



MURANG 'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Dr. (H.C.) Charles Wanyoike Rubia

on

Conferment upon him of the
Honorary Degree of

Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.)

by

Murang'a University of Technology on

10th August, 2018



MURANG 'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

VISION

A leading university in technological innovation, training and research for socio-economic development

MISSION

To advance knowledge and learning in science and technology through teaching, learning, consultancy, research and innovation for socio-economic development

CITATION
EARLY LIFE, EDUCATION, AND DISTINGUISHED
CONTRIBUTION IN PUBLIC, CORPORATE
AND POLITICAL ARENA
DR. (H.C.) CHARLES WANYOIKE RUBIA, EBS, EGH

Hon. Dr. Charles Wanyoike Rubia is one of the most influential makers of the history of modern Kenya. He served as a Cabinet Minister, the First African Mayor of the City of Nairobi, an “Extra-ordinary Diplomat,” a member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency in Nairobi and a one time very successful businessman within Nairobi and its environs.

Hon. Dr. Rubia was born in Maria-ini sub-location, Location 5, Kandara Division of Murang’a County in the Republic (then colony) of Kenya in 1923 being the first born child of Mzee Rubia Mbutia and Mama Dorcas Nduta. He attended various schools in Murang’a before proceeding to the prestigious Alliance High School in 1941, graduating in 1942. He was admitted to the East African Posts and Telegraphics Training School in Tanzania, where he received an intensive training in International Telegraphic Services, banking, management and operational systems of Postal Services in East Africa. After graduating from this school in 1945, he served the East African Posts and Telecommunications Corporation rising to one of the pioneer Africans to be appointed Post Master. In 1959, Dr. Rubia received a British Council grant to study the British system of the Local Government in the United Kingdom. During his training, he was attached to the Greater London Council and the Exeter and Cardiff Councils. For an opportunity to understand the workings of the Central Government and Local Authorities, he was attached to the Ministry of Local Government at the Ministry’s headquarters at The Whitehall in London.

Between 1946 and 1960, Hon. Rubia did a lot of studies by enrolling for professional training in colleges within Nairobi, furthering his studies in Book-keeping and Accounting, finally sitting and passing examinations set by the London Chamber of Commerce.

He also undertook and graduated with a Diploma in Economics, Business and Commerce by the Bennett College, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

Charles, as he was fondly referred to by his peers, was now ready for his next ground breaking job. In 1962, he became the first African Mayor of the City of Nairobi at a time when Kenya was transiting from colonial rule to self-government. He served as the Mayor of the City of Nairobi until 1967.

In 1962, as the Mayor of Nairobi, he was instrumental and took part in a very crucial convention dubbed, "The Kenya we Want." This convention, which was an initiative of leading business, political and professional leaders of the time, was funded by the private sector and their friends. It was intended to design and develop strategies and roadmaps to propel Kenya into a great country in Africa and the world.

As the Mayor of Nairobi, Hon. Rubia was one of the highest ranking diplomats in an "extra-ordinary capacity." He routinely hosted civic receptions at City Hall, Nairobi for ambassadors who presented their credentials to the new President of the Republic of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. He was awarded the "Honorary Freedom of the City of Nairobi" because of his exemplary work as the Mayor of Nairobi. For this, he won acclaim from the Government of the First Prime Minister of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta.

In 1963, Hon. Rubia was invited to the United States of America under the State Department's Exchange Visitor/Foreign Leaders Programme where he greatly publicized the City of Nairobi and Kenya. He also won recognition from the Government of the first Prime Minister of Kenya for his "Best Diplomatic Service." Hon. Rubia represented Kenya on the Africanization Commission of the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO).

He served on the first Board of Directors in the East African Development Bank, representing the Republic of Kenya. In May 1963, Hon. Rubia was in a very strong delegation of the Government

of Kenya to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa held in Khartoum, Sudan to offer the City of Nairobi as the First Seat of the Proposed African Development Bank (ADB).

In the corporate world, Hon. Rubia also excelled, serving on many boards of State corporations and private commercial and industrial companies. In the voluntary/charitable organizations, Hon. Rubia was closely associated with the Kenya Red Cross activities. In 1963, immediately after independence, it was mandatory that the Society be established as a National Society and by an Act of Parliament. In 1965, the Kenya Red Cross Society was registered as such and Hon. Rubia was appointed the first Governor, a position he held for a long time. In 2007, he was awarded a Memento for his long and exemplary service of about 45 years to the Society.

Dr. Rubia was also closely associated and involved with many other community organizations such as the Kenya Council of Youth Centres under which Starehe Boys' Centre was established. He served as the Vice Chairman of this organization for many years. He also served in the Councils of the Child Welfare Society of Kenya, the Kenya Society for the Deaf and many other societies.

