100yrs of Bishop Tucker Building
UGAND UNIVER A Center of Exc
2,000 One student to reconstruction. First total in-person
Some graduands who picked up caps and gowns degrees in different disciplines. Story on Page 2.
How blended lea

ALUMS MAKING A MARK

Ex-Vice Chancellors on UCU's past, future



2,000 GRADUATE

- One student to receive degree award posthumously
- First total in-person ceremony since outbreak of Covid-19



Some graduands who picked up caps and gowns ahead of the celebration pose at UCU. The July 2022 graduates receive diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees in different disciplines. Story on Page 2.

How blended learning helped UCU students

Sh520m in dental equipment arrives

UCU Main campus map



Public lecture focuses on local health systems

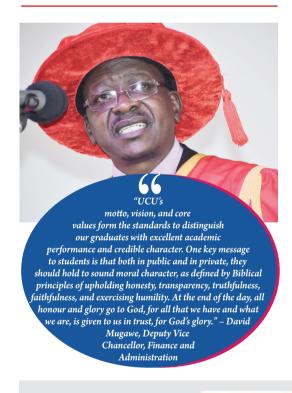
By Jimmy Siyasa

Many developing countries have poorly funded and underdeveloped health care systems. Good health care tends to be a privilege for few, with ongoing concern about how local health systems can be improved for more people.

It is on the basis of this that Doug Fountain, a former UCU Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and External Relations, was scheduled to give a public lecture on July 27, on the topic "Christian University: The Strongest Asset for Building Resilient Local Health Systems."

Doug, now living in Maryland, USA, is the Executive Director of Christian Connections for International Health, a global network of over 100 organisations that works to advance health and wholeness from a Christian perspective. Doug was part of the planning for UCU's School of Medicine that launched in 2018.

Joel Okullo, the Chairperson of the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council, was the invited discussant for the Wednesday lecture while Gen. Katumba Wamala. the Minister of Works and Transport, was invited to be the Guest of Honour.



Over 2,000 graduate today

By Jimmy Siyasa

Over 2,000 Uganda Christian University (UCU) students are expected to be part of today's graduation ceremony at the main campus in Mukono. Of these, 55 students have graduated

The University Chancellor, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu, will preside over the graduation. Kaziimba is the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda.

Top University administrators led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, will also be present at the ceremony. UCU's graduation ceremonies start with the commissioning services of the graduating students a day before, in the Nkoyoyo Hall. The 23rd graduation will be the institution's first total in-person ceremony since the outbreak of Covid-19 more than two years ago.

The previous two graduation ceremonies — on December 18, 2020, and October 22, 2021 were virtual, in line with the Uganda Government's policy of observing the Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures.

At the time, the Government had banned public gatherings, to reduce avenues through which the Covid-19 pandemic can spread.

The graduating students for the 23rd ceremony are from seven of UCU's 11 faculties and schools — the School of Social Sciences, School of Business, School of Law, School of Education, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, School of Journalism, Media and Communication, and the Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology.

The graduating students are also coming from some of UCU's constituent colleges, such as Bishop Barham; Kampala Campus and study

The Schools of Medicine and Dentistry; Faculty of Public Health, Nursing and Midwifery; and Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology have no graduating students for this ceremony. The School of Medicine and School of Dentistry,

started in 2018, are expected to have the first graduates of their five-year programmes by late

One student, Owen Alleluya, is expected to receive his Bachelor of Agricultural Science and Entrepreneurship award posthumously. In line with UCU's stepped-up online services,

the July 29, 2022, graduation ceremony is to



Former Chairperson of the University Council, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Sheldon Mwesigwa, is expected to be the Chief Guest. Mwesigwa, the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Ankole, is also a former Dean of UCU's Faculty of Education. The faculty has since transitioned into a school.

Mwesigwa, appointed bishop on July 18, 2010, is a former deputy head teacher of Kibubura Girls' School in Ibanda district, western Uganda. He was also once the chaplain at Ntare School, where he also served as deputy head teacher. Mwesigwa is an alumnus of the Bishop Tucker Theological College, where he studied from 1987 to 1990. He also served as Senior Lecturer at UCU, Head of the Department of Education and, later, becoming the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts, from 2005 to 2010. He was also a UCU Council member and Chair UCU Council from 2012 to 2020.

UCU in years...

1922: The year the Bishop Tucker Building, which is 100 years old this year, was inaugurated. This was after three years of construction. The building hosts, among others, the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

1997: The year UCU started, having transitioned from the Bishop Tucker Theological College. UCU was established by the Province of the Church of Uganda at the Bishop Tucker Theological College. The college was named after Bishop Alfred Tucker, a Christian missionary from England.

2022: UCU is 25 years old this year. The institution has transformed many lives through its theme: A Complete Education for a Complete Person. The institution today boasts five campuses and nearly 13,000

be streamed live on the university's YouTube page, <u>https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMryu</u> ZxageEIp g4Q/featured, as well as its other social

This year marks 25 years of existence of UCU. It also marks 100 years of existence of the iconic Bishop Tucker Building, the face of the university. The building hosts, among others, the Office of the

UCU started in 1997, having transitioned from

the Bishop Tucker Theological College. The college was named after Bishop Alfred Tucker, a Christian missionary from England. Today, with five campuses and nearly 13,000

students, UCU has become a trusted education brand and a household name in higher education in the East Africa region. UCU is one of the fastest growing, modern higher education institutions in Uganda. At the graduation ceremony last year, Chief Guest

Mrs. Janet Museveni, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, having heard the story of the success UCU had made in virtual learning, said she was impressed by the university's "robust online education programme" and encouraged UCU to "share best practices with other institutions."

Some academics of UCU have since participated in community outreach programmes, teaching parents how to help their children benefit from the opportunities that online learning offers. Also, leaders from Greenhill Academy met with

UCU e-learning staff in December last year, to keep abreast of virtual learning best practices.

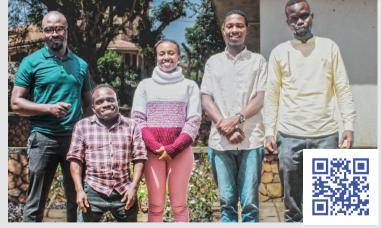
been produced as a collaborative venture among the <u>Uganda</u> Christian University's

Department of Communication and Public Relations, The Standard of the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communication, and the Uganda Partners. The *Ebenezer* is not just

a print product, but a convergence of print, audio, visual and online products, using the cutting-edge technology that the Quick Response (QR) two-dimensional bar code offers. Enjoy the experience using the Ebenezer newspaper.



Uganda Partners Executive Director Mark Bartels, centre, cuts a cake to celebrate the first year of an on-line, hands-on collaboration between the USA-based nonprofit and the Uganda Christian University (UCU) School of Journalism, Media and Communication. The NGO's e-lab was launched in January 2021 to offer an opportunity for students to get resume-building, real-world experience in print and audio-visual production while providing communication services to Partners, which has been supporting UCU programmes, students, activities and services for more than two decades. The Partners website is <u>www.ugandapartners.org</u>. Information also can be found through the organization's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages. Scan the QR code on the photo to visit the Uganda Partners website, where you will read more stories about UCU.



Interns of The Standard with their supervisor, Roggers Akanyijuka (left) The Standard is a Uganda Christian University newspaper established in May 2007 under the Mass Communication Department and operated today under the School of Journalism, Media and Communication. Currently, it operates through a multimedia platform that works as a training lab for students while providing news, features, opinion and other stories for the university community and others. Many leaders in the media and other career fields have received their professional launch from The Standard. The content, including visuals and podcasts, can be accessed at https://standard.ucu.ac.ug. Scan the QR code on the photo to visit The Standard website, where you will read, watch and listen to more

Residence/recreation Emergency services Parking lots Toilets Offices/Classrooms

The story behind Ebenezer

On the morning of April 15, 2022, when a team of six Ugandan journalism/ communications professionals proposed we call this publication Ebenezer," all I could think of was the unlikable character from the 1843 Charles Dickens novel, A Christmas Carol. My Ugandan colleagues were so excited that true to the spiral of silence theory that a person with a minority opinion doesn't speak out, I remained

This time, I was glad I was quiet because as with many times in my decade-long association with Uganda Christian University (UCU) and despite the fact most call me "teacher," the people here teach me.

The Ebenezer reference that day from my team (Frank, John, Jimmy, Constantine, Edwin and Geoffrey) was from the Bible, 1 Samuel 7 with events occurring in 1,100 B.C. The nation of Israel revives its belief in the Lord in the midst of an attack from the Philistines. Because of their belief, the Israelites received God's help. They erected a stone as a reminder of God's power and protection and called it Ebenezer, meaning "stone of help."

Thus, this publication – the first such printed piece from UCU in two years – is rightfully called Ebenezer.



Ebenezer publication team: (First row, left to right) Constantine Odongo, Patty Huston-Holm, Geoffrey Ssenoga; (second row, left to right) Jimmy Siyasa, Frank Obonyo, Edwin Byarugaba, John Semakula

Through Covid-related education persevered and now thrives. The stories implementation and growing projects lockdowns and with faith in God's here of on-line and blended learning, deliverance, the University has graduate successes, entrepreneurial past 18 months and are a testimonial

and programs were written over the

o perseverance among believers in Christ. Teaching and learning and using that knowledge and skill to make the world and its people better are what UCU continues

As a collaborative among the UCU Communications and Public Relations office, The Standard newspaper, the Uganda Partners NGO and the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communication, our team has put together a small slice of the stories generated by us and UCU students and recent graduates during the past year

We hope you find this publication interesting and that it instills in you the hope we have for UCU, its graduates and

To God be the glory.

Patty Huston-Holm, Communications Director, Uganda Partners, Pennsylvania,

(Submitted on behalf of John Semakula, head of undergraduate studies for the School of Journalism, Media and Communications; Frank

Obonyo, former manager of the UCU Communications and Public Relations Office and now Senior Public Relations Officer at the Law Development Centre; Constantine Odongo, Chief Production Journalist, New Vision: Edwin Byarugaba.

Elearning and Development Officer with Mildmay Institute of Health Sciences; Geoffrey Ssenoga, UCU broadcast media lecturer; Jimmy Siyasa, communications assistant; Roggers Akanyijuka, supervisor, The Standard; and Peggy Noll, wife of UCU's first vice chancellor, Stephen Noll, and our last-look editor.)

Business continuity that gives God glory

(UCU), like many institutions, was staff had been established with negatively affected by the Covid-19 modern equipment. Modules pandemic. However, UCU was for training staff in e-learning able to emerge from the pandemic were ongoing. It is also worth stronger because of her business noting that some programmes at continuity plan. The strategy was UCU had already started offering to minimise costs and only keep essential services operating within the available resources. This was pandemic. Therefore, the foresight necessary because the revenue coming to the university had drastically reduced and even the little expected was uncertain. The University Council, as the supervisory body of the university, UCU has over 250,000 electronic

charged a business continuity committee to come up with strategies and interventions to enable UCU to survive the effects of the pandemic. The committee reviewed the university's major expense lines and recommended to the University Council the suspension of the staff contracts. These, at 50%, were the university's heaviest expense. This meant that only staff offering essential services would be given semester-based contracts and receive only a percentage pay of their former salaries. Secondly, all university operations were suspended save those offered online. Teaching and learning moved online with some hitches.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, UCU had already embraced e-learning as a future staff were not present at the mode of teaching and learning. An Campus, they were able to transact,

Kampala.

opportunity. I was always amazed to see

clusters and groups of students in two's,

chapel, in Principal's Hall, in Nkoyoyo

Hall – praying fervently together. The

services, fellowships and community

worship were always filled to the brim

with students and staff. And what

amazed me is that no one forced them

to come, they wanted to be there. What

a blessing for a campus to be so open to

the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.

The UCU staff family was great,

genuine, and showered us with love and

respect. We had fellowship in different

homes every week and had a great time

welcoming new staff on campus with

a basket of food and happy smiles and

songs. Our house was open to both

students and staff and we had many

happy moments of sharing both food

and the word of God.

students from anywhere and at any

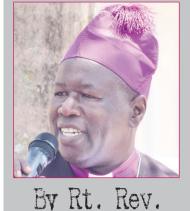
Prior to the pandemic, UCU had

Uganda Christian University e-learning centre with technical blended programmes and take home examinations before the of UCU Management in investing in e-learning and online services, like library services, put UCU in an advantaged position to mitigate the effects of the lockdown. Currently, books, journal articles and reference materials that can be accessed by

> Other on-line actions involved admissions, examinations (including pre-entry tests for some programs), graduation and student government activity. Guild government elections occurred via an on-line voting system known as e-Chagua.

commissioned the development of a Management Information System (Alpha-MIS). This was to move all management operations online. This meant that financial functions, procurement operations, human resource activities, fleet management, etc. all could be conducted online. So even though

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity



Prof. Alfred Olwa

Bishop of the Diocese of Lango and Chairperson of the University Council of Uganda **Christian University**

recommend and approve activities online. This greatly ensured business continuity of

As UCU, we give God the glory that He gave us foresight, provided the means over such a difficult period, and He also gave us a team of staff and students who embraced the changes with a high degree of understanding and cooperation. The University Council, through her various Boards, provided strategic guidance and decision making. A number of Governance meetings were able to be held online, so UCU Management received timely guidance on key matters.

Truly, UCU has lived up to her Vision: "A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of

Resilience is the new normal

"The price of greatness is responsibility." So said British statesman, soldier and writer, Winston Churchill, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during WWII.

As the Uganda Christian University Guild, operating in a post-Covid-19 era, we cannot agree more. Our journey has been of resilience. We believe one must be resilient in order to progress in the "new normal."

However, most importantly, we believe the 24th Guild Government is on a journey orchestrated by God, who alone is immune to all crises that could happen now or tomorrow. And, therefore, He will hold us through.

We have a five-point program, focused on enriching, strengthening and developing the following core areas that matter to students: Health, Education, Security, Accountability and Formidable Leadership. Much as the first 100 days of our governance have been uneasy, God has and continues to enable us to perform beyond our expectations.

Through the leadership of Her Excellency Mirembe Racheal Sserwadda, the President, our Guild government has registered many success stories. We have managed to organize many impactful events/ programs, to the benefit of students.

First, Guild Bazaars: These are normally weeklong, transient, marketplace arrangements, that bring essential products and services closer to students, especially those who reside within the university halls. The first bazaar (Easter semester) was not as robust to our expectation due to a few indulge in here. Await the surprise! challenges like low student and trader turnup. But the second (Trinity semester) was far better and befitting our ideal. Hence a testimony of resilience. Second, Health Week, a weeklong health awareness campaign that brought free medical services and sensitization to hundreds of students.

Third, Guild Run. The UCU annual Guild run was successfully held on March 12, 2022. More than 5 million shillings (\$1,347) was collected Excellence in the Heart of Africa.

of the 24th Government, Uganda Christian University

By Ephraim Titus Makuma

towards supporting the Guild fund that caters for students with tuition arrears.

Fourth, Outreach: We believe that Christcenteredness - a core value of UCU, entails compassion for the needy. Therefore, the Guild conducted an outreach dubbed Mwonyo's Heart. We visited children/pupils of a Mukono-based primary school, and donated scholastic materials, clothes, foodstuff, among other essentials. We thank the student-community for heeding our resource-mobilization call and giving generously towards this cause.

Furthermore, we participated in the orientation of the 2022 first-year students, to not only initiate them into the university culture, but also to make them feel at home. Currently, we are pursuing a grand guild project whose details I will not

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the Church of Uganda, Chancellor, Council, management, staff, students and esteemed Uganda Partners for their continued support, both directly and indirectly to the students' guild.

Leadership is like a garden, one whose fruits come forth in due season. We remain hopeful and resilient as we make our mark on the Centre of

Blended learning helped our students to continue with studies

(This article, slightly edited by Frank Obonyo, was first published by New Vision newspaper on February 7,

Before the Covid-19 onset, virtual learning was taking place in some institutions, although it was not widespread.

