



MY FEMINIST AWAKENING!



- So this will be a story of how growing up with influence from my grandfather has contributed the African woman that I am now.
- My favorite person ever!!!!his name is John Kinyungu Muthiora
- He was my grandfather and the person to blame for my “princess attitude” as I have been told for years which I came to realise was just me being opinionated!



# A little more about him

- He was born in 1940 in a village called Kamoni. He grew up with 12 of his siblings. There were 8 boys. He was the 5<sup>th</sup> born of his parents; Numia and Muthiora.

- Now when it came to school, that man was motivated!!! He joined formal school in 1948 and in 1952 being 1 of 2 out of 40 students attempted the common entrance exams, he passed and proceeded with school. I believe all his children and grand children are educated!





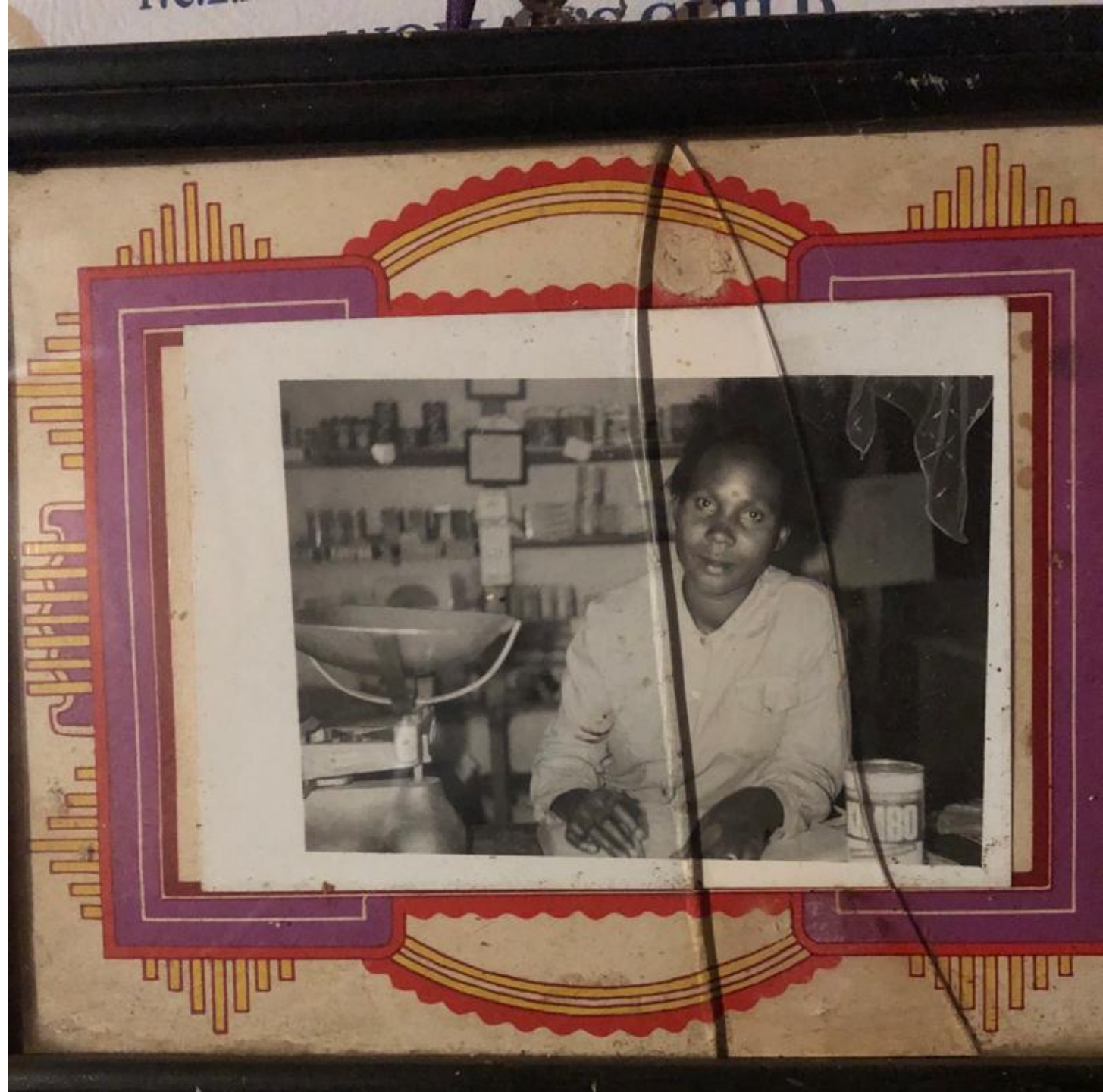
# THE JOPATSY EMPIRE

- This begun as a combination of the names (John and Patricia) which they named their first rental apartment building.
- He was a businessman! One thing my grandfather did was ensure his family was taken care of
- He was a station master at the Limuru Railway Station and this made enough money to open a shop for my grandmother. With my grandmother heading the shop, the business grew and he retired from being station master and opened a sawmill that thrived and helped grow real estate and educate all his children.



# MY GRANDMOTHER MANAGING HER SHOP

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# MARRIAGE, FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY

- The sweetest thing my grand father would always do was bring my grandmother flowers and on their anniversary they would ( twist) together and little me was amazed at the romance between them something you do not see a lot in African homes.
- I remember being in primary school and every Wednesdays would be “ugali, skuma and nyama” days in our house. That was and continues to be such a common local food in Kenya and I remember both my grandparents would be in the kitchen cooking and listening to the radio....
- My grandfather was the designated ugali maker in the family and for me growing up, the idea of a man in the kitchen was a common occurrence.
- He would pick me up from school and make my favorite snack at the time which was French toast ( toast mayai)t and I would happily follow him around as he manged his business.





# FAMOUS UGALI SKUMA AND NYAMA

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- They both had 9 children and the first 3 were girls, in most societies post colonialism educating the girl-child was seen as not important.
