

# UWITODAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES • ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

#### SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2020

## **St Augustine**



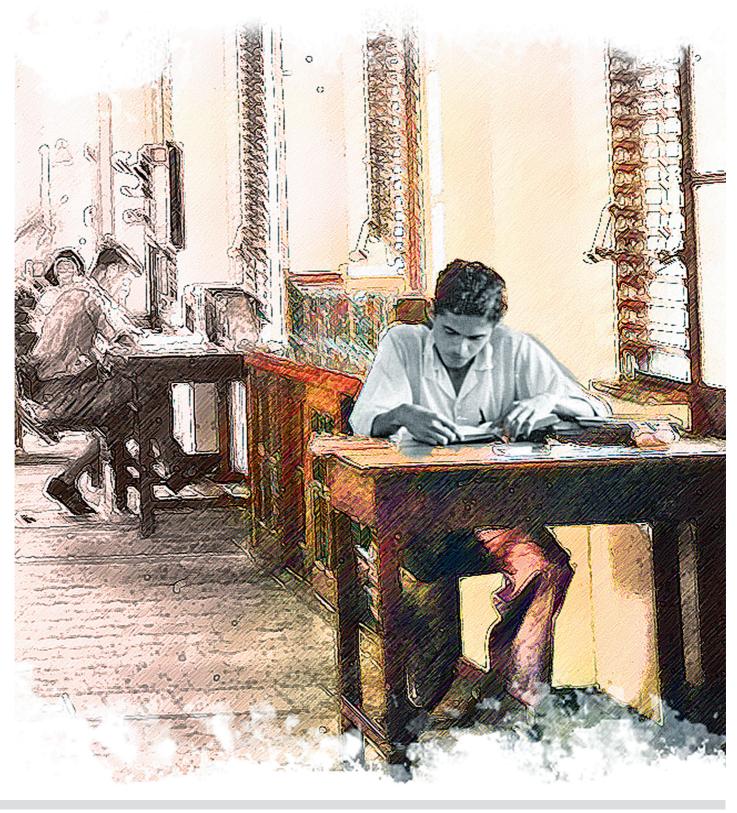
The very first matta season? A young student is engrossed in work at the library of the building that would one day become UWI St Augustine's Main Admin Building. It began as the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, then, on October 12, 1960, became the Faculty of Agriculture at the St Augustine Campus. From this simple beginning the campus would grow, adding more faculties, more students and staff, and becoming an integral part of Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. Students like this young man would go on to become

chart our course since Independence. It's an awesome legacy for a people, society and institution that are still so very young, with still so much to accomplish. And like many great legacies it started small, a small campus, a single student, working at a desk to better himself and by extension his country.

the leaders, scholars, scientists, business owners, artists and professionals that have helped to shape our society and

Happy Anniversary, UWI St Augustine.

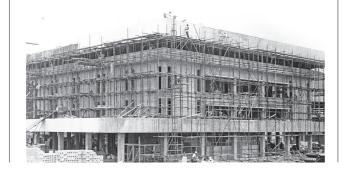
PHOTO: COURTESY THE WEST INDIANA AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY, UWI ST AUGUSTINE.



## ■ CAMPUS NEWS - 04 Point, Click, Innovate UWI Ventures launches web portal



## ■ OUR CAMPUS - 08 Brick by Brick, Page by Page Alma Jordan Library turns 50

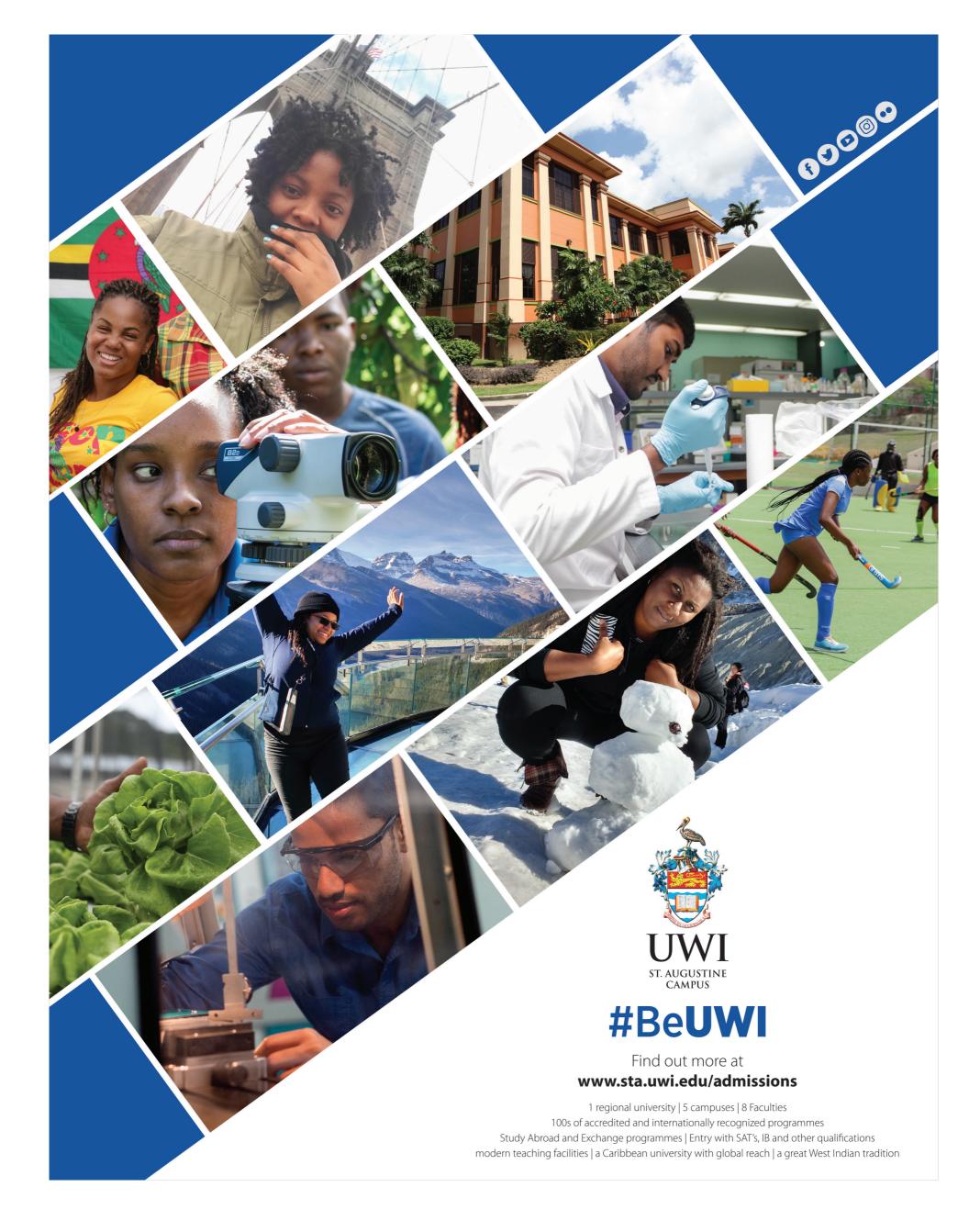


# ■ ARTS - 18 Decades of T&T's Words, Writers Literary Conference 2020



# OUR STUDENTS - 23 A Week of Virtual Vybz Guild Fest 2020





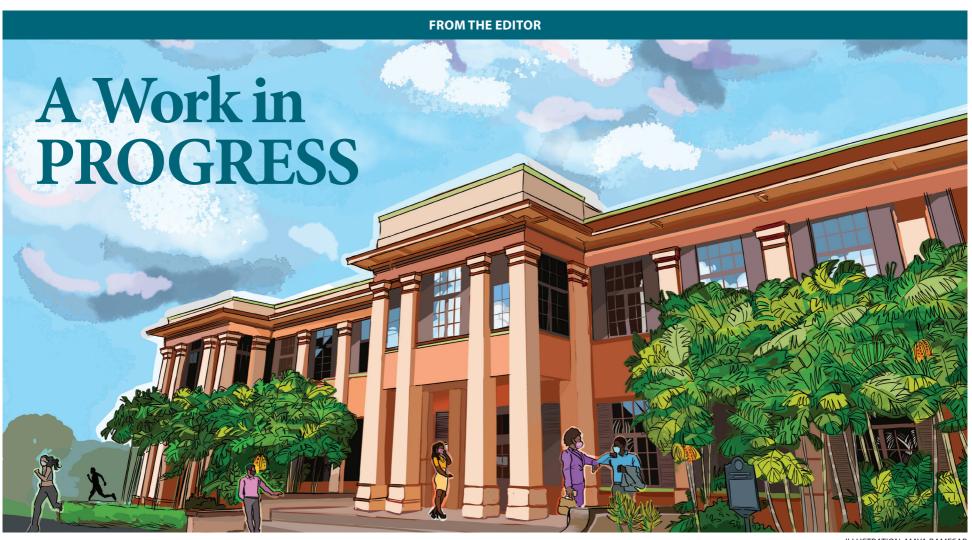


ILLUSTRATION: MAYA RAMESAF

As editor of UWI Today it's been my pleasure over the last two years to share the stories of the St Augustine Campus. It's an odd contradiction that even though the university is well-known many people have no idea about the amazing work of the people who make up the UWI community. It's even more fulfilling to share work that has the potential to improve society and help us solve our most persistent problems. At its core this is what UWI St Augustine is - an asset, a resource for making all our lives better.

