



Remembering and celebrating the life of Professor John F. Machiwa

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(Both were colleagues of the late Professor Machiwa)

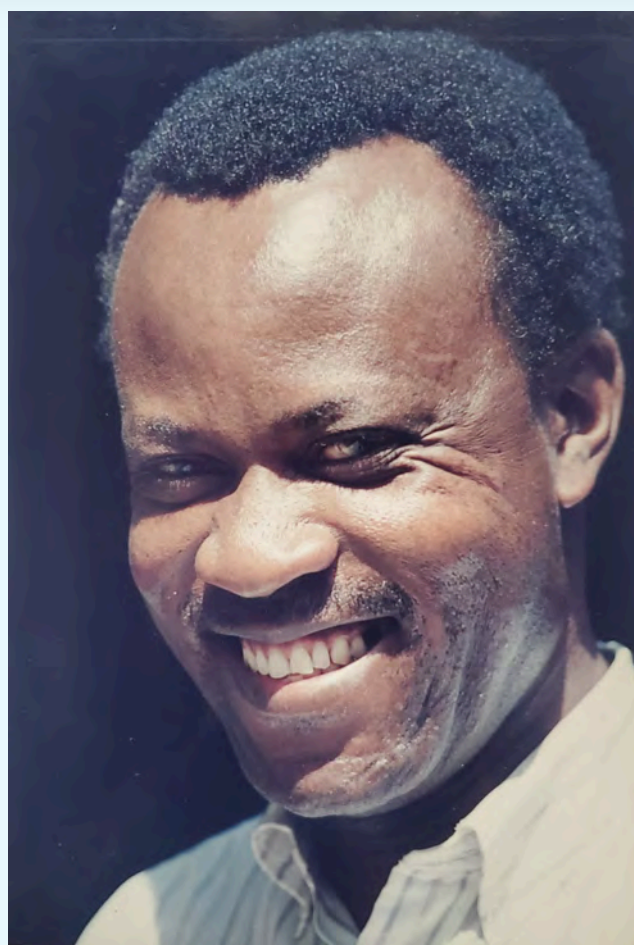


Prof. John Ferdinand Machiwa, who departed from us on 29 July 2022 following a valiant struggle with illness, was a revered research scientist and esteemed administrator who made impactful contributions to the field of aquatic sciences. The passing of Prof. Machiwa is a loss not only to his family and colleagues but also to the broader academic community. His legacy will endure through his groundbreaking research, mentorship of students, and dedication to the advancement of aquatic sciences. His work advanced the frontiers of scientific understanding and inspired countless individuals within the academic community. His passion for research, commitment to education, and unwavering integrity were a guiding light to many, and his absence will be keenly felt. May the memories of his accomplishments bring comfort, and may the Almighty grant his loved ones the strength to navigate this period of profound loss.

Field work for undergraduate students

Born in Kinesi, Rorya District, Tanzania, in 1956, Prof. Machiwa's educational path was marked by notable achievements and contributions. After completing his primary and secondary education, Prof. Machiwa pursued his interest in fisheries and marine research by enrolling at the Kunduchi Marine Fisheries Research and Training Institute (KMFRTI). There, he obtained a Fisheries Diploma in 1979, marking the beginning of his formal education in the field. After attaining his diploma, Prof. Machiwa embarked on a career as an Assistant Fisheries Officer in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. His academic journey continued as he pursued undergraduate studies at the University of Dar es Salaam, culminating in the award of a BSc (Ed) degree in 1984.

Upon completing his Bachelor's degree, Prof. Machiwa was recruited as a Tutorial Assistant in the Department of Zoology and Marine Biology at the University of Dar es Salaam, where he further honed his expertise and contributed to the academic community. Eager to broaden his horizons and deepen his knowledge, Prof. Machiwa pursued advanced



Prof. Machiwa at IMS during his PhD. ©Ron Johnstone

studies abroad, earning a Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) from the University of Wales (UK) in 1988 and a PhD in Biogeochemistry from the University of Stockholm (Sweden) in 1999. These academic achievements underscore his commitment to scholarship and research in Aquatic Sciences.

Having attained the rank of professor in 2011, Prof. Machiwa dedicated a total of 38 years of service to the University of Dar es Salaam. This period comprised 32

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years of permanent service from 1984 to 2016, during which he imparted knowledge and expertise to generations of students. Even after his statutory retirement in 2016, Prof. Machiwa continued to serve the university for an additional 6 years on a contract basis, showcasing his ongoing dedication to academia. Throughout his academic career, Prof. Machiwa's affiliation with the Department of Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Technology, established in 2002, underscored his specialization and expertise in the field. Before the department's inception, he was a valued member of the Department of Zoology and Marine Biology, where he laid the foundation for his distinguished career in academia.

As a respected educator, Prof. Machiwa taught various courses in aquatic sciences, covering essential topics such as Oceanography, Aquatic Pollution, Aquatic Biology, Aquatic Resources and Management, and Water Quality and Pollution Control. His commitment to providing high-quality education and fostering a deeper understanding of critical environmental issues has left an enduring mark on his students and the academic community at large.