- Post-colonial patriarchal systems continued to grant men access to resources, power, and authority, often at the expense of women. Men were more likely to hold positions of political and economic authority and had greater access to education, formal employment, and other opportunities for advancement. Women, on the other hand, were often relegated to traditional gender roles and faced significant barriers to equal participation in social, economic, and political life.
- In many cases, post-colonial patriarchal systems also reinforced gender-based violence and discrimination against women.
- He made sure they went and stayed in school especially during a time where boys were educated more and girls would be married off early. He wanted to ensure that all his children had equal opportunities in life and that started with education



# 3 KINYUNGU DAUGHTERS

- Divorce can be seen as taboo in some African societies due to cultural and religious beliefs that prioritize the importance of marriage and the family unit. In many African societies, marriage is seen as a sacred bond and a lifelong commitment, and divorce is often stigmatized as a failure of the couple to maintain their commitment to one another and to their family.
- My grandfather was a strong advocate for leaving abusive situations (better coming back whole rather than in a body bag)
- Continuously encouraged my moms and I's departure from an abusive situation that possibly saved our lives.
- He also used his influence to break the harmful tradition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) which was very prevalent among the Kikuyu.





# THE CHURCH

- Christianity began to spread in Kenya during the colonial period, with missionaries from various European countries establishing churches and missionary schools across the country. Christianity was seen as an important tool for the colonial project, with missionaries promoting European values and customs and using the Christian religion as a means of legitimizing colonial authority.
- After independence, Christianity continued to grow in Kenya, with various Christian denominations establishing a significant presence in the country. Christianity has become a dominant religion in Kenya, with approximately 80% of the population identifying as Christian.
- He was an avid member of the church and was a church elder that contributed to the growth of Karambaine church.
- He used the church as an outreach program for people in the neighborhood and this included donating food and clothes and assisting in enrolling the children in less fortunate homes to school. this was a great lesson on community building that I learnt from him. I would often participate in projects involving human rights and advocacy and this might have been the catalyst to me being in this class.

