

## Pomp and colour as we mark our 6th Graduation Ceremony



One of the graduates celebrates his academic achievement with family and friends during the MKU 6th Graduation Ceremony held on July 25, 2014 at Happy Valley Grounds, Thika. Hon. Dr John Muyingo, Minister of State, Higher Education, Republic of Uganda, was the chief guest. The event was graced by Chancellor Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chief Executive of Commission for University Education Prof. David Some, Uganda High Commissioner to Kenya H.E Agnes Wapakhabulo, and Hon. Ahmed Noor Fahie, Minister of State for Education, Republic of Somaliland among other dignitaries.

## 6th Graduation Special

Honorary Doctorate awardee wows crowds with his moving Acceptance Speech....

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Dr. George Njoroge, now MKU alumnus

### Chancellor bereaved



Chancellor, Prof Victoria W. Wulsin

*The university Chancellor Prof Victoria W. Wulsin has lost her father in law. But in a clear testament of her courage and commitment to the university, she has braved the grief*

*and graced the 6th Graduation Ceremony. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Stanley Waudu on behalf of the entire Mount Kenya University community sent condolences to her family.*

# Happy Valley, Happy Graduands



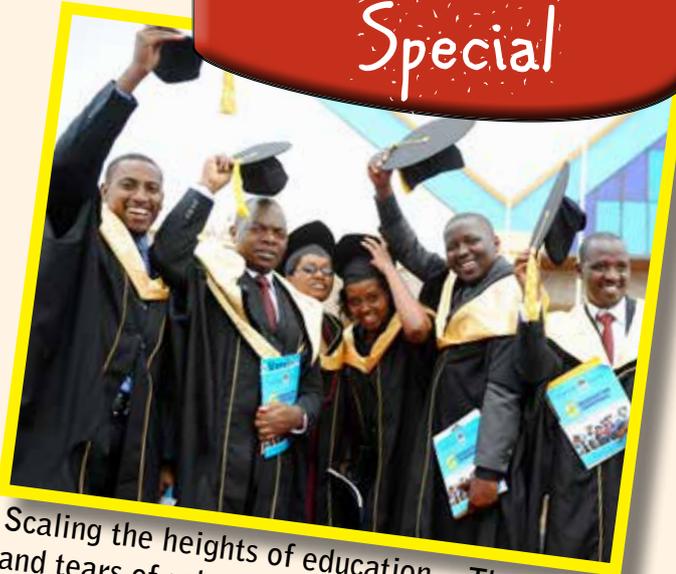
HATS OFF to the more than 5,000 graduands who braved the chill at the Graduation Pavilion. The 6th Graduation Ceremony heralded a new future in their professional careers.



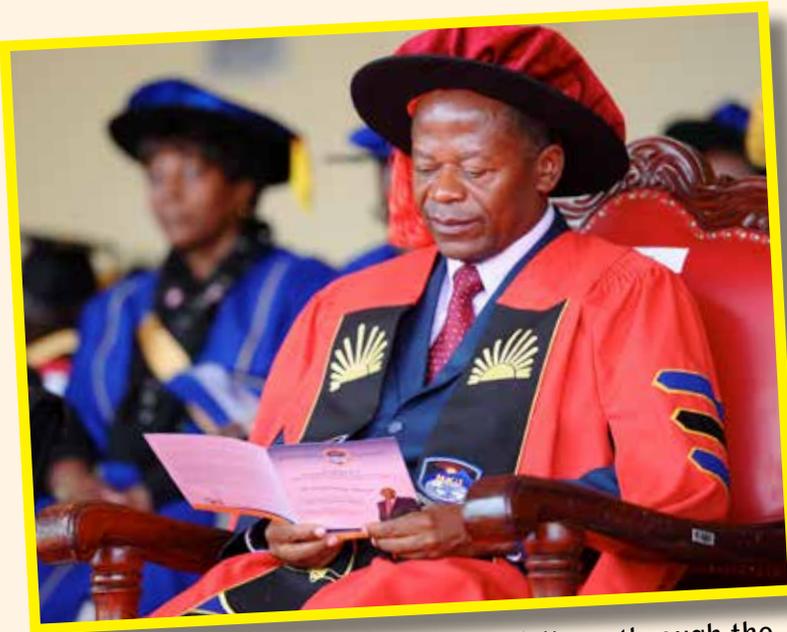
TETE-A-TETE: Vice Chair of the MKU Council Dr. Vincent Gaitho (left) chats with Hon. Dr. John Muyingo, Minister of State, Higher Education, Uganda. Dr. Muyingo was the chief guest.

