



From Green to Gene

The New Revolution in Agriculture

PHOTO: ALEX SMAILES

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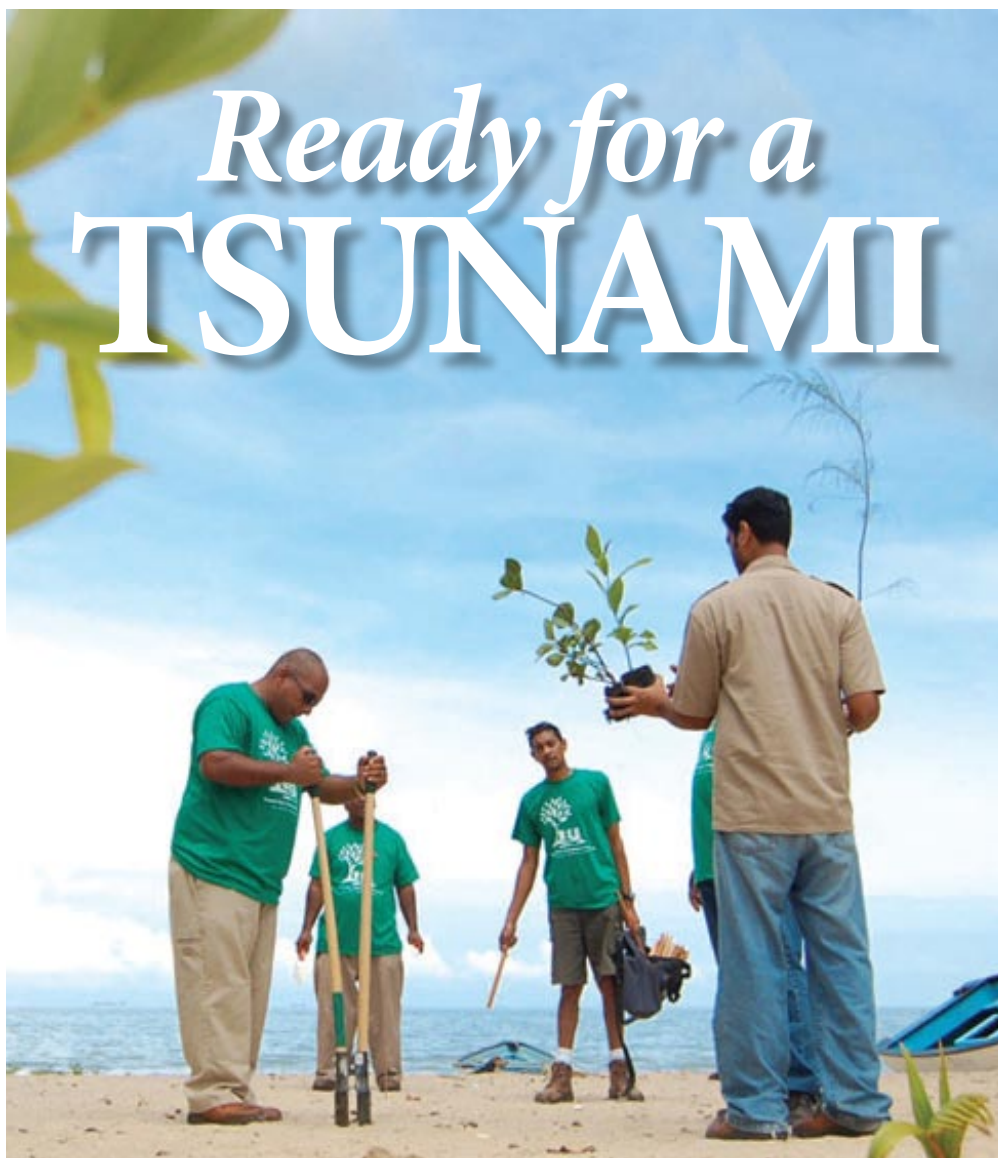
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■ Time for leaders to stand and deliver



RESEARCH



Forestry officers from the Department of Forestry worked alongside the Seismic Research Centre during the Understanding Tsunamis project. They are preparing a site for planting Golden Flower, Almond and Sea Grape trees along the beach in Bonasse Village during the recent Earth Science Week.

Students from two of Trinidad's remote coastal communities are now better educated on tsunami safety thanks to an outreach initiative by the UWI Seismic Research Centre (SRC).

This year, the SRC chose Understanding Tsunamis as the main theme for its Earth Science Week celebrations and targeted two schools for raising awareness on tsunamis. "Currently, there is a lot of work being done to establish a tsunami warning system for the Caribbean but we still have a long way to go," said SRC Education Officer, Stacey Edwards. "In the meantime it is very important for people living and working in coastal areas to be able to recognize a tsunami's natural warning signs and to be able to respond appropriately."

During Earth Science Week, the SRC and the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) sponsored a group of geography students from Mayaro Secondary School to attend a student workshop at the SRC in St. Augustine. During the workshop, the students learned about the causes of tsunamis and they learned how to recognize a tsunami's natural warning signs.

Students of Cedros Secondary School benefited from a similar educational programme when a team from the SRC visited the fishing community of Bonasse Village. In addition to learning about tsunamis, Cedros Secondary students planted trees along the beach as part of the SRC's Tsunami Ready Environment & Education (TREE) event. According to the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) coastal forests can reduce the depth, force and velocity of a tsunami and other large wave events.

"It was great that first the students learned about the potential impact of tsunamis and then they actually went outside and did something to reduce that impact on their community," commented Dr. Robert Watts, SRC Volcanologist.

The SRC partnered with the Department of Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture Land & Marine Resources and the Trinidad & Tobago Meteorological Service and received generous sponsorship from First Citizens, ODPM, Neal & Massy Foundation, Scrip-J and Cool Connections Ltd.

Although tsunamis do not occur frequently in the Caribbean, the region is vulnerable to these events and it is hoped that students will impart the knowledge gained during Earth Science Week to other members of their coastal communities.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Celebrating Excellence



As the regional university, The UWI prides itself on continuously raising the bar for quality standards in teaching, research and service. We have a long-standing tradition of producing leaders in both the public and private sectors nationally, regionally and internationally. In fact, during our recent graduation ceremonies across the Caribbean, we graduated over 6,914 undergraduate and 1,969 postgraduate students from our four UWI Campuses, including 89 doctoral students. We also paid tribute to 16 specially selected honorary graduands, each of whom epitomizes excellence, dedication and service to the people of our region. Like our honorees, I too share the view that strong, visionary leadership is an important element of human development and that The UWI has a critical continuing role in building Caribbean leaders of the future.

As we welcome another contingent of world leaders, this time for the 2009 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), and discuss issues related to equitable and sustainable development, we must stand ready to take full responsibility for our part in creating a more equitable and sustainable world. After all, privilege and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. As leaders in our various disciplines, therefore, we must accept the challenge to be agents of change in the pursuit of a better future for those in our charge.

There are several glowing examples around us that remind us of what authentic leadership and a drive to excel can produce.

Our honorary graduates have been beacons in this regard and have remained committed to using their talent and their respective offices to uplift others. Our many students recognized in the various Faculty Prize-giving Ceremonies in October also demonstrate diligence and perseverance, while staff members such as our own Professor Clement Imbert, who was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence, exemplify the true meaning of student-centredness, academic leadership and giving back to the community.

Many more examples abound outside our Campus. Recently our own Trinidad and Tobago cricket team demonstrated its tenacity and drive for achieving excellence in a manner which can only communicate true leadership to the rest of the region. Inherent in these examples of success are the consistent qualities of commitment, discipline, selflessness, and teamwork, qualities which I hope to see taking root, more and more, at all levels in our societies.

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Pro Vice Chancellor & Principal

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■ CAMPUS NEWS

BREAKING THE SILENCE – 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Breaking the Silence: Child Sexual Abuse with a Special Emphasis on Incest: A Multi-Sectoral Approach is one of two initiatives of the research programme: Gender, Sexuality and Implications for HIV. This is a project of The Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), UWI, St. Augustine, led by Professor Rhoda Reddock, Deputy Principal of the St Augustine Campus and Dr Sandra Reid, lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medical Sciences.

