



## UTNA RECOGNIZES RICHARD PANKHURST AS *DEJAZMACH BENKREW!*

In a quiet dinner party in Ghion Hotel this past April, amid friends and family, among long time associates and colleagues, in the presence of prominent government officials and dignitaries, Professor Richard Pankhurst was awarded a recognition plaque and an honorary title of “*Dejazmach Benkirew*” for his well deserved, long and arduous work of bringing home the Axum Obelisk looted by Mussolini, and for having it erected in its original spot. This event was organized and carried out by UTNA, the Union of Tigrians in North America.

The reason for the new name and title: *Dejazmach Benkirew* goes back some three years, when Professor Pankhurst visited Los Angeles as Guest of Honor of ESFANA (Ethiopian Soccer Federation of North America) for the tournament of 2006 and met G. E. Gorfu at a dinner hosted by EHCC (Ethiopian Historic Conservation Council). The Obelisk looted some seventy years earlier had just been returned from Rome, but was still not erected.



During dinner, G. E. Gorfu asked the good Professor if the name ‘Pankhurst’ had any meaning since most Ethiopian names have meaning. The Professor thought for a minute and said: “It is just an old English name. It does not have any meaning.” “If that is the case,” said G. E. Gorfu, “Instead of Pankhurst, can we call you: ‘Benkirew’? Better yet: ‘Dejach Benkirew’ for you have extracted our Obelisk and brought it safely home. Don’t you think that is appropriate?” He asked. The professor thought for a moment, smiled, and bowing, said in Amharic: “Eshi, eshi, Tekebiyalehu! Tekebiyalehu!”

It was clear that he understood the meaning and liked the name.

Professor Pankhurst has been relentless in his work and dedication in bringing back the Axum Obelisk all through the Derge era and at the time of Haileselassie when he set up The Return of Axum Obelisk Organization. What is more, his efforts have not been restricted just for the Obelisk but also for many Ethiopian sacred scripts, books, and parchments, sacred tabbots, talismans, and similar other artifacts looted and/or stolen from Ethiopia.



Over the years, Dejazmach Benkirew has researched, documented, and put the great pressure of his mighty pen on many western governments, and has succeeded to have some of these items returned home. He has written extensively of his findings, indicating where some of these objects are still being kept. Many are to be found in western museums, in galleries, and some in the homes of private collectors.



After the ceremony well-wishers pose with Dejazmach Benkirew

Some say the Professor“...deserves a Nobel Prize for an outstanding lifetime contribution to Ethiopia and her people and that the award would be a profound complement to the entire Pankhurst family for their unselfish dedication and love of Ethiopia and Ethiopian causes.”\* We agree with that assessment and believe that he and his family do deserve the Nobel Prize. Until that happens however, it is good that he was given this small token award of a plaque and conferred with the honorary title of *Dejazmach Benkirew*.

By UTNA Staff Writer

**ደጃዝማች በንቅረው - Dejazmach Benkirew**



ይህ ጽላት፣ ከዛሬ ጀምሮ ደጃዝማች በንቅረው ተብለው በክብር ስም ለሚጠሩት፣ ለፕሮፌሰር ሪቻርድ ፓንክረስት፣ የአክሱምን ሓውልት ተማርኮ ከነበረበት በንቅረው በማውጣት ከሃገሩ ተመልሶ እንዲተክል ላደረጉት ረጅም ትግል የተሰጠ ነው።

**ማተሰክ - ማሕበር ተጋሩ አብ ሰሜን አሜሪካ**

This plaque is awarded to Professor Richard Pankhurst, who will heretofore be named: *Dejazmach Benkrew*, for his tireless effort in extracting the Axum Obelisk from captivity and getting it restored in its original place.

**UTNA – Union of Tigreans in North America**

This award was instigated & designed by G. E. Gorfu  
ይህ ሽልግት በገሌ. ጥርፋ አሳቢነትና አዘጋጅነት ተሠራ።

\* [http://www.ethioobserver.net/Professor Richard Pankhurst.pdf](http://www.ethioobserver.net/Professor_Richard_Pankhurst.pdf)