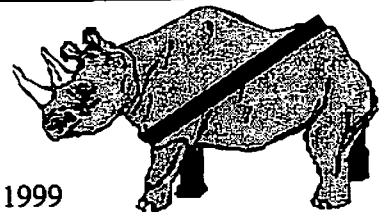


REALLY, RHINOS!



Volume 13, no. 3, 1999

'Rhino' man Werikhe is dead

Nation Newspapers Limited Tuesday, August 10, 1999

Renowned Kenyan conservationist Michael Werikhe died on August 9, 1999, at the Pandya Hospital, Mombasa, from injuries sustained in an assault by gangsters three weeks ago.

Werikhe, internationally acclaimed as the "Rhino Man", gained fame in highly-publicised conservation walks across East Africa, Europe and the US in which he raised millions of shillings to aid conservation efforts in Africa. He was 43.

Werikhe was attacked by thugs outside his Majengo Segal flat as he left for work at the Associated Vehicle Assembly, where he was a maintenance superintendent.

Family sources told the Nation that Werikhe succumbed to his injuries yesterday as he was undergoing specialised treatment.

Werikhe was the recipient of numerous local and international awards for his conservation efforts, which saw him traverse the globe - from Taiwan to South America - to give lectures on endangered species, among them the Black Rhino.

He was a widower at the time of death and is survived by two daughters, Acacia and Kora.



Two funds have been established in Michael Werikhe's name by The Rhino Trust. One fund will provide assistance to his family and the second, tax-exempt, Werikhe Conservation Fund will continue Michael's legacy of supporting rhino conservation projects worldwide. Contributions to either fund can be mailed to: **The Rhino Trust, P.O. Box 68805, Indianapolis, IN 46268.**





Condolences for 'Rhino' man's family

By NATION Reporter

Various institutions and individuals, both local and foreign, yesterday sent condolences to the family of the late 'Rhino Man' Michael Werikhe.

They came from conservation organisations and personalities. The organisations included the International Save the Rhino Fund based in the US, Walt Disney of Orlando, Florida, US, and the East African Wildlife Society.

Personalities who mourned Werikhe included Ms Kuki Goldman, a Nanyuki-based conservationist, and former Mombasa Mayor Najib Balala who described the late Werikhe as a selfless man who was a shining scion for Kenyan youth.

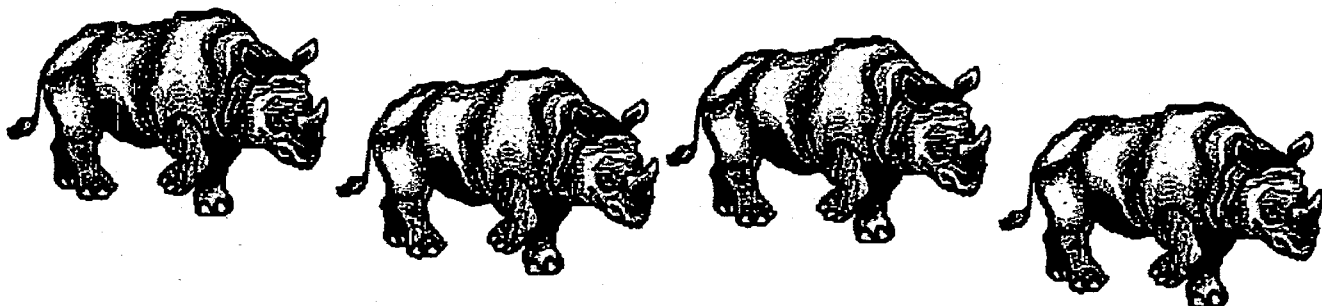
"He represented the boundless energy of the Kenyan youth, the love for nature that is inherently African and the internationalist lover of humankind who refused to be constrained by his country's boundaries," he said. Mr Balala, speaking on telephone, said the values that Werikhe espoused would emancipate Kenyans from their present depression.

"Rejection of corruption, sycophancy and mindless selfishness are hallmarks of a great man and Mike will remain a guiding light to future generations in Kenya and abroad," he added.

Meanwhile, the family of the late Werikhe yesterday announced that the conservationist would be buried on Saturday, August 21, in Mombasa.

Werikhe, who was internationally acclaimed as the 'Rhino Man', gained fame in highly publicised conservation walks across East Africa, Europe and the US through which he raised more than \$3 million to aid conservation efforts in Africa.

