



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

SECOND SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2022



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

SECOND SESSION - SPECIAL SITTING - SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 13 December 2022

Parliament met at 1.58 p.m. at Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker, Ms Anita Among, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to welcome you to this special sitting today. It is rather a sad moment that we are sitting this afternoon to pay tribute to a distinguished son of the soil, a Supreme Court judge; Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, who breathed his last on Wednesday, 7 December 2022. This special sitting is pursuant to section 23 and the Schedule 3 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020.

Death has, indeed, robbed this country of such a reputable person of Justice Rubby Aweri. The late, in whose honour we are gathered here today, was a jurist par excellence and a man of boundless intellect.

Through his selfless and dedicated service to the Judiciary, which spanned four decades, Justice Rubby Aweri Opio was committed to the dispensation of justice; you know, justice delayed is justice denied. The late Justice Opio never delayed cases and he never had backlog. That was the person who is going to lie here today. I urge Members to emulate the dedication that the judge had; the humility and selflessness of the late Justice Opio Aweri.

Personally, I knew Justice Opio when he was a resident judge in Gulu; I worked for Centenary Bank then. He used to be a parent to all of us. He would call and talk to all of us. He was part of the fraternity of the non-Acholi people living in Gulu. He used to advise us on how to live our lives. By then, Chairman Mao was the chairman of the district. I can actually say that some of us were made by Justice Opio Aweri.

Great nations are built on the sweat and values like the ones that Justice Opio has shown this country. As leaders of this country, we owe it to humanity to leave our society better than we found it. I can testify, today, that Justice Opio has left society better than he found it. He has left the Judiciary better than he found it and indeed, we must emulate his contribution to humanity, our country and the Judiciary.

On behalf of the Legislature, I pass my condolences to the family and pray that the good Lord comforts the family during this trying period. Justice Aweri has fought a good fight. He has left a legacy that will be remembered forever, and as Parliament, we condole with the family.

Honourable members, after this special sitting, the body is going to lie in state and depart tomorrow morning. So, the body will be here and I request Members to be kind enough to stay around with the family so that we offer our support to the Lango Parliamentary Group, Ugandans and the Judiciary.

At an appropriate time, we will be calling you to lay your wreaths and we will introduce the

family members and members of the Judiciary, who are around.

It is only one item on the Order Paper and we will ask – Prime Minister, we thank you very much for coming and being there for the family, Uganda and the Judiciary.

The Prime Minister will be moving a motion to that effect and the Chief Justice who is the head of the Judiciary is around; seated next to me. I invoked rule 8 to have him sit inside the Chambers. *(Applause)*

Having been a Member of Parliament and the one who swore me in as Speaker and being the person leading the other Arm of Government, we condole with you, Chief Justice. We thank you very much for coming to Parliament. Parliament will always work together with the Judiciary and the Executive.

Honourable members, let us now stand to receive the body; it will be entering the Chamber any time now. Please rise.

(Entrance of the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri.)

The National Anthem

The East African Community Anthem

Laying of wreaths

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JUSTICE RUBBY OPIO AWERI, SUPREME COURT JUDGE, PURSUANT TO SCHEDULE 3 OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE JUDICIARY ACT, 2020

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as I said before, the special sitting is pursuant to section 23 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020. We have a motion by the Prime Minister. However, before she comes in, in the Chamber this afternoon, we have the Chief Justice of Uganda, His Lordship

Alphonse Owiny Dollo. He has come to join Parliament in paying tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. Kindly, join me in welcoming him. *(Applause)*

We also have Lady Justice Susan Abinyo from the Commercial Court. You are most welcome. *(Applause)*

We have the immediate family of the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, who are seated behind, on the Technical Bench. We have:

1. Mrs Susan Acen Aweri;
2. Ms Mary Alobo;
3. His Worship George Obong, a son to the late;
4. Eng. Allan Okodi;
5. His Worship Solomon Okem;
6. Ms Naome Amuge;
7. Ms Zilla Anna Apio; and
8. Ms Angela Acola.

You are all most welcome. *(Applause)* They have come to observe the proceedings, as we pay tribute to the gallant son of the soil. Join me in welcoming them to this august House. *(Applause)*

2.21

THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja): Madam Speaker, I move under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament to move a motion for a resolution of Parliament to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, Justice of the Supreme Court.

“WHEREAS the Parliament of Uganda received with deep sorrow, news of the untimely death of Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda, which occurred on 7 December 2022;

AWARE that section 23 and Schedule 3 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020, requires Parliament to pay tribute to a Justice of the Supreme Court who dies while holding that office;

RECOGNISING that the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri had an impeccable career as a judicial officer and served the bench with boundless dedication, utmost humility and commitment for nearly four decades;

NOTING that besides executing his judicial duties, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri also served in several other capacities in the service of the community and country;

APPRECIATING that Justice Rubby Opio Aweri has meticulously served his country with devotion and his commitment to the judicial oath greatly contributed to the strengthening of the judicial independence and the Judiciary's adherence to the norms, values and aspirations of the people of Uganda;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that Parliament of Uganda:

- 1. Collectively conveys its deepest condolences to the bereaved family, the Judiciary, the legal fraternity, friends and the nation as a whole upon the loss of this celebrated son of Uganda, and;*
- 2. Appreciate the distinguished service rendered and the contribution made by Justice Rubby Opio Aweri to Uganda's legal jurisprudence and the academia."*

Madam Speaker, I beg to move. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Prime Minister. Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose)* It is seconded by Hon. Jacob Oboth, Hon. Muhoozi, the Attorney-General, Hon. Bahati, the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Ssegona, Hon. Elijah Okupa, Hon. Sarah Opendi, the Leader of the Opposition, the DP Whip, Hon. Mao – by the whole House.

Thank you very much.

Would you like to speak to your motion?

MS NABBANJA: Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, the 7th of December this year, we received the sad news of the death of Justice

Opio Aweri, Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda.

Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was born on 31 May 1953 in Kacung Village, Agwata Subcounty in the then Dokolo County, Lira District. He attended Kacung Primary School and Agwata Primary School from 1960 to 1969.

In 1973, he sat for the East African Certificate of Education at Lango College in Lira District. In 1977, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri sat for the East African Advanced Certificate of Education at Dr Obote College Boroboro, in Lira District.

On 8 October 1981, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was awarded a Bachelor of Laws at Makerere University. On 31 January 1983, he was awarded a post-graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre. He later acquired a Master's Degree in Environmental Law from Makerere University.

Justice Rubby Opio Aweri had an illustrious professional legal career:

1. From 1982 to 1983, he was a legal assistant in Engwau & Co. Advocates.
2. In 1983, he was appointed Acting Magistrate Grade I.
3. On 7 October 1999, he was confirmed in service as a Grade I Magistrate.
4. On 13 August 1991, he was confirmed as Senior Principal Magistrate Grade I.
5. On 31 August 1993, he was confirmed as Chief Magistrate.
6. On 27 October 1999, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was appointed Judge of the High Court.
7. On 4 July 2013, he was appointed Justice of the Court of Appeal.
8. On 13 October 2015, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda.

9. On 3 August 2017, he was appointed Chief Inspector of Courts.
10. On 30 March 2021, he was appointed member of the First Judicial Council.
11. On 10 August 2022, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri wrote a notice of retirement to the Chief Justice. His expected date of retirement was 31 May 2023 - which is next year.

Honourable colleagues, despite his busy schedule, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri served the country in various positions;

- a. A Treasurer of the Uganda Magistrates Association;
- b. Deputy Diocesan Chancellor, Lango Diocese;
- c. Vice-Chairperson Board of Governors, Dr Obote College, Boroboro;
- d. Board chairperson, Amach Secondary School;
- e. Member Board of Governors, Agwata Secondary School;
- f. Part-time Lecturer and Examiner Business Law, Uganda College of Commerce Aduku;
- g. Examiner (orals), the Law Development Centre; and
- h. Chancellor, Uganda Pentecostal University.

Justice Aweri has been described by many as a great towering legal mind, who served the bench with boundless dedication, utmost humility and commitment for nearly four decades. There is no doubt Uganda will miss his noble service.

Justice Aweri had major interest in law and practice, civil litigation, criminal law, environmental law and management. The late

Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was a true legal professional who dedicated his life to the Judiciary.

I wish to extend my sincere sympathies and condolences to the family, friends and the entire Judiciary fraternity, upon this great loss. May the soul of Justice Rubby Opio Aweri rest in perfect peace.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move. (*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Robinah Nabbanja. Can we have the seconder, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Mathias Mpuuga?

2.31

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the motion made by my honourable colleague and sister, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, in paying tribute to this gallant son of Uganda.

Death is without invitation. At the seminary cemetery of Masaka Diocese, there is a small signpost written in Latin, "*Memento Mori.*" to mean, "Remember you must die." It is not a probability; it reminds you that there is no discussion with death.

