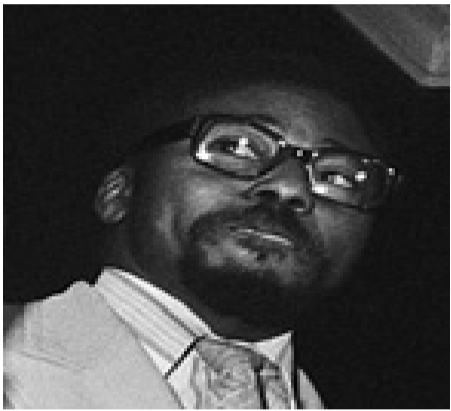




## Our January 2020 UDSM Alumnus

This is a “light corner” on the UDSM portal intended to feature for one month in turns two among many of the University’s graduates—alumni—since its foundation in 1961. The corner is designed to inform the public and the University itself, without prejudice in terms of historical precedence but guided only by professional information search, on the past graduates of the University, their whereabouts, their current position or engagement, what is remembered of them as past ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ of their time and, finally, on what is reckoned about their contribution to their Alma Mater, their nation, the Africa region and/or the wider world.

### Peter H. KATJAVIVI



**Year of matriculation: 1966**

**Year of graduation: 1969; Degree: B.A (Hons.)**

**More: DPhil in History (Oxford, 1986)**

Peter Hitjitevi Katjavivi, hailing from Namibia in southern Africa, is an alumnus of the University of Dar es Salaam. He is a previous Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia, the oldest of Namibia’s higher education institutions, and is the current Speaker of his country’s National Assembly. He is both an academic and a politician. One might even say that he is one of the products of the generations of struggle for his country’s independence from the colonial yoke in the two stages of European colonialism: first when the territory was identified with a coastal bay ‘Angra Pequena’ during German occupation and, later, when it was known as Southwest Africa under successive over-lordship of the British colonial administrators, followed by a self-declared apartheid South African state.

Peter Katjavivi was born on 12 May 1941 in Okahandja district, some 70 km north of the capital city Windhoek. He attended primary school in his home village, proceeding with secondary education at the Augustineum School, a pioneering learning institution established back in 1866. For higher education opportunities, he went to Government College Umuahia in Nigeria (1963-1966), where he obtained necessary qualifications for university entry. In 1966 he enrolled at University College Dar es Salaam (then constituent part of the University of East Africa) for a B.A degree programme in History, Political Science and Law. At Dar es Salaam, he became well-acquainted with the intellectually stimulating discourses led by scholars such as historian Walter Rodney, author of *The Grounds with my Brothers* (1969) and *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), to whom Peter became a fervent research assistant.

It was during the 1960s—the time when many African countries were vying for independence—that Katjavivi joined the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) which had been founded back in April 1960 by Sam Nujoma and his colleagues Kuhangua and Toivo ya Toivo. Katjavivi was subsequently appointed head of SWAPO’s overseas office in London. Alongside the hard work of coordinating his country’s political struggle, he enrolled at St Antony’s College, Oxford, to pursue a DPhil in History. He obtained it in 1986. With South-West Africa’s independence in sight, Dr. Katjavivi was appointed (in 1989) to serve as a member of the Constituent Assembly for Namibia [This was to turn into the first National Assembly of Namibia upon independence in 1990]. In the years that followed, Katjavivi served in numerous capacities: as President of the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit in 1990; as Chairman of the Council of National Monuments [now the National Heritage Council of Namibia] (1992-2000); also as a member of the Executive Council of UNESCO (1993-1997). For a good eleven years from 1992 to 2003, he served as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia (affectionately referred to as UNAM). After his time there, Prof. Katjavivi was appointed Namibia’s Ambassador to the European Union in Brussels (2003-2006); Ambassador to Germany (2006-

2008) as well as Director-General of the National Planning Commission of his country (2008).

After the November 2009 parliamentary elections, President Hifikepunye Pohamba appointed Prof. Katjavivi to the National Assembly as one of the six non-voting MPs appointed by the President. Subsequently, Katjavivi became SWAPO’s Chief Whip in the National Assembly. In the November 2014 general elections, Katjavivi was elected to the National Assembly as a SWAPO candidate. Subsequently, on 20 March 2015, he was sworn in as Speaker of Parliament. Throughout his time in Parliament, Katjavivi has held a non-ambiguous view that parliamentarians, to be and to remain respectable and exemplary, must declare their assets for public scrutiny and trust. With this strong belief, upon becoming Speaker of Namibia’s sixth Parliament, he vowed to follow up this matter of “saving law-makers from law-breaking” by demanding all MPs to declare their assets. In 2016, along with his parliamentary position, Katjavivi was appointed Chancellor [titular head] of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

Peter Katjavivi is a prolific writer, having authored a number of publications, including *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (1988), *Church and Liberation in Namibia* (1989), and *The Road to Namibian Independence* (2003). He has himself been honoured with a number of awards, including ‘Ordre des Palmes Académiques’ (France, 1996); ‘Distinguished academic visitor award’ (New Delhi, India, 1998); ‘Honorary Doctorate of the University of Joensuu’ (Finland, 1999); ‘Certificate of Service to the Executive Council of the Association of African Universities’ (AAU, Accra), 2002; and ‘Most Brilliant Order of the Sun, First Class, Heroes Day’ (Namibia, 2014). Peter Katjavivi has comfortable command of less than five languages: German, English, French, Kiswahili and his native Otjiherero.



In 2015, Hon. Speaker Professor Katjavivi pledging to ensure that Namibian lawmakers did not become lawbreakers by not declaring their assets to Parliament. He was taking over from outgoing Speaker Theo-Ben Gurirab.

**Peter H. KATJAVIVI is our January 2020 Alumnus  
and his great Stories Begin Here**

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