

As Kupo Mleya's family we feel compelled to share with the community the depth of our gratitude. With heavy hearts we traveled across three continents to gather in Nebraska, the place our brother and son made his home for 19 years. We came to honor Kupo, to meet his delightful daughter, to walk where he walked and to experience the community he loved.

Along the way we have gained the highest esteem for the legal team. County Attorney Pat Condon, Chief Deputy County Attorney Christopher Turner and Victim Assistant Elizabeth McQueen supported the family at every step. They ensured our family's full participation during the legal proceedings and assisted us in securing our travel visas.

A few days before the final hearing we were notified of the defendant's unexpected attempt to postpone the sentencing. The potential for delay caused considerable distress, given our efforts to travel as well as our emotional state. It gave us great comfort for Beth to phone the evening before the last-minute hearing. Upon our arrival at the courthouse the next day Beth, Chris and Pat welcomed us into a private conference room and explained the process in detail. They also followed up immediately afterward to answer all our questions.

Similarly on the day of the sentencing Beth met us as we arrived, escorted us to a meeting room where Pat and Chris explained exactly what to expect. In addition to accommodating our family, the team extended the same welcome and thorough explanation to the many supporters who gathered with us. They followed up to answer all our questions and to kindly let us process some of our emotions with Kupo's beloved community, many of whom we had only met that day.

We thank Investigator Michael Ripley and his team for swiftly bringing Kupo's killer into custody and for all the work of the subsequent investigation. It was deeply meaningful for our family to have Officer Ripley, Captain Ben Miller and Investigator Tim Cronin meet with us in person after the conclusion of the sentencing. Thanks to now-retired Investigator Jason Adams for his valuable contribution in solving the murder. The officers clearly care about the human beings they protect and serve.

We extend our profound appreciation for Judge Lori Maret. She gave careful consideration to the facts of the case and determined a sentence for the safety of the community. Throughout the process she ensured transparency by allowing

remote access for the family and supporters. Not only has she honorably served us, the family of the victim, she has served the broader community by removing a violent criminal from the public.

Every individual on the team embodied both compassionate human kindness and an exemplary level of professional expertise as they sought justice for Kupo.

To Kupo's loving friends who surrounded us, we were deeply moved to see you at the courthouse. In Zimbabwe, we believe in *Ubuntu* – the spirit and power of loved community. Thank you for standing with us, for wearing a Kupo shirt or a Kupo smile on your sweet face. Thank you for bringing the hug you've waited to share and the story you've waited to tell. Our free-spirited, loving Kupo was taken too soon and nothing will bring him back. But sharing our memories with each one of you has brought a small measure of comfort. We hope the same for you. Kupo 4 Ever.

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