



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL
Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Copeland

BSc (UWI), MSc (University of Toronto), PhD (University of Southern California), IEEE, ISA

Address by the Campus Principal

BOOK LAUNCH

“MY JOURNEY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF F HAROLD RAMKISSOON”

TUESDAY 2ND MAY 2017 | 5.30pm; DAAGA AUDITORIUM

The Rt. Honourable Dr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada

His Excellency Guillermo Vázquez Moreno Ambassador of Cuba

His Excellency Lutz H. Görgens Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany

His Excellency David Prendergast High Commissioner for Jamaica

Suzanne Shurlan, Secretary General Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO

Prof. Brian Copeland, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal

Prof. Indar Ramnarine, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology

Mr. Frank Soodeen, Campus Librarian

Dr. Oscar Ocho Director - UWI School of Nursing

Ms. Sylvia Lalla, President (Ag) - Niherst

Professor Dyer Narinesingh, President – The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)

Mr. Navneet Boodhai, Vice President - Entrepreneurship & Business Development, The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)

Mr and Mrs Ramesh Seepersad - Trinity Paints (*main sponsor*)

Mr. and Mrs Gary Pirali - Bricha Ltd. (*main sponsor*)

Mrs. Tara Ramkissoon and other members of the Ramkissoon family

The Principals, teachers and students from both Tabaquite R.C. School and Tabaquite Secondary School

Invited guests and well wishers

Good Afternoon

[“My Journey” The Autobiography of Harold Ramkissoon](#)
[Remarks by Campus Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Copeland](#)

‘Pure mathematics is, in its way, the poetry of logical ideas’. So said Albert Einstein, the famous theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity, one of the two pillars of modern physics. In similar fashion, a 19th century mathematician – James Joseph Sylvester – called it the ‘music of reason’.

As an Engineer by choice and profession, I understand and speak the language of Mathematics; I delight in its logic and order. It has fuelled my reasoning ability, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It has even nurtured my ability to communicate effectively and succinctly. In a very real sense, it has helped me achieve as much as I have today.

Beyond my personal testimony, it is a fact that we all need and use mathematics in everyday life. From cook to carpenter, doctor or magician, Mathematics underpins and enables all that we do. The world’s many discoveries in science have been facilitated by the use of mathematical methods. Napoleon, remembered mainly as the French Emperor and Military

Leader, was also a Mathematician who believed that ‘there cannot be a great nation without great mathematics’.

This evening we are here for another Mathematician, a son of our soil, a gentleman who has played a pivotal role in the advancement of science in the Caribbean region. Professor Harold Ramkissoon, the first West Indian to be given a Personal Chair in Mathematics at The University of the West Indies, has made notable contributions to understanding micropolar and micro-continuum fluids and marangoni instabilities. His honours are many - recipient of the Chaconia Gold Medal, Trinidad and Tobago’s second highest national award; Academic Gold Medal from the Simón Bolívar University in Venezuela; and the first CARICOM Science Award. He is an Alexander von-Humboldt fellow, a senior Fulbright fellow, a Third World Academy of Sciences fellow; Fellow, Caribbean Academy of Sciences and member of the Caribbean Congress of Fluid Dynamics.

Indeed, his personal and professional journey has been remarkable and inspirational. I am happy that he has documented it in his latest book, an autobiography, so that others too can be motivated to being the best that they can be.

Given all of these accolades, I must now express how truly honoured I am to have had Professor Ramkissoon lecture in my final undergraduate year Complex Analysis class here at the University of the West Indies. As I recall, that class was quite small. Professor Ramkissoon, your delivery of a topic that was so daunting, allowed me to make easy work of the application of principles established by Euler, Gauss, Riemann, Cauchy and other great mathematicians. You will be pleased to know that the material to which I was so richly exposed were invaluable in my postgraduate studies in Control Systems Theory and in my later research and consultancy work in Acoustics. I cannot say how grateful I am for your mentorship.

Although a bit after the 'April 14' day, may I also take this opportunity, Professor, to wish you a very happy birthday? Thank you for all your contributions to the field and to the professional development of many, including myself. There can be no greater legacy.

Thank you.