The overall aim of the programme is to integrate the analysis of gender and sexuality into research and action related to HIV. This particular project focuses on breaking the silence that has surrounded incest and other forms of child sexual abuse in Trinidad and Tobago. Its aim is generating knowledge and understanding on child sexual abuse/incest and the implications for HIV; empowering women, girls, men and boys to address these issues; and influencing service providers to strengthen their response to child sexual abuse and to understand the linkages between child sexual abuse/incest and HIV.

Break the Silence is the name given to the pilot multi-disciplinary, community-based empowerment and educational intervention which has been developed and is being implemented in three communities in Trinidad and Tobago: Aranguez and Toco in Trinidad and Charlotteville in Tobago. It targets boys and girls, and young people, male and female adults in various capacities as students, parents, survivors, community-based service providers such as teachers, social and cultural groups and community activists. The activities, which were proposed by and developed in collaboration with community members, span



Arts in Action actor-teachers facilitating a performance workshop at a high school.

three broad areas: educational, skills building and service provision. Examples of these include teacher sensitization seminars, parenting workshops, child-centered activities and interactive, artistic and theatre-based activities.

Like other life issues, child abuse across the globe is recognizable by a ribbon, in this case, a blue ribbon. This



ribbon is not yet widely or immediately known in Trinidad and Tobago. The blue teddy bear has been created to symbolize the Break the Silence research and intervention project and to signal a call to awareness about issues surrounding CSA/incest and HIV. The symbol uses the teddy bear that is a long-time image of security, love, care, comfort and relationships; however, this teddy bear wears a plaster positioned on its heart, offering a sense of healing and hope.

The project has received core funding from The United Nations Trust Fund for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, managed by UNIFEM, New York and UNICEF Caribbean. So far over US\$400,000 has been committed to this project. In order to facilitate this intervention and to ensure sustainability at the end of the project, the IGDS has partnered with The Trinidad and Tobago Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV). Other partnerships have been established with The Caribbean Health Research Council (CHRC); Arts in Action (the Theatre in Education programme of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts UWI, St Augustine), and the Department of Social Services and Gender Affairs, Tobago House of Assembly.

The Break the Silence project team recognises the **16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign** and calls for greater awareness and action on the issues surrounding child sexual abuse and incest and their implications for HIV. This UN campaign takes place annually from November 25 (International Day of No Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day) and includes World AIDS Day: December 1.

UWI ACADEMICS ELECTED TO CAES EXECUTIVE



CAES Executive Members (from left): Dr Wayne Ganpat, Sarojini Ragbir, Dr Carel Ligeon, Hazel Patterson-Andrews, Edric Harry, Dr Carlisle Pemberton and Bruce Lauckner. Missing are: Drs Neela Badrie, Wendel Parham, Edward Evans and Edwin Joseph.

The 28th West Indies Agricultural Economic Conference, the biennial flagship activity of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society (CAES) was held in collaboration with the Barbados National Agricultural Conference in July in Barbados. Forty technical papers dealing with food safety, modern development in Caribbean agriculture, rural development, food prices and food security issues, economics of food crop production, agri-business, marketing and trade issues were presented.

At the opening ceremony, Dr Chelston Brathwaite, Director General of the Inter American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA) gave a stirring call for a new

development model for regional agriculture. He countered the recent calls for a new 'Green Revolution' in agriculture, reminding of the negative consequences of that development paradigm: exclusion of small farmers; dependence on pesticides and fertilizers and disregard for environmental issues. He proposed a new model focusing on strategies to increase investment in agricultural research, innovation and technology transfer, a new agricultural education curriculum, and the transformation of regional ministries of agriculture. Dr Brathwaite noted that while the Caribbean is dependent on agriculture, this is not emphasized in the educational system, so the curriculum needs revision.

At the Conference, a new Caribbean Agro-Economic Society (CAES) executive was elected comprising Dr Carlisle Pemberton, (Senior lecturer, UWI) as President (re-elected), Sarojini Ragbir (Communication Coordinator, UWI) as Vice-President, Hazel Patterson-Andrews (lecturer, UWI) as Secretary, Dr Neela Badrie (Senior lecturer/researcher, UWI) as Director of Publications, Edric Harry (Policy Analysis and Planning Specialist, IICA) as treasurer, Bruce Lauckner (Head, Strategic Alliances/Biometrician, CARDI), Dr Carel Ligeon (Associate Professor, Auburn University Montgomery), Dr Edwin Joseph (Associate Professor, Grand Valley State University, Michigan), Dr Wendel Parham (Consultant), Dr Wayne Ganpat (Deputy Director, Extension, Ministry of Agriculture, T&T), Dr Edward Evans (Assistant Professor and Associate Director, University of Florida) as members.



THIRD EDULINK STAKEHOLDER'S CONFERENCE

Lisbon, Portugal was the site of the Third EDULINK Stakeholder's Conference, which took place on October 1 and 2, 2009. Dr. Azad Mohammed, Dr. Judith Mendes, Dr. Mark Thomas, Professor Andrew Lawrence and Ms. Joy Cooblal represented The University of the West Indies at the event. Themed "Knowledge sharing through the ACP-EU Platform for Cooperation in Higher Education," the conference aimed to promote "higher education as a means of reducing poverty in ACP countries and regions" by encouraging higher education stakeholders to work together to assess the influence of EDULINK projects on poverty alleviation.

Approximately 120 delegates attended the conference, including representatives from 56 ongoing EDULINK projects, European Union affiliated agencies and external higher education institutions with interests in EDULINK

NO LONGER JUST A RACE

By Raffique Shah

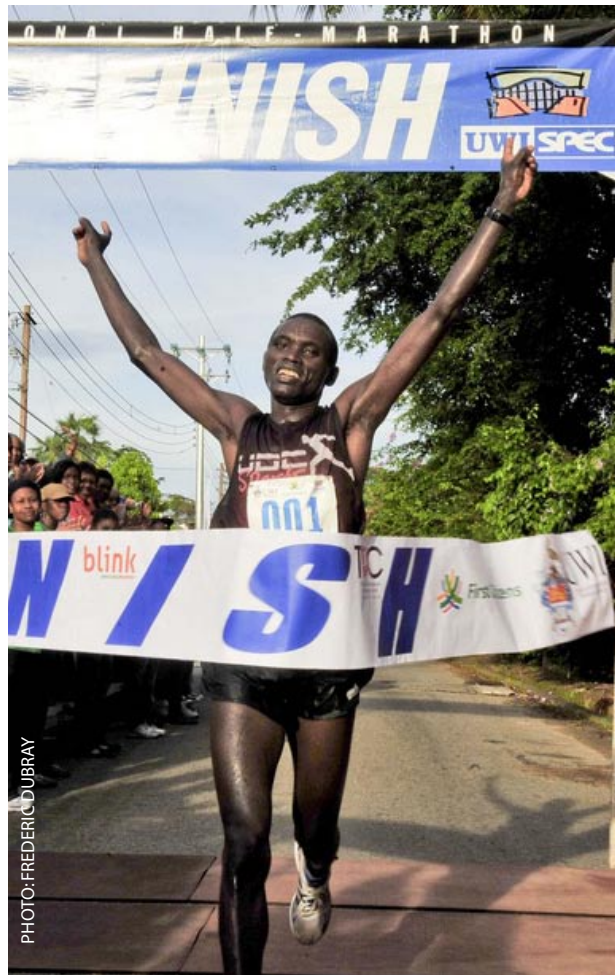
It took a mere six years for the UWI-SPEC International Half-Marathon to mature—which is quite an achievement by any standard. What this means is the race came close to attaining optimum participation. Back in 2004 when an idea germinated into the most successful half marathon in the English-speaking Caribbean, the organising committee set itself a goal of attracting 1,000 participants.

This year there were 950 entrants: 776 officially finished the event. From the organisational standpoint, the race was a resounding success. Its water stations, medical and paramedical facilities, processing of participants before the start and after finishing, as well as hospitality for runners, volunteers and VIPs, all functioned as efficiently as could be expected.

The event might have been even more competitive in both the male and female categories had a few invited elite athletes not withdrawn when it was too late to find replacements. Kenya's Alfonsi Yatich (age 25) turned the halfway point in just over 30 minutes, putting him on course for world-class finishing time in our weather conditions. But lack of competition saw him slow down considerably on the return leg. He finished in 1:06.47, which could easily have been 1:02 if he was challenged.

