



Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology

Tribute



It is hard to eulogize any person -- to capture in words not just the facts and the dates that make a life, but the essential truth of a person -- their private joys and sorrows; the quiet moments and unique qualities that illuminate their soul. How much harder to do so for a woman who has seen it all, yet remained so strong and full of hope, hope for a better future, thoughtful and hard working.

In her effort to improve the livelihoods of the local communities caused by dwindling fortunes of the sugar sector, Mama Christabel was committed to fulfilling her late husband Dr. Robert Ouko's wish to build a Sugar Training Institute to address declining sugar productivity and profits. She believed that the potential of sugar sub sector in Kenya is immense and can revitalize livelihoods if fully exploited.

It was on this basis that Dr. Robert Ouko Memorial Research and Training Institute idea was conceived under the patronage of Mama Christabel. The idea was initiated in 2014 by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOUST) and Muhoroni Development Strategic Association (MUDESA) to advance research and teaching outcomes in the field of sugar sector with the aim of addressing the socio economic well-being of Muhoroni communities and by extension improving sugar based economy in Kenya. The proposed institute is to stand on a six acre piece of land donated to the University by Mama Christabel Ouko. The facility will consist of three core research programmes (1) Clean Germplasm and Diagnostic Research (2) Co-product Research and; (3) Technology and Innovation supported by two cross-cutting programmes on technology transfer and capacity building.

Through this initiative, Mama Christabel has taught us and demonstrated the power of action; the power of ideas; the importance of community empowerment; and the need to live harmoniously. She demonstrated that ideas cannot be overshadowed by gloom, or extinguished by self-pity. She turned her negative experiences into strength to work for the good of the society. Mama demonstrated that ideas are not enough. No matter how right, they must be chiselled into action. She was practical, testing her beliefs against the hard surface of circumstance and history.

It is most unfortunate that Mama Christabel did not live to see her dream come true but as a University we are more motivated to push the project forward if not for anything, for her honour. To all those who want to share Mama Christabel's dream, let us join hands to actualize this dream. Let us strive to finish the work she started.

The Late Mrs Christabel Ouko

***What a magnificent and humble soul she was. We will miss her deeply.
May God bless the memory of Mama Christabel Ouko. May God Rest her Soul in Eternal peace.***