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In this autobiography, I have relied heavily on my memory to tell my own life story. My life journey begins in my rural home in Othaya, Nyeri where I was born and bred. From the very beginning, my life has been event-full and full of drama. As I became older, challenges seemed to increase by the day. Through sheer hard work and determination to succeed, I overcame so many of the challenges. Failing in one attempt never dampened my resolve to succeed in anything I set my eyes on. I kept my focus and succeeded in a way I never anticipated. As I approach what may most likely be the last quarter of my life on earth, I feel I should share my story firsthand. I feel much satisfied and relaxed in life. Now as an elder, I have taken time to reflect on my life journey and the many obstacles I have had to overcome to reach the pinnacle of academic pursuits.

In the course of writing this story, I may have made errors here and there or omitted certain historical facts. I must apologise for any such omissions because they may not have been deliberate. As you will discover shortly, I have tried to be as honest and truthful as possible. It is my hope you will find my story worthwhile. The young generation may learn something out of my life story.
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DEDICATION

My wife, Mary Wangui
My children, Bernice Wangari, Caroline Muthoni, Thomas Nderitu
My late father, Nderitu Mbatia
My late mother, Wangari Mbatia
My late grandfather, Mbatia Huria
My late grandmother, Wangui Mbatia
My brothers and sisters, James Mbatia, the late Wacera Wachiuri, the late Francis Njogu, Martha Wanjiru, the late Richard Mathenge, Newton Mwangi and Jane Wagaki. Their contribution to my social and academic life cannot be ignored.
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• Special thanks to Dr Ken Ramani, for having given me useful comments and edited many drafts, and for the encouragement and support during the preparation of this book.

Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to everyone that was involved in the production of this book.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABLH - Association for Better Land Husbandry

AHI - Africa Highland Initiative

ASARECA - Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in
          East and Central Africa

CHE - Commission of Higher Education

CIAT - Internacional Central de Agricultura Tropical

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
      Nations

ICIPE - International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology

ICRAF - International Centre for Research in Agroforestry

CIMMYT - International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre

ISO - International Standards for Organizations

KARI - Kenya Agricultural Research Institute

KAPP - Kenya Agricultural Productivity Programme

KAPAP - Kenya Productivity and Agribusiness Project

MKU - Mount Kenya University

NARL - National Agricultural Research Institute

NCST - National Council of Science and Technology

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organisations

UASU - Universities Academic Staff Union

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UON - University of Nairobi

YMCA - Young Men Christian Association
A LIFE OF STRUGGLES

Sculptor and goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571), declares that: “No matter what sort he is, everyone who has to his credit what are or really seem great achievements, if he cares for truth and goodness, ought to write the story of his own life in his own hand; but no one should venture on such a splendid undertaking before he is over forty.”

MY STORY

I, John Huria Nderitu was born in Nyeri, Kenya in 1952. I hold a Bachelor of Education (Science - Zoology, Botany and Education), Master of Science in Agricultural Entomology both from the University of Nairobi and PhD in Agricultural Entomology from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

I have attended the following short technical and leadership courses: Transformative and result-based management-oriented to rapid results initiative; performance contracting; safety and health; participatory monitoring and evaluation; public procurement rules and regulations; ISO 9001; effective labour management; labour advocacy and negotiation skills; scientific proposal writing; pedagogy; content development and e-learning tools; database production; internal examinations and PhD supervision. I was employed by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) in 1978 where I worked for 14 years as a Senior Research Scientist and currently at the University of Nairobi where I started off as a Senior Lecturer and rose to the position of Associate Professor. I have attended courses in plant protection
in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Egypt and Tanzania and has participated in conferences and workshops held in Malawi, Ghana, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Canada. In addition, I have been a visiting Research Scientist in Ethiopia, Canada and Colombia. I have been involved in more than 30 crop management research projects on beans, sweet potatoes, Irish potato, maize and horticultural crops funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, CIAT, AHI, FAO, ABLH, ASARECA, KAPP, CHE, UNDP, Deans Committee (UoN) and NCST.

I have published more than 80 papers in refereed journals and more than 80 papers in conference refereed proceedings. I have also carried out several consultancies on pest-management and other agricultural disciplines and written technical/consultancy reports. To my credit, I have co-supervised and examined 70 MSc and 6 PhD students in crop management. I have also been an external examiner for 24 MSc and PhD theses in pest management at Makerere University, Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenyatta University and Egerton University. I have co-authored two university textbooks namely “Agricultural Entomology: Practical Aspects of Agricultural Entomology” and “Invertebrate Zoology for Beginners”.

I have been a visiting scientist to CIAT (Colombia) and McGill University (Canada). I have reviewed many research proposals, conference and journal papers. I have been a member of the National
Agricultural Information Task Force of The Ministry of Agriculture; Member of Advisory Board of EAAFRO Journal, Chairman Kenya Organic Standard, KBS (2005-2007) and Chairman of the National Potato Council of Kenya. I am the founding National Chairman of Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) and former Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi. At some point during my academic journey, I served as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Development and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Linkages and Partnerships at Mount Kenya University. Currently I am an Associate Professor at the University of Nairobi.
CHAPTER 1

MY EARLY LIFE

I don’t know exactly when I was born. My eldest brother once told me that I was born during the start of the Mau Mau war of independence. I indicate in my official documents that I was born on 2nd June 1952. I recall very little of 1950s. I recall that we lived in a village called Rukira, in Nyeri. Rukira was one of the villages that were created by the colonial government during the Mau Mau uprising. Equally, I have scanty recollections of the late 1950s when I used to look after family cattle. I would ask for consent from my elder brother, cousins and grandfather to look after the cattle. My father was a very busy man. Therefore the onus of looking after the cows, sheep and goats was therefore on us, a duty which I did every day. By the local standards, my grandfather was a moderately rich man. He was about 80 years old.
at the time and wore a blanket and when it was cold he would wear a long coat (kabuti). He did not wear a trouser. It was also normal for young boys to wear shirts only as we did not have shorts. Each day, around lunch hour, we would massage him by walking on his back for about twenty minutes as he lay on the ground. We did this alternately with my brothers and cousins. My grandfather would sometimes look after the family livestock with us, he often prepared sour milk for us to drink before going to the fields to look after the cattle. I also remember my grandfather shooting cows around the neck and drawing blood for use. The old man also frequently slaughtered sheep especially during circumcision and marriage ceremonies and whenever a child was born.
These are some of the fondest memories I have of him.

My father was very hardworking, I remember him leaving the house in the middle of the night to go to work and would be gone until late in the evening. I later learnt from him, many years later, that he was leaving at 3.00 a.m. to travel 30 kilometers to a tea factory to do menial jobs.

As I grew older, I started helping my mother in cultivating the farm. We would grow maize, millet, irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and beans. By
A LIFE OF STRUGGLES

Nakuru Secondary School, 1971
mid 1960s, my father’s coffee trees had matured. The family started engaging in harvesting coffee beans on Saturdays. We would take coffee berries to Kagere Coffee Factory which is four kilometers from the family farm. The weekly task saw us carry a lot of coffee berries (sometimes over 40 kilogrammes each) on our backs and climb a 60° slope to the factory. It was around this time that my father stopped going to look for menial jobs. He was generating enough from his farm for our education and clothes. When compared with most of our neighbours, we were doing well because of proceeds from the coffee berries. My father therefore started contracting some of our neighbours to pick ripe berries and deliver them to the factory when the harvest was more than we could handle. My mother was also very hard-working and produced enough food from the farm for our domestic use. My father had a number of cows in our compound which my mother used to milk.

MY ACADEMIC JOURNEY
I joined Standard One at Birithia Primary School, Othaya Division, Nyeri, in 1960. By then, there were no pre-school classes in rural
Kuria, Nderitu and Kamau classmates at Nakuru Secondary School in 1972
areas. I joined primary school when I was eight years old. I was among the youngest children in class because most children started primary school late. I sat my Kenya Primary Education (KPE) examination in 1966 where I scored a B grade in English, Mathematics and the General Paper. I was admitted to Kiangoma Secondary School in Nyeri District in 1967. The school was about 30 kilometres from home. Owing to the poor road network, there were no public vehicles plying the route. The public transport could only be accessed easily from Nyeri town.

On the 1st day of secondary school, my father, my uncle and I woke up at 5.00 a.m. and the two escorted me for 30kms to school. We arrived
A LIFE OF STRUGGLES

at about 11.00 a.m. and the two had to walk back home and leave me at school. The secondary school had permanent classrooms and semi-permanent dormitories with floors which were not cemented. The headmaster was Mr. Henveld; his wife and another teacher nicknamed Mr. “Gikuhi” were all Americans in the same school. I settled well in the school and I was among the youngest students in Form 1.

I was an average student for the first two years. Although it was not compulsory, I enrolled for the Kenya Junior Secondary School Examination (KJSE) in 1968. KJSE examination was a wake-up call because when results were released the following year, I had scored grade C. The grade did not please me at all and it dawned on me that I had to be more serious with my studies if my performance in O’Level examination was to be better.

I was not exempt from peer pressure; I remember being very sad when I was in Form Three because I did not have a long trouser like the rest of my school mates. However, towards the end of Form Three, I convinced a relative to buy me a long trouser.

After the KJSE debacle, I put more effort and I started seeing my term examination results improve. When I got to Form Four, in July 1970, the mock examinations were done and I emerged among the top boys. The mock examination encouraged me to work harder. By the time I sat the final EACE examination in November 1970, I was confident I had done well. The results were out in February 1971 and
Nderitu (squatting left) with classmates at Nakuru Secondary School, 1971
I was pleased to learn I had scored Division One of 21 points. I was number 3 in a class of 36 students. This showed tremendous progress since I was number 32 in first term of Form 1 in 1967. When the examination results were announced, I had gone to Nyahururu to visit my two brothers who had dropped out of secondary school at Form 2 and employed by Nyahururu Town Council.

I joined Nakuru High School for my A-Level education in May 1971. The school was a national mixed school. It also had a Secretarial class for girls after Form 4. Forms 5 and 6 were normally students invited from all over the country. We paid Sh320 as fees for the two years. We were always served the best food available. We were served eggs and milk during breakfast for most days of the week. The headmaster was a Mr. Pen, a British national who was tall and heavily-built. As I settled in Form 5, I made good friends. Some were talented in playing guitar and others were very good dancers. The group also attracted a lot of female students from Form 1 up to 4 and those who were also studying Secretarial courses. Although I was part of the team, I never fully got involved with other students’ social activities. The comments by headmaster on my report for 1st term in Form 5 indicated that I was a below average student. This alerted me of my weaknesses in academic activities. While most of my classmates had passed Chemistry and Physics in their O-Level examination, I had joined the school having pursued Physical Science which combined Physics and
Chemistry. At least I had studied Biology. So my A-level subjects were Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. Thus the pre-requisite subjects and performance at O-level was my weak starting point. My performance in Form 5 never improved. I was unable to cope with social life and the hard science subjects I was studying. The social environment in the school was different from Kiangoma Secondary School. The company of students was not also the right one for me. Their academic background was stronger than mine.

Our family life changed when my mother died in October 1971. She had been diagnosed with liver cancer and later died at an army dispensary in Gilgil where by cousin (Simon Wakahora) who was a nurse had taken her. Simon Wakahora worked in the army barracks (at the rank of Warrant Officer). I recall my cousin coming to Nakuru High School in the evening to take me to Gilgil before my mother died. I met her in great pain and had emaciated a lot but still managed to talk to me. The second time my cousin came for me was to break the sad news! My mother had died. It was a very long night for me. I left for Nyeri to wait for the body of my mother to be brought home to be laid to rest. At that time the road next to our home, which is one kilometre away, was not graded and vehicles could not use it. The casket had to be carried for one kilometre to our home for an overnight stay before burial the following morning.

My two-year stay in Nakuru High School was a mixture of joy and
At UoN Main Campus in 1978 with my roommate, Mr. Ikinya (1975-1978)
After Graduation at the University of Nairobi in October 1978
Graduated with B.Ed. (Science), October 1978
pain. I joined prolific and lively classmates who had come from different schools from across the country. I changed my pattern of life which was influenced by seven friends. I had come from a poor school background and had not prepared myself enough for furthering my education in sciences as my friends. Therefore I did poorly right from first term of my A-Level at Nakuru High School. I was not able to cope with Biology, Chemistry and Physics subjects which I had
enrolled for at A-Level. I blame myself for having been influenced by my classmates who we were a very close group of seven which called itself “Sullivan Brothers”. The death of my mother somehow made my academic life deteriorate further and I never recovered in time before the final examinations.

