

TEXT OF SPEECH BY MR. B.M. GECAGA, CHAIRMAN OF  
THE COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NAIROBI,  
AT A CONGREGATION FOR THE AWARD OF  
CERTIFICATES AND CONFERMENT OF  
DEGREES BY THE VISITOR ON  
THURSDAY, 28th SEPTEMBER, 1967.

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Your Excellency, Mr. Visitor, Sir; our honoured guests;  
members of University College, Nairobi:

It falls upon me to express on behalf of the Council and the College, as also on behalf of the University of East Africa, our appreciation and gratitude to your Excellency for honouring us with your presence at this ceremony, and for performing so perfectly the function of awarding to our students the certificates and conferring the degrees, of the University of East Africa, whose Vice-Chancellor, Sir James Cook, we are also happy to have had with us. On this, as on previous occasions, we have derived fresh vitality from the important words that you have said to us and which we shall think upon and seek to translate into appropriate action.

Three years ago, when University College, Nairobi, was going through a most difficult period of development and stood in great need of rejuvenation, the Council of this College invited Dr. Arthur T. Porter to come and fill the then vacant post of Principal, and so occupy, as the current jargon goes, the "hot seat" of this College. Dr. Porter would, I think, admit that the seat has certainly been hot for most of the time and, indeed, at various times hotter than usual. But I can also testify that by his courage, perserverance and foresight he has never allowed that heat to turn into a volcanic eruption, but always his watchword and guiding star, as I have observed, has been service to University College, Nairobi, in particular, and to Kenya and, indeed, East Africa as a whole. Aided by a team of able and devoted administrative and academic staff - to all of whom our thanks are due - he has rendered that service without stint, harmonising the multifarious and divergent needs of the different Faculties within the Principal's melting pot or cooling well, out of which there emerges refreshing and vitalising water to run through the various channels that go to irrigate growth in the many fields which together form the whole of this College. I think you will agree, Mr. Visitor, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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that if evidence of that continuing and revitalised growth were needed it would not be far to seek.

Upon the expiry of Dr. Porter's initial contract, the Council of this College, with the concurrence of the Visitor and the approval of the Kenya Government, has decided once again to invite him to continue in this service for a further period of three years, which invitation, I am glad to say, he has accepted. In this connection, we are indebted to his own University and to the Government of his country, Sierra Leone, for agreeing to extend his leave of absence, so as to enable him to accept our invitation.

In the difficult task of leading this College into what is still very largely an uncharted future, Dr. Porter needs and deserves our help and co-operation. I commend him to you and am confident that the people of this country will, in their characteristic manner, accord to him and Mrs. Porter the courtesies which our breeding has taught us to reserve for those who are guests in our home.

Na sasa, Bwana Visitor, Mabibi na Mabwana, mtaniruhusu niseme maneno machache kwa lugha ya kikwetu, yaani Kiswahili, kwa maana wageni wakibutembelea na usiwape kile chakula cha kienyeji, pengine wataona kama hukuwakaribisha kamili.

Katika hotuba ya Bwana Principal mmekwisha kusikia mengi yaliyofanyika miaka michache iliyopita katika jitihada zetu za kupanua na kuongeza elimu ya juu katika Chuo hiki Kikuu cha University College, Nairobi.

Haingefaa mimi kurudia yote yaliyotajwa, lakini ningependa kutaja jambo moja tu.

Siku hizi tunasikia sana hutoka pande zote vile ifaavyo wanawake wa nchi hii yetu ya Kenya wapatiwe nafasi na wafunguliwe milango katika juhudi zote za maendeleo ya nchi. Ingawa hivyo, ni lazima wao wenyewe watie bidii po pote walipo. Hapa katika chuo hiki hatusahau mahitaji ya wanawake, na twaendelea kuongeza nafasi kwa wasichana waliohitimu mitihani ya kuingia hapa. Nafurahi kusema ya kwamba walioingia wametia bidii sana, na wengine, kama mlivyojionea wenyewe leo, wamefaulu na kupata vyeti na madigirii yao.

Miaka 5 ikiyopita tulikuwa na wanafunzi wasichana 75 tu; mwaka huu wameongezeka kufika karibu 180.

Hapo zamani kidogo kulikuwa na nyumba moja tu hapa College ya hawa wanafunzi wasichana. Sasa tumekwisha kuwajengea nyumba nyingine mpya. Vile vile twatoa shukrani kwa serikali ya Kenya ambayo imekwisha ahidi kutoa pauni sitini na tano elfu (£65,000) kwa kupanua hayo majengo ambapo wanafunzi wasichana huishi.

Juzi Council ya College hii ilikata shauri ya kwamba ingependa nyumba hiyo mpya sasa iliyomalizika ipewe jina la mmoja ambaye twamheshimu na ambaye daima yuko pamoja na Bwana Visitor wetu kumsaidia na kuona ya kwamba mahitaji yake yametimika.

Nafurahiwa kutangaza ya kwamba huyo Mheshimiwa amekubali ombi letu, na katika sherehe ambayo twatumaini

/kuifanya ...

kuifanya baadaye mwaka huu, hiyo nyumba itapewa jina la  
"MAMA NGINA KENYATTA HALL".

And now Mr. Visitor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, it  
only remains for me to thank all our guests for coming to  
this ceremony, and to say good-bye to you all, but in doing so  
to invite you to tea, which will be served in the Great Court  
immediately after the conclusion of these proceedings.

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BMG/MJ

27/9/1967

NAIROBI.