

Mourning Prof. Dorothy McCormick: A tribute by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi

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On behalf of all staff and faculty

We, at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi, join the rest of the World to mourn Prof. Dorothy McCormick. The news of her passing on shocked many of us because of how close she was with us when she worked at the Institute. She joined IDS way back in 1988 to teach, carry research and train young career development researchers, an occupation she loved and cherished. From the time she joined us, there is not a single time one would say that Sister Dorothy – as many of us would call her - was not cherishing the need to build the institute into a global development think tank.

All the time she was at IDS, Sister Dorothy was synonymous with the IDS especially because of her great contributions to scholarship. Name it. National debates and policies on industrialization and development. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises and development in Kenya. The informal sector and development. Regional trade and many others. Her name or ideas were clearly imprinted on these policy documents and remain so even today.

Prof. Dorothy McCormick trained many post-graduate students at Masters and PhD level. There is no single year that would pass without Prof. McCormick helping to graduate several students. She had the determination to ensure that students became better all the time. She was determined to build careers and strengthen them to fit the world of the academy as well as the job markets. We are indeed indebted to Prof. McCormick for her great contribution to scholarship and nurturing young career researchers.

Prof. McCormick was a prolific scholar. She had many publications in development studies and was indeed ranked among the top scholars in the field in Africa. To-date, her publications remain inspiring and very relevant to our students and faculty.

Prof. McCormick laid a very strong foundation for development research at IDS. She developed the capacity of the institute to develop many research projects through which we would engage students and train them for their graduate studies.

The foundation she built is so strong that we note that she has not passed on! She is here with us in many ways. The students she has trained. The colleagues she has nurtured. The communities she established. The knowledge she passed to all, among other things, are a mark of her presence in the lives of many people, the IDS, and the University of Nairobi in general. She built and nurtured communities whose strong spirit of giving will continue to firm conditions for reproduction of many more. We have lost our best – our Queen Mother Sister Dorothy. But it is the lord who gives, it is the lord who takes.

Below are testimonies and tributes by many of us who got the opportunity to draft some.

Tributes from IDS colleagues and Alumni – 14th December 2023

1. John Njoka: The late Prof. Dorothy McCormick was a true academic. I will miss her commitment and dedication to development studies and the larger social inclusion causes. She mentored me in research and policy issues, which I greatly appreciate. May her soul rest in eternal peace.
2. Joseph Onjala : Dorothy was a prolific scholar who championed numerous research projects at the IDS. Her efforts enabled me and several colleagues to pursue PhD studies in Denmark.
3. George Michuki: To many of us, Prof. you were an amazing teacher, humble and highly prolific scholar. May perpetual light shine upon you.
4. Anne Kamau: Dorothy, I remember you for your kindness and generosity. You were so organised. You kept your diary, your office was very well organised, I believe your mind too. You had too much faith in me. You threw me in the deep end, asking me to work on 'unimaginable proposals'. In the beginning I was scared but you held my hand and monitored carefully to ensure that I did not drown. Thank you so much. May you Rest in Peace Prof. McCormick.
5. Herbert Wamalwa: Rest easy Prof. Dorothy McCormick. You taught us so much about what it means to be a mentor to your student. You gave it all. Your door was always open, and you demystified the power distance between a supervisor and their student. Your legacy will live on in the countless proteges you mentored, me included. I am privileged and honored to have been taught, supervised [masters and PhD], mentored, and later worked very closely with you at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. I will cherish forever the memories we created together. Including the many research travels we took together across the world, with colleagues from the SAFIC team. For all this and much more, I say thank you very much and may you rest in eternal peace.
6. Radha Upadhyaya: Dear Prof., Thank you for being the most amazing mentor, colleague, and friend. I will always remember your genuine commitment to your students. When we co-supervised students I learnt so much from your experience. Thank you for also being such a hands-on researcher. I will never forget that you were already in your 70s but you learnt NVivo.. even after you retired, I would come to your community, and we would work together. May you rest in peace, close to God after a life full of devotion. You will always be remembered.
7. Rosemary Atieno: Prof. Dorothy McCormick. I could say so many things about you, but I will only say a few. You were a great person to know and interact with. Everyone knows you for your great academic prowess. But you will also be remembered for your leadership skills, wisdom, and humility. Despite all your achievements you displayed great humility. As a leader at IDS, you ensured fairness to all. At a personal level, I still cherish all your support and encouragement, giving me the chance to grow. You were always approachable. I will not forget our meetings at the Holy Family Basilica with my family and your sister. You touched lives Dorothy, go well. May God rest your soul in eternal peace.
8. Paul Kamau: Treasured Memories of Prof. Dorothy McCormick. It is extremely difficult and devastating to me imagine that Prof. McCormick is gone. Your cheers and mentorship remain a huge treasure in our hearts. We thank God for the live you lived

and for the mentorship you gave to many including myself. Your inspiration and support were beyond boundaries. I remember when I first joined the IDS family 23 three years ago, then you were the director in the institute. You made my settling down so smooth that I never felt a stranger. Within no time you integrated me into your research projects and encouraged me to join a PhD programme which I did in 2004. I consulted you a lot on many issues such as teaching, research and how to navigate in the world of development studies. When I finally enrolled for my PhD, you were extremely instrumental in my progress. You were a great academic mentor. You contributed immensely to what I am today. You made me become the FIRST PhD Graduate of IDS-UoN. I am honored to have been one of the many students that went through your hands. You have left a great legacy in the scholarship. Though gone, I will treasure your memories. Forever, you will be missed.