Among female competitors, Nigeria-born Mary Akor (now a US citizen) also had an easy run, winning in 1:18.48. UWI (Mona) student Tanice Barnett improved her 2008 time by three minutes to place 2nd in 1:25.

Of significance was an increase in the numbers of participants from The UWI. Sixty-two students finished the 13.1 mile challenge (compared with 45 last year), with Brian Maynard maintaining his dominance in 1:17:58. Among the 19 campus staff members who completed the race, Darrin



Kenya's Alfonsi Yatich, 25, won in 1:06.47

Grenade was also a repeat winner (1:26.13) while Elizabeth Hackshaw took 1st place among females in 1:50.38.

The half marathon is not just about winners and fast times. It promotes health and fitness, competition and camaraderie among a wide spectrum of citizens. Participants ranged from age 15 to persons in their 80s. Among the teen-wonders, 15 year-old Andrew Harrilal finished in a respectable 1:50.53 while Abiane Collymore (16) won her age group in 1:46.54.

At the other end of the age-scale, Lynette "Granny" Lucess (81) kept spectators waiting for 3:25 to see the grand-dame of T&T distance running finish. And 85 year-old Charles Spooner proved that age is just a number, clocking 3:08. In between, there were some remarkable performances in the other age-groups, with the top three winners in each category winning cash prizes. Where does the UWI-SPEC Half-Marathon go from here? Director Dr Iva Gloudon spelt it out to committee members: "This is no longer just a race...it's now a major national event." There will be changes for 2010. The limit of 1,000 entrants will be maintained. But the event's website <http://sta.uwi.edu/spec/marathon/> will feature training programmes to help potential participants better prepare for what is a demanding distance.

Dr Gloudon will explore through the NAAA the prospect of having the race sanctioned by the IAAF as the hemispheric Universities' Half Marathon Championships. And showcasing this country's culture at the start/finish and along the course will be a feature from 2010.

What started out as an idea and 300 runners just five years ago is poised to take flight to heights never envisaged by the pioneers. It's yet another facet of UWI's quest for excellence in all aspects of human development.

Raffique Shah is technical director of the UWI SPEC International Half-Marathon.

NEW PROGRAMME



Master of Public Health

A month ago, The University of the West Indies (UWI) St Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago officially launched its new Master of Public Health (MPH) programme, developed in collaboration with the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

The new MPH is being offered as a part-time programme over two years by the Faculty of Science and Agriculture and the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The MPH is recognized internationally as the required degree in many ancillary medical fields including occupational health, public health, epidemiology, hospital management, health planning, environmental safety and food and nutrition.

The programme aims to equip persons with the essential skills to assess and manage the health of communities and to advance and promote public health.

To be admitted to the prescribed course of study for the degree of Master of Public Health (MPH) candidates must either:

- Be registered medical practitioners, dental surgeons, or veterinary surgeons, with at least three years professional experience preferably in Public Health after successfully completing the final examination in their discipline; or
- Be graduates of an approved university with at least three years of relevant practical experience; or
- Hold an approved technical or professional qualification awarded by an approved body and approved by this university and have had at least five years relevant practical experience; or
- Have in the opinion of the University, other qualifications of special relevance to the course and in the opinion of the University, have had at least five years of relevant practical experience.

■ Applicants will be required to submit an online application and a statement of intent written application and may in some instances be required to attend an interview to be eligible for selection to the programme.

CAMPUS NEWS

UNESCO, HISTORIES, AND UWI

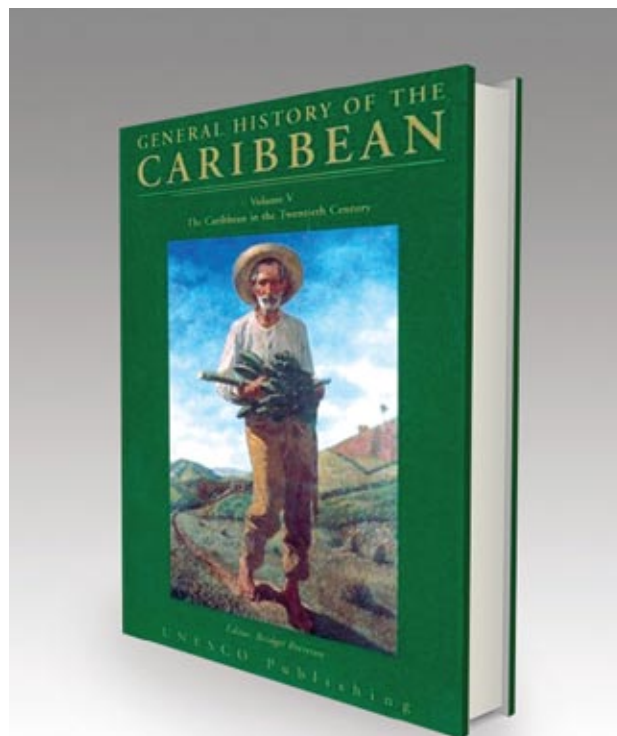
In early October, UNESCO summoned a group of historians to a meeting at its headquarters in Paris to discuss the general and regional history series which UNESCO has sponsored, starting in the 1960s. There are six of these ambitious, multi-volume series: The History of Humanity; The General History of Africa; The History of Civilisations of Central Asia; The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture; The General History of Latin America; and The General History of the Caribbean.

Representing the History of the Caribbean series was Professor Bridget Brereton of the St Augustine campus, along with Sir Roy Augier of Mona, and Professor Franklin Knight of The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. It seems fair to say that UWI historians have played a very large role in the six-volume work. Four of the six volume editors are closely connected to UWI: Knight, editor of Volume 3, is a Jamaican Mona graduate and a recent (2007) recipient of our honorary degree; the editor of Volume 4, taking over on the death of the Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals, is St Augustine Professor Emeritus Keith Laurence; Barry Higman, for many years based at Mona, edited Volume 6; and Brereton is the editor of Volume 5, as well as the author of chapters in Volumes 4 and 6. Many UWI people wrote chapters for the series, including St Augustine's Kusha Haraksingh, Keith Laurence, Brinsley Samaroo and Kelvin Singh. And Augier, Professor Emeritus at Mona, and a former Pro-Vice-Chancellor, is the President of the Scientific Committee which has overall supervision of the series.

The History of the Caribbean, like the other series, aims to present current scholarly knowledge on the region's past, for a readership mainly conceived as University students and the intelligent general public. It is also designed as a work of reference. Defining the region in the broadest possible sense, it offers a genuinely pan-Caribbean perspective, and its authors are all specialists in the history of the pre-Columbian, colonial and postcolonial periods, and of all the territories whatever European language they may currently speak. Five of the six volumes are out and the last one, Volume 4, is in press and will appear early in 2010.



Professor Bridget Brereton



The Paris meeting was partly to 'big up' the different Histories, and to celebrate their completion or near-completion—planning for some began as long ago as the 1960s. But the more substantive agenda had to do with the next steps for the Histories: how to disseminate them more widely; how to market them better; how to produce versions in different media for a wider and younger constituency.

With respect to the History of the Caribbean, which is in English only, translating the volumes into Spanish and French was clearly essential. More people in the Caribbean speak and read Spanish and French than English; and the pan-Caribbean conception and design of the series are undermined when the publication is in only one regional language. Sadly, it became clear that UNESCO could not currently fund this project, and that it would be necessary to find a 'partner' who could sponsor the translations, and the publication of the translated versions. Plans are in train for producing a 'youth-friendly', video version of the History, and it is hoped that funds may be raised for a three-part series of one-hour film documentaries.

RESEARCH



The New Revolution in Agriculture

Genetics professor says agriculture can be the region's biggest, best bio-business

By Vaneisa Baksh

When people think of agriculture, they generally associate it with planting food crops. But it is a much wider field than that. We need to think of it in modern terms and current realities, with a sharper focus on the business and science elements of the process, says Pathmanathan Umaharan, Professor of Genetics at The UWI.

It is a cultural and mental shift that needs more than a shove to move it from its firmly rooted base.

Recently, as farmers complained that agricultural land was being diverted to housing, even the Minister of Agriculture conceded that agricultural development would not happen without land, but he too appeared to be in a land-locked frame of mind.

