

district headquarters on Thursday. The event ended prematurely as police opened teargas following a confrontation between two candidates from Tsekululu sub-county who arrived to take their oaths, as each asserted they were the rightful elected individual with both possessing declaration forms

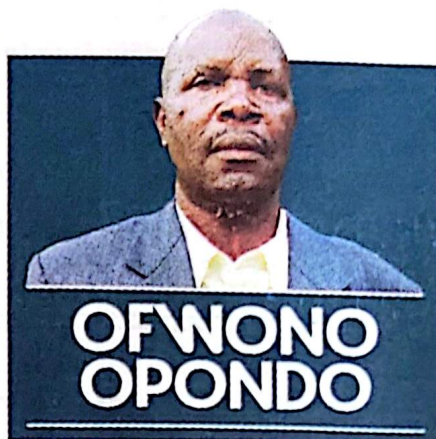


TRIBUTE TO OUSTED MPS KATUNTU, SSEMUJJU, SSEKIKUBO AND MPUUGA

When Speaker Anita Annet Among's chips have come down, so fast and in dramatic, spectacular ways, a consolation to her and friends becomes natural as events unfold. But today, the tribute goes to former MPs, thrown out of Parliament by their voters. Many will miss Abdu Katuntu, Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda, Theodore Ssekikubo, Mathias Mpuuga, Medard Sseggon, and the very raucous Barnabas Tinkasimiire on the House floor.

Jonathan Odur was a latter-day man, but caught up so fast, and many will miss his jocular approach to tackling issues. Katuntu, with 25 years under his belt, beaten by Felix Okot Ogong at 30, also has the singular record of serving longest on the legal and parliamentary affairs committee. He was the longest on the parliamentary rules committee, and chaired more committees of Parliament than any other MP since Legislative Council in 1958.

In my late hours, I had hoped to meet them on the Parliament floor and tango, but voters thought otherwise. Guys, good you take a well-deserved rest. Ssemujju has been a thorn, not entirely a bad one, if you consider the evident laxity and impunity with which some NRM leaders handle serious national issues. On the surface, he looks sly, but inside is steel, an avid researcher, writer, and multimedia debater, hard to fault. We cross-pollinated in media and politics, although he is younger. Ssekikubo and Tinkasimiire joined Parliament together in 2001 and have been a no-holds-



barred political guns, who fired directly at President Yoweri Museveni, and take down anyone they see as obstructing them. Ssekikubo, soft-spoken but could shriek, was an insistent fellow, almost nagging to the point of annoyance, even on things one considers very petty. Tinkasimiire, in particular, was a street fighter, and usually spoke in staccato and a heavy Rukiga accent.

Kahinda Otafiire and Jim Muhwezi have been in there since January 29, 1986, when they were sworn in as NRM historical members, having been part of the bush war effort that brought NRM to state power. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga has been a political doyen since February 1989, when the National Resistance Council was expanded, and district women's representation was introduced as a special affirmative action. Otafiire, Muhwezi and Kadaga have all just won new terms to stretch their tenure in Parliament and the national political scene. Mpuuga and Sseggon, although from a peasant stock, cultivated through

the school system to Buganda's cultural tradition and institutions, have made to be of letters and good English, airs of a pedigree of aristocracy and nobility in English. Almost snobs and condescending, but good and respectful. Both now exude the flair of a pedigree of aristocracy and nobility. But for ambition, they joined bad company in the National Unity Platform (NUP) political party, where they were ill-fitting, and so got thrown under the bus. And Mohammed Muwanga Kivumbi, the lead mischief maker in NUP, who went around declaring his colleague's constituencies 'vacant', himself suffered poetic justice. He failed to defend his own MP seat, Butambala County, and is now squatting in a prison cell for alleged incitement of political violence.

Nathan Nandala Mafabi is another MP to miss in the 12th Parliament because he gambled his ambition to run for president of Uganda on a ticket that has been rotting away from its roots to the leaves.

But perhaps, having been there since 2001, with nothing visible in Budadiri West, it was a clever way to vacate the constituency without taking direct blame. No doubt, a man who understood figures, finance, and the economy. In his heyday in the opposition, he was mean-spirited, though jovial as well. Nandala engineered many walk-outs on President Museveni during the State of the Nation address and national budget readings. We have come so and now look forward to meeting a much depressed and compliant, but buoyant, Norbert Mao.