

Lekuton Wins \$13,000 Fellowship

By Kenneth Polk

It's not everyday that a St. Lawrence senior is awarded \$13,000 upon graduation. However, Joseph Lekuton ('91) received this grant after being selected for a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.

The fellowship, according to Lekuton, is given to 75 seniors across the country. Students must write a proposal on their particular interest of study, gather academic transcripts and recommendations before having two interviews, one on campus and one by someone from the fellowship.

Lekuton, a government and economics double major, is from Kenya, East Africa. His proposal states that his main goal "is to study management and marketing strategies employed by the sedentary traditional Pastoralist [nomads] of Tswana of Eastern Botswana and Masai of Northern Tan-

zania."

He explained, "The fellowship wants you to study something which you are interested in and bring that knowledge back to your country. Where I live, there are many nomads who are looked down upon since they are unproductive, not producing for the economy. In Tswana and Botswana, the nomads are very successful, and I hope to see how their management and marketing strategies can help groups which are not as productive."

Lekuton said he wants to look at how the nomads in Tswana and Botswana keep their traditions while struggling with the modern market economy.

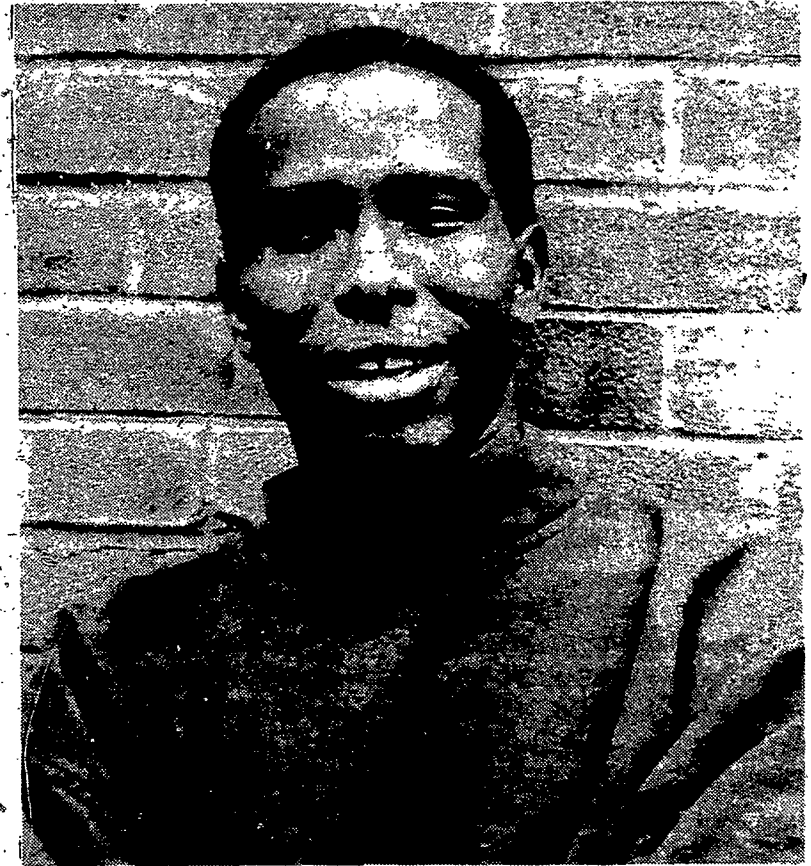
"As I continued to learn about government and economics at SLU," said Lekuton, "I realized there are many people out there who need help. Nomads haven't caught up with the modern world because most people

aren't willing to help them. Rather, they only want to study their traditions, customs and culture, without offering assistance in managing their lives," he said.

Lekuton says managing livestock is the nomads' primary business. He says he wants to look at how the nomads in Tswana and Botswana manage their livestock through drought and famine, without any Western intervention.

He said, "Many nomads are eager to pursue other ways to survive. By using the strategies of the Tswana and Botswana, other nomads can learn how to make their livestock more marketable."

Lekuton will spend between nine months and one year studying in Africa. Besides his interest in the marketing strategies and management of these nomads, Lekuton also wants to look at their educational system.



Joseph Lekuton ('91) will travel with African nomads next year.

Photo by Dave High

"Because the government doesn't see the nomads on an equal level of others, their education suffers," he said. "I hope to bring this awareness back to Kenya and help other

groups."