Now is a good time to ponder the purpose and meaning of the St Augustine Campus as we celebrate its 60th anniversary. In going through the old records for this special commemorative issue of UWI Today, I was most impressed by the clarity of the campus' founders. They knew exactly what they wanted from this institution. They knew how it would fit in the larger plan of national and regional development post-Independence.

"Ours is a university community in the process of rapid growth, stretching our slender resources to what we think are desirable ends - provision of more trained people as quickly as possible," wrote Dr Dudley Huggins, UWI St Augustine Campus Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor in the 1966 issue of the Pelican Annual.

In the same issue, grandmaster of West Indies' cricket Sir Frank Worrell, writing in his capacity as Dean of Students, said: "it is the university's task to get its students to think in terms of making a contribution not only to the university itself, but to the people of their respective countries, and indeed, the people of the West Indies."

They wanted to prepare our people for selfdetermination and modernisation, and instil in them a sense of Caribbean identity and commitment to our collective advancement. As the second campus, with an initial focus on agriculture and engineering, UWI St

Augustine was very important to these objectives.

It wasn't easy. I think many of us familiar with the sprawling, well-populated St Augustine Campus of today would be surprised at how small and under-resourced the enterprise was in its beginning. In its first year (1960 to 1961) the campus had 67 students, in its second 96, in its third 583, and in its fourth 800. Today we have as many as 18,000. Many people, past and present, gave a supernatural effort in the generational endeavour that led to this expansion.

In the 1965 issue of the Pelican Annual, Dr Huggins, pointing to the quest for expansion and its perils, said, 'St Augustine has rapidly become a centre of increasing university interests and activities... This expansion has brought strains... The basic cause of our problems is that we took in more students than our present resources justify."

However, and most importantly, he adds that "the driving force has been our conviction of the need for an increase in the number of our people with skills."

In this issue we also celebrate the  $50^{\text{th}}$  anniversary of the establishment of the Alma Jordan Library (AJL), one of the region's greatest stores of knowledge. Most of the imagery you see in these pages come from the AJL's West Indiana and Special Collections Division, of which the staff provided UWI Today with incredible support in finding and preparing the photographs for our use.

We also looked at a legacy in the making. UWI Global Giving, a philanthropic initiative conceived by Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, has evolved from a campaign to meet the university's research and scholarship needs to a mechanism for supporting students during the COVID-19 pandemic. We spoke with Ms Minna Israel - a powerhouse in Jamaican banking, philanthropist and campaign chair of UWI Global Giving - on the initiative and its great success in 2020.

In this issue as well we had the chance to speak to three former campus principals - Professor Emeritus Compton Bourne, Dr Bhoe Tewarie and Professor Clement Sankat. This was especially enlightening as each of them had their own challenges to face, just as the principals before them. Whether it be the lack of resources, economic recession, competition from other institutions, unrest, or outdated campus cultures and practices, there have always been times of crises.

We are at such a moment again. One of the greatest in our history. But in the story of UWI St Augustine's founding and rise, despite the challenges, we can be inspired to continue moving forward. Maybe the next great expansion won't be in student population or campus construction. Perhaps it may be a spectacular redefinition of purpose. We look forward to sharing the stories.

Until then, happy anniversary UWI St Augustine. May the future bring much growth and happiness to the campus community.

**JOEL HENRY** – Ag. Editor, UWI Today

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**CORRECTION** In the print edition of the September 2020 issue of **UWITODAY**, the page 8 article entitled "Losing Race", includes the statement, "Compounding these are perceptions that AfroTrinbagonians hold the political and cultural hegemony, while Indo-Trinbagonians capitalise on their economic hegemony." The statement appears to be attributed to **Professor Rhoda Reddock**. This is not the case. Professor Reddock made no such statement. The article was amended in our online version to remove the sentence.

#### **CAMPUS NEWS**

# UWI Ventures opens ONLINE PORTAL FOR INNOVATORS

BY GILLIAN MOORE

How many brilliant ideas and inventions are languishing right now because of a lack of financing, business connections or marketing know-how?

UWI Ventures, an initiative that draws on UWI's business, finance and marketing ecosystem, is seeking to tap into those ideas and help realise them.

The entrepreneurship and innovation hub has just launched its new online portal, uwiventuresltd.com and new VenturesApp, to make accessing its services simple and seamless, providing mentorship, guidance and coaching 24/7, 365 days a year.

With the new digital platforms, clients will now have access to confidential entrepreneurship, business planning, innovation and research support, and access to partnerships and investment.

Referring to the September 1 website launch, UWI Ventures Executive Chairman and Professor of Practice – Innovation and Entrepreneurship Gerry Brooks declared: "The pandemic will not stop us!"

He said, rather than establishing a physical base of operations first, the decision had been taken to "lead with digitalisation", because "it is cost-effective, ubiquitous and efficient — online and 'real time'".

He advised that UWI Ventures is "a fully incorporated company, with a board of directors and a very strong private sector DNA.

UWI Ventures Chief Operations Officer Mr Julian Henry explained, "the website and the UWI VenturesApp, are interconnected. Logging into the website allows you to learn about us and the ecosystem, and how it functions. There is an access form that allows you to register directly for the VenturesApp and its coaching and mentorship services.

"We've created a seamless digital experience for our entrepreneurs and innovators."

Ĥenry said UWI Ventures is "a key part of the UWI ecosystem," which also includes the St Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (StACIE), the Entrepreneurship Unit (EU) and the faculties, centres and institutes at the campus.

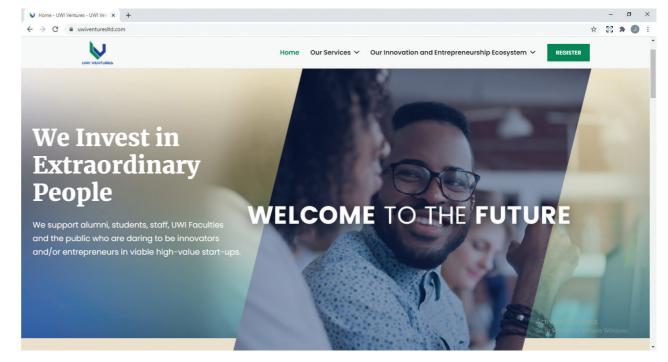
The coaching service, which is free for UWI staff and students, is also available to the wider public, he explained. There will also be a number of workshops offered with discussions on business ideation, business models, marketing strategies, cash flow planning, and management.

Brooks described the way the initiative works: "After getting (a project) to the stage of refining the business model and creating an investable proposal, UWI Ventures takes over strategically, looking at where potential market opportunities are, to position your idea with partners and investors to facilitate its commercialisation.

"If you have an innovation, we will interrogate it vigorously. If it is unique, we will, where appropriate, seek to license, patent and/or commercialise. UWI Ventures will also tap into its network of local, regional and global partners to ensure accelerated commercialisation and internationalisation of worthy projects."

"We work together to make that entrepreneurial journey successful."

Brooks said, "we have so many young students involved in agricultural, engineering, and chemistry projects. Many are worthy of commercialisation. With





With the new digital platforms, clients will now have access to confidential entrepreneurship, business planning, innovation and research support, start-up capital support and access to partnerships and investment.

the right fine-tuning and partnership, [their concept] could quickly become a multimillion-dollar idea".

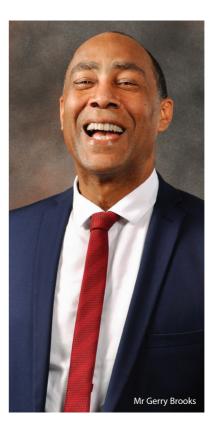
He said the company is working closely with the Government and private sector entities. They are also working regionally and globally to maximise potential links for innovators and entrepreneurs.

