

**“Celebrating Our Own”
Address by Professor Clement Sankat, Pro Vice Chancellor & Campus Principal
Retirement and MEEAP Awards Function
Learning Resource Centre**

**Saturday 20th September, 2008
4:00 p.m.**

PROTOCOL:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

I want to start this evening with a question. What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? I think we may find an answer to that question today because they say I could talk forever. And many of you here like you don't ever want to leave! so maybe between us, we can answer one of the mysteries of the universe!

(Pause)

I'm only joking; it's good to be able to relax. It's good to be among so many familiar faces. And I promise you I won't be long.

As we approach the climax of our University's 60th Anniversary Celebrations and our Campus prepares to begin the commemoration of its 50th Anniversary, it is my great privilege to celebrate you, our MEEAP Awardees and our dear retirees. It is an honour and a pleasure to stand here with you at this crossroads of celebrations.

Our MEEAP Awardees, I can say without reservation, are totally deserving of this honour. Since its early beginnings in 1960, the strength of this Campus has been the loyalty, creativity and hard work of dedicated members of staff. Therefore, I am convinced that the continued success of our institution lies not in the ability of a few top-level managers to download new vision but in the commitment of the collective staff to execute it. And so, in recognising a few MEEAP Awardees this evening, we are also celebrating our dependence on the whole.

To our dear retirees, I owe a personal debt of gratitude. In October 1969, when I first came to The University of the West Indies to start my undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering, some of you were already employees of this great institution. Your unseen hands worked quietly in the background to make my education possible. By the time I returned to the Department of Mechanical Engineering in August 1973 for my first day of work as a postgraduate scholar and Graduate Assistant, many of you were already established as longstanding members of staff. You have helped many of us achieve our undergraduate and postgraduate dreams.

Scattered throughout our offices, our units, our centres, our administrative and academic departments, you built the foundation of our tradition of excellence. More than our Campus, it is the Principal who owes you a personal debt of gratitude. I am here today to thank you on behalf of the St Augustine Campus. I am a UWI man. In your professional excellence and longstanding commitment in serving this Campus, you have made many of us at The UWI and beyond who we are. Many in the Caribbean region owe you a sincere debt of gratitude.

Collectively, your professional dedication, your consistent effort and your enduring commitment are at the very core of the success of our Campus and our University. Because of you, our Campus is not just a workplace but a place of long-term growth, lifelong friendships, hope and joy. I commend you, our retirees and MEEAP Awardees, for your good work, I congratulate you for your achievement, and I wish you and your families all the best in your future endeavours.

Once again, I thank you.