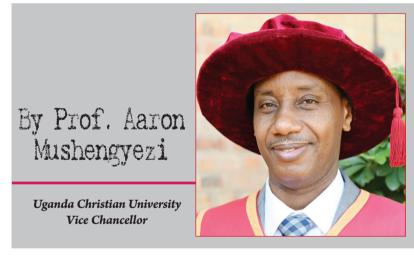
On September 1, 2020, at the height of the pandemic, Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, formerly Head, Department of Journalism and Communication, Makerere University, took office as the new Vice Chancellor of the Uganda Christian University (UCU).

All education institutions had closed as a result of the pandemic, and were stuck on how to proceed. In June 2020, as a response to the coronavirus pandemic and government lockdown measures, the University Council had suspended most activities and staff. It was a never-before, difficult situation.

"As management, we realised that online learning was the way to go," said Mushengyezi, who was front and centre in the education continuance storm. "The University already had an eLearning system, but there were several hiccups, including the system crashing."

The investment

UCU upgraded its system to a larger and functional one that would sustain learning for all students, not just those who were studying at the main campus in Mukono, but all regional campuses and colleges that include: Kampala, Arua, Kabale and Mbale. Without giving a figure, Prof. Mushengyezi said considerable money was injected by the University to upgrade





(Left to right) UCU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) John Mulindwa Kitayimbwa, Vice Chancellor Aaron Mushengyezi and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance and Administration) David Mugawe in their

the already existing small eLearning center. meaning "choose" in Kiswahili)," reveals "We invested more money in purchasing Prof. Mushengyezi. "We were able to keep students," disclosed the Vice Chancellor.

The added challenges

The next move was to shift all the teaching and learning.

However, the move was not without challenges. "People were unfamiliar with online teaching and learning, and so there was a lot of resistance," the Vice

The University also undertook measures to enlighten its faculty members and students in small groups, to understand that eLearning was the way to go.

At one point, management requested the Chancellor and Head of the Church of Uganda, the Most Rev. Dr. Stephen Samuel Kaziimba Mugalu, to add his disruptions. voice onto theirs, encouraging everybody

Once the majority of students agreed o learn online, we considered it a victory," Prof. Mushengyezi said. "That's how we made the shift to eLearning. We were able to sustain learning for our students."

Students continued with their studies, and some completed their programs and graduated. This, in turn, brought operational revenue to UCU. "We held virtual graduations. The

students elected their leaders online

using the e-chagua platform (Chagua

servers and a larger eLearning system. the inflow of intakes going. Our students We upgraded the eLearning center to a never got stuck. Those who were meant level that is enough to cater for all 13,000 to complete studies, did so online, and graduated virtually and we got new intakes for May and September 2021 as well." The future: Blended learning

University staff and students to online To maintain success with eLearning, the University has adopted a blended model of learning. It is a hybrid system that involves a mix of physical lecture room learning and

"Our emphasis on full online learning is Chancellor said. "Some faculty told me mostly for Master's and PhD students that they would not teach online but the working class who have no time for full-

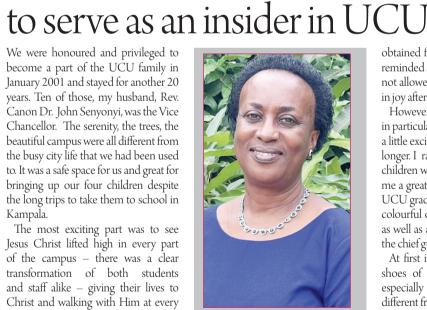
> "For undergraduates, physical classes are important for instilling Christian values and life skills. But, having some level of blended learning will help our students keep abreast with e-Learning skills as well."

Mushengyezi adds that blended learning is the future, and the cushion for future

"I do not think that online learning will stop," Prof. Mushengyezi said. "However, we also need our students physically on campus to teach them Christian values and soft skills (hands-on practice)." (UCU Vice Chancellor Prof.

Aaron Mushengyezi has bachelor's

and master's degrees in Arts from Makerere University; and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Connecticut in the United States. The Vice Chancellor and his wife, Patience Rubabinda Mushengyezi, have three



By Canon Senyonyi

> Wife of former Vice Chancellor, Rev. Canon Dr. John Senyonyi, 2010-2020

commotion around the main hall and John went down to see what the matter was... he managed to walk through them and calm them down. Some students eventually confessed their involvement and were disciplined and/ or pardoned.

Graduations were always a thrill for There were a few scary moments too. me – to see students ululating and I do remember one instance where jumping with joy at their success. Two the students were not happy about of our children, Sarah and Benjamin, the tuition increase. There was a lot of were students at UCU and both opportunity to serve as an insider in UCU.

reminded at their graduations that parents were not allowed to jump out to meet their children in joy after their names were read out. However, we, John and I, broke all the rules. I,

obtained first class degrees. I remember being

in particular, first screamed and jumped up like a little excited girl. Then, I could not hold it any longer. I ran like an athlete to give a hug to our children who had made us so proud. This gave me a great experience of the joy our parents at UCU graduation went through. It was always a colourful occasion with applause and worship as well as a word of counsel from the Bible by the chief guest.

At first it was scary for me to step into the shoes of the wife of a Vice Chancellor especially after Mrs. Peggy Noll. She was so different from me.

She had more time with staff, students, and internationals. I was working full time in time. However, she encouraged me to be myself and to be used of the Lord in my own unique

My main job was to support my husband. I did that with prayer, presence and encouraging words. In all our work life, this was the busiest and most engaging job. I may not have known all the inside campus and administrative decision stories but was pretty much involved in supporting whatever it was that I was allowed to do – hosting and entertaining, speaking from my heart to both students and staff, and

I spent time teaching the MA counselling students, using my profession to help in counselling both staff and students and a good amount of time building up the Sunday School ministry. It was a worthwhile effort – we believe that both John and I impacted UCU in our own unique ways. We were blessed to be part of this

Ebenezer. Thank you, Lord, for the

Jesus was there with me, as real as that palm tree in my garden

forward to the future. An invitation to write this short piece has prompted me to look both backwards and forwards, and to encourage you, especially the graduates themselves, to do the

A graduation is a time to look backward as well as a time to celebrate in the present and to look

First, looking backwards ... What memories will we take from our time at UCU? I challenge the graduates to cultivate a spirit of gratitude to God for how He has shaped them, even perhaps

through times of doubt and difficulty, during their years in Mukono. I will briefly share three such memories of mine among the many others still vivid to me despite our return home to the USA a dozen years ago. The morning of October 18, 2000, I was

desperately homesick for my youngest daughter, who was turning (or as you would say, "making") 18 years the next day on the other side of the world. In my quiet time I read these words from the famous English preacher Charles Spurgeon, "Come up to the palm tree of Jesus and take hold of the branches." When I lifted my eyes and saw the literal palm tree growing outside my window



lived, I knew how I would survive these years far from my children — because Jesus was there

with me, as real as that palm tree in my garden. Another memory is of a Christmas Eve service in the small chapel, as we worshipped with the students who had not been able to go home for the Christmas break because they were from countries outside Uganda. The international students were from DRC Congo, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi. That night I gained a new understanding about what it meant that Jesus was a refugee when Joseph fled with him and his mother Mary into Egypt, away from the violence of Herod and his soldiers, as many of these students had fled from strife in their home countries.

Finally, I remember the dedication of the Children's Library here on the campus after a procession of children and adults down from Nkoyoyo Hall after a Sunday morning service. I knew the joy of seeing a vision become a reality, of being able to share not only my love of books with children of UCU students and staff and Mukono townspeople, but the books themselves, donated by friends from around the world.

Today, as we give thanks with and for these graduates, whatever their degree or program, we can also look forward in confidence with them to the future God will open up for them. The reason we can do so is expressed in a chorus I remember singing often in Nkoyoyo Hall many

"I know who holds the future, and I know He holds my hand; With God things don't just happen, Everything by Him is planned. So, as I face tomorrow with its problems large and small, I'll trust the God of miracles, Give to Him my all." God bless you all.

Nsiimenta's film makes mark at international film festivals





By Eriah Lule

(This article was edited from the January 2022 published version)

Miika is a 14-year-old fictional character living in northern Uganda. As the story goes, her family had enough of the tyranny of the government forces so she took matters into her own hands to

This <u>3D</u> short, five-minute animated film by the same name as the main character, "Miika," is the darling of international film festivals and written and directed by Uganda Christian University (UCU) alum Shevon Nsiimenta. Among honours is the Best women in northern Uganda Animation Film Category at the suffered rape, torture, murder,

being named a finalist at the Auber International Film Festival and Official Selection at the Flickfair Film Festival.

hit the cinemas as Nsiimenta said it

The inspiration for Nsiimenta's storyline is from the experience of watching or hearing about women and children who end up as the primary victims of war and tyranny. From 1986 to 2006. there was civil war in northern Uganda, orchestrated by the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group and terrorist organization.

CineOdyssey Film Festival and forced marriages and domestic

At the Los Angeles International

Film Festival, Nsiimenta was a nominee for the Best First Time Female Director, and her film, "Miika," got a nomination for the Best Animation Film.

All this happened before the film





Download a QR code scanner app on your smartphone and use it to scan this code, to watch

The regime of former Ugandan President Idi Amin, which was from 1971 to 1979, has been described as tyrannical. Nsiimenta's film is set in northern Uganda during the reign of Amin.

Despite the haunting tale of desperation that Milka's family matter the amount of horror an effort.

individual faces, they can always

turn tables on the oppressors.

"I chose a 14-year-old to deliver the family from its horrors because at that age, they are still innocently bold enough to take on the world," says Nsiimenta, a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Communication at UCU.

Miika is short for Malaika a name that means Angel in

"Indeed, I wanted Miika to be the angel for her family," Nsiimenta explains of her script. The success that "Miika" has

achieved can be attributed, in

part, to Kemiyondo Coutinho, a Ugandan playwright, actress and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. In 2020, Kemiyondo launched an initiative to help up-andcoming Ugandan female filmmakers to bring their stories faced, Nsiimenta explains that she to life on screen. "Miika" was one wanted to pass a message that no of five films funded through this

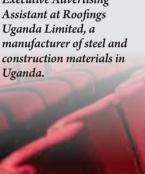
Who is **Nsiimenta?**

She is a daughter of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Sheldon Mwesigwa, the Bishop of Ankole Diocese in western Uganda and former Chairperson of UCU University Council.

She attended Mbarara Preparatory School in western Uganda before relocating to central Uganda, where she attended Kampala Parents School, Gayaza High School and, later, UCU. Nsiimenta savs UCU instilled in her a sense of

discipline, self-respect and smartness, virtues she has found useful in her professional and personal life. But she also had something to learn from those who taught her. "I also had admirable women to look up to in my faculty. Prof. Monica Chibita and Dr. Emilly Maractho served as wonderful examples to base my image on at the

workplace," she says. Nsiimenta works as the Executive Advertising



Uganda's only university podcast launches at UCU

By Patty Huston-Holm

(This article was edited from the April 2022 published version)

Andrew Bugembe's early experience with audio journalism involved walking outside the Uganda Christian University (UCU) gate and, with his phone, recording what random people along a dusty street thought about topical sports issues.

He, thereafter, walked back on the Mukono campus and shared his "African English" recordings with five friends who used this information raw or as background for stories in UCU's

"I wasn't good at writing; I wasn't good at sports," Andrew, who hails from Mityana in central Uganda, admitted.

"The credit I got for this work was 'thank you,' and that was enough. God puts you where He can use you."

Sitting on a black, wrought-iron bench between the newspaper the audio and monitoring the in the third month since post- and from what devices. Covid, in-person learning resumed, the final-year student in UCU's School of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMC) shared his comfort and enjoyment of being behind the

As UCU launched in January of Christ in Canal Winchester, 2022 its first podcast – <u>the only</u> Ohio, USA, in June 2021. <u>university</u> <u>podcast</u> <u>in</u> <u>Uganda</u> Students used the church's



Andrew Bugembe, member of the initial UCU podcast team and a student in the UCU

and communications offices analytics of who was listening "It was exciting," he said.

"I didn't even know the word 'podcast' until I was tapped to be a part of it last year."

The UCU podcast training for a small group of students began through David's United Church

interviews on topics such as Black – Andrew, was the guy splicing podcast platform to conduct Preaching and Fake Pastors.

Scan this QR code and listen to some of the <u>UCU podcasts</u> that have been produced by students

Lives Matter, Hate Speech, Street veteran broadcaster and UCU lecturer, Geoffrey Ssenoga, and etc.) topics, the initial target

with support by the School of JMC head of undergraduate

students had recorded and produced two dozen podcasts under the umbrella of the new on-line Standard newspaper with

the theme "Lighting our Way." With a combination of fun Under the supervision of (male-female differences, etc.) and serious (Ankrah Foundation,

"Students are always excited about new ways of applying their knowledge and skill," said Ssenoga, a lifelong journalist with most of his work in "We were teaching radio, but

during the Covid shutdown. the practical application of that was mostly non-existent. Podcast recordings via Zoom allowed students to learn this form of media while practicing coronavirus safety protocols."

As the School of JMC revises its curriculum for the Council of Higher Education, podcasting channel with two million globally – is included.

While not necessarily listening to recordings in the initial phase of UCU's podcast, two Ugandan professionals, New Vision's Stephen Ssenkaaba and Max Adii, are lauding them. Together, they started the New

Vision podcast three years ago. "I came to understand how podcasts were relevant to people in Uganda and Africa where the culture revolves around talking, and having conversations,"

Ssenkaaba said. "More and more, media audiences are shifting to on-line

"Podcasting is Internetbased – allowing our audience potential to be people all over

Amoru is Uganda's envoy to South Africa



By Yasiri J Kasango (This article was edited from the March 2022 published version)

Paul Amoru Omiat's leadership star is bright. The Uganda Christian University (UCU) alum of the School of Journalism, Media and Communication and former legislator in the Ugandan Parliament was recently named Uganda's High Commissioner to Pretoria, South Africa.

Amoru, whose appointment was confirmed after a vetting by the Ugandan Parliament, took over Uganda's High Commission from Barbara Nekesa

As Uganda's envoy to South Africa, Amoru also will be in charge of Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and the Royal Kingdom of Eswatini.

Amoru intends to use his new position to improve the trade balance between Uganda and countries in southern

For instance, he said he will focus on expanding the market for Uganda's agricultural produce. According to UN statistics, Uganda's imports from South Africa in 2020 were worth \$220 million while the country exported goods worth \$11 million to South Africa.

Whereas Amoru is new to diplomatic service, it is not his first time in leadership.

The 39-year-old journalist-turned politician represented Dokolo North. a constituency in northern Uganda, in Uganda's Parliament from 2016 to 2021. His re-election bid during Uganda's general election in 2021 was

Amoru started his education and training at Ngora High School in Kumi district, eastern Uganda, where he attended both O'level and A'level.

His primary education often got interrupted because of the insurgency in northern Uganda, where Amoru's home district, Dokolo, is located.

From 1986 to 2006, there was insecurity in northern and part of eastern Uganda, courtesy of the destructive effects of the Lord's Resistance Army rebels. As a result, Amoru attended Agwachibange Primary School, Dokolo High School, Amoru was in charge of library affairs.

He was later voted the district chairperson representing Uganda National Students Association, an umbrella association of the



When he joined UCU in 2003, Amoru did not take his foot off the pedal of leadership. In 2005, the second born of eight children of Samuel Kofie and Mary Agamah became UCU's Guild

Amoru's relations with UCU continued even when he had left the institution. For instance, he was the president of the UCU Alumni Convocation. He handed over that

In 2007, Amoru joined Kumi University as the institution's Public Relations Officer. A year later, he switched to the Daily Monitor. becoming the newspaper's staff reporter.