The task to pay tribute to the late Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri is a challenging one, as I have personally associated with him in cases close to the heart of many unresolved issues in our time. It is true that he was expressively positioned in both the age limit case and the Hon. Kyagulanyi presidential election petition, in which colleagues across Parliament and I had a vested interest.

At the same time, his tour of duty, as a career judge, bears significant accomplishments to enumerate. Notable among them, are the cases for which he will be remembered; Uganda v. Dr Aggrey Kiyingi and two others (Criminal Session 30 of 2006) and the famous Muwanga-Kivumbi v. the Attorney-General (Constitutional Appeal No.6 of 2011) that set aside the assumed powers of the police in

public gatherings. That was remarkable in our judicial prudence.

I take cognisance of the fact that Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, as a career judge, goes beyond the sum of his court decisions. It is rather that his tenure on the bench occurred in challenging times, when the call to do justice is a tall order, yet he has held himself fairly well.

In all, he represents a generation of judges who have lived and worked through the times leading to the current unsettled debate on the rule of law. For the period I have known and seen him, he had no criminal record known to me, and those close to me. The country has lost a well-balanced human and a decent servant of the country.

He opted to join the Judiciary early in 1983 as a Magistrate Grade I and rising through the ranks to a Justice of the Supreme Court is an attestation to his dedicated career as a public servant. This is, of course, in light of the fact that he had the option of pursuing more lucrative prospects in private practice.

To this end, I wish to extend my condolences to the family and the rest of the country for the loss of this dear son. I extend the same sympathies to the Lango community, to the Supreme Court and the entire Judiciary for this loss.

I take the liberty, as we celebrate his life, to appraise the House and invite us to reflect upon the courts of law and their attendant mandate in the administration of justice, which has been inhibited by all standards, as shown in a number of circumstances.

Let me make two brief inferences, Madam Speaker:

Despite operating to an extent beyond our eyes and reach, the unprecedented intrusion by the Executive into the work of the Judiciary should be a concern to all of us. We are all alive to cases, when during broad daylight, courts have casually been stormed by the military with the view of overturning the findings of court.

Without shame, suspects have been re-arrested on a number of occasions on the same set of facts after being released by court on bail. We are all aware of the case of our two honourable colleagues, Hon. Ssegirinya and Hon. Ssewanyana, who were re-arrested.

I am making reference to unabated, unchecked State interference in the work of the Judiciary portraying the Judiciary as incapable of executing its independent mandate.

In other cases, State operatives have interfered with and frustrated the conduct of cases before court; I will make reference to a case in point, where I was involved directly; the one of *Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi v. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Election Petition No.1 of 2021*.

In this petition, Madam Speaker, my party president was challenging the outcome of the 2021 election. It should be recorded that at the time of filing his petition and adducing evidence, regime operatives subjected him to house arrest, which was, of course, illegal, seized and locked up the NUP offices where evidence was being kept, and arrested the key witnesses. Therefore, among other reasons, it apparently becomes impossible for this case to be pursued in court.

This is an indictment on the Judiciary to always rise to the occasion and ward off human rights violations in the course of the dispensation of justice, since it is an exercise in futility, to call the regime to restrain itself on such conduct.

The regime is unstoppable; the Judiciary must rise to the occasion and stop it. We understand the impediments, but they must strongly rise and stop it.

Madam Speaker, we are also aware that the Judiciary has challenges and the beauty in this debate is that the honourable Chief Justice is with us here; he will take note and heed.

We are very concerned when the Judiciary is muddled with internal bickering. We are aware that it is also a space for humans. Much as we look to the courts for redress and remedy, the

dirt from the linen of the internal conflicts that currently bedevil the Judiciary, involving its own cadres, has disfigured the expectation of the quality of justice.

We are also live to the conditional petition lodged by one of the Justices of the Supreme Court, challenging the actions and the conduct of the Chief Justice, the Permanent Secretary of the Judiciary, and the Chief Registrar of Court -

THE SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I think you are going overboard; we are here to pay tribute to the person lying before us. We are not talking about the conduct of the Judiciary; we are looking at the good deeds of the late Justice Rubby.

I was once moving with Hon. Obua and we accidentally passed a cemetery. In the cemetery, there was a writing like the one you mentioned; it said, "We used to be like you and you will be like us."

Let us now talk about the person who has died and leave the issues of the Judiciary. If we want the Judiciary, we know where to get them. The Chief Justice is here as my guest; the issues in his house are for him to handle. For now, let us pay tribute to Justice Rubby. (*Applause*)

Put yourself in the shoes of the son, the mother or the wife of the late that we are talking about. We will have space to discuss the Judiciary and even the Legislature; let us not only look outside, but also at ourselves.

MR MPUUGA: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. I have made very kind observations of the late and I continue to do so. I am a very sensitive human being and I would never attack the dead at any moment.

THE SPEAKER: And that is what I know of you.

MR MPUUGA: Certainly, but in these kinds of moments, Madam Speaker, we talk about the living and the duty of the living because we have a duty to preserve the sanctity and dignity of the departed. I am very alive to that, Madam

Speaker. I take your guidance very seriously and I am very restricted.

As I wind up, we are alive to the fact that the late served with exception and distinction and I am aware that he is one of the few that had very little backlog. That, for me, is an exception.

Madam Speaker, we know the causes of case backlog; we also invite the Judiciary to be alive to the concerns of the citizens when it comes to executing their mandate.

One of my proudest moments in the 10th Parliament is when we considered "The Administration of the Judiciary Bill, 2020", which is now an Act. Of course, it had pended for several years; we worked tirelessly to have it passed, to give the Judiciary more independence to be able to execute their mandate. They need more resources, we need more judges, and we need more magistrates.

We invite the successor to the honourable departed gentleman to do even more. Probably, the court needs closer scrutiny, especially the lower courts where backlog starts, to make sure that the work of the Judiciary, for which we expect nothing, but output, is executed without fear or favour.

Madam Speaker, the expectations of the citizens from the Judiciary are not different from the expectations of their Parliament, because they subscribe to these institutions by way of the taxes they pay. Therefore, we must speak to their expectations and frustrations.

I represent more than five million people when I speak on the Floor of Parliament, who voted for the Opposition, and nobody can speak for them on matters that nobody can raise. Therefore, when I sometimes rub people the wrong way, it is because I represent five or plus million people and it must be understood in that context.

I do not know, for example, who will speak for Hon. Ssegirinya or Hon. Ssewanyana who are in prison, and the Judiciary is reluctant or casual in handling their matter.

I do not know who will speak for the many people whose rights have been abused and the Judiciary has received these people whose rights have been violated, without calling to order those violating them. In these kinds of moments, we call out for the Judiciary to be alive.

THE SPEAKER: Are we on the same page of paying tribute?

MR MPUUGA: Yes. The only way we can honour a gentleman, a servant of this country, is to rise to the occasion and perform better, even much more than he did. Probably, we are more equipped now than his generation, to perform better.

I want, once again, to condole with the family and the Judiciary on this great loss. May the soul of this son of Uganda rest in eternity. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I request that we have a non-partisan debate and pay tribute to our elder - the person who has left a legacy. Any fault in the Judiciary is not the fault of Justice Rubby. The Judiciary is not Justice Rubby and if there is anybody to be blamed for the Ssegirinyas' case, then it should not be the Judiciary, but Hon. Mao. Hon. Mao, we want those people in court.

Hon. Zijjan, the Dean of Independents, the second seconder -

2.47

MR DAVID ZIJJAN (Independent, Butembe County, Jinja): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the motion for a resolution of Parliament to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda, pursuant to Schedule 3 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your continued acknowledgement of the Independent Members in this House as a distinct shade of opinion, and for granting us the opportunity to second the motion on the Floor to eulogise the fallen great starring legal mind before us today.

Madam Speaker, it has been said and truly so, that the longest distance is 13 inches, from the centre of the brain to the centre of the heart. Many people know with their heads, but their hearts do not know what their heads know. That is why you find many professionals in this country who exude a lot of brutality against their own citizens. In their heads, they know, but in their hearts, they do not; they lack empathy.

The late Justice Aweri knew with both. He knew with his head and also with his heart. He dispensed justice with empathy, humility and integrity. He interpreted the law and used it in its instrumentality as to the instrumentalisation of the law. He used the law as a tool for correction and not for persecution or oppression.

Madam Speaker, this afternoon, Uganda ought to be proud of him and the legacy that he leaves behind. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri decried the apathy and corruption in our institutions. As we send him off today, we owe him a better nation at the end of our journey.

His legacy speaks for itself. We have seen that while he was one lawyer, out of him, we see many lawyers in his children, who will continue to dispense justice to this nation. *(Applause)* In his life, he has multiplied himself and has done Uganda better.

May the Lord bless Aweri's flight to eternity; may the Lord bless his memory.

For God and my country.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, the Dean of Independents. We are talking about Rubby's humility; the selflessness he had; the commitment and dedication he had for his job. As I said before, I grew up seeing Rubby and I admired how he used to work.

