



# THE KARIMS

THREE GENERATIONS, TWO SPORTS, ONE FAMILY

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## — An Icon Of Icons —

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**Yusuf Karim, majestically ruled the tennis courts in Mombasa for 25 years unbeaten from the age of 16 to 42 (1951-1977). He also played high level cricket and volleyball.**

**His son Aasif effortlessly continued in his father's footsteps. The youngest prodigy, Irfan is already shining in the cricket circles, both locally and internationally.**

**It is very rare in sporting history for three generations to represent their country in international sports.**

**This book takes us on a journey from where it all began.**

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—❧—

*For*

*My father, Yusuf Karim,*  
*who made me the sportsman I am;*  
*My mother, Nargis Karim, who made it all possible;*  
*My brothers, Aarif and Altaf, who encouraged me;*  
*My wife, Nazneen; and children,*  
*Fatema, Irfan, Zainab and Imran*  
*to whom I owe everything.*

—❧—

CREDITS

Publisher

Alpha Sports Limited  
P.O. Box 57386-00200  
NAIROBI - KENYA  
Printed in Dubai  
Atlas Media  
PO Box 14833, Dubai, UAE  
Tel: +971 4340 9895 | Fax: +971 4340 9894  
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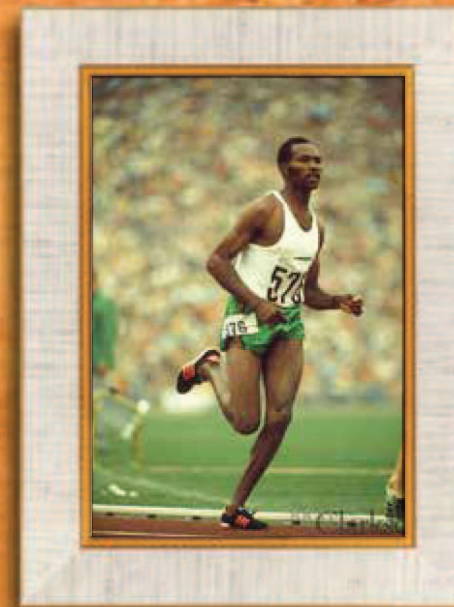
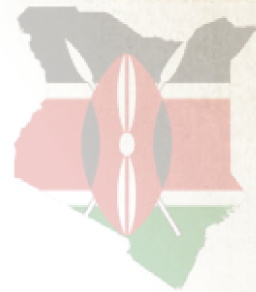
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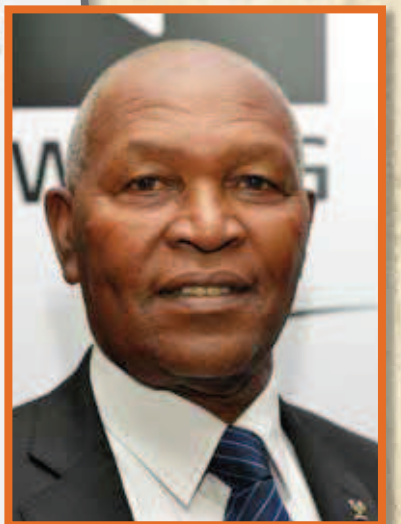
*Kipchoge Keino*

**K**ipchoge Keino was born in 1940 in Nandi county, Kenya. Kipchoge is a retired Kenyan track and field athlete.

A two time olympic gold medalist, three gold medals at the commonwealth games and two gold medals in all Africa games.

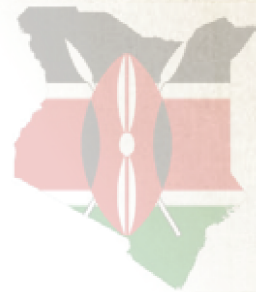
Kip was among the first in a long line succesful middle and long distance from Kenya. In 2012, he was one of the 24 athletes inducted as inaugural member of the international association of athletics federsations whole of fame.

## FOREWORD



*Kipchoge Keino*





## FOREWORD



THE FEDERATION OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA ASHERI JAMAATS OF AFRICA

P.O. Box 2710, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Tel: +255 22 213 0800 Fax: +255 22 213 0564 Email: [secretary@khofederation.org](mailto:secretary@khofederation.org) Web: [www.khofederation.org](http://www.khofederation.org)

Dear Readers,

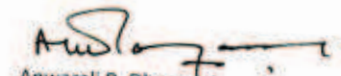
It gives me great pleasure to pen down this message in this impressive and enlightening publication of a pictorial Coffee Table Book of the Karim family which will be published this year.

The Yusuf Karim family's contribution to sports in Kenya transcended the community boundaries. The family's fame in sports took height and they became known in Kenya nationally and internationally.

The role of the family in three successive generations in the fields of sport is a rare feat by any standards. This has been an inspiration to the younger generation of sports players.

I am pleased to learn that the Karim family has also produced a two hour documentary in several languages on the family's journey of migration from India to Kenya and capturing the family's history of sports.

I, on behalf the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa, and on my own behalf, extend our best wishes and prayers for the family for their successes in sports and I am sure the publication will capture the imagination of the youth engaged in sports.