Through presentations and memoranda of understanding, he said, they are focusing on outreach: "where innovators have ideas and projects that could be of benefit to the third party institution. We are creating those linkages."

"We are also reaching out to them to avoid overlaps in the system and to avoid gaps, so instead of each entity doing its own thing, we can have a cohesive ecosystem."

Brooks added that UWI Ventures plans to produce regular reports on their activities, to provide "a formalised view of the system and be able to direct funding far more surgically."

Innovators and entrepreneurs are encouraged to visit the new site at **uwiventuresItd.com** to learn more.



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## **Head of the Class!**

60 years of educational excellence; helping to forge futures and bring out the best in the Caribbean, to be the best FOR the Caribbean.

Happy 60th Anniversary to The University of the West Indies.















#### UWI IN SOCIETY

When the world went into lockdown in March 2020, nobody imagined that the COVID-19 pandemic would cause unprecedented disruption to our lives. Yet, throughout human history, disruption presents opportunities for transformation. Before Caribbean societies embark on transformative action, however, we must have a clear diagnosis of the impacts of the pandemic.

COVID-19 protocols for practicing social distancing are challenging how people share space in their homes, offices, schools and public places. The virus is easily spread in overcrowded living conditions typically associated in the Caribbean with high density, low-income housing developments and informal/squatter settlements where self-quarantining is difficult. Access to water for good hygiene practices is problematic where irregular supply creates additional stress which contributes to poor health. Further, psychological impacts associated with crowded housing—in addition to the lack of access to indoor and outdoor recreational space such as bars, beaches, parks and playgrounds—are likely to be high and will need to be studied.

Long-term interventions focusing on reviewing current approaches to housing, land and basic services are crucial, as they could significantly shape the success or failure of urban and rural areas to respond to extreme events and future post-disaster recovery. Urban and regional planners and architects have a great opportunity to revisit how settlements and houses for marginalised communities are planned and designed to lessen crowding in living quarters. Public space is integral to human wellbeing, so a more concerted effort is needed to plan, design and manage these spaces to encourage safe use by women, children and the elderly. Such action is especially necessary given that the number of reported domestic violence cases has grown in the Caribbean during the pandemic. This may be linked to confinement measures, overcrowded living conditions, the lack of personal space, and limited opportunities to retreat to safe space. It is an opportune time for more effective management of public space at the local level.

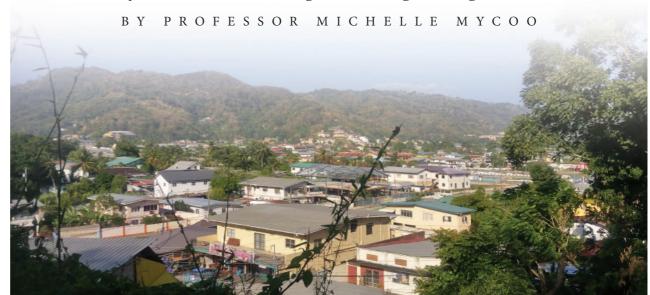
In this regard, the MSc programme in Urban and Regional Planning in the Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management at the St Augustine Campus is playing a vital part in addressing these issues through capacity building and knowledge transfer to young, aspiring professional planners. Its role in the vanguard of transforming land use planning and design to tackle the consequences of COVID-19 is paramount.

Over several decades, traffic congestion has been growing in Caribbean countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad. Transportation studies have revealed that in the case of Trinidad, commuters spent an average of three hours per day in traffic. COVID-19 safety measures included a stay-at-home directive which resulted in people working from home and home-schooling for children. Traffic congestion was non-existent for the first three months of the lockdown. Operating in a digital world based from home meant less gasoline consumption, a reduction in time spent on congested roadways, less stress associated with commuting, perhaps a more productive workforce, and environmental and health benefits such as cleaner air resulting from less vehicular exhausts.

Transportation engineers have long struggled with finding ways to minimise traffic congestion. As small islands with limited land, the building of highways has consumed a considerable amount of space. COVID-19 presents a golden opportunity for policymakers to explore a range of possibilities to reduce traffic congestion, using for example a work-from-home option if workers do not require frequent face-to-face interaction or a compressed work week allowing persons to work in their offices on a roster basis. Moreover, an innovative, bolder vision for the transportation sector must be merged with both land use planning and economic planning. This calls for interdisciplinary research and policy formulation.

## LIVING DIFFERENT

Can the COVID-19 disruption spur positive transformation for our homes, workplaces and public spaces?



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Professor Michelle Mycoo

The pandemic has brought major economic disruption to Caribbean economies, more so because of their integration into the global economy. Small islands are quite vulnerable to external shocks because they are open economies. Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has exacerbated the poverty trap for the Caribbean's poor and marginalised. Households faced with the rising cost of food items and consumer durables have felt inflationary impacts. Small businesses, including informal vendors, have been severely impacted and many have closed their operations.

The cost of sanitising offices and shops is high and burdensome to enterprises. Food security is threatened in islands that rely heavily on imported food such as The Bahamas. The real estate market has been significantly affected with several properties now unoccupied. Reduced



personal savings and remittances from persons living abroad, especially in the USA, UK and Canada, have exacerbated poverty among dependent persons. With increased government borrowing, higher deficits and reduced social safety nets, crime is already rising in some countries. Delayed investments in key infrastructure upgrading will have negative outcomes.

However, many positive outcomes have been associated with COVID-19. Some businesses have already become more innovative to survive the pandemic. For example, rapid transformation in conducting business using digital technology has led to economic efficiency and cost cutting in some business operations such as banking and insurance. During the early phases of the lockdown, internet providers stepped up in the fight against the virus. They offered free Wi-Fi to university students and are now making available free Wi-Fi hotspots for students at all levels.

The sector which can help Caribbean countries reduce their high food import bill, save much needed foreign exchange, boost employment opportunities and improve food security, is agriculture. COVID-19 gives countries like Trinidad and Tobago another chance at resuscitating this neglected sector with the potential for high economic returns. In this context, the role of urban and regional planning is critical in zoning agricultural land so as to reduce its conversion to housing and infrastructure.

Caribbean islands must now refocus on forging new transformative pathways for sustainable development. An optimistic outlook is an essential ingredient in moving forward. Disruption is good for a societal reset. Policy grounded in science and sound interdisciplinary research is pivotal to creating a Caribbean capable of innovation and resilience. The University of the West Indies is a major stakeholder in setting the pace and vision for transformation.

#### ■ REGIONAL NEWS



Ms Minna Israel

Over the past several months, an invisible and deadly disease has ravaged almost every corner of the globe, including the Caribbean. Many families, government agencies, organisations, and even countries have halted normal operations and adopted new protocols to preserve life and safety. Charitable causes have increased exponentially in response to the needs of the

vulnerable. UWI Global Giving, too, has increased its momentum.

The 2020 UWI Global Giving campaign, initially slated for one week in August, shifted from its traditional focus on infrastructure development, research and scholarship funding to specifically addressing new issues arising in society due to this pandemic. "It was appropriately extended beyond a one-week event to a month-long appeal," explained Minna Israel, Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of The UWI and the Campaign Chair for the Global Giving Programme. The extension was to support students and parents that were negatively impacted by the novel coronavirus.

"Nearly 10,000 students—approximately one in five—have experienced financial instability and negative social circumstances of the COVID-19 fallout," Israel said.

The pandemic certainly demanded a radical shift in approach as many planned fundraising events, which usually brought the alumni and the community together, were either cancelled, postponed or delivered virtually. However, the patrons of this massive campaign were not deterred. Israel explained that the campaign focused on encouraging a large number of individuals to give small amounts. The response has been phenomenal.

"The initiative has seen donations from alumni and friends of The UWI exceeding this year's target of US\$500,000", Israel enthusiastically revealed. In time for the start of the new academic year, which began in September, the campaign has already offered 35 scholarships valuing up to US\$5,000 each, and established two endowment funds totalling US\$350,000. "Even more encouraging is the fact that contributions are still coming in on the online donation platform, www.uwi.edu/giving." In its 5th year since the launch of UWI Global Giving, the response suggests that the goal of building a philanthropic culture is being realised.

UWI Global Giving was conceptualised by Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, and the inaugural campaign launched on August 1, 2016—Emancipation Day for most of the region's territories. The programme pays tribute to that past while raising the spotlight on education as one of the most critical means to freedom, particularly for the current generation of youth.