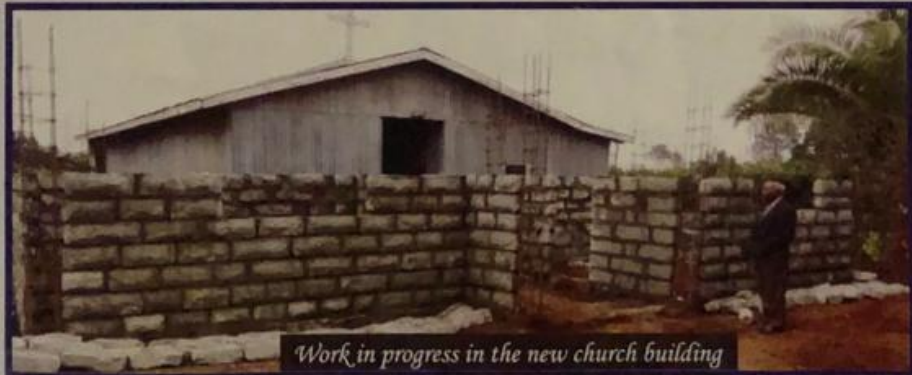




*Our early church building*



*The start of the new church building*



*Work in progress in the new church building*



*The current church building*



- As a church elder among other male church elders, there was evident misogyny in the church where there were less women elders in the church.
- There was an issue where there was a lot of focus on Reverend Lydia a young pastor that had just joined the church's physical appearance. My grandfather was one of the elders that advocated for her and insisted that she had any right just as any man in the parish to lead





# BELIEFS


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- The Kikuyu, like many other African societies, experienced significant cultural changes and disruptions after colonialism. During the colonial period, European colonizers sought to impose their values, customs, and institutions on the Kikuyu and other African societies, often at the expense of traditional African culture.
- The legacy of colonialism has had a lasting impact on Kikuyu culture, with many traditional customs and practices having been lost or significantly altered.
- Culturally, my grandfather being the oldest, was the family elder and organized family reunions or meetings.
- He tried as much as he could to hold on to our traditions and customs and this kept the family together.





# AUTONOMY

- I had a say as a child!
- Autonomy refers to the ability to make independent decisions and take actions based on one's own values and beliefs. In the context of young girls, autonomy is particularly important as it allows them to develop a sense of self-determination and agency, and to learn to make choices that are aligned with their own needs and desires.
- Encouraging autonomy in young girls can help to  build their self-esteem and confidence, as well as their ability to handle challenges and make decisions that are in their best interest. Autonomy also helps to develop critical thinking skills, as young girls learn to weigh different options and consider the consequences of their actions.
- Furthermore, promoting autonomy in young girls can help to counteract the effects of gender stereotypes and social expectations that often limit girls' opportunities and reinforce traditional gender roles. By encouraging girls to develop their own interests and pursue their own goals, regardless of societal expectations, we can help to create a more equitable and just society.

- I was a tomboy growing up and people often referred to me as “Kahii ka guka”( grandpa’s boy)
- I got to be a child with a wild childhood through his beliefs of not imposing gender norms on children especially in their developmental years as the world changes.
- I grew up with 3 of my cousins who were all boys and we all shared chores and were treated very equally.
- As a result, this created a comfortable space for me to comfortably and peacefully denounce the church despite my grandfather being a church elder. He respected my choices!





