

**“The road ahead will be difficult...but only as difficult as one makes it to be (even if wisdom is not in easy supply these days...), and there is a thing called common sense in every person. Tap into it without fear, and it works...be open to challenges, but without doubting your essential rationale beliefs...also remember that destiny is not a known, but to be ready for it is a must. Use kindness as a rule, and make that your background.”**

**By Lij Sebastianos Samson Beyene**

**Sept 18, 1960 - July 25, 2021**

Lij Sebastyanos was born on Sept 18, 1960 to Lij Samson Beyene Merid and Kibirt Woizero Koremtit Andargachew Messai in London in the United Kingdom. On his father's side he was the grandson of Princess Romanework, first born daughter of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia and of the renowned army commander and war patriot Dejazmatch Beyene Merid who died defending Ethiopia during the Italian invasion in 1935. On his mother's side he was the grandson of Ras Andargachew Messai\* a high ranking member of the Imperial Ethiopian government and a seasoned diplomat, and Kibirt Woizero Sirgut Ayele a dedicated nurse and a long-time advocate of Ethiopian causes.

Lij Sebastyanos grew up in the city of Addis Abeba surrounded by love and attention from his parents and family members. It was an idyllic and privileged childhood filled with happy times and fond memories. Although an only child upon his mother's second marriage to Captain Haile Gebray, he was blessed with a younger brother, Raphael Haile with whom he spent the last few years of his life.

Lij Sebastyanos attended his elementary education with his cousin Emebet Hannah Mariam Dereje, with whom he had a close bond, at Entoto International, a school founded and run by his aunt Princess Sophia Desta. He completed his junior high education at the Sandford English School with many of his close relatives, and this is also where he established lifelong relationships with many classmates and friends.

At the prompting of his mother, in the summer of 1974 Lij Sebastyanos went on holiday to London, United Kingdom with his cousin Tesfamichael Bayu to stay with his grandmother Woizero Sirgut. The holiday was disheartening as news from home was forecasting a bloody upheaval threatening the stability of the government of His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie. In September 1974, his great aunt Princess Tenagnework Haile Selassie, his mother and his aunt Kibirt Woizerit Metasebia Andargachew Messai and close relatives were thrown into a rotting Communist jail. The next day news of the Emperor's forced removal from power was announced. Naturally, Lij Sebastyanos remained in the UK. Now a royal exile, he pursued his junior high school education at Kings School, Bruton, in Somerset from 1975 – 1977. He followed this by taking his high school A- level exams in history and geography from 1977 - 1979 at Abigdon School in Oxford, where his cousin Lij Seyoum Mengesha was also studying.

During the difficult years of exile, Lij Sebastyanos lived in London with his maternal grandfather, Ras Andargachew Messai, his aunt Kibirt Woizerit Wainam, and many cousins including Lij Yohannes Mengesha, Emebet Jote Kassa and Emebet Yeshe Kassa. He was particularly close to his late uncle, Dejazmatch Merid Beyene who had come to London for medical treatment but had stayed after learning of the deteriorating situation in Ethiopia.