**“Setting trends in nurturing innovators and entrepreneurs for achievement of Vision 2030.”**

# 6th Graduation Special



Scaling the heights of education....The sweat and tears of relentless study had finally bore fruit.



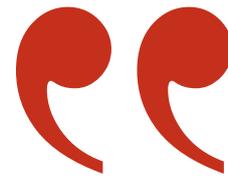
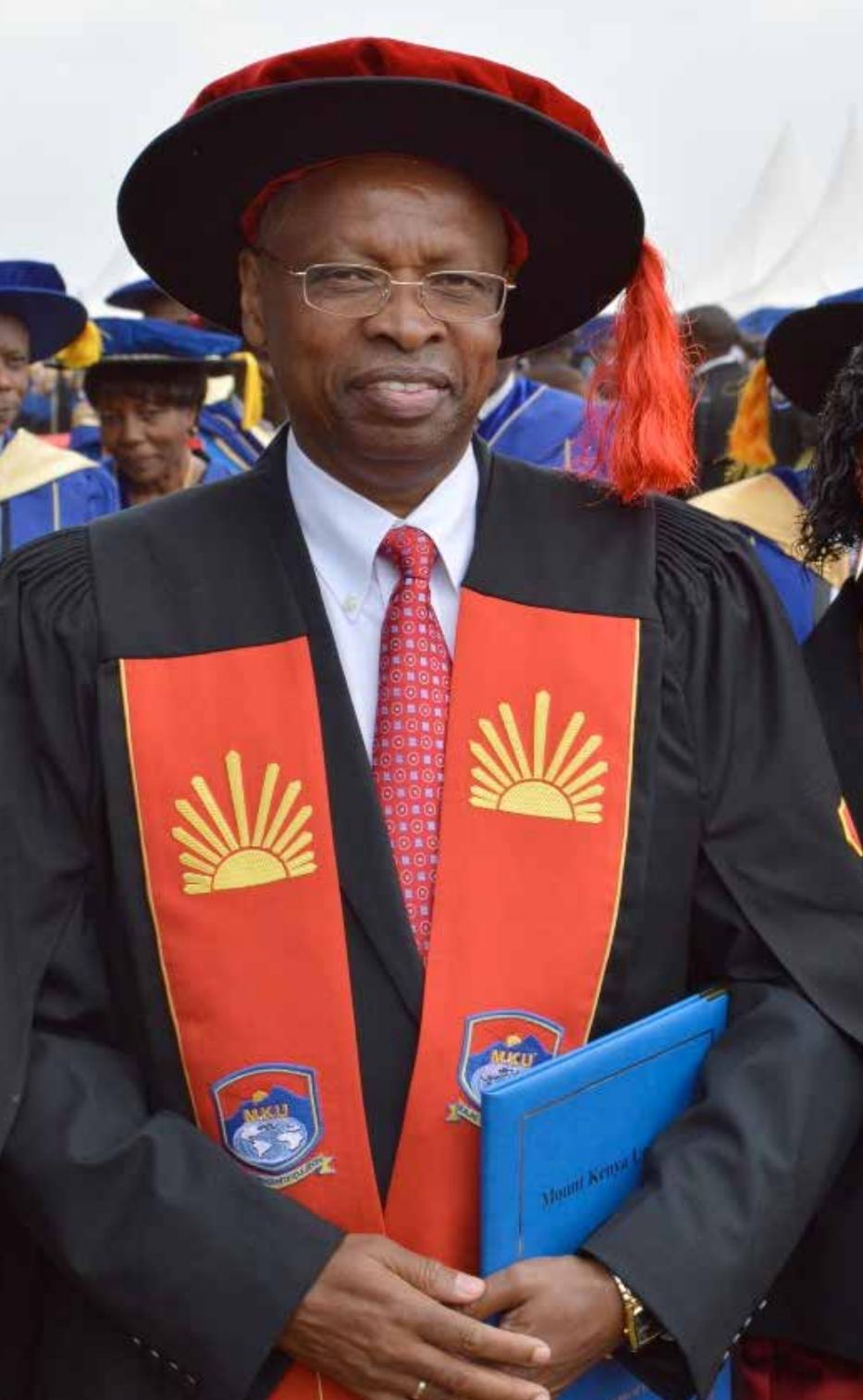
Chief guest Hon. Dr. John Muyingo follows through the citation booklet of Dr. George Njoroge. Dr. Njoroge, an organic chemist and brains behind the Victrelis™ drug received an honorary doctorate



