



University of Dar es Salaam

ALUMNUS OF THE MONTH

This is a “light corner” on the UDSM portal intended to feature for one month in turns two among many of the University’s graduates—alumni—since its foundation in 1961. The corner is designed to inform the public and the University itself, without prejudice in terms of historical precedence but guided only by professional information search, on the past graduates of the University, their whereabouts, their current position or engagement, what is remembered of them as past ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ of their time and, finally, on what is reckoned about their contribution to their Alma Mater, their nation, the Africa region and/or the wider world.

John Pombe Joseph MAGUFULI

YEAR OF MATRICULATION: 1985

YEAR OF GRADUATION: 1988; DEGREE: BSC EDUCATION (CHEMISTRY AND MATHEMATICS)

MORE: MSC (CHEMISTRY), 1994; PHD (CHEMISTRY), 2009 (UDSM)



John Pombe Joseph Magufuli was born on October 29, 1959 and raised in Chato, a village in Kagera region [now in Geita region]. He was born into the family of Christian-observant Mzee Joseph Magufuli and his wife Mama Suzana Magufuli. His late father Joseph engaged in mixed farming, and Magufuli grew up in typical village life, taking part in agricultural activities, especially raising his father’s cattle. He was sent to several schools for his primary and secondary education - Chato Primary, 1967-74; Katoke Seminary/secondary, 1975-77; Lake Secondary, 1977-78 and, for senior secondary education, Mkwawa High School, 1979-81.

Magufuli enrolled for teacher training to obtain Diploma in Education Science (Sc) in science subjects (Chemistry, Mathematics and Education) at Mkwawa College of Education from 1981 – 1982. He briefly taught Chemistry and Mathematics at Sengerema Secondary School (1982-83). After completing his military national service (1983-1984), during which time he crisscrossed between the Makutupora (Dodoma), Makuyuni (Arusha), and Mwapwa (Dodoma) National Service Camps, Magufuli earned his Bachelor Degree BSc (Ed) at the University of Dar es Salaam majoring in Chemistry and Mathematics from 1985- 1988, and then worked as an industrial chemist at Nyanza Cooperative Union in Mwanza from 1989 - 1995. In that year, he ran for and succeeded in winning parliamentary elections in his own Chato constituency.

This was the beginning of John Magufuli’s long and successful political journey of 25 years of service to the nation. He was re-elected, unopposed, in 2000, and in 2005 after winning a third term – again unopposed- as an MP for Chato. He served continuously at ministerial level in the Ministry of Works as deputy minister (1995-2000), then as full minister (2000-2005); then in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development (2005-2008); Ministry of Livestock Development and Fisheries (2008-2010); and the Ministry of Works for a second time (2010-2015). These ministries and their incumbent minister during these year periods were publicly reckoned to be some of the most efficient, circumspect and corruption-free zones in public service. Magufuli came to be one of rare UDSM’s alumni on record to have been elected three continuous times and appointed to a string of ministerial posts for a continuous period of 20 years from 1995 to 2015. In between these years, he read, researched and completed the requirements for postgraduate degrees (an MSc at UDSM/Salford (UK) in 1994 and a PhD at UDSM in 2009). His 2009 doctoral thesis was titled “The Potential of Anacardic Acid Self-Assembled Monolayer from Cashew Nut Shell Liquid as Corrosion Protection Coating”, and was the basis to establish that iso-anacardic acid would be one of the promising surface treatments to replace the conventional phosphonic acid treatment.

Since 2015, Dr. Magufuli has been President of the United Republic of Tanzania. Aware of what had been ‘troubling’ his own nation for a long time, and backed up by his own professional background, he decided to confront several challenges, ‘holding by the horns’ at least three of them: the rampant level of *corruption*, the *shrinking employment opportunities* particularly among youths, as well as the still *limited access* to education among Tanzanians. He has been in office for four years, and this is still too brief a period for an intensive evaluation of any government’s performance. However, a cool and reflective assessment by many on the work done so far to is positive. He has earned high praise for working tirelessly to supervise the construction of a road network in major parts of the country, which resulted in a connected, efficient system which even earned him the bill of a ‘Bulldozer’; youth employment opportunities are being pursued in a now reverberating policy towards a middle-level industrial economy by 2025. With respect to educational access, not only has universal and compulsory education been pushed up to secondary level but also more classrooms and desks are a mandatory directive for expanded primary and secondary education. In enforcing these, the argument is that ‘actions must run consistent with policies’ as was read in the minds of leaders before him such as Castro of Cuba: ‘History will absolve me’. As for other challenges he is to grapple with, well, he pleads for time. Rome was not built in one day.

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