

THE QUEEN: Miss UoN (University of Nairobi) Kawira Mugambi was barely noticeable until she wore that basketball outfit. Stay with *ZuQka*, to learn more about her as we will feature her on 21 Questions.



21QUESTIONS >> WITH MAUREEN ORWA

MISS UON 2013 — KAWIRA MUGAMBI



Zuqka: Where you were born?
Kawira: I was born in Chogoria Hospital, which is just past my hometown, Chuka. It is a small, warm, and fat-growing community. I spent the first three years of primary school in Sacred Heart Girls Kyeni and when we moved to Nairobi, I eventually settled at Moi Educational Centre. My high school years were interesting, but I did my KCSE at Bristar Girls High School in Juja and upon completion joined the University of Nairobi, where I am pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in procurement and supply chain management.

How old are you?
I am 23 years old

When did you join the modelling industry?
I joined the modelling industry in 2011 when I signed up with an agency called Strut It Afrika

Do you plan to pursue modelling after school?
I would definitely love to pursue it if I got the chance. I, it would be a great opportunity for me to grow and move on to much bigger things and who knows, you might find me in Europe next year.

Who inspires you in the local modelling industry?
In Kenya one of my favourite models is Ajuma Nasenyana. Her work is amazing and she is so beautiful. Former Miss World Kenya Susan Anyango is such a lovely person and great model. I also grew up admiring beauty queens such as Bidanya Barasa and Debra Sanaipai.

And internationally?
Internationally the list is endless but I would say Tyra Banks is way at the top, Grace Jones, whose work may be a bit controversial, but love her still, Coco

Rocha, Karolina Kurkova, and Miss Diva extraordinaire Kimora Lee Simmons.

What quality do you like most about yourself and why?
My ability to adapt to just about any situation that life throws my way. I take every moment as a lesson, make mistakes, learn from them, move on, and steer clear of making them again.

What is the one feature you would change about yourself and why?
As much as I am not perfect, I have come to accept who I am... but you know, sometimes, my feet *banai*! So hard to work with. It is hard for a girl to find shoes out here. Not complaining, though. Haha. They do serve me well.

What is your definition of success?
Success to me means the ability to envision, work relentlessly towards, achieve, maintain, and keep growing in mind and spirit. If you are able to do all this, then you have succeeded at each stage. It should not have to be defined by material gain alone, but all-rounded achievement.

If you could change one thing about the world, what would that be?
The world is vast and we are all so different but our one uniting factor is that we are all human beings. This is also our greatest weakness. I hate the fact that we have so much hatred, war, and negativity towards each other. Innocent people die everyday for the selfish gain of others. If I could change anything I would find a way for us all to live in peace and to find other ways to solve issues without having to resort to wars. We should instead be looking after our planet and each other. There is so much beauty on earth, if only we would preserve it!

Spoken like a beauty queen. Now, what bothers you most about what is happen-

ing in our country today?
I love my country but one thing I would change is the fact that we seem to have gotten used to the sight of street families and people living in poor conditions without access to basic needs. We are not all able to live lavishly or even close, so I would urge all those who are lucky enough to have it to help those without. Take a little time to donate, help someone else out, and help this person who may not have had the opportunities that you had.

If you could be on the cover of any international magazine, which one would it be and why?
Oh Lord, *Vogue* of course. It is published in several languages and is widely subscribed to, so many people around the world read it. I read it as often as I can, sometimes a few months late but it is always worth the wait. I love the fashion pieces, the editorials. Can you imagine me in a spread for Chanel or Prada.

What is your dream job?
My dream job is to own and run my own procurement firm and hopefully find a link between entertainment and procurement. But for the time being I would love to be a presenter on an amazing show, hopefully one that involves travelling and meeting new people. I love adventure, too!

If you were to find your perfect gentleman, what kind of a man would he be?
Well, I believe I have found my perfect gentleman. Haha. He is tall, dark, handsome, has an amazing personality and is easily one of the kindest people I have met, is not afraid to step into the kitchen and can cook up a storm, a delicious one at that, great adviser, easy to talk to, willing to help, ambitious, works out; we all love a man in shape, don't we? And last but not least, he is my best friend.

If you were to meet three people in the world, who would they be and why?
First of all, our President, Uhuru Kenyatta. I would love to interview him on a few issues and also get to know the man steering the country. Secondly, Mr Aliko Dangote, business mogul and one of Africa's richest men, to get tips on how to grow an idea into a great empire. Last but definitely not least, Rihanna. She has made it big and with great style. If she could become my best friend... hmmm (laughs).

If I was to grant you one wish, what would you wish for?
I would wish to be the best version of myself that I can be, to succeed in unimaginable ways!

What do you wish you had known before?
I wish that I had believed in myself more when I was younger and taken advantage of all the opportunities I had and it would have been nice to not be afraid to take chances. Also I wish I had known how many people would try and take advantage of me in this world, but I handled that quite well.

If you were offered, say, half-a-million to pose nude, would you do it?
Okay... umm see what people do not realise is that nude work can be an art if done artistically and well directed. That

alone will set it apart from pornography. But is it for me? No, I am a little shy in that area, even though that half-a-million sounds so good.

Do you think professional models in the country are underpaid?
My experience in the modelling industry before I joined my agency is that there are a lot of people exploiting this talent and underpaying models who clearly deserve more. I think that models could be paid better but also one should be willing to pay well for a well-trained and professional model who will deliver. Let us not be stingy now (grinning).

What is the oddest job you have ever done?
Maybe not the oddest job but the oddest thing that I have ever had to do on a job is dance around in a chicken mascot uniform. It was in an episode of a television drama I act in. It felt ridiculous at first but when I found out I was going to have to wear it for three more episodes, I soon got my chicken dance moves in check and had fun with it.

Parting shot?
Sometimes the unexpected can turn out to be something worthwhile and incredibly fulfilling, be willing to try out new things and see where that takes you. It is never easy, but the hardships make you a stronger person.

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