

**NKUMBA UNIVERSITY**  
**CHANCELLOR'S GRADUATION SPEECH**

I greet you and welcome you to this 23rd Graduation Ceremony of Nkumba University.

I am honored to be standing here today as the 5<sup>th</sup> Chancellor of Nkumba University, a position I am taking up for the first time in my life time. The mandate that was bestowed upon me on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 is a great responsibility for me and I am confident that with God's Guidance and your utmost support, I will fulfil these responsibilities. I pledge to perform these duties with great pride and contribute to the development and growth of this University.

As you are all aware, from 2019 up to date, the World including Uganda was badly hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This Pandemic forced all people in the World to change their way of living and operations. This has contributed to change in culture of doing things such as restrictions on mass gathering, scientific weddings, burial ceremonies and so on. Following the advice from H.E The President of Uganda and Ministry of Health, Nkumba University cannot divert from these government restrictions hence this form of scientific graduation.

This ceremony which marks the 23rd graduation ceremony for Nkumba University is very historical in that the majority of students are not attending in person but virtually from anywhere they wish. This is living in the new normal where by ICTs are supporting service delivery such as graduation ceremonies. It is true for the undergraduate students that they feel dismayed for not having come in person to be conferred their degrees and awarded their certificates because of the Covid -19 Pandemic. As Nkumba University, we sympathise with you but we want to safeguard you and I urge you to always follow the guidelines given to us by the Ministry of Health concerning Covid - 19.

I thank all the parents, guardians and benefactors that have supported these students to make sure they complete their studies. Sparing your resources, you had to make sure that your child had an education to this level. This is no mean achievement. Thank you.

I would also like to thank the entire University Council, Management and all Nkumba University staff for grooming these students in what they are now. It is our responsibility to nurture students into products that can better represent us out in the world. Therefore, let's always give our best in whatever we do so that the students are able to find their purpose hence shaping their new world. Without you, these graduands would not probably be here today.

To you graduands, today marks an important day in your lives which will as well mark the beginning of a long journey ahead of you as alumni of Nkumba University. Through following the 4Cs of Nkumba University which are Competence, Confidence, Creativity and Character you managed to get here today.

I congratulate you upon the success you have attained today. It is a critical day in one's career path. I recall my graduation day about 35 years ago with emotional feelings. It is a day I thought that yes, I have made it and its time to enjoy. Nevertheless, days after this special day, I confronted the reality of what to do. I had big dreams but these met so many obstacles. I had no relatives to run to for help. My parents were both illiterate and peasant farmers. My father migrated to Kampala in 1965 when I was only three years old. He did this in search of an opportunity to educate me and my three older sisters. Hardly a year as a night porter, he was caught up in the middle of a political turmoil that engulfed our country in 1966. He is believed to have been shot dead and we have never known his whereabouts to this day. Meanwhile, my mother struggled to work as a cook, a domestic servant for Church Missionaries at Nalugi Parish in present day Mityana district so as to raise money to keep us in school. This proved an uphill task and my sisters had to drop out of school so that the limited resources could be concentrated on the only hope for the family, the young Emmanuel, who now stands here before you. On my part, I spent much of my childhood doing odd jobs like boiling corn to sell by the roadside and raise a few cents to compliment my mother's income. Out of school time, I would spend most of the evenings herding goats.

All said, I struggled until I completed my formal studies at Makerere University. Unfortunately, my mother and my sisters are all passed away now but I am sure they must be proud of the fruits from the seeds they sowed under such difficult circumstances. I will forever be grateful for their sacrifice.

After a brief period of employment, I joined five colleagues to set up Quality Chemicals Ltd. I was privileged to start as the team leader. Because of limited resources, we started this company in Katwe which is considered as one of Uganda's biggest slums. This did not matter to us. We had a strong desire, determination, dedication and discipline to grow it into a world class company. This idea propelled us to dream about mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS and Malaria to our population and this led us to setting up Quality Chemical Industries Ltd. Today this company is the leader in Africa when it comes to manufacture of HIV/AIDS and malaria medicines. We have helped to increase the number of patients accessing ARVs from 100,000 to over 1 million and to reduce the number of people dying of malaria from over 400 to less than 100 per day.

Why do I share this story with you? I want you graduands to know that for anything you land your hands on, it is possible to attain success.

We want to see the kind of graduate that can beat the odds and take this country forward. That is the kind of graduate that will ensure a better future for Uganda. Tomorrow, we want to look back and be able to say "we have come from far".

I would like to appeal to the graduands to use the 4Cs of Nkumba (Competence, Confidence, Creativity and Character) to become change agents of this era. Nkumba University has equipped you with the knowledge and skills that are required beyond having a job in a company but those that will make you create the jobs. The world you inherit has great challenges that need to be addressed but you have the greatest opportunity in this era to be the architects and builders of a new world. I am very confident that you will be able to maneuverer the world with the acquired knowledge.

So as you leave the gates of this great University, always remember the following: -

1. Dont wait until conditions are perfect
2. Be a doer
3. Remember that ideas alone don't bring success
4. Use action to cure fear
5. Start your creative engine mechanically
6. Live in the present
7. Get down to work immediately the opportunity sets in.

I wish you the best for your lives and remind you that from now onwards you will be referred to as Nkumba University Alumni. You should also feel proud to be associated with Nkumba University. This is your mother institution. So, work hard and come back and support this University.

**Thank you for listening to me and may God bless you all.**

**I OWE YOU**

**Emmanuel Katongole  
CHANCELLOR**