

Edith Nkatha Mwirigi

Avoid loud and aggressive persons they are vexations to the spirit

MEEET EDITH NKATHA MWIRIGI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF SONU AND A STUDENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING. I INTRODUCE THE LADY TO YOU because she is the first woman to hold the position of Secretary General of SONU. SONU traditionally has slots for women e.g. Treasurer, Gender Affairs Secretary and Vice-chair Academic Affairs, but Secretary-General has always been a preserve for male students.

"In high school, I loved being a leader, seeing that things were right, I do not like to see people being discriminated, I adore justice and I believe that each person has a role to play. These words, might sound as if they are pitch of a senator elect, but coming from Edith, they do not surprise me. The words serve to reveal a thread of steel in the otherwise soft-spoken secretary general.

Edith Mwirigi broke the usual political gender ranks when she vied and won the seat, but she has always been in student politics ever since she joined the University of Nairobi. Mwirigi served as a member of the SONU parliament in her first year, where the executive voted her as the

Meet Edith Nkatha Mwirigi, Secretary-General of SONU and a student of civil engineering

Hansard Editor. In her second year, she vied for and won the seat of vice-chair academic affairs. It is here that away from the usual propaganda of us versus the administration, that she was able to gain a new appreciation of the leadership. "I oversaw the allocation of SONU bursaries, and through her efforts the supplementary rule at School of Engineering was revoked". At the end of her tenure, Mwirigi organised the academic forum a platform for students to discuss exam cheating, and other challenges such as issues of adequate facilities in the halls of residence, and lecture theatres.

Mwirigi loved history and government at high school and was fascinated by the cold war and

imperial powers balkanisation of the world. It was not new for her to be active in leadership because she begun serving as a prefect while in Form one, she served as a compound prefect, in form 3 she was the school comptroller and in form 4 was a dormitory prefect. Mwirigi also enjoyed playing basketball, being a presenter during the science congress and being active in YCS throughout high school.

When Mwirigi was admitted to the University in 2010, she was thrown to her 4th choice, BA and through faculty transfer was taken to civil engineering and she finds pleasure in the course because she does not like white collar jobs, enjoys meeting people and finds engineering interesting because it does not have the monotony.

Mwirigi's ambition to be Secretary General, stems from a realisation she had even while serving as vice chair, that the secretary general is the face of the union and his /her image can either build or destroy the union. "I felt that if there was any change to be made in SONU, then any change in perception by the public would always begin with the secretary general". The office of the secretary general has in the past been viewed from the

perception of street scenes, but Mwirigi vowed that this was a thing of the past and if elected would steer the position differently. Again given that the secretary general had been the bastion of men, it had to be challenged and given women's knack for detail and organising, it would be the new domain of women.

Mwirigi notes that one of the major challenges she faces is that one cannot be a lone ranger. The student leadership must walk with you and embrace a sober approach. The perception by students that you must use force is alien to me" those who use force need to be disciplined. "as a woman, the challenge of working with men, who sometimes can be goonish is disconcerting. These men really know how to dress someone down. In terms of inspiration and motivation, Mwirigi, without hesitation, states that her mother



has been her motivation. “My mother has been there for us, raising us up, sharing whatever she had and seeing us through love. I also love my brother, who I lost on the eve of the SONU election that elevated me to secretary general. He was my biggest mentor from childhood and I have vowed to continue to lead to do him proud. The humble environment that Mwirigi was brought up in has made her realize the importance of a nation sharing its resources fairly, balancing the disadvantaged and the advantaged. Mwirigi

shares the truth of the Desiderata on speaking your truth quietly and clearly and about surviving and thriving.

Beneath what one might like to call a thread of steel, is a softer side of Mwirigi that acknowledges she is a human being, is in a relationship and she loves it “ we are not the same tribe but that has not stopped us from sharing something wonderful. To back her up in life, Mwirigi relies on her Christian walk; she is active at St. Paul’s Chaplaincy where

she is a member of the choir. This really has helped her to hold firm, to be restricted and protected from the vicissitudes of life.

“As far as possible, without surrender be on good terms with all persons”

UoN students visit children’s home

THE STUDENTS ORGANISATION, SONU HAS COMMENCED A PROGRAM OF FOSTERING AND AUGMENTING GOOD NEIGHBOR RELATIONS WITH THE SURROUNDING UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES.

This was revealed, when a group of students from the University of Nairobi (UoN) visited the Christ Chapel Children’s Home in Nairobi’s Huruma area. The initiative, organized by the SONU Legal Affairs Secretary, Isaack Muuo, and the Rotaract Club, UoN

Chapter saw the students interact with the children and organize a cleanup of the home.

The highlight of the mission was the student’s sharing and listening to the children’s moving stories and their hopes for the future. The event also saw the latter students and children interact in various sporting activities with the students making a generous donation of food items, clothing and shoes that will go a long way in running the facility.

Established in 2002, Christ Chapel Children’s Home, houses

62 orphans and vulnerable children between the age of two and fifteen years. The home aims at ensuring holistic growth of the children away from the poverty and other dangers palpable in the surrounding Huruma Slums.

Madam Gloria, Director of the home, expressed her gratitude to the student body and the University of Nairobi fraternity for their kind gesture. She encouraged students to build their volunteer aspects since not everyone is equally endowed in the society.