Therefore, I request you, honourable members, that we run a non-partisan debate. Let us not bring politics into this debate. We all know each of us as politicians, but for today, I beg you, my brothers and sisters; let us have a non-partisan debate.

Any amendment to the prayers before we go to the debate? - Do you have an amendment to make, Counsel? Can we start with Counsel Nsibambi?

2.52

MR YUSUF NSIBAMBI (FDC, Mawokota County South, Mpigi): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My Lord the Chief Justice, my Lords and Your Worships, I have a small amendment, but before the amendment, can I say something -

THE SPEAKER: In the House here, Members recognise only the Speaker. (*Laughter*)

MR NSIBAMBI: Most obliged, Madam Speaker. I am between a rock and a hard place. As a lawyer, the moment I meet a judge – I have taught Law for the last 23 years, but I bow before all the lordships. So, I am sorry.

THE SPEAKER: We are in the Parliament of Uganda; the only person to be addressed here is the Speaker. Can you go ahead with the amendment?

MR NSIBAMBI: Most obliged. Madam Speaker, I have an amendment to make, specifically to the resolutions proposed by the Rt Hon. Prime Minister. Given his record and legacy, I wish to propose that we recommend to the district administration of his area of birth to pick out a prominent road or building and have it named after him.

Justice Rubby Aweri was very humble, dedicated and gentle. He rose through the ranks, from Grade I Magistrate to the Supreme Court, which is the pinnacle. So, his name should not just be wished away unrecognised. It is my prayer and request that this House proposes that a major road be named after him as an amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Is the amendment seconded? (*Members rose*) Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Sseggon, Hon. Macho and Hon. Teira. I see another amendment from Hon. Tonny Ayo; *Hansard*, take note.

2.54

MR TONNY AYO (NRM, Kwanja County, Kwanja): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to propose an amendment to the motion moved by the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, but before that, allow me first extend my sincere condolences to the family of the late Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, the Judiciary and the country.

Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has presented a lot of contributions made by the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. However, I wish to propose an amendment – the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri believed in the development of knowledge and education, in academia. Therefore, we cannot speak here, close our books and just go. We need his name to be remembered because he spent 40 years of dedicated service to this country.

Before the late died, he had a dream of building a modern state-of-the-art library at his former school, Lango College and he had started mobilising resources.

Madam Speaker, I think we will only pay the best tribute to the fallen hero before us, by having Government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, take up his dream and build that modern high-tech library for the public at Lango College School, which will remain forever. (*Applause*)

If we can have the names of J.F. Kennedy, Queen Victoria and names of all these other people around, why can't we, this time, have our own who spent 40 years working for this country?

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, beg to move that Parliament do consider this amendment for Government to build a high-tech state-of-the-art library at Lango College School, whose process the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri had already started. (*Applause*)

The library should be named Justice Rubby Opio Aweri Memorial Public Library. Thank you, Madam Speaker. (*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the amendment urges Government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, to build a state-of-art library at Lango College School, in the name of Justice Rubby Opio Aweri Memorial Public Library. Is it seconded? (*Members rose*) Seconded by Hon. Ocan, Hon. Peter, Hon. Ogwal, Hon. Tebandeke, Flora, Hon. Aloba; okay seconded by the whole House.

Can I have a commitment from Government on the two amendments?

2.58

MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to convey my condolences to the family and to the Judiciary. On the amendment that Hon. Yusuf raised, the late was a judge of the Supreme Court. For us to localise it to the local administration would be lowering his level. He could amend it to read that the Government finds it fitting to name a road, anywhere in Uganda or in any of the 15 cities, in his memory, rather than localising it. The district local government can do that, but as a national Parliament, we should talk nationally.

Madam Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment that Government finds it befitting to put it anywhere in the country or anywhere in the 15 cities of this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker. My condolences to the family.

THE SPEAKER: Is that seconded? Honourable Members, this was a Justice of the Supreme Court for the entire Uganda, not only for Dokolo. Having a road in Dokolo would be localising the late. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, we have two amendments; naming a road - We are not asking for too much.

2.59

THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja): Madam Speaker, I will definitely take this to Cabinet and we shall consider it.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Prime Minister, thank you for accepting to take up our amendment. Can we now open the debate?

I want to start with the President of DP and the Government Chief Whip. I will start with the frontbench.

3.00

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Norbert Mao): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, 7 December 2022, an illustrious judicial career spanning 39 years came to an end when Justice Rubby Opio Aweri breathed his last. That career saw him serve the High Court for 16 years, the Court of Appeal for about one year and the Supreme Court for seven years.

We all remember his tough stance on corruption in the Judiciary when he was named Chief Inspector of Courts from 2017 until his death. I thus count it a great honour to be able to join in paying tribute to Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. I thank you and the Parliament of Uganda and, indeed, the entire Government of Uganda for according him due recognition for his distinguished judicial career.

Those of us who knew Justice Opio Aweri personally were impressed by his humanity, his capacity for hard work and his seriousness of purpose. A good judge must be able to cut through to the heart of a dispute and quickly arrive at a well-reasoned and practical resolution. Justice Opio Aweri had that rare ability.

If I were to state, in one sentence, the attributes and characteristics of Justice Opio Aweri's track record as a judicial officer and to pick the one thing that all those who have the privilege to serve as judicial officers can learn from him, I would say this: judicial officers should see themselves not as wielders of judicial power and authority, but rather as servants of justice in the broadest possible sense.

It is, therefore, with deep gratitude for the privilege of having known Justice Opio Aweri

that I ask God to judge him with mercy as he approaches the throne of Grace. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Mao. Honourable members, in the VIP Gallery this afternoon, we have Justice Sserunkuma Isaiah, the resident Judge of Masindi. You are most welcome. He has come to join us in paying tribute to Justice Rubby. Join me in welcoming him.

Still in the public gallery, we have the family members and friends to the late Justice Aweri. Please, stand up and wave. You are all most welcome. This is your Parliament.

3.03

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Denis Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. As a former member of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs under the able leadership of Hon. Oboth, the committee that, in the last Parliament, processed, on behalf of Parliament, the Administration of the Judiciary Bill, I wish to thank Parliament of Uganda for passing this Bill and His Excellency the President for assenting to this piece of legislation, which is now called, "The Administration of Judiciary Act, 2020".

Madam Speaker, in death, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri becomes the first recipient and the first test of this piece of legislation.

That said, at such a moment of grief, I equally rise, on behalf of the people of Ajuri County in Alebtong District, to pay special tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, a senior and an experienced judicial officer who served his motherland, Uganda, with precision.

In his professional and career path, in his rise to the level of a Justice of the Supreme Court, the track record of the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, from wherever he worked, within and without Uganda, is clean and clear. He has left a legacy; no wonder, in his family that you introduced; there are a number who are following him. From their Worships, maybe in future, they will become their Lordships, just like their father.

Madam Speaker, I know that the late Honourable Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was an inspiration to many who knew him. He was a father to all. He was a counsellor. He was an advisor. He was a consultant and he was readily available. One thing that I want to pay special tribute to him about is, whenever he heard something about you, he would pick his phone and call you. That is the gentleman lying before us.

Madam Speaker, he was a friend to the young, the middle-aged, the poor, the rich and a friend to all categories of people. No wonder, Heaven is looking for good people. That is why God has called him. Maybe, you and I first have to repent because Heaven is looking for good people. Such a good man has been called at 69 years.

Honourable members, my message now is to you and I; before we are called, let us repent and borrow a leaf from the late Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. May his soul rest in eternal peace. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Government Chief Whip. Just a small correction: Justice Sserunkuma is not Isaiah, but he is called Issa. Sorry for that. In the Public Gallery, we have Hon. Okello Anthony and Hon. Otekat John Emily.

3.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We thank you for according Justice Opio Aweri a State funeral according to the law. We appreciate His Excellency the President for allowing this to happen.

I bring condolences, on behalf of the people of Ndoorwa West and Kigezi, to the family of Justice Opio Aweri and the Judiciary, through the Chief Justice.

Last week, when Justice Rubby Opio Aweri died, we were commemorating the Anti-Corruption Day. We also had the National Thanksgiving Day at State House. On that day, Bishop Johnson Twinomujuni challenged

the nation and all of us. He posed a question: “What would the world miss if you were not around?”

In Justice Opio Aweri, we shall miss a lot. We shall miss a hard-working legal professional, a non-corrupt Justice of the Supreme Court and a nationalist - a great man who was born in Lango, but served the nation generally.

