



## Besa Lwimba Kotati

July 12, 1942 - December 12, 2025

The sun rose on a Sunday in July, 1942, welcoming the light we came to know and love in the form of Besa L. Kotati. Born in the Belgian Congo's Katanga Province to Mofya Veronique and Lwimba Kotati. He led a childhood filled with adventure, cousins, family and fun. He would always speak with longing fondness for his grandfather Thomas who taught him to fish and canoe rides across the river to visit family in Zambia. His later childhood dedicated to learning, education and cultivation of his faith and watching over his young sisters. A proud graduate of the Springer Institute in Mulungwishi Congo, he always took an all in approach to life. He started adulthood making tough choices, selecting education rather than following the traditional path to being village chief upon the death of his father in 1960. The Wesley Foundation chapter of Michigan State University through one of their missionaries sought a top-notch student who could learn and thrive in their institution. They found the perfect candidate in Besa.

His 1965 arrival in East Lansing, Michigan forced Besa to quickly add English to the collection of his spoken language repertoire with the help of the Wesley Foundation and his host family the Pohl's, with whom he would share a lifelong bond. Further he spoke to area churches about his Methodist faith and God's glory as shown through the Wesley foundation. While at Michigan State he met, courted, and later married Marilyn Apple from Detroit, Michigan in 1970. His doctoral research led him back to his homeland after a seven-year

absence, allowing a chance for his family to meet Marilyn in 1972. Together they continued their educational pursuits resulting in a master's degree for Marilyn and a PhD for Besa in 1973. Their work took them to New York City and in 1975 a son, Yombwe, was born to their union. Shortly thereafter Besa's work with the United Nations took them to Geneva Switzerland. The family returned to the US by way of Lincoln, Nebraska where Besa completed a post-doctoral degree in Agricultural Economics and became a United States Citizen. Opportunity, growth, and service led them to Washington D.C. next. It was here in 1978, Besa

entered the halls of government, in the United States Department of Agriculture. He held many roles during his time at USDA, Export Credit Analyst, Foreign Agriculture Services (FAS) Budget Director, however it was his time serving overseas as Agricultural Attache, then Minister Counselor where he found the most joy. He loved serving the American people, farmers, and citizens of the Midwest even though most never knew of his service to them. It had been these same Midwesterners from Michigan who had poured into him years ago. His call to serve, uplift, encourage and contribute remained steadfast throughout his life. Countless stories, memories are filled with his living out his belief in Martin Luther King's quote, "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." Upon retiring from FAS, Besa spent most of his time quietly reflecting over his life, spending time with friends and family. Traveling when possible. Thankfully, he was able to spend the last couple of years of his life getting closer to family after moving to Georgia.

The sunset for our brother, friend, son, mentor, and father Besa L. Kotati on December 12th, 2025, at Manor Lake Assisted Living and Memory Care in Buford, GA, as he passed peacefully into heavenly repose. He was proceeded in death by his parents, sisters, and ex-wife (Marilyn). His legacy lives on through his son Yombwe (Tahirah), grandchildren, Julian Alyster, Benjamin Ellis, Zahra Ain, godson Robert Gary, Jr, and brothers-in-law, Darwyn Apple,

Bryan Apple (Glenda). Around the globe, countless friends, colleagues, extended family mourn his passing, remember his life and strive to serve in honor of his memory.

In lieu of flowers we would ask for donations to be made in memory of Besa L. Kotati to the Michigan State University Wesley Foundation Chapter <https://www.msuwesley.org/donations/>. Information regarding a Spring 2026 memorial service for Besa L. Kotati will be made available.

# Cemetery Details

## Hamilton Mill Gardens

3481 Hamilton Mill Road  
Buford, GA 30519

# Previous Events

## Visitation

DEC **29**. 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home - Lawrenceville Location  
914 Scenic Highway South  
Lawrenceville, GA 30045-6353

## Celebration of Life

DEC **29**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home - Lawrenceville Location  
914 Scenic Highway South  
Lawrenceville, GA 30045-6353

# Tribute Wall

WA

“ William A. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Besa Lwimba Kotati.

William A. - December 29, 2025 at 08:53 AM



“ Lavender & White Standing Spray was purchased for the family of Besa Lwimba Kotati.



December 27, 2025 at 10:31 AM

WF

“ With fond memories of childhood friendsh planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Besa Lwimba Kotati.

With fond memories of childhood friendsh - December 27, 2025 at 10:31 AM

DA

“ Darwyn Apple purchased the Red, White & Blue Sympathy Standing Spray for the family of Besa Lwimba Kotati.



Darwyn Apple - December 26, 2025 at 03:34 PM

LT

“ Love From-The QOALA Team purchased the Peace, Prayers, & Blessings- Lavender and White for the family of Besa Lwimba Kotati.



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**Love From-The QOALA Team** - December 24, 2025 at 03:11 PM

LT

“ Love From-The QOALA Team planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Besa Lwimba Kotati.

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**Love From-The QOALA Team** - December 24, 2025 at 03:11 PM

MB

“ The best memory of Mr Kotati is when I flew to Africa in 1998 and was able to have dinner with him. Far from home and far from where I met him, we were able to sit and spend time together. It always sits in my heart and brings me a smile.

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**Michelle “Mo” Barrett** - December 23, 2025 at 06:23 PM