

A tribute to Prof. Dominic Were Makawiti by Prof Charles Omwandho

DW Makawiti: A man of distinctions and many firsts:

Student, Professional development, Pan African Scientist, Patriarch of training and Mentorship at the UoN and other Universities in Africa, Professor/Scholar Administrator and more

DW The student:

1972- Division 1 EACE Nyabondo Sec School

1976- Best Chemistry Student award KSTC

1979: First Class Honors B.Sc. Biochemistry (Total madness):

Total madness: Unheard of but DW got it so we surrendered to the possibility that he was some kind of a genius or a mad man so to speak or may be both: I believed it was both

*1984: Ph.D. Kings College School of Medicine, University of London

Professional development

Lecturer 1985 - Full Professor 1998 (13 years): at the age of 43 years. Awesome

1st Pre-Clinical Scientist to become Dean, School of Medicine at UoN. Amazing

Training and Mentorship: Patriarch

Teacher/lecturer: One of our best: Calm, contained, confident and he had the biochemical content to present, slowly with deep sense of impact. We loved his teaching

Professor/Scholar/Administrator: DW stood shoulders above his contemporaries. Did intensive research and moved swiftly up the ranks to become a full Professor at the age of 43 and Chairman of Academic Department of Biochemistry at - 37.

*At 60 years of age, he had been there, done that and come back to the department, i.e. done with Chairman of Academic dept. of Biochemistry, Dean Medicine, DVC Academic Affairs, Vice Chancellor Maseno University and back to dept.

Other Outstanding Distinctions

Numerous awards of distinction

Numerous publications in high impact journals 11/52 page CV

*DW as the First Kenyan to take Kenyan Biochemistry to African Continent through formation of FASBMB – First President

Sept 1996: Kenya hosted through Makawiti the first ever Pan-African Conference on Biochemists and Molecular Biology Union at UNEP, Gigiri and at which the FASBMB was launched with DW as President, Prof. Vincent Titanji of Buea University Cameroun as Vice President, Prof. IQBal Parker of University of Cape Town, South Africa as secretary and Prof. Julia Hasler from University of Harare, Zimbabwe as Treasurer.

***History of Biochemistry department: Drs. Rossini, Galgigna (wch), Sartorelli & Ramasamy: Mbaya 1st Vet Biochemistry chair: Service other courses namely Medicine, Vet medicine, Agriculture, Dentistry, Pharmacy etc.**

DW then took the African Biochemistry Union to the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, IUBMB

1997: He was elected to Council for African Regional Training Center Networks for Basic, Medical and Allied Sciences (AFRET)

Evaluated numerous curriculum vitae of Associate Professors seeking Professorial appointments in many African Universities

MEMBERSHIP TO Professional societies: numerous including African Academy of Sciences, Vice Chair, KNAS among many others

Mentorship of students at the Dept. of Biochemistry

He invested immensely in intellectual discourse and gave his students opportunities to excel in science and medicine all over the world.

Prof. Laila Abubakar: Vice Chancellor Technical University of Mombasa

Prof. Dorrington Ogoyi: CEO National Biosafety Authority

Prof. Charles Omwandho: DVC Academic & Students Affairs Kirinyaga University

Prof. Esther Magiri: DVC A & F, Cooperative University of Kenya

Prof. Edward Nguu: Associate Dean, School of Medicine UoN

Prof. Gabriel Magoma: Director Pan African University of Science and Technology (PAUSTI)-38 member states, AU Commission – equivalent to a VC of an African University

Prof. Elijah Songok: Professor at Kanazawa University - Japan and University of Manitoba - Canada, a senior researcher and Director of graduate studies at KEMRI

Prof. Moses Limo: Previously dean, now Principal, Baringo Campus of Egerton University

Prof. Naomi Maina: Coordinator of Molecular Biology Program at Pan African University of Science and Technology

Prof. Bulimo (Ph.D. at Hertfordshire, UK): Practiced and continues to practice Fine Science at Walter Reed Institute of USA and department of Biochemistry, UoN

Prof. Fred Wamunyokoli (Ph.D., UCT, through DW link to Prof. IQBAL Parker of UCT): Practiced Science at NIH Washington DC: and currently practicing as Director Institute of Open and Distance Learning, JKUAT.