It was a direct response to the fact that regional governments' subventions to The UWI, while significant, were insufficient to adequately cater to the path of advancement which the university has been exploring. Israel stated "there was a growing need to diversify revenue sources", and so, Global Giving was birthed. This inspiring concept sought to engage the alumni and other stakeholders in philanthropic efforts to increase access to education. It operates annually under the theme, "Emancipate, Educate, Donate".

UWI Global Giving applauds the visionary creator of the project, Vice-Chancellor Beckles, who continues

## **UWI Global Giving**

A philanthropic culture takes root

BY JODY ROBINSON



to lead this effort of sustained student development. Earlier in May, he rallied the university's senior executive leadership to allocate a percentage of their salaries for three months towards a student hardship fund called UWI Cares, providing the foundation for the 2020 crowdfunding

campaign.

The entire UWI community of alumni, students, friends, private and public sector corporations and international bodies are recognised as superheroes in UWI Global Giving Campaign 2020, especially as they continued to show invaluable support during this crisis. Amazingly, one of their biggest donors is a 93-year-old alum, Dr Doyle Slifer, who not only made an incredibly substantial contribution but encouraged others to donate and add the initiative to their wills, as he has done.

Minna Israel is no stranger to the financial world. She has had a long and successful banking career in the Caribbean. On her journey, she shattered many glass ceilings. Israel is Scotiabank's first female Country Head in the Caribbean and Latin America, and the first female president of the Jamaica Bankers' Association. In 2017, she was recognised with the "Women Making a Difference Award" from the International Women's Forum, sharing the stage with other remarkable women, including former US First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"I built my foundation on The UWI," says Israel, who attained a Bachelor's in Management Studies at UWI Mona, which she describes as a personal investment with highly anticipated returns which she now enjoys. In 2011, she was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree at The UWI. She shortly thereafter re-joined the UWI family and was appointed Distinguished Business Fellow at the Mona School of Business & Management (MSBM). After 18 months of pro-bono work with the university, increasing alignment with the private sector and mentoring final year business students, she was selected as the special advisor on Resource Development, to the Vice-Chancellor.

In this capacity, she led a team that spearheaded

engagements and solicitations for financial support from corporations, international partners, foundations and alumni, which helped to propel The UWI's development, and impacted its standing as the number one university in the Caribbean and among the top in Latin America and the world as ranked by Times Higher Education.

Re-emphasising that "all of us can make it happen", Israel recognises all past and present donors and patrons of UWI Global Giving, asserting that "this is one of the ways members of the UWI community can make an impact at the university by contributing to Caribbean development by ensuring the future of the region's human resource capacity."

Among these patrons are notable figures such as Sir Rodney Williams, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda; Ms A Missouri Sherman-Peter, Ambassador, Permanent Observer for (CARICOM); Sir Colville Young, Governor General of Belize; PJ Patterson, former Prime Minister of Jamaica; Sir SW Tapley Seaton, Governor General of Saint Kitts and Nevis; Justice Anthony Thomas Carmona, former President of Trinidad and Tobago; Sir George Alleyne, former Chancellor of The UWI and Dame Pearlette Louisy, former Governor General of Saint Lucia.

We are almost at the end of this year, but the 2020 Global Giving Campaign is far from over. The impact has been far reaching, but particularly important as The UWI community navigates this new normal while assisting many affected students.

As Vice-Chancellor Beckles, puts it, "This is the time for our young people to embrace university education. It is not the time to retreat. One step back is to place their future, and that of their family, community and nation on the back burner".

UWI Global Giving is creating these opportunities uninterrupted.

Persons are encouraged to routinely visit the Global Giving webpage at **www.uwi.edu/giving** to stay in touch, become an advocate and inspire others to give to this noble cause.

#### ■ ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Fifty years ago, a building that would become one of the richest repositories of information in the region opened its doors for the first time. The Alma Jordan Library, on the southern side of UWI's St Augustine Campus, would become a haven for research and study. It has evolved to reflect the times and the needs of its users, while striving to maintain its tradition of excellence and service.

The serene seat of knowledge as it is known today had a controversial start. Paid for by the US government as part of negotiations to leave their military base in Chaguaramas, the edifice was initially to be named the JFK Library, after the late American president.

But the year was 1970. UWI students crying "black power" were driving a national movement for racial equality. They would not abide the naming of their new institution after an "imperialist" figurehead. The administration acquiesced: for years, the building would be known simply as the Main Library.

The label was apt. The library blossomed under the leadership of its first Campus Librarian, Dr Alma Jordan, who worked to develop the collections of books and audio visual resources and whose name it would eventually adopt. It would become the central library of not only the St Augustine Campus, but the others as well.

The network of libraries includes one at the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business, the Norman Girvan Library, the Medical Sciences Library, the School of Education Library, the Seismic Research Centre Library and the Patience Theunisses Memorial Library at Mt St Benedict.

The four-storey Alma Jordan building houses 400,000 books and is split into sections including Engineering, Food and Agriculture, Humanities and Education, Law, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, and West Indiana and Special Collections — the latter being a unique treasure house of Caribbean history.

It was his background in History that led to Dr Glenroy Taitt's recruitment to work in the West Indiana and Special Collections section in 1997. But he still remembers the first time he walked through the doors in 1977. It was the year before he started his undergraduate studies and, he recalls, "we form six students snuck into the library on a couple of evenings, because we had got word this was a valuable place to go and study. I was totally in awe of this huge building. I just could not believe it!"

Years later, having lectured at the History Department at UWI from 1990 to 1991, and having earned a Doctorate in History from Sussex University in England in 1997, he took on a prestigious first assignment at West Indiana: cataloguing the newly acquired CLR James Collection, which contained the late chronicler's extensive personal library, letters, photos and manuscripts.

Located on the second floor, West Indiana is a jewel in the library's trove. Dr Taitt explains: "It is the section of



A librarian assists a researcher.

the library that focuses on our region, largely the English-speaking Caribbean.

"It features many published and unpublished documents and primary, raw source materials — original items that researchers want to dig into. There are rare books and archival materials, journals, magazines, newspapers, and many historical papers published in the region or about the region."

These resources are preserved using archival folders, envelopes and boxes. Access is carefully regulated.

Dr Taitt notes that because UWI is funded by regional governments — and therefore taxpayers — "the library, through West Indiana, has a responsibility to society".

Former Campus Librarian Jennifer Joseph notes that the West Indiana Collection is being digitised. The shift towards electronic library services has been ongoing. "I look back now at the strides we made in modernising services," she says.

After working at libraries in the private and public sector, in multinational organisations like the World Bank and at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Ministry of Finance in Trinidad, she was somewhat surprised at the slow pace of technological advancement at UWI's library systems when she joined in 1998. She had to share a desktop computer with another member of staff.

"At that time, the special libraries in the public service were ahead of UWI in terms of providing electronic services and had started digitising their inventory," she says.

But by 2000, things were changing. The library management lobbied the Bursary, stressing the importance of investing in online resources.

"These resources allowed us to consolidate the excellence in service that Alma Jordan was known for. We built on the service, establishing policies and providing the much-needed equipment. Now we can give even more efficient, personal, detailed support. You can access information anywhere, anytime," she explains.

In her role as University Librarian, she worked closely with the other UWI campus librarians at Mona, Cave Hill, and the Open Campus seeking to streamline and modernise the institution and to fulfil the goal of "one university". It was at this time that UWILinC was established. UWILinC is an e-Information portal which allows users to search for information in the libraries across the region through a single interface.

She says she had good rapport with staff of all the campus libraries, "because we all wanted the same thing".

Joseph sees the library staff as a family, and she is keen to credit the contributions of her predecessors, former Campus Librarians Professor Margaret Rouse-Jones and the woman she calls "the mother of the library", Alma Jordan herself.

It was Joseph that suggested the building be named in



A very young Alma Jordan in the library of the University College of the West Indies in 1961.

## UWI's seat o CELEBRATES F

BY GILLIA



REE AT Nelso

"King" David Rudder, one of T&T's greatest calypsonians with AJL staff at an event in 1991

# f knowledge FIVE DECADES

AN MOORE

on a visit to the AJL with St Augustine al Professor Maxwell Richards (centre e-Chancellor Dr Aston Preston (right).

her honour, in 2011: "I felt we needed to recognise her. She is a formidable lady — the inveterate professional."

Joseph too, values professionalism: "I am old fashioned. I think staff should dress properly — you can't look like the students! If a user walks in they should be able to identify staff."