When the A-Level examination results were released in 1972, it came as no surprise when I realised my grades could not allow me to be admitted to the university. I had to look for a job. I stayed with my two brothers in Nyahururu and rarely went back to Nyeri.

In May 1973, I was employed to teach at Gikondi Secondary School, a Catholic Church-run institution where I stayed for one year. I used to stay with four other teachers in the same staff house. We lived a simple life since our salary was Sh450 per month for untrained teachers. We used to travel to Nyeri Catholic Diocese Secretariat to collect our salaries every month. We would enjoy good food and beer in Nyeri and either return to school or visit our parents. During this period, I was able to buy a piece of land in Mweiga and at the same time built a 5-room semi-permanent house in my father’s homestead. I did not engage in too much social life and I therefore was able to save for the two projects. During the same period, I made a down payment to buy land in Mweiga but pulled out after I joined the University of Nairobi in October 1975 and had no means of raising the balance to complete the payment.
By 1974, my father had remarried. My two sisters and two brothers were still staying at home and looked after my father. My youngest sister was five years while the oldest was 12 years when our mother died. It was a big responsibility for my father who had taken up the burden with a lot of strength and courage. Even with the second wife, my father was a responsible father and took care of all our needs.

My sister completed her primary education at Birithia Primary School after sitting the 1974 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination. My father wanted her to repeat Standard Seven because she had not done well. I convinced him to allow her join a *harambee* secondary school in my home area. I had noted that she could not have improved her grades even after repeating to qualify for admission into a government secondary school. I paid the first fees instalment of Sh400 to Birithia Secondary school for my sister. My father paid the rest. I was happy that she never missed school like most of the other girls in the area. My sister was in a day school and continued to take care of other siblings after school. It was a great responsibility for her which affected her school performance. She managed a Division 4 in her O-Level examination. I felt this was the best she could do under the circumstances.
HOW I JOINED THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

I sat my A-Level final examination in November 1972 and the results were out in February 1973. I managed to score 2 subsidiaries in Chemistry and Biology. I had made a wrong choice to study Chemistry because my sense of smell was very weak if not absent. The minimum grades for a degree admission to the University of Nairobi were two principal passes. Therefore, I was not eligible for BSc in Agriculture which was the course of my choice. I had to look for a job.

I applied for various jobs after examination results were out. I was invited for an interview at Shell Company in Nairobi. I attended the interview but failed to get the appointment. I later went to Nakuru Army Barracks to attend an interview for Army Cadets. The Army Cadets were direct entries to lieutenant positions after nine months training. The interview was for five days and failures were sent away at the end of every day. I passed the interview every day until the fourth day when I was sent away. The fifth day was for the highest ranking army officer to approve the thirty two recruits. The physical and mental interviews were very tough. When I look back, if I had passed the interview, by now I could be one of the highest ranking officer in the armed forces if not a retired Chief of General Staff! I was prepared to take any job that came my way since my grades could not take me to the university. In May 1973, I was employed to teach at Gikondi Secondary school in North Tetu Division, Nyeri, just five
kilometers from Kiangoma Secondary School. I settled on a career which I had previously not thought about. I mainly taught Biology in Form 1 to 4. I joined other teachers some of whom had not qualified to join the university just like me. It was unfortunate that there was no mechanism where the students who had failed could repeat the “A” Level science subjects. Even as I struggled to develop a teaching career, the urge to join the university kept on burning inside me. So I registered for the London GCE, a British examination body.

In January 1974, I attempted Biology and Chemistry and got Principal Grade E’s for the two subjects. This was the minimum to join the University of Nairobi. In the same year of 1974, I was admitted to join Kenya Science Teachers College (KSTC) to train as a secondary school teacher but I declined the offer. In October 1975, I was admitted to study Bachelor of Education (Science) degree at Chiromo Campus, University of Nairobi. I had preferred to pursue a BSc in Agriculture but my grades in “A” Level were too low to pursue my dream course. I joined the university in October 1975 and worked very hard for the three years of my studies. When I joined the University of Nairobi I met four out of the seven colleagues from Nakuru High School at an advanced stage in their degree programmes. I refused to be dragged into any social groups in the university. I was always in the library whenever I did not have class to attend because I thought failure was following me. I also never entertained any person who wanted to waste part of my reading time. My hard work paid off handsomely because
Nderitu with wife, Wangui, in 1979
Prof. Nderitu with wife, daughters, son as well as grandchildren in 2012

Nderitu with his extended family members in 1985
Nderitu in 1980 at Chiromo Campus, University of Nairobi
right form 1st year, I was performing above average. This led to my finishing in July 1978 and attaining B.Ed (Science) Upper Second Class Honours. I remember facilitating my father and two brothers to attend my graduation ceremony in October 1978. The following day I bought my father a well tailored suit. This was his first suit in his life and was very excited about it.

Within one week after graduating from the University of Nairobi in 1978, I was employed at the Scientific Research Division in the Ministry of Agriculture in Nairobi. I rented a two-bed roomed house in Umoja Estate where I was joined by a colleague and friend called Wambugu Maina. I settled very fast in the house at Umoja Estate and within two months I had bought all basic furniture for the house. I was able to do that because of my prudent saving and less indulgence in social activities.

In October 1979, I returned to the University of Nairobi to pursue an MSc degree on a full scholarship by the Scientific Division, Ministry of Agriculture. I relocated from my rented house to YMCA in Nairobi Central Business District for the whole year of course work. I committed myself to serious reading during the whole academic year. Despite the course being stressful and demanding, I passed all course units. I then returned to my duty station at NARL to do my MSc thesis research. Before I started my research project, I relocated back to Umoja Estate once again and got married.
FAMILY LIFE

When I reported for duty at the Ministry of Agriculture headquarters at Kilimo House, Nairobi, little did I know that a young lady I had seen near my home area a few years earlier would become my future wife. We were both happy to meet in Nairobi and surprised that we were working for the same employer. Mary Wangui and I started dating and along the way decided to live together and found a family. A few months into our relationship, she conceived. This was in 1980. As the Agikuyu culture demands, her father’s age mates were dispatched to my rural home to report that “their lost Sheep had gotten a broken a leg” (meaning their daughter had conceived). When I was asked if I
During a Crop Protection Training at Wangegin, Netherlands, 1981

Nderitu at the Imperial College, University of London, in 1991 while attending a Tropical Pest Management course
was responsible for the “broken leg” the answer was in the affirmative. Therefore I was required to commence the dowry payment process. I immediately wrote a cheque of Sh2500 to buy goats.

Wangui and I have lived happily together ever since. God blessed us with three children – two daughters and one son. They are all university graduates, are employed in different sectors and have families. Now we are proud grandparents of two grandsons and two grand-daughters and still counting.

Wangui has always been very supportive and understanding. Even during my difficult financial times, she has never complained. She has always been by my side in whatever venture I engage in. Her modest lifestyle has been key to the remarkable achievements we have made in our family life. I am sure without peace of mind at the domestic level nobody can really do much in investment and bringing up a happy family.

My wife’s modesty is legendary. We started life together and our main focus was on property acquisition. We bought the first TV set after 6 years, the first car after 10 years and the first fridge after 17 years of living together. I remember our firstborn daughter used to sneak to a neighbour’s house to join other children in watching TV. It came as a relief to my kids when we bought the first black and white TV set in 1986. I suspect not many modern women can live this kind of simple life without complaining.
CHAPTER 2

PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

Although I was trained as a secondary school teacher, I never went to teach after graduating with a Bachelor of Education (Science) degree from the University of Nairobi in July 1978. I was employed at Kenya Agricultural Research Institute in July 1978. In 1979, I went back to University of Nairobi to pursue an MSc in Agricultural Entomology. I did the course work for one year and then went back to my duty station to conduct a research project for the thesis. After the research which took one year, I got a scholarship to attend an international course on crop protection for three and a half months at the International Agricultural Centre, Wagenigen, Netherlands. In 1984, I completed my MSc in Agricultural Entomology and wrote an MSc thesis titled “Aphid infestation on eight selected potato varieties (Solanumtuberosum L.) and their control with insecticides in Kenya”. I registered for PhD programme at ICIPE immediately after I finished the MSc. I trained under African Regional Programme in Insect Science (ARPPIS) (1984 –1987). In 1990, I graduated with a PhD in Agricultural Entomology.
from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. The PhD Thesis was titled, “Responses of Common Beans (Phaseolus vulgaris L.) cultivars to bean flies (Diptera: Agromyzidae).

While I pursued MSc and PhD training, I also attended very many professional courses locally and abroad. In May to July 1981, I attended International Plant Protection course in Wageningen, Netherlands. In July to August 1982, I attended a three week International Course on Pest Management at ICIPE. From May to July 1991, I attended an international course on Pest Management at the Imperial College, University of London, Britain. From March – May 1991, I was attached to CIAT, Cali, Columbia as a visiting research scientist. In May 1994, I attended an international course on Integrated Pest Management in Fieldfang, Munich, Germany.

I have attended many conferences and workshops around the world. I visited Arusha and Morogoro in Tanzania in 1986; I attended workshops in Egypt and Burundi in 1991. In 1995, I attended a conference in Malawi, a workshop in Ghana, a workshop in Zimbabwe. While working for CIAT-AFRICA, I attended many workshops in Uganda and Ethiopia in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998. In 2008, I attended a RUFORUM workshop in Maputo, Mozambique and in 2007 I attended a workshop in McGill University, Canada. I attended a workshop in Rwanda in 2010 in my area of expertise and other areas such as research management, research implementation,
proposal writing, scientific writing and collaborative effort in research. The workshops and conferences gave me an opportunity to see agricultural development at both national and global levels. They also enabled me to acquire knowledge and expertise in areas unrelated to original expertise such as organic agriculture and general agricultural development in the country and the region. Although I never formally attended a single agricultural course in primary and secondary level, I have learnt a lot through experience and have been an expert in many agricultural knowledge fields. I have used well the knowledge for my social mobility and agricultural development in the region.

**CAREER CHANGE AND LIFE IN ACADEMIA**

As fate would have it, in June 1992, I was employed by the University of Nairobi, Faculty of Agriculture as a Senior Lecturer. This was the same department I was unable to be admitted to study BSc in Agriculture in 1975! Back then, the Dean of Faculty advised me that after I finished my B.Ed (Science) degree, I could still apply to study BSc in Agriculture in the same faculty. Before I joined the Faculty as a Senior Lecturer, there had not been any other lecturer who had been employed directly as Senior Lecturer. They were mainly appointed as lecturers then progressed through the promotion ladder depending on how hard they worked through publishing, teaching and supervision of students.
During a workshop held in Nairobi in 1992

Attending a course in Thika, 1995
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During a course at ICRAF in 1997

Nderitu making a presentation during a workshop at McGill University in 2007
ON THE FAST LANE

Since 1982, I have attended many courses locally on pest management system, pesticide use, biometrics, computers, presentation skills, effective management, programme formulation and priority setting, data base production, participatory monitoring and evaluation, transformative leadership and result-based management, strengthening capacity in agricultural research and development in Africa, data analysis, scientific proposal writing, management leadership performance contracting, ISO training and e-learning tools. I attended *Bean Stem Resistance Screening Methods* course in Burundi (1991), FAO training on international standards for *phytosanitary* measures and contemporary practices in Tanzania (2002). In 1994, I attended a course on integrated plant protection measures for one month in Germany. Besides the MSc and PhD research projects, I have sourced donor funding for over 30 projects which have been carried out in collaboration with other research scientists for the last 30 years. The research projects have mainly been on pest management on beans, Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes. I have published over 100 papers out of the research projects. Out of the publications are four papers from my thesis and four papers from my PhD thesis. The publications from MSc and PhD thesis enabled me to be employed as Senior Lecturer at the University of Nairobi in 1992. To publish, one has to spend a lot of time in writing proposals and actual research and writing. This business of research and writing has occupied me for over a quarter century.
Crop protection training course at Wagenigen, Netherlands, 1981

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It requires a lot of drive and personal initiative to do research. It requires an investigative mind. Research requires you to be a team player since rarely do donors give money to an individual research scientist. The collaborative projects I have been able to raise over USD2, 500,000 from donors.