Werikhe, known throughout the world as "Rhino Man," has led a one-man crusade to boost public awareness of the plight of the black rhinoceros. By walking thousands of miles across four separate continents, he has raised millions of dollars for the conservation and survival of the environment.



Fare thee well 'Rhinoman'

[Daily Nation, Friday, August 13, 1999]

By NJUGUNA MUTONYA

Watching Michael Werikhe struggle for his life at the Pandya Hospital Mombasa last week, a pale shadow of the bubbling, vivacious conservationist who had ridden the crest of international fame with so much humility and effortlessness, one could be forgiven for imagining it was a bad dream that would go away.

It was not!

Like the Black Rhino he so hard fought to conserve from local and international poachers who prized the horn he carried, he fell victim to a more vile, vulture - the human kind - but to date the prize they sought is yet to be known.

Werikhe, 43, known all over the world for his decade-long struggle to highlight the plight of the African Black Rhino and other endangered species was clubbed senseless by a gang outside his house at Majengo Sega on a bright morning as he walked to catch a bus to work like he had done for many years.

Maybe if the gang could have known who he was, they might have spared him but then the ifs will never stop death in its ultimate and loud finality.

What a waste! Is all many who knew him can say.

For his age Mike, as everyone who new him called him, had achieved so much that even those who knew him barely knew how to deal with him.

Sample this - Guinness Stout Effort Award (1983), David Sheldrick Memorial Award (1984), Boots Action Award (1985), EAWLS Conservation Award (1986), UNEP Global 500 Award (1989), Goldman Environment Prize (1990), Eddie Bauer Heroes of Earth (1991, and the San Diego Zoological Society Conservation Medal (1991).

Many could not believe that the humble, almost shy but extremely articulate person could be so famous.

Over a period of less than 10 years Werikhe traversed the world spreading his Rhino gospel to all and sundry and one thing was for sure - whoever listened to him got converted instantly.

Werikhe had affable charm, fluency of language and ideas that kept audiences as far apart as Oregon and Taiwan glued to his logic for as long as he spoke.

Wanjiru Ciira in an article on him in 1985 says of his mystique: "I must admit that when I set out to interview this 29-year 'Rhino Man', I was not convinced that he was a genuine conservationist . . . But after spending just a few minutes with Werikhe I became convinced that he is a genuine naturalist."

That is what Werikhe was.

His interest in animals is chronicled by his family members who say it started off in his childhood and was encouraged by them.

He is reputed to have kept Agama lizards, chameleons, snakes, birds and all types of animals as pets.

His name came into the limelight, however, in 1982 when he decided to walk 500 kilometres in the Coastal country side

before embarking on the first internationally-recognized walk.

Werikhe can be credited for being (as he told an Oregon USA audience) the first African to take conservation to the West.

Immediately after his gruelling East African trek in which he cut a trail through Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania ending it in Mombasa, Werikhe flew to Europe for the first conservation walk by an African.

He started his campaign in Assisi in Italy and went through Milan, the Swiss Alps, former East Germany through the Black Forest, the Netherlands and across the channel to England.

All along his trek routes, Werikhe would hold small rallies where he would educate the local communities on the plight of his favourite endangered species.

At the Oregon talk he dismissed the myth of aphrodisiac qualities of the Rhino horn in the Middle and Far East as pure hogwash leaving his audience in stitches.

"The Rhino horn is made of tissue just like that which makes our nails. If one has a problem with his libido, all he has to do is to chew his nails!"

Mike held strong views about conservation of endangered species which he equated with the drug problem in the West.

"We should not repeat the mistakes of Europe and America. Africa still has a chance to avoid the environmental blunders of the West and we must take charge of events," he said.

Werikhe, a teetotaller and widower leaves behind two children - Kora and Acacia.

Like Najib Balala, the former mayor of Mombasa said, Werikhe "represented the boundless energy of the Kenyan youth, the love for nature that is inherently African and the internationalist lover of humankind who refused to be constrained by his country's boundaries".

The departed conservationist was buried at the St Emmanuel Church graveyard in Kisauni on August 19th.



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For Release: August 9, 1999
Contact: Meg Gammage-Tucker, Ph.D.
(317) 293-4099

(Indianapolis, IN) - Lifelong conservationist and rhino advocate Michael Werikhe (aka "The Rhino Man") died Monday morning at a hospital in Mombasa, Kenya. The Daily Nation newspaper (Nairobi, Kenya) has reported that Werikhe's death resulted from injuries sustained in an assault outside his home in Majengo Segga some three weeks earlier.