In the small islands of the Caribbean, the availability of land will always present a challenge for farmers to reap economies of scale, and with populations growing, the allocation of land will continue to provoke debates.

Bio-business is the strategically viable and profitable way to develop agriculture, says Prof Umaharan. Food security is extremely important, he readily agrees.

“The first requirement is to meet the food needs of the people in the region and the second is how we can use our genetic resources to create economic opportunities.”

Neutraceuticals from cocoa, for example, create an avenue to earn revenue. (UWI's Dept of Chemistry is actually doing work based on the findings that dark chocolates contain healthy anti-oxidant and nutritive properties: neutraceuticals. The project seeks to chemically characterise the flavour and neutraceutical content of local cocoa beans and to correlate their respective sensory qualities.)

“We have developed new anthurium varieties which are resistant to bacterial blight. These are universal



diseases in the tropics, so it has widespread application. Mozambique, South Africa, South China, and Hawaii have requested varieties. We can either licence them and earn royalties, or sell them to them.”



he prepared a report on a workshop held at the Tropical Agricultural Congress in December 2008. The report is a broad, comprehensive document distilling the analyses and recommendations of a broad group of participants—public and private sector—throughout the region.

Unsurprisingly, he notes that agriculture has dropped out of the realm of being a profitable venture.

“Right now there is more of an exodus,” he says. “It is in a depressed state because large, private investors consider it risky, menial and backward. We have to change that mindset. Agriculture can be developed and marketed so that it has a large potential.”

It is perfectly suited to be the region's strategic centre because it is renewable and revolves around our tropical existence.

“We are in the hemisphere which is the most diversity rich in the world: the neotropics. We have pineapples, anthuriums, sweet potatoes, hot peppers and peanuts—all indigenous to the region—how many are developed here?”

The business possibilities are endless with careful planning. Holland is the main anthurium supplier of the

world but has none indigenously. We buy papayas from Hawaii, and they are indigenous to this region.

“Small islands do not need to develop many things, but just need to concentrate on one or two. New Zealand took the Chinese gooseberry and branded it into Kiwis. They also worked with dairy and developed their dairy brand. Our challenge is to utilise these things to add value,” he says.



There are two types of peppers, for example in the region. The *Capsicum annum* includes chilli peppers, jalapeños, sweet peppers, etc and is indigenous to Central America and the southern part of North America. The *Capsicum chinense* is more up the Caribbean alley. Among other fiery inmates, it includes the Scotch Bonnet, Habanero, Congo, the one commonly called Seven Pot (conjuring the image that it is hot enough to flavour seven potfuls but which is really Seven Pod) and of course, the Scorpion, which is rated the hottest, and looks dangerously like a scorpion with its aggressively pouting tail.

These flavourful peppers are not marketed well, so that their export market remains confined to the diaspora community, and the world has not yet been seduced by their zesty heat.

“All these are potential markets for development. *Capsicum annum* generally yields about 120 tonnes per acre. Our hot peppers produce much less, a mere 20 tonnes per acre. We have to increase our yield potential because it has always been confined to the ethnic market and so remains uncompetitive,” he says.

“We don't have the space to grow and sell on large scales, so we should create knowledge products, licence them and receive royalties.”

The Department of Life Sciences has been developing what he calls knowledge products based on manipulating genes in different ways. They have done considerable work already on cocoa, anthuriums and hot peppers.

The Cocoa Research Unit of The UWI is custodian of the International Cocoa Genebank, Trinidad, one of only two such cacao repositories in the public domain. Its work on cocoa has brought international acclaim, and is directly related to Trinidad and Tobago being one of only eight countries classified as an exclusive producer of fine or flavour cocoa.

The cocoa industry had been almost eradicated by disease until research led to the development of the Trinitario variety, which has become associated with the best cocoa and chocolate products globally.

Likewise, Trinidad had been the largest exporter of anthuriums to North America in the nineties, but diseases devastated the industry, and the UWI scientists focused their attention on restoring life to the beautiful flowers.

They succeeded in identifying resistance to the bacterial blight and leaf spot that had practically killed the industry, and now they are working on nematode-resistance. Next on the agenda is developing new colours—yellows, blues, purples. Anything is possible, says Prof Umaharan, and even his calm, measured tone cannot hide his excitement at the prospects.

“An anthurium normally sells for US 30¢, but if you have a premium,





novel quality, you can get US\$3 for each one. With this new variety, the risk is minimal,” he says.

They have also developed a bodi resistant to three diseases. Cowpea severe mosaic virus, Cercospora leaf spot and Southern Blight. The bodi

is now being commercially grown on five acres at the Chaguaramas Development Authority’s mega farm.

These are simple samples of the kind of ventures that can be made profitable if a common strategy is developed regionally. Businesses will enter if the environment is made attractive. He says it is not about growing a wide range of crops in small quantities. That kind of kitchen garden approach is unlikely to attract investment leading to sustainable livelihoods.



The key is to identify one or two crops or items and to develop systems that support it right through the process, from seed to market.

“For these things to work you need to prioritize, you need strong research and development. Set a five-

year plan and develop each phase to intense concentration. We have limited human resources, so we need to pool all and work together on one project at a time.”

He cites the modus operandi of the US, where they administer competitive funds in priority areas, which brings about institutional partnerships.

“We need enabling policies, and that is where governments come in. The governments need to



provide an enabling environment, policies, and support mechanisms. The Government has a role to play by putting the the right incentives to organise and nurture the industry.

“No industry can survive without very strong R&D support. Our farmers

in the past have been left to strive on their own. Farmers get low yields and are investing heavily to control pests, etc. They face problems of water-logging, and yields are poor because of poor quality seeds.

“They import seeds from the US, but these seeds are resistant to US pests and diseases, not to local ones. You’re buying stuff from them to plant with lower yields and more need for spraying. Vehicles of disadvantage, I call them.”

W A L K I N G T H E G R E E N M I L E

As part of its sixtieth anniversary celebrations, The University of the West Indies organised an International Congress on Tropical Agriculture entitled “Overcoming Challenges to Developing Sustainable Agri-food systems in the Caribbean” in 2008. A workshop followed, aiming to find consensus on the way forward for Caribbean agriculture vis-à-vis rising food prices and concerns regarding food security. It included representatives from CARICOM institutions, technocrats representing the various Ministries of Agriculture from CARICOM countries, farmer organizations, research and development institutions, agri-business associations and other private sector groups. An attractive document has emerged from this workshop. Its title alone suggests the optimism engendered by the process: A Green Step Forward – Creating a Strategic, Sustainable, knowledge-driven and technology-based agriculture industry in the Caribbean. The document is to be presented shortly to CARICOM as a white paper for consideration. Its contents are generated by the insights and recommendations of the stakeholders involved, and provide a blueprint for an innovative and radical approach to an agricultural development strategy. Here are a few of the areas addressed in the draft document, which can be read at: <http://sta.uwi.edu/news/ecalendar/event.asp?id=1019>

■ KEY ISSUES FOR CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE

FARM LEVEL: Infrastructure, praedial larceny, finance, hurricanes and crop insurance, extension, etc.

ORGANIZATION: Lack of or poor governance of marketing systems, cooperatives, commodity groups, community groups

UNDER-DEVELOPMENT: Innovation, technology development/procurement and transfer along the agri-food chain (resulting in lower productivity, higher cost of production, lack of value-added products, low farmer income, etc)

HUMAN RESOURCES: Poorly trained and declining numbers of human resources

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE: Lack of a focused or consistent agricultural policy or diversification policy (priorities), lack of a consistent land tenure policy, inadequate support for farm and marketing infrastructure and innovation/technology transfer; inadequate financing systems/subsidies to support new agriculture ventures, and inadequate incentives for private sector investment.

■ INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN GOVERNANCE TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

CREATING A NEW IMAGE: NEW AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is considered to be a backward, backbreaking, unprofitable and degrading livelihood in the Caribbean. Agriculture should be marketed as a strategic, forward-looking, knowledge-driven, technology-based industry that is highly profitable. Existing agricultural farms should be transformed into modern, intensive, technology-based, profitable outfits.

PRIVATE SECTOR IS INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING

The private sector should be part of boards of institutions/organisations so that they become part of the decision-making

process. Publicly funded institutions and organizations may then adopt a private sector culture.

