



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

CITATION ON

**JOSEPH BARRAGE WANJUI**

M.B.S., F.K.I.M., B.A., M.Sc.

*CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI*

ON HIS CONFERMENT  
OF

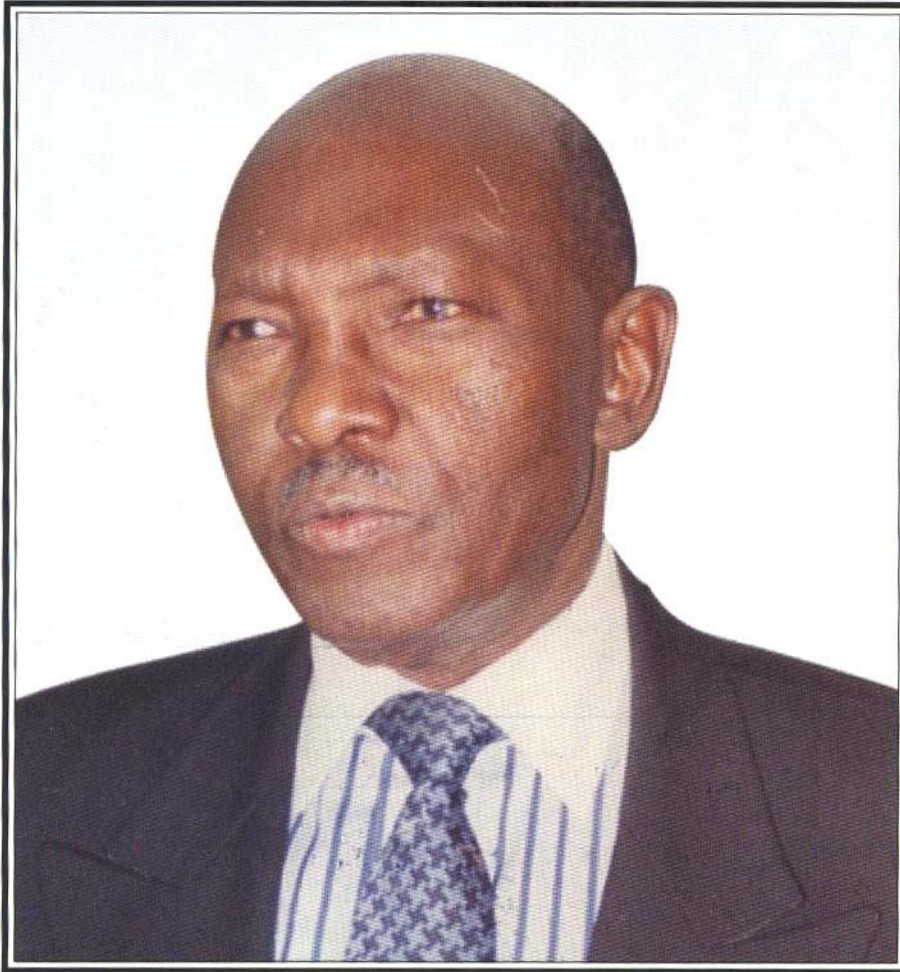
**DOCTOR OF SCIENCE (D.Sc.) (HONORIS CAUSA)**

AT THE

31ST CONGREGATION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

ON

**7TH MAY 2004**



***JOSEPH BARRAGE WANJUI***  
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The University of Nairobi is privileged to have today in its midst the presence of a man who is among the most accomplished business and industrial leaders and institutional builders in our country and in Africa. A tireless worker on behalf of the causes and businesses he believes in, he was last year appointed the Chancellor of University of Nairobi by His Excellency the President. This great industrialist and African executive is Mr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, known less formally to his colleagues as "Joe Wanjui".

Mr. Wanjui was born on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1937 at Kikuyu. He had his secondary education at Kabaa and Mangu. At Mangu High School, where he was between 1954 and 1957, he obtained a First Division in Cambridge School Certificate. At Mangu, as the School Head Prefect during 1957, the young Wanjui's leadership qualities were already apparent.

From Mangu, Mr Wanjui proceeded to the United States of America for further studies. He enrolled for undergraduate degree studies at the Ohio Wesleyan University in 1958 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics and Mathematics in 1961. Immediately thereafter he enrolled for postgraduate studies at Columbia University, New York, where he graduated with a Master of Science degree in Industrial and Management Engineering in 1963. During his working life he registered for Ph.D. research programme with the University of East Africa at the University College Nairobi in 1966, but he later had to withdraw from the programme due to pressure of professional work.

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Mr. Wanjui began his business career as an executive trainee with ESSO Corporation in New York in 1963, but eager to participate in the building of the newly independent and young nation, Mr. Wanjui returned to Kenya in 1964 to work with the same company. That same year, at the age of 27, he was appointed the Executive Director Kenya Government's Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC). In this capacity he helped to promote and finance numerous industrial and commercial ventures in Kenya, including the Kenya National Trading Corporation, Kenya Industrial Estates, ICDC Investment Company Limited, and helped to launch a great many individual entrepreneur projects largely through credit and management support. He was instrumental in attracting a number of multinational manufacturers to Kenya. ICDC Investments Limited was eventually listed in the Nairobi Stock Exchange and played a major role in educating Kenyans to participate in the stock exchange. Further, the Kenya Industrial estates became the major incubator for indigenous Kenyan industrialists.