# MY 3 COUSINS AND I

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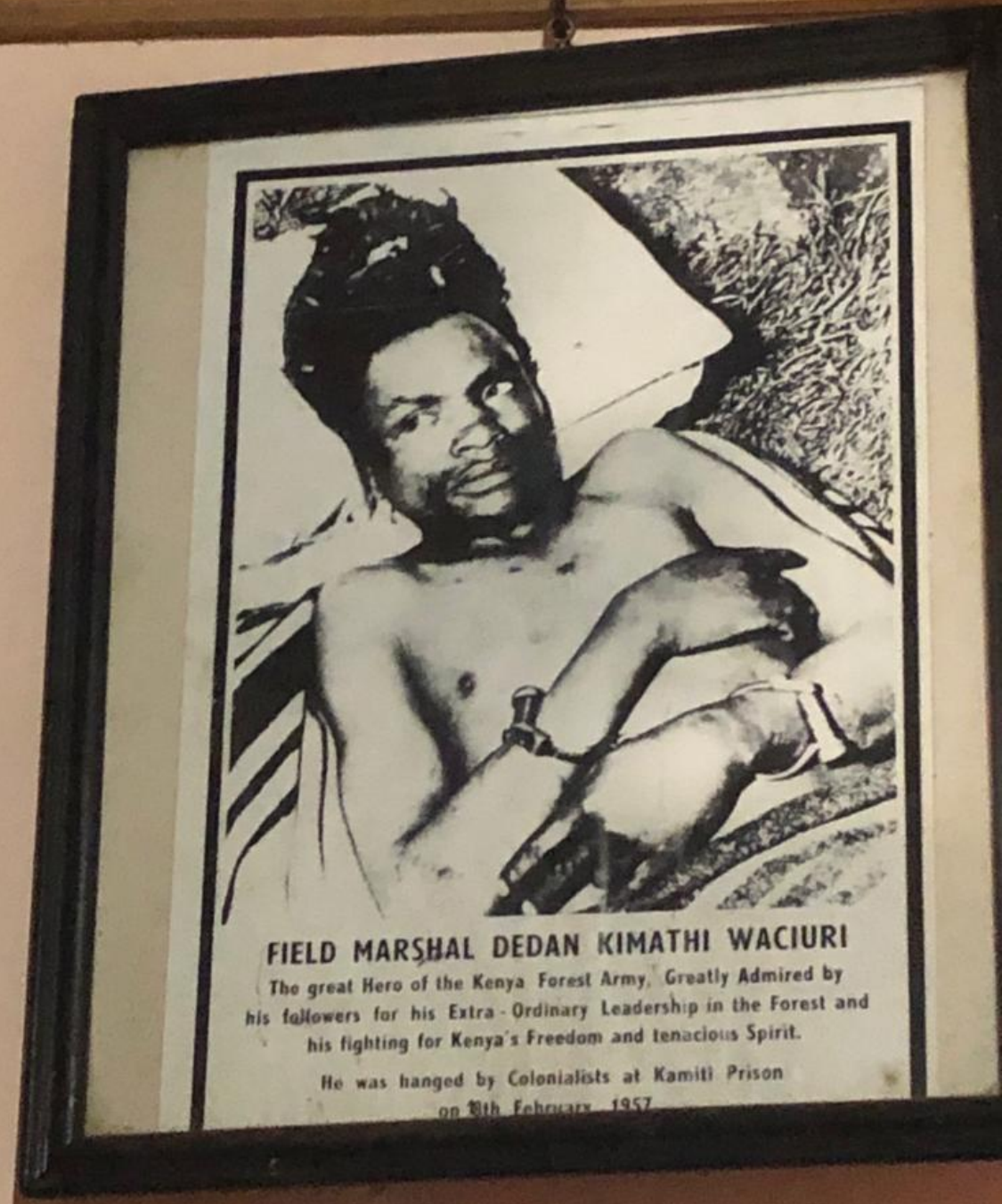
## DEGREE NI HARAMBEE

- The confidence he nurtured in me continued to inspire me to always reach for my goals go for whatever I want!
- Everybody except him was surprised when I showed up with an admission letter to Riara Law school that I had secretly applied to.




# HISTORY

- My grandfather loved history, he had books and DVDs of major historical events but really focused on Kenyan colonial history.
- We would watch African journals together which was an African history channel and I believe this is where my curiosity for learning beyond what we were taught in school regarding colonialism.



# I KNOW WHO I RAISED!

- Mistakes were made!
- “ I know the girl I raised and she broke the rules but you have no right to talk to her like that!”
- In that moment I knew that I still  and will always have him on my side and that moment changed the trajectory of my view in life and the importance of a support system and this is something I continue to believe especially because in that moment I was being silenced and he stopped it and I plan to contribute to stop the silencing of women.



# **AN EXAMPLE OF A TRADITIONAL KIKUYU WOMAN**



**AN IMAGE OF  
MY BEAUTIFUL  
GREAT  
GRANDMATHER  
NUMIA IN HER  
TRADITIONAL  
ACCESSORIES  
(HANG'I)**

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