

In Brief

Siaya. KMTC to build new campus in Ugunja

■ The Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) will build a new campus in Ugunja. Board chairman Philip Kaloki said construction would begin next month and the college is expected to be ready in 2020. "Phase one of the project will cost Sh100 million. The money will be used to build lecture halls, a library and laboratory, and purchase learning materials and furniture," Mr Kaloki said when board members toured the site yesterday. Area MP Opiyo Wanda said his office would allocate the project Sh10 million. "We will also ensure sufficient land is available for the campus," said the MP. **[Olivia Odhiambo]**

Kisumu. Ombudsman set up offices in counties

■ The Commission on Administrative Justice (The Ombudsman) is planning to open offices in all counties. Commission chairperson Florence Kajuku (above), who spoke at a forum in Kisumu Town, said this will facilitate justice in the regions. "We want homegrown solutions to some of the cases touching on the county governments. We believe some of these issues can be sorted out by county governments," Kajuku said. She added: "We shall, however, be available to handle cases the people feel cannot be handled by counties, especially those touching on senior officials." Only Kakamega and Mombasa the regional offices. **[Kevin Omolo and Washington Onyango]**

Kakamega. Woman in court over Sh100,000

■ A woman has been charged with obtaining Sh100,000 from a trader by pretending she could help his son join the Kenya Defence Forces. Japheth Barasa said he gave Sweeney Nabalayo Wangia Sh60,000 in cash and a cow worth Sh40,000 in June last year. "The accused told me not to worry about the job as she had connections in the military. She said we didn't even need an agreement," Barasa told the court yesterday. Problems started when the accused started dodging Barasa, telling him recruitment had been pushed to October, then January this year before the complainant heard she had been arrested for swindling other people. The matter resumes on January 16, 2019. **[Jack Murima]**

Siaya. One notable achievement was the construction of a major road linking the Bondo-Kisumu road to Yimbo

Okello Anam: Ex-colonial chief who was way ahead of his time

Fascinating story of former administrator and his family unfolded on Monday after the demise of his son, William Odhiambo.

By Isaiah Gwengi
igwengi@standardmedia.co.ke

As Kenyans marked Mashujaa Day last Saturday, a family with a rich history of raising diplomats and international peace makers went unnoticed.

Though little known to many Kenyans, former Senior Chief Jairo Okello Anam will live in the annals of history for raising world-renowned envoys Washington Jalang'o Okumu and William Odhiambo.

Prof Jalang'o, who died in 2016, hit international headlines when he brokered a peace deal between former South African President Nelson Mandela and Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1994. This was after several world leaders failed to end prolonged hostility between the two.

Jalang'o was a nephew of career diplomat William Odhiambo, who died last week after working for many years at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Chief Anam raised a powerful family that spread from Sakwa to Yimbo in Bondo.

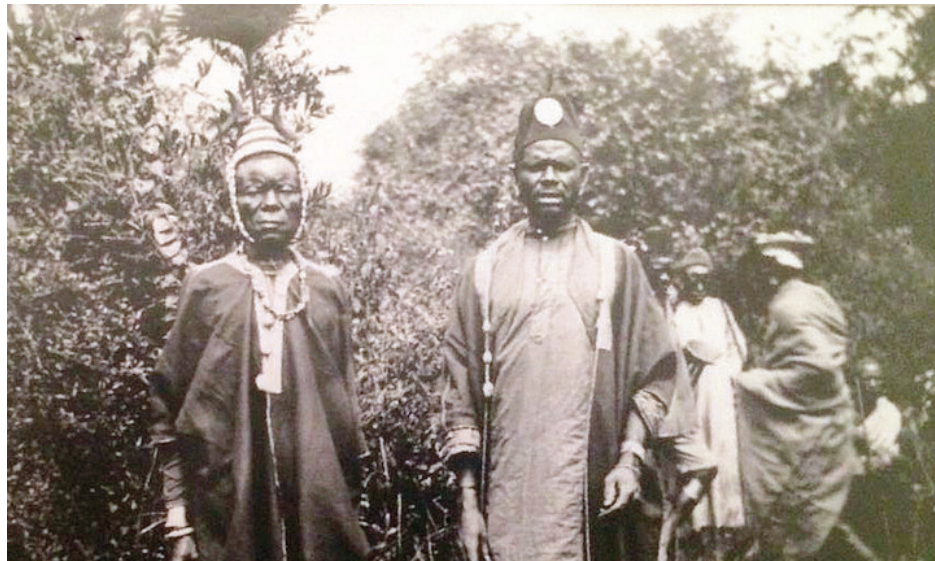
Records show that between 1913 and 1927, he was a chief of Yimbo, present-day East and West Yimbo wards. He succeeded his father, Chief Anam Ulwa, who ruled from 1902 to 1913.

Under Chief Okello's leadership, the location went through transformation, including infrastructure development.

Of notable achievement was the construction of a major road linking the Bondo-Kisumu road to Yimbo location, with the first bus service reaching Yimbo as early as 1924.

Great ruler

From his essay, "A Pillar of Conservative Change: The Life and Times of Chief Jairo Okello Anam of Yimbo in Western Kenya, 1880-1967", published in *Biographical Essays on Imperialism and Collaboration in Colonial Kenya* by Dr BE Kipkorir, Robert William Ochieng acknowledges that as controversial as Chief Jairo Okello's reign might have been, measured by the standards of his contemporaries, he was a great ruler whose influence was felt throughout the location.