ASSISTANCE FOR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

State assistance to local universities to set up technology transfer systems will allow R&D institutions to convert innovations into business models that can be marketed to the private sector. Where local technologies are not available, incentives for technology acquisition, transfer, or partnership with foreign organizations should be fostered. This could include incentives for foreign direct investment, support for adaptive research, support for organising local or regional technology transfer workshops or training programmes, etc.

REGIONAL INVESTMENT FORUM

An investment forum should be organised on a biannual basis for the research organisations involved in agriculture to showcase the investment portfolios and business models. This could be coupled with trade shows. In addition, the food and beverage sector, agro-chemical sector and other input sectors, should be encouraged to participate in agriculture conferences, workshops and boards of institutions and organisations, to create awareness of investment opportunities.

DEVELOP INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEMS

An intellectual property (IP) policy, legislation, regulations and an implementation mechanism need to be set up so that these can be the basis of negotiations and partnership. The research and development institution may license a product or technology to a private sector company/service provider or enter into a partnership arrangement or sell the technology to a private sector company.

INCUBATORS AND ACCELERATORS TO DEVELOP INTO SMES

Universities and research institutions should be encouraged to develop public-private sector collaborations in the form of incubators/accelerators towards providing research support and ser-

vices to the agro-industry, using venture capital. An innovation policy, regulatory framework and implementation system is imperative to achieve this. The incubators should lead to the development of SMEs which should slowly move from a national focus to a regional and global agenda, so that they can become viable entities in their own right. Governments should provide incentives to support such development, particularly in the beginning, and also ensure that risk involved in operating in a small economy is mitigated.

FISCAL AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Government to provide fiscal incentives to promote private companies to engage in innovative agricultural initiatives and adaptive research. Reduce agricultural risk by provision of better infrastructure, agricultural insurance, protection against praedial larceny, etc.

WEANING R&D AND SERVICE INSTITUTIONS

Over time, research institutions should be weaned from government funding and expected to generate revenue through IPs, incubator companies, consultancies and international competitive grants.

NURTURE NATURAL EVOLUTION OF STRONG REGIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR INSTITUTIONS

Encourage national level institutions to merge or transform into larger regional level institutions that are capable competing at the international level.

GOVERNMENTS CONFINE ACTIVITIES TO POLICY, OVERSIGHT AND PROVISION OF PUBLIC GOODS

Governments in the longer-term completely out-source services (research, extension, support services) from the private sector, as necessary. They should ensure that business models proposed for development are evaluated not only for economic sustainability but also for environmental and social sustainability.



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2009
UWI HONORARY GRADUATES

CREATE LEADERSHIP, LOOK BEYOND YOURSELVES

This is an abbreviated excerpt of Honorary Graduate, Angela Cropper's address to the Graduation Ceremony, Faculties of Science and Agriculture, and Medical Sciences, The UWI, St. Augustine, October 30, 2009.

I appear before you as a graduate of this University, within which I have had my grounding at the Campuses of St. Augustine and Cave Hill, and from which I have taken my bearings. I thank the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, and of Barbados, whose taxes bore the cost of my education. I am still trying to find a way to give something back to this region that could possibly be commensurate with that investment.

I regard this honour as the culmination of my mother's decision, taken more than half a century ago, to make it possible by whatever means to allow and enable a 'girl child to get education'. I became the first among her twelve children to have the opportunity for secondary schooling and in due course also for university education. And throughout my life I have been conscious of that privilege, and tried to shoulder the responsibility and meet the expectations that came with that investment in me. Likewise, I will see this honour by the University as another investment in me against which I still need to deliver.

At this Campus I had the further privilege of being tutored by Lloyd Best, and I pay tribute to him for expanding my horizon from that of a rural village girl to a sense of identity as a Caribbean citizen, and a perception of a Caribbean replete with possibility. This certainly laid the foundation for my own evolution as a global citizen.

The University, and this Campus in particular, is associated in my mind with more than my intellectual development and philosophical outlook. It brought John Cropper to the Caribbean through its offering of a Diploma in Tropical Agriculture. He then served his entire professional life in this region, most of it through the University or other regional institutions. This Campus brought me in contact with him, and he became my life partner and my compass for 34 years. His support, encouragement, counsel, and subordination of his own interests in favour of my professional opportunities were unwavering.

I acknowledge the respective contributions of these three major influences to the course of my life and personal development.



Angela Cropper. Photo: PIPS PHOTOGRAPHY

Fortunately for me, not everyone who has had a hand in the shaping of Angela Cropper, such as she is, can be described as 'late'. There are many others still available to me, some here in this audience, who have guided, encouraged and assisted me along the way, whether as teacher, colleague, mentor, or friend. I thank them all.

My fellow Honorary Graduand, Mr Robert Riley thinks that "the real failure of the Caribbean is leadership in all its spheres." His statement echoed the words of Lloyd Best to me some 40 years ago that "the first obligation of leaders is to create new leadership." These words still ring in my ears. Mr Riley also said that at bpTT they are "developing people whose duty is to look beyond themselves."

I cannot think of any combination of insights that could better serve as inspiration and motivation to a graduate of The University of the West Indies, than those I have just cited. Create leadership. Look beyond yourselves.

The creation of The Cropper Foundation nine years ago reflects similar inspiration and motivation engendered in me by others.

Its creation is our way—John Cropper's and mine—of giving something back to the Caribbean and to this University, and of facilitating others to do so.

From my mother who could always "feed another mouth," as she would put it, however slender our resources, I came to understand that philanthropy is not about how much one has, but it is about what one does with what little one has.

The Foundation's rationale embodies these insights of demonstrating and creating new leadership and looking beyond oneself. I remain ambitious that we will better manifest these values as we go along. The Foundation is also a mechanism for continuing engagement and collaboration with University colleagues. I am encouraged by the University's commitment to such a relationship as evidenced in our Memorandum of Understanding, and I am pleased by the interest of this Campus Principal and the Vice-Chancellor to deepen this relationship.

"From my mother who could always 'feed another mouth,' as she would put it, however slender our resources, I came to understand that philanthropy is not about how much one has, but it is about what one does with what little one has."



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2009 UWI HONORARY GRADUATES

I and the Foundation are guided by the maxim that “Life is about more than personal advantage.” This guiding line was suggested by the first awardee of the Devanand Cropper Memorial Award which is offered at the London School of Economics, in recognition of students who have contributed to the wider community of LSE and beyond. Everything comes together in that tag line. It echoes Mr Riley’s motivation to “develop people who understand that their duty is to look beyond themselves.”

So how can these snippets from my modest story be made relevant for the Medical Graduands?

You have an opportunity through your own practice to contribute to leadership, and to be an example for our Caribbean leaders in their role to orchestrate the economic foundations, the cultural and social conditions in which we might realize that sea of Caribbean possibility of which Lloyd Best used to speak, and which has been a template in my mind.

Why do I say that? Because our economies and societies are sick and are in need of intensive, creative, compassionate and holistic care. Because patients are to you what the body politic is—or should be—to the leaders. Because your vocation exists to serve and sustain your patients’ health and well-being, and analogously, so should theirs.

How might you contribute such example to other realms of public service?

I expect that your training would lead you to take the extra effort to address the underlying causes of an ailment, not just the patient’s symptoms—that you would focus on prevention and counsel your patients towards routine cultivation of well-being, in order to avoid the need for emergency treatment or for life support systems. That you would practice early intervention in order to avoid later distress. That you would assist your patient to look within—at life style, at personal practice, at responsibility for oneself—and enlist the patient’s capabilities in the healing process.

For the Graduands of Science and Agriculture: Your patient is the Planet.

It is a living organism. It comes to you already in very bad shape. It needs a similar kind of intensive, creative, compassionate and holistic care. But there is no life support system outside of itself that you can offer to it. It also warrants attention to the root causes of its problems, not just to its symptoms. So it needs diagnosis and prescription and practice based on an understanding of the whole organism, and of the entire pathology.

You also might approach your duty in a manner that gives example for leadership elsewhere. The approach addressed to the Medical Graduands is equally applicable in your domains.

I expect your training would lead you to exemplify “the duty to look beyond yourselves.” That you would be guided by the sustainability imperative “to meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.” That your horizon would be the needs and interests of the next generation, as distinct, analogously, from looking just to the next election. That you would be good stewards of the patrimony of this region, its natural capital, which could be its enduring asset.