He eventually rose through the ranks, becoming a deputy editor at the newspaper by 2011. In 2012, Amoru left the Daily Monitor, becoming the Public Relations Officer of a newly setup government agency, the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations

Amoru intends to take advantage of his leadership experience to strengthen the country's

When Amoru joined Uganda's Parliament in 2016, the institution benefited from his vast expertise in media and public relations. For instance, he became the chairperson of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on

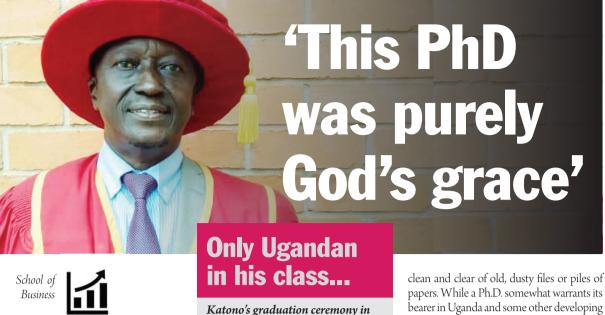
diplomatic

relations.

He also chaired the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance (ICT & National Guidance). In 2019, when Uganda hosted the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Kampala, Amoru was the chairperson of the

parliamentary forum on media. School for the seven years that he was and approving all media before, during in primary. As a student leader at Ngora and shortly after the conference that was held in Kampala.

Now that he is in Pretoria, he will take advantage of the vast leadership experience that he has garnered to strengthen Uganda's diplomatic relations with the countries in southern



2020, just as UCU's 2020 virtual

graduation ceremony did. He

UCU Faculty of Business and

was the only graduate from the

Administration (now the School of

Business), let alone being the only

Ugandan from his Ph.D. class of

university.

2020 from the South African-based

His PhD thesis is titled: "Cultural

Predictions of Entrepreneurial

Role of Entrepreneurial

Competencies on Graduate

Entrepreneurial Intentions: A

Cross-Sectional Survey of East

Africa." The research focuses on the

Katono was admitted to UCT in

2012 but wasn't able to join until

year's end." Not only Google but friends and

colleagues attest to Katono's unwavering zeal

"One thing I know about him is his passion

for research," said Richard Sebaggala, a

lecturer of Economics. "He encouraged

for opportunities for staff to upgrade their

Everything about Dr. Katono, a man in his

mid-60s, seems mellow and simple. His office

2016 because of lack of funds.

impact of culture on entrepreneurial

Orientation and the Moderating

By Jimmy Siyasa

(This article was edited from the April 2021 published version)

With a new doctorate degree under his belt, Dr. Isaac Wasswa Katono is eager to realize his goal of being among the most cited scholars from Uganda Christian University (UCU). In December 2020, the former dean of the Faculty of Business and Administration at UCU graduated with a Ph.D. in Business Science and Entrepreneurship from the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. That journey further reinforced his passion and understanding of the value of research for publication.

Metric data from the Web of Science reveals a promising, proactive researcher whose impact has risen steadily since 2010. ResearchGate, a European commercial social networking site for scientists and researchers, shows that Dr. Katono has 16 publications, 7.029 Reads and 382 citations. This places him at the pinnacle of UCU's distinguished scholars. GoogleScholar has juried his research on action-based entrepreneurship training, automatic teller machine quality and government impact of multi-party politics, among others.

Katono does not simply bask in the glory of his Tudor bonnet. He always has his scholarly sleeves rolled up.

"Currently, I have a list of 10 papers, which I am supposed to have finished and published, because I already have the data," he said. "I pray for God's peace because all I now need is to sit down and do my data analysis. God willing, I will have executed all of them by

bearer in Uganda and some other developing South Africa happened (virtually, countries some pomp, Katono brushes off that elevated status due to Covid-19) in December

He says, "This Ph.D. is not mine. It is for my benefactors. But most importantly, it's not a fruit of my labour. This was purely God's

"When I received the news of my admission, I shouted and all the neighbours came," he said. "I knelt down and thanked God... My admission for the Ph.D. was absolutely by God's grace. Not my performance or intellectual prowess."

He calls upon students and youth at large to embrace risk-taking, be proactive and undertake entrepreneurial ventures. Dr. Katono argues in his thesis that the education curriculum in these countries must change to solve the problem.

Katono's natural business acumen evolved after acquiring a Bachelors of Science from Makerere University in 1979. He was charged with running the family business – a secondary school called Seeta College where he was Principal for six years. Thereafter, he joined Kasuru Enterprises, an agricultural company in Uganda, where he was head of agrarian projects. In 1995, he quit and enrolled for an MBA at the Makerere faculty

Earlier in 1986, at age 30 years, Dr. Katono invested in a company called Wasswa Katono's Hatchery. He bought 50 acres of land in Njeru, Mukono district, for the us to do research and always looked out project. Dr. Katono counts himself blessed studies when he was still Associate Dean in because he saw UCU at its beginning stage the faculty. Dr. Katono is also a very humble as it hatched from Bishop Tucker School of Theology in 1997 to become a "Centre of excellence in the heart of Africa" as a university with other faculties in addition to space is unlike a typical Ugandan office; it is

Medicine and music: UCU student from Nigeria seeks nexus



(This article was edited from the May 2022 published version)

As a young girl, Dorcas Chizaram Okeke was thin and weak a common face at the school sick-bay. At times, she wrote her promotional examinations while receiving intravenous treatment. on to become a health care expert.

From her telling, the first instance was when she interfaced with a malaria-suffering schoolmate, who would later drop out because she was taking frequent sick leave.

In the second incident, another schoolmate died after a "long struggle with leukemia," she said.

These early health encounters contributed to the decision of Chizaram, of Nigeria, to pursue a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor Medicine (SoM).

"Some diseases are curable," the first-year student said. "Sometimes doctors just observe a patient and are able to tell what is wrong and someone facing a problem that I am unable to help them solve, I feel

Chizaram's lifelong ambition is to set up a large wellness center, Chizaram underwent pre-year, which is a yearlong, mandatory that the main campus has.

orientation/ assimilation University program for non-Ugandan students. During that period, she undertook a short course in paracounseling, for which she attained a certificate. She believes with this skill, she is able to help her peers who suffer mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety and addiction.

Chizaram, one of the 60 entry-year medical students, sees UCU as the best place to receive a quality education. The low number of community among peers who encourage each other to participate in the twice-weekly community worship.

On this March Day and following community worship, she She had "self-pity." This early condition and two incidents spurred her expressed appreciation for the newly assigned pastor at the Mengo (Kampala) hospital campus. Chizaram, a worship choir member, upholds the institution's strong focus on both the spiritual and intellectual formation of students with the music twist.

"I was attracted to UCU because of its Christian moral foundation," she said. "I think that is partly why I have never heard of UCU students rioting ... you study when you are peaceful, without fear of waking up one day to damaged or lost property from a student strike."

Further influence to come to UCU came through two of her older of Surgery at the Uganda Christian University (UCU) School of siblings who studied at UCU. One of them, Shalom Okeke graduated

As a non-Ugandan student studying in Uganda, over 2,400 miles away from her home country, Chizaram is grateful that through music then treat it. I wanted to be able to do that someday... Whenever I see ministry, she easily made/met her first friends in Ugandan. Shortly after enrolling at UCU for the pre-year, she joined a university choir

After completing the pre-year at Mukono, she moved in September where patients or clients can access rehabilitation services with an 2021 to the SoM academic and training site – rich with career unusual twist – music therapy. When she joined UCU in 2019, learning, but devoid of the rich music and sound equipment/facilities

called Mustard Seed Worship Team (MSWT).

Hands-on experience

Student Nicollette Nampijja, one of the first UCU Podcast interviewers. expressed appreciation for UCU's aunch into the podcast medium. Despite her experience speaking in front of classmates in secondary school, her "heart was beating" for the first recording she did at UCU With three podcast interviews under her belt, the confidence of the

22-year-old has soared. "<u>The UCU podcast</u> has added excitement for students while giving hem hands-on experience in a cutting-edge part of our industry,' lecturer Geoffrey Ssenoga said. "That we added the podcasting piece to what we teach and did it in the midst of coming off a pandemic lockdown speaks volumes about

where UCU is going and can be.'

School of Journalism, Media and Communication, shown in a photo taken in Mbale







studies, John Semakula, UCU started its own podcast. By early mid-year 2022,

content," Adii said.

First

birding

course

spread

(This article was edited from the August 2021

By Eriah Lule

Kampala campus.

August 2021 published version)

Amponda Kenneth Agaba believes

that to rise, one must lift others. True

to this credence, he has participated

in many charity causes, while rising

One of those leadership positions

degree in 2021 was that of Guild

President of Uganda Christian

University (UCU). Among his

the founding of a not-for-profit

organization, the Amponda

As a fourth-year student at

to positions of leadership.

students

their wings

Building expertise

Mutyaba is building expertise in aquaculture, which refers to raising fish in either earthen ponds or cage units submerged in natural water bodies. Curiosity, he has found, can be a stronger driver to success than prior knowledge or expectations.

"I recalled first seeing cage fishing promoted in 2010," Mutyaba said. "What I didn't know then fascinated me as much as what I now know." Once learned, catching fish in a mesh enclosure is a more reliable method than net casting. Tilapia, which is Mutyba's favourite to eat followed by catfish, is the most common in Uganda. (Nile perch, according to Livingstone, is equally tasty, but the smell lingers on your body



(This article was edited from the July

John Livingstone Mutyaba is not a fisherman. He's never baited a hook on a line, cast a net or set up a cage. But he knows a lot about fishing. So much so that the head of Department of Natural Resource intersect. He uses information Economics and Agribusiness in from multiple specialties in his the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Egerton University (Kenya) at Uganda Christian University doctoral research focused on cage (UCU) is increasingly being acknowledged for his research on

the topic – specifically about "the of Information Links and Flow economic analysis of raising fish in through Social Networks on cages in Uganda," a case study in Smallholder Farmers' Awareness Lake Victoria waters. Mutyaba's explanation for his lack of practical experience is simple. new institutional economics,

He doesn't have the time. He has all the knowledge required for cage fish farming business but a schedule packed with family, with teaching and with his own learning and research towards a doctoral degree.

the most practiced activity in the fish producer.

that almost 99% of the people living in the fishing communities derive their livelihoods through capture fishing and also use heavy alcoholic beverages and small nonmotorized handmade boats.

Mutyaba's growing expertise is likewise easy to explain. He has subject matter knowledge in agriculture, the economy, education, research and planning. Mutyaba, who is the only agricultural economist at UCU, is a testament to understanding how various academic disciplines fish farming technologies.

The research, entitled "Effect and Adoption of Cage Fish Technologies in Uganda," involves resource economics, social science and aquaculture

Regarding economics, Uganda could make more money in its fishing industry if the country took a lesson from the playbook of Capture fishing (with a net) is China, which is the world's biggest

in Uganda. Current statistics show 2.5% the size of China so the



John Livingstone Mutyaba on Lake Victoria, doing his



water from such lakes as Victoria, Albert, Edward and George covers 18% of the country's surface. With better planning and implementing cage fish farming technologies, Ugandans would improve their economic standing and reputation for quality fish.

fish that comes from China?" Mutyaba gueried with a chuckle. He referenced China's seafood that has been under repeated scrutiny for chemical additions that violate safety regulations.

He added that with cleaner water and neutral pH levels of Lake Victoria waters, "Our fish tastes better, is better for you and is very unique in the world."

Mutyaba has found that most fascinating. He says that learning women and younger people in and research should be more Uganda quickly embrace new ways than about grades and degree of doing things, namely raising fish in cage technologies instead of capture fishing, while older men are reluctant to give up their traditional capture fishing lifestyle.

"Wives have a better understanding of what is needed to support their families," Mutyaba said. "The men come in during the selling process but often take the money for themselves. . . or destroy or steal from somebody's cage." Fortunately, he added, the Ugandan enforcement of laws for theft and destruction is more frequent to deter these incidences.

As with all good researchers, the more he knows, the more Mutyaba wants to know. Among his many mentors and influencers is Thomas Gurley, a former UCU Fulbright Scholar and a research and development director at Aerop Development. With Gurley, now living in South Carolina, the project was on land, focusing on tomatoes.

Other projects have involved cassava and livestock, namely cows. Since completing Bishop Senior School (Mukono) and through studies at Bukalasa National Agricultural College, Martyrs University and now Egerton,

Regarding societal relationships, Mutyaba has found learning

"I hope what I have informs policymakers, maybe even to provide incentives for the more economical cage fishing," he said. "I hope that my engagement changes the traditional fishing mindset of some locals...that they can see the added market value not just locally but for loading onto trucks to Kenya, the Congo, South Sudan and even exported to the UK."

The students, who have been studying Within Mutvaba's hectic schedule since February 2021, graduated at a lowand ambitions, God is ever present, he said, quoting his favorite scripture from Joshua 1, verse 5: No one will be able to stand up against you, all the days of your life ... I will

(This story is supplemented with two short videos created by students at Uganda

never leave you not forsake you.

Christian University. The lead developer was Jimmy Siyasa, a post-graduate student in the UCU School of Journalism,

Media and Communication. The videos on cage fish farming and voices of farmers about <u>iing challenges around Lake</u> Victoria are on the Uganda

Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the School of Business.

The students were taught the economic potential of the birding industry, important bird areas in Uganda, professional bird guiding as a career, marketing bird watching locally and globally, establishing and running a birding tour company, as well as

Uganda Christian University have flown Uganda has more than 1,000 bird species, according to the African Wildlife Foundation, making the country one of the richest destinations for birding i key ceremony held at Uganda Christian Africa. More than half of the continent's

"We have a big gap in the tourism recognising them as birdwatchers. The industry will grow faster," said Agnes three-month course, taught as an evening

Joy Kamugisha, one of the

The course was made possible through

Forty students who enrolled for the conservation and protection of bird inaugural birding course class at the

University's (UCU) Nkoyoyo Hall in bird species are in Uganda.

They were awarded certificates industry, but with such training, the **Fact** programme, was conducted at the UCU's graduates.

had the opportunity to a partnership between UCU and the learn how to associate Private Sector Foundation Uganda, with my customers, how where the university won a sh238 million to develop good business (about \$65,000) grant to train students, ethics, bookkeeping and especially those pursuing the degree of many other things that I

Mary Kajumba, an official from the Private Sector

30th birthday," Kamugisha

pelieve when I put into practice, at the graduation ceremony, said one my business will live to see its of the major aims of the agency is to equip citizens with employment skills

UCU Vice Chancellor Assoc. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi (second from left) helps cut cake at the birding course

Students were

potential of the

birding industry,

important bird

areas in Uganda

and professional

bird guiding as a

career.

taught the economic

Business Mrs. Elsie Nsiyona; and Dr. Martin Lwanga, former Dean of the School of Business

graduation. Also pictured are Mrs. Mary Kajumba of the Private Sector Foundation; Assoc. Dean of the School of

and empower them to be able to set up projects that can solve the high level of unemployment in the country.

"Birding is one of the areas that doesn't

Union leader at the school.

could not afford the fees at the school.

the tuition fees of the students in need.

take to patients at the nearby Gombe Hospital.

need much capital," she said.

"I am convinced we are training job creators and not seekers...We hope that this project is rolled out to other universities all over the country after being approved by the National Council for Higher Education."

Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, the UCU Vice Chancellor, said the course fulfills his objective of imparting skills-based

"I didn't understand the aim of the project at first, until I was given a lecture on how practical it was, fulfilling my long-term desire of creating skillsbased courses that can bridge the gap between industry and the classroom Mushengyezi said.

UCU is the only institution of higher learning offering a course in birding Johnnie Kamugisha, a professional birder and the CEO of Johnny Safaris, is optimistic about the impact of the

"This project will produce professionals for our industry. I assure you that with such a course, we shall uplift the tourism industry in this country," Kamugisha, one of the course's instructors, said.

