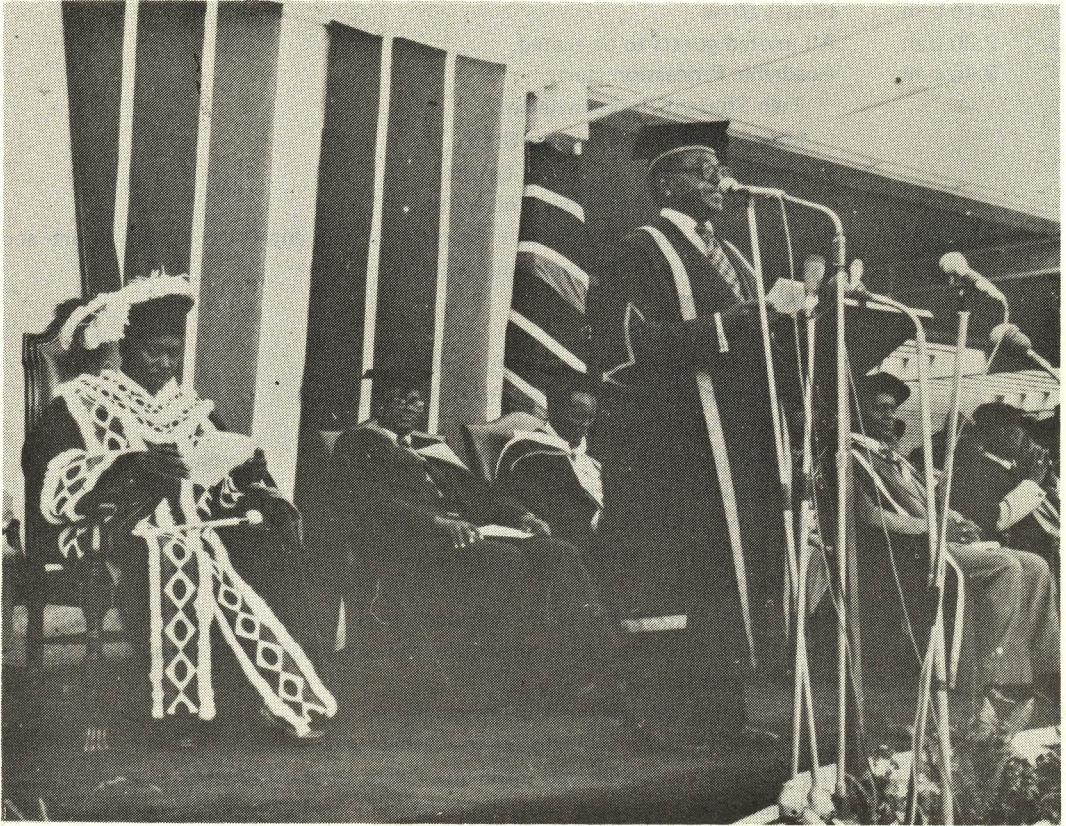


**TEXT OF SPEECH BY MR. B.M. GECAGA
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**



Your Excellency The Honourable Daniel arap Moi, President of the Republic of Kenya, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: My first duty, which I gladly perform on behalf of the Council and Senate of the University of Nairobi, is to extend a warm welcome to all our guests who have so graciously responded to our invitation and have come to share this happy occasion with us in witnessing the culmination of the academic careers of some 1700 graduands. May I say how particularly grateful we are to the Chancellor, His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi, for according to us such a generous portion of his valuable time to be present and officiate at this function which is the highlight of the University calendar year.

We hold today's function of conferment of degrees and award of diplomas as the year 1979 draws to a close. The time is auspicious, being immediately after the very recent special Jamhuri celebration at which His Excellency Daniel arap Moi, who is also the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, was sworn in for the second term as the President of the Republic of Kenya; and preceding the imminent Christmas festivities. The former function reminded us of our obligation to the State; the latter will remind us of our duty to the Almighty: the two striking concordant notes of principles and precepts on which it is fitting to enter and commence the impending New Year with renewed dedication to the pursuit of the ideals of nation-building.

For the University, the current year itself has been eventful. In May the former Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Josephat Karanja relinquished his post, of his own volition, which he had held for nearly 10 years. During his tenure of office the University saw rapid and significant growth not

only in student numbers, but also in the creation of new Faculties and expansion of existing ones. In the ensuing evolution, one significant feature was, and continues to be, the vigorous pursuit and implementation of our Kenyanisation policy whose success is, I believe, commendable; so that today nearly all the Faculties and Departments of the University are headed by Kenyans — Kenyans whose academic qualifications and competence are of a high order consistent with internationally recognised standards of reputable institutions of higher learning.

The rapid growth to which I have alluded inevitably entailed multifarious problems of a complex nature. In tackling such problems through guidelines set by the University Council, Dr. Karanja always acted with vigour and tenacity, tempered with the wisdom of experience gained over many years both as an academician and a diplomat. He provided outstanding leadership during a period of unprecedented University growth fraught with numerous difficult problems. The considerable contribution which Dr. Karanja made to the achievements of this University will long be remembered with gratitude.

To succeed Dr. Karanja, the Chancellor made an appointment which, it is gratifying to note, was received with universal acclaim. Professor Joseph Mungai is no stranger to the University. Although his field of specialisation is human anatomy, he has had useful and relevant administrative experience in that he has previously served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for 2 years. I might mention that he is also Chairman of the National Council for Science and Technology. Professor Mungai has many distinctions, but perhaps one might single out two for mention here; the first is that he was the first youngest Kenyan at the age of 36 years to be appointed a Professor of this University thus exploding the myth that grey or white hair is a necessary attribute of a Professor! I might add that it is not what is outside but what is inside the head that matters; the second is that he was the person very largely responsible for the establishment of the University Medical School, of which he was the first Dean, and whose reputation now has spread far beyond the borders of this land.

The University Council has the highest confidence in Professor Mungai who, in his tenure of office, will, we believe, provide stability to and be instrumental for further growth of the University of Nairobi, including the full integration of our constituent college, namely, Kenyatta University College whose Principal, Mr. Karuga Koinange, we are always glad to see every year at the graduation ceremony.

At its meeting in October the University Council appointed Professor Richard Musangi as Deputy Vice-Chancellor to succeed Professor Douglas Odhiambo who had successfully completed two terms totalling four years of very creditable performance.

We take this opportunity to welcome the new Minister for Higher Education, Mr. Kamotho, and look forward to working with him in the field of University Education.

Finally, to all those of our students who are graduating today, and also those who are receiving higher degrees, I should like to offer our warmest congratulations. We share with you, along with your parents, relatives and friends, the feeling of elation which deservedly is yours today, when after the sustained hard work during your time here, you finally receive your award from the hand of the Chancellor of the University, His Excellency Daniel arap Moi. As you enter the practical world outside these precincts, I would exhort you to carry and guard the torch of the good name of this University which has been the springboard of your anticipated success in your respective future careers.

It now gives me pleasure to call upon the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mungai, to address the congregation.