Recognition Award for Your Exemplary Leadership in University Management and Institutional Building

Presented to

Professor Olive Mwihaki Mugenda

Above: Overall award winner for IMPRESSA 2015/2016, Professor Olive Mwihaki Mugenda, Vice Chancellor of Kenyatta University receiving her award from Professor Levi Nyagura

1. Family Background.
   Prof Olive Mwihaki Mugenda was born in Kiambu County in Kenya and is married to Prof. Abel Mugenda and they have four children; two daughters, Angela and Linda and two sons, Gitau and Nyoike.

2. Academic and professional background
   Prof. Mugenda is the Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University, the fastest growing university in East Africa. She is a Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences of Kenyatta University. She
earned a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from Iowa State University USA in 1988; an MBA from the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) in 2007; an MSC in Family and Consumer Sciences from Iowa State University in 1983; and a First Class Honours Bachelor of Education from the University of Nairobi, Kenya in 1979. Prof. Mugenda has over 30 years of experience in teaching at Kenyatta University.

Prof. Mugenda made history in April 2006 for being the first woman Vice Chancellor of a public university in East Africa to be appointed competitively. Before becoming Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University, Prof. Mugenda served in various leadership positions at the same university including Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Finance, Planning & Development from 2002 to 2006; Dean, School of Applied and Human Sciences from 1999 to 2002; Director, International Programs and Linkages Board (1998-1999) and Chairperson of the Department of Family and Consumer Studies (1996 to1998).

3. Recognitions and Awards
Her exceptional leadership qualities have been recognized globally and regionally. She is currently the Chairperson of the Association of Commonwealth Universities; the Vice-President of the International Association of Universities (IAU); a Non-Executive Director of Nation Media Group and the Chairperson of the Kenya Education Staff Institute Council.

Due to her outstanding and distinguished service, Prof. Mugenda was conferred the Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear (CBS) in 2011 and the Elder of the Order of the Burning Spear (EBS) in 2006 by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya Hon Mwai Kibaki. In 2014, she received the prestigious Ernst and Young Lifetime Achievement Award and the Honorary Fellow award of the Kenya Institute of Management. Further, Prof. Mugenda received Exemplary Service Awards of Kenyatta University in 2002 and 2010.

4. Scholarship
Prof. Mugenda is an active scholar of extraordinary insight who has effectively balanced university leadership and scholarly activity. Two of her widely acclaimed books; Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Research Methods Dictionary, are used extensively as reference books by scholars world-wide.
5. **Transformative leadership**

Due to her outstanding transformative leadership skills, Prof Mugenda has transformed Kenyatta University into one of the fastest growing and leading universities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Her leadership is anchored on the University’s Strategic Plan which she developed and whose vision is “To be a dynamic, inclusive and globally competitive center of excellence in teaching, learning, research and service to humanity” with a focus on Access, equity, quality, relevance and science, technology and innovation (STI).

5.1. **Equitable access**

On equitable access to University education, the university has experienced tremendous growth and expansion under her leadership with the number of campuses increased from three (3) to nine (9); schools/faculties from 6 to 15 and student population from 15,000 to 71,000. Some of the new schools include the School of Agriculture and Enterprise Development, School of Engineering and Technology, School of Hospitality and Tourism, School of Health Sciences, the Digital School of Virtual and Open Learning, and School of Creative Arts, Film and Media Studies. Further, she has been at the forefront in implementing the Affirmative Action for students in disadvantaged regions, Orphaned and Vulnerable Students (OVS), those with special needs and gender mainstreaming.

5.2 **Quality and Relevance**

Due to her resolve and great commitment to offer quality and relevant university education, Prof Mugenda put in place Quality Management Systems that ensures that the University meets the world standards. As a result, the University has attained ISO certification and has consistently been among the best two performing State Corporations in Performance Based Ranking in Kenya. Further, the University’s webometrics ranking improved from out of rank in 2006 (top 12,000) to position 1,987 globally, 22 continentally and 2 in Kenya in 2015.

5.3. **Physical Facilities and Infrastructure**

In her bid to improve service delivery, Prof Mugenda has enabled unprecedented growth and expansion of physical infrastructure and facilities. The office, library, teaching, laboratory and hostel spaces have increased significantly. For example, she spearheaded the construction of the Post Modern 6,000 seater and fully digitized Library, the largest library in East and Central Africa which was completed 2012. In addition, through her strategic leadership, the University has commenced the construction of a state-of-the-art 600 bed Teaching, Research and Referral Hospital. This will be the first referral hospital in East and Central Africa to be owned by a university. Further, she led her team in making a case to Government for the establishment of the first public Children’s Hospital not only in Kenya but also in the region with a 300 bed capacity and whose construction has commenced. The main focus of these hospitals is to provide an efficient, integrated and high quality affordable health care system.
Connectivity has also increased tremendously, the bandwidth is currently at 440Mbs and the university is currently rolling out wireless internet connection wifi – edurom for use by both students and staff.

