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Stephen Baamba Albert passed away today, Wednesday 13th November, 2019 aged 69. He leaves behind his daughter Stephanie, sons Michael and Joseph, many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, three sisters and two brothers. His passing will have an effect on the entire community who knew and loved him.

His son, Michael Albert, would like to thank and acknowledge his family and friends. He says "his father has had a colourful life, which has enriched those around him".

Baamba was born at the Broome Native Hospital in 1950. He initially undertook his apprenticeship as a Diesel Mechanic but he soon realised he had a lot more in store for his life especially in performing arts, music and education. His professional music career began in 1968 with the band Broome Beats. If you talk to the long term old Broome residents they will tell you of an era in the 1960s and 1970s when Baamba was the local entertainer and interpreter of all of the major musical genres from early rock n roll, to jazz to country and western. It was in this context that Baamba learned how to entertain people and to weave stories and magic into his performances.

His trademark hat banded by weaved string with the Indigenous colours of black, red and yellow, Baamba was synonymous with old Broome. His stories of luggers, pearl divers, gambling houses, beautiful women and hard-living deep-sea diving men, cast a spell over his audiences. With other musicians and singers from Broome he embodied the spirit of the modern day troubadour and minstrel. He felt his job was to make people happy, to make them think and reflect on the past and the future. For visitors to Broome and to people who saw Baamba perform, his songs and stories were a revelation of the promise of a multi-cultural Australia. But like other great Indigenous performers and leaders Baamba brought out the tough times of the past. This was usually done with his own unique humour and a conquering spirit of good will.

Baamba starred in the smash hit musicals "Bran Nue Dae" and "Corrugation Road" as well as numerous other roles in television, film and stage. Baamba headlined Goolarri Media's "A Taste of Broome" show from 2013, and in 2014, he released his album "Baamba Baad" with it quickly selling out and subsequent re-orders required.

Baamba's achievements however, were not only confined to music and theatre. He was the first chairman of the Commonwealth Government's National Aboriginal Education Committee and maintained a strong commitment to the education of young Aboriginal people. Baamba was one of the founders of the Broome Aboriginal Media Association which led to the development of Goolarri Media Enterprises which produces film, radio and television. Through his platform of Chairperson of BAMA and Director of Goolarri, he encouraged the development of pathways for young people taking up careers in the performing arts. It made him so happy supporting their growth and development and he took pride in watching young people flourish in their creative endeavours. In his later years Baamba became a strong advocate for people living with disabilities.

Baamba, a treasure of Broome will be sadly missed by all. Baamba had a passion for living and not wasting a second of it. He touched many people's lives with his stories, music, humour and brilliant performances on stage and screen. He performed for a diverse array of people over the last five decades and is loved by audiences worldwide. There's hardly a town in Australia where Stephen "Baamba" Albert, storyteller, singer, musician, comedian and actor, is not personally known to someone - "Who didn't know Baamba" states one of his family members.

Baamba's story will live on, backed by the saltwater music of the unique and magical town of Broome, his home and the place he loved.