As we go to Lango tomorrow, we thank the people of Dokolo for raising this important person who served us very well. *(Applause)* He inspired many people, not only in that region, but the whole country. Today, he joins, in history, other great people from that region, who have served this country. A few that I can remember, off record, are Dr Milton Obote and Hon. Ekulo Epak – I do not know about Oyite Ojok, but those two come to mind in terms of the contribution they have made.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of Ndorwa West in Kabale, I register our condolences to the family and the Judiciary. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

3.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ELDERLY AFFAIRS) (Mr Dominic Gidudu): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the elderly persons of Uganda, I send my deepest condolences -

THE SPEAKER: The honourable members are asking: “Who is that?” That is Hon. Gidudu, representing the elders. He is the Minister for the Elderly. *(Laughter)*

MR GIDUDU: Madam Speaker, I have spoken here several times. Nevertheless, I am glad you have noticed me today. As I said, I send deepest condolences from the older persons’ fraternity in Uganda to the family, Lango subregion, northern Uganda, the Judiciary and Uganda as a whole.

In our elderly persons’ fraternity, we consider 69 years as middle age for the older persons. He has accomplished what he set out to do, his

pinnacle being a Justice of the Supreme Court. Age is a special gift from God; the children he had are another special gift; long service to your nation is another gift. He served until he had more or less retired. God allowed him to serve longer.

We pray that the ancestors receive him with open hands. May his soul rest in peace. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, it is an elder speaking, so, when he says something, it is final. He is speaking about another elder, who is lying before us. Let us listen to Hon. Oboth whom I know, knew the late very well.

3.12

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (DEFENCE) (Mr Jacob Oboth): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people of Tororo, West Budama Central in particular, and Bukedi subregion, we extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Justice Opio Aweri. He worked in Tororo as Magistrate Grade I. He went to school with one of my cousins, George Oburu Akwoyo, who also retired.

He was a judge whom I came to know while he was still a chief magistrate. I went to school with his son and we developed a relationship from Law school. We were privileged, together with Hon. Medard Ssegona, to share – *(Interjections)*- I do not know about Hon. Medard Ssegona’s father, but I know about mine, who was not a judicial officer. *(Laughter)* In fact, my father died the day I arrived in Law school. So, there was no way I could have met His Worship George Obong. I was a son of an old man, who died before I started school.

I was privileged, indeed, to meet the son of a chief magistrate - the first person I met. To me, that was high-ranking. We sat together and George took me to their home in Kamwokya. I liked mzee’s humility. The good things you see in me – Hon. Medard Ssegona knows - I copied from him. The bad ones are from Hon. Medard Ssegona. *(Laughter)*

The humility speaks volumes. Yesterday, at his residence in Kawanda, I talked about his service with meekness. Meekness is an attribute below humility. In this country, many people who are humble and meek are misunderstood and underrated. People call you names –

THE SPEAKER: Like the Speaker.

MR OBOTH: Like the Speaker here. *(Laughter)* A Supreme Court Judge picks out a phone and calls me! Hon. Obua said it rightly. One of the people, who were passionately following the Administration of the Judiciary Bill, that time, was Justice Opio Aweri. He would tell me his disappointments with us, Members of Parliament. I always tried to take them in good faith.

He had a very sharp, but soft voice. When you see his children – I said it yesterday – you do not need to do a DNA test. Hon. Okot Ogong yesterday, for some reasons known to him, challenged me on whether all my children look like me, the way the children of Justice Opio Aweri look like their father. I found that very provocative, but we are here to pay tribute to a humble judge. *(Laughter)*

Lawyers, by training, are known to be very arrogant – like Hon. Ssegona – *(Laughter)* – but there are some very humble ones like Gen. Muhoozi and Hon. Yusuf Nsibambi, who taught both George Obong and I. *(Interjections)* the point I am making here is that the profession makes us –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I will give you only two minutes each; everybody wants to speak.

MR OBOTH: I am glad that I am able to tell the stories because I personally know him. My tribute is the story I am telling. If you are getting offended, you cannot –

THE SPEAKER: Nobody is offended with your story; after all you are telling us what he was.

MR OBOTH: Yes, and this is something that most people know. That is now the arrogance, which had got to me to answer – Madam Speaker, this country will miss a humble, gentle and very objective man. I know Hon. Okot Ogong recently lost his mother. During the funeral, I delegated Hon. Cecilia, his Member of Parliament, to speak. This country needs humbler people. *(Applause)* Humility is not weakness.

I want to speak this as I conclude, to the children; five of you are lawyers. You were lucky to be the children of somebody. You have a harder task than me whose father was not recognised as “somebody”. You have to protect his legacy; you will make your own.

Justice Opio Aweri, I know all that you told me. In fact, you said you are a friend of many, including the Speaker of this House. I am glad that she is presiding over a session in which we are paying tribute to you. The journey you have undertaken is a journey of the majority. We are on our way. Fare thee well.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much for those kind words.

3.20

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LANDS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (URBAN DEVELOPMENT) (Mr Obiga Kania): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join you and the rest to pay tribute to Hon. Justice Opio Aweri and pass my condolences to the family.

I came to know Justice Aweri not under very good circumstances. At that time, around 2001, I had lost an election and had a petition before him. Like anybody else, I expected him to rule in my favour, but he did not. In my heart, this was a bad man.

However, immediately after, less than a year, we had some social interaction. There is a trading centre called Migyera. When you are going to the North, it is halfway Gulu and Arua. Travellers stop there to rest and that is where I used to meet him.

I asked him why he ruled against me – *(Interjection)*- No, I could not intimidate him anymore because I was not in Parliament. Justice Aweri looked at me and smiled. He asked me how I was and he did not want to answer my question.

He said, “Let us meet in Kampala and have a chat.” From then, I realised that judges have to make a decision. *(Applause)* All the decisions they make are not necessarily in our favour. When we hire lawyers, they have to win us a case, but sometimes, they do not. Nonetheless, we continued to make friends with him.

Recently, just about six months before this incident, I met him in the same town, Migyera. I arrived there before him and he was following me. We had a chat and he told me, “Do you remember what you asked me here?” I said, “That was long ago. I am now different.” We chatted. Ultimately, what I saw in him was something I would want all of us to emulate - the virtue of humility. *(Applause)*

Honourable colleagues have spoken here and many will speak about these virtues. The unfortunate thing is that we, leaders, and other Ugandans, will leave these virtues here. We will not go out and practise them. That is not a fair tribute. The best tribute we should pay to Justice Aweri and the rest, after their death, is to realise their virtue and the values for which they lived.

There are many of us who ignore the virtues and corruptly struggle for property. At the end of the day, nobody mentions anything about your property. What you will bestow to your children are the good values and virtues you live for. May those virtues and values of Justice Aweri be a guiding principle for those of us who are still living, until - and not if - we shall die and go where we belong. May the Almighty God rest his soul in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Amen. Thank you very much.

3.25

MR SAMUEL OKWIR (NRM, Moroto County, Alebtong): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people of Moroto County, Alebtong District, who I represent, I send our heartfelt condolences to the family, the Judiciary and the entire country.

I came into close interface with the late Justice Rubby Aweri in 2021 after elections when my victory was being challenged. It was like I was drowning, looking for anything to cling onto, if I could be saved. I made the phone call. He asked me where I was and I told him I was in the village in Alebtong. He asked me if I had facts and I told him I had my facts. He told me, “If you have facts, go to any court and you will get justice. But do not go there with the wrong facts because you will be challenged.”

I thought that was the end, but he allowed me to meet him. He gave me counsel and courage. I learned one thing - and many people have spoken about it here – humility. I have tried my best to copy what I saw in him. I am still trying to be humble, although it is not very – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Samuel. We pray that God gives you the humility that you are looking for.

3.27

MR ABDU KATUNTU (Independent, Bugweri County, Bugweri): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to pay tribute and say farewell to a person I have known since 1993. I am not so sure whether many people knew the late Justice Opio Aweri before 1993. And for that, Madam Speaker, you could give me one more minute, alongside the two.

Madam Speaker, I first came to know Justice Opio Aweri in 1993, when he had just been appointed the Chief Magistrate at Mengo court. I was a young lawyer at the time, appearing in his court for the first time.

He was a judicial officer who even mentored the younger ones. For those who know the

Judiciary well - not the local Judiciary - let me talk about the outside Judiciary, for reasons, I am sure Hon. Mao would know. Sometimes judicial officers can be bullies - I am talking about outside Uganda, not within Uganda. *(Laughter)*

Therefore, to have a judicial officer who mentors the younger ones, even when they are gambling with a case; they are not so sure of their facts and sometimes even the law. Here was a judicial officer trying to mentor young lawyers and that is what he did throughout his career - any lawyer who appeared before Aweri can tell you that.

He would even call you back to his chambers and say, "No that is not the way a lawyer should behave in a court of law -" he would do that. That is the kind of man lying before us.

However, let me say this to the Minister of Justice: when you have somebody who has decided to join the Judiciary, and he applies for a job as a Grade One Magistrate, his dream ultimately is to become a judge of the Supreme Court. That is what he did. He rose from grade one to Chief Magistrate of the High Court, to the Court of Appeal and to the Supreme Court.

Today, some of these people are not given the opportunity because there are many people who come from outside the Judiciary and are appointed judges.