5.4 Strengthening Research, Science, Technology and Innovation
Prof Mugenda has made significant efforts to strengthen research and STI at the University; she created the Division of Research, Innovation and Outreach in 2013 headed by a Deputy Vice Chancellor. In 2009, she established the Vice-Chancellor’s Research Grant and commits Kshs. 20 million per year which is accessed competitively. She also spearheaded the development of the first ever, University Research Policy in 2007, established a Grant writing and management unit, Center for Intellectual Property Rights and the University Ethics Review Board, among others.

Further in 2011, she established the Chandaria Business Innovation and Incubation Centre (CBIIC) to identify and nurture new and innovative ideas from Kenyatta University students, staff and other Kenyans in need of support. The Centre has over 40 business ideas under incubation in various disciplines including Agribusiness, bio and nano technology, energy, water and sanitation, human health and nutrition, fine and performing arts and space science. The Innovation centre is now transforming the lives of many youth in the country and has been nominated as the third most promising innovative centre globally. An incubatee from the Center, Jacob Rugano won the First Prize in the Youth Category during the COMESA summit held in March 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

5.5 Enriching Students’ Learning Experience
Prof Mugenda has initiated innovative programs that are aimed at enriching the experience of both undergraduates and postgraduate students. She initiated the Intra-Africa Semester Abroad Exchange Program in partnership with 10 universities in Eastern, Western and Southern Africa whose aim is to provide opportunities to undergraduate students to experience diverse academic and social environments and to strengthen the East African Community and Continental cooperation.

5.6 Enhancing student Employability
In April 2011, Prof. Mugenda initiated a fully sponsored Growing Leaders Program to train final year undergraduate students on transformational leadership skills and are issued with a “Certificate in Leadership and Mentorship” at the end of the three months training. Since inception, over 10,000 students have benefited from the program.

Further in 2014, she initiated Student Work Induction Program (SWIP) which is aimed at inculcating work experience for undergraduate students in a real work environment and is
designed to enable students alternate study and work during their last 2 to 3 years of their undergraduate studies. To date over 100 have benefitted from the initiative.

5.7 Hosting regional training hubs

Through the strategic leadership of Prof. Mugenda, Kenyatta University won the bids to host both the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) regional hub for East Africa and the African Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL). The honor to host the two prestigious hubs is a testimony to Kenyatta University’s regional competitiveness. YALI which was officially opened by His Excellence the President of the United States of America, Mr Barack Obama on 26th July 2015 during his recent visit to Kenya is an initiative aimed at supporting young African leaders to spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance and enhance peace and security across Africa.

ACTIL, a brainchild of the UN Women, which serves the East, South and Horn of Africa was officially inaugurated in February 2014 at Kenyatta University. ACTIL’s vision is to raise a critical mass of transformational leaders in politics, business, government and society as well as create a network of female and male policy makers that are committed to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in all spheres and prepare African leaders to influence development, political and economic discourse in the global level. To date several women and youth leaders from seven African countries have been trained at ACTIL.

5.8 Staff Capacity Development and Upward Mobility

Understanding that the strength of the university depends on the quality of its human resource, Prof. Mugenda has created and implemented policies and programs for attracting and retaining qualified and committed staff and has also embarked on training & retooling the existing staff. Some of these include; establishment of the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Research Training Unit; and investing in training of Tutorial Fellows and Assistant Lecturers. Further, Prof. Mugenda initiated a very effective strategy aimed at enhancing the completion rate of postgraduate students; PhD within three years and MSc within 2 years. Prof. Mugenda has also passionately championed gender parity in all academic programs and leadership.
5.9. Enhancing Public Private Partnership

Prof. Mugenda’s ability to forge partnerships with private and public firms is outstanding. In June 2015, Prof Mugenda spearheaded the construction of 10,000 hostels to cater for both undergraduate and post graduate students including married students through a Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) partnership with Africa Integras. The university therefore became the pioneer institution to actualize the 2013 Public-Private Partnership Act in Kenya.

In Conclusion

Prof. Mugenda’s strategic and innovative approach to leadership has led to the creation of growth strategies, new product categories, services and models that have significantly impacted higher education to generate significant new value for clients and the society. All this has led to the development of a world class institution, an inspired workforce and a transformed student body. Delegates from many universities in the continent have made benchmarking visits to the University for the last couple of years.

RUFORUM today recognizes the outstanding contribution of Professor Olive Mwihami Mugenda to Africa’s development; she is a role model for institutional transformation and for creating an African business model university with development relevance. She is the overall winner of the 2015 IMPRESSA competition for Excellence in University leadership and Management, and Capacity Development.

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