The Watson Fellowship is a prestigious honor and is equivalent to the Rhodes and Fulbright Scholarships, other fellowships awarded to college seniors.

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"You just don't expect it. These past months I could've been doing something, but I'm here," Paul said.

As this was his first time in jail, Paul was moved to minimum security after a few months.

"No matter what it seems like, this ain't home. It's jail," he said. "I get angry sometimes. You got guys like child molesters and rapists and they get light bids." Paul was sentenced to one year in prison, but will most likely get out in a few months for good behavior.

Hughto said that Paul is safe where he is in the society of the jail. The inmates get along well enough, but society in the prison can be cruel. Inmates convicted of sex offenses are not well thought of by their fellow inmates, while those convicted of assaults or murder tend to get the most respect, according to Hughto.

Many of the inmates are there for alcohol and drug related offenses. Hughto and I talked with a number of inmates in a medium security block about their problems with addiction.

"I'm here on my fourth D.W.I. offense," said one inmate, "and you know what I'm going to do the first thing I get out? I'm going to have a nice cold one and probably

get smashed."

"Yeah, me too," said another inmate who looked like a high-schooler. "AA hasn't helped one bit."

Alcoholics Anonymous provides volunteers who go to the prison twice per week to talk with inmates, but they are not trained counselors.

"The real counselors come in only to tell you you're an alcoholic," the first inmate said. "Tell me something I don't know."

"You've got to want to change, though," said Hughto. "We're all addicted to something, booze or drugs or whatever."

"Yeah, Steve, looks like you're addicted to food," joked one inmate.

"You're right," yelled Hughto over the chorus of laughter as he pointed to his stomach. "I eat when I'm nervous. I used to be 175 pounds."

After leaving the block, I asked Hughto if all the inmates were as familiar with the guards.

"Sure, why not?" he said. "We're a lot of things to these guys. We're big brothers, checking up on them, seeing how they're doing, whatever."

"However, we're here primarily as officers. Sure, we joke with the guys, but when we tell them to do

something, they do it. If I don't show you respect, you're not going to give any back to me," said Hughto.

The jail itself is very strict about drugs, and those inmates caught with drugs will face criminal charges as well as internal disciplinary actions. Hughto said that there

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have been very creative attempts to smuggle illegal substances, but that these generally do not work.

Inmates are allowed contact visits twice per week during which they are allowed to embrace and talk with visitors without a partition. If they want, they can choose to have visits where they cannot touch the visitor, in which case they can have four visits per week. All visits are supervised by the guards.

The visitation room also serves as a classroom. Li-

censed teachers from the community come in to help those inmates acquire their high school equivalency if they don't have their diploma. According to Hughto, the program has a about 50 percent success rate.

"If we can turn around one person," Hughto said, "we accomplished something."

All of the educational materials, like the recreation facilities, are generally paid for by the inmates along with various state and charitable programs.

Lunch at the jail for the day I visited consisted of a couple of hot dogs, onions, baked beans, a banana, and a carton of milk. Earlier in the day, a kitchen worker told me that all of the meals are designed by the staff with the help of a nutritionist and are in accordance with public school lunch requirements, just in greater quantity. All of the food is made on the premises.

"It's as close to homemade as you can get in a jail," she said. "It's jail-made."

The guards eat the same food as the inmates, and all the food is packaged in styrofoam and plastic containers and served with plastic utensils. There are generally no bones in meals

as they are easily sharpened and quite dangerous. Security is a specialty here.

All of the prison guards are unarmed inside the jail and are trained in hand-to-hand combat. They also receive training in correctional and penal codes, interpersonal relations, and medical sciences.

Bette Bissell, another health officer and the woman who greeted me at the door, said that there was a certain camaraderie between the guards.

"We bicker like a regular family," she said. "But when it comes right down to it, we'll be there in a second if we're needed."

In an environment which has a high potential for danger, the guards look out for each other.

"Someone may not like me," said Hughto, "but we're professionals, and I know he'll be behind me if things get bad."

As I was leaving the building, I caught a glimpse of the security monitor and saw Paul, one of the inmates I talked to, walking back to his cell.

"You see these guys walking around outside and you feel bad," he said earlier. "I'd like my freedom, but I did my crime, and I'm paying."