You all have a duty of care. We have a duty of care—beyond ourselves, for others, for the health and well-being of the citizens of this region, for our collective regional future, and for this Planet without which humankind will have no home.

GRADUATION HIGHLIGHTS



Christopher Laird spoke on behalf of the five honorary graduates at a cocktail reception hosted by St Augustine Campus Principal, Prof Clement Sankat on October 30. Listening from left: UWI Chancellor Prof George Alleyne, Honorees Yesu Persaud, Angela Cropper, Robert Riley and Prof Arnold Rampersad, UWI Vice Chancellor Prof E. Nigel Harris, Dr. Rohani Maharaj and her husband, Prof Sankat. *Photo: RICHARD SPENCE*



Honorary Graduate, Robert Riley with his beaming parents, Camilla and Rupert, after the graduation ceremony.



Christopher Laird and Prof Arnold Rampersad were jointly presented with their honorary degrees at the first of the four graduation ceremonies.



Chancellor Prof George Alleyne tips his mortarboard to the new holder of the honorary D.Litt, Christopher Laird. *Photos: PIPS PHOTOGRAPHY.*



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2009 UWI HONORARY GRADUATES

ABIDING VISION

Christopher Laird spoke on behalf of the honorary graduates at a reception on October 30, 2009.

Ever since I received news of this award I have wondered what it is that made an ordinary person, like me, develop a track record that the University would judge worthy of honour. The answer I keep returning to is inspiration. That is the only thing that could have driven me to my limits. Reading the published remarks of my fellow graduates the word “Vision” kept coming up. Something inspired in us a vision that informed and motivated our efforts.

As far as my own story goes, my parents have an abiding passion for this country and this region. Dreams of the development of a Caribbean civilisation were woven through and through our lives as we grew up. Federation was in the air and the young Derek Walcott, fresh from St. Lucia; the young Rex Nettleford, in Trinidad to pay homage to Beryl McBurnie; Carlisle Chang, Boscoe Holder, Noel Vaz, CLR James, the pioneering anthropologists Dan Crowley and Andrew Pearse, deeply engaged in the process of claiming space on the world stage for our culture, were all people who would be in our house at one time or another.

Imagine it: My father erected a full size Federal Flag in the front yard of our home in staid St. Clair, that beautiful, optimistic, innocent flag of sun and sea would greet me everyday as I walked home from QRC with its own tradition of intellectual advancement and service.

As an architect my father dreamed of being the Caribbean Oscar Niemeyer and building a Caribbean Brasilia when Port of Spain was chosen for the capital city of the Federation.

When I went away to study in London, I became immersed in the Caribbean Artists Movement under the leadership of such giants as Edward, now Kamau, Braithwaite, Andrew Salkey and John la Rose. There I met and engaged with Wilson Harris, the young Ken Ramchand, Shiva Naipaul, Wayne Brown, Michael Anthony, Aubrey Williams all inspired by the vision of a wider Caribbean civilisation. It is not a coincidence that three of the honorary graduates this year were all intimately involved with the Caribbean Artists Movement.

I returned home to further idealistic inspiration from Lloyd Best and those in the Tapia House Movement. In fact, the first time I met Angela Cropper was at a Tapia-



Christopher Laird. Photo: PIPS PHOTOGRAPHY

inspired teacher volunteer session at a school in Tacarigua nearly forty years ago.

These models and mentors inspired me with their faith in our place in the history and future of the world. As ordinary as I felt myself to be, I could not fail their faith. They and many others afterwards, too many to name here, ensured that I did the work and pushed ever toward the dream, the “vision.”

Many of those special souls are here today in spirit if not in the flesh as special guests of the honorary graduates. We honour them especially. My work in the arts and in mass media has been devoted to putting the achievements and the vision of those who inspired us and others like them before the eyes of subsequent generations, that we may as a society act on their inspiration.

There cannot be anything too special about my story. My fellow honorary graduates, I am sure, can attest to those influences that have inspired their work and supported them in maximising their potential.

That The University of the West Indies has seen it fit to give us this honour is wonderful. Recognition not only helps us who are recognised but also, we have to assume, identifies models for the inspiration of future generations.

In a world where greed seems to have supplanted vision, young people today are as hungry as ever for inspiration, eager to adopt a positive vision of our future. From my own experience as a student and as a manager of scores of young people in a creative enterprise like Gayelle, the most valuable gift a teaching institution can give its students is an inspiring vision of how they can best place their talents in actualising our ideals.

We are deeply appreciative of this special honour even while we are acutely, if not guiltily, aware of those deserving many, working with great fortitude in the grip of a vision that consumes them, yet to receive such prestigious recognition.

On behalf of my fellow honorary graduates I wish to acknowledge the investment The University of the West Indies is making with these awards and assure you that we are inspired to redouble our efforts and live up to the expectations implicit in this recognition.



“My father erected a full size Federal Flag in the front yard of our home in staid St. Clair, that beautiful, optimistic, innocent flag of sun and sea would greet me everyday as I walked home from QRC with its own tradition of intellectual advancement and service.”



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2009
UWI HONORARY GRADUATES

IN SEARCH OF THE SELF

A BIOGRAPHER ISSUES A CHALLENGE

This is an abbreviated excerpt of Honorary Graduate, Prof Arnold Rampersad's address to the Graduation Ceremony, Faculty of Humanities and Education, The UWI, St. Augustine, October 30, 2009.

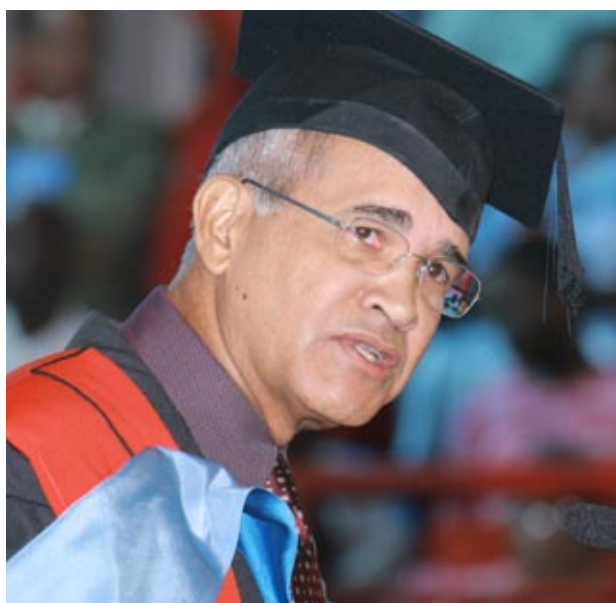
I thought I would speak to you this morning about the central target of my work as a scholar-critic committed to biography and autobiography. That target has been what we call “the self” in each of my scholarly subjects—the essence of the life in question. “The self” is a vexed term, but we know the word and some of its variations only too well: *selfish, unselfish, selflessness, self-absorbed, self-reliant, self-hating*, and so on. Is the “self” the same as what we call the soul? How do we know when we have found it?

Biography has often aroused criticism as a way of getting to the self. In his Nobel Prize speech, V.S. Naipaul pitted the novelist Marcel Proust against the critic Sainte-Beuve, who believed, in Naipaul's words, “that to understand a writer it was necessary to know as much as possible about the exterior man, the details of his life.” Not so, said Proust; Sainte-Beuve “ignores what a very slight degree of self-acquaintance teaches us: that a book is a product of a different self from the self we manifest in our habits, in our social life, in our vices. If we would try to understand that particular self, it is by searching our own bosoms, and trying to reconstruct it there, that we may arrive at it.”

The so-called father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, also took biographers to task. “Biographical truth is not to be had,” he insisted. “Anyone turning biographer commits himself to lies, to concealment, to hypocrisy, to flattery and even to hiding his own lack of understanding.” One might say that at least three selves seem to exist in any one person. First of all, there is the face one shows the world, often with an ingratiating grin. Next, we have a private self we reveal to our family. And then there is the self that one keeps largely hidden even from one's family. This is the self we often think of as painfully misunderstood, a place unreachable by others.