Her term saw the introduction of monogrammed polo shirts for personnel, and even monogrammed blazers for formal occasions — or long hours in the library's "freezing"

From childhood, Joseph wanted to be a librarian. She went to UWI Mona in 1975 to study for a post-graduate diploma in Library Studies, then to Columbia University in 1984, earning her Masters of Science in Library and Information Studies.

"Sharing information and helping people find information has always been rewarding," she says.

Current Campus Librarian Frank Soodeen succeeded Joseph in 2015. He recently started his second five-year term, and sees his role as building on the work of his "illustrious predecessors," and "the management and staff who have served the institution over the years".

He says he is "driven by the need to support our students, faculty and major stakeholders".

Soodeen started in the library's IT Services Division, and as director he has "focused on transforming it from dealing with books and analogue content, to the point where we are now."

He believes "you have to know your audience and understand what their needs are", but adds, "those needs, as well as their information seeking behaviours, have been changing fairly quickly over the years. Our responsibility

as a library is to ensure that our services and delivery of information products keep in sync

with those changing needs."

Soodeen sees the library as an extension of the classroom and as central in fostering the academic success of the students and staff.

"We are really an online environment now for the most part, with a number of electronic resources," he adds.

One of the platforms Soodeen is most proud of creating is the UWISpace institutional repository, developed to capture the intellectual output of the university

"When I started as a librarian in 1999, I realised many students didn't know a lot about digital literacy, including the basics like how to save a file to a directory or how to search the internet," he says.

Importantly, many did not understand how to discern reputable sources from questionable ones, a crucial skill when doing research.

He remembers spending many lunch hours during his first year teaching users to use the programmes and apps.

Soodeen says, "over the last 15 to 20 years, [students] are much better versed in dealing with computers and technology. Now, it seems that a lot of our children are born with a computer chip in their heads! So it's also critical for our faculty to know how to use the programmes and applications involved in delivering teaching in this current environment. It's an entirely different type of pedagogy, adjusting to which can sometimes pose a challenge both to the lecturer and the student."

Looking towards the future of AJL and libraries in general, he points out that it "has to be built around strengthening the network of university libraries across the region. There has to be a thrust toward globalisation and online learning."

He says: "Because of COVID-19, we are going to be online for a very long while." He feels even after this initial stage, "we will probably continue with a hybrid, blended approach. The UWI libraries have a big role to play in supporting and growing this online learning and teaching environment. Our libraries must move in this direction — it cannot be business as usual."

Frankly, students prefer online learning. What is frustrating for them in the Caribbean is infrastructure that doesn't support it — the slow rate of internet penetration, freezing screens, low bandwidth, etc, particularly in underserved communities."

He adds, "it's challenging for a lot of people, but AJL is committed to helping guide the process along. We have to use Caribbean content to develop digital learning, stop relying on foreign texts, and push for publication in the region. Our libraries must move in this direction — it cannot be business as usual."

AJL's 50th Anniversary celebrations have included a display on the 50th anniversary of the Black Power Movement in March, a festive staff luncheon in January, a treasure hunt, a student essay-writing contest, and an exhibition of works by artist Donald "Jackie" Hinkson (who also donated more than 70 books of his original artwork and sketches to the West Indiana and Special Collections Division).

Gillian Moore is a writer, editor and singer-songwriter.

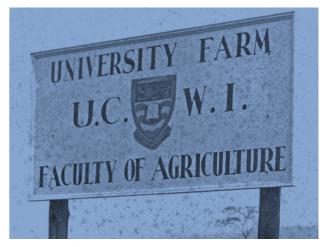


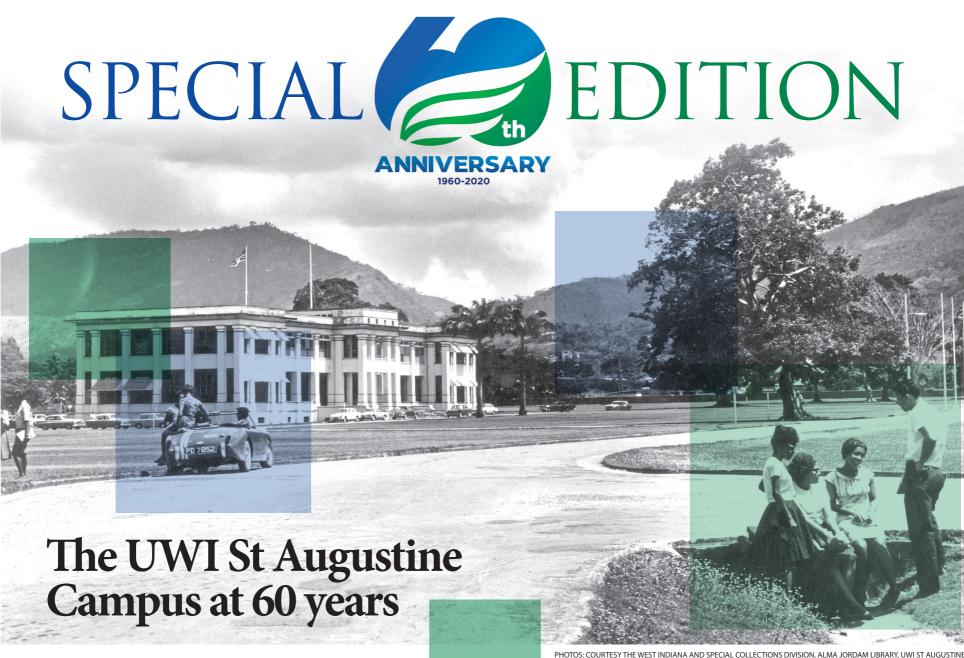
A student looks at a new collection on display.

An archived photo of AJL's first floor.















#### lacksquare the UWI ST augustine campus $60^{ ext{th}}$ anniversary



## From Strength to Strength

**Mr Robert Bermudez** Chancellor of The University of the West Indies

he St Augustine campus of The University of the West Indies has grown from strength to strength over its 60 years of delivering quality academic instruction, research and innovation services to the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and the world. From early beginnings in St Augustine at the former Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, the campus has expanded to include satellite campuses at Mount Hope, Penal-Debe and a teaching hospital at Couva. St Augustine hosts the only Faculty of Food and Agriculture within The UWI. This, I believe, is not only an appropriate tribute to its beginnings, but also makes a clear statement to stakeholders that the role of agriculture remains central to development of the country and the region.

The leadership of the campus past and present, are commended for their vision and commitment to ensuring a continuous upward trajectory for the campus over the years. The year 2020 has proven to be a challenging one with a global pandemic creating uncertainty and unpredictability in all our lives. Principal Brian Copeland and his management team, together with their remarkable academic, administrative and support staff, were unrelenting in their efforts to ensure that students were not disadvantaged in the transition to online teaching. I salute them for bringing the 2019-2020 academic year to a successful close.

As we look to the future, I am confident that prudent management and adherence to an admirable vision, will ensure that the campus continues on a positive development path.

Heartiest congratulations!



## A Strong and Focused **Academic Enterprise**

**Professor Sir Hilary Beckles** Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies

ixty years ago, the St Augustine Campus was established in Trinidad and Tobago, building on the foundation of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. It is fitting that a discipline so fundamental to the history and development of the Caribbean should be the bedrock on which would rise a strong and focused academic enterprise, committed to research, innovation, entrepreneurism, excellence and service. St Augustine has expanded to include satellite campuses at Mount Hope, Penal-Debe and a teaching hospital at Couva. It is undoubtedly the most significant provider of higher education services in Trinidad and Tobago. This metamorphosis is as a result of the vision and hard work of the current and past leadership of the campus and the ongoing commitment of successive governments of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and other contributing countries to The University of the West Indies. I thank them for all their support.

In this year of COVID, characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability, a dynamic Principal, Professor Brian Copeland, together with a highly qualified and committed team of academic and administrative staff across eight faculties and specialised centres and institutes, demonstrated in a most magnificent manner what teamwork and a positive attitude to ensuring delivery of academic instruction to more than 15,000 students, could achieve. Enrolment this semester, for the 2020-2021 year is at 15,500, a remarkable confirmation of the confidence that the people of the region have in the St Augustine Campus and by extension, The University of the West Indies.

Onward and upward!

Blessings!



## Our Brand, **Our Success**

Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to The UWI St Augustine!

Sharon Christopher Chair of The UWI St Augustine Campus Council

ongratulations on building a legacy that started 60 years ago with the birth of the second UWI campus. From the moment the first small cohort of students signed up for accessible education at the then University College of the West Indies, The UWI St Augustine brand was forged. Over the years, our campus has become synonymous with a high standard of education and Caribbeanbased innovation, and has acted as a catalyst for national development.