Examples of previous help offered

In 2016, when Agaba joined A'level at Gombe Secondary School in

As a leader, he thought of a signature activity that would leave an

Agaba and his colleagues rolled up their sleeves and began a

On many occasions, they contributed money to the school's

school community to help these disadvantaged students.

fundraising campaign among students and other members of the

financial aid purse. From this purse, the school got money to meet

At one point, they collected up to sh700,000 (about \$200) from

his fellow students to donate items, such as soap, which they would

students, for this cause. And that was not all. Agaba also often rallied

central Uganda, he successfully contested for the position of Scripture

indelible mark. At the time, there were brilliant, needy students who

Ex-Guild President Amponda lightens burdens of the needy



Kishero brings more Ugandans to coffee table

By Agatha N. Biira

(This article was edited from the March 2022 publisheď version)

has put bread on the table. As early as the time when she was in secondary school, Kishero knew the value

of the crop for her family's survival and as gifts to others. Whenever she wanted to gift someone, it was either a coffee seedling or coffee beans. Within the past year, Kishero established

a business enterprise that she hopes will enable the whole world to get a feel of the aroma of her family's coffee. Kishero's initial idea was to operate a nursery bed, but her mother, Olive, convinced her that it was more lucrative to roast coffee.

Thus, Olivaz Coffee, a brand named after Kishero's mother, was born.

"I was inspired by the encouragement from people about our coffee, and yet we had never promoted it as our specific brand," said Kishero, a third-year student business after her mother was a reward to legacy."



Regarding local sales and despite being the second leading

Low consumption

producer of coffee in Africa and the leading exporter in the continent, Ugandans themselves consume less than 10% of the country's coffee. Despite that statistic, Kishero is hopeful that the aroma and the brand that she is building around coffee will play a role in inviting more people to the beverage table.



Olivaz coffee after packaging. Inset is Kishero, a third-year law student at UCU and coffee entrepreneur

University (UCU). Prior to joining UCU, in the coffee plantation. Kishero attended Nkokonjeru Primary

School and Seeta High School, both in because of coffee," said Kishero, of eastern "They are the ones who showed me the She said naming the coffee-roasting source of income. I wanted to keep the roasters and grinders," said Kishero. "To

of Bachelor of Laws at Uganda Christian her for the sweat her mom broke working She says she was introduced to the process of branding coffee by her friends who were "We have grown up, studied and lived already in the business at Wild Coffee Bar. Uganda. "It has been my family's main way; how to try out roasting, where to find date, they still counsel and guide me."

Kishero started the business with capital of sh500,000 (about \$140) that she earned from another business she operated in 2020. She says part of that money was used for buying packaging materials for the coffee. She owns a roasting and grinding machine, but since she lacks expertise in that process, another place, where professional roasters take the beans through the "medium roast."

"If I were to roast and grind something, I would do it for home use only," Kishero explains. "When it comes to my customers, I want to give them top notch coffee. I go to professionals to roast and grind."

The support Kishero got from her family has enabled her business to grow steadily. She says the law degree course that she is pursuing has helped her learn how to start

"At the time I was beginning my business, we were starting a course unit called Business Association, where we were taught how to operate businesses and companies," Kishero explains, adding: "So, whenever I got stuck somewhere, I consulted my lecturers and applied the knowledge they gave me to my business."

Time permitting, Kishero hopes to start a Coffee Club before leaving UCU as well as to improve on a marketing plan.



Christian

University was

launched in 1997

Amponda packing Covid relief food items that were donated to the needy in 2021

June to July in the same year.

UCU, and through the Amponda Foundation, Agaba was pivotal in during the two lockdowns that provided food to students in hostels Samaritan Primary School, an scholastic materials, sanitary pads the closure of education institutions soliciting donations, which they Uganda had due to the Covid-19 at Kyambogo University, as well as at institution in Mukono for Persons and foodstuffs to help children at was a barrier to securing more could take together to PWDs.

Foundation, a vehicle to boost month lockdown from March to Agaba said they gave out money to the beneficiaries of the foundation's donated \$225 toward the building of Herbert Mukuru, who also runs a June in 2020 and for 42 days, from help students with other survival goodwill. The foundation teamed up a PWD-accessible shopping centre similar charity - Upendo Mikono with the UCU Guild government, in Mukono. "We came to the rescue of The university students have students and well-wishers from While dishing out donations Agaba first met Mukuru at the students, mostly those who were not been the only beneficiaries the Mukono community and during the Covid-19 lockdown, latter's restaurant. The next time he in hostels," he said, adding that they of Amponda Foundation. Good mobilized resources, such as Agaba's charity struggled. He says met Mukuru, he was in their class,

pandemic. Uganda had a three- UCU. In addition to the food items, with Disabilities (PWDs), is one of the school. The foundation also funds. That's when a UCU alumnus,

UCU teaches schools e-learning best practices

(This article was edited from the January 2022 published version)

The <u>Uganda Christian University (UCU)</u> <u>e-learning</u> candle is spreading its light to other institutions in the country. Among the recent beneficiaries is Greenhill Academy, a group of Christianfounded primary and secondary schools in Kampala. Leaders from the Academy met with UCU e-learning staff for a virtual learning seminar in December 2021.

During the UCU visit, Greenhill Academy officials gained a better understanding of how UCU accommodated learners virtually during the Covid-19 lockdown when in-person learning was halted

Greenhill Academy Rector Joy Veronica Maraka led the Academy's staff who attended the seminar. The head of the UCU Online Distance Learning Department, the Rev. Dr. Jessica Hughes, provided insight into how classes are taught on the platforms, highlighting how the switch to online classes has improved her work. She said students prefer having small assessments, which makes it easier to track their progress during the semester. "Online classes have provided flexibility in the way lectures are

conducted because lecturers can evaluate students through small quizzes and assignments, which

enables critical thinking," she told the delegation from Greenhill Academy. The Rev. Dr. Hughes proposed the evaluation of students on a "more During UCU's 22nd

regular basis through videos, quizzes graduation ceremony and questions that allow for more on October 22, 2021. critical thinking to eliminate the Uganda's education aspect of cramming." During UCU's 22nd graduation Museveni, said she ceremony on October 22, 2021, was impressed by Uganda's First Lady and education UCU's "robust online

minister, Mrs. Janet Museveni, said education programme" she was impressed by UCU's "robust and encouraged the online education programme" and University to share best encouraged the University to share practices with other best practices with other institutions. institutions. UCU's Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs, the

Rev. Dr. John Kitayimbwa, who also attended the seminar, said the University was ready to partner with Greenhill Academy.

minister, Mrs. Janet

"This is a great opportunity to find ways of changing the way teaching is conducted," Kitayimbwa said, encouraging Greenhill Academy to take the lead and show other schools that online learning is the way to go, and that with it, "the possibilities of learning

Kitayimbwa said the University has invested a lot in the networking, IT department and library database, which work in unison to provide a seamless experience for students.

The University has invested about sh1.4b (\$395,000) on e-learning, management information systems and networking,

Recently, UCU Partners donated \$50,000 (about sh170m) to the University to help it expand the e-learning platform. Mark Bartels, UCU Partners executive director, said the organization contributed the funds following a call by the university's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, for external funders to support the eLearning

Greenhill Academy Rector Joy Veronica Maraka thanked UCU for hosting them, stating that they will "pick ideas from the session and follow in the footsteps of UCU in evolving education in Uganda."

At a virtual dialogue held in August 2021 to discuss the impact advised institutions to consider a rigorous shift towards online distance learning and service delivery, so that future lockdowns do not affect operations and learning.



A Greenhill Academy teacher asks a question during the seminar held last year

As part of the Uganda Christian University (UCU) and Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology anniversaries of 25 and 100 years, respectively, this year, there will be a public lecture on October 26, 2022. The invited guest of honour is Uganda President, Yoweri Kaguta

Planned to take place in Nkoyoyo Hall on the UCU Mukono campus, two former UCU Vice Chancellors will be featured during the lecture, addressing the topic, "The beginnings of Private Higher Education in Uganda." The Rev. Prof. Stephen Noll, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, Trinity School for Ministry, Pennsylvania, USA, will be the lecturer; and the Rev. Canon Dr. John Musisi Senyonyi, mathematician, academic and evangelist in Mukono, Uganda, will lead the discussion. The two VCs were interviewed by John Semakula, head of undergraduate programs with the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communication;



Former Busoga Bishop Michael Kyomya, former Archbishops Mpalanyi Nkoyoyo (RIP) and Luke Orombi with Senyonyi and Noll



Ex-Vice Chancellors speak about past, future of UCU

Fact

Livingstone Mpalanyi

Nkoyoyo (RIP) was the first

Chancellor of Uganda Christian University. The UCU Chancellor is

always the Archbishop of the Church of

Uganda. To honour Nkoyoyo's services

to the university, UCU named its

multipurpose hall after Church of Uganda's sixth archbishop.

Nkoyoyo died in January

How did you see your role as VC at UCU, and what years did you serve at the helm?

and Patty Huston-Holm,

Communications Director,

Uganda Partners.

I was the first, the "pioneer" Vice Chancellor, although I did not take office until September 2000 (Bishop Eliphaz Maari, the former Principal of Bishop Tucker College, had served as Acting VC from 1997-2000).

Becoming VC was a reach, as they say. My prior roles in the States had been as "deputy." În addition, I had to learn specific customs in Uganda, for instance, going first in the banquet line, even ahead of my wife (contrary to the "ladies first" American tradition)!

I have sometimes said that I tried to emulate two practices from African leadership as I observed it. The first was the "council of elders." I worked closely and listened carefully to my colleagues on the academic and administrative staff. In many cases, I was learning "how do you do things here?" At the same time, I came to see that, as the "big drum," my word settled matters and would be carried out by the staff willingly and promptly.

I suppose my greatest contribution was as vision-bearer for Uganda Christian University as an authentically Christian institution, fleshing out what the "Christian" in its title stands for. I think UCU's founders in the Church of Uganda held that vision implicitly, but I brought experience and wisdom from the long tradition of private Christian education in the United States and from my involvement in confessional the increasing secularism of Western Christianity

The exciting challenge for me was to discern how the vision of Christian higher education might work itself out in an African setting. Here I had much to learn and much to trust God for.

I served as VC of UCU from September 2010 to the end of August 2020, a total of 10 years. But I worked at UCU in different portfolios from

I was the CEO of the University and hence, head of all the different aspects of the University's

Above all, I considered the importance of keeping faithful to the Christian Identity of UCU. This meant keeping the functioning of the University at its best in all its services, especially to students, as a testimony to Christ. This included the preservation and animation of Christian faith, keeping academic life on its cutting edge, retaining a committed, competent

and growing staff at all levels, ensuring modern infrastructure, financial integrity, and developing and maintaining engaged partnerships.

I was also intent that UCU should set standards both in Uganda and the Africa region.

Why is it important for UCU to celebrate 25 years of existence and for Bishop Tucker to commemorate 100 years?

Anniversaries are celebratory milestones, and milestones are important to recall the road one has taken in the past and the way forward in the future. I frequently reminded students that a university or college is a "dear mother," an alma mater, who would ever be part of their heritage. None of the original Bishop Tucker College students are alive today, but they are on its honor roll. Most of the alumni of UCU are still alive and taking places of importance in Uganda and beyond, but they, too, will be remembered in its

Anniversaries are times of reflection on the journey so far, and an opportunity for recasting and replanning, considering the changed or changing market landscapes. Thus, celebration of the past 25 years of existence helps to maximize use of the past to build a greater future. The same applies to Bishop Tucker's 100 years.

In 2013, the same Divinity School remembered its conception in 1913; I would expect this year's national and global challenges and opportunities facing the church and the work of mission so that her graduates are well equipped for effective dissemination of the Gospel of Christ.

One key challenge of UCU's former and current Vice-Chancellors is mobilizing funds to run the University. How did you address

It is indeed a heavy burden for the Vice Chancellor to seek funding to maintain the University's mission. As an American, I was able to raise funding for student scholarships and for capital projects from outside donors, especially through our Uganda Partners societies in USA, UK and Australia.

However, the main source of recurrent funds came from students and their parents. We struggled with keeping fees moderate while at the same time making clear that an excellent university is a cost-intensive enterprise and that investment in a student's education is worth

UCU's top achievements in the past 25 years

What would you say are the top three achievements at UCU in the past 25 years?

I suppose I would see the top three achievements during my tenure to be: 1) preparing UCU to receive the first Charter in Uganda; 2) planning and executing the expanded campus and its facilities; and 3) keeping its focus on the Gospel by calling and equipping clergy and lay leaders for the church,

First, UCU has shown that a private university in Uganda can compete favorably and even beat a well-financed public university to be the university of choice for many bright students. Among the private universities, none has achieved UCU's status.

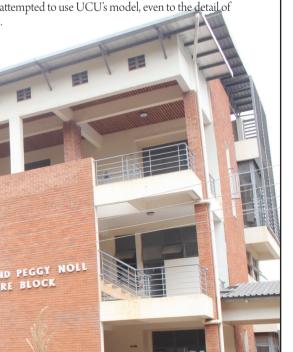
Many of their Vice Chancellors came to consult with me for best practices

and regarded my voice in the public square as their voice. Some of the public university Vice Chancellors also benchmarked with UCU.

UCU has shown that a Christian university can produce graduates that the market prefers to others because of the added values and Christian ethos. Ironically, this also worked in the favor of staff members who sought job opportunities elsewhere. In fact, given the volatile environment in universities, UCU has shown that the Christian worldview gives stability to university education and students can enjoy the best atmosphere for study.

UCU pioneered defining a 'Christian university' for Uganda. This is important because prior to the founding of UCU, no university was intentional about Christian faith matters, even those that were church-

Now, all universities in Uganda founded by Christian churches or by Christians, have attempted to use UCU's model, even to the detail. worship services.



The Stephen and Peggy Noll Lecture Block

the sacrifice made by a student and his or her

Senyonyi:

In reality, almost every problem I faced could be reduced to meagre finances for running the University. Consequently, the burden of financing was increasingly cast on students. The bottom line was exercising stringent controls and adherence to cash flows, as we tried to implement the budget.

During my first years, the Ugandan economy was not too badly off and we afforded the basics of the recurrent budget. In due time, however, we used the undesirable and very limiting method of nominal increments on fees to the chagrin of our students, but they bore it stoically most of

It was a bigger challenge with financing infrastructure development. Throughout my 10 years as VC, we did not access external financing for infrastructure development. So, most of the time we used innovative ways to get by, cutting costs as necessary, cautious shopping and bank loans to build the infrastructure, but all the time mindful to use money for its intended purpose.

Something interesting happened one time when students asked me to increase fees to put asphalt on the dusty roads. They had called for work on the roads.

After sensitization of the Guild Leaders about the costs involved, computed as a cost for each student, the leaders suggested we do it. It is the only time students asked the University to

How would you describe the role and value of the Church of Uganda regarding UCU? Some voices say the Church should hand over UCU to government (to become government aided) to alleviate the challenge of increasing operational costs. What is your

The founding of Uganda Christian University, along with Bishop Tucker College, is part of the sacred history of Church of Uganda. The Church through its House of Bishops upholds the Christian identity of UCU, and the Archbishop, as Chancellor, has the right of regular or special visitation.

The Government is responsible to provide for the education of its citizens, which is why it reached out to private and religious bodies to take on the burden as the university population

Just as Government partners with business and NGOs for the common good, so there are ways it can and should work with private hand over UCU to government control would be contrary to its Charter and its distinctive identity and would be a tragic mistake.

Senyonyi:

The Church of Uganda's proprietorship of the University is vital for preservation and energizing of the original purpose and vision for founding the University. Whereas Church of Uganda involvement in the University is legally delineated, and maybe, restricted, the Church has been given latitude and forums through which this can be done.

In particular, the Church should strengthen its advocacy for UCU to Government, to the Church organs and to the general public. The Church needs to lend its extensive credibility to UCU, to use its large and diverse membership and its public clout to advocate for legal frameworks that enable an environment supportive to the thriving of private education in Uganda.

