

Kajubi: Great educationalist passes on

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Prof. William Senteza Kajubi

Professor William Senteza Kajubi, who in 1987, authored the Kajubi Report that government later adopted as the “White Paper” for reforming Uganda’s education sector, died yesterday.

He was 86. By press time the cause of his death had not been revealed. Wasswa Kajubi, nevertheless, told us that his father suffered a stroke three months ago. Kajubi’s name was synonymous with countless great things. An advisor to Kabaka Ronald Mutebi, Kajubi sat on the committee that vetted Uganda’s national symbols.

Yet it was his advocacy for reform in the education sector that amplified his image locally and globally. His Kajubi Report proposed that female students joining public university get an additional 1.5 points to address the gender imbalance at the higher levels of education. It also urged government to consider making vocational and technical education an integral part of the education system.

This, the report added, would help fight youth unemployment. Government adopted both proposals.

Kajubi’s passion for education was understandable. He was a teacher by profession. He studied Geography and Education at the then Makerere College. He later attended the University of Chicago in America to study Geography, again.

He returned to Uganda to teach Geography at his alma mater, King’s College Budo, rising to senior Geography teacher. At the end of 1958, Kajubi joined Makerere to teach “Methods of Teaching Geography in Secondary Schools”. He would later become a senior lecturer in Education.

In 1965, he became Director of the National Institute of Education, which was responsible for development of curricula and examination and certification of primary school teachers. Between 1977 and 1979 and from 1990 to 1993, Kajubi was Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, where he oversaw a number of reforms. The Acting Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof Venansius Baryamureeba, said Kajubi’s love for the institution was evident.

“Our hearts go out to Senteza Kajubi’s family upon the loss of a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, mentor, friend and confidant who had an inexhaustible sense of humour,” Baryamureeba said in a condolence message yesterday.

“The nation and the world will indeed miss this multi-talented person of integrity with demonstrated commitment to duty, and an immense ability to relate, entertain and socialize.”

Interestingly, Kajubi initially wanted to do agriculture. When he was in junior secondary school, his headmaster asked what he wanted to do with his adult life. Kajubi replied that he wanted to become an agricultural officer since he enjoyed being around plants. But the headmaster believed Kajubi would make a good teacher, persuaded him to study Education.

Political life

Kajubi also embraced politics later in life but he was not as successful there. An avid supporter of the Democratic Party, he was, in 1994, elected to represent Kyadondo North in the Constituent Assembly (CA) where he, among other things, championed federo for Buganda.

“It has been pointed out in certain parts of this country, in Buganda in particular, people at RC-I and RC-II said that they want a federal system of government. They want their region to be administered as one unit, but the centre is saying no, we cannot have a region administered together. It must be chopped up into small districts. This is what smacks of the policy of divide and rule,” he said during one of the heated debates in the CA.

In the first parliamentary elections after the promulgation of the new constitution, the late Kibirige Sebunya defeated Kajubi to claim Kyadondo North. In 2008, while delivering a keynote address at the Forum for Democratic Change delegates’ conference, Kajubi urged the opposition party not to emulate the NRM, which promised good policies but failed to deliver. Wasswa Kajubi described his father as a nationalist and someone who had Buganda at heart.

“He loved Uganda and Buganda very much. He wanted Uganda to catch up with the Asian Tigers in terms of development,” Wasswa told us yesterday.

Kajubi is survived by six children – remarkably three sets of twins. His wife Elsie Kajubi died in 2006. By press time, the family had not yet finalised funeral arrangements but Wasswa said he was likely to be buried on May 5 at Maya, along Kampala-Masaka road.

In a 2004 interview, when Kajubi was asked what he felt was his greatest contribution to humanity, he said it was in the various positions he had held that have opened a door to higher education for many people. He singled out the time he spent as head of the National Institute of Education (NIE).

“It [NIE] has trained many people who have gone to higher levels, gained PhDs and international jobs...These people have come up because the National Institute was there. Our policy was to widen access,” he said.

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