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Willie Musarurwa

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Willie Dzawanda Musarurwa, also known as Wirayi Dzawanda Musarurwa was a renowned Zimbabwean journalist who became the first black editor of [The Sunday Mail](#). Musarurwa was known for criticising the status quo though he worked for a pro-government and state-owned newspaper. He was also a politician having been a founding member of the [National Democratic Party](#) and the [Zimbabwe African People's Union](#) (ZAPU). His political activities led to his arrest and 10-year detention at the hands of the white minority regime. However, it was his journalism that he was most known for and remembered. Musarurwa was dismissed at the Sunday Mail in 1985 for allegedly being critical of the government.^[1]

Willie Musarurwa



Born

Wirayi Dzawanda Musarurwa
(1927-11-24)November 24, 1927

[Chinhoyi](#), Zimbabwe

Died

April 3, 1990(1990-04-03) (aged 62)

Citizenship

Zimbabwe

Alma mater

Trans African College

Princeton University

Occupation

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- Journalist
- Politician
- Rights Activist

Spouse(s)	Elizabeth Musarurwa
Children	6 children
Parent(s)	Ruth Tambe aka Chibagu (<i>Mother</i>), Jack Goto (<i>Father</i>)

In 2012, 12 years after his death, one Sunday Mail reporter Grace Mtandwa revealed that Musarurwa, though "an old nice man" had once touched her inappropriately.^[2] Musarurwa became the first journalist ever to be buried at the Heroes Acre.

Background

Musarurwa was born to Jack Goto Musarurwa and Ruth Tambe on 24 November 1927 in the Sinoia District of [Zvimba](#). He was born in a family of 9 boys and 5 girls. He attended the following school:

- [Nyamangara Primary School](#) (1939 - 1940),
- [Marshall Hartley School](#) (1941 - 1942)
- [Howard Institute](#) (1943 - 1944)
- [Goromonzi High School](#) (1946 - 1949)

After completing his Cambridge School Certificate, Willie trained as a teacher at St [Augustine's Mission, Penhalonga](#). He later taught at [Epworth Mission](#) in 1952, while at the same time regularly contributing articles to the press.^[3]

In 1952 he graduated with a Higher Teachers Certificate from St Augustine, Penhalonga. The following year he graduated with a Diploma in Journalism from the Trans-African College. In 1962 to 1963, he attended Princeton University in Jersey, USA as a Parvin Fellow. On his return to Rhodesia in 1963 he became active in the liberation struggle which led to his arrest in 1964 and was subsequently detained until 1974.^[3]

Journalism career

After 5 years in the newsroom at the [African Weekly](#) Musarurwa was appointed editor in 1958. The following year he got a similar position at the [Bantu Mirror](#). Between 1961 and 1962 he edited '[African Parade](#)' and '[African Daily News](#)' respectively.^[4]

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Musarurwa was appointed Sunday Mail editor in 1982 following the country's independence two years before. He was the first black editor. Musarurwa was known for his professionalism reflected in how he balanced his stories despite the fact that he had been an official of the ruling party. Three years later he was fired after reporting on a financial scandal that rocked the national airline, [Air Zimbabwe](#). Musarurwa was dismissed because under his editorship, Sunday Mail was seen as too critical of the government.^[5]

Politics

Between 1960 and 1961 he was the founding member of the National Democratic Party as well as its National Executive. He also held several posts including a ZAPU representative in Zambia in 1963 and secretary of the then [Joshua Nkomo](#) led [ANC](#) party. He was detained without trial or formal charges by the government from 1965 until 1974.^[6]

He took part in all major conferences to end the Rhodesian conflict-Victoria Falls conference; Salisbury talks; Geneva Conference; Malta Conference and the Lancaster House Conference where he was co-spokesman of the Patriotic Front alliance. After the Lancaster House Conference, he came back home and continued as PF-ZAPU's publicity secretary. He stood for election in 1980 Mashonaland West on the Party list system, but was not successful.^[3]

Death

Musarurwa died on Tuesday, 3 April 1990, apparently of a heart attack.^[1]

Trivia

- At the time of his death, Musarurwa was the chairman of the Children's Protection Society.
- One of his last renowned works of Willie was his article which reviewed the press in Zimbabwe during the country's first decade of independence. It was published in the Parade of April, 1990^[3]
- He cherished the achievement in December, 1987 of unity between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF for which he had worked tirelessly behind the scenes and never claimed credit for.

About Pindula

Pindula is a place to find information about local things on the internet. We do it a lot like Wikipedia, except everything is hyper-local. We started work on Pindula because we needed something like it. There's so little useful information about local things online and we're working to change that

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References

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