Therefore, the dream of the young people who have joined the Judiciary is killed. So, as you recommend persons to become judges, keep that in mind; that there are many people whose dream is to become judicial officers - and that is the path they have chosen - they should rise from the bottom to the top.

For example, when you see a police officer rising from Cadet Assistant to Superintendent of Police up to IGP - I am sure some of you know the current IGP, Okoth Ochola; I knew him as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent of Police, and he rose through the ranks to become the IGP. I have seen army officers who have risen all the way from officer cadets to

Generals. That is what young people who have chosen a profession dream of, and that is what Justice Opio Aweri achieved.

Lastly, I want to thank this House. We struggled so much to have the Administration of the Judiciary Act passed. It took us 15 years. I remember that time. It was Justice *—(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, so much. The bottom-top approach in the Judiciary should apply. Just because somebody is a son to so and so - let people grow within their career and become judges. Chairperson Lango Parliamentary Group, then Hon. Sseggona

3.32

MS JUDITH ALYEK (NRM, Woman Representative, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people of Kole District and the entire Lango Subregion, I would like to send our deepest condolences to the family, friends and relatives of the fallen Justice.

Madam Speaker, a lot has been said about our Justice Aweri. However, I would like to add that he rose from the rank of Magistrate Grade One to the level of Justice of the Supreme Court.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, this is not an easy thing to achieve in life. This comes because of hard work - that somebody has been persistent in his work. To rise from the level of Magistrate Grade One up to the rank at which he has died - he is lying here; he has done a lot for this country and has mentored so many people. He has been a soft-spoken person. I knew him very well; he was very principled. He was dedicated to his work; here he lies in State.

Madam Speaker, the late Justice did not entertain corruption in any form. He was an open-minded person. He did not receive any bribe, and I know, now that he has died, God is also happy with him. Yes, because he did his work as a Judge, diligently *—(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Counsel Ssegona. Thank you so much, Chairperson.

3.34

MR MEDARD SSEGGONA (NUP, Busiro County East Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I want to join colleagues in support of the Rt Hon. Prime Minister to support the motion to the fullest.

Like many colleagues have talked about Justice Opio Aweri, and like Hon. Jacob Oboth said, I came into contact with him in September 1997, through our colleague, his son, now His Worship George Ebong.

When I met George, we gave each other names. I remember giving him the name 'Mukasa' and I became 'Ojok' and that is when I became more Luo than Hon. Norbert Mao.

We have, therefore, lived together as brothers and I agree with Hon. Jacob Oboth when he said that he learned some attributes from me; I have always said - and now he has confirmed that he was reading my notes - but he chose to read them the wrong way, and that is why he only picked the bad. (*Laughter*) For George Ebong, who read them the right way, you can see where he is, in the Judiciary. Through George, I met Justice Opio Aweri, he became my father and he would always refer to me as his son.

As Hon. Oboth said, whenever he heard something about you, he would pick up his phone and call you. I remember with fond memories in 2001, at around eight o'clock; I received a phone call from him. I was so concerned when he told me what he had heard about me.

I pleaded my case and innocence - I did not know that he understood my case. I ran to the Chief Justice (CJ) for intercession. The CJ asked me, "What did you conclude with him?" I said that he said it was okay with him, and that he understood my point. Then he said, "You do not need an intercessor."

When we speak about the dead, we are not talking to them. We are talking to the living. At this point, I want to associate myself with all the words of the Leader of the Opposition. We are now speaking to the living, not only in the Judiciary, but also in our institution; do the right thing, and the right thing will do the rest for you. He has died a dignified judge. We shall miss him. (*Applause*)

Madam Speaker, he dies at a time when we are grappling with abductions and human rights abuses. It is a fact, we must deal with it and there is nobody to address it other than the Judiciary. In paying tribute to this fallen gentleman, the only way he can be rewarded is by doing the right thing at the right time.

I pray that the Almighty God rests his soul in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from the woman MP, Dokolo.

3.37

MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing me to pay tribute to my brother and mentor.

Madam Speaker, one of the things, which has not come out so far, is that Justice Opio Aweri was humorous. Every time he met someone, he would start with jokes. So, he always asked me why I keep winning elections. The last time I met him, I also decided to pull a joke on him, but he did not like it very much. I asked him, "Why are you, as a judge, continuing to promote fraud?" So, he got shocked.

Madam Speaker, one thing you do not know is that while he has been called Opio Aweri, his name should have been Aweri Opio. It was his father who was called Opio Aweri. Now, he has continued to use his father's name. (*Laughter*) So, the joke knocked him off completely; he was unable to joke with me anymore.

Madam Speaker, I cannot speak about his efficacy in his profession because I have never been fortunate enough to learn about law or to

practice it. But one thing I know, as a politician who has been on the ground for a long time, is that there are two things we need to remember my brother for.

The first is that in his practice of the law, he maintained one thing: equal opportunity. One of the things we, the Langi will remember him for, is that there was a blind man who actually did law and graduated, but could not be accepted to work as a magistrate. Justice Opio Aweri followed this man and as I speak, he is working in the registrar's office. He is practicing the profession of his heart; he is very passionate about equal opportunity. The man is blind, but he is going to, probably, be one of the few blind judges in future.

Madam Speaker, during COVID-19, Justice Opio Aweri distributed posho and beans. So, when they said distributing posho and beans was illegal, I gave him a call and I said, "They are saying you are not a procurement officer and so, you are not supposed to distribute beans and posho." And he said, "The good thing is that it will come to the Bench and we will sort it out." (*Laughter*)

Madam Speaker, finally, allow me to say this: Justice Opio Aweri, in his humility, was a giant. He was fearless. In 2019, some of us who cherish democracy – Justice Opio Aweri, with his colleagues, was able to order Government to table the law reforms for elections in one month – if you remember, in June 2019.

So, I plead with Members of Parliament that we should remember this man by making sure we increase funding for the Judiciary. They cannot perform unless we increase funding to the Judiciary. I want to thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Miss Uganda. Maybe the cases cannot be heard because there is less funding; so, once we increase the funding, the issues will be sorted out as was raised by the Leader of Opposition.

Can we hear from the Member for Dokolo North?

3.42

MR MOSES OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Colleagues, Justice Aweri Opio is and remains the most senior distinguished citizen in my constituency. He used to compete with *Imat* Cecilia, but I am sure she agrees with that in terms of age, but since he is gone, possibly that distinction will be with her.

I also want to take the opportunity, as a Member of Parliament for Dokolo, where he comes from, to thank Government for giving him this special send-off, as by law established. Thank you very much. I want to pass this message through the Speaker to His Excellency the President.

Allow me also mention a few things. I will not also go into law because he would summon me and tell me, "This constituency is not being run well; do the following." And I want to pass a few messages because it may also impact you; you may learn from it. On the issue of prices, he said: "The prices are very high. What are we going to do?" In the discussion he said, "When the prices are high, you have an option either to pay the high price or receive the value of the high price. So, you have to choose which side you must be."

So, he said, "Dokolo North, we must choose the side of receiving the high price; leave others who are complaining to concentrate on ensuring that our people receive the high price of production so that we get more money." That is a big message I thought I should pass on to my colleagues.

The other is related to employment. He mentioned - and everybody will mention here that he has supported so many people to have education. However, the people he supported, he expected them to also support others, but he was disappointed that even those he supported, some are not employed. So, his solution was, "Education is not enough to enable you have a good life. You should have skills on top of education." So, his argument is that let us work on the skills, particularly on the issues which

we have – agriculture. Go, look for high-value products, get good breeds, you know things like that, train people so that our people become better.

Lastly, his family is a great one. Madam Speaker, allow me recognise, particularly his son –His Worship Ebong. He was so strong in remotely helping me to win my elections – remotely! *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Never declare your people. And by the way, Hon. Ssegona, George gave you a very wrong name – Ojok. Do you know what Ojok means? You are a witch. *(Laughter)* Hon. Alum?

3.46

MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri.

Madam Speaker, the late Justice was an OB to my mother. They went to the same primary school; Agwa Primary School. What surprised me is that he was able to connect with my mother even when she stopped at a very low level. What kind of man are we paying tribute to? How many of us connect to the lowly in our societies?

Whenever they would meet, they would only speak English and their English was called *Agwatha primary English*. It was so fine, Madam Speaker –*(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute and make mention that he was an environmentalist. We used to go to the same bank and he encouraged me to grow trees. I now have over 10,000 trees that I have planted arising from the advice that he gave me. Faced with these environmental challenges, I would like us to emulate this very important activity that he was doing.

Finally, I want to talk about the virtue of humility. Madam Speaker, if there is anything that the late should be remembered for, it is

humility. He was so humble to the extent that he would relate and socialise with the lowly in all our communities. A case in point was when I went to Otuke District. I found the local people –*(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Chairman, Teso Parliamentary Group.