I have attended over 100 conferences, seminars and workshops locally and in Tanzania, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, Egypt, Burundi and Rwanda. I have gained a lot of knowledge from the workshops/conferences. I have enjoyed attending workshops, as social places for making contacts. The knowledge I have acquired from workshops has made me to be technically qualified as an agricultural research scientist.

In July 1995, I took leave of absence from the University of Nairobi and joined a collaborative project comprising five international research institutions. The collaborative project was called African Highland Initiative (AHI). I was based in KARI, Kakamega as a Research Fellow to conduct research on bean pest management for three years. I had a good working relationship with CIAT – Uganda and KARI – Kakamega and did a lot of research and disseminated a lot of information to farmers in Western Kenya. This was the first time I felt that I contributed directly to the welfare of farmers in this country. Our research and dissemination activities attracted CIAT research Scientists from Colombia and other African CIAT
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Centres. We worked directly with farmers and the effects of our efforts can still be felt today in the areas of dissemination of bean varieties tolerant to diseases and pests. In Western Kenya, we worked in collaboration with NGOs and international research centres such as ICRAF and CYMMIT.

I left CIAT in June 1998 to go back to the University of Nairobi to teach and conduct research. From June 1998, I continued to teach and work in ABLH, an NGO based in Runda Estate in areas of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The NGO had field sites in Western and Central Kenya. I was engaged in promotion of IPM activities in the specific crop production system that the NGO was advocating in those areas. I continued working with the NGO on a full-time basis until June 2000. From the year 2000 up to 2004, the NGO contracted me as a consultant to carry out feasibility studies in organic production and marketing in Embu, Teso, Kakamega and Vihiga. In 2004, I fully went back to the University of Nairobi and resumed my teaching and teaching duties. I was promoted to Associate Professor in October 2004 and elected by the lecturers to become Dean, Faculty of Agriculture in March 2006.

I held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture until 12th March 2010. As Dean of Faculty, I gained a lot of management and administrative skills. I learnt to be patient with my seniors when I did not agree with some management decisions. I committed a
lot of my time in doing the university work. I made very many contacts from universities in East Africa and attended meetings for advancement of faculties of Agriculture. I left the University of Nairobi on a leave of absence with effect from 1st May 2010 to join Mount Kenya University as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs). This was an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of running a private institution. I had worked all my life mainly in Government, international institutions and NGOs.

I have supervised more than 70 MSc and PhD students in writing their research projects. The supervision of students help me improve significantly in my knowledge of pest management. I have co-authored a lot of papers. I have funded a number of students for their research and tuition for their post-graduate studies. I have also examined over 15 theses internally and over 30 MSc and PhD theses from Makerere University, Kenyatta University, Egerton University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Thesis examination has also given me a lot of technical knowledge and experience in supervision. Supervision and examining postgraduate takes a lot of time and requires patience and experience. It has taken me more than 25 years as a supervisor and examiner of postgraduate students in East Africa.
I became an Agricultural Entomologist after my undergraduate studies. Although it was by default, I became a Researcher in the Scientific Research Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and came to like the life of a researcher. I trained for Masters in Science in Agricultural Entomology and did a research project on potato entomology. I pursued my PhD in Agricultural Entomology and a research project on bean entomology. For the last 38 years I have got mainly donor funds to do research on the two crops. I collaborated with both local and international scientists for implementation of the projects.
A LIFE OF STRUGGLES

My most exciting period was in 1995 to 1998 in Western Kenya. During that period, I was a Research Fellow under the African Highland Institute (AHI) managed by a consortium of International Research Institutions based in the East African region i.e. CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICRAF and IITA. The project was on Climbing and Bush Beans pest and disease management.

I worked with farmers in Western Kenya. I also collaborated with staff from KARI, Kakamega. I really enjoyed working with the farmers. I was able to interact with farmers nearly every day. We were able to introduce crop management practices and new bean varieties to farmers. I am very happy that when I go to markets in Western Kenya and notice those beans that we introduced over 20 years ago are still being grown. I feel that we achieved a lot with the farmers. Due to the output of the project, we received a lot of support from the donors and our sponsor institutions for AHI. I appreciated a lot the collaboration I had with staff from KARI, international institutions and farmers.

In the year 2000, I won a fellowship to join ICIPE. I was able to write proposals on French Beans, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and onion pests. I forwarded the proposals to donors together with my collaborators, and we received funding for all the proposals within a span of five years. In four of the proposals, we were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. We engaged Masters students to conduct research. We trained six students who produced more than twelve
scientific papers in refereed journals. During the period of five years, I was the key driver of a team of three lecturers and students to do research in Irish Potatoes, sweet potatoes and French beans. We received more than USD 200,000 for three years and we managed to buy three cars for the projects.

I have continued to bid for research grants and managed to win more than ten research grants, which have enabled me to do research, supervise more than 70 Masters and about 6 PhD candidates. I have continued to present papers in conferences, publish in refereed journals and supervised postgraduate students.

Academic life requires hard work, concentration, time and thinking hard. I have done that for over 38 years of my life. I will continue to mentor postgraduate students and other young scientists on research and publications. This requires time and commitment. Both my Masters and PhD studies took a lot of my social time for ten years. The academic profession may also not give one time to consider other options in life. You can only build your economic pillar through honoraria from research grants. This honoraria may be through travel, accommodation and transport allowances.

My academic activities have given me opportunities to travel to South America, North America and Europe to study and learn in my field of expertise. The many travels have given me an opportunity to interact with many communities in the world. I have had international linkages
in all three continents in research collaboration. I have collaborated with Cornell University, USA, and McGill University, Canada, in research and training.

**MY TIME AT MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

My employment period at Mount Kenya University has been my most difficult period of working life. It has all along been life of survival at the institution. I joined Mount Kenya University on 1st May 2010. Three months earlier, I had completed my term as Dean at the University of Nairobi. I was given a lot of publicity when I joined Mount Kenya University. My academic and professional experience and other achievements were published in national newspapers. I was excited as I took “leave of absence” without pay from the University of Nairobi. At least, my salary was improved by one and half times.

I was taken through a very thorough orientation at Mount Kenya University for over one week. I visited every department and school. I met top management in their official capacity. I was given an executive office that was well furnished and always stocked with juices and sodas. Lunches and tea were also provided daily. I felt that my position was rewarded and recognised but what I did not know was that I was to stay for three months being oriented for a job I had done for nearly twenty years. I never fitted into the academic division, which I was heading. Everybody was involved, including my bosses on the job I was given to do.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HURIA NDERITU

As time went by, I tried to find out what I could do in the institution, which did not attract everybody to do it. I realised it was research. Although it was in my docket, I did not have a competitor. I quickly plunged myself into research and started attending conferences and meetings on research outside the university.

On March 2011, a new Division of Research and Development was created and I was transferred there. I felt relieved to transfer from the Academic Affairs Division. Throughout the year 2011, I struggled to build the new Division of Research and Development. During the same year, I won a grant by the National Council of Science and Technology of Sh5 million. I also won a grant of Sh24 million from KAPAP funded by the World Bank.

In January 2012, a Research Assistant was deployed to my office. It was a relief to me because at last I had somebody to assist me in the many activities I had lined up for that year. Within another two months, the institution engaged a highly qualified Director of Research and Development on a full-time basis. This was good for me as I had people to assist me during the research and development agenda. We launched the Research Policy, Intellectual Property Policy and University Research Policy. I continued to lead the two research projects for the second year. We organised public lectures, public debates and workshops at the university. We processed research grants for internally funded research proposals. We also visited MKU campuses to sensitise academic members of staff on the need to do
research as a key mandate of the university. We teamed up with other lecturers on postgraduate research training. By the end of the year, the Research and Development Division was rated the best in achievement of its performance targets at MKU.

In 2013, the activities carried out in the Research and Development Division started on a high note. We organised training courses for the members of staff and facilitated them to carry out research. We set-up an Incubation Centre and continued to buy equipment for the research centre. More qualified staff were employed in the Research and Development Division, but work output was not commensurate with the increase of staff. There was acrimony characterised by confusion, fighting among staff in the Division of Research and Development. It seemed like there was need for team-building for the staff to be able to resolve their differences, appreciate colleagues’ strengths and respect my authority as the team leader. By the end of the year, the team did not appreciate each other better and were not able to consult and provide constructive feedback. I failed in my attempts to pull the staff together and move as a team. In June 2014, the Division of Research and Development was disbanded and a new Division of Linkages and Resource Mobilisation was formed. I was tasked to lead the new outfit. We managed to have the university sign several agreements with local research institutions and established linkages with foreign universities in Asia, Europe and United States of America.
Contrary to popular opinion, leadership is not a reserved position for a particular group of people who were elected or appointed, ordained or enthroned. Leadership is self-made, self-retained, self-inculcated and then exposed through a faithful, sincere and exemplary life - Israelmore Ayivor

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Before 1997, I had not held any serious leadership position. I was a studious youth in all the levels of education. I took all my time in reading and spent less time in social activities. This was the case even after I left school and was employed as a secondary school teacher in early 1970s and later as a research officer in late 1970’s. I committed ten years in 1980’s for postgraduate studies that took most of the time I should have been with my young family. I spent virtually all the seven days of the week from Monday to Sunday and every day from seven thirty to seven thirty at National Agricultural Laboratories in Nairobi. I had been stigmatised by failure in “A” levels and wholly blamed it on socialisation. During those years, I invested in real estate. I was mean to myself during the period as I earned and invested the
salary. I used to borrow loans from SACCOs which I promptly repaid. I engaged in very few social activities. I was very a very disciplined alcohol drinker. I never galloped more than three beers at any sitting. I also leisurely smoked one or two cigarettes per day and sometimes I would give up smoking and drinking for a whole year only to go back to the bad habit during festive seasons in November and December.

My financial situation improved when I joined ICRAF in 1995. I was able to join friends for social activities besides the extended family parties we had been holding since 1985. In 1990s, land grabbing became a big issue and people started demonstrating against land grabbers. It was a few days before Moi Day of 10th October 1997 that we organised to repossess a vacant piece of land in Buru Buru Estate Phase V where I had bought a maisonette house in 1981. I became an active organiser of the demonstration held on Moi Day against the grabbed plot. I distributed leaflets calling people to the site of the grabbed land. I went to Nation Centre and invited residents through paid up advertisement to come for the meeting at the grabbed land site. We were a team which had been formed in a drinking joint at the estate. More than a thousand residents came for the meeting on 10th October 1997. I chaired the public meeting.

We started with a word of prayer. In the meeting I realised there were people who were not residents. They would bring issues that the land was transferred to another owner and title deed issued. The residents were agitated by the group. The residents requested me to shift the
meeting to another site in the estate away from the grabbed land. I did not realise that they had a strategy to isolate the non-residents from the residents. Immediately the residents went away from the site the non-residents were left at the grabbed land and were only twenty. I was informed later that the group had been hired by the perceived grabber of the plot. Immediately they were isolated, the group was targeted by the boys from the estate and driven out by a hail of stones. They were lucky they were not killed. They ran to the vehicle that had driven them there and took off in high speed. The residents returned to the grabbed land and burnt the gate the perceived grabber had erected at the site. I realised it was difficult to lead people. I had not known that they had their own solution to
the problem and they required only ignition to solve their problem. I realised the outcome of demonstration may not be pegged to the leader. They can administer mob justice very easily when brought together. It is important for a leader to know this before he mobilises the public for a cause. The land had been reserved by the developer of the estate to build a playfield and nursery school. Up to now, neither the City Council nor the residents have utilised the piece of land.

