

Prof. Elsa Leo-Rhynie

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the CGDS - St Augustine to contribute to this collective tribute to Prof. Elsa Leo Rhynie. Elsa's retirement reminds us that the march of time moving as the Centre moves towards its first 15 years. Elsa has been part of this history for almost all of these years so it would be strange not to have the safe and secure feeling that Elsa with her calm professionalism and commitment to the UWI, the region and to women's and gender issues is there keeping watch over our developments.

In many ways Elsa led the way for us to follow. She was the first professor of Gender and Development Studies, the first woman to serve as deputy principal of a UWI campus and the first woman to serve as principal of the UWI campus. Her leadership of the CGDS during those early years of our establishment, that time when we were still fighting for legitimacy, for staff, for established financial resources and for academic recognition was priceless. She was part of many of the high level negotiations which were necessary at that time as well as the nitty gritty work which was necessary to establish the Centres. It was she who first demonstrated for all to see that an academic focus on gender, unlike what many thought at that time is not a narrow concern but rather a broad, multidisciplinary, intellectual and oh so relevant endeavour. It was for this reason that the CGDS - St. Augustine invited Elsa to give our 10th Anniversary Lecture in 2004. This lecture was subsequently published and is available for all who wish to see it. We hope that this retirement from administration will provide Elsa with the opportunity to do some of the things she has long wished to but not been able to do for some time. No doubt, in addition to that important time for family and friends, this would include those intellectual explorations which continue to be important to all true academics.

Congratulations Elsa!!!