3.49

MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a dark moment for our nation as I rise to pay tribute to Justice Opio Aweri. I went to school with the children of Justice Opio Aweri, particularly my colleague, His Worship Solomon. We were together at law school.

One aspect which is so captivating is the aspect of the environment. He had a Master's degree in Environmental Law. However, he did not leave it at that. Even in his decisions in court, whenever he handled cases, you would be able to see his knowledge and how he cared for the common person.

Permit me read from one of the cases that he handled; the Miscellaneous Cause No.0100 of 2004, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment v. Attorney-General. It was decided in Kampala. He was handling the issue of the permit that was granted to Kakira Sugar in the Butamira Forest Reserve.

This is how he rescued that forest. He made reference to a quotation of an Indian Supreme Court case where he said, "*Man is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. In the long and torturous evolution of the human race on this planet, a stage has been reached when, through rapid acceleration of science and technology, man has acquired the power to transform his environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale. Both aspects of man's environment –the natural and man-made, are essential to the enjoyment of the basic human rights, even the right to life itself*".

He emphasised and said that the Attorney-General, that is Government, has its constitutional duty to conserve the environment and natural resources equitably for the benefit of both the present and the future generations. That is the judge we are talking about. He allowed all the reliefs, saved the forest and said that it is for the benefit of us today and tomorrow.

I want to agree with my sister, Hon. Santa, that the planting of trees is what he has lived for. Can we, as Members of Parliament and Uganda as a country, go ahead and save our environment as a living testimony for our Judge? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. In memory of Justice Rubby, each of you should go and plant at least 10 trees. Let us be an example for the rest.

3.52

MR JULIUS ACON BUA (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people of Otuke, I rise to support the motion to pay tribute to Justice Opio Aweri.

Madam Speaker, some of you might not have known this gentleman who has gone. In 2016, I met him in Otuke - He is from Dokolo, and from Otuke to Dokolo is about 150 kilometres. He had a garden there and I also had a garden. I was surprised and I said, honourable Justice, how come you do not have a bodyguard? Your friends in Kampala are carrying around bodyguards like the medals that we win in the Olympics. (*Laughter*) I joked with him and he laughed.

He said, "Acon, you see, when you are a simple man, wrong things do not happen to you, but when you begin to carry these security guards like the medals you are talking about, that is when the wrong people follow you". Madam Speaker, this gentleman would drive himself without a security guard. I really feel that when you remain simple, God becomes your bodyguard and nothing can happen.

I want to urge Members of Parliament: let us raise our children in a good way, and not the other way around. I said to him, "There are cattle keepers around here. Do not let them make your name to be judged here." - (*Member timed out.*)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.54

MR PETER OCEN (Independent, Kole South County, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to pay tribute to Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri on behalf of the people of Kole South and also on behalf of the old boys and girls of Uganda College of Commerce Aduku (UCC).

Justice Rubby Aweri taught us in UCC Aduku, as well as many other people in this country. When teaching, he used to give us small cases and when you judged the case very well, he would joke with you and say, "You are a small magistrate".

He was very friendly to all the students. Justice Rubby Aweri has been a father, an advisor and an elder who cares for all. I want to add that the death of Justice Rubby Opio Aweri should be a mark stone for other people who do a good job and are alive. They should be praised while they still live. We have some good men and women in this country who are still doing the job - (*Member timed out.*)

3.56

MR YUSUF MUTEMBULI (NRM, Bunyole East County, Butaleja): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Fifteen years ago, I was enrolled as an advocate and the first time I appeared before the High Court, I appeared before Justice Opio. When people talk about humility, I am here to testify. Having practiced for almost a year before a chief magistrate's court, we were used to saying, "His worship, Your worship". If you appeared before a judge and you were still saying, "Your Worship", other judges would get offended, but His Lordship kept on saying: "Counsel, I understand. You have just come from the Chief Magistrate's Court and you think you are still there. You will get

used.” To other judicial officers, that would be an offence.

Secondly, I was quoting a decision of one of the deceased judges. I said, “In the decision of the late Justice...” and he said: “Counsel Mutembuli, judges don’t die. When you are quoting, just say, ‘Justice...’ do not say, “the late.” It is not necessary.”

Therefore, not only was he a judge, but he kept on teaching us like senior counsel, Abdu Katuntu, said. He was a gentleman who would not bark at you, but would educate and counsel you. That is why I am sure all the advocates who appeared before him, for the first time, enjoyed the practice. There are judges before whom you appear, if you are still new, and regret why you are an advocate. They are in Uganda here. They will tell you: “If you are not ready –(Member timed out.)

THE SPEAKER: First finish that one. (Laughter)

MR MUTEMBULI: Madam Speaker, what I was saying is that there are judges that keep on bullying and teasing the young advocates. That is on record – you appear before a certain judge and refer to them as “Your Worship”, the judge would get offended.

However, because of the humility of this gentleman lying here, he would tell you: “Please, Counsel, I understand you have just been practicing before this and the other.”

My appeal to the judicial officers, especially the judges, is that, please, give opportunity to these young men because for the last one year they may have been used to “Your Worship” and so on.

I appeared on a matter in the Court of Appeal. I do not know what had happened to this particular advocate. He addressed one of the judges as “Your Worship.” The judge said: “Please, get out of my court.” The matter was adjourned just because this particular advocate maybe had appeared before chief magistrates severally and was used to that.

Therefore, we should be patient and give opportunity to some of these young men so that we mentor them. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Judicial officers, let us emulate Justice Rubby and support and help our young officers.

3.59

MR FELIX OKOT OGONG (NRM, Dokolo South County, Dokolo): Madam Speaker, I rise to support the motion to pay tribute to my uncle, Rubby Opio Aweri, Justice of the Supreme Court.

Honourable members, I would like to inform you that the Justice lying before us here is my uncle. We loved him very much and continue loving him, even in death. As a family, we are proud that he served this nation with utmost distinction.

Justice Rubby Opio Aweri should minister to us today. He was a very simple man. However, in his simplicity, there was a strong will and mind behind it. He was very diligent, but very humble. That is the character I would like all Members of Parliament to emulate.

I know most Members here once they step on this Floor; they rarely pick calls from ordinary people. They rarely talk to them or walk on the street with ordinary people. They jump in their cars, close the windows and are not always with the ordinary people. Let us emulate the character of my uncle.

My uncle loved his children very much. He loved education because he knew it was the only weapon to destroy poverty. He educated his children. I can see five lawyers in his family and an engineer, with a PhD and lecturing in Canada. That is why we want to remember and thank him for all that effort.

Madam Speaker, he loved people. He loved promoting peace. He was a peace builder and promoter. These are all virtues that we need to emulate.

As I end, my uncle loved the environment. He planted close to 300,000 trees, not only in Lango but everywhere. Let us plant trees in his memory. He also encouraged me. Right now, I have over 200,000 trees. Before I die, I pray to God to help me reach a million trees. That will be my contribution to this environment and my country. Thank you.

4.03

MR MAXWELL AKORA (UPC, Maruzi County, Apac): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to pay tribute to our departed son, brother and elder, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri. As a judicial officer, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri was calm, quiet –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ocen, you do not finish and leave others here. Wait for the question. Come back.

MR AKORA: Justice Aweri was quiet, calm and unassuming. He dispensed his judicial duties with dedication. As they say, justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done. In all the tributes that have been paid here, it is evident that none of his decisions was doubted. Many times, judicial officers make illogical decisions to the extent that political actors might take steps, as was recently done by the Prime Minister, to address an unfortunate judicial decision.

I pay tribute to the fairness, humility, dedication and the call of service that Justice Rubby Opio Aweri exuded as a judicial officer.

As a son of Lango, he was a respected member of our community. He served us in many capacities; in education, religious and traditional matters. He was also an environmentalist.

He was my neighbour and friend in Lira. I had the opportunity to meet him on several occasions. One of the things I want to reiterate here was his humility. My houseboy used to spend a lot of his time at Justice Opio Aweri's residence in Lira. First of all, his home in Lira is not fenced. He would walk around and escort my house help from his house to my residence

- this is about 300 meters - unaccompanied by any security official.

Justice Opio Aweri served his country well. I call upon the Government to strengthen the independence of the Judiciary to review the tenure of judicial officers. As a judicial officer, at the age of 69, Justice Aweri died before his prime. I know that judicial officers at that level retire at the age of 70.

In many jurisdictions, there is no age limit; both in the Judiciary and in the Executive. Just as we removed the age limit in the Executive, let us remove the age limit in the Judiciary, so that we can build expertise; we can build on the good virtues that experience and maturity bring to the service of our nation. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ebong. Honourable members, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from Kalaki District Local Government represented by Hon. Aloba Acom Joan and Hon. Jennifer Ayoo. They include: Ms Grace Ariokot and Ms Daniella Alyek. Please stand up. You are most welcome. Thank you for coming. *(Applause)*

4.07

MR JOHN TEIRA (NRM, Bugabula County North, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for granting me an opportunity to pay tribute to a very noble gentleman in the name of Justice Rubby Opio Aweri.

