

Dr. Susan Kiguli Recognised for her Academic Achievements & Raising the University Profile

Makerere University College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) has recognised and appreciated Associate Prof. Susan Kiguli for her excellent and innovative contribution to creativity and scholarship of poetry.

Kiguli was recognised as Uganda's "Lord Star" and encouraged to keep shining on 11th December 2023 at a ceremony held at Fairway Hotel in Kampala. She was presented with a bouquet, a plaque and a cake.

Celebration started with Eddy Wamalas song, "*Ani yali amanyi! Okujako Mukama Katonda*" meaning who knew except God.

The college recognition follows Kiguli's recent Lifetime Achievement Award (2023) in Italy at the Vercelli Seminar (on 25 October 2023) as the first Black African recipient. During that award ceremony in Italy, Dr. Kiguli launched her book that won her a new prize called, the "Ali sul Mediterraneo Libri & Cultura" international award.

Handing over the gifts, the Principal CHUSS Prof. Josephine Ahikire said the college prides in Kigulis achievement.

"As a college, your achievement is our achievement. We celebrate you and we feel proud. We feel so honoured that you are one among us", Ahikire stated.

Prof. Ahikire commended Dr. Susan Kiguli for her modesty and noted that despite the fact that staff are modest, Kiguli is the "*Nabamodest*" meaning *the modest of all*.

"Prof. Kiguli, you are a star. Please keep shining. You motivate students and when you have lectures near the Principal's office, know that you have an extra student. In the corridors, the quadrangle Kiguli is always smiling. Please keep smiling", Prof. Ahikire commended

The Principal proposed and pledged to initiate the culture of college-wide recognition on grounds that achievers deserve a celebration.

Dr. Saudah Namyalo, a student of the celebrant Susan Kiguli and, the Dean School of Languages, Literature and Communication, spoke about Assoc. Prof. Susan Kiguli as her teacher, a friend and colleague.

While taking them in a course on communication skill at her post graduate diploma in translation, Dr. Namyalo remembered how Kiguli emphasised the need to look out for the small details after every piece of writing.

"An whenever I write, I hear her voice to be aware of the small details and this is one of the traits of Susan that have enabled her reach the heights of her work in poetry. In you Prof, Kiguli, we see a figure that is celebrated across the world. We are proud of you and all is by God's desire," Dean Namyalo said

Kigulis Teacher Prof. Abasi Kiyimba said the celebrated poet appeared in his class as a first year in 1989 when he was teaching language and literature as he still does today. He said Kiguli was a very determined student, anxious to absorb everything that he said and asked very difficult questions at the end of every lecture.

“She was more than just a student. The first course work I gave her B++ and she wanted to know why I had not given her an A. I showed her how to work for an A and the next course work she remained up there”, Prof. Abasi recounted.

Abasi recalled that over her two undergraduate years, Susan Kiguli proved to be a leader while organising the symposium of Okot B’Ptek, Kiguli gave the lasting impression of the character of Lawino, very active in the interpretation of song at that time when people had not discovered the secrets and treasure in the texts.

Prof. Abasi also narrated how Kiguli looked at him as a teacher and a person behind the teacher adding that, he had the honour to be introduced to the Kiguli family

“I got stuck in her family and when the mother was at her sick bed, she called me and said Susan trust you so much and if she ever wrongs you, always forgive her. That gave her a blanket cheque to say things that others would never get away with.”

Susan is such a magnificent character and still with all her academic achievement she is always my very modest young sister to me. I am happy for that, I have glory in her achievements and I look forward to her rising higher and higher”, Prof. Abasi remembered

Abasi challenged Dr. Kiguli to keep writing saying, he will keep nagging her till she attains the rank of Professor.

Moderating the celebration, Dr. Fred Nabutanyi ushered in Dr. Kiguli to speak with chants SK SK!SK.. a shortened form for the name Susan Kiguli.

“ You have got me this time. I really don’t know what to say. I am so overwhelmed and I have kept telling myself not to do what my mother used to do to crying public. I really did not see this coming and yet they say, people in Literature are supposed to be foresighted, read the climate, understand and unravel underpinnings, interpret situations and uncover the unexpected.

I thank all of you for seeing it fit and putting a spotlight on me. You are very right, spotlights make me shake. I don’t know where to begin and what to say ”. She said

In her life and achievements, Kiguli said, family means a lot in what she could explain. Raised by a single mother (RIP) after the death of her father (RIP) at the age two, Kiguli spoke fondly of her late mother explaining that in all the time that she lived till her demise at the age 67, she never spoke negatively about her Late father Georg William Kiguli.

Similarly, Kiguli appreciated CHUSS for choosing to speak only the good in her, despite her odds.

“I really don’t know what to say, that you have chosen to make me a good example, to make what you think are my strength lit my name instead of my flaws and I really must thank you so very much. I must thank you from the bottom of my heart for centering me a proud Makererean”.

Kiguli narrated that she was excited when she came to Makerere university because she came as a single parented child and they were told many things about single parented children when they came to a place where there were no rules on what they do.

“I came so determined that people who may be brought up by single mothers or fathers can also be something. I also came very aware of the loaded heritage of Makerere University”

Kiguli narrated that while at Gayaza High School, they were told that it is at Makerere where you get the best orators, where you would find Mamdan, Nsibambi and Ali Mazrui.

“They told us that when Mamdan and Nsibambi argue, the chairs would stand up and clap. So I wanted to come to this palce where chairs stand and clap” Kiguli said. Chairs have not clapped but:

“ Makerere has opened doors that I never expected would be open. I have stood by the side of Wole Soyinka, and I was in 2020 in Nigeria, I never expected. I have photos walking side by side with Ngungi Wathiongo” , Kiguli said amidst applause that she comes from Luwero, Nakaseke district-deep and down there in the village.

“I coming from there, never expected to rub shoulders with what they call, cream la cream in the Literally world! In 2011, my mum was sick and was invited to the US through the African Humanities programme to read at the Library of Congress. I was the second African Writer after Chinua Achebe” She said.

Kiguli wondered how and acknowledged the song , “*who knew*” adding that her life is orderd by God and her recognition is from God.

Apart from God and her mother who is a big figure, Kiguli said, she has been inspired by her teachers who held her by hands an so many other people that are eloquent and passionate of what they do.

By:

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