  
Anwarali R. Dharansi  
CHAIRMAN

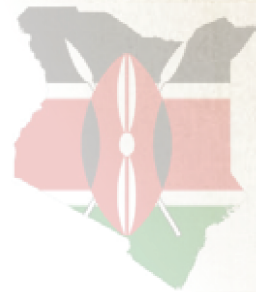
2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015



Anwarali R. Dharamsi

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A member of The World Federation which is also an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of United Nations





## FOREWORD

### FOREWORD

The Karim Dynasty is a unique success story of three generations, recognised, appreciated and lovingly documented, covering events of the last 80 years.

Though the emphasis, collaborated by various personalities closely associated with the family has been on sports, particularly tennis and cricket. The family has achieved considerable success in business and religious activities. So much so, that a road in Mombasa, which has been the base of the family is named after Yusuf Karim.

My association with the family goes back to the early fifties when I played cricket against Yusuf Karim, a stylish batsman, who in my opinion should have played for Kenya. Later with Aasif Karim, who was a member of many Kenya teams I managed.

Aasif will be remembered for his bowling performance against Australia when Kenya reached the semi finals of the 2003 World Cup, and being a member of the Kenya team when Kenya beat the West Indies in the 1996 world cup.

The tradition is carried on by Yusuf Karim's grandson Irfan now representing Kenya in cricket.

Kenya is a great sporting nation and recording the achievements of the Karim family should encourage others to do the same.

*Jasmer Singh*

**Jasmer Singh**

Induction – Hall of Fame, 2015

Recipient of I.C.C. Lifetime Service Award, 2004

Hon. Life Member of M.C.C., 1997

Manager – Kenya – I.C.C. Trophy, 1997

Manager – Kenya – Cricket World Cup, 1996

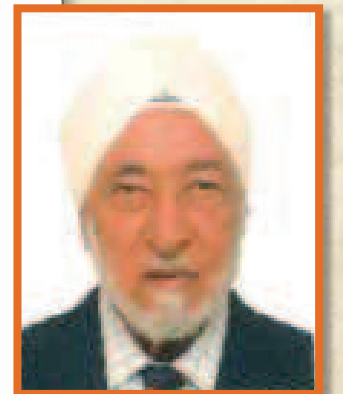
Manager – Kenya – I.C.C. Trophy 1982, 1986,

Chairman – Kenya Cricket Association, 1977

Manager – East Africa First Cricket World Cup 1975

Chairman – Kenya Cricket Association 1970-75

Played Cricket for Kenya 1956-58



*Jasmer Singh*





Yusuf Karim  
1935-2009



## PROLOGUE *by Aasif Karim*

*H*ow does one define heroism? Is it made of great material wealth? Is it made of great political power? Is it made of great fame of whatever calling?

Yusuf Karim's life is an enduring example that heroism is none of all these. Heroism is much simpler. No sound of trumpets nor any sight of fireworks for this great hero! Humble, generous, kind, honest fair and charitable are only a few words to describe Yusuf Karim. These virtues for him represent boundless wealth. He is the best role model and these qualities are the greatest gift a father can pass on to his son.

It was in the Spring of 1937, that a dhow left the Indian sub-continent powered by the seasonal Monsoon winds. Its destination was a 1000 year-old East African city known as Mombasa in Kenya. It is famous to travelers throughout the centuries for its sheltered harbour, warm climate and hospitable people. Of course, these fine attributes also attracted Arab, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish sea-farers who fought hard to control this beautiful port, giving rise to its Swahili name Mvita, which means a place of war. But the passengers in this particular dhow were not part of a naval armada on a mission of conquest. They were simple, hopeful people looking beyond their shores for a better life.

A two year-old boy sailed in this dhow. His name was Yusuf Karim.

He was born of truly humble origins. He was part of a large family that did not always pull in the same direction. Beginning with that tempestuous voyage across the Indian Ocean, Yusuf Karim's early years were rough and there was almost no respite from the desperate need to keep his head above the water all the time. Out of this adversity, came a great man of outstanding character. Nearly a 100 years have passed since that dhow landed in Mombasa.

This little boy grew into a strong, disciplined young man. He was determined to make a success out of his and his family's life. Yusuf made a substantial impact in sports by playing both locally and nationally three major sports. These were tennis, cricket and volleyball.

For 25 continuous years, he also ruled the tennis courts of Kenya. This is the highest achievement any sportsman can dream of, but for Yusuf Karim, this was no dream, it was a reality. Although struggling to overcome economic challenges, communal, racial and political discrimination, he worked his way to the top, proving to himself and others around him, that hard work and determination really pays off in the end.

More than two generations later, a lot of water has passed under the bridge, yet since embarking on this one-way trip from the Indian sub-continent to Mombasa, they have never looked back with any regrets. The flag of their new home they proudly call Kenya, still flies high. Something unimaginable to him in 1937.

The work goes on. In fact, it has only just seriously begun. Our beautiful homeland has so much to offer as a formidable sporting nation. We can all rise to the challenge of making it even greater.

Yusuf Karim is no longer amongst us and every single day, his family, his children and grandchildren try to ensure that the struggle and hard work has been fruitful and rewarding.

This book takes a look back at the path which has had its occasional hardships and downfalls. It would not have been possible to reach this far without the inspiration of Yusuf Karim and I could think of no better way to begin this book to reflect and share his powerful, yet humble life.

Above all I am immensely proud that this is the man I called -FATHER

*Aasif Karim*

Aasif Karim  
15th December 2012