Dr. George Njoroge and Chancellor Prof. Victoria Wulsin after he received an Honorary Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Science. Dr. Njoroge's academic achievements belie his humble beginnings.



MKU Council Chair Prof. Grace Njoroge leads the chief guest Hon. Dr. John Muyingo in the academic procession.



*Of all the honors that have been bestowed upon me in the last few years, this one comes closest to my heart.” -*

**Dr. George Njoroge**, Honorary Doctorate Awardee.



Dr Njoroge, adorned in MKU academic raiment, and right, receiving his honorary doctorate in Pharmaceutical Science from Chancellor Prof. Victoria Wulsin.

*Dr. George Njoroge delivered a memorable acceptance speech during the 6th graduation ceremony. The graduands were encouraged, faculty was challenged and parents gained courage to bolster their children’s dreams. We publish it in full:*

# “THREE THINGS THAT WORKED OUT WELL FOR ME”



**“** Let me start by saying that I feel greatly honored to be a participant of this event since I know exactly what it means to all of us who are here today. Of all the honors that have been bestowed upon me in the last few years, this one comes closest to my heart. Thank you to MKU for making me feel appreciated – especially in my own country! Thank you Grad-uands for the endurance that you have demonstrated in successfully completing your studies and thus, providing me with the opportunity to come all the way from United States and celebrate this event with you. To all, I graciously accept the MKU Honorary Degree award.

**THIRTY FIVE YEARS AGO,** I was sitting on similar chairs as you are today and excited about my future prospects but also scared to death about what was yet to come. A number of things went through my mind and many of them were frightening: For example, there was the worry of what kind of a job I would get after graduation or who would be my future partner in life and would I live a meaningful life whereby the society would accept and walk with me as I moved forward? The notion that most of you would have similar questions and worries today, was the driver for my coming here to accept this honorary degree, but more importantly to also have a chance to share with you some of my life experiences and hopefully, someone in your midst might find them inspiring enough to assist them in their pursuit of a better future.

**LET ME REWIND BACK A LITTLE**

**BIT TO MY EARLY LIFE.** I was born in a village about 40 miles from here called Kamuchege by a single mother, by the name of Alice Nyau-cha, who is here in the audience. But guess what – after completing my primary school education at Kiawairia, I was admitted at Thika High school, a school that is just a stone’s throw-away distance from here. Coming from an economically challenged family, there was a lot of uncertainty in my life some of which directly affected some of the decisions that I made at that time. For example, although I performed very well in my academic life and being a class prefect from form 1 to VI; I still did not regard myself worthy of attending the second higher level of education which at that time was ‘A’ – levels. I vividly remember when asked by our career master to fill out the “A”-level secondary school choices, I just left that provision blank and opted to apply to the then Kenya Science and Kagumo Teacher’s college as my 1st priority choices; my main objective at that time was to acquire a gainful employment as quickly as possible, start a family life and support my extended one. It took the intervention of several of my teachers, who after realizing that I was not in the list of students selected to join the “A” level class despite my excellent performance in my ‘O”-level exams – drove all the way to Githunguri to look for me and eventually convinced me to change my mind to joining the ‘A’- levels class. I joined Thika High School “A” level- class and eventually became

