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Ahmadou Ahidjo



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Quick Facts

Birthday: [August 24](#) (//Www.Thefamouspeople.Com/August-24th.Php), [1924](#) (//Www.Thefamouspeople.Com/Born-1924.Php)

Died At Age: [65](#) (//Www.Thefamouspeople.Com/Died-At-65.Php)

Sun Sign: [Virgo](#) (//Www.Thefamouspeople.Com/Virgo.Php)

Also Known As: Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo

Born In: Garoua

Famous As: First President Of Cameroon

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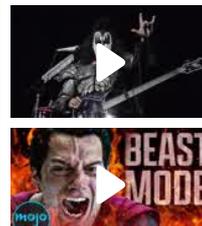
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Family:

Spouse/Ex-: Germaine Ahidjo

Died On: [November 30 \(//www.thefamouspeople.com/Died-November-30th.Php\)](http://www.thefamouspeople.com/Died-November-30th.Php), 1989
 ([//www.thefamouspeople.com/Died-1989.Php](http://www.thefamouspeople.com/Died-1989.Php))

Place Of Death: Dakar

Founder/Co-Founder: Cameroon Union

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Who was Ahmadou Ahidjo?

Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo was the first President of Cameroon. He was born to a Muslim chieftain and one of his slave wives. Encouraged by his mother at a young age, Ahidjo attended a local religious school and taught himself to read and write French. Although he struggled at first with his higher education, he graduated with honors from the prestigious Ecole Primaire Supérieure, in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. After completing his education, Ahidjo secured himself a job with the colonial postal service. His job duties required him to operate and repair telegraph and radio transmitters, and he was often on the road, crisscrossing his country, where he began to build up a network of contacts in all of the big cities. His experiences during his travel fostered his sense of national identity

and provided him the necessary intelligence and erudition to govern a multi-ethnic country like Cameroon. As France relinquished its hold on its former territories, Ahidjo guided Cameroon through its first two turbulent decades of independence. Known today for his surprise exit from politics near the end of his life, Ahidjo's iron clampdown on his nation for a quarter century in the name of national unity continues to echo through modern Cameroonian society.

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Childhood & Early Life

- He was born on August 24, 1924 in the village of Nassarao near Garoua in Cameroon. His father was a Fulani village chief but his mother was a Fulani slave.
- Ahidjo's mother, who was Muslim, sent him to Quranic school. When he failed an important school exam at the age of 14, he quit school and started working as a veterinary assistant.
- At the age of 15, he enrolled at the Ecole Primaire Superieure, an elite school in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon..

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Career

- After graduating from the school at age of 18, Ahidjo joined the postal service where he worked as a radio and telegraph operator. His job required him to travel extensively throughout the country, as a result of which he made important contacts in key cities.
- In 1947, at the tender age of 22, he entered politics and was elected to the Cameroon territorial assembly.
- From 1953–1956, he served in Paris as Cameroon's representative in the Assembly of the French Union.
- He served as Deputy Prime Minister and minister of the interior in the first Cameroon government in 1957.
- In 1958, when the Prime Minister André-Marie Mbida's government fell, he formed his own party, the Cameroonian Union (CU), and became the new Prime Minister.
- During this time, the radical, nationalist Union of the Populations of Cameroon was demanding immediate independence from France. To press its demands it had taken up arms against the French administration. Ahidjo used French troops to clamp down the rebellion and offered amnesty to those who surrendered
- When Cameroon gained independence from France in 1960, Ahidjo was elected as its first President. A year later, he invited the territory of British Cameroon to join his nation and the two lands united as the Republic of Cameroon after a popular vote approved the measure. The CU was then renamed the Cameroon National Union (CNU) and rapidly became the only party in the country.
- Ahidjou was re-elected as president in 1965, 1970, 1975 and 1980. Although he continually called for unity between his country's Muslim, French-speaking north and partly English Christian western half, Ahidjou had to continually repress rebellions throughout his long rule.
- In 1975, Ahidjou appointed his long-time protege, Paul Biya, to be his Prime Minister.

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- Ahidjou surprised his nation by suddenly resigning on November 4, 1982. He then named Paul Biya to take over as president.
- Despite rumors that he was suffering from a mysterious illness, Ahidjou began touring across Cameroon in January 1983 to canvass support for Biya. After Biya's legitimacy was sufficiently well established, Ahidjo left for exile in France.
- An attempt to overthrow Biya in a coup in June 1983 was put down with great difficulty and soon Biya and Ahidjo began hurling acrimonious accusations at one another, eventually resulting in Biya's government passing a death sentence against Ahidjo in absentia.
- Biya remained in power in Cameroon and Ahidjo divided his time in exile between Senegal and France till the time he died.

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Major Works

- Over a span of three decades, Ahmadou Ahidjo successfully ruled a vast multi-ethnic, multi-racial patchwork of different tribes. He led Cameroon's transition from a French colonial territory to a fully independent nation.