Prof. Jemimah Oduma: Associate Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, UoN

Prof. Daniel Mwangi: previously CoD Biochemistry, and currently the Dean, School of Biomedical Sciences, JKUAT

Prof. Peter Lomo (Ph.D. University of KwaZulu Natal): Practiced at JKUAT, now deceased

Prof. Solomon Mpoke: Practicing as faculty at Kanazawa University in Japan and Immediate former Director KEMRI

Prof. Jimmy Wachira (Ph.D. Kings College of Medicine, UCL): Practiced in South Africa and later on University of Maryland at Baltimore, USA

Dr. Daudi Menge: Post-Doc in Germany, Buffalo New Your, UC Davies, Minnesota, Davies - deceased

Dr. Onyango Onono (Ph.D. Hannover University School of Medicine): currently Asst. Professor, Kentucky, USA

Dr. Victor Obungu (Ph.D. North Carolina Chapel Hill – Beattie): Currently senior Research Scientist, Eli Lilly Indiana, USA

Prof. Edward Omollo Orony: Practiced in one of the Colleges of Pennsylvania State University, USA

Prof. Patrick Okanya: Practicing at Technical University of Kenya

Dr. Washington Ochieng: Practicing at Harvard Medical School, Boston Massachusetts, USA

Dr. Osanjo Oyamo (Ph.D. Nantes, France): Practicing at School Of Pharmacy, UoN

Dr. Edward Muge (Ph.D. Austria): Current CoD, Biochemistry, UoN

Dr. Vincent Ochieng: Currently Practicing at Dept. of Biochemistry, UoN

Dr. Thaimuta: Currently practicing at Dept. of Pathology, UoN

Dr. Chem Githui: Practicing in California, USA

Granted numerous opportunities to many more young Kenyans to study in Europe when he worked as 1. Chairman of Dept. of Biochemistry, Dean School of Medicine and Selection Committee for DAAD:

Common phrase: We are targeting him/her for staff development

DW and the 1989 class of Biochemists – by Fred Wamunyokoli

Feb/March 1989.

He gave a lecture on postgraduate studies and availability of scholarships and how far else you could go.

*You guys, what are you planning to do now that you will be finishing your first degree studies.

Come on you guys, you can come to do Masters at the department of Biochemistry and there are too many scholarships for further studies even after that.

In September of 1989, six graduates of that class enrolled for Masters at the Biochemistry dept. and was ever one of the most successful graduate classes of the department of Biochemistry, UoN.

DW and mentorship of Biochemistry dept. at JKUAT

1st external Examiner, External Examiner and gave DAAD scholarships to three graduates of the pioneer Biochemistry class at JKUAT....

Marvelously Performance and DW henceforth gave 2 DAAD scholarships yearly to graduates of JKUAT and the department grew fairly well thereafter.... Outcome a stable SOM at JKUAT

DW in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture etc.

Current lot of consultants in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Agriculture, Food Science & Tech, Pharmacy, Biochemistry

DW and Young Turks

DW coined a term “Young Turks” for three junior lecturers in namely

1. **Dr. Dorington Ogoyi (Darlington):** Now a Professor at Technical University of Kenya and - CEO National Biosafety Authority
2. **Dr. Edward Nguu:** Now a Professor and Associate Dean School of Medicine and also serving as Pre-clinical Assistant to Deans of Pharmacy, Dentistry and School of Nursing Sciences
3. **Dr. Charles Omwandho:** now a Professor and Currently DVC Academics and students’ Affairs at Kirinyaga University