a Deputy School Captain. – Once again, although other people could see great potential in me, I lacked self-esteem. Case in point: at the end of every academic year, Thika High school used to have a day when parents and family would be invited to be briefed on the state of school affairs. One of the major events that normally took place on that day was presentation of awards to the best performing students in each class category. Normally the school would have a renowned person invited to officiate the occasion. During my form six year, our guest speaker was the late Professor Joseph Mungai, a previous Vice-Chancellor of University of Nairobi.

**IN THAT PARTICULAR YEAR,** I was the recipient of the coveted Biology Prize for the best performing student in that class, thus, when Professor Mungai, a bona fide expert in Biology proceeded to present me with that award, he was conspicuously overwhelmed with joy and specifically requested me to make a point of visiting him upon entering medical school the following year – little did Professor Mungai know that I had not elected to join the school of medicine despite my great performance in biology; I had instead opted to pursue a degree course in Science, hoping to major in either botany or zoology – my choice, as strange as it might seem had been influenced by a class trip we made to Malindi Marine Park where we were hosted by the Game Warden. I was blown away by the kind of powers and responsibilities the game warden commanded – fleet of Land

Rovers, numerous glass-bottomed boats, a big mansion for his family, large body of workers- you name it – he had it all – After that trip, it was perfectly clear to me that would be my dream job – and all it required was a 3 year BSc degree as opposed to the 5 years medical degree.

To cut a long story short, after my first year in college I realized that my real passion was not in biological sciences but in organic chemistry. I excelled in this subject and received a scholarship for graduate studies at Case Western Reserve University (interestingly enough this is the same university that your esteemed Chancellor, Victoria Wulsin attended – in-fact she was a class ahead of me).

**AFTER GRADUATING FROM CASE WESTERN,** I joined Schering-Plough pharmaceutical company where my group invented Victrelis, the first Hepatitis C protease medicine to treat the deadly Hepatitis C virus that infected ~ 150 million people world wide. The discovery of Victrelis took 16 years of intensive research to accomplish and was plagued with numerous failures, however, the struggle to achieve this invention was the greatest thing that ever happened in my life – the medicine has now treated thousands of patients who would have otherwise died from this deadly viral disease. I derive a lot of satisfaction when I read letters from patients expressing their gratitude to our researchers for our discovery of Victrelis.

**GRADUANDS, THIS IS MY STORY – AND EVERY ONE OF YOU OUT THERE TODAY IS IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING THEIR STORY.**

You are embarking on an exciting journey; however, this excitement also brings with it a lot of anxiety. Through this mix of anxiety and excitement, there are three things that have worked out well for me which I would like to share with you today.

**POINT NUMBER 1:** Be yourself – Do not let other people define your destiny – define your own destiny.

Identify a career or an area within your field of study that you are very passionate about and go for it and give it all your energy. Professionally, it really doesn't matter what field you get into – it may be in health sciences, engineering, business, education just to mention a few - the point is whatever it is, go for it and demonstrate the best performance. So many times we wait for other people to define who we are and what we should be and never get a chance to do it ourselves. This is an unfortunate state of affair since the Creator crafted us thoughtfully and beautifully each endowed with unique virtues which we need to exploit to the make maximum.