Mr. Werikhe attracted worldwide media attention to the plight of the endangered rhino during walks across the continents of Africa and North America in 1991. He was a recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize in recognition of his heroic efforts to prevent the species' global extinction.

At the time of his death, according to Rhino Trust President, Dr. Meg Gammage-Tucker, Werikhe was actively involved as a supporter of several rhino conservation projects in east Africa including vital efforts

projects in east Africa including vital efforts in Kenya's Tsavo National Park. Werikhe served as a member of the Trust's Advisory Council.

"This is a devastating loss for his family, the rhinos and the entire conservation movement," Gammage-Tucker stated. "Michael's almost single-handedly raised global awareness of the rhino crisis. His next major project was to help build semi-permanent housing for the rangers when they are on duty at Tsavo. He also envisioned guest rooms would be built for visiting researchers who would help bring awareness and resources to the protection of the entire Tsavo ecosystem."

Widowed by the death of his wife Helen in 1996, Michael is survived by two young daughters and a sister.

The Rhino Trust was established in 1996 as a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of The Rhino Trust is to support efforts to protect and preserve the earth's five rhinoceros species within their native habitats.

Towards that end, the Trust supports three primary objectives:

- * insitu rhino and rhino habitat conservation projects,
- * establishing a direct link between human welfare and species survival, and
- * international public education collaborative efforts related to rhinos and habitat conservation.

For further information, contact the Trust offices at (317) 293-4099 or via e-mail: info@rhinotrust.org.

From happier times....



Michael Werikhe (Rhino Crusader) and Daughters Chosen As Disney's Animal Kingdom Honorary First Family

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. -- Michael Werikhe and his two children, Acacia, 9, and Kora, 7, were recognized as the honorary first family of Disney's Animal Kingdom during a ceremony April 22, 1999 at Conservation Station.

Werikhe, known throughout the world as "Rhino Man," has led a one-man crusade to boost public awareness of the plight of the black rhinoceros. By walking thousands of miles across four separate continents, he has raised millions of dollars for the conservation and survival of the endangered black rhino. Werikhe is one of four eco-heroes who share their stories with guests at Conservation Station. In interactive displays, Werikhe along with eco-heroes Jane Goodall, Melissa Poe and George Schaller help guests find information on conservation efforts around the world.

Born in Mombasa, Werikhe first became aware of the danger posed to the black rhino while working in a warehouse filled with rhino horns, elephant tusks and leopard skins confiscated from poachers by the Kenyan game department. The atrocities he witnessed so disturbed him that a few years later he set out on foot -- a 300-mile trek from Mombasa to Nairobi -- to inform his countrymen of the perils that face the black rhino.

In 1985, Werikhe walked 1,250-miles across Africa and risked life-and-limb by crossing through the then war-torn country of Uganda. He followed that with a 1,800-mile journey across Europe in 1988 and a 30-city U.S. tour in 1991.

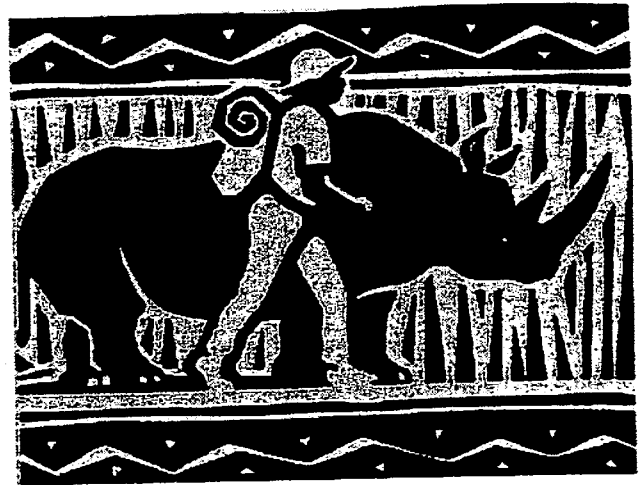
Werikhe has received numerous awards for his conservation efforts for the black rhino including the UN Environmental Program's Global 500 Award in 1989 and the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1990. He is also honorary vice-chairman of the East African Wildlife Society.

"The rhino has long been a symbol of conservation in Africa," Werikhe noted at the Goldman Environmental Prize ceremony.

*"If
we cannot take
care of our symbol,
what hope is there
for the rest of our
natural habitat
and ultimately
for man, himself?"*

Michael Werikhe

Honor Michael. Save Rhinos!



