

Tribute

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Friends mourn Mak 'Uncle Ekudu'

The former Dean of Students is remembered as a God-fearing mentor to several students at the university.

BY MOSES TALEMWA

Those who studied at Makerere University up to 2010 will remember an elderly and widely loved man who often stepped in to stop student grievances from turning into strikes and other problems.

He was usually found near the University Hall flats, but his name was well known across the campus community - John Michaels Ekudu-Adoku or simply as Uncle John or Mr Ekudu as students variously called him.

So, when news of his death at the age of 76 years started streaming in on Friday, many remembered him with fondness and turned up for his funeral service at Kampala Baptist Church in Nakulabye, Kampala. The man best known as the Dean of Students at Makerere, had succumbed to complications brought on by diabetes and kidney disease, last week.

During a funeral service, many speakers acknowledged his role as a mentor to many students, owing to his stature as a disciplined and compassionate man devoted to both God and humanity. He indeed became one of the most influential students' administrators at



FAMILY

Ekudu-Adoku is survived by his wife Grace Ekudu-Adoku, four children and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The late John Michaels Ekudu-Adoku. PHOTO/ COURTESY OF THE LATE EKUDU-ADOKU'S FAMILY

Makerere University, earning the admiration of many as a caring but firm disciplinarian.

Ekudu-Adoku's strong Christian faith was rooted in his upbringing. Born in 1950 to the late Rev Yosamu Adoku and Jovina Apajo Adoku in Alwa Sub-county in present day Kaberamaido District, he was raised in a firm Anglican family.

He joined Makerere University in the early 1970s as a student, graduating with a degree in Botany and Zoology in 1974. He later obtained a post graduate diploma in Education, which some say enabled him to be more influential in teaching young people at the university.

Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, who worked with Ekudu for more than 20 years, said Ekudu-Adoku had lived a long and honourable life and was a strong pillar in the lives of students at Makerere University.

"We mourn the loss of a colleague and mentor whose counsel and dedication to this university went beyond duty; his legacy will remain an enduring part of our community," he said.

Former Uganda Christian University vice chancellor John Senyonyi remembered meeting Ekudu in 1978, when he joined Makerere University as a lecturer.

"I was a graduate student, having arrived at Makerere after completing my Master's degree in Mathematics, but he related to us as a brother in Christ, not as an expert," he recalled. "He excelled as a warden at Northcote Hall (now known as Nsibirwa Hall) and it was

not surprising that he was elevated to a dean of all students in 1995."

One of those who benefited from Ekudu-Adoku's mentorship and later became friends with him was Supreme Court Justice Mike Chibita. He said Ekudu-Adoku, who was a pastor in the Kampala Baptist Church, defined being Baptist as one who was married to only one wife and did not partake of any alcohol, including wine.

"He used to tell us that it is easier to join Heaven than to be a Baptist, which also required one to be written in a book, kept by the pastor," Justice Chibita said.

Makerere University's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Prof Sarah Ssali, recalled a story from 2000 when a wave of student deaths shook the campus. She said a group of frustrated students bought a coffin and took it to his home to challenge him to confront the situation.

"In his usual style, Uncle Ekudu accepted the challenge in good faith and did his best to restore order, so we were glad," she recalled. "We in Makerere shall miss him and we commit him to God's grace."

Ekudu-Adoku retired from Makerere University in 2010 and spent his later years preaching at Kampala Baptist Church and doing farming. In his final years, he became frail as he battled diabetes and kidney disease. He died on Friday at a hospital in Kampala.

His body has been taken to Kaberamaido District, where he will be buried today.