Who do we think we are? Who do you think *you* are? So much depends on your answer! To what extent are you aware of some dangerous gaps that exist between the face you show the world and the face you show your family, and between those faces and the face that faces you when you look into a mirror? We achieve honor and integrity by trying to align these different selves or parts of the self. However, a completely harmonious alignment isn't possible. It may not always be *desirable*. Here, what we call the self washes up against what Freud called the “ego” and then against what he called the “id,” the irrational world that artists, in particular, tap into in order to create inspired poetry or painting or music or acting.

We have an obligation to try to monitor these selves. This task entails a commitment to the famous maxim Socrates set down at his trial, just before his suicide, when he declared that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” “Know thyself” was the command written above the portals of the temple at Delphi. But what are the basic parts of the self? When we say, sometimes defiantly, “*That's just who I am*,” to what are we referring, or *deferring*? Each of these major parts can be both a source of strength and also a weakness. Perhaps the major parts of the self derive from



Prof Arnold Rampersad. Photo: PIPS PHOTOGRAPHY

our beliefs about the following factors: race or ethnicity; social class and/or money; gender—male, female, or in between; and religion. And there's at least one other. This is the nagging desire for freedom from the chains of the preceding four. This last category has dominated the modern world, especially our younger people. If “Know Thyself” was the motto of antiquity, as someone points out, we tend to want to follow Oscar Wilde's alternative command: “*Be Thyself!*”

Sometimes we must embrace race and ethnicity as the key to our selfhood. In probably the lowest point in modern African American history, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote of the dilemma of the black American, considered by some whites to be sub-human and forced to live in “a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other [white] world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others.... One ever feels his twoness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” Du Bois went on: “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.”

Nevertheless, race-pride and ethnicity-pride can be double-edged swords. One cannot detach oneself from the greater world without losing something precious. As John Donne wrote: “*No man is an island, entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main... Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. Therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*” Those of us who centre ourselves in race pride should ask ourselves: “How does this pride affect the way we treat our spouse, or our children? What consolation is it to a neglected or suppressed wife, or an

abused child, to know that her husband or his father is proud of his racial or ethnic origins? How is their hurt lessened?

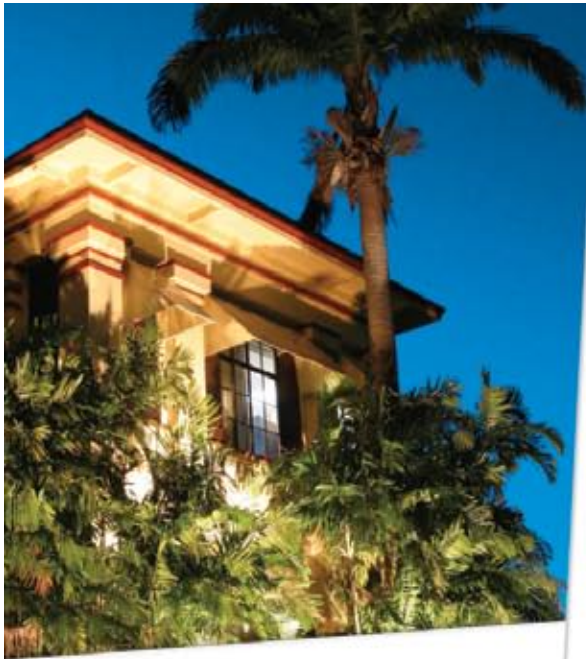
The same might be said of those of us who try to fix our personal star, or sense of individual self, by the dollar; or by fondling the idea of having aristocratic ancestors (who perhaps never existed). As for gender, its emergence for women as a main pillar of selfhood certainly had been long overdue. But it, too, can cut both ways. The acclaimed modern American poet Sylvia Plath confided to her journal her belief that “being born a woman is my awful tragedy.” Plath, by the impact of her writings, reminds us that tragedy can be a redemptive force. But what did her literary success mean to her when, still a young woman, she killed herself? Or to the small children she left behind? Or to her son, who recently, after living what seemed a fulfilled life, also killed himself?

And then there is religion. Conscience driven by religious doctrine can make us aware of our faults or sins, to the greater glory of God; or it can simply make us better human beings. But autobiography, the search for the self by the self (as it were), is often seen as incompatible with true faith in God. What, after all, is the worth of the individual self when measured against the power of Allah or Jehovah or other deities? Autobiography is largely a Western enterprise, while all of our great religions came out of the East. A deep belief in God should in theory efface the self. And yet, are we prepared to sacrifice secular autobiography, a form that has been so important to the growth of civilization?

For this reason, among others, I am sharply reminded that this morning we are assembled on doubly hallowed ground. The first hallowing has to do with the near-sacred dedication of this university to the pursuit of learning for the betterment of humanity. The other hallowed element lies in the place-name “St. Augustine.” How fortuitous to speak about the need to search for the self in a place named after the man universally credited with being the father of modern autobiography, through his grand achievement many centuries ago in *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.

St. Augustine's life story ends, to all intents and purposes, with his growth beyond a life of sin to his final surrender to God. Despite the fact that what he started as a religious enterprise evolved over the centuries into one mainly secular, he surely comforts those among you who find your deepest identity in God. “Seek for yourself, O man; search for your true self,” St. Augustine wrote. “He who seeks shall find himself in God.”

Whether you are religious or not, his core injunction rings with original power: “Search for your true self, O man.” This university has given you women and men a wonderful foundation on which to follow St. Augustine's injunction as you build your future. I know you will do so with a sense of integrity worthy of this fine institution, and also do so with the joy that comes with a life honorably and richly lived.



Unlocking



Caribbean



Potential

As the Commonwealth Caribbean's largest and longest standing university, The University of the West Indies (UWI) is the recognised leader in Caribbean scholarship.



Backed by a 60-year old tradition of excellence, UWI is a sought-after partner in the delivery of quality undergraduate and graduate programmes, and cutting-edge research focusing largely on the Caribbean and Caribbean issues.

Its linkages extend beyond the Caribbean to over 100 international universities and colleges, and numerous regional and global research partners and institutions.

UWI offers certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate programmes in Agriculture, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Law, Medical Sciences, Pure and Applied Sciences, and Social Sciences and is a primary source for research and expert advice in dealing with complex issues and challenges facing the Caribbean region. Internationally recognised as a centre of excellence on research and teaching related to the Caribbean.



GRADUATION CEREMONIES 2009
UWI HONORARY GRADUATES

OUR TIME TO STAND AND DELIVER

This is an abbreviated excerpt of Honorary Graduate, Robert Riley's address to the Graduation Ceremony, Faculties of Engineering and Law, The UWI, St. Augustine, October 31, 2009.

I came from very humble beginnings and I must thank my parents for the sacrifices they made to ensure that I had a proper education. It is not just about the material contributions: the fee and books, but about the values they instilled in me and the interest they showed in my development. They took some hard-earned money, scarce as it was then, to enrol me in a speed-reading course, which I did—a skill which I have used every day and one which has given me a distinct advantage in a world with an ever-growing pace of change and proliferation of information and opinion. ...

I can clearly recall that time 28 years ago when I first graduated from this campus with an honours Degree in Agriculture, convinced in my heart that I was going to change life in Trinidad and Tobago, and perhaps the world, forever. ... I believed then, and I still do now, that a country that could grow its own food and feed itself would have a true experience of independence.

My first job was that of plant pathologist at the Ministry of Agriculture Lands and Fisheries and somewhere in that Ministry I lost my dream. I lost the dream, but I did not lose the passion for development and independence, not just in the country but in the region.

I have since been a lawyer in private practice and then in the field of energy—oil and gas—moving forward always with this passion for people and the dream that we can in this region create a society that is sustainable through integration, high moral and ethical standards and the intellectual and artistic contribution that enables all citizens a better standard of life in an increasingly difficult world.

I have been very fortunate in the opportunity to lead the largest and most successful petroleum company in this country since the 1970s—fortunate in that I have always had great mentors and great support from every level in the company. When I was appointed Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BP Trinidad and Tobago 2001, I became the first national of this country to lead such a large multinational energy company in Trinidad and Tobago. I have merely had the privilege to guide, challenge, support, and serve a wonderful team of great individuals who all believe in the vision that in delivering extra-ordinary performance we would be pioneers in BP that would be part of the development of this country and the wider world and that we would positively affect the lives of every citizen.