I joined Buru Buru Residents Association and became Vice-Chairman. We agitated against grabbing of community land, organised clean-up exercises and opposed the building of high-rise structures in the estate contrary to the original plan. We petitioned Government authorities over night clubs in the estate that used to play loud music into the wee hours of the night and in the process affecting the residents’ sleep and comfort. We went to the press at Chester House many times and presented our issues. I realised that the press was a powerful tool when fighting for rights. They are the biggest and focused force to enlist when fighting for your rights. The press came on sight many times and published what we said. The media extensively covered the demolition of high-rise buildings in the estate. I played a great role in the demolitions and always contacted the media to cover the exercise. We visited the Press Centre to air our views on the grabbers and those putting up flats in the estate. This proved to be a very effective way of repulsing grabbers and preventing homeowners from building illegal
structures in their compounds, a success story of my five-year tenure at the helm of Buru Buru Residents Association. The land grabbers got scared and the Government and City Council came to our aid. The community was happy with the leadership. Just before the 2002 General Election, it was time to exit the stage of estate activism. My team relinquished its leadership positions to incoming executives of Buru Buru Residents Association. At least my team had made a contribution to the welfare of the residents.
CHAPTER 4

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH UASU

I joined the University of Nairobi in June 1992. I became an active member of Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) in October 1993 and I was appointed Upper Kabete Campus representative in the union’s governing body. The main drive behind the union was to improve the lecturers’ welfare. The national officials of the union included Dr Korwa Adar, Dr Omari Onyango, Dr Kilemi Mwiria, Charles Namachanja, Dr James Nyikal, among others. When we engaged in a national strike, lecturers staying in university houses were ordered to vacate without notice. All national officials were sacked from the public universities. A number of lecturers were arrested, some sacked, while others quit their jobs to seek greener pastures in local private universities, Southern Africa, the United States, Australia and Europe.

Former President Daniel arap Moi was blunt in his response to our agitation for UASU’s registration. He advised lecturers to join Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) if they wished to join a trade
union. His argument was that lecturers were also teachers just like the KNUT members. Therefore he did not see the sense in having another trade union to represent teachers.

In October 1993, the University of Nairobi was closed for 10 months. It was strange that even as the strike was on, lecturers continued to receive their full salary. By the time the university was reopened, UASU was still not registered. The union remained moribund until Moi’s KANU regime was voted out in December 2002.

**The registration of UASU**

My life as a trade unionist (2003-2005) is an experience that is worth mentioning. In January 2003, I attended a meeting in Taifa Hall, University of Nairobi that was called by lecturers. I stood up and aired my views on the need to revive UASU. My historical review of UASU was appreciated and the lecturers resolved that I be the Chairman of the Interim Committee that had just been set-up to pursue the registration of the union. I had little leadership experience that was expected for the new calling. Nevertheless, I accepted the challenge and embarked on modalities of reviving the union with the aim of improving our financial fortunes.

After Mwai Kibaki’s NARC government ascended to power, we took advantage of the political goodwill to have UASU registered within
three months. In any case opposition stalwarts who were sympathetic to the lecturers’ cause such as Mr Kiraitu Murungi, Mr James Orenge and former lecturers such as Dr Kilemi Mwiria, Prof Anyang’ Nyong’o, Prof Kivuta Kibwana, Prof Wangari Maathai among others, were in government as Cabinet Ministers.

Finally, the lecturers got what they wanted after decades of struggle. But even before UASU was registered, issues started arising. Kenyatta University lecturers mobilised themselves and wanted their vice-chancellor, Prof George Eshiwani out of the university because of his many years of high handedness. In any case he had completed two terms of five years each but President Moi had irregularly given him
an extension of two years. I invited the KU lecturers to attend a press conference at Chester House which we jointly addressed and called for Prof Eshiwani’s exit. The government heeded our call and removed Prof Eshiwani and replaced him with Prof Everett Standa.

We organised national elections of the union and I was confirmed the national chairman. This was in spite of having not held any elective position before. I enjoyed the union leadership. Members of the union identified some weaknesses in me especially in press conferences. They would advise me on how best to do it. I led the union during a three months strike (October 2003 to January 2004) to agitate for better terms of service for lectures. I learnt a lot in leadership. It was not easy.
The job demanded personal effort, time, and financial resources that we did not have at the time.

In our push for better pay in 2003, we were very critical of the offending disparities within and between grades which were in total disregard of academic and professional qualifications. With a mean salary of Sh20,392 for a lecturer with a PhD and Sh35,415 for a full Professor, the remuneration of academic and professional staff when compared to other public officers in Kenya, left a lot to be desired. For instance in 1980, the University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor was placed in the same job group as the Chief Justice and the Head of Civil Service, while lecturers’ salaries were slightly higher than those in civil service. But in a sustained and malicious scheme by the KANU government against scholars whom the party mandarins considered a threat to their political survival, they ensured their salaries stagnated even as those of Civil Servants kept rising.

Taking into consideration inflation, we realised that as at 2003, a professor’s salary was less than what a lecturer earned in 1976. To make ends meet, lecturers were compelled to supplement their meagre salaries by engaging in demeaning non-academic activities at the expense of scholarly pursuits. As the strike persisted, we finally and successfully negotiated for a very lucrative pay rise which no other union had negotiated for its members in the history of Kenya. Lecturers were awarded between 100 per cent pay rise for the highest
paid and 150 per cent for the lowest paid. Together with other union officials, we embarked on institutionalising the union. We rented an office, bought a computer and employed a programme officer. By the time I left the union in 2005, I felt a personal fulfilment. I felt that because we had achieved so much, it was time for me to exit the stage. I believed and still do that one should not overstay in a public office. There are other equally qualified Kenyans who can do the job well if not better.

HISTORY OF UASU

UASU’s history dates back to April 1966 when an organisation called the University College Academic Staff Association was registered with the Registrar of Societies. This association was very much a social organisation which welcomed and saw off expatriate staff as they joined or left college. Most of this social function has since been taken up by the Faculty Boards and the Senior Common Room.

The Academic Staff Association was given some kind of legal status with the establishment of the University of Nairobi (set up by the University of Nairobi Act, 1970) whereby the staff association was entitled to representation in the University Council - the highest governing body of the university. There was contention over this representation since the Academic Staff Association transformed itself to a staff union. This transformation came about in 1972 when, due
to some misunderstanding over access to certain information vital to staff welfare, the association members decided to form a trade union which could then make certain demands with the backing of the law.

The union was subsequently registered with the Registrar of Trade Unions on 19th April 1972, with Dr. Willy Mutunga as the Secretary General. Dr. Mutunga immediately rallied other UASU officials to spearhead a campaign for the reinstatement of Ngugi wa Thiong’o to his former job of teaching English and Literature at the University of Nairobi. Ngugi was incarcerated by the Kenyatta government in December 1977, and although he was released in December 1978, he never returned to his job. Police arrested Dr. Mutunga on 10th June, 1980, and UASU was banned on 19 July, 1980.

After banning UASU, President Moi detained its leaders who included Dr Willy Mutunga (who later became the Chief Justice and the President of the Supreme Court of Kenya), Kamonji Wachira, Prof. Al Amin Mazrui, Prof. Edward Oyugi, Maina wa Kinyatti and Mukaru Ng’ang’a. This was meant to send a message to progressive Kenyans, particularly within the university community, that the Nyayo era expected everybody to “fuata nyayo.” Dissent and independent opinions and views would not be tolerated. By immediately resorting to the extreme method of detention without trial, as his first action against perceived dissidents, Moi was also telling Kenyans to expect the very worst should they ever cross the red line.
As a result of the internal and international pressure culminating in the withholding of aid by the donor countries, President Moi allowed the repeal of section 2(A) in December 1991. Thereafter, a number of political parties were registered and participated in the 1992 multiparty elections. The academics in Kenya’s public universities also participated in this wind of change. They seized the opportunity to articulate the need for respect for human rights and academic freedom in the universities. The academics tried in vain to revive UASU in 1993 to advocate for academic freedom, the de-politicisation of the academic institutions, the promotion of academic standards and development, and the advancement of the general welfare of its members.

This is the rich background against which I took up the role of reviving a union in 2003 that had so many false starts. I am proud of my contribution in putting UASU on the world map of academic trade unions and a strong path to prosperity.

In February 2003, university colleagues and I addressed the media at the Press Centre on the issue of registration of UASU, which had been pending since 1993. We struggled until the Union was registered in May of 2003. By then, we had held many press conferences to demand the registration of the Union.

As we settled in office, there was demand by our members that the Government should remunerate well the academic staff by increasing
their salaries. In July 2003, my Committee met the then Minister for Education, the late Prof. George Saitoti. The members were very aggressive and demanded that university staff be offered better terms of service. Our demands continued until the end of October 2013, when UASU called for a strike.

We went on strike from November 2003 to January 2004. We got a lot of media publicity. Journalists and even university students pressurized the Government to listen to our demands. In February of 2004, the Government finally relented and we were given a good salary increment. Agitation for the implementation of the offer continued until the salary increment was implemented in July of 2004.

The support we got from the media fraternity was great and they even sometimes wrote articles that suggested the way forward on our issue. At least the media enabled us build the union by airing our views and giving ideas on how we were to handle the Government. They enabled us build up a formidable Union to air and fight for the rights of lecturers. We also contributed to the change of the way universities hire management staff. They put on serious media debates on the way of hiring of vice-chancellors competitively. The first case was that of the University of Nairobi. It was the first one to lay down stringent requirements for the hiring of the Vice-Chancellor. That is how Prof George Magoha was appointed to replace Prof Crispus
Kiamba who had apparently fallen out with the Chancellor, Mr Joe Wanjui. After being pushed out, Prof Kiamba was appointed the Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the Commission for Higher Education (that has since been renamed Commission for University Education).

As National Chairman, I led the Union to go on strike and negotiate for a salary that ranged between 100-150 per cent for the highest and lowest paid respectively. One year after negotiating for a salary hike, we held an election at the UoN chapter which I lost. I decided not to become a candidate at the national election held immediately thereafter. I realised the people you lead may not always be thankful even after sacrificing and achieving a lot for them. I had spent a lot of resources to organise the strike and institutionalise the Union. I committed a lot in time and personal resources to have the Union excel and get recognised nationally and internationally. I liaised with members of Staff Union at the University of Dar-es-Salaam and attended a workshop to discuss issues of academic freedom in East African universities. I had a good network within KNUT and organised joint training workshops supported by Solidarity International.

We also held numerous press conferences to push for our issues as members of the teaching profession. It is always in me to get focused on what I do at a given time and put all my effort to achieve it. I
go for one achievement at a time. That has been my character. I am patient and will hold out for a long time. But at this time, I had no option but to accept the member’s decision and handed over the office and instruments of power to the incoming union officials.
CHAPTER 5

THE ROAD TO MY FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Staring at a financial abyss

In July 1981, I left for training in the Netherlands. I left my family in Umoja Estate, Nairobi. We received our second child two months after I had left for the training in the Netherlands. I left money for their upkeep. I came back from the Netherlands in October 1981. I was fortunate to be allocated a mortgage house in Buru Buru Phase V while I was away in the Netherlands. Although I was lucky, I had to raise the house deposit before I received the mortgage from HFCK.

I struggled to raise the money and I sold a radio set I had bought while in the Netherlands to my late brother Richard Mathenge. I also sold suit materials to a friend who was working with the National Irrigation Board (NIB). Before I left Netherlands, I had sold to a Ugandan lady a new coat. I sold personal belongings to raise the money for the initial deposit of the house. I only left one pair of shoes, one cardigan, one coat and one dress for my wife. However, the money raised was not enough

*You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing and falling over.* – Richard Branson
to pay house deposit. I borrowed from my father, father-in-law and from my cousin. I got the rest from the Ukulima Cooperative Society as a second loan. This was unusual because cooperative societies used to give one loan at a time. The Chairman of Ukulima Cooperative Society was very considerate. I paid the house deposit which left me with huge debts. I struggled to make ends meet to sustain my family of two children and a wife.

