



Mervyn Maciel: A Brief Bio

Mervyn Maciel (now 84) who was born in Nairobi is the son of the late Mathias Maciel (of the Nairobi Secretariat) and Josephine Maciel (nee D'Sa). His mother died at childbirth while his father, step-mother and 3 young siblings were the victims of that ill-fated B.I. liner S.S. TILAWA, torpedoed by the Japanese during World War II. Mervyn and his two brothers (the late Rev. Joseph Maciel, S.J. and Wilfred Maciel-well known in Kenya's journalistic and Social circles -) were orphaned overnight. After completing his education in Belgum and Goa (Aldona), Mervyn was offered a job at the Kenya Secretariat at the comparative young age of 18 years.

He later moved to the Provincial Administration and served in various districts including some of the most outlying and inhospitable regions of Northern Kenya (N.F.D.) – a region and people he got to love. (he still keeps in touch with friends in Northern Kenya). Kenya's independence saw the Africanisation of his post at the Plant Breeding Station, Njoro (in the former White Highlands) when Mervyn, his wife Elsie and four young children-Clyde, Andrew, Josey & Pollyanna) moved to the U.K. settling in leafy Sutton, Surrey at a homestead they promptly named '**Manyatta**' (hut or Masai village).

Here, he worked in various private companies in a managerial capacity until his retirement. It was while still in employment that Mervyn was able to realize his lifelong dream by publishing his East African memoirs, "**Bwana Karani**" to which Sir Richard Turnbull, Mervyn's one-time boss and former Governor of Tanganyika contributed the Foreword. The book was very well received both here and in Kenya and Mervyn still treasures the many personal letters and reviews he received.

His interest in writing continues to this day and many of his articles have featured in the Kenya-based magazine OLD AFRICA, KENYA PAST & PRESENT, AWAAZ and also several religious magazines in this country. He also writes letters to the national and local Press.

Not one to sit idly by in retirement, Mervyn has been active in his local parish and for the past 20 years has been doing voluntary work with the international Catholic charity -Aid to the Church in Need- whose U.K. headquarters are in Sutton.

Some of his other interests like wine making have had to take backstage for the past few years since, some ten years ago, he and his wife Elsie took on an allotment from their local Council where they grow an assortment of vegetables and soft fruit. This year, he was even successful in growing his favourite Goan veg – “**thambdi bhaji**” (red spinach?). No shortage of labour as some of the Maciel’s eight grandchildren are always around to lend a hand.

Mervyn traces his Goan roots to the village of Salvador-do-Mundo, Bardez Goa, and since he loves singing, nothing gives him greater pleasure than to hear some of our old Goan folk songs- the original, unspoilt mandos and dekhnis.