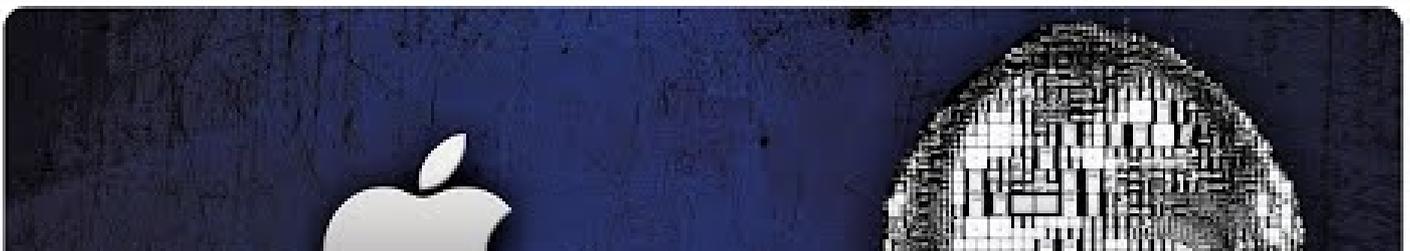
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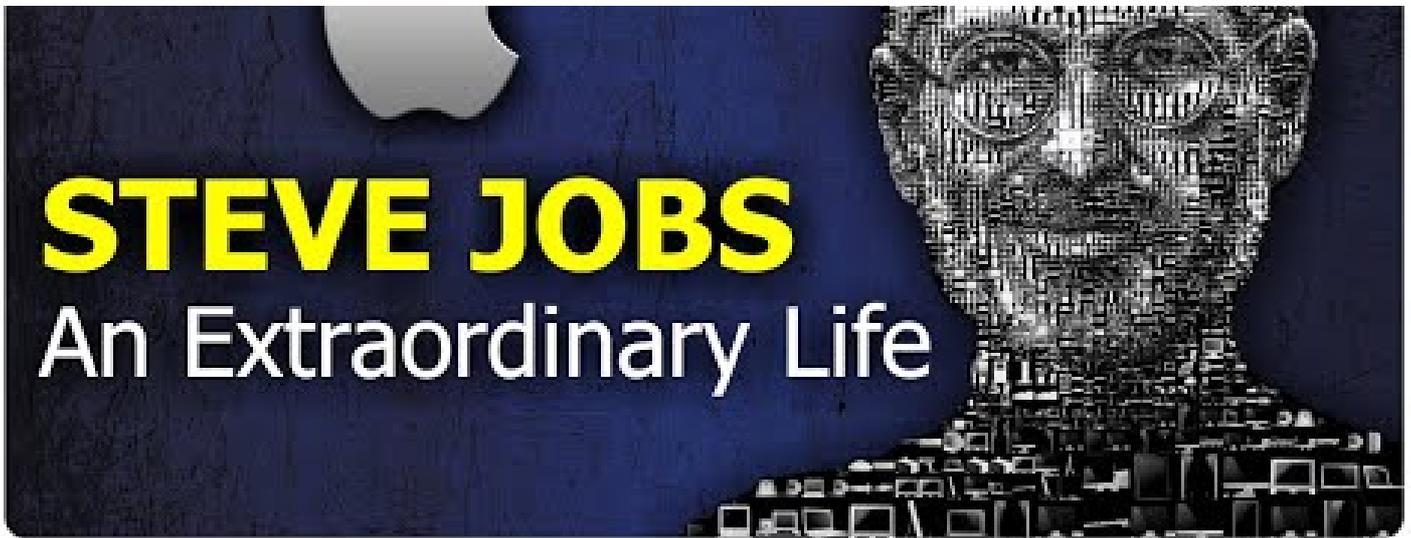
- He was married to Germaine Ahidjo.
- He died of a heart attack on November 30, 1989, in Dakar Senegal.
- There is a stadium named after him in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon

Trivia

- While in exile in Senegal, it was reported that Ahidjo would throw tantrums when learning of bad news. It is said that it was during one such tantrum that he slipped and fell in the bathroom of his luxurious estate. Paralysed and restricted to bed, Ahidjo's health rapidly declined and he died the following day.
- In 1972, Ahidjo sent a bull elephant named Jumbo to Queen Elizabeth in Britain to commemorate her silver wedding anniversary.
- After Biya became president, he ordered that all public displays of Ahidjo were to be renamed or destroyed, and it became forbidden to mention Ahidjo in the media, all in an effort to remove all the traces of Ahidjo's long rule from Cameroon's history.

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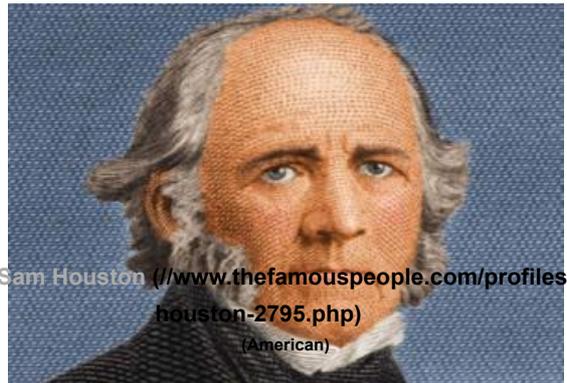
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