The UWI St Augustine started with an emphasis on agricultural research, and now our faculty, staff, students, and alumni live out their Pelican Pride showcasing excellence in their research, knowledge creation, and service across all eight of our faculties including Engineering, Food and Agriculture, Humanities and Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and most recently, Sport, as well as in our centres, institutes and units.

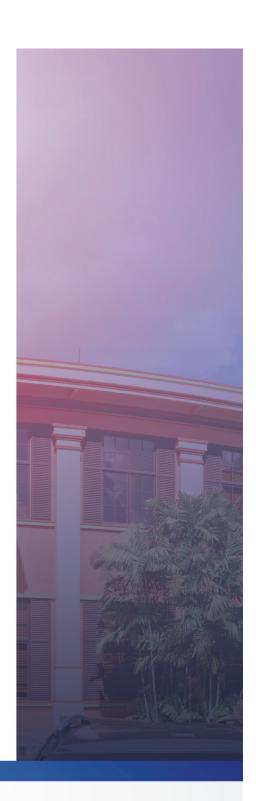
Over its 60 years, the campus has evolved as a global authority on Caribbean academia, and as an agent of cultural change. UWI St Augustine has produced thousands of thought leaders who advocate for justice and equity for all, and many other important causes that advance human and planetary health.

Creating a successful brand that has sustained for six decades in the hearts and minds of people all over the Caribbean diaspora and the globe is an extraordinary accomplishment. I salute the faculty, staff, and students of The UWI St Augustine and look forward to continuing to make our brand our success.









## **OUR PELICAN PRIDE**

## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE UWI ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

October 12, 2020, marks 60 years since the establishment of the St Augustine Campus of UWI St Augustine. Our anniversary logo uses the pelican which stands atop UWI's coat of arms, symbolising care for the young. We have chosen to focus on the pelican's wings, embodying flight, momentum, the serenity of the sky, and ascension. There have been many ups and downs over our 60-year-history, just as we are challenged today. Yet one thing remains consistent: UWI St Augustine keeps moving forward, keeps rising. We will continue to do so even as we celebrate our founding and the legacy of education, scholarship and leadership that followed.

**UWI St Augustine keeps moving forward, keeps rising.** 

#### lacksquare the UWI ST augustine campus $60^{ ext{th}}$ anniversary



## Pelican Pride

**Professor Brian Copeland** St Augustine Campus Principal

We continue to use our knowledge and research for the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago. From the last century to now, The UWI has always stepped up to lend support and guidance to Caribbean societies grappling with unprecedented challenges.

his year, 2020, is a significant year for The UWI St Augustine. It marks the 60th anniversary of this institution that has shaped the lives of so many of us. Ours is truly a great story. It's a Trinbagonian story. In October 1960, Sir Solomon Hochoy was just about three months on the job as Governor of Trinidad and Tobago. Dr Eric Williams was our premier. Donkey carts could be seen in the city and not just in the country. Life was still complicated but at a slower pace.

On October 12, 1960, Patrick Buchan-Hepburn – Lord Hailes - who was first and last Governor-General of the soon to be defunct West Indies Federation, formally handed over the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture to the University College of the West Indies. At that historical moment, the St Augustine Campus became the second Campus of what would become The University of the West Indies, following the Mona Campus in 1948. Today, there are five Campuses, including Cave Hill, Five Islands, and the Open Campus.

The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was then 38 years old and internationally renowned for its research in tropical agriculture. Top scientists conducted research on cash crops such as cocoa and citrus, and the impact of their work was felt across the English Commonwealth and beyond. The St Augustine Faculty of Food and Agriculture, our oldest faculty, continues in that tradition.

Sixty years later, the St Augustine Campus now

boasts of eight faculties, the newest being the Faculties of Law and Sport. It has grown from a handful of students to an annual enrolment of some 14,000, an annual graduation rate of about 3,500 students and an alumni family of roughly 90,000.

This campus has also grown far outside of its St Augustine home base. It encompasses the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex; the School of Nursing in El Dorado; the Department of Creative and Festival Arts on Cheesman Avenue; the Agricultural Innovation Park in Orange Grove, and most recently, the Penal-Debe home of our South Campus - earmarked to anchor the UWI Global School of Medicine. This milestone celebration, therefore, is one in which students, faculty, and staff, past and

Over the decades, we have faced many challenges as part of our story, I dare say none worse than what 2020 has presented. Once again, our campus community hunkered down to ensure that students, faculty, and staff remain safe. We continue to use our knowledge and research for the benefit of Trinidad and Tobago. From the last century to now, The UWI has always stepped up to lend support and guidance to Caribbean societies grappling with unprecedented challenges. We have never shirked our responsibility to this Region. We are transforming to thrive in this new reality.

In just 70 years, The UWI is one of the world's most globalised universities, with nine global centres spread

across North and Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Times Higher Education ranks The UWI among the top 600 universities in the world for 2019 and 2020, and the 40 best universities in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2018 and 2019. The UWI is the only Caribbean-based university to be on these prestigious lists.

Looking back, we can take pride in our St. Augustine story. Our pelican pride is embedded in our creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit. Our faculty, students, and alumni have achieved remarkable successes in developing new technologies, fighting for the rights of our Caribbean people, uniting in the fight against COVID-19, advocating and informing climate change policy, winning Paralympic medals – and so much more in our 60 years.

Now, we are writing a new story, one of resilience and accelerated advancement in the face of a global pandemic. We will not emerge financially unscathed from this period. But, be assured, your university and this campus will use all the qualities I mentioned to radically adapt and contribute to the revitalisation and development of

We are shaping the future of this country, this region, and our world through community engagement, research, outstanding teaching, and creative contributions. This is a time to celebrate but let us also reflect on the story we want to tell in the next 60 years.

Happy 60th anniversary, UWI St Augustine!



## Resilience like a Diamond

**Mr Warren Anderson** 

President of the UWI St Augustine Guild of Students

t is fitting that our campus is celebrating its diamond jubilee during such a tumultuous time in world history. A diamond is the ultimate terrestrial symbol of endurance and, as the campus endured so too has the Guild of Students.

Diamonds need pressure, heat and time. Student society at St Augustine has provided a transformative pressure and heat like that from within the belly of the earth. From the oft referenced 1970's Black Power Revolution to the Security Protest of 2018, the Guild stands on the forefront of social justice and human rights, leveraging our knowledge and passion to execute

our duty to the citizenry. Our associations and clubs are the catalyst for well-rounded and cultured academics engaged in discourse and action towards a holistically developed and integrated Caribbean. Time has allowed us to advance the Guild into an organisation that has maintained our voice on domestic and global matters while making internal strategic strides in professionalism, sustainable advocacy, entrepreneurship, community engagement and governance excellence.

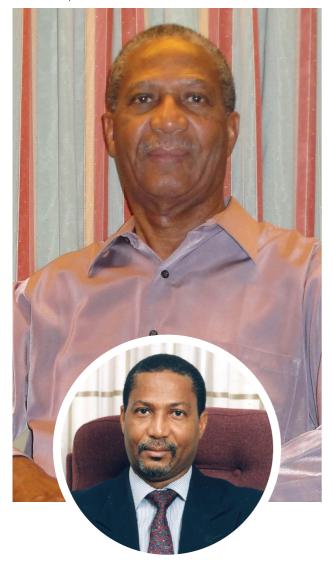
As Pelicans with diamond status, we are proud to be a part of the cutting-edge developments and laser-sharp focus that is the St Augustine Campus legacy. Shine on, Pelicans; see you at

#### lacksquare the UWI ST augustine campus $60^{ ext{th}}$ anniversary

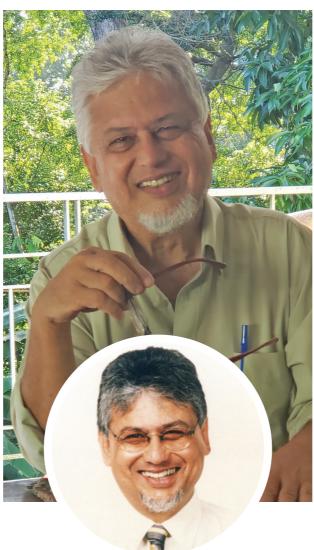
## The Chief Executives

BY JOEL HENRY

**Professor Compton Bourne** 



Dr Bhoendradatt Tewarie



Professor Clement Sankat



f you look at a map of the St Augustine Campus or had a bird eye's view of its green expanse, right at the centre you'd see the Office of the Campus Principal. For decades it has been the base of operations and sometimes residence of the person most responsible for the welfare of the institution and the people that comprise it.

