

# THE STORY OF CHUDLEIGH HOUSE SCHOOL.

## PETRONELLA CHISANGA, FOUNDER- CHUDLEIGH HOUSE SCHOOL

The vision of starting a School was the brainchild of Mrs Petronella Chisanga.

I was teacher for 5 years and retired in National interest, I had unfinished business in the Education sector and coupled with my having been in the corporate world as Managing Director of Zambia National Holdings Ltd for 13 years, I felt time had come to go back to the Education sector.

The idea was to invest in a business that could sustain itself as well as respond to some need in the community. Hence, the birth of a Private School. I invited four of my friends to invest in the project; these were Mrs Dorothy Kasanda, Mrs. Lucy Musonda, Mrs Lalita Money who are all teachers and Mrs Maud Moonzwe who is a registered nurse; they helped clarify the strategy. Unfortunately, within a year three left the country and one joined another education institution and therefore could not participate in the daily execution of the project. I was not discouraged and pushed on and with encouragement from Mr Ernest Makasa who helped in putting the curriculum together and advised on required books, equipment and teacher recruitment.

A plot was acquired in 1990 and building works began with two Workers, Alick Smoke Daka as a builder and Patrick Chewe as a General worker. The school building was a house like structure of open craft and was constructed to accommodate 80 children between the ages of 3 and 5 years.

The school opened its doors in June 1991 with 5 pupils and 3 teachers and one of them being the Head, Mrs. Margaret Musonda. We immediately embarked on building the Primary School. The little money I had was depleted and the construction of the Primary School required external funding. I approached the Zambia National Building Society (ZNBS) who approved my application but required my husband's signature; since as a woman I was classified as a minor. I was furious and on principle I refused to accept blatant discrimination. I fought battles with the then Prime Minister, Honourable Kebby Musokotwane to change the rules and level the playing field. He obliged and the project obtained its first external funding of a K10 million mortgage from ZNBS in 1992. The funds helped to speed up the construction of the classrooms for the Lower Primary.

The school was officially opened in July 1993 by Mr John Mupanga Mwanakatwe, a renowned Educationalist. The school at this point could accommodate Baby Class, Middle Class, Reception, Grade 1 and 2. The teething problems were many but the most vexing were:-

1. *There being no policy on private schools. Borrowing for Infrastructure was not available.*
2. *Private schools were not inspected to determine the Standards offered by schools.*

3. *Unavailability of learning and teaching materials in the country and therefore materials had to be imported at great cost and long wait.*
4. *Poorly trained teachers with very low morale.*
5. *Establishing trust with parents who believed schools make money at their expense.*

The school population grew rapidly and especially popular with Parasatal parents. It had grown from a small family entity to a Corporate Limited Liability company and fully compliant to Corporate Governance principles and practices.

In subsequent years, with the Privatization and the collapse of Zambia Airways, the school saw the enrolment drop significantly. As a result, the school's cash flow was adversely affected and in turn could no longer service the Mortgage and had to refinance with Zanaco (Zambia National Commercial Bank). Although at this point the school was limping financially; Zanaco was impressed with the School's Corporate Governance compliance, Strategic Plan, commitment of management and staff and decided to stand by the school.

Zanaco has been a good reliable partner even in trying moments; both parties have benefited from the relationship. Chudleigh House School has grown from humble beginnings to where we are now; recognized as a successful Brand. This has been possible because of the financial loans extended to the school by ZNBS and Zanaco, which enabled the school to put up structures in step with demand. After 25 years, there are 37 classrooms plus Administration space. The school now accommodates Early Learning Centre (ELC) pupils in 9 classes, Primary School has 17 classes from Grade 1 to 7 and the Secondary school has 5 classes of Grade 8 to 12. In 25 years the school has grown from 5 pupils in 1992 to 900 in 2018. Teachers have increased from 3 in 1991 to 55 in 2018. CHS has a total staff of 115; Teachers, General Workers, Administration, Security, Drivers and Management.

The continuity in tenure of Heads of the school has assured stability and strength of Standards in the school. We have had 3 Heads in 25 years, Mrs. Margaret Musonda, Mr. Victor Mwape Mulenga and the late Mr. Nobert Bwalya Mulenga. We thank them for their loyalty, perseverance, smart work, leadership and integrity. Chudleigh House School is now a Brand recognized by the general public. It draws strength from the commitment of the staff, Academic, Administration, Security, Catering, Maintenance and auxiliary. Discipline and integrity are strong pillars that guide both pupils and staff. This school was only a dream 25 years ago.

May I thank all those who have been part of the dream or have contributed in one way or another. May I mention Mr. Ernest Makasa, my mentor, Mr. Alick Daka who has built everything you see in brick and mortar, Heads and teachers who have been part of the story, the past pupils who have gone through the school and are now professionals in their own right, past pupils who are now part of the current parent body in the school for believing in the school, the parents who have been our inspectors and

helped us to get this far. The School PTA, who have given tremendous support to the school in various ways. I would like to thank all those dignitaries who have officiated or attended some of our functions; you are our inspiration.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for being there come rain come sunshine, my children who scrubbed floors with me in readiness for start of term. Lastly, but definitely not the least, my husband who supported my initial idea and risked the family silver to allow me to fulfil my dream. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. God Bless you all.

## **JOHN MUPANGA MWANAKATWE**

John Mupanga Mwanakatwe was well known and highly regarded in Zambia, and Zambian Studies. He was the first African to gain a university degree in Northern Rhodesia, and he went on to serve in the first independent government of Kenneth Kaunda, with portfolios including Education, Mines and Finance Minister.

He served as chairman of the Constitutional Review Commission, and as Chancellor of the University of Zambia. He authored two previous landmark publications in Zambia: *The Growth of Education in Zambia since Independence*, (Oxford, 1968) and *End of Kaunda Era* (Multimedia, 1994).

His [biography](#) chronicles his personal experience of politics, development, and the role of legal practitioners in providing effective safeguards for civil liberties in Zambia. It is characterized by his belief in hard work, engagement in public life, and affirmation in human endeavor, which he considered essential for both personal and national development.