### Interviewer:

**Traditional titles, whether small or great, are considered and held in high regard among the Lebialem people. So, before we delve into questions related to Ombe College, could you please share with our readers more about this loyalty?**

### HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to introduce myself in this forum. Yes, you are correct about the esteem to which traditional titles are held among my people. My Royalty came as a result of my achievements – a successful entrepreneur and my work as mayor, and also giving back to our community. The Fons of lebialem thought it wise to crown my humble self within their concentrated process. They all agreed to introduce me into royalty command whereby I was named HRH Fuolasroh .

### Interviewer:

**I will like to take you several decades back when you first walked through the “golden gates” of Ombe College. Please tell us what it meant to you, what you trained in and how you chose that discipline.**

### HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:

To be honest with you Mr. President, Ombe college made me who I am today. Upon completing primary education, I was not able to get straight into college. I wasted 4 years of my life because each time I passed the common entrance examination into secondary Grammar school, they failed me during the interview phase. There were very few governments secondary schools in the seventies, and getting admission into any of them was not dependent on the child's intellectual ability only. Oftentimes, it required the admission authorities to be bribed. My parents who were peasant farmers, could neither afford the money for bribe nor money to send me to a private secondary school. At some point, my parents proposed that I go to learn a trade, specifically, motor mechanic. Then my class seven teacher introduced the idea of going to Ombe since there was no interview once you passed the entrance examination. I wrote the entrance exams once and I was successful and joined others in the 1977 batch. Although my parents were talking about motor mechanic as a discipline, I decided to train in Building Construction.

## **Interviewer**

**What was your experience during those four years?  
Teachers that made a lasting impact on you and  
even some regrettable experiences.**



### **HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

My experience was very rich in substance. I learned the rudimentary, like how to eat nicely using cutlery. The training was really enduring and that made me who I am today. All our instructors were formidable; however, my science-oriented transformation was as a result of my attachment to Mr. Nkafu George of blessed memory. He found something in me that I could not see of myself. He would not stop reminding me that I cannot end up a craftsman and that although I was in a technical school, I could still reorient my future into science.

### **Interviewer:**

**Were you finally persuaded?**

### **HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

Yes. When I graduated from Ombe College, I went on to Bilingual grammar school Buea where I did one year and obtained my GCE Ordinary level, then I proceeded to CCAST Bambili where I obtained my GCE Advance level. I wrote and passed the entrance examination into the National advance school of public workers Yaoundé where I got my civil Engineering Diploma.

### **Interviewer:**

**That made you a civil servant. Where were you posted?**

### **HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

Yes, I automatically became a civil servant. I was transferred to the western Region of the Country. I was later on appointed Divisional chief of Service for

construction in the Nkam division. I oversaw construction in the division enabling me to work closely with building contractors as I supervised their work. It was there that some of the contractors saw in me the spirit of entrepreneurship and convinced me to start my own small business which I did. I created the chariot group of companies (chariot hotel, chariot construction and chariot quarry).

**Interviewer:**

**That must have been an exciting time with such great achievement. However, it looks like despite those successes, somehow you were still motivated to migrate to the United States and continued the entrepreneurial spirit, Tell our readers about it.**

**HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

Later on in 1999, my family and I moved to the United States. I had a crash course for 6 months in telecommunication, then I was hired by lucent technology. I worked with them for 2 years then decided to start a medical transportation business. The business did not expand the way I anticipated so in 2004, my wife and I decided to get into the Homecare business. I have never regretted the decision and would be forever grateful to my wife who serves as the administrator. We are not only able to provide food and butter on the table for our family but also the provide employment for others.

**Interviewer:**

**There is another feather on your hat: You were mayor of the Muyuka municipality. Tell us this twist.**

**HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

Running for Mayor of Muyuka came as a result of my business achievement in Cameroon especially the creation of chariot group of companies (chariot hotel, chariot construction and chariot quarry) The celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> reunification anniversary celebration brought me to the limelight. My participation in the success of the events did not go unnoticed. I acquired an adopted father in the person of the governor of the South West Region, Bernard Okalia. He inspired me to the political process and I hold that allegiance to him despite the fact that sometimes we may disagree.

However, what really motivated me to join politics was to fight for the common man (Muyuka population). I did not lack food and butter to put on the table for my family. I can remember that I spent almost 60 million francs CFA for different infrastructural works to convince the Muyuka population to vote for the CPDM in the 2013 Municipal and legislative election. Though politics is

very slippery, I will never regret going into it because I changed the living conditions of so many people during my mandate. We built schools, roads, and hospitals for the population.

**Interviewer:**

**You did not run for a second term, any regrets, lessons learned? Any word regarding politics?**

**HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

Yes. I should have run for a second term. The on-going Anglophone crisis is part to blame. However never say never in politics. Well, I can tell you this, that politics is a nasty game and politicians lie a lot. If you have a clean conscience however, you could still help the population without necessarily lying.

If there is one suggestion I could give to the political class of Cameroon, it would be that, any prospective mayor should be the head of his or her list. This will enable the population to properly choose who they want to govern them.

“Though politics is very slippery, I will never regret going into it because I changed the living conditions of so many people during my mandate”.

**Interviewer:**

**Finally on this topic, please compare and contrast your job as mayor and/versus as entrepreneur.**

**HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

As a mayor, you are just a servant of the people, especially if you are doing the right thing. You cannot equate entrepreneurship to that of being a mayor. As I earlier said, before going into politics, I was an entrepreneur and was blessed with being successful. I received only my salary and monthly stipend as a mayor. So equating business and mayorship is like equating day and night. For those who put on their mayorship suits to misappropriate money meant to help the population, only their conscience could judge them.

**Interviewer:**

**Let us go back to Ombe related issue. What advice do you have for the students of your alma Mata?**

**HRH/Mayor Michael Nkeng:**

My advice to the students of Government Technical High school Ombe is for them to work hard. They should get out of this radius of cheating that has engulfed deep into the Cameroonian fabric. They should be devoted to

academic assignments and respect the rule of law. They should be equally patriotic and humble, for you lose nothing in life being honest, humble and dedicated

Mr. President, you know as I do that most of our technical students in Cameroon are not well oriented. Normally all students were supposed to go through secondary grammar education to acquire the necessary general education knowledge before entering either a craft or professional center or continue with entering in a technical university just as it is in Nigeria or the US. Technical institutions in Cameroon are not well funded. That's why the necessary resources should be made available to enhance and sustain their existence. I strongly believe the best is yet to come out of Ombe. Ahead, ahead, un seul mot . Continue

To OOSA Global I say it was a welcome sigh of relief. I want to use this opportunity to thank President SAAH Paul for standing his ground despite the numerous challenges from the do-nothing-would be political Hawks. To you Mr. President of the OOSA North America, we are behind you. I am very convinced that we shall have a very successful 2022 first of its kind convention of OOSA in the DC area. Keep ON.

# CLASSIFICATION OF QUADRILATERALS