Prof. John Ferdinand Machiwa's impact as an educator and mentor transcended the confines of academia, as evidenced by his profound influence on numerous postgraduate students. Through his unwavering dedication and exceptional guidance, Prof. Machiwa played a pivotal role in nurturing the academic and personal growth of individuals under his tutelage, leaving an indelible mark on their lives. During his illustrious career, Prof. Machiwa had the privilege of advising a diverse cohort of undergraduate and postgraduate students, supervising the research and academic pursuits of 9 Master's students and 14 doctoral candidates. His mentorship extended beyond the confines of his own institution, as he also served as an External Examiner for 4 postgraduate students from Kenya and South Africa, further showcasing his commitment to fostering scholarship beyond borders.

Those fortunate enough to have been mentored by Prof. Machiwa were recipients of his boundless generosity, compassion, and expertise. His approach to teaching and advising was characterized by a profound care for his students, exemplifying a commitment to their holistic development. Prof. Machiwa's involvement in the lives of his students transcended mere academic instruction; he served as a role model, actively engaging in their personal and intellectual growth and providing a paradigmatic example of excellence and dedication. The impact of Prof. Machiwa's mentorship reverberates through the achievements and successes of the students he guided, reflecting the lasting legacy of his teaching philosophy

and unwavering support. His influence as a mentor continues to shape the trajectories of his students, instilling in them the values of scholarship, integrity, and compassion that he exemplified throughout his career.

Prof. John Ferdinand Machiwa's invaluable contributions extend far beyond the realm of academia, encompassing a multifaceted career marked by pioneering research, impactful administrative roles, and dedicated service to the University of Dar es Salaam. His diverse portfolio of accomplishments underscores his exceptional leadership qualities and unwavering commitment to advancing the fields of aquatic sciences and fisheries technology. As a prolific researcher, Prof. Machiwa's scholarly output is a testament to his intellectual prowess and dedication to advancing scientific knowledge. With 48 journal papers, three books, and chapters to his credit, he has significantly enriched the academic discourse in his areas of expertise, leaving a lasting imprint on the field.

In addition to his research endeavors, Prof. Machiwa's leadership extended to the coordination of two major projects—the Support to Riparian University Component of the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project (LVEMP) from 1998 to 2008 and the PUMPSEA project from 2005 to 2008. His stewardship of these projects underscores his ability to facilitate collaborative initiatives and drive impactful research endeavours aimed at addressing critical environmental challenges. His pivotal role in the establishment of the Faculty of Aquatic Sciences and Technology (FAST) in 2002 and later, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Fisheries Technology (CoAF) in 2015, highlights his instrumental role in fostering the growth and development of academic programmes in these disciplines.

Throughout his tenure, Prof. Machiwa held various administrative positions, including Head of the Department of Aquatic Environment and Conservation, Dean of FAST, Deputy Principal (Planning, Finance and Administration) at Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE), and Acting Principal in CoAF. In each capacity, he exemplified exceptional leadership skills, a collaborative spirit, and a steadfast commitment to mentorship, guiding both students and colleagues toward academic and professional excellence.

In this article, we are reflecting on the remarkable life and legacy of Prof. John Ferdinand Machiwa, a distinguished scholar, mentor, and visionary leader whose contributions have left an indelible mark on the University of Dar es Salaam and the scientific community at large. Prof. Machiwa's unwavering

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dedication and exemplary service to the university and the nation were met with well-deserved recognition and accolades, throughout his illustrious career. The honours he received, including the prestigious award of Best Worker (Academic) of the University of Dar es Salaam in 2005 and the Vice Chancellor's Congratulatory Note in 2011, are a testament to his outstanding commitment to academic excellence and exemplary service to the community.

Beyond his professional achievements, Prof. Machiwa's impact went far beyond academia; he was cherished by colleagues and friends for his kindness, generosity, and sense of humour. His unwavering optimism in the face of challenges served as a source of inspiration and comfort to those around him, leaving a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing him. In addition to his contributions to academia, Prof. Machiwa dedicated his time and expertise to public service, serving as a member of various boards and as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (MPRU). His commitment to environmental conservation and community service exemplified his deep-rooted values of stewardship and

responsibility towards his nation and its natural resources.

Prof. Machiwa's legacy extends far beyond his professional achievements. He leaves behind a loving family—his wife Praxeda, two daughters Dr. Herrieth and Doreen, a son Eric, three grandsons, and one granddaughter—who were the centre of his world and the source of his greatest joy and inspiration. Their love and support undoubtedly fueled his passion for his work and his unwavering dedication to making a difference in the world.

As we celebrate his life, his contributions to science and society, and the enduring impact he had on the lives of those around him, are highlighted. His research, mentorship, and profound influence will continue to inspire future generations of scholars, ensuring that his legacy remains alive and thriving in the hearts and minds of all who had the honour of knowing him.

Rest in eternal peace, Prof. Machiwa. Your light will continue to shine brightly through the lives you touched and the legacy you leave behind ■



Prof. Machiwa (L), as one of the judges during the Research and Innovation Week in 2021. ©SoAF