In May, 1970, Hon. Rubia with several other Murang'a people in Nairobi conceived the idea of a project in Murang'a which in addition to bringing swift development in the District, would act as a uniting factor of the people. The initial idea was that of a hospital but after some more thoughts, it was resolved to develop the first College of Technology in Kenya. It was also decided that in order not to politicize the project, the Office of the Chairman should be held by a non politician; hence the Late Dr. B. M. Gecaga of BAT Kenya Limited was appointed the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Murang'a College of Technology. Amb. Solomon W. Karanja of the University of Nairobi was appointed the Secretary while the Late John Michuki of the Kenya Commercial Bank then was appointed the Treasurer. Because of his influence in the City of Nairobi, his evident ability in mobilizing people and the very heavy responsibility of raising enough funds for the development of the proposed Murang'a College of Technology, Hon. Rubia was appointed Chairman of the National Fund Raising Committee.

Hon. Maina Wanjigi was appointed Chairman of the Project Committee, the Late Hon. Dr. Gikonyo Kiano was appointed Chairman of the Education Committee and the Late Hon. Bildad Kaggia was appointed Chairman of the Historic and Cultural Research Committee. Another 18 people from Murang'a including business people, politicians and civil servants were appointed Trustees of the Murang'a Harambee Development Fund, registered as a Self-Help Charitable Organization, charged with the mandate of developing Murang'a College of Technology.

Hon. Rubia hosted many more meetings in Nairobi and attended other meetings all over the country, mobilizing Murang'a people and their friends to raise funds for the development of Murang'a College of Technology. On 4th December, 1971, President Kenyatta officiated at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony at the proposed college site in Murang'a Town. The National Fund Raising Committee chaired by Hon. Rubia, with the combined efforts of the other sub-committees all over the Republic, managed to raise the highest amount ever raised at any other harambee in the Republic of Kenya at that time, amounting to over One Million and Three Hundred Thousand Kenya Shillings. The Late Dr. Gecaga called it "an astronomical sum never raised anywhere else in Kenya."

It is worth noting that at a committee meeting of the Fund held in February, 1973, the Trustees floated the idea of developing the College into a University. On another note, Hon. Rubia's achievements in the Local Government propelled him for higher responsibilities at the National level. He served as a Member of Parliament for Starehe Constituency in Nairobi from 1969 to 1988; for an uninterrupted four terms of twenty years. He first served as an Assistant Minister in President Kenyatta's Government from 1969 to 1974. He was appointed Minister in various government ministries under President Moi. These included Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Works, Housing and Planning. He was dropped from the Cabinet in 1988 when he lost his parliamentary seat in the then infamous Mlolongo voting system.

Dr. Rubia's landmark moment was during the height of the struggle for multi-party democracy, when in 1990 he teamed up with the late Hon. Kenneth Matiba to demand for the introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya.

The Government then was not ready for such talk. When the duo called for a mass rally at Kamukunji grounds in Nairobi on 7th July, 1990, they were arrested and detained on 4th July, 1990 for a period of one year. Because of the detention, Dr. Rubia suffered ill-health. His entire family paid heavily for his political stand. He lost several company directorships and his business empire crumbled.

In 2015, after several meetings by the people from Murang'a in Nairobi and elsewhere, it was resolved that in view of the political situation in the County, there was need for the formation of a Council of Elders who would advocate for peace and reconciliation within the County and the Republic of Kenya. The Council of Eminent Persons of Murang'a was thus formed (now registered as a company) with Hon. Rubia as the Chairman. The other members of the Council are Dr. Nyamu-Njoka as Secretary, Dr. Peter K. Munga as Coordinator, Hon. Maina Wanjigi, Bishop Gideon Githiga, Amb. Solomon Karanja, Mr. Joe Kibe, Mrs. Jane Kiano and Mrs. Muthoni Likimani. For his contributions, Dr. Rubia was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the United Graduate College and Seminary of North Carolina, USA on 22nd January, 2016.

We rejoice today because of the important role played by Hon. Rubia and other Kenyans in opening up democratic space that we currently enjoy. We also rejoice today because of his contribution towards the initiation and development of Murang'a University of Technology, later elevated to Murang'a University of Technology.

In recognition of his talent as an organizer and mover of human and material resources, and his specific contributions to humanity and society for the benefit of the country, the continent and the world, Murang'a University of Technology Council, Senate and Management is highly privileged and honored to present Dr. Charles Wanyoike Rubia for the conferment of the **Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters (*Honoris Causa*)**, with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities there unto attached to this degree.

Dr. Charles Wanyoike Rubia, EBS, EGH