

CJ interacts with University community

In August 2012, the Chief Justice of Kenya, Dr. Willy Mutunga challenged universities in Kenya to retain their true heritage and go back to their roots and be more vocal in national development.

Speaking during a public lecture held that the University of Nairobi's Taifa Hall which he described as 'a place of rich history of intellectual debate dating back to close to 40 years ago', he called on universities to reclaim their territory in national development.

Reflecting on university life in yester years, Dr. Mutunga said universities were at the forefront in national debate and immensely contributed to implementing changes in the country. However,

the tide has changed and Kenya's development has paid a hefty price for the poor systems and structures in place. He noted that with the commercialization of university education, Kenyans with the potential to bring change to the country have been locked out of accessing higher education. For a developing country, this is a risky state of affairs as the country needs to see the sense that the production of knowledge is for the benefit of the individual self and the public. Universities need to look for other ways of funding".

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and organizations to make endowments for scholarships. The university needs to reassert itself in the world of theory building and contribution. He pointed out that universities are not islands and that they

need to work with other stakeholders to realize their mandates.

The CJ challenged the younger generation in Kenya to take up its role in nation building. His generation pushed for the new constitution and now it is up to the young generation to make this constitution work for the nation. On the upcoming general elections, Justice Mutunga called on Kenyans to reflect on the 2008 post-election chaos, and shun violence and embrace the constitution.

Student politics did not



Chief Justice, Willy Mutunga signs the visitors book at the University.



Justice Mutunga (centre) with Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha and former Vice-Chancellor Prof. Francis Gichaga.

go unmentioned. Back in his days, the Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) played a significant role in opening up the democratic space in Kenya. Unfortunately, university student organizations in the present day have been compromised thereby stopped contributing to national development. He pointed out the need to ensure that student politics is driven by ethics and that university leadership should uphold the values of the constitution. Universities should seek to

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nurture student leadership that reflect these values as standards for public leadership are very high.

The Chief Justice said that he was still passionate about teaching in the university after his term. He looked forward to being associated with liberal institutions that have a democratic foundation- a university that is free from the vile and

vicious political persecution of thought. He said that he would like to come back to a university that is intellectually active where the notice boards are filled with numerous notices of knowledge driven seminars and lectures and no other businesses. Universities must be cautious of the aspirations of people and these aspirations must be protected.

The well attended interactive public lecture not only attracted University students and staff but the general public as well. Some of Kenya’s senior judges, most of whom are UoN’s alumni, graced the event.

The Chief Justice was introduced by the Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. George Magoha, who observed that the University has been interacting with the public and private sector, as part of its role to engage in intellectual discourse.

The public lecture marked the start of the Judicial Marches Week, whose theme was “Taking Justice to the people.” The marches week which will be held annually, is an opportunity for those privileged to serve in the Judiciary to open up to the public; explain to them how they work and get feedback from the people on how to improve their services.

The Judiciary is working towards becoming a knowledge based institution. The intersection between justice and knowledge can be developed through partnerships between the judiciary and the scholars thereby realizing collective wisdom on research on the constitution and the laws.