Prof. Naomi Nari James-Rugu : Portrait Of An Excellent Academic

by PEOPLE & POWER

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Prof. Naomi Nari James-Rugu is an academic giant in every sense. She has made monumental contributions to the world of research and learning. As a professor of Zoology of the University of Jos, she has greatly distinguished herself.

Prof. Naomi N. James-Rugu was born on 25 th April, 1961. She attended St.Theresa’s Girls’ Primary School, Jos, Plateau State between 1966 and 1972. She proceeded to St. Louis College, Jos, for her Secondary School education from 1973 to 1977. She later went to the University of Jos for her Preliminary Science Studies in 1977/1978 Session.

After her Pre-degree, she enrolled into the Department of Zoology, University of Jos for her degree programme. During her undergraduate programme, she went for vacation job at various times to Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB), as a trainee administrator. Naomi completed her degree programme and earned a B.Sc Zoology in 1982.

Having graduated from the University of Jos, she was posted to Niger State to serve as a member of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the 1983/84 service year. She proceeded to Government Girl’s Secondary School, Tegina where she did her primary assignment.

Naomi is a very sociable personality. During her National Youth Service, she related very well with people from different backgrounds and cultural affinity. Her house was always a beehive of activities of some sort. This attitude of simplicity and sociability in-spite of her status has endeared a whole lot of people to her.

Naomi enrolled for her Master’s degree in the 1982/83 Session and bagged an M.Sc. in Applied Entomology and Parasitology in 1985 from the University of Jos. Without delay, she proceeded for her Ph.D. Programme in the Department of Zoology, University of Jos.

It is worthy of note that before she enrolled for her Ph.D. Programme, Naomi was a Research Assistant under the eagle-eye of an Academic giant, Prof. Moses O.E. Iwuala of the University of Jos. As a Postgraduate Student (M.Phil/Ph.D.), she was engaged as a Demonstrator of Courses taught by Prof. Moses O.E. Iwuala. It is important to state here that he adroitly mentored her for several years. No wonder she took this deep root in academics.

Because Naomi has this love for teaching, she was involved in part-time teaching, in the Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA) Kaduna, Kaduna State; Miango Community Secondary School, Taagbe, Miango (now Government Secondary School, Miango), and ECWA Staff School, Jos, Plateau State.

In 1990, Naomi bagged a Ph.D. in Applied Entomology (Zoology) from the University of Jos. She was later employed as Lecturer II in the Department of Zoology in 1988. Her appointment to that status was due to her excellent performance while on her Ph.D. Programme and the teaching experience she acquired from the part-time teaching. It is well known that the Postgraduate School Board scored her as excellent, this is the highest score ever recorded by any M.Phil/Ph.D. student of the University of Jos. She rose through the ranks to become a Professor in 2003.

Professor Naomi Nari James-Rugu is a Professor of Zoology, Erudite Professor, Distinguished Scholar, Researcher, Initiator of Journal of Pests and Disease Vector Management, Amazon, Grand Patron of the National Zoological Garden, Jos (NZGJ), Patron of Boys’ Brigade, Patron of Different Student Associations, External Examiner of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes to Various Universities, Internal and External Assessor of Academic Staff for promotions to Associate Professorial/ Readership and Professorial Cadres, former Deputy Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS), former Deputy Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences (FNS) and former Director of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES),University of Jos.

She is an Executive Council Member of Gaskiya Gospel and Prayer Ministry (GGPM), Mobilization Coordinator of Gaskiya Gospel and Prayer Ministry (GGPM), Preacher and Teacher in Gaskiya Gospel and Prayer Ministry (GGPM), Mother of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Gamzaki) in partnership with Jauro Gospel Ministry International, Coordinator of Marriage Restoration Unit (MRU), Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Gamzaki), Member of the Organization of Women in Science in Developing World (OWSDW), Role Model, Member of several Professional Bodies, Philanthropist, Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Mentor to Emulate, everal Awards Winner, Nation Builder, Peace Maker and Evangelist who has given herself to the service of God and humanity. It is worthy of note that she is humble, cheerful, jovial, responsible, honest, vibrant, motherly, workaholic, patient, assertive, efficient, enthusiastic, friendly, meticulous, generous, trust-worthy, amiable, dependable, reliable and approachable. She is also a great encourager.

Professor N.N. James-Rugu is a dynamic leader. She is full of competence and courage. She exercises a high spirit of teamwork. She is a gentle Orator, who is audible, clear, precise and attention catching. She is a teacher par excellence. Because of her high level of hard work, Prof. James-Rugu has won the admiration of past Vice Chancellors of the University of Jos and has represented the institution at different fora in the country.

As the Deputy Dean of School of Postgraduate Studies of the University of Jos in 1999 – 2000, Dr. Naomi chaired some Ph.D. Examination Panels. It is on record that she was also a Member of all Ph.D. Examinations that were held in the University of Jos during her tenure as Deputy Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies. It is worth mentioning that Professor James-Rugu revived the Postgraduate Open Lecture in 1998. She also designed the Strategic Plan of the School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Jos from 1998 to 2003. Prof. James-Rugu was the Departmental SIWES Coordinator (DSC) of the Department of Zoology for over sixteen (16) years. Her performance was quite palpable, hence the commendations she recorded from former Directors of SIWES.

It is important to note that Dr. Naomi N. James-Rugu as a Senior Lecturer, was elected Senate Representative of the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 2003 to 2005. She also served as a Member of Senate Special Admissions Committee between 2003 and 2005.

Apart from these, she was a Member of the Faculty of Natural Sciences Examinations Results Screening Committee. Further to this, Naomi was the Chairman, Faculty of Natural Sciences Admissions Committee from 2003 to 2005. As a Senior Lecturer, she was also elected in 2003 to represent the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Jos, a position she held for two (2) years.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Plateau State in collaboration with EPPIC Foundation (2007) described Prof. Naomi N. James-Rugu as an “eminent scholar, scientist, foremost academician, erudite, sage and amazon who has perhaps the tallest and most intimidating pedigree touching on the likes of legendary Ali Mazrui, Margaret Thatcher or Golda Meir.” The aforementioned bodies, stated that “Prof. James-Rugu is without doubt among the most shining entities in her niche whose life has touched on countless

Youths in the Institutions of Higher learning as well as adults and even children in all walks of life.” According to these bodies, “Naomi carried the seed of greatness from birth and she started at a very early stage to position herself to excellence. They described her as a young, dynamic, very studious and courageous individual. “They further revealed that “within a record of eight short years after her first degree, she blazed through to Masters Degree and Ph.D., a fit uncommon even among the most brilliant male folks.”

She possesses pedagogical skills that are highly visible and touching. These are excellent and brilliant skills that she exhibits while exercising her professional responsibilities. She excites her students and teaches extemporaneously. No wonder, she is referred to as the Mother of Zoology by her students. She is indeed a teacher par excellence. This ability has no doubt given impetus to her students hence the interest to take to teaching/lecturing as a profession.

Prof. James-Rugu is a good administrator. When she was the Director of SIWES, she designed various SIWES Instruments (SIs) which were used for the administration of SIWES. This action facilitated the day to day running of SIWES.

It is in recognition of her contribution to national development in the sphere of Higher Education that Prof. Naomi Nari James – Rugu is deemed worthy to be conferred with the Woman of Merit Gold Award.