...[As] graduates about to launch careers, there is an immediacy in your destiny that is of critical importance to the future of this region—a region in great challenge without a clear vision and without, at this time, the broad cohe-



Robert Riley. Photo: PIPS PHOTOGRAPHY

sive force of leadership to chart a sustainable future.

When you belong to this elite group, you must be prepared to give at least as much to society as you must give to yourself if you want to see society progress. Among you are people destined for leadership roles in this country.

To move forward beyond the doldrums of stagnation and decay that we find ourselves in as a region, we have to look for new solutions and approaches to problems. We even have to describe and interpret those challenges differently, in a way which creates forward momentum, rather than intellectual description without real action and results. We must begin to change the ordinary into the extraordinary. To do this, leadership in this region must become less self-seeking with greater emphasis on service to country.

The sort of performance that I am hoping for from you is the kind that was so easily becoming of people like Tubal Uriah “Buzz” Butler, who is one of the most formidable heroes of Trinidad and Tobago. Buzz Butler did not think twice about putting his own liberty at stake in order to champion the nobility of the notion that all men are equal and all men are entitled to fair and equal treatment. Butler is undeniably one of the founding fathers of nationhood in this country, and personally, I have always regarded him as the true father of the Nation.

I am not proposing that there is a need for you all to become sacrificial lambs; it is more about the need to move away from selfishness, self-seeking and narrow-mindedness. Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean as well, now suffer from a failure of leadership and the failure of leaders to lead with the interest of people in mind rather than their own personal interests. And my reference to leadership crosses into every sphere of leadership in this country. Change is required now—this is urgent—we have to get past debate into action or we perish. Climate change, energy shortages, viral terrorism, biological and man-made, together with no real sustainable earning capacity save our talent, point us to the challenges and the solution: fix ourselves and our way of thinking and being.

We have to accept that it is not going to be fixed for us. We have to stand and declare that we are going to be the ones to make the difference. To do this will take courage, deep skill and reflection, a commitment to the vision and a lot less to ourselves, but with the intellectual logic that we will only succeed if we pull together and work for the scale effect of the good of all.

I have referred to you more than once as an elite group. I do believe you are, but you must be mindful that true elites are not “elitist” in disposition or behaviour. ...

We really have no excuses for our failures. This institution produces people who are world class. I share with you now some news that I coincidentally received two days ago that speaks with pride about the outstanding quality of the UWI graduate: BP Trinidad and Tobago's engineers received the most commendations and awards among engineers from around the world at a recent BP group world-wide engineering conference. The vast majority of engineers at bpTT are UWI graduates. Does this not underscore the elitism of the UWI graduate considering that the BP group is the world's fifth largest energy company?

...Leadership is but one of your many challenges: the challenge of changing the leadership model in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. Our university graduates must be part of the vanguard of the elites for positive change in our society; an elite group that must serve and reshape the region.

Perhaps one of the unrecognised failures of our education system today is that we are almost by default, teaching our students to be selfish in their chosen professions and their style of leadership and the end result is that people are looking after themselves and not their country. I urge you now to break that mould.

“I have been very fortunate in the opportunity to lead the largest and most successful petroleum company in this country since the 1970s—fortunate in that I have always had great mentors and great support from every level in the company.”

UWI CALENDAR of EVENTS

DECEMBER 2009 – JANUARY 2010

International School for Young Astronomers

Monday 7 to Friday 18 December
Physics Department, UWI, St Augustine

The prestigious International Astronomical Union's (IAU) 31st International School for Young Astronomers (ISYA 2009) is being hosted by the Physics Department at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine from 7-18 December, 2009. Master's and PhD level Astronomy students from around the world will be participating in this school, which is being held in this region for the first time. The course will be run by Astronomy professors from Chile, USA, United Kingdom, France and Belgium. Since it is the International Year of Astronomy also, the ISYA will focus on other activities as well, including public lectures in Astronomy and a workshop for teachers. The chair of ISYA 2009 is Prof. Jean-Pierre de Greve (Belgium) and co-chair is Dr. Shirin Haque (Trinidad).

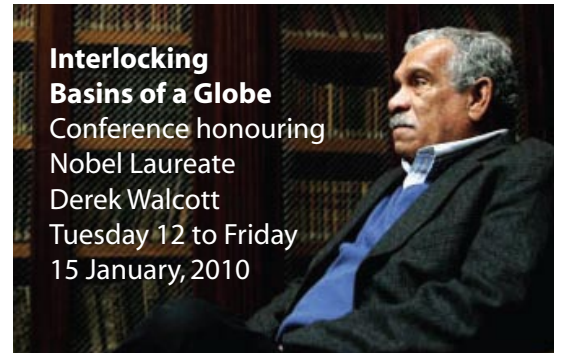
Further information can be found at www.sta.uwi.edu/fsa/physics or through the Physics Department, UWI at extensions 2051, 3113, 3846.

Introduction to Radiation Safety

Thursday 3 December
Room 101, 1st floor Block 1, Faculty of Engineering

The UWI's Faculty of Engineering, in collaboration with GNF Solutions Ltd, will be presenting a workshop titled, "Introduction to Radiation Safety," on Thursday 3 December, 2009, from 8.30am-4.30pm, at Lecture Theatre 3, 2nd Floor, Block 13, Faculty of Engineering. Ricardo Rodriguez, Fredrison J. Jagessar and Anthony Archibald will present the workshop, along with guest speaker Professor Stephan Gift, Professor of Electrical Engineering, Leader of Electronics Systems Group. The cost to attend the workshop is TT \$1,150.00 per participant and the package includes a seminar workbook, lunch and refreshments and a certificate of participation. All cheques should be made out to "Engineering Institute" (Linx available).

To find out more: The Engineering Institute, Faculty of Engineering UWI, Tel.: (868) 662-6267/(868) 662-2002 ext 2175/2197, Email: ceec@eng.uwi.tt, enainst@eng.uwi.tt



Interlocking Basins of a Globe
Conference honouring Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott
Tuesday 12 to Friday 15 January, 2010

Poet, playwright, essayist, critic, dramatist and painter, Derek Walcott, is recognised as one of the world's greatest living writers. Among his many awards and honours is the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature. The conference Interlocking Basins of a Globe will explore the multifaceted nature of Walcott's work. It invites reflections on his evolving thought and analyses of Caribbean civilization.

Papers are on the following topics:

Literary Ghosts and confrères

Here and Elsewhere:

The Politics of Exile and Belonging

The Visual Imagination

Rethinking the Sublime

Time, Landscape and Myth

Walcott's Cities: A Babel like Heaven

Caribbean Contestations

Walcott as Critic,

Commentator and Journalist



Hydro-Climatic Disasters in Water Resources Management

Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 December
Design Room 3, 2nd Floor, Block 13, Faculty of Engineering, UWI St Augustine

Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) in collaboration with The UWI Disaster Risk Reduction Centre, Caribbean Waternet and Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) present a workshop on Hydro-Climatic Disasters in Water Resources Management. Public and private individuals, NGO's/CBO's, social scientists, water and wastewater managers, legal practitioners and staff of local governments are invited to attend. Fee: TT\$1,500

To find out more, please contact Kevin Awai at ceec@eng.uwi.tt or eng.inst@eng.uwi.tt, or call 1-868-662-6267 or 1-868-662-2002 ext 2197/2175, or visit The UWI Faculty of Engineering website at <http://www.eng.uwi.tt/depts/ei/>

Bernstein's Chichester Psalms and Music for Christmas

Saturday 5 December, 2009
7.30pm, Daaga Hall, UWI, St. Augustine

Sunday 13 December, 2009
6pm, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Harris Promenade, San Fernando

The UWI Arts Chorale and the National Sinfonia Orchestra salutes Christmas with its rendition of Bernstein's Chichester Psalms and Music for Christmas. There will be two performances, both conducted by Musical Director, Jessel Murray: Tickets cost TT\$125.

For tickets, more information and to make reservations for St. Paul's, please call (868) 743-0841 or (868) 398-8576.

UWI TODAY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

UWI TODAY welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the paper. Please send your suggestions, comments, or articles for consideration to uwitoday@sta.uwi.edu.



UWI Fete
Sunday 17 January, 2010
St Augustine Campus, UWI.

It has been twenty years of awarding bursaries generated by the annual fete that has become one of the biggest social events on the Carnival season's calendar. The theme of this year's fete will be China.