

Roger Dery Gem Design



Gichuchu Okeno

March 28, 2016

Gichuchu Okeno

Guide, friend, miner, gemstone broker, husband, father, mentor

Gichuchu Okeno, who we knew as Okeno, passed away early this morning of kidney failure. His passing has us remembering the man who spent his life working faithfully, who served the men he led without end, and warmly welcomed us into his life.



Those that had the opportunity to travel with us to East Africa were influenced by Okeno's

humor, his compassion, and the extent of his knowledge, from mining and gemstone rough to the ways of the tribal people to the very nature of life. He knew everyone in each town, at the mines, at the border crossings...all called him friend.

Many others were introduced to Okeno by the documentary, *Sharing the Rough*. Okeno was integral to the film. His relationship with Roger was the foundation of the story, built on years of friendship and a deep bond of trust. His connections with the Kenyan government and miners provided a window into the world of artisanal mining and the lives of the miners. We're thankful he was able to see the film and the result of his hard work, not only surrounding the film, but of his entire life.



Okeno had been in a Mombasa hospital for nine days. As each day passed we grew more concerned and the hospital bills were mounting on a daily basis. Roger made plans to visit Okeno and to help with the export of his rough to facilitate payment of the hospital bills. Instead Roger will attend his friend's funeral.

To have known Okeno is to be loved. The very nature of his heart drew you in to a full life the moment you met him. His laughter was contagious. His humor infectious. His wisdom unparalleled. His compassion for others an example to us all.



We love you, Okeno. You will be missed. May we live following your model of service and humility.

Roger and Ginger Dery
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