Anna Merz's Rhino at the brink of extinction 3rd Edition (233 pages,) 28 b/w photos, 7 color photos on 4 plates. \$22.50 including postage. Order from:

The Rhino Trust

Mrs M. Gammage-Tucker

P.O.Box 68805

Indianapolis, IN 46268-0805

Fax 317-630-5153, email: info@rhinotrust.org

In just 30 years, 97% of the world's rhino population has been wiped out.

A fully grown rhino has no natural enemies. And yet a combination of loss of habitat and poaching has reduced the total world rhino population to a state of emergency - with less than 10,500 rhino's left on the planet.

Now, more than ever, your donations are needed to help save these remaining rhinos.

Remember the power of one.

First winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize (1990)

(The Goldman Environmental Prize is given each year to six environmental heroes - one from each of six continental regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Island Nations, North America and South/Central America. Initially each recipient received a \$60,000 award from the Goldman Environmental Foundation. The award stipend has been raised three times since and currently stands at \$125,000.)

Michael Werikhe, fondly known to many as "The Rhino Man," was raised in Mombasa on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast. A lifelong protector of animals, Werikhe has walked thousands of miles on several continents to educate people around the world about the plight of the rhinoceros.

Poaching, fueled by the international black market's demand for rhino horn, has been leading the rhino toward extinction. Thirty years ago black rhinos had a population of approximately 100,000. The animal is now virtually extinct in several African countries including Chad, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire).

Werikhe's approach is creative and his goal straightforward: to help save the animal he views as the symbol of environmental crisis, he undertakes long walks. On these "Rhino Walks," Werikhe educates the people who join him and raises funds for rhino conservation programs. This work is dangerous as he is frequently threatened by poachers.

of large, fenced, guarded tracts of land where rhinos can breed and survive. Animals from threatened areas are transported to these sanctuaries and, for the first time in years, the rhino population is reported to be on the increase. The black rhino population is currently estimated to be just over 2,000. The southern white rhino has fared slightly better. There are thought to be 8,800 of them.

Rhino horns are, however, still for sale on the international black market. In late 1993, Werikhe led two well publicized walks in

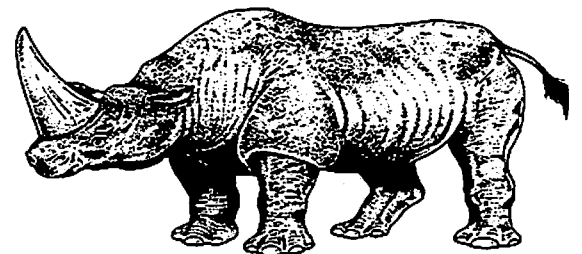
Taiwan, one of the biggest consumers of rhino horns in Asia. He visited many traditional medicine shops and encouraged the medicine men and Taiwanese government to work together to educate the public about

alternatives to rhino horn powder.

Recently, Werikhe has been active with the Rhino project at Kenya's Thavo East National Park 290 kilometers from Mombasa. In 1998 heavy rains and summer fires damaged the park severely. Werikhe was joined by a group of teenage school boys from England who raised money for Save the Rhino International and together they helped rangers at Thavo East rebuild park infrastructure.

"If there is no hope for an animal so huge, strong and recognizable, what hope is there for lesser animals - the reptiles, the monkeys, etc. "

Michael Werikhe, 1990

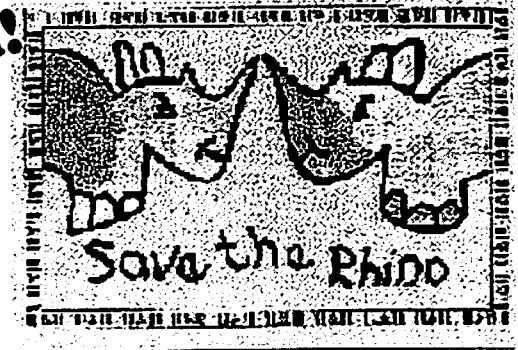




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**Kwa heri, Michael.
 Rafiki to all kifaruu!**



A one year quarterly subscription to *Really, Rhinos!* is \$20 (\$25 foreign). Make check payable to Judyth Lessee. 100% of each subscription is donated to rhino conservation projects. Send feedback or rhino citations to: *Really, Rhinos!*, PO Box 40503, Tucson, AZ 85717-0503. Phone: (520) 327-9048. e-mail: rinophyl@rtd.com. www.infospace.com/lessee1 (Patience; we're working on it!!)
 If you find errors, please know they are printed for those who always look for them. We try to print something for everybody.

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**For Michael
 1956-1999**