**POINT NUMBER 2:** Do not spend too much time worrying about failure. This has been an important aspect of life to me and my colleagues since we work in a research field where more than 95% of what we do fail. In discovering new medicines such as Victrelis it was 1 out of 5,000 molecules that we interrogated that made it to the market- this is a very low success rate. In many other fields the success rate might be higher but it will still be there. Today, I would like to reinstate to all of you the fact that failure will always be part of your lives and for that reason the best way to treat failure is to think of it as merely a dress rehearsal to success. Graduands don't be discouraged in your life to a point that you cannot complete a task in hand for the fear of failure – actually, to make everyone feel better, let me inform you that many great people have failed at one time or the other in their lives – case in point - Albert Einstein who is considered as the smartest person that ever lived, failed in his first set of college entrance exam. He however repeated it, passed and went to become the greatest scientist of 20th century.

Let us all learn from those who were there before us that failure is not a condemnation in life: it is bound to

happen at one time or the other in our lives but if we confront it in the right way, we will inevitably convert it into success. Friends, in life don't give up – if you fall, wake up shake off the dust and keep on moving  
**POINT NUMBER 3:** Focus - When Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, the two richest men in the world, were asked to single out the most important factor that led to their success in life, they both unanimously pointed out to focus. You should give maximum attention to things that matter most to you in life - things that you want to succeed in. Identify a few things that you have a great passion for and perform them repeatedly with focus. As the writer Malcolm Gladwell beautifully puts it in his book "the outlier", "if you want to succeed, you should do one thing a million times rather than doing 1 millions things just one time". That is how athletes and other professionals become successful in their endeavors.

My fellow graduands, Mount Kenya University has done a great job in scaling education to greater heights – you are part of that effort and you are well equipped to tackle the major issues that face Kenya and the world at large – go out there and make a difference, The worst thing any one of us can do is to enter this world, consume and deplete what exists and depart without making a difference. I suggest to all of you to take a good inventory of the blessings that the Almighty God has bestowed on you and exploit them to make a difference in the world. If you are an accountant, be the best accountant there can ever be, if you are a nurse, be the best health care giver we have ever had and so on and on for the other professionals.

**I wish you all a great success in whatever you do and may God bless you and may you live an abundant life.**

**THANK YOU**

# What they said

## 6th Graduation Special

### “Universities have a role to play in regional integration”

As centres of learning, universities have a potentially vital role to play in the social and economic development of the region. In the developing country context, higher education is generally viewed as having a clear role in contributing to socio-economic development thereby strengthening human capacity and skills and conducting research. Scholars have suggested four routes through which universities contribute to development processes:

**1. Providing academic leadership through high quality research** into critical areas of national development (knowledge creation).

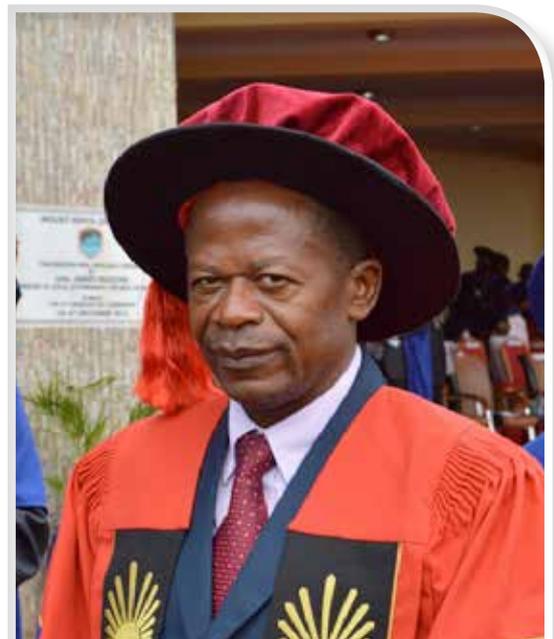
**2. Providing professional development through the teaching and training** of students for the

labour market and other endeavours.

**3. Providing advisory or outreach services to government, private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations.**

**4. Providing general higher education through the development of analytical skills,** critical and creative thinking.

In addition to addressing development needs, universities also fulfil other roles including developing “the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a ‘citizen of the world’; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person”. This is based on the perceptions of responding universities rather than objective measures.



