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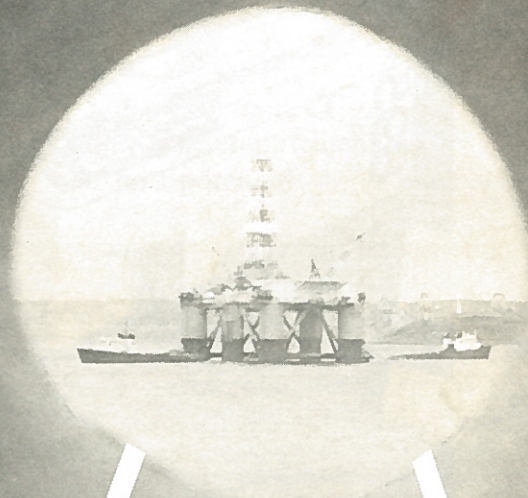
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# Commercial News

## Nova Scotia's Light at the End of the Tunnel



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# From Kampala to Halifax ... and events along the way ...

by Adrienne Malloy



*Davies Bagambiire*

It is a long way from Uganda to Halifax and thirteen years ago Davies Bagambiire's only knowledge of Nova Scotia was through his geography lessons in the Ugandan public school system. Today he is a Canadian citizen and a practising lawyer in Halifax.

Ruled by Britain from 1893-1962, when it acquired its independence, Uganda is perhaps known for the reign of Idi Amin and the human atrocities associated with that dictatorship.

Thirteen years ago Bagambiire was headboy at the secondary school he attended — the largest highschool in the country. It was in 1970 that he was invited as the student's representative to attend a party convention called by President Milton Obote who was trying to mobilize students and enlist their support. While Bagambiire realized the significance of being one of only five students in the country invited to the gathering, the crucial aspect of his participation in this event was that his name was recorded along with thousands of others as a supposed supporter of the Obote government. All of this took place just prior to Amin overthrowing the Obote government in January 1971.

President Obote had led Uganda to independence in 1962 and proceeded in the years leading up to the Amin Coup of 1971 to gain full executive power by suspending the constitution, arresting ministers who opposed him and setting up a centralized government. Obote had not found the key to greater popular support and the whole idea of calling the students together was to try and mobilize what was a persuasive force in the country.

Political activity was second nature to Bagambiire. His father was actively involved at this local village level and his oldest brother was a minister in the

Obote government. "Ugandans by nature are very controversial people", said Bagambiire. He said that the system devised for settling disputes is not only sophisticated but frequently used in his country.

After Amin took power in 1971, one of his first concerns was the 5,000 strong National Union of Students and its paramilitary army, the General Service Unit. He had all those who attended the Obote convention in 1970 arrested, and questioned on their views and general activities before releasing them.

In June, he called the student's representatives together again to dissolve their organization because he identified them as supporters of the previous regime. "He wanted to abolish the union because it was perceived as a network of the political party he had overthrown", said Bagambiire. Bagambiire was quoted in the local papers denouncing Amin's minister of education. "At that point we were not aware of the vicious nature of Idi Amin," he added.

He said most people were still caught up in the excitement that a government thought to be repressive had been overthrown and the murdering done at Amin's direction was kept secret in the early stages of his rule.

While there were no immediate consequences for Bagambiire's objections, he was posted in Tanzania to do his law degree. The decision as to where you study is made by the government. Once in Tanzania, he found himself in the company of many exiled Ugandans. "Among the students sent to Tanzania were spies, whose responsibility it was to report our activities back to Amin," he said.

Bagambiire returned to Kampala, to teach at Makerere University and to finish his articles. One of his brothers

Robert had continued to be politically active, organizing students on campus after Amin abolished the national union. He was forced to flee Uganda and along with some friends Davies helped him to escape one night because the army had come to arrest him. The five hour ordeal at one point involved crossing a river on a single railroad track which spanned a river to Jinja (at a distance comparable to crossing from Halifax to Dartmouth).

"For 48 hours I was missing and because of my job as a resident tutor, I was not there to deliver my lectures," he said. Of course it doesn't take 24 hours to notice someone is missing and as a matter of fact most people thought we had been arrested and killed. You see, disappearing in Uganda usually means you have been murdered."

Two days later he returned to Uganda where friends warned him that Amin's men had been looking for him so he stayed in another home for two weeks and conducted his normal lectures at the university until things had died down somewhat. "After this incident I took a low profile and just continued my articling and teaching."

