

LIBRARY

TEXT OF SPEECH BY DR. J. N. KARANJA, VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI, AT A CONGREGATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE SECOND
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY AND FOR THE CONFERNMENT AND
PRESENTATION OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS TO BE HELD ON
FRIDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 1978

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya,
Your Excellency the Vice-President, Your Excellency Mama Ngina
Kenyatta, Hon. Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished
Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

May I welcome you all, on behalf of the entire University
to this important occasion.

We are deeply honoured by your presence here, Sir. That
you could find time amidst your many committments to be here with
us is a moving testimony of the importance I know you attach to
higher education in general and to our University in particular.

You, Sir, are no stranger to this institution. You have
regularly attended our graduation ceremonies. But your magnetic
pull has brought many of your colleagues in Government and in
Parliament, some of whom have not before ventured into these
precincts. We welcome them wholeheartedly and hope that they
will visit us more often so that they can feel the inner spirit
..... that motivates

that motivates this institution and also to help us to integrate the University more with the community and to appreciate that our mutual efforts are directed to the same goal of nation building.

We have also amongst us today many eminent guests from different countries in the world many of them Vice-Chancellors or Presidents of their Universities or Colleges. They have come to share with us the joy of this memorable occasion while others who could not come have sent greetings to you, Sir, and wish you every success in your onerous tasks. All this is a mark of our international status and repute and of our close links with institutions of higher learning beyond our borders. We are all very grateful for their warm and fraternal felicitations.

Beside welcoming you here, Sir, we also mark the sad demise of our late President, His Excellency Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, our revered First Chancellor and undoubtedly our most distinguished graduate. The University has expressed our sorrow to you, Sir, and to the family. All I would like to add today is that although his voice has been stilled by fate, his wisdom will illuminate our paths from this Great Court for generations to come. A fitting Academic Memorial will be erected soon to memorialize his name and contribution to this University which

no word of tribute can truly be enough. Man may come, man may go, but the footprints left by him will never fade.

You, Sir, have pledged to follow in the footsteps of this Great Son of Kenya and Africa. We in the University, like our brethren throughout the Republic, wish to congratulate you and your Vice-President - formerly our colleague but now gone to greener pastures - on your election to your respective high offices. We wish to pledge our loyalty to you and your Government and assure you that we will follow in your footsteps in your declared commitment to lead this nation to greater prosperity.

This University, which from today you will head, represents an enormous capital and human investment, perhaps the best investment made today by the Government and people of Kenya.

The famous English mathematician and philosopher Alfred Whitehead told his countrymen in 1916 that

"in the conditions of modern life, the rule is absolute, the race that does not value trained intelligence is doomed Today we maintain ourselves. Tomorrow science will have moved

forward, yet one more step, and there will be no appeal from the judgement which will then be pronounced on the uneducated".

Judging by your Government's allocation of funds to the development of educational opportunities for our youth, you too Sir, are aware of these admonitions. The realized human resources, the active brain power, the technical capacities, the educated minds are the essential agents in every form of development. And the University being the main centre where this human element is nurtured, therefore, assumes at the present time when the need and desire for development are alive everywhere, an increasingly strategic and consequential function in our society.

The essence of our mission here is to ensure that the University adopts a practical theory and method to suit our situation so that education would promote progress and to assist in creating a new culture which though its roots are still in the African soil, is yet modified to meet the pressure of modern technological conditions.

Together with this

Together with this we have to emphasize the importance of excellence and the quality of scholarship. High academic standards are what we attempt to achieve and maintain. These standards can only be attained through hard work by all. They are the essential foundations for a truly great University and they cannot be achieved without effort.

The University has continued to grow apace over the years. We have now here and at Kenyatta University College seven thousand students. This is in keeping with demands for high level manpower in our country and also in response to the aspirations of Kenyan youth for access to higher education.

We have made every effort to create here a University of dynamic diversity. Through our Faculties, Departments and Research Institutes, we offer a variety of courses that directly relate to our environment and national requirements, and provide the highest levels of professional education in order to offer the students the preparation of the mind and the intellectual tools which will enable them to respond flexibly to the varied needs of working life.

Since the pursuit

Since the pursuit of knowledge today needs vaster and vaster resources, material as well as financial, we are engaged in discussion with the Government to find funds needed to cope with our expanding activities. I would like here to acknowledge the help that we have received from your Government, Sir, in form of recurrent expenditure and postgraduate scholarships. However, I regret to report, Sir, that our increase in numbers has not been matched by growth in academic and physical facilities. We have received very little money for needed capital development in recent years and in many academic departments, we are desperately short of laboratories and teaching space and more critically our Libraries are filled to the rafters. I do not speak without hope, Sir, because I am sure this obvious need will be met quickly through your generous persuasion of your colleagues.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those foreign Governments and international agencies, too numerous to list individually, who have contributed so generously with money and personnel to our academic growth and health.

But, Sir, the University

But, Sir, the University is not composed of buildings alone. It is composed primarily of students. We are always striving to provide better facilities and amenities in the Halls and elsewhere. The University exists to train them for leadership and service. We should encourage them to be self-reliant and to contribute in decision making. I am sure that even though they at times may seem impatient and insistent, they are devoted and loyal to this their motherland. Our youth can exert sustained power for good if it acts with maturity which involves readiness to assess both the situation to be faced and one's own capabilities. Maturity also means the understanding of the nature of freedom and self-restraint. If we respect ourselves and behave accordingly, the community will respect us and more important be prepared to listen when we have something to say. Acts of hooliganism and violence will not be tolerated.

The University is run on the basis of team work and in this connection I would like to thank all members of staff for their contribution to the wellbeing of the University. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the work of our Council members and their untiring Chairman for the support and advice which has been invaluable to us in the management of the University.

Your Excellency,

Your Excellency I shall shortly present to you those who are about to graduate. There are nearly 1500 graduates. I am particularly proud to present the first graduates from our school of Dentistry which has operated with grave difficulties but which is now nearing completion.

My advice to all of them is that they should uphold the cause of reason wherever they go and in whatever they do. If they can do this both in the University and in the professions and callings beyond, then the promise for the future which the present holds will be bright indeed.

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