The Archbishop and all Church of Uganda

leaders owe it to themselves to keep keen interest in what is going on at UCU.

Handing over UCU from the Church to the government would be a mega-mistake for several reasons. People suggest this easy way due to financial hardships, but the University can find ways to survive through temporary hardships.

First, I know of no Government aided university in Uganda, and there is no such arrangement in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA); the Law exclusively provides for either a public or a private university. Government can only own the

Secondly, Governments are incurably inefficient and insufferably bureaucratic. This would inevitably hinder innovative management ways for running the University.

Thirdly, all assets of the University would now be vested with Government, not the Church of Uganda, including its precious historic structure and maybe, the archives of the Church of

Finally, and most importantly, a take-over would nullify the original vision of the Church, as is already happening with another university that Government is taking over. UCU would have to become a secular university under such an arrangement – it would become like the poorly run public universities we have in Uganda

Where do you want to see UCU in the next Noll:

I would hope that UCU will maintain (and deserve) its reputation as a centre of excellence and for providing a "complete education for a complete person." As it matures, I would expect that UCU will continue to develop new programmes, research partnerships, and international networks. At the same time, I would hope that it can continue to provide a firm foundation for the undergraduate population in their personal, professional and spiritual lives.

UCU should be on the cutting edge in research within its fields of study.

UCU should be producing graduates that are taking up leadership roles in all spheres in their countries – in politics, business, law, medicine, agriculture, engineering, and others.

UCU should be a continent-wide first-class university mentioned among the top twenty or so in Africa, and routinely attracting students from across the continent.

Tracing back the origins of one of UCU's oldest buildings as it makes a century

It's **100** years



By Esther Byoona

(This article was edited from the March 2021 published version)

Gray hair. Walking stick. Wrinkles. These are perfect descriptions of a

If that centenarian is a building, its architecture is likely to be in sharp contrast with other younger buildings around it.

The appearance of Uganda Christian University's (UCU) Bishop Tucker building, which joins the club of centenarians in 2022, seizes attention.

Its medieval architecture starkly differs from that of most buildings on the Mukono campus. The neatly arranged baked clay brick walls tell of a time when such a building was associated with royalty and colonial administrators.

A closer look over the center arch of the building's entrance confirms this. The year "1922" is inscribed. Uganda was under colonial administration from 1894 to 1962. The Bishop Tucker building, marking 100 years, was named after the late Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker, an Anglican Bishop of Uganda from 1890 to 1911. Prior

of Eastern Equatorial Africa. The walkway to the building is paved with baked clay tiles. A plaque at the easterly side of the building's entrance tells the origin of both the faculty and the facility that houses it. It reads: "To the Glory of God... the memory of Alfred Robert Tucker, D.D, LL. D, Bishop of Uganda 1890-1911 ..."

to that, he was the Anglican Bishop



Download a QR code scanner app on your smartphone and use it to scan this code, to take a virtual tour of the Bishop Tucker

npleted in 1922. Bishop Alfred

building was named, was the Anglicar

Bishop of Uganda from 1890 to

Robert Tucker, after whom the



it. Its baked clay brick walls are

evidence of the type of construction

materials that were being used for

high-end structures at the time of its

The year was 1919

Hall, which is the university?

boardroom, on the other. The Vice

Chancellor's office is also situated in the

building and sits in between the chapel

"The construction of the Bishop Tucker Theology College started in November 1919, only two years after the completion of Namirembe Cathedral," Eng. David Kivumbi, UCU's director of facilities and capital projects, says. "While buildings of the time were constructed using mud and cow dung or sun-dried brick and straw, baked brick and cement were used for these (Bishop Tucker and Namirembe)."

Mahogany-wood arches serve as a ceiling of the building. They are held up by Y-shaped wooden columns that seem to be grayed by time.

From a bird's eye view, the Bishop Tucker building forms the shape of an E," Prof. Christopher Byaruhanga, Theology

"On one end, you have the Thornycroft Chapel," he says, with a guiding hand. "On the other, you have the Principals' Hall." Between these are the equally storied offices and the Faculty of Theology.

The Principals' Hall is the university's boardroom. In it are framed photos of the Bishop Tucker Theological College's principals from inception in 1922 until when it became Uganda Christian University in 1997. The building also houses the office of the UCU Vice age. All furniture here, from the pulpit to

The musty air of worn wood welcomes visitors who walk through the Thornycroft Chapel door. Everything about the chapel signifies its age, except for the new Yamaha speakers cleverly installed on either side of

Buganda, Tooro, Bunyoro and Busoga.

Chwa, also provided building resources

for the Anglican Church's Namirembe

Buganda's king at the time, Daudi

The aisle is hemmed by mahogany pews, made several shades darker because of the pews, is sculpted, as opposed to being

that "time is moving." An electronic

clock was installed in 2007 to mark

10 years of Uganda Christian

At the front right-hand side of the chapel, two unique instruments sit silently - an upright piano and a large drum. The piano's lid reads "Ralph Alison and Sons-

Its keys are out of tune and ivories yellowed by several decades of striking. The hide on the drum has been smoothened to baldness by countless years of drumming it.

Together, these instruments tell of the intercontinental partnership that brought Thornycroft and the entire Bishop Tucker building into existence.

Royalty from four kingdoms – Buganda, Tooro, Bunyoro and Busoga – provided original resources.

Buganda's king at the time, Daudi Chwa, was also credited for providing building resources for the Anglican Church's Namirembe Cathedral.

Clock installed on building

Tucker

bishop in East

By Ivan Tsebeni

(This article was edited from the October 2021 published version)

Every 30 minutes, a clock on an iconic building at Uganda Christian University (UCU) goes "ding **Fact**

The sound of the bell on the clock on the Bishop Tucker Building is a reminder to the institution's community that "time is moving." However, for nine years,

no one at UCU heard the sound. An electronic clock, installed in 2007 to mark 10 years of UCU, malfunctioned five

Upon learning that the clock was no longer working, Prof. Stephen Noll, the first Vice-Chancellor of UCU, offered to buy a new one for the building.

That offer was fulfilled over the summer

of 2021 when Noll sent the clock through that mobilizes financial support for the

According to Noll, who joined the university in 2000 as its first Vice Chancellor, the Bishop Tucker

Building is part of the heritage of the Anglican Church of Uganda and of Bishop Tucker Theological Theological College (which later became UCU) College, which was ounded in 1913.

was named after English Noll said the sound from Bishop Alfred Tucker, the the clock should remind the first resident Anglican UCU community about the importance of keeping time. "The clock reminds us that

'my times are in your hands' (Psalm 31:15)," Noll said.

Welcoming the gift, UCU's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, said "the massive sound bell inside the clock tower looks spectacular at night when the clock face is illuminated."



An engineer uses a grader to fix the clock on the tower on Bishop Tucker Building

Despite finesse in many fields, gypsum walls seem to be Nasasira's calling



By Emmanuel Kizaale

(This article was edited from the August 2021 published version)

Kareem Nasasira's ability to work beautifully with granite, paint, wood, marble and board is striking. He does not just throw his energy willy-nilly.

The level of concentration he puts in the art he is developing is seen in the quality of work he

Perhaps, that explains his choice to concentrate on interior art. Despite his finesse in many fields, gypsum walls and ceilings seem to be his calling. And he creates them with so much ease, giving out exquisite results.

"I have loved art since I was a child," he said.

"Even when I am on a break, I just love to sit down and draw sketches of things, just anything."

The idea of venturing into interior design has been in Nasasira's mind since secondary school at Namirembe Hillside High School in Kampala. His gratification comes from the smiles on people's faces.

Little wonder that in 2017, he chose to pursue the Bachelor of Industrial and Fine Art at Uganda Christian University (UCU).

He felt it was the only way to give his God-given talent a professional training.

"When I was still at UCU, we used to go to other universities to attend exhibitions, and I discovered that the kind of art that was being taught in many universities was limited in scope, Nasasira says.

"UCU gives you a variety and it is up to you to choose where your passion lies."

According to Nasasira, UCU offered choices in ceramics, sculpture, pottery, fabric and several others to give students an "avenue to explore and understand" strengths.

Now that he had chosen interior design, how would he launch himself into the self-employment world without any startup capital? Nasasira was battling with finding answers to that question. It kept him awake at night.

One particular sleepless night in his second year of studies, he determined to save some of his money he had to live on as a

Since he had limited time, as made a drastic decision to spend only 20% of the pocket money he was given. The rest went into the

When he completed his course, Nasasira had his work cut out.

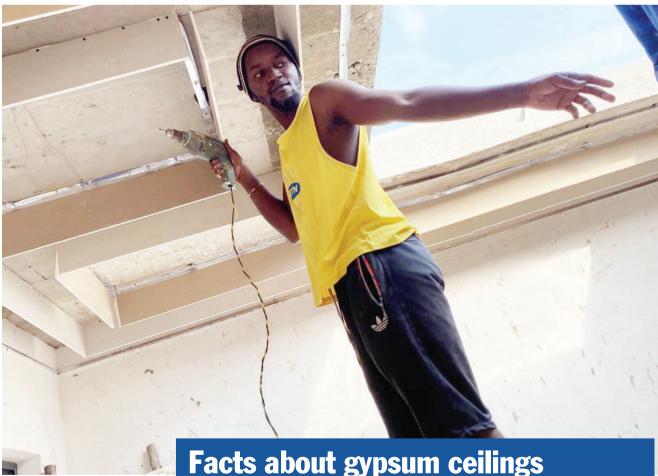
He had to buy the essential equipment he needed for the kind of artwork he felt he was industrially ready for. That is how Nas Interiors company, the brainchild of Nasasira, was born.

The company employs four other youth who work as electrician, painter, carpenter and

He. however, dreams of employing more, when his business portfolio grows.

around the time when the whole him to advertise his business.





cumbersome for the technicians.

temperature.

Many gypsum ceilings are imported when ready to install. To fix the boards, the

technician screws them on to a metal. In most cases the metal frame is attached to the

Many of the gypsum boards are smooth surface, making the installation process less

One of the advantages of gypsum board ceilings is its ability to insulate the room from

The other advantage that experts take pride in is gypsum's ability to resist heat, hence

calcium sulphate, with the intention of providing a product that does not embrace high

protection from fire. One of the materials used for making the boards is mixed with

outside noise, a suitable option for people who love comfort and peace.

Nasasira at one of the sites

world was shutting down to limit the effects of the Covid-19 virus. And businesses were folding as a result of the lockdowns.

But he is grateful to the friends he made as a student. It is through their referrals that he has been able to keep in business.

"You come to UCU as strangers at the beginning of the course but, Nasasira was never afraid to at the end, you leave as a family," jump in at the deep end as he he said, as he enumerated the launched his business. It was many people who have helped

Academics study health benefits of local vegetables

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2022 EBENEZER 13

By Vanessa Kyalimpa

(This article was edited from the June 2022 published version)

Uganda Christian University (UCU) academics went into the trenches to establish how the elderly can consume food as medicine to take advantage of the full potential of the health benefits of African indigenous vegetables.

While touted as one of the "magic bullets" to addressing malnutrition and some medical challenges, African indigenous vegetables have been increasingly absent from the table, leading to "hidden hunger" and poorer

So, how can such a challenge be addressed? Researchers at UCU embarked on a year-long study among the elderly in Mukono district in central Uganda, hoping to come up with answers.

The research project, Exploring the Potential of African Indigenous Vegetables for Human Health in Uganda, is intended to be used to unpack the health benefits of African indigenous vegetables.

Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Balyejusa Kizito, the principal investigator of the research, said the main objective of the study is to conduct a human nutritional survey on the effects of consuming fresh African indigenous vegetables in the diets of elderly people in Mukono. Among these vegetables in Uganda are Amaranthus dubius (Doodo); Solanum aethiopicum (Nakati), Solanum nigrum (Ensuga); Manihotesculenta (cassava leaves); Solanum indicum subsp (Katunkuma), and eggplant.

"Through the research, we shall be able to find out the biochemical profile of the African indigenous vegetables," said Prof. Kizito, the Director of Research, Partnership and Innovations at UCU. "We shall also be able to know how much vegetables someone needs to eat for a healthy living." The study, launched in February 2022, is being conducted by UCU's Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and the institution's School of Medicine, in collaboration with Mukono Municipality.

The researchers plan to find a sample of people willing to take part in the study, provide them with African indigenous vegetables for the duration of the study, and take their blood samples before and after consumption of the vegetables, which they will compare and note differences.

Dr. Gerald Tumusiime, the Dean of also is the co-principal investigator of the research, said the study is additionally intended to be used as a platform to teach people how to handle and prepare the African indigenous vegetables.

"The older persons who take part in this study are expected to have improved gut, kidney, liver, and cardiovascular health by the end of the study," Dr. Tumusiime said.

African indigenous vegetables have for a long time been believed to have medicinal benefits, including lowering blood pressure, reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke, reducing chances of contracting some types of cancer and lowering the risk of eye and digestive problems. Dr. Anthony Konde, the medical officer of Mukono Municipality, said that they are willing to work with the researchers to make the study a success.



By Eriah Lule

(This article was edited from the September 2021 published version)

The life of Uganda Christian University (UCU) graduate Denis Kutesa is punctuated by work where he was forced to take two lives to one where he is saving them. He's most recently a nurse but formerly a security guard.

His is a tale of losing and regaining hope. His school cycle took a seven-year break

Kutesa's father, Simon Nsubuga, who had been meeting his tuition requirements, had suddenly lost his job when Kutesa had just completed his A'level. The year was 2009.

For the next seven years, Kutesa went through a storm. He survived the downpour by working as a guard, a primary school teacher - anything and everything to survive. Some of the odd jobs he did were a stark contrast for someone who not long before had attended some of

Fact

has 11 faculties/

schools in the areas

of theology, journalism,

Uganda's elite schools Kutesa, who has freshly completed a Bachelor of Nursing Science course at UCU, studied at St. Mary's College, Kisubi for O'level and Kibuli Secondary School for A'level

education, law, social science, nedicine, dentistry, agriculture, usiness, engineering/IT and For his primary Kutesa education,

attended Nkumba Primary School. All four schools are in central Uganda. When his father lost his job and was no longer able to meet the tuition requirements of his children, Kutesa left home to seek a livelihood elsewhere. He reasoned that it was not wise for him to stay home, to compete for the little resources that

his father and mother – Florence Nakalema – came across. Kutesa relocated to Kampala, where he was employed as a security guard. "Although the payment was low, I was determined to work and establish myself," he said. In order to start earning sh150,000 (about \$40) a month, Kutesa was trained under harsh conditions. The trainees were entitled to only one meal a day. Kutesa finished the learning with good performance.

Masaka, a district in central Uganda. In Masaka, Kutesa mostly guarded banks.

He was relocated from Kampala to

of the soft drink manufacturer – Coca-Cola. During the Christmas festivities, the demand for soda usually goes up, and many of the areas are undersupplied. Thieves are aware of the supply and demand situation, and, on the eve of the 2014 Christmas Day, they attacked the depot that Kutesa was guarding. In the battle with five thieves, he was forced to shoot, leaving two dead. Three others fled

education or midwifery.

That incident traumatized Kutesa to the point that his workplace had to relocate him to another station in a neighbouring district. There, his monthly salary increased to sh200,000 (about \$56).

However, due to tough working conditions Around the Christmas season of 2014, he not last at his new station, later switching to since the institution is highly respected.

was moved from the bank to guard a depot teaching in a primary school although he did not have the official credentials.

Kutesa (behind) sharing a light moment with his classmates

during their internship at Mukono General hospital

Now that he has completed his internship, Kutesa hopes to

pursue a post-graduate course so he can specialise in nursing

As he heads to the hospital wards as his new work station, Kutesa

is fully aware that he needs to be strong enough to tolerate anything

and soft enough to understand every patient he will work on.

What next for Kutesa?