I was unable to pay house rent for many months. I never paid my water bills for one year. My family stopped using gas for cooking. We started relying wholly on charcoal for cooking for a whole year. We got many bags of charcoal on credit for a whole year. Life was intolerable but we persevered. We struggled the whole year of 1982/1983. I borrowed from many of my former college mates for our upkeep. It was difficult. Borrowing from the same friends frequently without making any refunds was hard. I would stay at home without a single cent. I would request a friend to lend me bus fare and from colleagues at work. I would arrive at home without bus fare for the next day. I survived off friends for long spells of time. At the time, I behaved like a beggar. This is the only time I remember when I was in deep financial trouble and learnt a lot about financial management and how hard life could be with limited resources. I learnt that when you are financially handicapped, it is very difficult to come out of it and be financially stable.
Pyramid scheme

In 1983, I was lucky to get involved in an activity that would improve my financial situation. This was a pyramid scheme that I was introduced to by my neighbour and friend. The pyramid scheme was in the form of three sheets of paper with provisions to enter details that one was supposed to sell to friends. The friends were supposed to recover money for the three and then buy a Postal Money Order for Sh100 for each of the sheets of paper and send the money order to the Pyramid Scheme office. Therefore, each sheet of paper was to generate Sh100 each for the pyramid scheme owner himself. I was able to sell the papers and the new owners sold them. This scheme earned me about Sh14,000 before it was closed down by the government. I spent the money for basic family requirements and settled rent arrears and debts from friends and relatives.

In 1982 and 1983, I rented out my house in Buruburu. It was unfortunate that the three tenants that occupied the house were not consistent in paying rent for the two and a half years. I may not have been paid more than half of the rent. It was important because I had committed all my salary hoping to depend on the rent for my family upkeep and maintenance. Furthermore, the tenants who occupied the house didn’t maintain it. One tenant had just hired the house for his ‘concubine’ with three children and never paid the rent. This really damaged the house. The last tenant left the house in April 1984 never
paid rent consistently and left with huge arrears. I took him to court but he was still not able to pay. My experience with tenants is that you have to be very strict and ruthless in demanding rent.

In April of 1984, I joined PhD training programme where I was paid a stipend of Sh6,000 per month. This continued for nearly four years. As soon as I was paid the first stipend, I moved into my Buruburu house with my family. I felt happy that I was no longer going to deal with tenants who defaulted on rent payments. I felt a real financial reprieve. I paid all my personal debts. I have continued to live in my Buruburu house ever since. In 2009, I contemplated moving out to upmarket estates. Although I finally bought a gated community house in a prime area in Nairobi, but I never relocated. I still continue to live in Buruburu Phase V in Nairobi. I don’t see myself leaving the residency for another estate any time soon.

In search of greener pastures

I resigned from KARI in 1992. I quit because I had not stabilised financially due to the low salary and poor staff welfare. I remember one time my wife was admitted at Aga Khan Hospital but KARI could not foot the Sh10,000 bill. Even after graduating with a PhD in 1990, I was not promoted. I decided to quit and join the University of Nairobi hoping for better terms and conditions of service. I was mistaken. My financial fortunes could not change because the university salary and allowances were equally very low.
Starting a nursery school

After the unsuccessful UASU strike of 1994, I contemplated starting my own business. I settled on a nursery school business in April 1994. I borrowed money to build four classrooms on my plot in Kayole. I built four rooms to house the nursery school. The nursery school opened its doors in January 1995. I hired two teachers. I engaged a lady to do house-to-house marketing and recruitment of pupils. I was able to enroll nine pupils in January 1995. I was always in school by 7.00 O’clock when the children would start trickling in. Since I was trained as a teacher, I used my professionalism to run the nursery school. I would start my work there before driving to Kabete Campus to teach. As fate would have it, I left Nairobi in the July 1995 for an international research assignment in Western Kenya.

I assigned two teachers to run the nursery school on my behalf while I was away. They worked hard and marketed the school widely. In January 1996, they left my nursery school to establish their own in Langata Estate. In December 1995, I had to recruit new teachers for the following year. It was not easy since I spent less time in Nairobi before I went back to Western Kenya for my assignment. Nevertheless, I got a teacher to manage the school. She registered 60 pupils for the first term in 1996. It seemed the nursery school had picked up. However, the school started experiencing low enrolment in 1997 because of lack of a supervisor. I did not have time to supervise the teachers. It deteriorated until I closed it in April 1998 and started building rental flats in the
compound. This is how I lost an opportunity to start my own school and become a businessman. May be the school would have grown to a fully-fledged primary and secondary school. I went for a quick win for three years in Western Kenya and lost a long-life opportunity of building a family business. All along, I had thought that my daughters and son would later find a big school and manage without bothering to look for a job. That was my wishful thinking. It never was to be!

I was contracted by ICRAF and attached to Africa Highland Initiative (AHI) to implement a research project in Western Kenya for three years. Owing to my medical condition, I nearly refused to take up the offer fearing that I would not manage the research activity. Of course, my two children were joining secondary school and my wife had persuaded me not to go because of those responsibilities. But the salary at the university was meagre. AHI was going to pay me three times my salary. My money was being wired from Citibank in USA in US Dollars. Technically, the project was being managed from CIAT Colombia. I went to Western Kenya in July 1995 and was able to achieve a lot in research and dissemination in farmers’ fields in Kakamega and the Vihiga counties. I also stabilised financially more than any other time before. I was able to import a Toyota Corolla from Japan and enjoyed a new Isuzu Double Cabin provided by the ICRAF for the project. I enjoyed the work in Western Kenya. I had a lot of career fulfilment. I had frequent checkups by the doctor since I was fully insured along with my family.
My three years in Western Kenya was an exciting and fulfilling experience. I was attached to KARI Centre in Kakamega. I was able to fit in the community and also the organisation. I had research money. I attracted researchers to collaborate because I had money. I was able to delegate duties to researchers and reward them with money. I delegated and got the highest achievement in research in my 38 years research period. I still think delegation of duties and reward system is the best way to collaborate with a lot of people to make an impact on research activities. I left Western Kenya Nairobi in December 1997 and resumed my duties at the University of Nairobi in July 1998.

**Property acquisition**

In May 1973, I was first employed at Gikondi Secondary School and my monthly salary was Sh420 where I worked until I left in October 1975 to join the University of Nairobi for my undergraduate studies. During the two-year period I worked at Gikondi Secondary School, I earned money to build a five-room semi-permanent house at my father’s farm in Rukira Village, Othaya Division. My father gave me eucalyptus tree to make timber to build the house. In 1974, my father gave me land in Mwenje which he had only paid the membership fee. In 1974, I completed the payment. It is a five-acre piece of land situated in Milimani area of Mwenje. This piece belonged to a cooperative society which later gave us title deeds. In 1976, I built a
two-roomed house at the farm in Mwenje using the student stipend given by the Government.

After I completed my degree studies in 1978, I was posted by TSC to teach in a secondary school in Tetu Division but I opted for a job offered by Ministry of Agriculture (Scientific Division) on 7\textsuperscript{th} July 1978. This was only one week after our final semester examination results had been released by the Dean of Faculty. I joined Ukulima SACCO as a member immediately I was employed by Ministry of Agriculture. This enabled me to accumulate my savings before I qualified for a loan in February 1980. I used the money to pay for a SACCO land in Marmanet Forest Scheme. The rest I paid dowry for my wife and built a two-room house in the Marmanet Scheme.

In June 1981, I was allocated a mortgage house in Buru Buru Phase V House No.170. I was then in Netherlands for a three months training. I did not have money in my account since I was paying for the loan for the Marmanet land scheduled to get fully paid within 4 years. When I realised that I was allocated a mortgage house, I sold most of the things I had bought with the training allowance I was being paid by the Dutch government. I sold the rest of the items I had bought from Netherlands to my relatives to raise money for deposit for the house. I struggled to raise the money through a second loan from Ukulima Sacco and borrowing money from my father, cousin and father in law. Although I was able to pay the deposit of the house, this
left me with only a small amount of money every month since I was paying two loans at the Ukulima Sacco. The house was completed by the developer in July 1982 and officially handed over to me. I immediately rented the house to a tenant who had no commitment to pay rent. I had the most financial difficult times in 1982, 1983 and half of 1984 since my tenant in Buru Buru was very inconsistent in paying rent. I had a very difficult time paying for the rental house in Umoja Estate. For several months, I remained in rent arrears for the house we were living in at Umoja Estate. I had to continuously borrow money from colleagues and friends to meet food requirements for the young family of two daughters. I repeat, this was the hardest financial time of my life.

Luckily, I was given a PhD scholarship and a reasonable stipend by ICIPE in April 1984. This was a great financial relief. I immediately moved into my house in Buru Buru since the tenant had absconded and taken off from the house within the days of offer of scholarship. The money I got monthly was nearly equivalent to what Permanent Secretaries were getting during that time. I was delighted to be on monthly stipend which enabled me to experience some financial reprieve.

At around April 1984, I started feeling recovered from financial difficulties. I continued to repay the two loans to Ukulima Sacco without much effect on my general wellbeing. By 1985, I had cleared
the debts I had accumulated from my friends, father, cousin and father-in-law. I was back on my feet because of the stipend allowance from ICIPE. I cleared all the loans from Ukulima SACCO in 1985 and borrowed another loan which I used to buy a plot in Mathare North Area 4. I was able to accelerate payment of the loan within a period of two years and cleared it. In 1987, I borrowed a loan of Sh100,000 from Ukulima SACCO to build 8 rooms in Mathare North Area 4 plot. I completed building within three months because I wanted to rent the rooms as soon as the Ukulima SACCO started monthly deductions. By 1991, I had cleared payment of the loan from Ukulima Sacco and borrowed another loan from the same SACCO to buy a plot in Kayole. I then joined University of Nairobi in June 1992. I immediately joined the CHUNA SACCO for the University of Nairobi employees and started saving prudently. In April 1994, I borrowed money from CHUNA SACCO to build 4 rooms in Kayole. The rooms were meant for a nursery school. In January 1995, I started a nursery school in the four rooms at Kayole and employed two teachers to start off the school. The school enrolled 9 children for the 1st term and the number continued to increase. I was reporting to the school most of the days of the week and I continued to run it until June 1995 when I left for Kakamega to take up an international job where I was being paid handsomely in US$ per month. The school continued and the intake for January 1996 was sixty children. However, because of management problems the number of children in the school reduced drastically and remained
continuously at low level in late 1996 and 1997. In January 1998, I made a decision to close down the school and use the money I had earned from the 3 year job in Kakamega to build a four-storey flat. I completed building the structure in 1999. In April 1998, I also acquired a mortgage house at Komarock Phase III which I continued paying for ten years until 2008.

In June 1998, I joined an NGO, ABLH, at Runda Estate where I earned a monthly consultancy allowance besides my university salary for two years. I built enough capital through salary and consultancies with ALBH in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. In 2003, I realised I had enough money to rebuild the house in Mathare North Area 4 and increase the floors up to five. The house with 40 rooms was completed in 2004 and became the best in financial returns.

In 2006, I bought a plot in Tassia and in 2007, I accumulated enough money and started building six units of two bedrooms each. The building was completed in November 2007 and occupied in 2008. I sold all shares I had bought since 1997 up to 2005 at Nyaga Stockbrokers. Using that money, I bought an incomplete house in Tassia and completed six units of two bedrooms each and the houses were occupied. I used the rest of the proceeds from shares to pay deposit and legal fees for a house in Rosslyn Gardens. The cost of the house was negotiated under mortgage payment for the next 13 years.
In 2007, I decided to plant eucalyptus trees in all two acres of my land in Marmanet Forest Scheme. I planted two acres the following year and planted the rest of the one-and-half acres in 2009. I left half acre for the caretaker and the house where she was residing. I had decided that the land may not be very habitable because the land which was under the forest in the area had been allocated to people in the area and insecurity was high. There was also a lot of subdivision of land into small plots for those people relocated from the forest in the area. I decided to rehabilitate my house in Othaya, Nyeri which I had built in 1973. I put a concrete floor and raised the timber house with two levels of stone from the ground. In 2012 I planted two thousand seedlings of the eucalyptus tree in one acre in my farm in Mwenje, MilimaTatu area in Laikipia. I continued planting more seedlings until the whole land is now fully covered. I have built a two room house for the caretaker to live in.

I joined the money business in 1997 by buying shares through Nyaga Stock Brokers. I wanted to have shares as a security for my health, that is, if my family got sick and required a lot of money, I would sell the shares to settle the hospital bill. I did not sell my shares until 1998 when I started building a four-storey house in Kayole Estate and ran short of funds. I sold a few shares to complete the house at Kayole. I later sold a few more shares to complete a five-storey house in Mathare North Area 4. In 2006, I bought more shares from ten companies which I thought were performing well and as a way of spreading the risk through Nyaga Stock Brokers.
In 2008, Nyaga Stock Brokers collapsed but I was lucky that I had frozen all my shares with the brokers. Therefore, all the shares were intact when the company collapsed and people lost money. Later on, I sold all my shares and bought a house in Tassia Estate and paid a deposit for a high-end market house in Rosslyn Gardens.