A UWI campus principal however, is more than the most senior of administrators. UWI, after all, is more than a university. It's a unique asset of Caribbean society.

"From the last century to now, The UWI has always stepped up and stepped forward to lend support and guidance to Caribbean societies," says Professor Brian Copeland, the current occupant of the campus principal's office.

Copeland, an engineer and innovator who has focused his tenure on unlocking the campus' - and the wider society's—creative and business potential, is the eighth campus principal at UWI St Augustine.

"Our story," he says of the campus community in his commemorative address on its 60th anniversary, "is a Trinbagonian story."

Copeland is not the only campus principal to recognise the bond between UWI St Augustine and its host country.

"As a boy growing up in Curepe (a nearby community) with other friends, a number of whom were QRC boys, we often would cycle together on the

St Augustine Campus, watch football or cricket games in session, or sit on the benches and talk," recalls Dr Bhoendradatt Tewarie.

Tewarie, who served as campus principal from 2001 to 2007, is incredibly accomplished, a seeming requirement for the position. Government minister, Member of Parliament, chairman of several national boards, policymaker in the educational space, and of course an extremely successful educator and administrator.

Coming from Berbice County in Guyana, Professor Emeritus Clement Sankat (campus principal from 2008 to 2016) might not have been born and raised in Trinidad, but his connection to the country and campus is just as strong.

"I came to the St Augustine Campus in 1969 as an undergraduate student in engineering and have been part of the community ever since," he says. "For more than 47 years UWI St Augustine has been part of my life."

Sankat is currently the President of the University of Belize, another achievement in a career packed with professional and academic success; breakthroughs in research and development; and contribution to the region through innovation, particularly in the agricultural sector.

His affection for the campus goes far beyond its contribution to his academic career. Sankat defies the stereotype of the distant scientist and is very much an outgoing and warm person. For him, those early student

years were also about connecting with his classmates and fellow Canada Hall residents.

"I wasn't very much of an extrovert when I came to campus," he recalls, laughing. "But on Canada Hall you had to adapt fast. I lived with students from Jamaica and other islands. I grew to understand this Caribbean identity we all shared. That sense of connection and West Indian identity has stayed with me ever since."

Sankat's countryman, Professor Emeritus Compton Bourne (campus principal from 1996 to 2001) first came to UWI St Augustine later in his academic career, but as a member of the wider UWI community (he began as a lecturer on the Mona campus in 1971), he was very familiar with the campus and collaborated with his colleagues based here.

"Then I came to St Augustine in 1981 and took up the post of Professor in Economics," Bourne recalls.

Already an outstanding young academic on the higher education administrative path, these were still early days in a career that would one day lead to him becoming one of the most renowned economists in the history of the region. Among his numerous accomplishments is his position as President of the Caribbean Development Bank, and his achievement of the Order of Excellence (OE), Guyana's highest national

At St Augustine, his trajectory continued upward. He became a department head, then Dean of the Faculty

#### $\blacksquare$ The UWI ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS $60^{\text{TH}}$ anniversary

of Social Sciences, then Pro Vice-Chancellor for Planning and Development (a university-wide senior administrative post). Still, he was not expecting that an offer for the top campus post was coming his way, nor did he particularly desire the post.

None of the men were either looking for or expected the position of campus principal to come to them. Dr Tewarie says, "as a young boy, I did entertain the thought that I might one day be a lecturer at UWI, but I don't think that the idea of being principal ever entered my head."

Professor Sankat, even years into his career as a campus administrator, ascending to the post of Pro Vice-Chancellor of Graduate Studies, also "did not expect to be offered this post". Yet, like Professor Bourne, who was succeeded by Dr Tewarie, and Dr Tewarie, who he succeeded, Professor Sankat competed for and gained the position

All three men, as well, saw the need for change. In fact, the most persistent theme in conversations with the campus principals, including Professor Copeland, is the necessity of evolution. Just as the current campus principal has pushed for greater innovation and entrepreneurship at St Augustine, his predecessors had similar objectives

"The Principalship was important to me because I felt that I could bring a more business-like approach and increased entrepreneurial energy to UWI St Augustine," says Tewarie, who previously served as the executive director of the then UWI Institute of Business (now Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business). He worked as well to "expand student enrollment", "deepen research engagement" and "strive for higher standards" to enhance the campus' reputation as a "world centre for learning". Supported by capable staff campus-wide, he established the necessary infrastructure and systems to achieve these things.

Professor Bourne was similarly focused on increasing St Augustine's international profile. "I felt we did not take enough advantage of our strengths and reach beyond our borders," he says, pointing to areas of scholarship in which the region has an advantage such as Caribbean Studies. Universities, he says, are offering such programmes internationally while relying on the work of our researchers. Seeing the monolingual competence of St Augustine graduates as a handicap internationally, he initiated the establishment of the Centre for Language Learning and Linguistics.

During his tenure he also worked to transform what he saw as a "traditional, conservative academic culture" that was resistant to cost efficiency, competitiveness and performance accountability. "Some people wanted us to be like an old English university at a time when universities in the UK had modernised." He also prioritised achieving and maintaining financial health through eliciting funds from governments and strengthening relations with the local business community and international

Like his predecessors, Professor Sankat's goal was to advance the institution. An innovator himself, whose application of mechanical engineering to agro-processing and post-harvesting technologies has made a major contribution to the Caribbean food sector, he put enormous effort into establishing an environment for highpotential graduate studies and research that could make a positive impact on society.

A son of the soil himself, he put special emphasis on igniting a new fire in the pursuit of agricultural education and research. Sankat once more made the Faculty of Agriculture (now the Faculty of Food and Agriculture) a separate entity in 2012, undoing a merger with the Faculty of Natural Sciences that was carried out in 1996. In 2015, after prolonged and exacting negotiations with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, UWI St Augustine was given the 200-acre parcel of land on which the Agricultural Innovation Park at Orange Grove was established.

Attempting to list the works of three campus principals would be an essay all to itself. They were all builders and any walk through the grounds will lead you to encounter at least one structure that was erected during their tenures. Likewise, the architecture of programmes and processes, the administrative and support services, the facilities for students and staff, have all evolved under their leadership. The St Augustine Campus has come a long way.

'Oh it was very different," says Sankat, recalling what the campus was like as a new student in 1969. "It was much smaller. There were far fewer people. It was intimate. Faculty lived on the campus and engaged the students much more than today. We got invited to their homes. We went there for Christmas, which meant a lot to foreign students. There was a strong connection between students and faculty."

All three men recognise the threat that COVID-19 presents to campus and the university itself. Yet they are all confident that UWI St Augustine can survive. The work of development however, must continue. In particular, UWI must move towards greater sustainability, lessening its dependence on subventions from host governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing the world, forcing restructuring and transformation, and demanding transformation of education. UWI needs not only to transform but to be super responsive and to innovate," says Dr Tewarie.

It's a challenging task for challenging times, but one thing UWI St Augustine's 60 year history has shown - it will always have its builders.

For a longer version of this conversation with UWI St Augustine's campus principals, please visit our website, https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/

A UWI CAMPUS PRINCIPAL HOWEVER, IS MORE THAN THE MOST SENIOR OF ADMINISTRATORS. UWI, AFTER ALL, IS MORE THAN A UNIVERSITY. IT'S A UNIQUE ASSET OF CARIBBEAN SOCIETY.

#### lacktriangle the UWI ST augustine Campus $60^{ ext{TH}}$ anniversary

n 12 October 1960, a marriage of sorts was celebrated at the brand new Queen's Hall in Port of Spain. The ceremony was the final handover of The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) to The University College of the West Indies (UCWI). ICTA, which had opened its doors to students in 1922, ceased to exist; its staff, students, assets and programmes were handed over to UCWI (which had first accepted students at Mona, Jamaica, in 1948), becoming its second campus.

