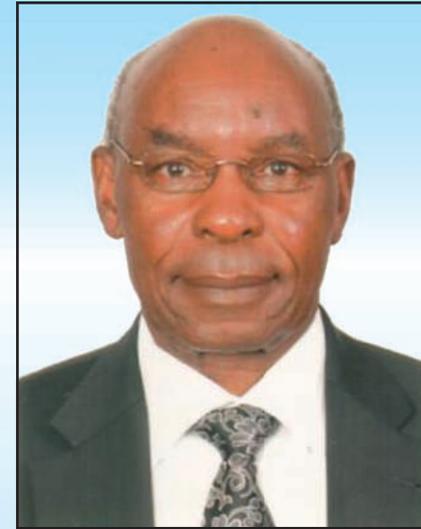




**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

CITATION ON



**DR. SAMUEL KAMAU MACHARIA**

ON HIS CONFERMENT OF  
THE DEGREE OF  
**DOCTOR OF LETTERS**  
*(HONORIS CAUSA)*

OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2014**



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## **DR. SAMUEL KAMAU MACHARIA**

### **His Early Childhood and Adolescence Experiences**

Dr. Samuel Kamau Macharia was born in 1942 in Ndakaini Village, Murang'a County. He was born to a humble background couple who worked as squatters on settler plantations in Sabatia. He was born amongst three sisters and was the second born in the family. He lost his mother at the tender age of five. The family moved to Arusha in search of livelihood but the father was unable to secure any employment. Subsequently, Dr. Macharia started keeping company of Maasai boys, herding their family herds and would as a result traverse great distances looking for pasture alongside the Maasai boys, hence he would be away for extended periods of time.

In 1952 the colonial government declared a State of Emergency following which all Kikuyu were forcefully repatriated to Central Kenya. Dr. Macharia was away herding livestock with the Maasai boys when the colonial soldiers raided Ngaramtoni and rounded up all the Kikuyu. When he came back "home" to Arusha

he found a smoldering heap of rubble where the family hut once stood. In subsequent days, he was able to piece together what had happened but had no resources to help him go back to Kenya. He therefore went back to the bush with his Maasai friends as they continued herding their livestock, traversing long distances for two years until one day, unknowingly, they reached Thika town. Macharia realized then that he was near home and thus remained behind in the town, hoping to find his way back to Ndakaini, his ancestral home. For months he lived like a chokora (street boy) scavenging for food from left-overs in the market place and spending nights on the floor in a local “restaurant”. One day a man he faintly remembered came to eat at the restaurant. As they talked, Macharia realized that this man was a friend of the family of another man called Ephraim Mutaki, a businessman. Mr. Mutaki in turn took Macharia back home where he was reunited with his family.

## **Primary School Education**

In 1954 Dr. Macharia went to school and was enrolled in standard one at Ndakaini Primary School. He was thereafter admitted to Gituru Intermediate School where he sat the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE) in 1958.

He was later on offered a job as an untrained primary school teacher (then called UT) at Makomboki Primary School, where he taught for a year before being selected to join Kahuhia Teachers Training College for a two-year training course which would qualify him to become a P3 teacher. On completion of the course, he was posted to Gituru Primary School in 1961.

## **The Treacherous Journey to the United States of America**

He applied for the famous scholarships then referred to as “J.F. Kennedy-Tom Mboya student airlifts” of 1959-61 to USA and was accepted for the 1962 group. But the family could not raise the Ksh.4, 000 required for the air ticket. He later heard about an Indian travel agent who was ready

to help him travel to America at a cost of Ksh.1, 200, the sum the family had managed to raise. The journey would however prove to be long and hazardous, travelling through Kampala, Uganda-River Nile in Sudan-Juba by bus. The perilous 45-day trip across the Sahara was an experience Dr. Macharia will never forget. They ate and slept in the bus, never moving out except to answer to calls of nature. They finally arrived at Benghazi, a coastal port town on the northern tip of Libya. From there, the rest of the journey was relatively easier.

Unfortunately, on arrival in Seattle, USA, he found no one to meet him, forcing him to spend a week at the bus station, begging for food from strangers as he tried to trace the whereabouts of the foster-family that was to host him during his stay in the United States. Unknown to him, the couple had divorced. A church minister then heard about his plight and rescued him, subsequent to which, after an appeal was made in the local church, a childless couple known as the Andertons volunteered to host him at their home for the duration of his education in the United States.