I have since resumed the buying of shares as a form of health security during my old age. Trading in shares is a worthy business with the least management stress. It can generate money if traded on. However, you require a heavy financial investment for you to realise substantial profit.

Renting houses is not only a matter of collecting rent monthly. It requires skills of a debt collector to deal with tenants. After realising I was not doing well in rent collection from the Mathare North house for two years, I contracted an old lady as a caretaker to stay in one room for free but collect rent from tenants at the end of every month on my behalf. She did a perfect job in collecting rent every month. Though she had been disabled by stroke, she was always at the compound maintaining order and demanding rent from those who had not paid. She served for over a decade which I highly appreciated. She later moved out to her daughter’s house. It is from her that I learnt the importance of engaging somebody to collect rent for you and not yourself. Rent collection requires someone who will not listen to the tenants’ financial problems that prevent them from paying rent on time. I have contracted persons to collect rent since that time and it is the best way of managing rental houses.
Forming a family investment company

In July of 2009, I suggested to members of my family that we register a company with all of them as directors with equal shareholding. We registered the company under the Companies Act and Articles of Association were written by a lawyer and registered. We opened an account with each of us paying a share Sh5,000 per month which totalled to Sh25,000 per month. We have held various normal meetings and Annual General Meetings (AGMs) every year. This has encouraged us to be together and continue to be together. As early as 2009, I thought of transferring through a written consent, all the property I had to the company. I wrote a letter to that effect. Most of the property was in the form of Real Estate and two pieces of land in Laikipia. I thought of having all the property under the company and managed by the company. Because of the difficulty of officially transferring the property, I only did this in writing and distributed copies of the signed documents to the directors of the company. The houses involved those I have in Kayole, Komarock, Buruburu, Mathare North and Rosslyn Gardens. The Land transferred involved were those in Marmanet Forest Scheme and Mirima Tatu in Mwenje, Laikipia District. I committed all the above property to the Company for the next sixty years. They were to be run by the company and 60 per cent of the property used for maintenance of the company and 40 per cent as management fee. Since that period, I have acquired a piece of four-acre land at Matuiku, Mwenje, Laikipia West District. Was it
a strategy of handing over all my property to the family for communal management? I had good intentions. I wanted all the members of my family to grow and create wealth, from the property base, which I held. Was it too early in my life to do that? I do not think so. I was approaching sixty years of age and I felt that was the best thing to do. I felt that I no longer required wealth. The family members should grow it. I was personally convinced that I needed to continue earning money through employment. Although my salary has been good in my current employment, I no longer bother to invest. I feel the young members of my family should take over the mantle since they have the energy and time to invest. All I required is to report to work and work the whole day for my employer. I have done this throughout the five years I was at Mount Kenya University (MKU).

All the directors have been meeting to discuss matters of interest to the Company and the properties I transferred. The members of the family are most informed of all the property I have. I have tried as much as possible to involve them in the management. I have noted their keenness to know how to manage and give me ideas on how we can improve on the management of those properties. Besides the transferred property, the company has acquired a house at Nyayo Estate in Embakasi and shares in various companies in the Nairobi Stock Exchange. We have also jointly acquired two houses in Riruta. We are making progress. It is slow progress but nonetheless, we are doing it. I have contributed more than the other directors in acquiring the property. The wealth is
growing under the company, although youthful directors feel that the growth is slow. It takes time to build a company and especially from real estate and shares but we hope that the company will grow and we will have built a stronger team of directors to run it. I still spend more time running the company than the other directors. This is partly due to the fact that most of the property has been under my name. I hope that the interest of managing the company will increase as soon as possible as the company owns a substantial number of properties or also brings dividends to the directors. My interest is to see them committed to the company and create time to manage it. This will be my ultimate pleasure. Of course, I have been receptive to their ideas of investment. I took the idea of “Garden” from one of our meetings. The suggestion was to have a garden in Marmanet Farm. The farm has mature eucalyptus trees and we felt that we could create a recreational garden with flowers, grass and shrubs in the remaining one acre of the farm that does not have trees.

I have moved into the area and planted flowers, shrubs and kikuyu grass in the one-acre compound. The garden looks beautiful. I have piped water in the compound. Of course, I have put more effort into the garden than the other directors of the company.

I may not have enough energy to run the recreational garden and have a viable event management and hospitality business. The project is a major shift in my thinking of investment. Since I shifted my mind from rural investments in 1981, I have never dreamt of going back. It is only that the idea came from one of the Directors and I took it
seriously. It is my hope that it will be a viable investment to generate income for the Directors of the company. But, could it also be my pastime during the sunset years? I derive a lot of pleasure by being chauffeur driven to the recreational garden every 2-3 weeks.

I have acquired a number of properties during my lifetime. I have decided to allocate my property to my family. I thought it wise to do it early enough so that they can also be able to manage and gain experience in property management. I tried to have my properties managed jointly with sons and daughters. I registered a company, Huria Management Company Ltd in July 2010 with my wife and children as directors of the company. We have developed the strategic plan, constitution, and operational manuals for real estate and money markets. We have been holding annual general meeting and normal meeting every three months since 2010. We have made many good deliberations during those meetings. Serious discussions have taken place and key decisions made. Although we meet often, it has always been on my side to make the briefing especially on the properties. The only business the other directors have taken more seriously is the money market. Two of the directors have been very keen and we have made money from that portfolio. This is the venture I was interested in creating so that they have something that they are doing besides the jobs they are employed. I intend to add more money to buy shares so that they may generate more profit for the company. *Huria Management Company Ltd* has succeeded in buying two houses. The buying of the two houses is out
of monthly savings in a company account and funding from my salary. Since 2014 I have shifted my thinking to sharing of my real estate properties to my family members. This shift is due to the realization that the members of the family are not keen on running my properties communally. However, they are keen to run the properties under the company together as directors of the company.

I have settled on real estate as my source of income. It is a worthwhile venture since rent always keeps rising. It gives mental comfort just like a salary per month. However, real estate requires heavy investment before you get substantial rent income per month. This requires you to borrow from cooperative societies and from banks. This ties you to loan re-payments for a long time. You can only build your real estate over time; it engages you for your life time. Since 1981, I have committed myself to real estate and stopped farming in my five acre land because I was not drawing much from it. I have seven houses in six estates within the city of Nairobi, four of which I have built using sacco loans and bought three others using mortgage loans. I have committed all the monthly rental collection to pay for my last mortgage loan which is to be repaid within 13 years.
"Making mistakes is the privilege of the active -- of those who can correct their mistakes and put them right." -- Ingvar Kamprad

CHAPTER 6

TRANSITION TO RETIREMENT

Determination to overcome failure

From 1972 when I sat my A level examinations and I got two subsidiary passes which were below the minimum requirement of two principal passes required for admission to the University of Nairobi, then the only university in the country, I promised myself never to give up in life. That is why in June of 1974, I registered for the London GCE (A-level) examination. I worked hard and passed the examination with two principal passes. The two principal passes were the minimum qualification for admission to the University of Nairobi.

In October of 1975, I was admitted to the University of Nairobi to study Bachelor of Education (Science). I had applied for BSc in Agriculture, which was regarded as more prestigious than B.Ed. Although frustrated after having not obtained the cut-off marks for BSc Agriculture, I took up the course and got down to business. My years of learning were of hard work and total commitment. I
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graduated with an Upper Second Class Division in 1978. I had no single supplementary or failure in any course unit during that period of my study. I ensured that I committed all my time to reading and never engaged in unnecessary social activities during the period. My further academic pursuits were successful without any hitch.

However, I failed miserably in other areas but learnt very important lessons. For instance, although I was working in research in agriculture, I failed in farming. In 1980, I bought a five-acre piece of land in Laikipia. The land was good for farming different crops. In 1981, I planted maize in two acres of land. The maize performed well and I harvested forty bags of maize. I took the forty bags of maize to the National Cereals Board that was the only buying institution for cereals in the country. The National Cereals Board took nearly one year to pay me. I therefore did not have money to prepare and plant in 1982. I rented the farm until 1997. I farmed two acres of maize crop. The maize crop did well and I harvested and sold the crop. I found out that it was not profitable to farm since I had spent more than I realised after selling the produce. I once again rented the farm out until 2007 when I started planting trees in the farm. I have planted the whole five acres with eucalyptus trees. I hope the investment trees will pay off handsomely and compensate for the period I have not planted crops in the farm. The failure to farm for a long time and get in touch with the rural income base has ensured that I concentrate on economic activities and investments in Nairobi.
The initial failure in farming diverted my attention from the rural area and gave me more time to build my career and real estate investment in Nairobi.

**Failed bar businesses**

In 1985, I failed in Bar Business. One day, I took my family for *nyama choma* retreat in a popular place called Kia Maiko, Nairobi. By then, it was the most popular place for *nyama choma* in Nairobi. You could enjoy goat being slaughtered and roasted as you wait. The blood from the goat would be emptied into a ridge just next to you. I met a village mate with a kiosk for *nyama choma*. He welcomed me and the family. We ate meat. He requested me to partner with him to start a bar in the kiosk. He was only doing *nyama choma* and he thought it wise that we can partner in a bar business in the kiosk. I agreed to partner with him in the business. I paid Sh5,000 as my share contribution to start the business. By then, it was a lot of money. It bought 30 crates of beer and we were in business. My partner requested to bring a music system in the bar to make it lively. I would go there on weekends to enjoy a booming business. However, I was not able to be briefed by my partner on the returns from the business. I could only see my partner very drunk and in the company of women.

Nevertheless, I thought the business was booming and no need to worry or be suspicious. But in three months’ time after the business started, I noticed that the stock of beer was low and the business was
not booming as expected. My business partner contracted serious pneumonia. He had been spending a lot of time drinking and womanising. That is how our bar business failed. Finally, he sold the empty bottles to be able to raise money to pay his hospital bill. Unless you know the character of your business partner, the partnership can be tricky and chances are you will lose your investment.

**Failed taxi business**

We bought two cars for taxi business in Eastleigh, Nairobi in 1992. A longtime friend, Mr John Karengi, had convinced me that taxi business was very lucrative. He was to manage the business and we share the proceeds. So we equally contributed for the buying of the two taxi cars. He continued to manage business for the whole year but never shared any profits. However, the vehicles were very busy with carrying people who hired them whenever I visited their station at Eastleigh. But he always said that they were not making money. Finally one of the cars was involved in an accident and the driver sustained serious injuries. We sold the other car at a throw away price but he never gave me anything. That was the end of the painful taxi venture that ended up wasting my money.

**Failed nursery school business**

In 1994, I built a four-roomed house at Kayole estate. In 1995, I
started the nursery school and called it Elite Pre-Primary School. I bought chairs, mattresses and furniture for the office. I bought all the materials required to start the school in January 1995. I had nine nursery children. During the second term, I recruited two nursery school teachers. I personally supervised the teachers. However, in July 1995, I got an international job with ICRAF and relocated to Western Kenya for the next 3 years. I would frequently come to Nairobi to visit the family and also visit the school to see the progress. The school flourished well in whole of 1995 and early 1996. Then it started to attract fewer children in 1997 and by 1998, there were none coming in. I contributed to the poor performance due to lack of supervision. The teachers were fully responsible for the school. The trained teachers had left in 1996 and the untrained teachers I had hired were not performing. I never came to know very well why it was not performing poorly.

I came back to Nairobi in June 1998. I was directly engaged by an NGO, ABLH, and also went back to teach at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi. I did not have enough time to monitor and do supervisory role at the school. In December 1998, I closed the nursery school. That was the best I could do. Otherwise the school had continued making losses in paying teachers for the 3 years that I was working in Western Kenya. In 1999, I demolished the school structure and started building a four-storey residential structure. That is the best I could do. I had made a decision to be an employee and
doing business was out of my mind. The money I was being paid monthly by the NGO for the next two years until 2000 was good enough for my family. I was also a full time employee of the University of Nairobi. The failure to build a business gave me time to build a career that has taken time and become financially rewarding.

