

Johnson Okwir-Okulo demystified mathematics

BY MATHIAS MAZINGA

Johnson Okwir-Okulo, the former deputy headteacher of Dr Obote College, Boroboro, was a mathematics wizard.

His former students still recall with amazement his unique teaching skills, which simplified the arguably tough subject, which has continued to bully so many students.

Engineer Richard Cong, an alumnus of Dr Obote College, spoke highly of his former teacher.

"Our respected mentor, Okwir-Okulo, was a seasoned teacher of mathematics. He demystified the subject so much that even the slow learners would pick up. He used the slow approach method for the slow learners and the short-cut method for the fast learners. His modus operandi gave us much confidence, which is why today, many of us are engineers, medical doctors, mathematicians and so forth." Cong also praised Okwir's passion for soccer.

But evidently, no one could tell Okwir-Okulo's attributes better than Corn Amai, his childhood friend.

"I knew Johnston since 1954. I studied with him right from P1 at Dokolo PS. We have shared good and challenging experiences together. Surprisingly, our spouses also died in the same year.

"After losing our spouses, we resolved not to remarry.

We thought that if we remarried, our new spouses would harass our children and subsequently disorganise our families. We then laid strategies to make it impossible for relatives and friends to pressurise us to remarry. We would speak to each other on phone every night, from around 1:00am to 3:00am about the strategies.

One preventive measure we agreed on was to choose elderly people like Alice Oder and Henry Makmot to be our flower girl and pageboy, in case one succumbed to the pressure of relatives. We knew that none of them would allow and the wedding would still not take place."

Amai later described Okwir-Okulo as a distinguished, dedicated and polished educationist, who also led a successful and careful life.

"Johnston was committed to whatever he did. He could not be bent or battled under pressure. His yes meant yes and his no meant no. He always insisted on honesty and perfection."

The head of the Inomo clan of the Langi, Colonel Dan Opito Odwee, also had great remarks for Okwir-Okulo. "He married our granddaughter, Betty Etap Okwir, in 1974. It was because of his love and support that Betty ably rose to the high political positions of deputy minister of youth, culture and sports, and later, deputy



**JOHNSTON OKWIR-OKULO
FROM NOVEMBER 24, 1941
TO OCTOBER 27, 2017**

speaker of Parliament.

When our granddaughter died in 2002, he remained with his mother-in-law, despite all the respective cultural taboos. As the Awitong (clan leader) of the Ngurauc clan, he worked a lot to organise the clan."

Engineer Bright Okuk-

Okwera (a son) said:

"Baba had a big heart that accommodated so many people. Further to his six biological children, he had about 300 other children that grew up at his home. He was a happy man, who would smile even when he is annoyed."