

Kiambu voters turned into spectators

From early 1960s politics in Kiambu District has been dominated by nationalists who played a key role in Kenya's struggle for independence.

Such personalities like the late President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the late Minister for State, Mr Mbiyu Koinange, and late Defence Minister, Mr James Gichuru, continued with that role until their final days.

The political lifestyle in the district changed with the departure of the late President in August 1978. New names came into the scene with a new political dimension.

This was the case during the 1979 general elections where the Kiambaa parliamentary seat attracted eight candidates, among them Mr James Njenga Karume who was recently nominated as a sole candidate for the seat. Mr Karume had earlier been a nominated MP.

In the elections held in 1979, Mr Karume unseated Mr Koinange when he polled 19,037 votes against Koinange's 9,273 votes.

Other prominent personalities like the once Permanent Secretary for Education, the late Mr Peter Gachathi, Lawrence Nginyo Kariuki and Grishon Nge'the suffered heavy defeat.

Election profiles

JAMES KIMONDO
ON
KIAMBU DISTRICT

Mr Karume came to the national limelight when he was chairman of the then Gikuyu Embu Meru Association (Gema). It was through the stewardship of Gema that Mzee Kenyatta nominated him MP after the 1974 general elections.

Karume is a highly respected parliamentarian and is known for his harambees in his constituency, in Kiambu District and elsewhere in the Republic.

Karume was returned to Parliament in September 1983 elections with a landslide of 23,642 votes against his closest rival, Lawrence Nginyo Kariuki, who polled only 4,458 votes. Two other candidates, Peter Njoroge and Munyui Kahuha, polled 166 and 271 respectively.

In the current elections, the Kiambaa seat had attracted three candidates: Mr Kariuki, Henry Kamanda Njoroge, Mr John Waithaka Kingarah and Mr Karume. During nominations, Karume emerged the sole candidate after scoring 87.29 per cent of votes.

PERHAPS the seat that could have attracted a real battle in Kiambu is

Limuru. But the electorate decided to pick one new representative during the party nominations.

Out of the seven constituencies in Kiambu District, six picked their representatives in the first round except Lari, where the parliamentary seat will be contested by the immediate former MP, Mr Peter Turuthi Muigai, and a one time area MP, Mr Andrew Kuria Kinyanjui.

In the nominations, Mr Muigai scored 38.18 per cent while Mr Kinyanjui garnered 38.02 per cent. A third candidate, Mr Paul Njuguna Karuga managed 23.87 per cent.

Elsewhere in the district four former MPs retained their seats, one lost while the other bowed out of the race because of poor health.

In Githunguri, the Minister for Transport and Communications, Mr Arthur Kinyanjui Magugu, was returned with 73.73 per cent votes beating his only rival, Mr Michael Njuguna Kung'u, who polled 26.27 per cent.

The Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, Mr George Muhoho, had a landslide victory with 89.07 per cent beating Mr Harris Kibathi Thuo who received 10.93 per cent. An Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Mr Muigai, suffered a heavy defeat from his arch-rival, Mr Zachariah Gakunju, when he polled 27.35 per cent while Mr Gakunju scored 70.5 per cent. A new comer in the area, Mr M.N. Muihia, managed to score only 2.13 per cent of votes cast.

In Kikuyu constituency, Mr Pe-

ter Kabibi Kinyanjui successfully defended his seat by netting 73.25 per cent of the votes against his closest rival, Mr Lawrence Waiyaki Wambaa, who had 16.65 per cent.

A former area MP, Mr Amos Ng'ang'a, polled 6.44 per cent with Mr Chris Kahara finishing last with 3.05 per cent.

In Limuru where two new comers were fighting it out, Mr Samuel Ngigi Mwaura triumphed with 76.86 per cent over a Nairobi architect, Mr George Boniface Nyanja, who only managed 23.13 per cent.

The Limuru seat attracted the two candidates after the immediate former MP, Mr Jonathan Njenga, bowed out of the race following an accident he had last September along Ngong Road, suffering some fractures.

Announcing his decision not to seek re-election, Mr Njenga said: "I simply cannot do it. And since I don't believe in sympathy votes or campaigning from home, I have withdrawn from elections."

Election mood started rather early, in Limuru occasioned by bitter tirades among some local prominent personalities.

Before the 1983 elections, Limuru politics revolved around those pro and anti Gichuru, the Defence Minister who died in 1982. The same trend dominated the 1983 elections.

Gatundu people decided to change guard after having been served by only two MPs since independence: the late Mzee Kenyatta and his nephew, Mr Ngengi Muigai.