**Failed social relationships**

I had close friends in my early life. My father and mother were always welcoming children from other families with whom we made friends. We would be given a lot of food which, somehow made our home attractive and the children were always happy to visit.

By the time I was joining secondary school, my father had build us our own house to sleep in and entertain our friends. We would roam in the village. We would attend night dances. We would attend night ceremonies which were precursor to circumcision ceremonies. December parties were very lively. They were mainly at night with lots of dancing. However, in form 3 and 4, I came to realise that I have to read seriously for the form four examinations which were in 1970. I had passed KJSE narrowly in 1968 and I did not want to take chances in EACE so I reduced the number of friends and social activities. I did well in EACE and admitted for A-Levels at Nakuru High School. I made friends from some boys in my class. We were always together. We nicknamed ourselves “Sullivan Brothers”. I did
not know where the name came from. All I know is that we were friends. We would spend a lot of time partying. They were good in womanising all the time. I was not good in that front. But I joined them in many social activities which wasted precious time for reading and doing assignments. Most of the other boys were brilliant. They performed well in class. I continued to perform poorly. This continued and even the final examination of EACE I performed dismally. I never performed well to gain qualification to join the university. Since then, I ensured I had no permanent friends and permanent enemies. I promised myself to drink beer but never compromise my character and my resolve to succeed in investments. Not even my immediate members of family are so close to me. I realised that my life is my life. The influence of the social mates can destroy your life as they continue to build theirs with a lot of vigour.

A golfer that never was

In October 2000, I visited Vetlabs Golf Club to meet a colleague of mine from the University of Nairobi. He was a golfer and he used to play four times a week. I followed him in the field where he was playing. The more we moved in the field, the more I realised that I could spend my spare time playing golf. By then, I had just stopped working with an NGO in Runda where I had worked for two years. So I required something to occupy myself during my spare time.
Therefore, I paid about Sh20,000 for my membership in the club. The club also had other lecturers from the university. I bought myself a second hand golf bag and golf clubs and started patronising the club, practising and playing every Wednesday and Friday at 4.00 O’clock. I put a lot of effort and time in training. I would spend time from 4 O’clock to 6 O’clock at the club.

Golf is a game where you must make friends. You have to look for friends who enjoy the game. I tried to link up with colleagues who were veterans in the club and I was able to practice quite a bit. The game requires one to pay for the services of a caddy to train you. I bought a bit newer golf clubs and continued to practice. Although golf is a social game, colleagues from the university were not very welcoming. They never allowed me to join them in the field. Thus, I did not make a friendly company in the field. I would walk alone and practice playing alone in the field. I continued to do that in the year 2001 and 2002. I never practiced enough to have a handicap of 28. This was purely because I never got good company to practice and play with. All that time I continued playing the game, I realised that my interest in the game was waning because I never created golf partners. I would join golfers on Wednesdays for socialising. I would enjoy wine and snacks in the club. In 2003, I became engaged in staff union matters and did not have time to visit the club and play. I would only visit intermittently in the evenings for socialising. For the three years between 2003 and 2005, I never played golf. I became a bit free towards the end of 2005.
In 2006, I was elected Dean, Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Nairobi. I became busier and had no time to play golf. There were a lot of meetings I had to attend at the university. I completed my term in 2010 and joined Mount Kenya University at Thika as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The distance from Kabete Golf Club to Mount Kenya University at Thika and time became limiting factors. That is how I forgot about the game. The only things I still keep are two golf bags with clubs. Should I throw them away?

**Determination to succeed**

Determination to become an agriculturalist paid off when I was employed in the Ministry of Agriculture and posted to an agricultural research station to become an entomologist. I pursued an MSc and a PhD in Agricultural Entomology. I have attracted donor funds to conduct research in entomology. I have trained a lot of students for their undergraduate MSc and PhD in entomology. I have worked very hard and focused in my profession. I have worked in many institutions where I have gained a lot of experience and networked with colleagues internationally, government and non-governmental organisations. The networks have made me very active in the activities related to my profession.

I never gave up when I was diagnosed with diabetes in August 1994. Although at first it was a shock to me, I took the news in my stride and
I have continued to live normally with the condition. I have continued to perform my family and professional duties diligently and with a lot of determination. Although investment in real estate is no walk in the park, I feel I have done fairly well and succeeded unlike in other business ventures where I lost money.

Journey to retirement

I have been employed for the last 38 years. I was initially employed in the Public Service where I would have retired at 55 years. Now I am 64 years old. I am asking myself, “When shall I retire from employment?” My employer at the University of Nairobi has the retirement age set at 70 years, and then after 2 years on contract until a person’s health doesn’t allow him or her to continue working. I have decided to go the full 70 years or more until my health does not allow me to continue or I die in office. Tradition dictates that at some point one must retire.

My vision for retirement

If I retire at 70 years, I may have 20 or 30 years ahead of me to live. And have to choose how to fill that time. I need to figure out what am most passionate about, what inspires me, and what gets me excited about being alive. Unless I discover what will give meaning to my retirement years, I risk letting valuable days and positive opportunities pass by.
I am not worried over which income-generating activity I will engage in after retirement. After all, I would retire from teaching at the university at the age of 70 years and thereafter I may have an option to take a two-year contract until either I die or I am unable to perform my teaching duties.

I have not developed any business that would occupy me on a daily basis and make economic sense. Other than collecting rent from my rental houses, I would be idle most of the time.

When I turned 60 years on 2nd June 2012, I celebrated my first ever birthday with a cake. I felt that God had brought me that far. Although I was diagnosed with diabetes in August 1994, I have not really had any worrying symptoms of the disease. I was diagnosed during a routine medical check-up at the University of Nairobi clinic by my doctor so that he could fill a medical record to enable me travel to Israel for a 3-month course. I was not able to travel to Israel thereafter because of a major war with the Palestinian Hezbollah. But as fate could have it, I came to be diagnosed with a long-term chronic disease i.e. *Diabetes Mellitus II*. I went to confirm the disease at Kikuyu Hospital. The nurses there confirmed through tests that I was indeed diabetic and had to learn to live with the condition throughout my life. At first, I did not believe the American nurse who was running the tests. I started going for glucose tests at University of Nairobi. Until 2001, I
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controlled the disease by diet management. In the early years, I was devastated but decided to put myself under strict diet management regime to ensure my weight remained in ranged between 72 and 74 kilos.

As time passed, I slowed down on attending medical checkups at the University of Nairobi Clinic. At one time, a doctor advised that I should create time for the checkups. He advised me that unless I took the advice seriously, the university may have no option but release me from work. I took the advice seriously and started to frequent the University Clinic for medication and check-ups. By then, the glucose levels were advancing and the doctor continued increasing the oral dosage. By then, I did not notice symptoms and I continued to work and live normally. When I was leaving the Deanship to join Mount Kenya University in May 2010, I had no doubt that my health was fine and I would work at Mount Kenya University for a three-year contract period and perform well. In August 2010, I was put on insulin at Aga Khan Hospital by Dr Nancy Kinyah, a diabetes specialist. I have continued with the medication and the specialist has continued to increase the insulin dosage every now and then. I am not sure how long it will take before the symptoms of the condition are observed again.

I have worked very hard since July 1978 when I was formally employed. I have also worked extra hard outside the formal employment. The
consultancies have earned me some extra money which I have invested in real estate. Managing diabetes is an expensive responsibility. I am currently spending Sh15,000 per month on my medical expenses. I have a committed diabetes specialist who I consult after every three months. I have to continue to work to meet my medical expenses. All the rental income for my houses is meeting the mortgage expenses of the Rosslyn Gardens house. Draining all the money into the mortgage has given me comfort. There is no extra money in the bank to think of investing. There is no further headache to think of developing another house and the headache that goes with it. I am free. I am more relaxed than ever before with no more projects to think about. The only project that requires money is my health.

My two daughters and son are employed and they can meet their basic requirements. As I get to the final leg of my life, I feel I have achieved my goals which I set very early in my life.

I have been rehabilitating my house in the rural home since 2011. Although I had the house since 1972, I never thought of occupying it. I never thought I would settle in my rural home in Othaya where I was born. I had also not thought about where I would be buried upon breathing my last. The death of my brother in 2008 made me think of identifying my final resting place. One of my family members suggested that my brother be buried at Langata Cemetery in Nairobi. This idea shocked me. Although family members finally reversed the
decision after my late brother’s children insisted that their father be buried in their home at Ol Kalou, I was left perturbed. I communicated to my family at that time that unless otherwise, I should be buried in Othaya, just next to my late parents’ graves.

After I chose to be buried at Othaya, I decided to renovate my house to make it look like we have been living there. My family may never move there but the house will create an impression that I have a rural home. I thank God for the period that I have lived and continue living. It is my prayer that God will give me more healthier and fruitful days ahead.

**Greening Kenya for posterity**

I wish to green Kenya on my way to retirement. I am passionate about environmental sustainability. I wish to continue my environmental conservation activities which I started in April 2006 after I was invited to plant a tree during an official function at the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi. Later that year, I led students and colleagues in planting 2000 tree seedlings at Kanyariri farm, University of Nairobi.

In April 2007, I led students and staff to plant 5,000 trees at the University of Nairobi farm near Ngong Forest. I moved to my farm and planted 3000 trees in April 2007, and between 2008 and 2009, I
planted 700 tree seedlings. So far I have 10,000 trees in my five-acre farm.

In 2009, I joined a team of colleagues from the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Science to consider the establishment of Wangari Maathai Institute of Peace and Environmental Studies. I was eager for the University of Nairobi to start an institute of environment. This is the faculty where the late Wangari Maathai was a member in the 1970s. She may have thought that establishing the Wangari Maathai Institute at University of Nairobi was more sustainable than her own Green Belt Movement. We met many times during the year both within and without the university to discuss the proposal for the establishment of the Institute. The team discussed the proposal many times with Prof Wangari Maathai at Jacaranda Hotel, Windsor Golf and Country Club and Green Belt Movement offices. She was very keen and determined to have the Institute. Before the end of 2009, the University Senate and University Management Board approved the proposal for the establishment of the Institute. Our fear of other interested departments and schools being a roadblock was over. We finally had a workshop to develop the Strategic Plan for the Institute at Karen Nairobi in May 2010.

Prof. Wangari Maathai Institute of Peace and Environment Studies was established as an experiential learning centre on environment. Prof. Maathai was keen that everything should be modeled on good
environment i.e. green building, indigenous trees in the 50 acres donated by the university. Although time was running out on her part, she moved very fast to raise funds from Japan, Clinton Foundation in USA and other donors to build the Institute. She did not have much time to raise enough funds to have the Institute fully operational before her death in 2011. However, Prof. Maathai left enough goodwill that has enabled the institute to continue its good work. I believe that we can sustain the environment for wealth creation, poverty alleviation and job creation.

**What has been my purpose in life?**

During my lifetime, I have worked very hard. I committed to reading very hard during my primary and secondary school days. My parents appreciated my commitment to education. During my primary school days, I would be in school at night until 9.00 pm and then walk home with my brother for about two kilometres. Sometimes it could be very dark. I remember one day we were nearly attacked by a wild animal, but my brother was very quick to hit it with a stick. That is the only time I recall having bad experience. Due to my commitment to education, I was exempted from domestic chores. Unlike my brothers, I never learned how to milk cows. Although I committed most of my time to reading in the evenings, I was able to join my brothers and cousins to look after cattle.
I became more passionate about education after I obtained my first degree. By joining a research station, the candle for acquiring further knowledge through studies was rekindled. I went for the second degree at the university. I isolated myself from my friends and put all the efforts to complete the second degree. It was also not easy. I struggled with course work. I struggled with the research project too because at the time I had family responsibilities to worry about too. The same hard times also happened with third degree but I was determined to pass. I was registered at the University of Dar-es-salaam and it was not easy with supervisors. Just like in other universities in Africa, the supervisors were to be literally begged to read our research work to the end of the final draft. Sometimes we had to give them gifts so as to build closeness to help us to graduate.