The trio, performed many departmental duties together, walked and did everything together and were later on named the three musketeers by Prof. Isaac Jumba of Department of Chemistry and the name stuck. Taught us responsibility and this has worked well for us in our professional pursuits and we thank him for that

DW as a personal mentor/Advisor to Charles Omwandho:

1. 1998: Sir Charles, I feel that you are mourning for too long and losing track of your research goals. Your brother is gone and he is not coming back. It would be better to concentrate on giving your best to support his family. Pull yourself together and focus on research to accelerate your progression through the ranks at the University
2. 1998: DW introduced me to a group of scientists namely Prof. Oloowekere a visiting Prof. from Nigeria, Victor Konji and James Kiara and we worked crazy and published----- the 2 am crash which was either Makawiti or Kiara after dropping me at mountain view estate at 2am in the morning
3. 2001: DW gave I, Charles Omwandho an opportunity to go and learn Bioinformatics at Buea University, Cameroun: wherein I took a very hard exam to qualify for a more advanced course at the Institute of Biophysics at Lund University in Sweden and later on an even harder exam to qualify for further training at University of Cape Town in South Africa
4. 2002: Sir Charles: I understand you people are planning to pay a visit to the Vice Chancellor to raise concerns about your salary increment: My advice is that you focus on advancing yourself to senior lecturer through Professor and you will stop comparing your salaries to that of Professors
5. 2010 Deanship at School of Medicine, UoN: When Pressure piled on me to become Dean of Medicine, DW encouraged me saying;

Sir Charles: Go for it because I have broken the ceiling for you guys

6. Back in 1998: Investment Advisor to Prof. Edward Nguu and me: (i) Module II: Don't take this money to Chiromo Club! Let us put it together and invest it somewhere, (ii) the moneys you get from your global travel, and (iii) the little allowances you get as Dean and later on.

7. 2014: Sir Charles: What is in your plans now that you are heading to end of your deanship? You know deanship is a strategic platform for better things, did you apply to position of Deputy Principal at Bondo: No and DW was disappointed: swang his neck and told me not to be comfortable anymore at dean's office.

Just put up applications to as many Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor positions as possible, some will reply, some will not and others will invite you only to make the numbers but you will get the experience to use on another day

Investment, investment, investment where I must have failed him

***Did we ever differ? Yes once on Principal ED & me on one side, DW the other:**

Summary, Humble, contained, intelligent, kind and passionate about mentorship

Thanks Prof. Fred Wamunyokoli and Prof. Gabriel Magoma for their support in preparing parts of this testimony

TRIBUTE TO DW MAKAWIKITI: FRIEND AND MENTOR

DW, our memories are testimony to the times we shared with you. Though we feel the pain of losing you, we celebrate the fruits of your intellect that today glow globally through the many scientists and doctors you mentored.

Gentle you were, smart, kind and humble, you stood shoulders high among your contemporaries. That you had passion for intellect and a burning desire to mentor cannot be overstated.

You invested immensely in our intellectual discourse, gave us opportunities to excel in science and medicine like you did. We travelled the world and mentored many more young scientists and doctors like you mentored us. The crop of doctors you mentored are now serving as consultants in their respective disciplines. The scientists you mentored and many of whom are now Professors have practiced and continue practicing science everywhere except nowhere in the world. Amazingly, we all continue looking up to you.

In your humility, you fitted well with your superiors, peers and amazingly well with your juniors. That was awesome.

Too soon your spirits vanished into the skies making us sob nights on end and even as we prepare this tribute.

Gone we know you are **“DW Markvitis”** as some of your European friends referred to you but your acts of kindness, humility and intellect remain to serve the world for eternity.

Fare thee well DW, Fare thee well our teacher, colleague and mentor, Fare thee well “Ja Plateau”. We will join you when God Almighty calls upon us.

That is my testimony of Prof Dominic Makawiti

Prof. Charles Omwandho