



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

OFFICE OF THE CAMPUS PRINCIPAL

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**Launch of UWI St. Augustine Campus 50th Anniversary Celebrations
& Rededication of the Administration Building, UWI, St. Augustine
Friday March 12th 2010 10am**

Salutations

- Thank you, Chair
- President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Your Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards
- Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Sir George Alleyne
- Honourable Ministers of Government
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Deputy Campus Registrar, Mr. David Moses
- Former Campus Bursar, Mrs. Lylla Bada
- Professor of History, UWI St. Augustine Campus, Professor Bridget Brereton
- Members of Campus Management
- President of the Alumni Association and President of the Guild of Students
- Colleagues. Alumni and Students of the UWI St. Augustine Campus,
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media

We have come together on this beautiful morning of March 12, 2010 to officially launch the commemoration of a significant milestone in the history of the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies. Exactly seven months from today, on October 12, 2010, we will mark an historic occasion, the 50th anniversary of the merger of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) and the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), which formally established the UWI St. Augustine Campus in 1960.

The Premier of Trinidad and Tobago at that time, Dr. Eric Williams, envisioned a university that would be “the conscience of the nation” and would allow for all persons in Trinidad and Tobago – “civil servants, teachers and ordinary citizens” - of diverse backgrounds and talents, to have access to a university education. A university that would **not** be an intellectual enclave but rather, a central part of the wider society, bringing together persons from all parts of the country in pursuit of light, liberty and learning. And so came into being the St. Augustine Campus, the second Campus of The University of the West Indies, with the first Faculty being the Faculty of Agriculture, which was soon followed by the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering.

In the words of Sir Philip Sherlock and Professor Rex Nettleford, “a university is a living organism that draws its nutrients from the society it serves”. And in the case of the St. Augustine Campus, what began in 1960 as a single Faculty Campus with 39 undergraduate students, 28 graduate students and a few staff members has blossomed into what we have today – a Campus with five Faculties and a sixth on the horizon, the Faculty of Law, and close to 17,000 students and 3,000 staff members; a Campus that last year produced over 3,600 Doctoral, Masters and Bachelor degree graduates.

Distinguished guests, colleagues, alumni, students, friends – over the past five decades, not only have we expanded physically, as an institution, we have truly asserted ourselves and assumed our place in society as an intellectual leader, a driver of national and regional development and a shaper of Caribbean identity. The UWI St. Augustine Campus has demonstrated commitment, perseverance and resilience in the pursuit of quality and excellence.

We have built an extensive community of alumni, academics, partners, supporters, friends and well-wishers – some of whom are here today – and many others who are scattered across the Caribbean Sea at our sister Campuses and in our neighbouring Caribbean territories and across the globe, in the wider Caribbean

diaspora. Without a doubt, it is through their collective efforts and support that this Campus has withstood the test of time. It is also because of the generous support of our regional governments and especially the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, that the UWI St. Augustine Campus has been able to grow and develop over the past five decades. On behalf of our Campus community, I thank you all for your support!

In addition to serving our community, our commitment to regionality is another unique and defining characteristic of our beloved institution, The University of the West Indies, with only one other tertiary institution in the world having been established to serve several independent countries. However, let me say that the essence of regionality goes beyond the unique and into the philosophical realm. For regionality is premised on a philosophy that is noble. It subsumes values that are inclusive, compassionate and benevolent, values that promote reaching out, embracing and supporting our Caribbean brothers and sisters. Indeed, we are each other's keeper.

This is a philosophy that has guided and nurtured my own life. Like many of you gathered here today, students and staff alike, I began my journey as a young, inexperienced – though, I thought then, witty and charming – undergraduate

student. The UWI St. Augustine Campus soon became the anchor of my personal and intellectual development, the compass that steered me towards the pursuit of excellence in my chosen field and the wind in the sails that took me to later represent my Department, Faculty, Campus and University in places I had never even dreamed of, when I was growing up in Corentyne, Berbice, a rural town in Guyana. That was in 1969! That is the power of education, the spirit of freedom, to be creative and innovative and the potential for achievement by all, to which each and everyone here at the UWI St. Augustine Campus is devoted.

And so, today, we stand tall before the flags of our member countries with a keen sense of pride, solidarity and distinction. We recognize the significance of the anniversary that we will celebrate on October 12th and honour the vision of our founding fathers as well as the steadfast commitment of those who have contributed to building the Campus into what it is today. Those who have long passed through the corridors of this Administration Building and the buildings and grounds of our Campus must be looking at us today with a great sense of pride.

In re-dedicating our Administration Building, we also renew our appreciation for this impressive structure that has become the icon of the St. Augustine Campus and a symbol of the UWI in Trinidad and Tobago. This re-dedication is, in itself, a

momentous occasion; one that is defined by pride in our achievements and solidarity in our purpose. In the presence of this architectural monument, we salute the distinction of our institution and the distinctiveness of our graduates. In preserving this magnificent building, the St. Augustine Campus is demonstrating by example the need for a strong national commitment to the preservation of our national heritage. As an Engineer, it is disheartening to see landmark structures, particularly in our rural communities, destroyed. These are important symbols and reminders of where we have come from and we must work hard to preserve them.

The UWI St. Augustine Campus - a light rising from the West. Unlike the celestial body captured in that imagery, however, we do not aspire to rise and set. Rather, the light that is embodied in the St. Augustine Campus must continue to rise and rise further....for the next fifty years and beyond!

PAUSE

As Campus Principal, let me emphasize that the significance of our 50th anniversary is much bigger than any one of us individually. It is about our commitment to the success of the UWI St. Augustine Campus and the peoples of Trinidad and Tobago and the region. It is therefore our collective responsibility to

leave the Campus better than we met it. This is a moment for all of us to rededicate ourselves to this effort.

At this point, I would therefore, like to invite the incoming President of the Guild of Students to join me as I unveil the 50th Anniversary logo. The motto simply and effectively captures our reason for being here today. The UWI St. Augustine Campus is: “Fifty and forging ahead”.

I thank you.