I was clear that the purpose of acquiring degrees was to progress further in my life. I have consistently built passion for documentation and dissemination of research findings. Research is my life, I “eat and sleep” research. I feel that passion for research has kept me in the track of life and enabled me accumulate modest wealth for my family. The effort in research has enabled me push my intellectual capacity to the best level I can. Nevertheless, I have spent most of my social life, intellectual capacity and physical capacity on research. I am determined to continue conducting research for the rest of my life, until I retire.
After I die, I want to be remembered as a Kenyan who lived and loved his family and country so much. I want to die a happy Kenyan who never left a debt behind to be paid on his behalf by his family. I want to be remembered for all the good things and happy times we had together with my family members, colleagues and friends. I want to be remembered for having contributed, albeit in a modest way, in improving the welfare of our neighbourhood, university staff and for greening Kenya for posterity.

I want to be remembered as a Kenyan scientist who made a modest contribution in agricultural entomology in an attempt to increase food security for humanity.

I have never been involved in corrupt deals nor grabbed anyone’s property. While working on increasing my wealth portfolio, I believe in hard work and honesty. I have lived a modest life within my means. Whatever little property I have acquired, I have made arrangements for my family to ensure its sound administration and management long after I am gone.

I have worked hard and raised a happy family anyone can be proud of. I am at peace with myself and with everyone else. In my lifetime, I
have always tried to be fair to all those I deal with. Even at family level, I don’t have a favourite child. I treat all my family members equally. This is what should define my legacy long after I am gone. I want to lay in peace in the true meaning of the phrase.

During my lifetime, I have learnt that failure is not an end. With a clear vision, you can rise, dust up yourself and succeed in whatever you decide to achieve. You only need to spend your time well. Don’t waste time. I don’t compromise on time. It is the biggest asset we all have or else you fail in whatever you want to achieve. Even with my family and students, I have always been very strict with time.

I have also learnt that it is always advisable to change direction when things are not working according to plan. After accomplishing your assignment, exit the stage when you are still popular. It is not advisable to overstay because what will follow will be humiliation that will taint your legacy.
A LIFE OF STRUGGLES

"Risk more than others think safe. Dream more than others think practical. Expect more than others think possible. Care more than others think wise." -- Howard Schultz

APPENDIX 1

PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>John Huria Nderitu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year of birth</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Kenyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Agricultural Entomologist/IPM/Crop Protection/Organic Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position</td>
<td>Associate Professor, University of Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Address</td>
<td>P.O. Box 00515-1282, Buru Buru, Nairobi, Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>+245-020-0722308581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:huria@uonbi.ac.ke">huria@uonbi.ac.ke</a> or <a href="mailto:hurianderitu@gmail.com">hurianderitu@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMPLOYMENT:
University of Nairobi - Associate Professor, Faculty of Agriculture
Mount Kenya University (2010-March 2011) Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Mount Kenya University, Thika.
University of Nairobi- Dean Faculty of Agriculture (2006- 12th March 2010).
University of Nairobi (June 1992 - October 2004) - Senior Lecturer; October 2004-current)- Associate Professor

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Development, Mount Kenya University, Thika, Kenya
Development and Implementation of five curriculum (PhD in Dryland Resource Management, MSc in Agricultural Information and Communication Management (AICM); Diploma in AICM, Certificate in AICM (2006-2008)
Dean, Faculty of Agriculture (March 2006-2010)
Associate Professor in Crop Protection (October 2004-Present)
Chairman, UASU (2003-2005)
IPM Scientist, ABLH (NGO) 1998-2000
Visiting Research Scientist (Bean Entomology), CIAT, Colombia, 24th April-25th May, 1993.
Senior Lecturer, Agricultural Entomology, University of Nairobi, Crop Science Department (1992-October 2004)

Training farmers and agricultural extension staff in Training and Visits Programme of Ministry of Agriculture (TV) while employed by MOA\KARI (1984-1988).

Deputy National Crop Protection Coordinator (1990-1992)
Deputy to the Chief Entomologist, KARI (1986-1990).
Plant inspection service (1978-1984) while employed by MOA\KARI
Edit Annual report of Entomology section, National Agricultural Laboratories while employed by MOA\KARI (1987-1991).
Lecture Short courses organized by CIP, CIAT and HCDA while employed by MOA\KARI (1978-1992).
Close collaboration with the following institutions in matters of research:  CIP, CIAT, ICIPE and Extension staff of the Ministry of
Agriculture while employed by MOA\KARI (1978-1992).
Attend technical research meetings at CIBC while employed at MOA\KARI (1978-1992).
Advisory services to farmers on crop pests control methods while employed at MOA\KARI (1978-1992).
Research in Agricultural entomology while employed at MOA\KARI (1978-1992).
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EDUCATION


Training under African Regional Postgraduate Programme in Insect Science (ARPPIS) at ICIPE(1984-1987)

B.Ed (Science)- 1978, Upper Second class Honors - Zoology, Botany, Education, University of Nairobi

A level, Nakuru High School; 2 principals (1974).

O level EACE,1970- 1st Division, 21 points, Kiangoma Secondary school, Nyeri.
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

International Plant Protection course held in the Netherlands from July 20th to October 30th, 1981.
International Group Training course on components essential for ecologically sound pest management systems held at ICIPE from July 18 to August 6, 1982.
Tropical pest management course, University of London, Imperial College, 8 May to 26 July 1991.
Bean Stem Resistance Screening Methods Course held at Bujumbura, Burundi, 1-8 November 1991.
Workshop on Program formulation and priority setting at Program level held at KARI Muguga, Nairobi, 1991. KARI/ISNAR.
Group training course in stratigraphic. KARI/ODA course, 13th-17th April, 1992, Nairobi.
Database production course. CABI/KARI course. 12th-16th July, 1993, Nairobi.
Basic principles of planning integrated plant protection measures.
Feldafing, Germany. 13th May-9th June 1994.
Characterization and Diagnostic training Workshop.
Kakamega. 19-20th March 1997, Kakamega
Member of Centre Research Advisory Committee(CRAC), National Agricultural Research Laboratories, Nairobi (1996-1998)
Participatory monitoring and evaluation course. ASSOCIATION BETTER LAND HUSBANDRY Held from 9th to 18th December 1998 in Nairobi, Kenya
Safe use of pesticides. GIFAP Safe Use Project, May 2002, Nairobi
FAO Training on international standards for phytosanitary measures and contemporary pytosanitary practices, Dar-es-salaam Tanzania, 24th February to 9th March 2002
Review KARI research proposals (CRAC)(1996-2005), Nairobi
Review full Research proposals the 2005 KAPP research call, Nakuru, 10-12 May 2006
Review conference papers for 10th Biennial Scientific conference, October 2006, KARI Headquarters
Review Research Proposals for 2006 KAPP Research Call, Nakuru, December 2006
Member of Communication Task Force. Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi, Kenya
Advisory Board Member, East African Agricultural and Forestry Journal, 2007-present
Programmes for capacity building training; Transformative leadership and result based management (RBM) University Of Nairobi, 25\textsuperscript{th} -26\textsuperscript{th} October 2007
Workshop on scientific proposal writing from 19\textsuperscript{th} – 25\textsuperscript{th} November, 2006 Nairobi, Kenya
Workshop on Strengthening Capacity in Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA), Entebbe, Uganda, 4\textsuperscript{th} – 7\textsuperscript{th} June 2007
Training workshop on Public Procurement, Nairobi, Kenya, 28\textsuperscript{th} May 2007
Senior management leadership orientation warming on Rapid Results Approach, Nairobi, Kenya, 3\textsuperscript{rd} May 2007
ISO 9001 training workshop, Nairobi, 7\textsuperscript{th} February 2007
The workshop on the training of Chief Internal examiners Nairobi, 13\textsuperscript{th} – 14\textsuperscript{th} July 2006
Stakeholders workshop on Agricultural education and training in Kenya Nairobi, 30th November– 1\textsuperscript{st} December 2006
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Training Centre, UON, September 8\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} September 2008
Training on application of public procurement rules and regulations and challenges. University of Nairobi, 19\textsuperscript{th} August 2008
Training on pedagogy, University of Nairobi, 4\textsuperscript{th}-6\textsuperscript{th} February 2008
Performance Contracting Training workshop, 20\textsuperscript{th}-30\textsuperscript{th} April 2009, Chiromo Campus, Nairobi
Second Curriculum Development Workshop, Centre of Pytosanitary Excellence, 6\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} July 2009, Merica Hotel, Nakuru, Kenya
Pytosanitary retooling Workshop on 14\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} September 2009, Nakuru, Kenya
Phd D supervision Training Workshop, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi, 2\textsuperscript{nd}-4\textsuperscript{th} March 2010
Below ground biodiversity workshop, Nairobi, 15\textsuperscript{th}–16\textsuperscript{th} March 2010
Scientific Writing Workshop, Kigali, Rwanda, 26-30\textsuperscript{th} July 2010
Data analysis using R software, Nairobi, Kenya, 25-29\textsuperscript{th} November 2010
KAPAP Full Proposal Training Workshop, KAPAP, EAST College, Embu, 13-19\textsuperscript{th} February 2011
KAPAP CGS research proposal review and approval workshop, KAPAP, EAST College, Embu, 3-8\textsuperscript{TH} April 2011
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HURIA NDERITU

SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATIONS

Technical advisory Committee, Kenya National Federation of Agricultural producers (KENFAP) (2011-Current)
Member of Kenya Organic Network (KOAN) (2008-present)
Board Member, East Africa Forestry and Agricultural Journal, 2007-present
Member of Agricultural Communication Task Force, Ministry of Agriculture, 2006-2008
Member of African Crop Science Society
Member University of Nairobi Alumni (2004-present)
Chairman, Kenya organic standards, 2005-2006
Member of Steering committee, ESK (2000-2004)
ICIPE Fellowship (June-October 2000)
Member of the African Crop Science Association (1995-present)
Member of African Association of Insect Scientists (AAIS) 1978-present.
AUTHORSHIP

- Journal Publications in Scientific Journals
- Conference Referred Papers,
- Manuals, Textbooks and Textbook Chapters,
- Occasional publications,
- Papers presented in Conferences, workshops, seminars and professional courses,
- Papers in Kenya Agricultural Research Laboratories (NARL)/CLAT Annual Reports.
- Technical Reports
- Consultancy Manuals and Reports

POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

Supervised over 70 MSc and 8 PhD theses
External examination of 20 MSc thesis and 10 PhD thesis

PRESENT INTERESTS

- Research,
- Writing,
- Consultancy,
- Advocacy and
- Golf
PHOTO GALLERY

Crop Protection course at Wagenigen, Netherlands, 1981
After graduating with a PhD in 1984
A workshop held at Nairobi, 1999

A workshop held at Naro Moru, Kenya, 2000
During an evening party at Carnivore, Kenya

Labour Management course, Naivasha, 2004
KAPAP FULL PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP


KAPAP workshop held at the East College Embu in April 2011
Family party at my elder brother, Mbatia, in Nyahururu on 12\textsuperscript{th} December 2012
During a workshop in Embu in 2012
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Stakeholder Workshop, Marsabit County, August 2013

MKU conference, Kitale Campus, Kwanza Farm, 2013

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Canadian Food Security Research Fund symposium in Naivasha in June 2014

During a regional workshop on Higher Education held in 2014 in Hargeisa, Somaliland
During a Water Summit in Lake Turkana, October 2014,

When MKU Chairman was awarded a docotorate (HC) by Gulu University in 2014
Students at Nakuru High School, 1971

KAPAP Writeshop, Nakuru, April 2015
Members of my family, 2014
John Huria Nderitu I, was born in Nyeri, Kenya in 1952. Currently he is an Associate Professor at the University of Nairobi based in the Faculty of Agriculture at Upper Kabete Campus. He holds a Bachelor of Education (Science), Master of Science in Agricultural Entomology both from the University of Nairobi and PhD in Agricultural Entomology from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Nderitu is a widely travelled scholar who has published and presented more than 80 academic papers in refereed international journals. He has been a consultant on pest-management and other agricultural disciplines. He has co-supervised and examined 45 MSc and 6 PhD students in crop management. He is an external examiner for 24 MSc and PhD theses in pest management at Makerere University, Jomo Kenya University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenyatta University and Egerton University. He has co-authored two university textbooks namely “Agricultural Entomology: Practical Aspects of Agricultural Entomology” and “Invertebrate Zoology for Beginners”.

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HURIA NDERITU**

*Prof. John Huria Nderitu, PhD*