

United States International University

PRESS RELEASE

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USIU Remembers Civil Rights Legend Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth

United States International University, Nairobi pays tribute to civil rights icon Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth with a ceremony on the afternoon of Monday, 24th October at 12:30pm. A Prunus Africana tree was planted on the campus grounds in the new Sustainable Development Garden, adjacent to the USIU Library which houses the largest collection of books in East Africa.

The commemorative tree planting in Kenya was planned to coincide with elaborate weekend-long celebrations in America. *“Rev. Shuttlesworth was a fiery preacher, a fearless leader and a mentor to my father, the late Elder statesman, The Rev. Floyd King of Birmingham,”* states Dr. Dashanaba King, a lecturer at USIU *“ It was Rev. Shuttlesworth and other civil rights leaders who taught me and showed me through leadership example, how to be the change you want to see.”*

Rev. Shuttlesworth was a U.S. civil rights activist who led the fight against segregation and other forms of racism as a minister in Birmingham, Alabama. He was a co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was instrumental in the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, and a key figure in the efforts that led to the passage of the two great legislative accomplishments of the civil rights movement – The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Words of reflection were delivered by Edward Buri, Youth Pastor at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and prayer by Elimo Njau, Director/Founder of Paa Ya Paa Galleries. A rousing rendition of songs from the civil rights era rang thru the air as USIU Psychology Junior and Ethiopian songstress Haimanot Armide entertained students and guests who included representatives from the U.S. Embassy, USAID, Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Kenyatta University and Pan Africa Christian University.

Dr. Maina Muniafu, Director of the Sustainable Development Initiative Centre at USIU said *“we selected the Prunus Africana, commonly called the Red Stinkwood tree because of its medicinal powers especially its bark, which is known to cure prostate cancer. This tree also has excellent wood for use in furniture and house building.”*

“You’re making my heart dance,” said Dr. King, *“this commemorative tree planted in Rev. Shuttlesworth’s honor can stand as a remembrance to those who have dedicated their lives to achieving equal rights for all and it is my hope that our students, as well as citizens and visitors to Kenya will come, tour the beautiful serene Sustainable Development Garden at USIU and be inspired to step into their own greatness.”*

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