In 2016. Kutesa reunited with his father. whom he had not seen since he left home in 2009. The financial situation at home had changed for the better. Nsubuga beseeched Kutesa to return to school – and said that he was ready to meet the tuition requirements.

After consultations, Kutesa found himself applying for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at UCU. He wanted to be in a career that gave people better lives, instead of taking them. While out of school for seven years, that did not reflect in the performance of Kutesa. There is no UCU semester where his GPA

was below 4.0 of 5.0. He says pursuing his course at UCU made and trauma from taking lives, Kutesa did it easy for him to get internship placements



Drs. Brian and Judith Taylor, nurse education philanthropists through UCU Partners

Husband-wife doctor team plugs nursing gap through partnerships

By Patty Huston-Holm

(This article was edited from the March 2022 published version)

Given the choice between having a doctor or nurse at your bedside, pick a nurse. Brian and Judith Taylor, a recently retired husband-and-wife physician team in Uniontown, Pennsylvania., USA, humbly

make that recommendation. The world's need for nurses is critical. The World Health Organization in 2020 reported 28 million nurses make up 59% of the world's health care workers. There are about two for every doctor. At that, WHO says there is a 5.9 million nursing shortfall. The demand is even greater in

developing countries. For close to two decades, the Taylors have been doing what they can to help plug the nursing gap in one of those countries – Uganda. They have funneled their contributions through the Pennsylvania-based non-profit, Uganda Christian University (UCU) Partners, which, among other roles, provides UCU nursing scholarships

Brian and Judith Taylor's story is one that has influenced countless UCU nursing student stories. The two doctors shared some of what led them to appreciate and understand the need for nurses and why they champion UCU nursing education.

"Too many times, doctors from economically poor countries go to wealthier countries to make more money," said Brian, who first visited UCU in 2005. "Nurses stay behind and care for families,

friends and neighbors to the very end." Judith, who, five years ago, concluded her medical career of decades in oncology and hospice care, has first-hand knowledge listeners," acting as a bridge between the

patient and the doctor, she said. "Most of the time, 70 percent of a diagnosis can come from asking good questions, 25 percent from an exam, 5 Judith, who worked as a nurse's aide in the

"This applies especially in the developing world, where there is limited access to technology." A native of England, Judith is now a volunteer with an interfaith organization, mostly taking patients to evangelism. appointments. Brian started out as a computer scientist, but shifted to general medical practice. Following retirement as a general practitioner, he taught anatomy and physiology to nursing students for three years.

"At UCU and through Partners, I saw a gap in Uganda is simply a continuance critical need and a good organization to of "putting the talents and blessings God help a quality university meet that need," gave us to work.".

Brian recalled of his visit to Uganda 17 years ago. "The Christian focus aligns with our faith-based beliefs. And the wonderful notes from the nursing students let us know how much they appreciate us."

Practicing medicine in disadvantaged countries is not foreign to the Taylors. In their 46-year marriage, the couple has provided health care services both in the United States and abroad. Through church and other Christian groups, they have felt a calling to lend their medical expertise in Bolivia, Honduras and

Both on their own and through the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders (SAMS), the Taylors spent most of their out-of-country time in Myanmar, one of the poorest countries in southeast

In their six years of visits to Myanmar (also known as Burma), they built friendships and provided health

> percent of a diagnosis can come from asking good questions, 25 percent from an exam, 5 percent with a technical test," according to Judith Taylor, who worked as a nurse's aide in the early part of her career.

*We spent a lot of time listening before teaching," Brian said.

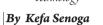
With listening comes understanding, according to Judith who, along with Brian, quickly realized that many people in huts with dirt floors and limited sanitation believed in witchcraft and took advice

life stage. Nurses "are keen observers and
In some villages, Judith recalled, there was a practice of putting pig feces on umbilical cords with a belief this prevents infections. At the same time, she observed one young man with no formalized health credentials correctly identify someone percent with a technical test," according to with leprosy and, as a nurse would, "stay at the leper's side until he got the care he

Their role was one of gently dispelling myths while teaching healthcare and wellness and sharing the word of Christ. In their work, the Taylors incorporate

"It's hard for physicians to think that prayer is the first thing to do," Judith said. "They often think it's the last thing, but prayer should be first, last and ongoing." For the Taylors, as Judith concluded, helping future nurses fill the health care

USA college, UCU solar partnership venture takes off



(This article was condensed from an early July 2022 published version)

In one week, the Uganda Christian University (UCU) kitchen uses 10 tons of firewood, which cost sh1.5million (about \$400). In a year, Ekadu Richard, the head of Royal Hospitality, the company that offers catering services at the UCU Dining Hall, says the university spends a minimum of sh63million (about \$16,700) on firewood.

Two decades ago, the university was spending 10 times less on the same amount of firewood. To put an end to the high expenditure and take better care of the earth's resources in trees, faculty and students of UCU and those of the Dartmouth College in the USA state of New Hampshire came up with a solution. The two parties focused on using solar energy as a substitute for charcoal and wood.

American Richard Ranger, an affiliate of the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders (SAMS) who introduced this idea to UCU, said the project seeks to construct a solar thermal system that is able to preheat water up to 700C (158 degrees Fahrenheit) as it passes through tubes before it gets to the kitchen, to reduce on the amount of firewood used

The exact option for heating water at UCU is one question the teams from Dartmouth and UCU dealt with in the project. Firewood is the primary source of heat for cooking meals for the university community. Of the 10 firewood cookers in the kitchen, six are reserved primarily for heating water, which is used for cooking and washing

utensils in the kitchen. Rodgers Tayebwa, the head of the Department of Engineering and Environment in the Faculty of Engineering, Design and Technology at UCU, **Fact** says that the project falls within the

Uganda Christian UCU engineering department's strategic plan. closed twice during the "As a department, Covid-19 outbreak, both we are looking government-ordered at enhancing the capacity of students

and staff, and also looking at practical solutions to the existing challenge, especially starting with our campus here at UCU," he said. "In most of the work we do, we involve students because the idea is to skill them through practical hands-on

experience." Daniel Tumusiime, a UCU engineering student on the project, said, "As engineering students, there's nothing as exciting as seeing something we've done on paper coming into real life."

Tayebwa additionally emphasised the danger of firewood overuse to the kitchen staff, noting that renewable energy could be the magic bullet for safety and saving money.

Vincent Kisenyi, the Dean of the School of Business at UCU, says the collaboration exposes faculty to applying theory to practice and could involve UCU students going to the United States to "look at interventions at Dartmouth." To listen to the podcast focused on understanding the technological innovation, visit https:// player.captivate.fm/episode/25e498e0-<u> 6de2-4acb-944c-1110abf3a02e</u>



The Uganda Christian University voiding plagiarism.

involve sustained research."

In early April 2022, a budget for approved, but money was not allocated.

centre, talked about centres as "welcoming places to



By Patty Huston-Holm (This article was edited from the May 2022 published version)

(UCU) journey to better writing is decades long. Like most universities, writing at UCU has been taught in foundation (general education) courses and seminars and strongly emphasized in research and lectures about But a centre?

That trek was accelerated with the late summer 2021 arrival of Prof. Tom Deans, American Fulbright Scholar in Uganda and Director of the University of Connecticut (USA) writing centre. In collaboration with UCU academic staff, he drafted a plan. The five-page plan talks about a "hub" where students and staff can get peer coaching. While reinforcing the value of all types of writing for various purposes, Deans commented that "students won't grow as researchers unless they are writing papers that

computers, tables and chairs was

That budget did not include funding to pay the centre's coordinator and tutors. In mid-April, a \$10,000 donation, contingent on a matching \$10,000 from UCU, and from the Muriel Lile Trust of Fenton, Michigan, USA, through the Uganda Partners NGO appeared

On April 25, a letter from David Mugawe, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration, confirmed the UCU \$10,000 match. The writing the centre, which is the first centre, under the UCU School of for any university in Uganda, Education, has a \$20,000 budget while being interviewed in a

Deans and Lilian Lyavaala, the UCU School of Journalism, acting coordinator of Media and Communication. In UCU's new writing that interview, they described such



Hub of the UCU writing centre, located inside Hamu Mukasa Library on the Mukono Campus.

'Transform minds of students'

"There is a big gap

in writing practices,' yavaala, a long-time teacher of writing, says. "Students in secondar (high school) are only taught to pass their exams. The university should overhaul this mindset and strike a balance. It's important to transform minds to let students know how they can and should use writing in all careers."



writing centre, with student, Gelda Nassozi, outside the Foundation Studies building on the Mukono campus.

Scan this QR code to hear a February 25, 2022, UCU podcast about late February podcast through

meet students wherever they are" and writing as the "core of human

Dr. James Busimba, head of UCU's Department of Languages and Literature under the School of Education, which is the umbrella for the writing centre, said that the door for writing tutor applications and student/faculty users of the tutors

"We are grateful that we have come this far and are hopeful," he said. Across the different faculties and schools Lyavaala teaches or has taught, she finds the best writers from all, but especially students studying law, medicine and engineering.

"I begin my classes by telling my students why writing is important, she says of her teaching method in the UCU foundation program.

"Then, I take them through the whole writing process. Writing is not spontaneous, but gradual. One has to think of what one wants to write, gather information, draft it, make the necessary changes and then come up with the final draft, while focusing on the audience. At this stage, the students also get the opportunity to unlearn what they earned wrong."

For Lyavaala, reading and writing were her passions since childhood. Her parents said she was spelling out words at an early age. She would sit for hours, listening to her grandmother tell

In primary, teachers had her lead reading classes. Her love of language helped her attain her master's degree in Literature in 2018 at UCU, where she also had earlier attained her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature

"You don't have to be as passionate about writing as I am to be a good writer," she says.

She echoed what Deans asserted during his time on campus in that the tutors don't necessarily have to be perfect writers but "capable and care about writing."

"Everybody can write," she said. "It's time we stopped saying

Medical student aspires to save lives with faith in Christ



By Muduku Derrick Brian This article was edited from the May 2022

published version)

When I watched Mercy Bikala, 19, enthusiastically lead community worship at the School of Medicine of Uganda Christian University (UCU), I imagined she was a full-time musician. Her eloquent voice, delivered with confidence and enthusiasm, encouraged everybody, including me, to sing along to the hymns and praises.

Shortly after the service, I confirmed that Bikala does music as a part-time activity while passionately aspiring to become doctor. She is a second-year student pursuing a Bachelors of Medicine and Bachelors in Surgery.

She says that spirituality, including that expressed through music, is vital to her today as she studies, and tomorrow as she works. "I turn to God when my energy is low," Bikala said. "My faith in Christ is what fuels me to study and it makes the whole process

'Dedicate more funds to research



Bikala adds that the Christian virtues

of honesty, righteousness, sympathy,

stewardship and the like are pillars that

make a doctor complete and wholesome in

For example, one dishonest practice

she observed during Covid-19 was some

medical practitioners increasing prices

for already hard-pressed patients and

benefitting from the excess funds.

Bikala, who hails from Bududa District in eastern some improvements made by the government to aid the work of medical practitioners in Uganda.

"More funds should be put into medical research," she

"Why import vaccines and yet we could have been able to make our own from

Bikala says that she was excited to hear that reputation as a Christ-centered institution. about aspects in her medical field. She says a week," she said, referring to the medical

school on the Mengo Hospital site. Scientists have often tried to create a she said.

science. However, Bikala says that there are things in nature that even science has failed "Science is attempting to explain things

that God has done," she said. "There is a limit to get answers to." She urges fellow medical students to become knowledgeable medical personnel

who are sensitive and spiritually mature so as to engage in works that uphold the name and glory of Christ. Bikala says that she ventured into medical school because she wants that value addition

"I want to attain skills that will enable me save lives of our people in society," she said.

"For me, that is where I shall derive my UCU having a well stocked laboratory she was accepted into UCU because of its has made it easy for Bikala to explore more

"Here, there is Community worship twice that she has been able to utilize the various equipment like the microscopes and slides to enrich her medical knowledge. "I feel revitalized when I engage in this "The microscopes aid me in learning more

activity. I get the energy to continue with my about micro-organisms like bacteria and endeavors of becoming a medical doctor." fungi, which I study under micro biology,"



Community worship grows at **School of** Medicine



By Patty Huston-Holm with Muduku Derrick Brian and Jimmy Siyasa

(This article was edited from the May 2022 published version)

First, there were five. Then 10. And on a spring Tuesday and under a professionals white tent shelter below darkening skies, there were 50. On the Ides Medicine (SoM) doctor hopefuls.

"I pray, Jesus, that you will cleanse our hearts," a young woman began before bowed heads, concluding, "Father, we pray that you bring your

According to the Rev. Ocen Walter Onen, the 28-year-old UCU-Mukono chaplaincy priest assigned it comes to addressing student to the medical school, participation problems, the UCU chaplaincy in community worship at the "does not work in isolation," but Mengo hospital location has been engages the counseling staff, he said. growing, albeit slowly, in the past five months. Spirituality for UCU's began in 2018 with the vision of future doctors became a priority adding to Uganda's health care following a discussion among the university's theology and divinity leaders in the fall of 2021.

chaplain, initiated the discussion among the clergy. Coming out of Uganda's Covid lockdown, he expressed his concern about the need for added spiritual infusion for the current 230 students who would become pediatricians, surgeons, dentists and other medical

"The work of the chaplaincy is more than coordination; it includes of March 2022, half of the 100 teaching, but most importantly, blue plastic chairs in the pavilion it includes discipleship and were filled by Uganda Christian pastoral care," he said. "Because University's (UCU) School of of discipleship and pastoral care, effectiveness in chaplaincy work requires consistent presence on

According to Rev. Wasswa, community worship exists for teaching, reinforcing a sense of Christian community and a reminder of God's presence. When The five-year SoM program system more physicians that were not only highly skilled, but also encompassing Christian values and practices. SoM planners were aware assignment, the Rev. Alex Kamoga that some professionals mentoring students have easier access to clergy was straddling responsibilities at the and teaching students would not be guidance. Additionally, the Mukono and have the same pressures that

SoM, but he was often stuck in traffic jams, delaying the service. At that, Rev. Alex had little time for one-on-

The Rev. Eng. Paul Wasswa, UCU's



Why the community worship? "We realized we had a population of students not receiving the Christian services that those in other programs did," Rev. Walter said. "Medical courses are full of stress and these students have the same frustrations and temptations that others do." "Science and theology are complementary in wisdom, but God i the ultimate creator of that knowledge and wisdom," Rev. Walter said. "Without our Lord and Savior, the work within the medical discipline would not exist... when you go to a hospital, you ask Jesus to treat yo through a doctor."

likewise, aware of the science vs. student leadership groups and other understanding of scriptures," Rev.

At the UCU main campus in and sexual activity that can lead to Mukono, as well as at Kampala, UCU Kampala campus with the believers in Jesus Christ. They were, UCU students engage in sports, I overcome through my faith and Onen said. "If you partner with God," is power in the Word."

religion debate that continues today, activities to relieve stress and youth Onen said. "Romans 12 addresses pressures related to drugs, alcohol that we need to be a living sacrifice." pregnancy out of wedlock.

"I tell them that I am single, too,

sacrifice references service or offering to God.

In this day's message and as mid-

you are headed for prosperity."

UCU School of Medicine students

pray during community worship

on their campus at Kampala's

Mengo Hospital.

day Islam chants echoed in the background, Rev. Onen referenced Luke 11:1-4 and the Lord's prayer, reminding students that "our Father is in heaven" but that "He also is

Such is among the messages that Rev. Walter delivers to the 3-5 students, mostly female, who come to him privately, with problems and questions at the SoM campus. His messages are about faith, strength to have it, forgiveness and understanding. One lesson he repeats is the importance of Christian character in a world where "beauty can fade.

