

Rafiki Foundation Announces Passing of its Founder, Rosemary Jensen

A Life Marked by Faithful Service, Steadfast Vision, and an Enduring Legacy Across Africa and Beyond

EUSTIS, FL, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It is with a mixture of great sadness, yet gratitude and hope in Christ, that the [Rafiki Foundation](#) shares the news of the passing of Rosemary McEachern Jensen, the Foundation's visionary founder. Rosemary went to be with the Lord on May 31, 2026, after a life marked by faithful service, steadfast vision, and a deep love for God's Word.

Rosemary had a clear sense of calling – to bring the truth of God's Word and the gift of education to Africa – and she pursued that calling with remarkable focus for decades, leaving an indelible mark on thousands of lives across ten African nations.



Rosemary Jensen, Founder of Rafiki, and Karen Elliott, Executive Director

Early Ministry



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Karen Elliott, Executive Director of the Rafiki Foundation

Rosemary's life of ministry began in the late 1950s. She and her husband, the late Dr. Robert T. Jensen, served as missionaries in East Africa, where they were instrumental in founding the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Tanzania.

General Director of Bible Study Fellowship (BSF)
Rosemary served as General Director (CEO) of Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) following founder Wetherell Johnson, whose mentorship shaped her leadership. Under Rosemary, BSF expanded its global reach, deepening its

commitment to rigorous, lay-led Scripture study and growing the organization into one of the world's most influential interdenominational Bible study ministries. Her twenty-year tenure resulted in 971 BSF classes worldwide and nearly 250,000 individuals engaged in Bible study.

Founding and Growth of the Rafiki Foundation

In 1985, Rosemary became one of the founders of the Rafiki Foundation with the goal of helping Africans know God and raise their standard of living. What began as a vision grew into a network of Rafiki Training Villages across ten African countries. These Villages support programs in classical Christian education, Bible study, orphan care, teacher training, community outreach, and the marketing of widows' handmade crafts. Thousands of children and widows have benefited from these schools and programs, receiving the doctrines of grace and opportunities for fruitful lives.

Key to Rosemary's vision for long-term success was a strong commitment to partnering with African Protestant denominations. Her work ultimately equipped over 30 denominations and more than 35 seminaries with Rafiki's Bible study materials, Bibles, and sound theological resources—laying the foundation for the discipling of millions of Africans.

"I've had the honor and privilege of working alongside Rosemary for decades," said Karen Elliott, Executive Director of the Rafiki Foundation. "I considered her a mentor and a friend. Even up to a few weeks ago, she was still visiting Rafiki and thoughtfully engaged with the organization. Her impact has not only outlived her, it will outlive generations to come who will benefit from her faithfulness to God's calling."

Commitment to Sound Doctrine

Rosemary's commitment to sound doctrine extended beyond Rafiki into the broader Reformed evangelical community. She was a member of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, an organization founded in 1994 by Dr. James Montgomery Boice to promote the theological principles of the Protestant Reformation and encourage biblical fidelity within the church.

Through her service with the Alliance, Rosemary worked alongside respected Christian leaders including Dr. James Montgomery Boice, Dr. R. C. Sproul, and D. A. Carson. Notably, she was the only woman on the Alliance's founding council, reflecting the esteem in which she was held and her longstanding commitment to Reformed theology and Christian discipleship.

Author, Bible Advocate, and Enduring Influence

Rosemary was also a published author whose works continue to encourage Christians in their walk with the Lord. She authored *Praying the Attributes of God* and *Living the Words of Jesus*, and edited *Humble Heroes*, a collection of biographical sketches of African church leaders.

Her "Retirement" Years

In her retirement years, Rosemary founded the Rosemary Jensen Bible Foundation, which, in collaboration with Crossway Publishing and Ligonier Ministries, helped catalyze the distribution

of more than half a million Bibles by the Rafiki Foundation across ten African countries. Pastors, church leaders, and children all received their own Bible through this effort. One of her final endeavors was serving on the board of the Rafiki Classical Academy, where she was affectionately known as "Grandmama Rosemary" by the students – a testament to the warmth and personal investment she brought to every endeavor. Notably, even in her final weeks, Rosemary continued to visit Rafiki and remain engaged with the organization she loved.

A Legacy That Will Outlast Generations

While her earthly ministry has come to a close, Rosemary's legacy endures in the thousands of lives touched through Rafiki's ongoing work across Africa. More than that, her influence lives on in those who carry forward the mission she began – a mission rooted in the conviction that lives are transformed through the truth of Scripture.

Rosemary was eager to be with the Lord and reunited with her husband, fondly known as Dr. Bob, who preceded her in death. She is survived by three accomplished daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren whom she loved dearly. She will be deeply missed by the thousands of people she taught and led to serve the Lord.

"Many tributes to Rosemary will be shared in the coming weeks," Elliott added. "But the best way to honor her legacy is to pursue the mission God has given Rafiki with even greater zeal and a desire to bear abundant fruit."

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About the Rafiki Foundation

Founded in 1985, the Rafiki Foundation is a Christian mission organization whose purpose is to help Africans know God and raise their standard of living. Through a network of Training Villages in ten African countries, Rafiki provides classical Christian education, orphan care, Bible study, teacher training, widow support programs, and theological resources to Protestant denominations and seminaries across the continent. For more information about Rafiki, visit www.RafikiFoundation.org. To learn more about Rosemary and her legacy, visit www.RosemaryJensen.org.

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