9. Paschaline Basil: Prof. D. McCormick was my teacher, mentor, and my MA project supervisor 2014-2016. An ever present and ready to help Professor. Any time you knocked on her office door, she was always ready to listen to you. In fact, with no prior appointment, she would stop what she was doing and attend to you. Just before she flew back to the USA for her holidays, she made sure that my project work was near completion in readiness for my graduation. Through her unwavering support I was privileged to graduate in 2 years record time! I took part in organising her Valedictory Ceremony in honour of her scholarly work in 2018. I vividly remember the organising committee sourcing her most ideal gifts. One of the many gift items was a Kiondo from Kariokor-signifying the informal sector which she has done intensive work in. May her soul continue resting in eternal peace. We shall miss you Prof!
10. Mary Mwangi: Prof. Dorothy, I may not have had the privilege of meeting you personally, but your impactful work has left an indelible mark, and the intellectual legacy you've created will continue to inspire generations to come. Shine on!
11. Naomi Wanga: Tribute to Prof. McCormick. As a scholar in development, you cannot miss the works of our dear Professor. With all the knowledge she had, she was so humble and very accommodative. Her legacy lives on beyond the university corridors as she touched so many lives. May her soul rest in peace.
12. Raphael Indimuli: Prof McCormick was an excellent teacher of research methods during my Masters degree. I loved to attend and listen to her presentations due to her excellence in communication of concepts and research findings. She made what is perceived as complex to be simple. Her humility allowed her to mentor many of us to research and she will be missed.
13. Grace Muraya: The sun has set on a great life! A great scholar, mentor, and lecturer. Her soft-spoken calm demeanor was admirable to all. She taught me in her last teaching days in 2018 just before she stopped teaching. You could feel her passion for passing on knowledge and making her students be excellent in doing development research, with her excellently unmatched standards despite her frail health. She leaves an enduring legacy that shall live on and remains forever in our hearts. Until we meet again, Rest in Eternal Peace, Prof McCormick.
14. Awuor PONGE: Ladies and Gentlemen! It is a great honour to speak before you to celebrate the life of this Great Scholar, Prof. Dorothy McCormick, as we lay you to your final resting place today. There are many that have passed through her very able hands, and in our WhatsApp Group, very many have sent their eulogies of a person they considered the humblest of all human beings, a teacher, a mentor, a career advisor, you

name it. We are not here to weep about the departure of Prof. Dorothy McCormick, but rather to celebrate Scholarship and Academic Excellence. The name Prof. McCormick has become synonymous with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), such that, whenever and wherever we are attending International Conferences and we are introduced as Alumni of IDS, during coffee breaks, the first thing the other participants usually ask us is, “How is Prof. McCormick doing?” It will be painful to tell them next time that Professor is no longer with us, that she has moved to be with her Creator. Prof. McCormick has been my Academic mentor and mentor to many others. She has been my Academic Referee for all this long, since I joined the IDS Family in 2007, and there is not a single application, whether for job or studies, that I have made that has not had her name as my Referee and her stamp of approval. Prof. McCormick has published 239 Journal Articles either alone or jointly with other Scholars, published on Google Scholar, with an all-time citation of 4, 179 with a h-index of 31 and i10-index of 64. We are not here to weep about the departure of Prof. Dorothy McCormick, because Academic Queen Mothers do not depart from the academia; rather, they spring forth and multiply, bringing the flowers of academic success, that bloom into the sea of academic humanity. Prof. McCormick can be regarded, and rightly so, as the Chief Supervisor, actually, the Supervisor of Supervisors at the IDS. This is because all the Masters Students have passed through her very able hands. She introduced the Masters Research Seminar Class, ably assisted by Oluoch Manga, and through this, all the past students since 2007 have benefitted immensely. Prof. McCormick taught as the Art of Literature Review. I heard for the first time from her, about Annotated Bibliography. She insisted on this from our Class of 2009, and by the time we were done with Annotated Bibliographies, doing our literature review was a walkover. This made our work so easy in our Dissertation writing, such that our class broke the IDS record of having five students graduating in one year after exactly two years of study. Thank you so much for this Professor! I continued to benefit from Prof. Dorothy McCormick, directly and indirectly long after I had left the IDS. Directly: I continued to use the knowledge I learned from her, in my Doctoral Studies (By the way, I’m now a PhD holder). Indirectly: I continued to “steal” from her, by benefitting from the sharing of knowledge with Dr. Herbert Wamalwa, whom she was supervising for his Doctoral Studies. I ask for forgiveness for “stealing” from you, through your student, especially ideas on tools development and conceptual framework. As we bid you farewell today, we would like to assure you that we shall continue to spread the knowledge that we learned from you. If the University of Nairobi truly loves and respects the intellectual contribution of Prof. Dorothy McCormick, let us immortalise her, by having a Prof. McCormick Development Studies Award, to the Best Final Year Masters Student in Development Studies; or we could have Annual Prof. McCormick Development Seminars to bring together Development Practitioners to showcase their research and publications. Thank you, Prof. McCormick, for your contribution to the academic community in Kenya and beyond. We shall surely miss you. Fare thee well! God Bless you all!