In my career as a private legal practitioner, during my first appearance before a panel of judges in the Court of Appeal, Justice Rubby Opio was presiding. I must attest that the first time is always an amazing experience. I thank the man lying in state over there for the good mentorship that he accorded me through my very first time of appearance before a panel. I stood out strong and proud for having joined the bar.

In his tour of duty, as the Inspector of Courts, on several occasions, Justice Rubby Opio Aweri decried the state of the court premises in this country, especially the lower courts. It is still a very challenging issue in this country.

While we pay tribute to the gentleman lying before us, it is prudent that we do not lower the bar that he had wished to set in terms of establishing dignifying court premises, especially for our lower judicial officers. It should be a duty that we must maintain, as those who are still here; in accomplishment of the good job he started.

Madam Speaker, I second the motion in paying tribute to a very amiable gentleman, a man of decorum, a man of professional repute, a man of—*(Member timed out.)*

4.10

MS DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion for a resolution of Parliament to pay tribute to our gallant son, Justice Rubby Aweri Opio.

On behalf of the people of Alebtong and on my own behalf, we condole with the family, the Judiciary, the entire legal fraternity, and the community of Lango and the greater North. This is our second gallant son that - within this year, a difficult year 2022 - we are paying tribute to, who will be lying in state in this Parliament.

Allow me commend His Excellency, the President and the Government of Uganda, for according our son a state funeral. This is a testament in honour of the service that he has provided to this nation. For that, we say, “Thank you.”

The man lying before us has been a great icon in this country, in many ways. He was able to dispense justice, without fear or favour, as has already been testified by many Members and I would not want to reiterate anything in that regard.

This is the man that we are talking about.

This man, in many ways, encouraged and inspired many of us and the young people of this country by walking the talk; this man has been able to uphold judicial ethics and integrity

in this country; this man has been able to display foundational competencies and virtues of commitment—*(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, whatever we are doing here is not a favour to the Judiciary. It is pursuant to Section 23 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 and Schedule Three. You must thank yourselves, as Parliament, for implementing the law to the letter. You must thank yourselves, as Parliament of Uganda. *(Applause)*

4.12

MS AGNES ATIM (NRM, Woman Representative, Amolatar): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I bring my condolences from the people of Amolatar and the Lango Subregion, on the bereavement of our own. We thank everyone for standing with the family and the people of Lango.

Justice Aweri Opio has demonstrated to us that we can be anything from humble beginnings, as long as the environment that we work in is conducive for our career growth. I thank, in a special way, the judicial system that nurtured the Judge, recognised his profession and allowed him to practise his profession in a practical environment.

The career of Justice Aweri shows us two things; practice v. professionalism. We have very many Ugandans, who are highly professional, but we rarely practise and we are rarely given an opportunity to showcase our potential in this country. We have just heard today that he was an environmental lawyer and he practised it through planting trees. He was also given an opportunity to practise whatever he studied.

In the Prime Minister’s submission, she made mention that the Justice did not have issues of backlog of cases, which is always very rampant in this country. This means increased access to justice and delivering justice as well to our vulnerable community. I was privileged to—*(Member timed out.)*

4.14

MS RITA ATUKWASA (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbarara): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to pay tribute and support the motion, as moved by the Prime Minister. In these words, I say, as quoted by Cornel West, “Never forget that justice is what love looks like in the public.” Mahatma Gandhi said, “The truth never damages a cause that is just.” Love is a powerful moral force on the side of justice.

I have read through some of the cases that the Justice handled that involve gender-based violence; some of which actually culminated into loss of life of one of the spouses. They were meticulously dealt with. When you read verbatim some of his judgments, you really feel the humility that everyone was talking about here.

Also, particularly in this time, when we have just concluded the 16 Days of Activism, the International Human Rights Day and adding that he is one person that did not have a lot of backlog on his desk, I do pay tribute in that manner. That means many of the survivors of gender-based violence received justice from his desk. If you are raped and you have got to walk seven years seeking for justice, even when it is delivered too late, it does not mean anything. Therefore, farewell the gallant son, Justice Rubby. May you rest well.

4.16

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. On behalf of Ibanda North and Ankole Subregion, I want to take this opportunity to support the motion for a resolution of Parliament to pay tribute to the late honourable Justice Rubby Aweri Opio, Justice of the Supreme Court.

Madam Speaker, many have talked about the honourable Justice. We have seen the honourable Justice, who went through all ranks from Magistrate Grade One up to the level of an honourable Justice of the Supreme Court; we cannot just take it for granted. Aware that

he was serving in an environment with a lot of hiccups, we shall greatly miss him.

We send our condolences and sympathies to his family, the Judiciary, the legal fraternity, and the entire nation. Therefore, it is worth paying tribute to the honourable Justice, because of his humility, gentility, and dedicated service. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

4.18

MR GEOFFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East Arua City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Prime Minister for bringing this motion.

I got to know Justice Rubby Aweri Opio through his family that has been serving this nation and the country dedicatedly. On Wednesday before he passed on, I went to see him at Mulago because I was interacting with his son, His Worship George Ebong, who serves in the West Nile.

I want to agree with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs that Rubby was a servant of justice, and he served this country so well through action. His record of humility is a record that every leader in this country should be able to emulate, if we want a Uganda that everybody will enjoy.

Secondly, he served by teaching us what to do. When you look at his family that has been introduced here, he paid the sacrifice of educating his children, putting the resources in his family so that the family can be able to do good for this country.

As we speak, thousands of Ugandans are benefiting from his works: from the school fees he paid and the trees he planted. You cannot attribute the trees in Lango region, to anybody else before you attribute them to this Justice. He has taught honourable Members of Parliament here how to plant trees.

His humility in picking calls to talk to –
(*Member timed out.*)

4.20

MR JAMES BABA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. All along, I thought Justice Opio Aweri was from Teso until his death. It was not until -

THE SPEAKER: Actually, Justice Opio Aweri is from Teso, we just lent him to Lango. *(Laughter)*

MR BABA: I do not know. Madam Speaker, it was until his son, a DPC in Koboko called each one of us; he called Dr Ayume, Dr Sharifah and I, saying that my father has died. I said, but you, this man is from Teso, why are you saying he is your father? He said no, that is my father. I also asked him if he was from Lango yet all along, I thought he was from Teso.

He said, “Baba, I am from Lango; from Dokolo.” Now, the only people I knew from Dokolo were these notorious ones; Cecilia Ogwal and Okot Ogong. *(Laughter)* Now, we have heard the testimony of his humble and very outstanding career.

Therefore, I want to pay tribute to the judiciary system for enabling Justice Apio Aweri to rise through the ranks up to the top. In addition, he in turn paid back by acknowledging merit and excellence throughout his life.

Madam Speaker, Hon. Oboth talked about his brand name. I can testify that his son, Samuel Abwang, who is the DPC of Koboko, is living that name; a very humble, hardworking and outreaching man. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much; from the elder and the notorious Cecilia. *(Laughter)*

4.22

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the people of Tororo, and on my own behalf, I convey our condolences to the family and to the people of Dokolo. I know my sister is close to one of the sons who is a

renowned surveyor. When initially there was a rumour of his death, she is actually the one who confirmed that he had not passed on, after calling the son.

Madam Speaker, it is important for people to rise through the ranks to the top in such technical areas as the Judiciary. And you can see he has mentored so many, as a result.

Madam Speaker, because of his love for the environment, he had to undertake a master’s degree in environmental law. In one of his presentations, he did say that man cannot survive without the environment. And because the environment is important to mankind, we have to use the law to protect it. Little wonder that in cases that were before him, where there were clear facts, he always ruled in favour of those cases.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that he did say in the case of Butamira Forest, was that we all have a right to a healthy environment; but the right to health does not only stop at physical health.

He said that courts of law should be slow in awarding costs in matters of public interest. I hope that this can be taken seriously. When we have such cases of public interest before courts, costs should not be awarded so that it can encourage others to go to courts of – *(Member timed out.)*

4.25

MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County Otuke): Thank you, Madam Speaker for giving me this opportunity. On behalf of the people of Otuke and on my own behalf, I would like to express our deep condolences to the family for the passing of our elder.

Madam Speaker, the late Justice was my closest neighbour in Lira City; his home and mine are only a distance of 100 metres, and every holiday, we would have time to exchange views about the country and about the environment.

People have talked a lot about his humility. One morning, I heard somebody knocking at

my door at around 7.00 a.m. When I walked out, who did I see? It was the Justice and he was actually barefooted; he had walked from his house to see me. I asked him why he was barefooted and he said, "You know, it is very therapeutic", he was very simple in all his ways.

Madam Speaker, he was a family man and educated all his children well and mentored them. No wonder five of them are lawyers, just like him, and each one of them has been successful in their own career. Maybe it is a challenge to us as parents – what are we to our children and how are we grooming them?

