



DR. ROBERT BYAMUGISHA, DIED APRIL 23, 2014

27 years of saving Mbale mothers

Intensive Care Unit at Mulago Hospital as he was declared dead on April 23, three days after he celebrated his 55th birthday.

Byamugisha, who was well known for his quick reaction to emergencies, leaving the comfort of his bed as early as 4:00am to save a dying mother in the labour ward at Mbale Hospital.

He was coming from Tororo when he hit an obstacle, forcing his car to roll off the road. The car was damaged beyond repair.

"He injured his spinal code. They tried to save him but it was not fruitful," Godfrey Asiimwe, one of his children, says.

Byamugisha was basking in the glory of his PhD, which he got on January 20 from Bergen University in Norway, though he never enjoyed any fruits from it. He had also got his masters from the same institution,

adding to his diploma in paramedics from Nigeria Paramedical School and a diploma in medicine from the Germany School of medicine.

"It is very unfortunate. It is a big blow to the Mbale community. He has been one of the longest serving doctors in Mbale Hospital and he has touched almost all the lives of the community," says John Baptist Waniaye, the district health officer of Mbale.

Byamugisha started as an intern in Mbale from Makerere University in 1996, but ended up making it a home, according to his wife Annette Namugaya, who works in Mbale Hospital in the nursing department.

"Byamugisha knew what life meant and he always did everything to make sure that he saved a life whenever he got an opportunity," Namugaya says.

It was this that made him one of the most approachable doctors according to Dr. Benon Wanume, the director of Mbale Hospital.

"We might get other doctors but

to say the truth, he is irreplaceable. He set his bar too high," Wanume says.

According to Louis Muhindo, the hospital's administrator, Byamugisha was a person of rare quality and it was this that gave him a bond with his patients.

"He was a man of special talent, a down to earth doctor who always listened. He was one of us in the family of Mbale Hospital. He made us connect with each other and his death has left a vacuum. We are lost for words," Muhindo says.

This bond was not only in the hospital but also with patients the son of the late Celestine and Mary Katororo of Karima in Kanungu treated, most of them rising after they stared at death.

"He saved lives, he was my first gynaecologist. We will miss your jokes, while working on us," Christine Abigaba in one of the many facebook messages about the doctor, wrote.

"He saved many lives and was

so dedicated to his work. May God rest his soul in perfect peace," Imy Muduwa added. Cephas Masaba says he was a doctor to his mother and he always treated them as his children.

According to Dr. Tom Charles Otim, despite the fact that he was going for a PhD, Byamugisha was always willing to learn and share advice and he remained dedicated to his work.

"He was very dependable. To him, the expecting mother was his calling. He could cancel any appointment to save her from death," Otim says about the doctor, who has helped deliver over 60% of the babies born in the hospital for the last 25 years, mostly those with complications.

"We were looking forward to using his PhD knowledge to boost the hospital," Otim says.

But this did not come to pass as God had other plans.

Byamugisha was laid to rest at his ancestral home in Karima, Kanungu yesterday.

BY NORMAN KATENDE

When Mbale heard the sad news that Dr. Robert Byamugisha had been involved in an accident over a month ago, injuring his collar bone, the town was in shock. The people hoped that the doctor, who had dedicated 27 years of service would be back to save more women.

That hope was no more after Byamugisha failed to leave the