On this particular day, he closed his message with a story about a man who borrowed a spear from his brother with the intent of using the weapon to stop an elephant from destructive behavior. When In Apostle Paul's Romans 12:1, the elephant took off with the spear, the lending brother was angry and not forgiving. "There is power in "God has a plan for all of us," Rev. forgiveness," Rev. Onen said. "There

UCU gets over sh520m in dental equipment



(This article was edited from the February 2021 published version)

After several months of waiting, modern training equipment arrived in mid-February 2021 for use by the newly designated Uganda Christian University School of Dentistry. This story, by John Semakula, narrows on the contributions specific to the USA-based Midmark and MedShare entities.

Uganda Christian University (UCU) has received a consignment of dental equipment worth \$141,488 (over sh520m) donated by Midmark, a USA-based manufacturer of medical and dental

The equipment was delivered free of charge to the UCU School of Dentistry in Mengo, Kampala, courtesy of an offer by MedShare, a shipping company also based in the

The equipment includes: five Ultracomfort dental chairs; LED Dental Light; Separator Tank Assembly, a Powervac P7 Base; Powerair Oil-less Compressor and a Midmark M3 Steam Sterilizer, 230V.

The Dean of the UCU School of Dentistry, Dr. James Magara, described the donation as generous, critical and foundational in setting up a dental training lab. UCU started an independent School of Dentistry in the middle of 2020 and is equipping its training laboratories with the most modern equipment

"We have a lot of heartfelt gratitude Director of the UCU Partners,



that the donors were able to see this said Doug Fountain, need and also saw it fit to respond to it," Dr. Magara said.

"They have a very big heart to help UCU or parts of the world that are not well resourced as where they are. When you train a doctor, you have actually invested in a lot of lives because that doctor if well trained will go on to work for a few more

Joana Bideri, a third-year student of dentistry, also praised the donation. "The dental chairs in particular will help us get used to using them before graduating," she said.

Mark Bartels, the Executive

the former UCU Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Development and External Relations, connected his organization (UCU

Christian Health, an

MidMark.

Doug is the

nealth and Christian perspectives. The organization shares information and provides a forum for dialogue, networking, advocacy and fellowship to a spectrum of Christian organization

internationa Doug expressed obtain a charter from the excitement the charter was delivered by Midmark esident Yoweri Museveni on the pening of the technology park rtion at the University's

MidMark says...

Mitch Eiting, the global philanthropic and corporate giving manager for MidMark also said the organization was very excited to work with Uganda Christian University Partners to donate dental equipment to the UCU School of Dentistry.

"We believe this equipment will help support the dental school by allowing students to continue focusing on the technical skills needed to treat patients successfully. Also, we are pleased that the additional equipment will allow the school to increase student registration, leading to more dental professionals much in demand in Uganda," Eiting said

UCU for training of a new cadre

of dentists. "This is one of the

professional training as good

children," he said.

Journey to clinching the coveted PhD opportunity

most overlooked areas of health

dentistry affects health, self-image

and nutrition for men, women and

"I came to know them (Midmark)

through another association several

a great example of partnership done

well – timely assessment of need and

dentists in Uganda," Mark noted. "We believe that as UCU trains medical and dental students in a Christ-centered context, they will be prepared to serve and make a difference to thousands who very much need quality medical and dental care.

According to Mark, in 2019 when ormer UCU Vice-Chancellor, Dr. John Senyonyi, was on a working

visit to the United States, he made a

connection with MedShare, which

later offered to ship the equipment

to Uganda. The organization

(MedShare) helps in shipping

donated medical and dental supplies

to hospitals and medical schools

"After receiving the items from

Midmark, MedShare added more

medical supplies and equipment and

sent the container to Uganda," Mark

said, adding that UCU Partners

contributors provided \$25,000

"UCU Partners is grateful to be

in partnership with UCU and the

School of Medicine and School

of Dentistry and to provide some

of the equipment needed to train

the next generation of doctors and

(over sh92m) for the container.

around the world.

With the statistics from the Uganda Dental Association indicating one dentist for every 142,000 Ugandans. Midmark's donations comes as a "God sent gift" to bridge the doctor to patient gap in the country, Mark

The donation also comes at the early 2020 backdrop of a directive by years ago and had the chance to share the East African Medical and Dental about UCU several times with one Practitioners Council for UCU to of their executives. This donation is stop admitting new students until it acquiring more dental equipment information sharing, coordination for the school. The University has with local partners, understanding of since complied with the directive what the donors will need. Now let's and is continuing to recruit new see this make a difference in the lives students.

How Mwima's life was molded by pain and pen



(This article was edited from the July 2021

Two tragedies occurred in the early life of AIDS. Two, the son of his departed sister succumbed to the same scourge. Those two deaths left an indelible mark on Mwima that later determined his career path.

"Due to structural and institutional barriers, poverty and stigma, my sister, Alice, could not access the care that she needed, leading to her death," he said.

After watching his sister and nephew die helplessly, he made it a mission to fight against HIV and AIDS. And he is now a medical social worker, as well as an academic at Uganda Christian University (UCU). Mwima recently won a four-year, merit-based scholarship worth \$70,000, including tuition and stipend, with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Times Higher Education world university rankings, the university ranks number 48.

The offer did not come on a silver platter for the 36-year-old, who is the first person to pursue a PhD program in his family.



 $\hbox{``I applied to five PhD programs and I must}$ thank God that the University of Illinois at School of Social Work. According to the Urbana-Champaign was impressed with my academic credentials and my research interests," he said.

Looking back at the path of material scarcity that Mwima has trodden since his birth in the eastern Uganda district of

 $Mwima, a son of retired primary teachers, previously worked as a {\it clinical}$ social worker at the Mulago Most At Risk Initiative (MARPI) clinic in Kampala. At the clinic, he managed cases of vulnerable adolescents. He is a research fellow for the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) implementation programme, a new HIV prevention intervention.

He holds two master's degrees — the first in public health, from Lund University in Sweden (2015) and in sociology (2020), from Makerere University. His undergraduate degree, which he obtained in 2009 at Makerere University, was in sociology.

Five years ago, he was invited to UCU as a guest speaker. From then, Mwima has been lecturing in sociology, anthropology and social work. He also supervises students conducting research at both undergraduate and master's level at the institution.

Mwima considers his employment at UCU a blessing because it has offered him opportunity to translate knowledge through lecturing, an experience he believes has afforded him friendships with fellow academics and students.

The teaching job also came in handy during his PhD application. "The teaching experience is critical and matters while PhD programmes

are assessing applications for admission," he says. Mwima intends to invest plenty of his post-PhD time conducting research to inform sexual health

Mwima, a 36-yearold, is the first person to pursue a PhD programme in his family. ""I thank God my research interests impressed the

University of Illinois.

Budaka, he cannot be more grateful for where he is now.

Mwima also earns his daily bread working for the Ugandan government in the health ministry. He has been a medical social worker for the National AIDS Control Programme since 2016. A celebrated national trainer for the Ministry of Health, well as serving as a social epidemiologist.

Mwima has educated over 500 social workers, as well as spearheading various HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns.

With the Covid-19 Mental and Psychological National Taskforce, Mwima has contributed to the development of the national psychosocial plan for Covid, as

Rival Guild President campaign manager now deputy student leader

By Muduku Derrick Brian

(This article was edited from the February 2022 published version)

How often is the campaign manager for a defeated candidate offered a top position with the winner? Rarely.

But that's what happened to Kivuna Jonathan Ahurira when the aspirant he directed lost the race for Uganda Christian University (UCU) Guild President. "I was home after a long day's work when

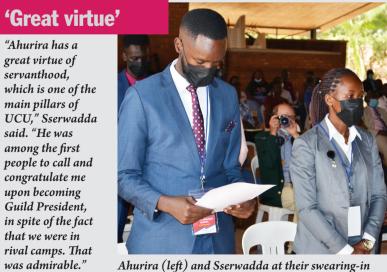
I got a surprise call from the victor, Racheal Sserwadda, informing me of her intention to appoint me Vice President," he said. "I felt surprised but joyful."

Ahurira, a UCU student working toward a Bachelor of Business Administration, gave Sserwadda, a Law student, the green light, but it was not over yet. He had to go through another hurdle of being vetted by the UCU Guild Parliament – where a vast

majority seconded the appointment. As expected, many in Ahurira's camp in looming.

"Ahurira has a

great virtue of servanthood, which is one of the main pillars of UCU," Sserwadda said. "He was among the first people to call and congratulate me upon becoming Guild President, in spite of the fact that we were in rival camps. That was admirable."



the campaign to elect Ayebare Phillip Bravo In fact, some said Ahurira disengaged with in the strategies to use during campaigns." the campaign team when he sensed a loss

But Ahurira disagrees, noting, "I endured saw this move to support a rival as betrayal. and stayed in spite of some disagreements Ahurira noted that during the campaigns, he worked tirelessly because he also saw

Ayebare's contest as an opportunity the the Vice Guild President. serve as a student leader. "My strong footprint, values, and

willingness to serve the students at UCU spoke for itself, even to the rival camp," he But what gave Sserwadda the confidence

to have trust in someone who was in a rival of guild government leadership. "Ahurira created a healthy competition of humility and being a good listener." during the campaigns," she said, noting that her deputy's "respectable character" pushed

Sserwadda's victory in the elections held on November 24, 2021, entered her into the annals of UCU as the institution's third

female Guild President in 2014. got another female Guild President in task that I undertake," he said.

university is in "safe hands" with Ahurira as about my work."

Ayebare said.

"He does not make a decision without consulting people."

Ahurira expects to build on the leadership experience he has garnered as a class leader at UCU for two years as he takes the mantle

He says UCU has taught him "the virtues A Guild Vice President stands in for the Guild President where need be and

also oversees all student social clubs and

associations within the University. When not in politics, Ahurira is a Christian music minister whose face is not female Guild President in its 25 years of hard to catch during worship services at existence. Blessed Murungi was the first UCU's Nkoyoyo Hall. He is a vocalist in the Mustard Seed choir in the University.

Two years later, in 2016, the institution "I like prayer and I put God first in every

"The [Christian] environment at UCU Ayebare, who lost to Sserwadda, said the makes it even easier for me to pray as I go



By Patty Huston-Holn with Vanessa Kyalimpa

(This article was edited from the May 2022 published version)

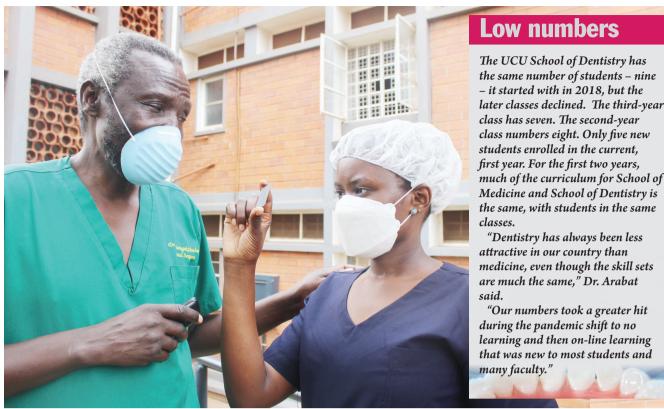
That ache in your tooth can cause a pain in your belly. To be more precise, oral bacteria weakens the stomach's ability to fight infection and could result in inflammatory bowel disease. Vice versa, gastrointestinal issues can yield gum sores.

The human body is one package, according to Dr. Arabat Kasangaki, a dentist and lecturer with the Uganda Christian University (UCU) School of Dentistry. He explains this more than once each day to students and patients at the Mengo Hospital, Kampala, location. On this day, April 5, 2022, and seated at left with yearfour student Ayikoru Hilda Diana and a male patient to his right, he reinforced the importance of using the proper words – explaining well and sensitively.

the mouth, chances are the food is not breaking down properly," Arabat said in response to the male patient's assertion that he has learned to live tear food and that molars crush and with discomfort. "It will not get

After an X-ray, it was determined the patient needed a root canal, a understand, approve and trust. procedure where the infected pulp is removed to save the tooth.

Striving to fill dentistry gap



"If you only chew on one side of **Dr. Arabat and student discussing tooth X-ray**

months, already knows that the feel pain. teeth incisors and canines cut and grind. But as monotonous as that s for a dentist or dentistry student, the patient needs the education to

"A good dentist serves and teaches to convince the patient to let us help Ayikoru, slated to finish UCU's do the right thing," Arabat said. "The five-year dentistry program in 18 way God created us, we run when we with a prestigious dentistry practice dental checkups would help prevent Covid-related, government-ordered

to practice in the country with more economic and service side of his than 45 million residents, resulting in shortage that the Uganda Dental Association (UDA) attributes to limited training institutions. UCU is working to fill that gap – progress stymied with the Covid lockdown.

"In normal times, wellness is difficult to reinforce here," he said. "During the height of the pandemic when many were not earning money, it was even harder for us Dr. James Magara, the SoM dean to send the message that regular

in Kampala, knows the global emergencies like severe tooth pain and faculty, he returned to in-Uganda has 320 dentists licensed virus impact from the education, from happening ... and even harder to recruit students into a career vaccination status and wears a mask where you are in close proximity to

"Dentistry has always been less

"Our numbers took a greater hit

the disease-spreading mouth." Peter Kabuye, a pioneer student of UCU School of Dentistry that was launched in 2018, described the challenges faced during the two on-line semesters because of two

"There are times when Moodle platform was unreliable, so we had to resort to platforms such as Zoom and Google Meets to have real time lectures," he said. Additionally, not all resources on the UCU Moodle platform were free. For dental, as well as medical students, "we had to dig deeper into our pockets" to pay sh3,000 (85 cents) to sh5,000 (\$1.40) each to access real-time lectures, he said.

Despite all the challenges, there was no option, but to persevere to reach his goal of being a dentist.

Tuition from an American friend and the mentorship of both Dr. Ken Chapman, an American and Ugandan dentist who serves as a lecturer at the UCU school of dentistry and director at the Mengo Dental Clinic; and Dr. Martin Aliker, retired dentist, have sustained Kabuye.

"I've always wanted to be a dentist since I was very young," he said. Since age four, his parents' medical insurance privileges allowed him more than two dozen visits to a dentist to learn and reap rewards of good oral health.

Like most School of Dentistry and School of Medicine students person training with Covid-19 The return found equipment

donations through Midmark and the Uganda Partners. These include compressors and work stations with chairs, as well as a simulated

He never scored below 4.00 GPA throughout his three years at UCU. He was one of the best students in

materialize and an understanding that his sight problems would be a

would be more prevalent.

2003 was the year Okumu completely lost his sight.

woke up one morning and my eyes were paining. I could not see anything," he said, with no emotion. "I realized that only God could help me even if I had killed myself, it would not help."

Kibirige, the head of the School of Social Sciences (John to check to see if Kibirige is still head...) The purpose of the call was to tell Okumu that he could study at UCU

"I knew it was God who had given me the chance," he says. "I was surprised that my lecturers had been discussing how to help me and unknown illness, while he was in how they could bring me back to my dream campus. Kasule had lobbied the UCU

Directorate of Teaching and Learning into absolving Okumu of paying fees. They would later grant him the green light for free meals, accommodation and education.

kingdom in eastern Uganda.

Okumu and his fiancée, Abbo

when she visited him at UCU

By infancy, Okumu already had optical complications that only worsened as time passed. As a child, and his environment.

was then left to the care of a paternal his sight.

This was until 2001, when his grandmother succumbed to an only God can help me even if I had

primary five. He was then moved ack to Tororo where he would live until adulthood, in the custody of a paternal aunt.

was among the top 10 students in father could only afford trivial Okumu is a Japadhola from

> a proper oculist-appointment. In 2003, Okumu completely lost

"I remember, I woke up one morning and my eyes were paining. I could not see anything," he said, with no emotion. "I realized that

The research... To help disabled students seeking to

study at UCU and other universities in the future, Okumu's research topic was: Visual Impairment and Learning Capabilities of Students at the University. He hopes his undergraduate research will reveal some of the hurdles, which learners with visual impairments face in higher institutions of learning.

Most importantly, to him, the findings of the study will guide lecturers on how to not only besthandle students with the kind of impairment Okumu suffers, but also to assess the latter based on their learning capabilities.



