

## Changing careers to extend justice: A heavy task ahead?

*"Don't let anyone tell you your time's up. Be passionate about something, keep that fire going, and you will keep going too" Benjamin Ferencz 2020:133).*

This is my life's journey part II, I am so proud to have turned 37 years old this year, I am accustomed to always reflecting on my life's journey. I remember vividly the time I used to rear goats and cows in my small village located in the western part of Uganda. It's like yesterday, I can't believe that time runs that fast, and I can't further believe that I have bypassed half of Uganda's life expectancy.

It was the year 2002 when I joined senior two in a High School, we used to sit on a co-joined bench and desk, and a fellow student brought a newspaper with a front page written in red ink, "A girl who was the best in the whole country is going to do law at Makerere University." It was at that time I told myself that I would be a lawyer, little did I know what it entails to become a lawyer. Anyway, I ended up being a lawyer and the rest is history.

I started as an advocate practitioner but I was not satisfied because my goal was to serve common indigent Ugandans who are less privileged like I was, such kinds of people always crave justice and they need someone to fight for their rights. I don't always take it for granted because I am one of the few people among my childhood peers who have come up to become men of valour. I think it's a calling for me to fight injustice because the injustice I went through as a young orphan thriving through hardships fighting for survival and for my education wasn't an easy site. I remember, telling myself never to subject an injustice to others. It's this so-called calling that took me to work and serve as a military-trained police officer serving seven years in rural communities of the country. I worked in a refugee settlement in Kiryandongo that accommodates refugees from South Sudan, DRC, Kenya, and Rwanda. I was always surprised by the praises and appreciation the refugees would extend to me, I would ask them why they were doing so, and their reply was simple, we have never seen a police officer in this settlement who gives a service without asking money. In other words, I was being told of an invisible corruption that prevailed at the time.

When I was transferred and detached from the community, I was half satisfied and decided to further my studies in the Netherlands where there were more opportunities for me to explore, but this wasn't satisfactory enough as I felt that my people needed me more than the Dutchman. I decided to join Uganda's judiciary as a Magistrate, I am busy serving Ugandans in the rural area of western Uganda. I see people coming to my Court, children and adults, privileged and unprivileged, men and women, all seeking justice. Sometimes, it challenges me when you are approached by a litigant of whichever kind and frankly tells you, I want to give you money so that I win this case, I normally reply with a simple smile, no thank you, use it to buy bread for the children. It would be absurd of me to take such money because I may kill my childhood calling of extending justice to all. We all deserve justice which we should all fight for even though we are not directly affected. Justice for all is my vision that I have for this new job, of course, I know it's a hard task ahead of me especially when you are working in a society that has normalized corruption.



I will always appreciate UECD for the landslide contribution it extended towards my career, if UECD didn't help me, the people I am extending justice to wouldn't have benefited from my good services. I think that's what humanity is all about, you save a life today and a life saved can save another in the future. Let's be humane!!

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