Mr Muigai has always had an arch rival in Mr Gakunju who is a former chairman of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who is a prominent businessman.

Mr Muigai first entered Parliament in a by-election following the death of Mzee Kenyatta in 1978. Before his uncle's death Mr Muigai often played politics be-



P. T. Muigai: Opposed in Lari.

hind the scenes.

Having been in Parliament for only a few months, Mr Muigai managed to be re-elected during the 1979 general elections with a landslide majority of 41,022 votes while Gakunju mastered only 9,360. Two other candidates, Mr Wanguhu Ng'ang'a and Mr Mwangi Mathu, polled 2,377 and 354 respectively.

Gakunju hoped to turn the tables in the 1983 polls. He however did not capture the seat although he improved on his performances as he received 16,314 votes against Muigai's 35,860. Mr Ng'ang'a was third with 833 votes.

The trend of the past elections might have been dictated by the fact that during the period Mzee Kenyatta represented the area, he was returned unopposed — hence the anxiety to vote.

In the last preliminary Kanu nominations, Mr Muigai complained of rigging.

Mr Muihia's debut in politics had a devastating effect as he did not even go through the preliminaries. He said he had been motivated to contest by a common realisation of the people of Gatundu that in order to achieve tangible development, there was need for total change in parliamentary leadership.

The victorious Mr Gakunju was in the national limelight last year when as the chairman of the Kenya Coffee Growers Association, he spearheaded opposition of a coffee bill which was later passed in Parliament.

In Kikuyu Constituency, the candidates who vied for the seat were initially five: They included the immediate past MP, Mr

Kinyanjui, Mr Wambaa, Mr James Muriu Kinuthia, Mr Christopher Kahara and a one time area MP, Mr Amos Ng'ang'a who resigned from his chairmanship of the Kenya Pipeline Company to contest the seat.

Mr Ng'ang'a was MP for Kikuyu from October 1974 to May 1980 when he resigned in favour of former Constitutional Affairs Minister, Mr Charles Njonjo, who had retired as Attorney-General to enter politics.

Wambaa had resigned as chairman of Kenya Post Office Savings Bank.

If Mr Ng'ang'a had made it to the secret ballot, he would have had to contend with challenges of his resignation after his election in 1979 to give way to Mr Njonjo.

The Kikuyu people had in 1979 elected him with a majority of 11,235 votes against his closest rival, Mr Wambaa's 9,016. Mr Joseph Gatuguta had polled 6,881.

In Githunguri, Mr Magugu appeared to have had the confidence of being returned to Parliament with majority votes as his formidable rival, Dr Josephat Karanja, had left the district to become MP for Mathare in Nairobi.

Magugu had been area MP since 1969 and his battles in the past two elections had been with Dr Karanja.

Mr Michael Njuguna Kung'u, former town clerk of Kiambu Municipality is currently a businessman and chairman of Kunita Holdings. With the votes he mastered during the preliminary nomination polls, it appears that in future Mr Magugu will have a strong challenge.

In Juja, Mr Muhoho had a walkover. His closest rival Mr Thuo, managed a poor 10.93 per cent.

Mr Muhoho entered political in 1983 when he contested the seat and defeat a line-up of candidates who included the former M.P., Mr Gitu Kahengeri who, in 1979 was returned to parliament unopposed.

During the polls, Mr Muhoho received 5,041 votes while the closest rival, Mr David Kigwe, managed 1,356 and the former MP, 875 votes only.

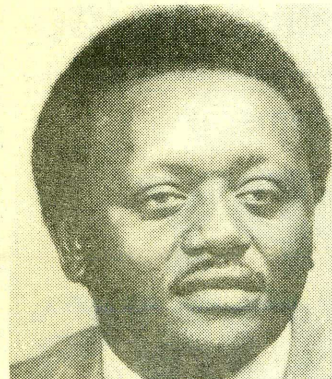
Going by preliminary nominations, Mr Muhoho has a strong foundation in the future polls.

The contest in Lari has never attracted much of attention in Kiambu district. This might have been the reason the two former MPs nearly tied and will have to fight it out during the March 21 elections.

Mr Muigai, the immediate former MP, defeated Mr Kinyanjui in the 1983 elections when they polled 7,176 and 5062 respectively.

Now that the battle has been left to the two candidates, it will be personalities instead of issues that will count.

The rest of the Kiambu constituencies will be watching the battle.



A. K. Magugu: Unopposed in Githunguri.



Z. K. Gakunju: Unopposed in Gatundu.



J. N. Karume: Unopposed in Kiambaa.



P.K. Kinyanjui: Unopposed in Kikuyu.



G. K. Muhoho: Unopposed in Juja.