**Hon. Dr. John Muyingo**, Uganda Minister for Higher Education. He was the Chief Guest

### “MKU has complied with the Universities Act of 2012”

According to the Universities Standards and Guidelines, 2014:

**a) A chartered university** shall have a fully established seat of the university that meets the standards of the Commission

**b) A chartered University** shall have at least 400 students enrolled in the degree programmes

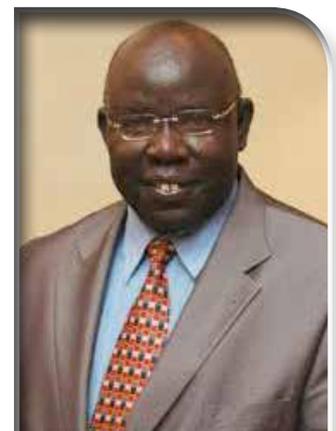
**c) The number of degree students** in a chartered university shall not be less than 70% of the total student enrollment.

In this regard am happy to note that

Mount Kenya University complies with Universities Act 2012 and The Standards and Guidelines 2012. I wish to challenge the graduands to focus on the following:

a) To serve the country with dedication  
b) To contribute positively to the nation’s aspiration in the light of Kenya Vision 2030

c) To remain innovative and entrepreneurial in spirit  
For MKU Community I encourage to always seek the knowledge of most worth as you endeavor to realize your mission and vision.



**Prof. David Some**, CEO, Commission For University Education

## *“University Council is committed to staff welfare”*



**Prof. Grace Njoroge, Chair of the University Council.**

The University Council remains committed to ensuring a conducive environment and a positive culture for successful engagements that enables both the staff and students to rip from their talent in the light of our university mission and vision. In this regard, I wish to mention that our 2008-2018 Strategic Plan is currently under review because most of our strategic performance targets have been achieved.

To enhance student participation in the running of the university affairs and their welfare both as students and their after, the Council approved the establishment of the Division of Student Welfare, Alumni and Marketing Affairs headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The Division is responsible for Sensitization of students on available student support systems such as academic advisory, mentorship, guidance and counseling and health care services among others. This division will also be

the bridge between the university and former students as well as prospective employers for continuous interaction. I further wish to mention that the Council approved amendments to Mount Kenya University Student Association Constitution to align it with the current trends in student leadership. There is continuous exposure of Student leaders on various leadership trainings to enable them to actively participate in decision making.

The University takes cognition of staff welfare as key in enhancing productivity and motivation. I am pleased to report that our staff recruitment schedule is being done as per the university almanac. Currently, the Human Resource Committee is reviewing conditions and terms of service for staff with the aim of coming up with a more work friendly terms of service. May I mention that a work friendly terms of service is not necessarily driven by monetary factors but all factors in a work environment.

## *“MKU is a truly world-class university”*

Mount Kenya University has hit a milestone. We have penetrated Kenya. Having a mid-year graduation speaks for itself. Already the Mount Kenya University affiliation speaks volumes. Many of the students I meet in the field are proud to say they are students at MKU.

MKU has penetrated Kenya through programs in open and distant learning being offered through the virtual campus. This serves to remove the necessity for class attendance, and they increase access to education. To augment these programs facilities for IT as well as sharing library resources, have been enhanced. Whence MKU’s excellence?

Excellence stems not only from standards, but also for the dedication and diligence it takes to make real those standards. ISO Certification is but one tangible demonstration of the excellence

of MKU. Another demonstration is the overwhelming re-enrollment rates of MKU students from one level to the next. Excellence requires globalisation, and MKU has led the universities in Kenya in reaching to other countries – yes, even other continents – to draw upon the highest quality resources in any universe. We not only attract quality students but also produce quality graduates. To ensure we admit good students, we collaborate with and adhere to standards set by the Commission of University Education as well as by professional bodies such as the Council of Legal Education, Pharmacy and Poisons Board, Clinical Officers Council and Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board among others. On management, structures have been put in place that ensures constant consultation and fairness in the development and implementation of policies.



**Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor**

***“We have put in place the ideal mechanisms, structures and systems”***

**W**e at Mount Kenya University are committed to the principles of quality assurance and control.

Some of the mechanisms, structures and systems put in place to ensure high quality in the Mount Kenya University teaching and learning processes include:

i) Student – Lecturer Evaluation

It is understood that the responsibility of enhancing quality lies with every member of staff. The evaluation, therefore, provides an opportunity for the university to get feedback from students in regard to performance of individual lectures.

We use the feedback to initiate ways of improving the teaching and learning process on a continuous basis.

ii) Internal and External Moderation of Examinations.

Internal and external moderation of

examinations address standard of syllabuses, course outlines and examination questions and answers to questions among others.

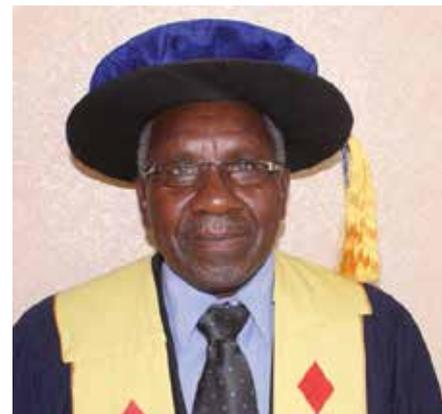
iii) University policies and Regulations  
The Mount Kenya University regulations and policies govern, student selection and admission, staff selection and recruitment teaching and learning processes and examination processes among others effectively.

As I conclude:

i) It is better to invest in education than to let ignorance prevail.

ii) To the graduands, please note that education merit does not stop with acquisition of an academic certificate. It is what you do with the education you acquire that proves the worthiness of your degree.

**6th Graduation Special**



**Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha**  
Pro-Chancellor

**Entertainment galore**



The slapstick comedy duo of Mchungaji and Mtumishi left the crowd in stitches.



The university choir lit the atmosphere with their smooth voices.

# MKUSA President off to Ghana

**M**ount Kenya University Students Association President Marvin Kimathi is attending the fourth annual African Students and Youth Summit in Accra, Ghana. The Summit, whose theme is Curbing Terrorism In-surgence in Africa –Students/Youth to the Rescue will be held between July 28 and August 2, 2014. “Recent terrorist attacks, including Nairobi’s Westgate shopping centre, which left more than 70 people dead, abduction of more than 270 defenseless Nigerian female students by Boko Haram and other intermittent spates of violence being committed by terrorist sects across the continent tells the story of how these hardline extremist terrorist groups are flourishing in Africa,” says an invitation letter from the All-Africa Students Union (AASU). “These recent developments raise serious questions about the effectiveness of the

AU’s counterterrorism legal instruments, including a 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, a 2002 Protocol to the Convention, and a 2004 Plan of Action.” Mr Kimathi says AASU is aiming to mobilise the students across the continent in a joint effort to stifle the growth of these terrorist groups. “After all, it is not 50 year olds who are being recruited into these terrorist groups. It is the youth.” The Summit will initiate the key talking points to enhance our collective understanding of the international terrorist activities and the threat they pose to Africa’s development. “Outcomes of the Summit will serve as a reference tool for policy makers and the general public to engage students and the youth as strategic partners in curbing the menace,” says Awaah Fred, Secretary General of AASU and head of the mission.

**Marvin Kimathi, MKUSA President.**





# 6th Graduation in NUMBERS

**5,524** - graduands who were conferred with Degrees and awarded Diplomas and Certificates.

**1**- Number of honorary doctorates awarded

**1**- Number of PhDs

**30,000**- Estimate number of visitors assembled at Happy Valley Grounds, Thika.

**11**- Number of vehicles in chief guest Hon. Dr. Muyingo's convoy



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