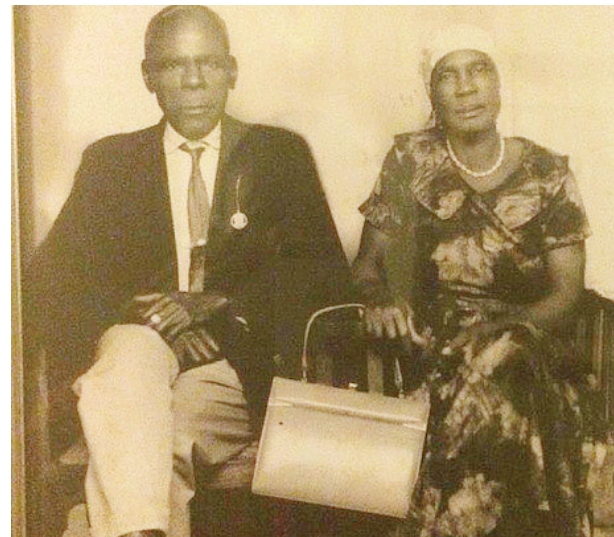
Chief Anam Ulwa and his headman at Kadimo on June 3, 1913. [Courtesy]

According to the essay, the fruits of Chief Okello's efforts together with the inculcation of strong virtues has seen his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren record spectacular success in various fields in the public and private sectors.

Chief Okello died on November 28, 1967, due to an illness that the family later suspected could have been prostate cancer.

There was a lull but after a few years, Eliakim Nyamwandha became a chief of the area from 1982 until his demise in 1993, after which the family seemed to have lost interest in the post.

Despite being an international hero, Prof Jalang'o died a lonely man. He paved the way



Chief Jairo Okello and his wife Mama Kesia Majengo. [Courtesy]

for South Africa's independence elections that brought the African National Congress to power.

Before he came to the scene, all efforts by world leaders to reconcile the two South African foes had failed and civil war was looming.

Jalang'o saved the day, earning himself a special place in the global diplomacy circles.

"This was an act of God. I told Buthelezi to think of the bigger picture and how history would treat him harshly if South Africa imploded into a slaughterhouse because of his intransigence," Okumu told *The Standard* in an interview in August 1994.

Mark in history

After making that mark in history, the Harvard-educated economist slowly faded into oblivion.

He chose a quiet life at his rural home in Nyang'oma village, popularly known as *dala kwe* (home of peace) until his

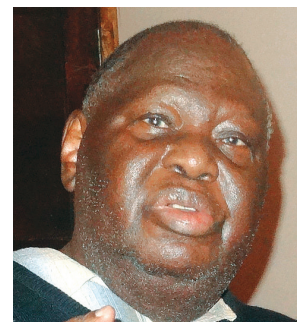
death in 2016.

Jalang'o's mother, Mariam Odera, was Okello's firstborn child and confidant. She was one of her father's main advisers. According to sources, no major family decisions were made without Mariam's input.

Okello's greatest legacy is that eventually, as a model chief, he and his wives, in an era of high child mortality, brought up a large family of 32, who now rank among successful lawyers, engineers, politicians, journalists, educationists, and diplomats.

Considering that even today, 51 years later, as the struggle for quality education continues, Chief Okello was a man way ahead of his time. This would explain his life of hard work that left a family with remarkable material and intellectual resources at its disposal.

The fascinating story of Chief Okello and his family, easily one of the most illustrious but largely unknown, was



Prof Okumu at his Dala Kwe home on July 2014.



Former envoy William Odhiambo Okello died on Monday at the age of 86. [Courtesy]

rekindled on Monday with the demise of his son, William Odhiambo.

While most of the Okellos have led quiet lives away from the limelight, the death of Odhiambo, 86, reveals remarkable individuals scaling the heights in their respective careers.

Ambassador Odhiambo, the son of a colonial chief, took over from his father, embraced the unknown and went on to become an influential diplomat.

Odhiambo worked for many years at the Organisation of African Unity before it was renamed the African Union (AU).

Least known

Opposition leader Raila Odinga eulogised the envoy as one of Kenya's most prominent, yet least known sons.

Odhiambo was Okello's ninth born child and took over as the family patriarch after his father's death.

Other family members included George Ousa Okello, a pioneer African teacher at Tambach School. It is understood that he taught with former President Moi.

Mika Odhiambo Okello was in the first generation of African Water engineers while another brother, Dick Anam Mahinga Okello, was one of the first African medical assistants.

Many other family members have risen in their careers.

Senior chief

- 1913 to 1927, Senior Chief Jairo Okello Anam reigned as chief of Yimbo
- Chief Anam Ulwa (Okello's father) reigned as the region's chief from 1902 to 1913
- Chief Jairo Okello died in 1967
- He had 32 children and many wives
- His nephew, Eliakim Nyamwandha, served as chief from 1982 to 1993
- His grandson, Prof Washington Jalang'o Okumu, brokered a peace deal in South Africa in 1994
- His ninth born son, William Odhiambo Okello, opened a Kanu office in Cairo