Graduate

who never

saw campus

By Jimmy Siyasa (This article was edited from the April

News

2021 published version) Francis Okumu could be a modern-

day Mordecai, a biblical exile who saw God's hand draw him from a pit of peril and hopelessness. For Okumu, age 37, his challenge and lack of hope were two-fold: visual impairment and lack of funds.

He overcame these obstacles and graduated from Uganda Christian University (UCU) on December 18, 2020, with a Bachelor in Social Work and Social Administration (BSWSA) – even though his lack of transportation from Mudodo, a hamlet of Tororo district in eastern Uganda, meant he couldn't be there in person. He had no funds to travel from his home to the UCU main

Okumu enrolled at UCU in September 2017 with hopes for a scholarship that didn't initially

"No other university or course of

study was more ideal for me apart from (the social work program) at UCU," he says. "I knew in UCU they would serve other students and me with that Christian heart. I also knew I would get more knowledge about God at UCU, as opposed to studying in a public university.

Okumu says he wanted to avoid non-Christian institutions where lecturers seeking bribes for marks, sexual harassment and other vices

Keeping his focus on UCU, Okumu prayed. One morning in 2018 while he was in Tororo,

"I remember, I

"I also knew the requirements of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) regarding people with disabilities," Kasule said. I can confidently say that Okumu his program who deserved all the help he needed."

Tororo. His mother, Alowo Angelina, died in 1991. He was survived by his father, Ochieng David, who later died in 1994. He aunt. He lived in Bunya, one of the six traditional chiefdoms of Busoga

he could make out colours, shapes, He often suffered severe eye ache

that later escalated into monocular vision. Growing up from an impoverished family, Okumu's treatment such as eye drops and only occasionally could he take the boy to a hospital in Busolwe, a town in Butaleja district. Mr. Ochieng's shoestring budget could not warrant

With UCU tuition fees, meals and accommodation sorted, Okumu

still had other challenges. He needed a laptop with Braille and, at the end of his undergraduate studies, an aide to help him do research. For his research, he could not

single-handedly execute the mundane task. He needed a seeing pair of eyes to support him. Blessedly his faculty permitted him a research assistant with whom he analyzed data and typed the work. But Okumu had to pay him \$40 for the job. This was a fortune, considering the former's financial Okumu says his desire after school

is to serve the community and participate in charity works. While in Tororo, Okumu has always volunteered as a counselor

for his home church. "There are many poor people with disabilities who feel discouraged and think it's over," he said. "I want

Partnerships signed in past year

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement between two or more parties to accomplish a goal with designated action

Under the leadership of Uganda Christian University (UCU) Vice Chancellor Assoc. Professor Aaron Mushengyezi, UCU has signed nearly a dozen such bilateral agreements with both academic and nonacademic organizations.

Initiation of MOUs is aligned with UCU's 2019/2023 strategic plan with the primary MOU initiation and oversight responsibility under the Research, Partnerships and Innovation directorate.

Among the MOUs signed since May 2021

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

Signed on May 31, 2022, by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Finance & Administration, Chancellor, to strengthen related School of Business courses. Co-signer from ACCA Uganda is Charlotte Kukunda, who noted that UCU is the only university in Uganda with more than five academic programs that are exempted by ACCA. This accreditation of courses runs until the October graduation date of 2025.

African Institute of Investigative Journalism (AIIJ)

Signed on May 31, 2022, by UCU Vice-Chancellor Mushengyezi and Solomon Serwanja, the Executive Director, on behalf of AIIJ, this MOU proposes to deepen reporting skills of students in the UCU School of Journalism, Media and Communication.

The collaboration is designed to bring practicing professionals in as visiting lecturers and expand opportunities for student internships focused on investigative



Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi receives lease documents from Prof. Eleanor Maxine Ankrah.

Human Resource Managers' Association of Uganda (HRMAU)

Signed on June 1, 2022, by Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Rev. Prof. Dr. John Mulindwa Kitayimbwa, on Stanbic Bank Uganda behalf of the Vice Chancellor, this agreement is designed to strengthen human resource training. Co-signer is Ronald Bbosa, the Head of HRMAU. Primary curriculum beneficiary is the UCU School of Business, Human Resource Management, and staff

Upon signing the agreement with this Uganda multimedia company on July 1, 2021, Vice Chancellor Mushengyezi said that both students and staff would benefit

working within the Human Resource field.

workplace experience and specialized training in print, television and radio. Co-signer was Kin Kariisa, CEO of Next Media.

Signed on July 28, 2021, by UCU Vice Chancellor Mushengyezi and Anne JJuuko, CEO of Stanbic Bank Uganda, this partnership benefits needy students unable to pay tuition. As part of the agreement ,UCU especially students pursuing a Bachelors in received a donation of slightly over \$20,000 (UGX 75m) to sponsor up to 15 students annually. Each student receives up to \$1,328 (5 million shillings) worth of tuition and

Hanze University of Applied Sciences

Foundation-Netherlands Signed in 2021, the agreement reinforces the from the partnership through acquisition of value of both academic and cultural infusion seminars and sharing of academic materials product samples.

into university teaching and learning. In mid- and programs. The partnership reinforces April 2022, Vice Chancellor Mushengyezi UCU's commitment to partnerships with visited Hanze University of Applied Sciences, international universities and other non-Groningen, Netherlands, where he interacted with some of the UCU students who traveled to the Dutch institution early this year for a six-month exchange related to the Diploma in International Marketing Management.

Tokyo Christian University- Japan

Signed on Jan 24, 2022, this MOU marks the peginning of an unprecedented collaboration between UCU and an Asian university to facilitate joint research and exchange programs for both students and staff. Cosigned by the UCU Vice Chancellor and Dr. Randall Short, Vice President of International

academic, but relevant organizations.

Ankrah

Foundation

Ankrah Foundation Limited – Signed on

facilities located on Besania Hill, adjacei

to UCU's Mukono campus. The Ankrah

Foundation Think-Tank will work closely

further community engagements, research and knowledge generation. The UCU

School of Business has since relocated its

official premises to the Ankrah facilities.

with the Africa Policy Center (APC) to

Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS)

Signed on May 31, 2022, by the UCU Vice-Chancellor Mushengyezi, and David Livingstone Ebiru, UNBS Executive Director, this collaboration cements the roles of research for UCU and of training for UNBS, which is a government agency charged with ensuring quality products. UCU will supply data to inform the standardization of curricula, short courses, student internships, and training. Through UNBS internationally Affairs at Tokyo Christian University, accredited labs, UCU students will be trained the agreement includes participation in on how to undertake quality analysis of

solar-powered lights Nov. 25, 2021, by UCU Vice Chancellor Mushengyezi and Assoc. Prof. Maxine Ankrah Kodwo, the Managing Director By Ivan Tsebeni and founder of the Ankrah Foundation, this MOU is a 10-year lease agreement (This article was edited from the December 2021 published version) authorizing UCU to use the Ankrah

The Uganda Christian University (UCU) main campus has installed solar-powered

Main campus gets

and pledged another sh50m (about graduation. \$14,000) towards the activities of the UCU In December 2020, people operating students' guild government during the businesses on the Bishop Tucker Road year's UCU Guild Run.

The President's contribution was Municipality's local council started especially welcomed in 2021 as the guild's renovations on the road. The constructors plans to conduct a run virtually vs. in- placed fresh tarmac on the section of the person struggled in a Covid-restricted Bishop Tucker Road from

"I'll put in sh80m towards the cause, but Kampala-Jinja road I came with sh30m," Museveni said. "I will to Wandegeya

The President also pledged to help UCU just before in installing security lights on the Bishop the UCU During the university's 22nd graduation distance of ceremony on October 22, 2021, Vice about ½ mile.

Chancellor Aaron Mushengyezi

promise of sh50m in August 2021. Former UCU guild president Timothy Eng. David Kadaga's administration initiated the solar Kivumbi said that light project and dedicated part of the under phase one, 13

proceeds of the year's guild run towards the cause. The annual UCU guild run is organized, in part, to raise funds for tuition support to needy students, and to set up security lights around hostels established near the university

At the guild run event on February 22, lights as part of a movement to promote a 2020, Kadaga also made a request to the Ugandan Government to tarmac the The solar-powered lights were bought Bishop Tucker Road from Mukono town with support from Uganda President to the university campus. The President Yoweri Museveni. In February 2020, agreed to help with the road paving in

> issued a sigh of relief when Mukono the Bus Stop on the

small gate, a ational broadcast station in Uganda, announced that Museveni fulfilled his director

Fact Anglican priest at Church of Uganda radio centre, where UCU's The Standard newspaper is now located , religiously linked up daily at nidnight with Radio Uganda, the sole

to say the closing national prayer, of projects ntil private radio stations were legalised in 1993.



Technicians connect solar panels on Nsibambi Lane

solar-powered lights Mukono campus ocations: on five poles along Ankrah Rise; on four ooles on Nsibambi Lane; and on four poles in the university's

new soccer pitch government's spearheaded first phase, a partnership with Mukono Municipal lights fixed on Bishop Tucker Road from Mukono town to the main campus.

The UCU Guild Vice President for 2019-2020, Ezra Ambasiize Rwashande, noted that the idea of installing solar lights by Kadaga's government was something that Council will enable phase two with solar should inspire future student leaders to think of projects that improve the image of



UCU alum wins scholarship to US college

Ugandan basketball star Abby Priscilla late 2021 won a scholarship to study a bachelor's in business administration course at Grayson College in Texas, USA. The UCU alumna said winning the scholarship had a lot to do with her performance on the basketbal

court. The 19-year-old noted that playing basketball at such a level will make her not only a better athlete, but also a competitive one.

(Article by Ian Asabo, edited from a longer version published in February 2022)



By Eriah Lule

(This article was edited from the March 2021 published version)

While Covid-19 severed sports in Uganda, including at Uganda Christian University (UCU) for nearly two years, it is important to recognise the role athletics continues to play in shaping a well-rounded individual and, for some, propelling a career. Athletes have to be prudent to run both their exam timetable and tournaments because they are subjected to the same time frame and rules as other non-athlete students.

The sports at UCU include football, rugby, basketball, volleyball, netball. handball, wood ball, and tennis. There are many successes of UCU sports alums, including these:

Ruth Aturo

Like her counterpart Hasifah, Ruth Aturo has shined on the national level in football. Having graduated in July 2019 with a UCU Diploma in Business Administration from the School of Business, Aturo notes that she persevered in sports despite her family feeling she would be better suited to focus on another career.

Aturo has soldiered on, being the captain of the national team, the Crested Cranes; and being named the best goalkeeper of the Council of Southern Africa Football Associations. In 2018, she was Uganda football association's female footballer of the year.

Fayed Bbaale

A student in the UCU Bachelor of Busine Administration degree path within the School of Business, Fayed Baale takes no prisoners while on the basketball court. His impeccable performance and shocking spring power have seen him take flights to represent UCU in competitions overseas. Baale has competed in Tunisia, with his club, the Silver Backs, for the Afro Basketball Championship, a continental tournament.

David Dkong

David Dkong, who pursued a Bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, has represented the university as part of the Silver Backs national basketball club. "I used to play basketball for fun. It was when I started playing in the national league, while on scholarship from UCU, that I started playing competitive basketball," Dkong said. "All I can say is UCU just showed me the worth of my talent."

Paul Mucureezi

Paul Mucureezi, an alumnus with a Bachelors in Procurement and Logistics Management, is a player with Vipers Sports

"I don't regret studying at UCU because the University polished my talent, positioned me strategically and, now, I'm shining at my club, as well as earning a living," Mucureezi said.

"I just didn't know what the future held for me, until UCU threw the light to the direction that I needed. I'm grateful and humbled and if there is any need, I will not hesitate to show my appreciation to my alma mater."

Peace Proscovia

A four-time winner of the Uganda Sports Press Association (USPA) netball player of the year award, Peace Proscovia was the first Ugandan to play professional netball in the United Kingdom.

The captain of the Uganda national netball team is a multi-talented player of basketball, handball and volleyball, but more known for her exploits in netball. With her academic and netball roots



Nassuna Hasifah

Nassuna Hasifah, a graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication within the School of Journalism, Media and Communication, is a forward for both the Uganda national women's team (The Crested Cranes) and UCU Lady Cardinals in the Federation of Uganda Football Association (UFA) Women Super League.

At only 24, she is a household name in Ugandan women's football.

Nassuna's awards include Female Player of the Year in the 2016 Airtel-FUFA awards, Most Valuable Player and top scorer awards in 2019. On May 5, 2022, Nassuna became the first player in the Uganda Women's Premier League history to score 100 goals.

in UCU, from where she pursued both bachelor's (2013) and master's degrees in Business Administration (2016), <u>Proscovia</u> of the world's leading goal shooters."

<u>is a world-class netball player.</u> An October 2021 Sky Sports story described her as "one

Desire Aloysius Ruhweza Ayeera Desire Ruhweza Ayeera was a student in the UCU School of Business. He has been there for top-notch American football competitions such as Common Wealth Games in 2017 and World Rugby Dubai in 2019, among others. "I am always privileged when I am

called to play at the National team, although we don't play as many competitive tournaments as UCU rugby team," said Ayeera. "But I thank them for always keeping us fit and by the way giving the advice, recommendations and papers always

needed." UCU has state-of-the-art sports facilities and a good record of sporting activities. Uganda Christian University teams have over the years won several championships and sporting accolades and are not about to stop.

Ex-UCU female athletes train girls in football

By Ian Asabo

(This article was edited from the March 2022 published version)

Football is a man's game. Women should sit and enjoy it being played on the pitch. These are two of the gender biases that have strengthened the bond among four former female footballers in Uganda.

Bridget Nabisaalu, Mercy Nabulobi, Collines Ahumuza and Ruth Akao – all alumnae of Uganda Christian University (UCU) – have formed an organization to further the access and acceptance of women

The Women in Football Uganda (WIFU), an organization birthed in November 2021, has so far registered 15 girls, who are being indoctrinated into embracing football as a sport for everyone.

Nabisaalu said the girls who registered early are from teams in Mukono. However, she said, there are plans to expand the registration to cover the whole country.

"WIFU partners with the girls' teams to coach them," Nabisaalu added. The program targets girls below 17 years.

The organization's role is not limited to coaching the girls on how to play football, but also teaches them other life skills that can help them off the pitch. "Many coaches teach girls how to play football, and that is all," Nabisaalu says, adding: "Other aspects of life are not taught, which, I think, is a detriment to an athlete's development."

Nabisaalu and her compatriots have in the past helped UCU's team win prestigious rophies at the national level. Nabisaalu played for the UCU Lady Cardinals for ome time, before becoming an assistant coach of the same team. Ahumuza is a

trainee coach for UCU Lady Cardinals Akao retired and is the current coach for Muyenga Soccer Academy in

"We are working with girls in different age groups, which allows us to be flexible in our training," Nabisaalu said, noting that they give the trainees the basics of personal hygiene as well as discipline to ensure they become "complete footballers and exemplary sportswomen."

In addition to the one-hour session on pitch with female coaches, the mentees are taken through issues concerning menstrual nygiene, discipline, mental health, public speaking and financial literacy.

Last year, since schools were in a Covid-19

lockdown that meant no classes during Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. However, this year, since schools have now opened, the sessions are held every Saturday. The venue for the sessions is the grounds for Champions United FC in Kauga, Mukono. It is not just the stigma against female footballers that the mentors face as a challenge. The founders of the organization say some coaches at academies are reluctant to let their players participate in the mentorship program, thinking that they may be snatched by other teams. Financial constraints, including the ability to get equipment, also have been a challenge. Lady Cardinals head coach Christian

Magoba praised the quartet for their commitment to the mentorship project, saying that he is confident the program will have a positive impact in the community. "I am proud of what these ladies are doing both on and off the pitch," he said.

"It takes a lot of commitment to undertake an initiative like this."