

REMEMBERING MARGARET WAMBUI KENYATTA 1928 – 5TH APRIL 2017

A TRIBUTE BY YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION – YWCA KENYA



Margaret Wambui Kenyatta first had occasion to interact with the YWCA of Kenya in 1964, when she met with the then retired world YWCA President, Isabel Catto. Early in that year, the first official National Council of Women of Kenya was founded and Margaret Kenyatta was elected President.

A great deal of discussion took place regarding the constitution of this new Council and whether it would be open to individual members or serve as an umbrella organization to include all women's movements in Kenya.

It was during this time that she interacted with the then National General Secretary Vera Harley. She called at the YWCA to seek Vera's opinion on the issue. Prior to the founding of the National Council of Women, the YWCA

was the only multi racial organization for women in Kenya. Margaret was a great activist for equality and women's empowerment and it is because of women like her that the YWCA was able to transition to serve the needs of Kenyan women after independence.

The YWCA is proud to have been a key influence in the life of Margaret in the journey of the great woman she came to be, a symbol of the strength in the midst of patriarchy that limits women fulfilling their full potentials. The first ever woman mayor of Nairobi, how can we forget that, we can only celebrate her for her fearless nature and ability to stand out and be counted.

In the book *Rickshaws to Jets, A History and anecdotes of the Kenya YWCA 1912-1965* by Vera Harley, Margaret Wambui Kenyatta, wrote the foreword. Here she acknowledges the YWCA as being the first organization for women and girls in Kenya and it was only after the passing of over forty years and two world wars that the organization became multiracial. She goes on to say that a sound pattern of committee structure, a foundation for voluntary service, raising funds and building hostels that would see a smooth transition three years after independence was in place for a truly multi racial YWCA grounded in comradeship and cooperation had been firmly established in Kenya.

Fare thee well Margaret, you fought the good fight and the women of Kenya and the YWCA Kenya in particular will never forget you.