

# PROFESSOR WALTER JOSEPH KAMBA

## Citation for Conferral of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*)

Mr Chancellor, I present Professor Walter Joseph Kamba for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Walter Kamba has devoted his life to the development of education in Africa. Indeed, he has played a pre-eminent role in the establishment of a system of university education throughout the emerging nations of Africa in the post-colonial period. His outstanding dedication to this cause was recognised earlier this year by the National University of Lesotho when it awarded him the Fifteenth Anniversary Distinguished Service Award “in appreciation and in recognition of” Professor Kamba’s “leadership role and for the outstanding contributions made to education in Africa.”

Walter Kamba was born in Southern Rhodesia in 1931 while that country was still under colonial rule. Little did anyone realise at that time that this child was destined as an adult to play such an important role in the emergence of the independent nation of Zimbabwe.

Walter Kamba attended the University of Cape Town where he obtained both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Law degree. Upon graduation, he was a legal practitioner to the High Court of Southern Rhodesia. During this period, he spent time in the United States at Yale Law School where he obtained his Master of Law degree.

Walter Kamba’s keen interest in international legal studies subsequently took him to the United Kingdom where, in 1967, he was appointed as a Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies at the University of London. From London, he moved north to Scotland, to the University of Dundee, first as a Lecturer in Comparative Law and Jurisprudence and ultimately as Dean of the Faculty of Law and University Orator. His two consuming interests in law and education were now truly united. The University of Dundee was to recognise his outstanding contributions by awarding him the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) in 1982.

While in the United Kingdom, Walter Kamba was closely involved as a legal adviser in the preparations for Zimbabwe’s independence. He participated in the Lancaster House Conference which ultimately led to the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. Walter Kamba is justifiably proud of the important role which he played in the founding of the nation of Zimbabwe. A privilege that few of us will ever have the honour to experience.

Walter Kamba returned to his homeland in 1980 as Professor of Law at the University of Zimbabwe where he served as Vice-Chancellor for eleven years. As the first Vice-Chancellor of a post-colonial university, he had to face some turbulent times with a great deal of student unrest. However, Professor Kamba handled these problems with the grace and good will that are so characteristic of him.

His reputation as an outstanding conciliator and great negotiator, with an innate ability to see around obstacles, led to his becoming a confidante and personal

adviser to Mr Robert Mugabe, the first Head of State and Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, during this all important developmental stage for the emerging nation.

Professor Kamba's reputation was growing internationally, both as an academic and as a man of clear vision and judgement with great insights into the learning process. One of the results of this was that in 1992 he was appointed Inaugural Distinguished R.G. and E.M. Knight Professor of Law and Education by the University of Manitoba, Canada. He is currently Visiting Research Professor at the Centre for Higher Education and Development at that university.

Walter Kamba has been honoured by his peers both nationally and internationally for his outstanding dedication to the advancement of education not only in Africa but throughout the world. Last month, he completed his term as President of the International Association of Universities, an organisation whose membership is composed of universities throughout the world. Professor Kamba was chosen as President of this prestigious organisation because he is arguably the most international of the world's academic administrators.

Professor Kamba is also a member of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning which has its headquarters in Vancouver, Canada. It was established by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers at a meeting in Harare in 1988 and grew out of the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility. Professor Kamba had been a member of this Standing Committee since 1981. The missions of the Commonwealth of Learning are to facilitate the exchange of distance education materials between the developed and developing nations of the Commonwealth as well as to facilitate the exchange of teachers and scholars. Moreover, in 1992 Walter Kamba was granted the Symons Award for outstanding service to the Association of Commonwealth Universities and to Universities of the Commonwealth. In the same year, he was appointed Inaugural UNESCO Professor by the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands.

Perhaps one of the greatest tributes to Walter Kamba as a distinguished lawyer with an international reputation and as a man of great integrity and impartiality was his appointment to a three-man committee to oversee the elections in South Africa - the most significant process of democratisation in the world today. He was also Chairman of the Electoral Supervisory Commission in Zimbabwe from 1984 to 1994.

At the end of April this year, Professor Kamba attended the graduation ceremonies at the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) in recognition of his outstanding contributions.

Walter Kamba currently resides in Namibia where he is the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Namibia, which includes the Human Rights and Documentation Centre and the Justice Training Centre. Again, Professor Kamba's dedication to jurisprudence and education is evident. His warm and generous nature has led to friendships throughout the globe. He is always genuinely excited at the prospect of renewing these friendships with his many colleagues from other countries.

Mr Chancellor, I commend to you Walter Joseph Kamba, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law of the University of Cape Town, Master of Laws of Yale University, Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) of the University of Dundee, Doctor of Humane Letters (*honoris causa*) of the University of Rhode Island, Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) of the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, Honorary Professor of the

*Universidad Externado de Colombia, Officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques,*  
Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, the founder of a nation,  
international scholar, and distinguished man of letters for admission to the degree of  
Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

**Dated this Tenth Day of May One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Five**