

TRUTH EVERYDAY

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Prof. Kajubi passed on with his dignity intact

Death has visited us once more. Prof. Senteza Kajubi, a former Vice Chancellor of Makerere and Nkumba universities breathed his last on Memorial Day. Many tributes on the web recognised him for what he was: a doting father, educator, administrator and nationalist.

Only recently has Prof. Kajubi's prominent role in the selection of the national anthem come to light. Prof. Kajubi was a visionary born before his time. Even though he went to Budo, Kajubi charted a different path by joining the Democratic Party-- then closely associated with the Catholics-- because of its progressive ideals- a truly democratic, free Uganda in which every Ugandan had a right to vote.

His late wife, Elsie Nabaloga Kajubi, was the first directly elected woman councillor in Uganda. She was elected KCC councillor in 1964. This turned out to be the last local government election during Obote I until the LC elections in 1987. The long drought of elected women officials did not end until 1980 when Teresiah Odong was elected MP from Lira to the National Assembly.

Every student in Uganda has probably seen a copy of the Uganda National Examination Board Syllabi; a detailed guide of what ought to be taught. Some idiosyncrasies in the syllabus may have been Kajubi's as well.

Geography students, at least after every exam, mused on what activities or number of people were in the tricky question on photographic interpretation. Today, policy people forget the role of liberal arts in a creative and innovative society. Kajubi perhaps never got the time to explain to the public why children had to dream first to achieve; an attribute again of his American education. On those fateful days, thousands of students struggled to "interpret" photographs; wondering how many people were in the photograph.

As a politician, Kajubi represented a difficult seat- Kyaddondo North in the CA. The Nansana fracas in 1995 marked the breakdown of moderate-hard line dialogue and the tenuous trip to a costly experiment in one party rule. In Select Committee No. 4 of the CA, Kajubi tried without much success to entrench democratic federalism in Uganda.

Kajubi's long life has been fruitful. He showed that a man of talent and ability could succeed both within and outside of the public sector. After Makerere and almost 70 years old, he turned around a struggling polytechnic and turned it into a university. It is a tragedy that he died shortly after paying homage to another great Ugandan, Nkalubo Ssebugwawo, who turned 100 over the weekend and gave the land on which this university stands.

One of Nkumba's attributes has been recruiting senior talent and retired civil servants to pass on the "torch" so to speak.

Kajubi's failings are few because of his greatness. There were a few difficult moments in Kajubi's life. His second departure from Makerere was not on the best of terms. The Gerald Sendaula Visitation Committee "visited" Makerere at a time of great tension over implementation of Structural Adjustment Reforms; simply put- IMF demanded that government revisit its role in higher education.

Strikes hit Makerere: Kajubi took the political blame but in hindsight, this was hardly the end of problems at Makerere. The university today remains in a precarious financial situation, without a clear role as a national educational institution and centre for research.

When voters in Kyaddondo North replaced him in 1996, Kajubi did not have the indignity of being replaced by the "scraps" so to speak. He was replaced by another academic- Dr Israel Kibirige Sebunnya. This was not the fate that befell his other peers. Abu Mayanja lost to an MP who has been to jail for murder and is now a minister.

There were light moments in Kajubi. In 1996, he turned around the "lubengo" grinding stone language on the Museveni group, warning of tough times that would accompany loading President Museveni with a grinding stone.

In the 1960s, Kajubi told an old joke about applying for a bank loan. When in financial distress, don't approach a bank manager asking for an equivalent of

Shs100 loan; it made more sense to borrow Shs10,000.00; promptly on time return Shs9900.00 and stretch out the final Shs100.00 which reflected your actual financial need. Most big dreams after all started with such small amounts.

Kajubi lived a full life and was fortunate to pass on with his dignity intact- not too common today- May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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