Mr. Wanjui left ICDC in 1968 and returned to the private sector as the Technical Director of the giant East Africa Industries Ltd. (EAI), a position he held until 1972 when he was promoted to the post of Managing Director of the Company. In 1974, at the age of 37, he became its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, a position he held until 1993. After relinquishing the Chairmanship with E.A.I., he remained with the UNILEVER, EAI's parent company, as a Development Member for Africa and Middle East Region until 1996, when he retired after twenty-eight years of dedicated service.

Mr. Wanjui strongly believes in a free market economy and that the growth of a strong and extensive middle class is the only viable basis for a stable political system and that is the surest way to the alleviation of poverty that is quite endemic in African countries. He also believes that the surest way of creation of employment is the creation of wealth, a classical economist to boot. It is not

surprising, therefore, as the Executive Director of ICDC, one of his major achievements was the creation, through credit and related support arrangements, of a strong middle class of Kenyan African entrepreneurs who then embarked on the road to wealth-creation for their families and, in turn, the nation.

As the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the East Africa Industries, Mr. Wanjui built one of the most formidable industrial establishments in East Africa. During that period he also got involved and directed research on local vegetable oil crops as the bases for the manufacture of vegetable oils. Further, recognizing quite early that the economic progress of the newly independent Country, would only be achieved through liberalization of the economy, and building on what he had started earlier at the ICDC, he vigorously championed the development of African retailers and wholesalers throughout East Africa, thereby making East Africa Industries products virtual household names in the region.

Mr. Wanjui has held a variety of government appointments concerned with industrial development, investment and trade. He has served as an adviser, director and chairman of many company, institutional and professional boards, in both the private and public sectors both in local and international economy.

Some of the Boards he is presently serving on are: the Stanbic Bank, as its Chairman since 1967; Simba Fund Ltd., registered in the London Stock Exchange, since 1995; the Acacia Fund Ltd. since 1996; Commonwealth Africa Investment Fund, registered in the London Stock Exchange, since 1996; Bawan Ltd and its associated companies since 1977; UAP Provincial Insurance Company as its Chairman since 1997; Transparency International since 1994; and the Kenya Institute of Management as its current National Chairman and has served in its Council and also as Chairman of the Board of Fellows.

Mr. Wanjui has in the past served on the Boards of the following institutions and companies: Kenya Association of Manufacturers as its Chairman from 1965 to 1984; the African Project Development Facilities (APDF) from 1985 to 1995; the Institute of Economic Affairs as its Chairman from 1994 to 1996; the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research from 1994 to 1996; Kenya External Trade Authority as its Chairman (KETA) between 1977 and 1987; the Nation Newspapers & Publications Ltd from 1992 to 1996; the International Pepsi Cola Bottlers Investments Ltd. from 1996 to 2001.

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Mr. Wanjui was also a member of Advisory Council of International Finance Corporation between 1986 and 1992 and has been active in civic organizations, including membership of the Rotary Club, Patronage of the Friends of Catholic University of East Africa, and the Chairman of the Elders of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), the political merger that saw His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki become the third President of the Republic of Kenya.

Such then is the wealth of boardroom and institutional management experience and enormous contribution of Mr. Wanjui, which obviously would baffle the ordinary mind on just how he managed to effectively play key roles in so many organizations.

Mr. Wanjui has not just been serving on boardrooms only, but has also actively attended numerous local and international conferences and seminars dealing with commerce, finance and development, where he shared his ideas and wealth of experience. He has compiled some of his speeches in form of a book entitled "*From where I Sit: Views of an African Executive*", published by East African Publishing House in 1986. The book covers very important topical issues of development in Kenya of the 1980's with a common theme that the best route for economic growth and improved standards of living in Africa is through selflessness, dedication, private free enterprise and industrialization. The

forward to the book was written by no other than His Excellency the President Hon. Mwai Kibaki, who then commended the “small book of big ideas” to any one interested in the economics and politics of Africa’s development.

The above can only be Mr. Wanjui’s executive summary of his life-long vocation as an industrialist, institution builder and a boardroom executive who has displayed a rare loyalty to his motherland with deep concerns for her plight. He not only has a vision for Kenya and Africa, but also has also dedicatedly spent his entire working-life in doing something about it. He has argued that with “courage, brotherhood, selflessness and dedication, we can begin to move Kenya toward’s her second plane of independence – that special and practical kind of liberty which is freedom from want”. He has recognised that the most important resource for development is human, hence the need to situate people at the centre of development.

Perhaps His Excellency the President recognized Mr. Wanjui’s deep concern for Kenya and African development and immense wealth of experience and appointed him the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi in June last year.

It is, therefore, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to industrial development, his exemplary professionalism and business leadership, and his enormous contribution in the development of institutional management in Kenya and Africa, that the University of Nairobi is greatly honoured to confer the Degree of **Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) (Honoris Causa)** upon Mr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, M.B.S., F.K.I.M, B.A., M.Sc., the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi.**