

Govt accords ex-minister Bitamazire official burial

BY JACINTA KANNYANGE

KAMPALA. President Museveni has accorded an official burial to the late former minister of Education and Sports Namirembe Bitamazire, recognising her long and distinguished service to the country.

According to a statement released yesterday by the Minister for the Presidency, Ms Milly Babirye Babalanda, the former minister will be laid to rest tomorrow at her ancestral home in Kibuga Parish, Masakwa Village, Butambala District.

“Accordingly, HE Gen Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in line with Article 99 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda as amended, which vests executive authority of Uganda in

the President, has directed that the late Hon Namirembe Bitamazire be accorded an official burial,” Ms Babalanda’s statement read in part.

She added that the government has constituted a hybrid national organising committee, chaired by herself, to coordinate burial arrangements in collaboration with the family.

An official burial means that the government will meet all funeral and burial expenses.

Bitamazire died last Wednesday at the International Hospital in Kampala at about 9pm. Details surrounding her illness were not immediately disclosed.

Distinguished career

Bitamazire was born on July 17, 1941,



Geraldine Namirembe Bitamazire.
PHOTO/COURTESY

EDUCATION LEGACY

Bitamazire is widely regarded as one of the architects of major education reforms in Uganda, including the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE). She played a key role in revising the

primary school curriculum, improving national enrolment levels, enhancing performance in national examinations – including primary leaving examinations (PLE) and Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) – strengthening teacher training and development.

Bitamazire had an illustrious career as an educationist, women’s rights activist, counsellor, diplomat, and politician. Between 1971 and 1973, she served as a director at the East African Harbours Corporation before becoming head teacher of Tororo Girls School, a position she held until 1974.

From 1974 to 1979, she worked as a senior education officer in the Ministry

of Education. In 1979, she was appointed minister of Education and Sports during the Idi Amin administration, a role she served in until 1980.

Between 1980 and 1996, she was deputy chairperson of the Education Service Commission. She later returned to Cabinet as State minister for Education and Sports from 1999 to 2005, before being elevated to full minister of Education and Sports in 2005, a position she held until 2011.

She concurrently served as a Woman Member of Parliament for Mpigi District between 2001 and 2011.

Her service also extended beyond Uganda. She was a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women from 1998 to 2001, a founding member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and a member of the Professor Senteza Kajubi Commission, which reviewed Uganda’s education policy.

In her later years, Bitamazire served as Chancellor of the Uganda Management Institute.