## **High School and University Education**

Once his accommodation was sorted out, Dr. Macharia enrolled at Seattle Technical College where he completed his high school education in two years. Although the Andertons accommodated him throughout this period, Dr. Macharia had to raise his own tuition fees and pay for other expenses as well, in addition to helping to finance the education of his younger siblings back in Kenya. He accomplished this by taking night jobs during the semester and working on two or three jobs concurrently, during the summer period. The jobs were mostly manual labour, such as mopping floors at Sears Department Stores, cleaning offices, mowing lawns in the campus, etc.

Following his high school education, he joined the Seattle Pacific University for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree course in political science. Thereafter he registered for part-time classes in accounts at the University of Washington where he later enrolled for a degree programme. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Accounting three years later. Thereafter, he successfully completed a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Accounting/Finance

and a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Accounting. He later enrolled for certification to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) holder.

### **Public Sector Contribution**

He came back to Kenya in 1969 and got a job in the Ministry of Local Government, as a Provincial Local Government Finance Officer (Supernumerary). He later worked with ICDC (Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation) and Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE). While at the KIE, Dr. Macharia was involved in implementation of President Kenyatta's Africanization policy.

Thus in 1973 he was appointed to head a taskforce whose broad term of reference was to do a thorough audit of the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC), with the aim of eventually liquidating it. The ADC was then a government parastatal organization, which had been established in 1965, through an Act of Parliament (Cap 346), to facilitate a land transfer programme from "European" settlers to indigenous Kenyans, following independence. After one year, the team filed their report with Head of

Civil Service and Secretary to the Cabinet, stating that ADC could be saved. Dr. Macharia was then transferred to the ADC as Financial Controller in January 1974 and tasked with implementation of the team's report. Working together with the ADC's general manager, the late Ben Gakonyo, they were able to successfully turn around the Corporation. Thus, his contribution to the agricultural sector in this country and, in effect, indigenization of the economy deserves acknowledging.

### **Private Sector Participation**

Dr. Macharia left ADC in 1979, to run Madhupaper, a tissue production company he had started three years earlier. The company grew rapidly and by 1985 had over 300 employees and "Rosy", its tissue paper brand, was and still is a household name in East Africa. Madhupaper was the only local manufacturer of tissue paper in Kenya and, in just a few years, had saved the country millions of shillings in foreign exchange previously spent on imported tissue paper. The company had created hundred jobs in waste paper collection, in addition to supporting many suppliers in their business development.

Madhupaper negotiated a one billion shilling syndicated loan to finance the project from a consortium of financiers, led by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the private sector arm of the World Bank. However, the political dispensation characterizing that decade thwarted the otherwise strategic business whose contributions to the Kenyan economy would have been enormous.

### **Community Service and Cultural Heritage Perpetuation**

Dr. Macharia stands tall as a media mogul who owns the biggest radio and television network in Kenya. Citizen radio network has a combined listener audience estimated at 80 per cent of all Kenyans. This is far ahead of the next privately-owned radio station in Kenya. Citizen television commands 55% of the market share in Kenya. The radio stations associated with Dr. Macharia include: Citizen FM, a Swahili station, which commands an audience equivalent to 43 per cent of Kenya; Ramogi FM; Mulembe FM; Changei FM; Egesa FM; Inooro FM; Musyi FM; Muga FM; Wimwaro FM; Bahari FM; among others, hence collectively accounting for enormous magnitude of

community knowledge creation, dissemination, sharing and perpetuation of cultural heritage. The broadcasting network with nationwide access has greatly improved the democratic space in the country.

### **Service to University of Nairobi**

Dr. Macharia has greatly promoted the vision and mission of the University of Nairobi towards enhancement of its institutional visibility and public image over the last decade, largely by providing free live coverage of its graduation ceremonies and other events. This magnanimity of service provision saves the University millions of Shillings.

As a former member of the University of Nairobi Council and chair of University's Procurement Committee, he spearheaded the streamlining of the University procurement systems, saving the Institution millions of shillings. This is in addition to his support for transformative leadership at the institution, which saw the University of Nairobi adopt and internalize the organizationally effective culture or management practice of doing business from 7.00 am in the morning.

## **Dr Macharia's Family**

Dr Macharia is a family man. He is married and blessed with six children, two girls and four boys who are all university graduates. It is a family that learnt to stay together closely through thick and thin as they went through livelihood experiences and challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is in recognition of his philanthropy and charitable work that Senate and Council have decided to confer on Dr. Samuel Kamau Macharia the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Madam Chancellor, I am greatly privileged to request you to confer the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) of the University of Nairobi, to Dr. Macharia.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
DR. SAMUEL KAMAU MACHARIA**



