

Stella Awinja: a heroine of all times

MANY FEMALE STUDENTS have been housed at Stella Awinja Hall. This beautiful hall was purchased from the Nairobi City Council in 1977, formerly called Marys' Hall; it accommodated mainly the senior female students drawn from all faculties. The inside of this hostel resembled a country side English hotel, the terrazzo floors were always immaculate and clean, the grounds covered with heather, rockery and occasional sprigs of blue grass, it was beautiful to live in and to work on your study notes, and thesis from the pristine rooms.

The Marys Hall remained so in name until 1990 when a specific request was made to rename the hall Stella Awinja. But who was Stella Awinja?

Stella Sally Muka Awinja was a third year student in the faculty of engineering, a brilliant scholar, leader, actor and poet, she died after being crushed by

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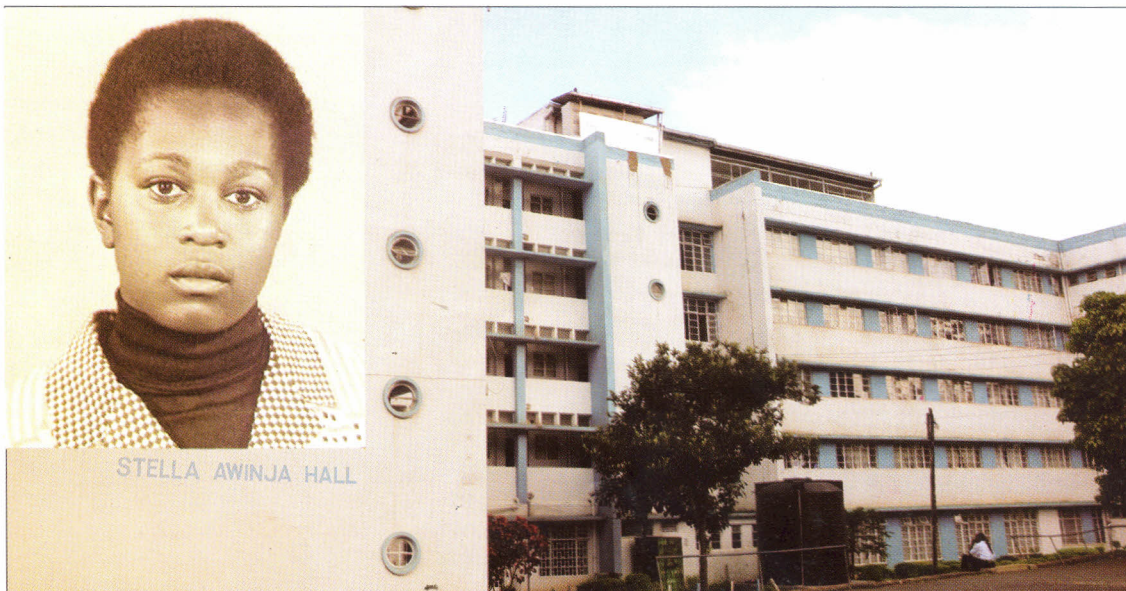
a big stone, which fell from the crane that was lifting building materials to erect the hotel we call Lillian towers. At the time, there was a bus stop on the site and the contractor had put up a balustrade for pedestrians, but on the day in question the balustrade was not able to save Stella from death.

Stella Muka Awinja was awarded an aegrotat degree in 1984. An aegrotat

degree is a degree granted to a student who dies in the course of their studies, but whom the faculty believes would have graduated fully if they had lived. During the graduation ceremony held in December of 1984, faculty, senate and the council had considered the case, saddened by the death of this fascinating and brilliant scholar, the decision had been unanimous, grant her the degree.

And so her name was called out, and her own parents stood in recognition of the academic excellence that their daughter stood for. This was no candle burning in the wind, but a legend when the rains came in. And so even if we did not know her, the candle burnt out long before the legend ever will

Stella Sally Muka Awinja, heroine, academic, scholar, her name lives, Rest in peace.



Hall of residence named after the late Stella Muka Awinja [inset] Awinja an engineering student who died after being hit by building materials.