As an environmentalist, Madam Speaker, he has farms everywhere in Lango and Acholi Subregion. He has one in Otuke where he has been planting trees. I think, in terms of our efforts towards having a better climate, we need to take this initiative of planting trees.

Finally, Madam Speaker, as lawyers here, his judgements have been legendary and I think it has gone down into the annals of our courts and has improved our jurisprudence dramatically. And I know that the future lawyers and judges will quote him in a good way. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. It is about parenting. Ask yourself: are you a good parent? Will you be like Rubby? Do you even know where your kids are? Do you even talk to them? Where have they reached? Parenting, parenting! And actually, do you know how many children you have? (*Laughter*) Yes, Hon. Jonathan Odur -

4.27

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Opiio Aweri, our elder who gained a lot of respect among the people of Lango.

Madam Speaker, when growing up, I used to see Justice Aweri move through our village to his home. Since then, we have been following him. During that time, it was very easy to know

the number of vehicles that are moving, so, we could see and know Justice Aweri was coming. He used to be so kind enough to stop and greet us, the children. He even gave us a lift from about 200 metres and asked us to go back home. That is how good he was then.

The records of this House must then show that Justice Aweri laid a foundation for courts that are going to be established at our sub county level. When he was in the Judiciary, he ensured that all the sub counties in this country were marked. Those courts at some point in future will have magistrates to dispense justice. That means that justice was his passion. He wanted to see it during his time. Unfortunately, God did not grant him that opportunity, but I believe with the support of this Parliament, we will be able to give the Judiciary money so that the cases and our people can then be helped.

Madam Speaker, I was looking at the records: 39 years of service means - except if I do not know any other person working for Government – a serving judicial officer and by extension, the longest serving public servant. And this now tickles my mind to reflect - and I want to invite Hon. Nobert Mao to work on this – people are so fascinated about breaking records in this country.

Sometimes, we have been asking: why has this one overstayed? Maybe Justice Aweri had served 39 and that person also wants to go to 39 and if he reaches 40, I ask Hon. Mao to work on the modality so that we can then retire at that record when it is broken at 40.

I thank you very much and may his soul rest in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Olobo?

4.30

MR JAMES OLOBO (NRM, Kioga North County, Amolatar): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand to bring the condolences of my people of Kioga North in Amolatar District.

Madam Speaker, I can easily describe the person who is lying before us as a person who has been down-to-earth. When you met him in

in his chambers in Kampala and you again met him in Lira or Kitgum, you would not know this one was a judge. He is one of the few humble people we had in northern Uganda. Another is just behind you there. If you hear that Owiny-Dollo is making bricks for building a church - those are the types of humble people we have. *(Applause)*

I want to implore the Members of Parliament to get time and go -

THE SPEAKER: You have forgotten Hon. Mao. *(Laughter)*

MR OLOBO: Let me mention two for today. *(Laughter)* I want to implore Members of Parliament present here, that now that Hon. Owiny-Dollo, the Chief Justice is here, we should help him build that church and finish it. I know we are going to get money soon; let us contribute and help him.

Madam Speaker, the time I knew Justice Opio better was the time the President visited me in 2010 and he went around with my name; that this young boy I got in Amolatar has chased poverty - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Okello Nelson.

4.33

MR NELSON OKELLO (UPC, Maruzi North County, Apac): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak to this item. On behalf of the people of Maruzi North County and on my own behalf, I rise to also support the motion to eulogise our gallant elder who passed on.

Madam Speaker, I knew the late through his children. Two of his sons are my best friends and one of them is my colleague in the profession; an engineer like me.

Madam Speaker, biblically people ask: is death a good or bad thing? To some extent, people say death is bad because it makes you miss a dear one. But to another extent, death is good. Death is good because it makes you change in form.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, that is a maiden speech, please.

MR NELSON OKELLO: Madam Speaker, I was saying some scholars say death is good or bad. Basically, there are three things. The first one, you change form physically. The second one - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. There has never been any good death; death has never been good to anybody however old or - even if you are old like Cecilia, death is death. *(Laughter)* Yes, Hon. Enosi Asiimwe.

4.35

MR ENOSI ASIIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to -

THE SPEAKER: After Enosi, Hon. Opio Sam.

MR ENOSI ASIIMWE: I want to support the motion to pay tribute to the late Justice. Personally I will confirm I never interfaced with him during his life, but a quick look at what is written about him, you pick two attributes: an attribute of commitment to service, and an attribute of patience.

Somebody who was a legal assistant in 1982 until 2015 when he became a Justice of the High Court - that tells you how patient he has been and how committed he has been to the cause of serving his country.

I want to use this opportunity to call upon all servants of people and this Government - when we get opportunities to serve our country, let us not make irrational decisions; let us not get involved in corrupt tendencies as if the world is ending tomorrow or as if we have no duty in the future. We should borrow a leaf from his life and get to know that the world is going nowhere, but service and legacy are more important than what we accumulate during the time of our service.

May the Almighty God rest his soul in eternal peace.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

4.36

MR SAMUEL OPIO ACUTI (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people of Kole north, I rise to pay tribute to the late Justice Opio Aweri. I came to make first contact with Justice Opio Aweri one year ago in a very unusual place; it was under a mango tree that was acting as a restaurant where he had gone to eat local dishes in Lira city. I joined him there.

Most times the usual place to meet a judge is when your case is being mentioned in court or when you are receiving your sentence. I was so humbled by that observation and when I asked him, he told me two things: Using the example of a tree as an environmentalist, he said, "No matter how high a tree grows, its roots will always remain in the ground." Indeed, he lived a life of a tree; his roots remained deep rooted to the values, even as he rose high in the ranks of the Judiciary.

The second thing he told me is, "Let the leader in you stay in your heart, but never let the leader in you get into your head." That is the Justice Opio Aweri that I knew.

Under the mango tree, I ate from his plate of wisdom and drank from his cup of humility. He was a mountain of humility, a sea of wisdom and a fountain of selfless service. What I can say is, he was not just one of a kind, he was not just one of a season, he was one of a generation.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

4.38

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the Rwenzori subregion, on behalf of Kasese, on behalf of the Rwenzuru kingdom and on my own behalf, I want to extend my deepest condolences, first of all to the family, to the Chief Justice, to you, Madam Speaker, to the President and to the entire country, my fellow citizens.

Your Lordship Chief justice, on 27 August 2020, I had the honour to interview you for the job of Chief Justice. The Speaker then said, we want to do things differently. Atkins, you are going to interview the Chief Justice. Hon. Moses Balyeku, you are going to interview the Deputy Chief Justice. That was in the Conference Centre. Your Lordship Chief Justice, I interviewed and scored you and it was upon the report that I submitted that the President gave you the job.

One of the things that I remember sharing with the Chief Justice was the backlog. Your Lordship Chief Justice, the reason why I am bringing that up is because the Hon. Justice Opio made clearing or downscaling –(*Member timed out.*) Madam Speaker, just one minute.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, so many people have debated this matter. The House is in unison in regard to the humility of Justice Rubby Aweri Opio. I have just been corrected today - My *muko*, I wish you could sit.

His selflessness in service, the good parent in him - the Bible says, we shall know them by their deeds. We have seen him by his deeds; he has done all that we are talking about. As we have said, we do work for humanity and when you work for humanity, you must leave societies better than you found them.

We are glad today that the person lying before us here has left society and the Judiciary better than they were. We must thank God for that. The legacy that he has left behind - in our culture, once you leave children behind, you are not dead. All of us can speak well of Justice Aweri Opio from morning to sunset. You have all heard the testimonies, left, right and centre.

The Judiciary must do what is right at all times. We are not saying that you are doing it wrong, but do what you are meant to do. Independence must be promoted and we will support you, as Parliament. We work together and complement each other. We are not competitors, but we are there for each other.

Based on that, Members, I now put the question that the House adopts the motion for a resolution of Parliament to pay tribute to the late Justice Rubby Aweri Opio, a Supreme Court Judge, pursuant to section 23 and Schedule 3 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 with amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion adopted.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, Members. Honourable members, do not come late to the House and you want to speak. Some of us have been sitting here from 2.00 p.m. up to this time. When you walk in and you think you want to talk - that will not work. Let us have respect for everybody.

The East African Community Anthem

The National Anthem

(Exit of the late Justice Rubby Opio Aweri.)

THE SPEAKER: The body will lie in state. Honourable members, kindly, remember to stay around – plus the family.

Honourable members, I thank you for today and for paying tribute to Justice Rubby Opio Aweri.

We have work at committee level. I ask you to make sure that you finish all the work that is before your committees - all the Bills before the committees.

Because of insufficient business in the House, I, therefore, adjourn the House. In case we do not meet before Christmas, I wish you a merry Christmas. I adjourn the House *sine die*.

(The House rose at 4.49 p.m. and adjourned sine die.)