In June 1976 an incident sparked a chain of events that would force Bagambiire to leave Uganda. The student movement distributed pamphlets denouncing the Amin government after the murder of a female lecturer by some army officers. Her body had been found in a wooded area near Makerere University.

"Amin's response to that was to send his boys in — almost the entire army came to the campus," he said. "They arrived at night and surrounded the campus (about the size of St. Mary's & Dalhousie together) and prepared to attack the residences."

continued next page

Three students came to his apartment looking for refuge. "There was a lot of commotion and I let them in," he said. "We didn't know what to do and the only thing we could think of was to get up to the attic", said Bagambiire.

They hid in the attic space among the mice and dirt and electric cables, for two days. The soldiers who came in seemed more interested in the booty available and cleaned out his apartment. He couldn't explain why they didn't look in the attic. "If they couldn't get people they were happy with material things. I suspect they thought we had already

left." "When we left Uganda I had a short sleeve shirt on and a pair of pants — I still have the pants as souvenirs," said Bagambiire. He went to Kenya, Tanzania and back to Kenya where

London penniless but safe and ready to plan his next move. He contacted several embassy's including the Australians and Americans but Canada was the last place he expected to come to. "The

*... When Bagambiire fled Uganda he left with only the clothes on his back. He kept his pants as a souvenir ...*

friends arranged for a ticket to London. Although he had already been accepted to Dalhousie University, before the raid had forced him to leave Uganda, there was no travelling money included in the arrangement and so he arrived in

immigration regulations in Canada are quite stringent, and they require evidence of financial independence," he said. He needed an offer of financial support.

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## Investors

### APPOINTMENT



**CEDRIC A. STOKES**

Investors Syndicate Ltd. is pleased to announce the appointment of Cedric A. Stokes as a Representative of the Company. Mr. Stokes brings with him over 26 years experience in the Trust and Financial Planning fields, at the local and national levels.

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Uganda is an eastern African country north of Tanzania and it lies between Kenya and the Sudan. By Canadian standards it is small, measuring approximately 230,000 km — it would fit nicely inside of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Of the 13 million people in Uganda, only about seven per cent of the population lives in towns of more than 1,000 people. Kampala (pop. 458,000), the capital and Jinja (pop. 52,000) an industrial town are the only urban centres of any significance. Agriculture is by far the most important sector in the Ugandan economy and provides a livelihood for close to 90 per cent of the population. The four leading export commodities of Uganda are coffee, tea, cotton and copper.

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In the meantime, a group of Dalhousie Law professors heard of Bagambiire's plight and put the money together to buy his ticket to Halifax. After arriving in Halifax in October Bagambiire was granted refugee status and began his LL.M. at Dalhousie. In 1978 he articulated with Kitz, Matheson, Green & MacIsaac and in 1979 started his own practice. He specializes in immigration law and litigation. He is now a Canadian citizen.

*Dalhousie Law Professors put some money together and paid his flight to Halifax.*

One of his major projects today is his presidency of the local Amnesty International Group which continues to fight, through exposure and representation to governments the human atrocities in Uganda and elsewhere in the world. He is also a member of the Board's Civic Affairs Committee and is working on the Committee's assessment of the

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Commission on City Government's report.

Bagambiire returned to Uganda in 1981 to attend his father's funeral and was arrested while in Kampala but not detained for long. His mother is still living in his local village.

Thirteen years ago Davies Bagambiire was headboy at his highschool in Uganda. Today he practises law in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Does he want to go back to Uganda?

"Yes, Uganda is a country that has been unfortunate but it is gifted in every respect — natural and human resources," he said. "I will go back to Uganda someday, but Canada is my home".

# News Makers

## Advertising Firm

### Wins Seven Awards

A Halifax public relations and advertising agency has won seven major awards at a recent advertising show.

Corporate Communications Limited received one gold, five silver and one bronze award. Its eighth entry won a certificate of excellence. The awards came in competition with public relations and advertising firms from across the United States and Canada at the National Advertising Agency Network

(NAAN) awards, held in Vancouver, B.C.

Collectively, NAAN member agencies represent over 2,700 employees and handle more than \$.5 billion of advertising and public relations work annually.

The Halifax firm won first place among member Canadian Agencies and placed fourth overall in number of awards won. The agency, Pringle Dixon Pringle Inc., of Atlanta, Georgia, was the U.S. winner at the NAAN awards.

Corporate Communications Limited won a gold for its "Impress Your Mouth" campaign poster for Scotian Gold Co-operative Ltd. The poster was developed to promote the sale of Scotian Gold's fresh apples.

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