At this ceremony, attended by notables such as the governor-general of the Federation of The West Indies and the governor and premier of Trinidad and Tobago, the speech of the day was made by Arthur Lewis, Principal of UCWI (he would become the first vice-chancellor of The University of the West Indies [UWI] in 1962). He said it was a boy of 12 marrying a mature lady of 40; the boy must be willing to learn and the lady to tolerate.... More seriously, Lewis described ICTA as "a great centre of teaching and research" in tropical agriculture. This "great centre" now became UCWI's Faculty of Agriculture, the first faculty at the St Augustine campus which came into existence at the Queen's Hall ceremony. Fittingly, its first principal was the "Father of UWI", the Jamaican Philip Sherlock, who came from Mona, where he was Vice-Principal, to lead

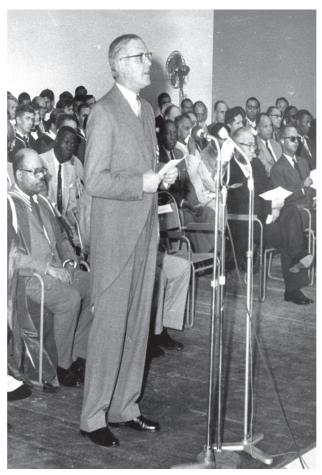
Why had ICTA agreed to its own demise through its merging with a much newer institution situated in faraway Jamaica? ICTA had many weaknesses. First, it was a foreign, British, colonial college, whose main purpose was to train men for jobs in the agricultural services of the empire. This, of course, made it increasingly irrelevant as the formal empire gradually disappeared, as well as politically unacceptable to leaders like Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago and Norman Manley of Jamaica. It had minimal links to its host country and to the English-speaking Caribbean in general. Its student numbers had always been small, well under 100 in most years. Above all, it did not grant degrees, only diplomas which lacked the status of a BSc, and was therefore not a first choice for ambitious West Indian school-leavers, nor could it establish partnerships with universities in Britain or elsewhere. Its strength was its international reputation for high-level research; its teaching and research staff, such as Fred Hardy; a fine specialist library; and its physical assets at St Augustine (many buildings, including the iconic "Admin Building", laboratories, an experimental sugar factory, and an extensive farm).

Discussions between ICTA and UCWI took place, on and off, for much of the 1950s, dragging on in typically academic fashion. The deadlock was broken by two strong-willed leaders: UCWI's Lewis, backed by Premier Williams; and Jock Campbell of Booker-McConnell (the UK and Guyana-based company responsible for the Booker Prize), who became chair of ICTA's Board in 1957. He saw the inevitable, and urged on negotiations leading to the winding-down of ICTA and the transfer of all its assets, and of its staff who agreed, to UCWI.

When the St Augustine campus of UCWI began its life in October 1960, it possessed one faculty and 67 students, registered for the new BSc in Agriculture or pursuing ICTA's postgraduate programmes. But at the Queen's Hall ceremony, Williams had made it clear that his government intended to fund a Faculty of Engineering as soon as possible. With assistance from UNESCO, the Ford Foundation and universities in Britain, Canada and the USA, the new Faculty accepted its first cohort of 28 students in October 1961. St Augustine was now a two-faculty campus, but student enrollment was minuscule, and relatively few were

# A Marriage at QUEEN'S HALL

BY PROFESSOR BRIDGET BRERETON



Lord Hailes speaking at the ceremony at Queen's Hall to hand over the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture to The University College of the West Indies on October 12, 1960. This was the founding of UWI St Augustine.

nationals of the host country; since the Mona campus did not offer degrees in agriculture or engineering, many came from the other territories served by UCWI.

This situation was transformed in October 1963. What was then called the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) began to teach for degrees in the humanities and the social and natural sciences, duplicating programmes long taught at Mona. From the start, the men and women reading for these degrees were overwhelmingly nationals of the host nation; it was only with the CAS that large numbers of Trinbagonians came to St Augustine as students. There was a significant backlog of local aspirants for degrees, most of whom opted for humanities courses; many were mature people, teachers and civil servants, who took advantage of evening classes for Year 1 students. It was in 1963, with the opening of the CAS, that St Augustine first began to have a wide impact on the host society, transforming the scope of local educational opportunities. Immediately, enrollment in the CAS outstripped that in Agriculture and Engineering. In 1966, 80 nationals of Trinidad and Tobago from that first 1963 cohort graduated with the BA, only slightly fewer than all the nationals who had obtained the BA at Mona between 1953 and 1964. Graduates in the natural sciences also increased dramatically from 1966.

In 1962, UCWI had been replaced by UWI, as the university gained its "independence" from the University of London with which UCWI had been affiliated, and gained the right to award its own degrees. Along with the dramatic opening up of the campus with the CAS in the following year, the St Augustine campus was set on the path of sustained expansion—in course offerings, programmes, faculties, institutes, students, staff and physical assets—which it would follow in the decades to come.



#### lacktriangle the UWI ST augustine Campus $60^{ ext{th}}$ anniversary



PHOTOS: COURTESY THE WEST INDIANA AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, ALMA JORDAN LIBRARY

## "This is the time of your life"

St Augustine's pioneer students share their story and advice on the campus experience

BY JODY ROBINSON



The pioneer students had fun times. They met several of their fellow students and lecturers from different islands, enjoyed many fetes, and competed in sporting events, including intercampus games.



A young guitarist shows his skill at a campus calvpso competition in 1988

"There is a strong camaraderie among us that has lasted for a lifetime," Mr Ramganie "Bob" Gopee says while looking back at his relationships with UWI St Augustine that began 60 years ago. The campus welcomed its first batch of engineering and agriculture students in 1960, then some 12 students studying Arts and Science three years later.

Since those earliest days, UWI St Augustine has emerged as a dynamic campus, a crucial component of a regional institution of higher education that has helped shape Caribbean society through its scholarship, thought leadership, and the training and enlightenment of several generations of academics, artists, activists, professionals and political leaders.

But as a fledgling campus in the early 1960s, it first had to attract students willing to make a life investment in its programmes. They did so, many driven by the need for an affordable education.

"It was expected that those who went on to attain a higher certificate would go on to University. Most of us couldn't afford to study abroad, so we went to UWI St Augustine," says Mrs Lyris Hodge-Christian, who enrolled in 1965 to do a degree in languages.

Very quickly, the campus was seen as a viable option for higher academia, for national, regional and international students. "I got the Trinidad and Tobago Government exhibition scholarship in 1962 to study Civil Engineering," Mr Cecil Chin states. He was one of two Guyanese students who came over that year to be enrolled as the first batch of engineering

Campus in the 60's was eventful, and the students had exciting experiences as they navigated life as newcomers. Even with so few students, space was sometimes scarce. Mr Gopee remembers once, his lecturer booked a class in the Arcon Building, and another lecturer showed up who had booked the class as well. "They kicked us out!" he laughs. "We ended up having class under a tree!"

The campus was smaller, safer and friendlier. Lecturers knew us personally," Mrs Hodge-Christian remembers.

The pioneer students had fun times. They met several of their fellow students and lecturers from different islands, enjoyed many fetes, and competed in sporting events, including intercampus games. In 1965, Mr Chin represented the UWI St Augustine table tennis team at the intercampus games held in Jamaica.

He excitedly recalls visiting Tobago in his second year for Survey Camp. The Thursday of that week, Tobago was struck by Hurricane Flora. "There was no satellite to warn us! We just felt the breeze, and saw the branch of a coconut tree touching the ground on its left," he recalls. "Then there was a lull, which we now know is the eye, and the wind started again, and the tree was now touching the ground to its right. Suddenly, we were no longer in the dark, because the roof flew off!

For the early students, the beauty of the campus was really in the relationships they formed. Mrs Hodge-Christian says, "There was the syncing of ideas, deep discussions and helping each other with studies." She gushed, "a good experience for me was being able to experience different cultures!'

 $60\ years$  later, these alums look forward to liming at Mr Gopee's house. "We still keep in touch. We have a Yahoo group where we catch up and we have a party around Christmas or New Years' time up by Bob Gopee's house every year", Mr Chin revealed. The highly anticipated party may not occur this year because of COVID-19 and the pandemic protocols.

Mr Gopee, 81, started UWI in 1963, studying economics and sociology. After graduation though, he went to London to be trained in accountancy. Now he is a consulting partner in his accounting firm. Mrs Hodge-Christian joined the Faculty of Arts and Science after obtaining her higher certificate. Now in her late 70's, she enjoys retirement, but she had a long career in teaching languages, training public service professionals and human resources.

Dr Cazabon, 84, left St Mary's College in 1954 and started working. He got married in

1958 and had two daughters. Thereafter, higher education in Trinidad opened up under the leadership of then Prime Minister and leader of the People's National Movement, Dr Eric Williams. In 1961, Cazabon applied for a scholarship in surveying but was successful with a scholarship in agriculture, specifically, animal production, continuing his higher education

"I headed the Ministry of Agriculture Veterinary Lab and ran the Pathology Department in Mt Hope. I eventually resigned from Government, while lecturing at The UWI and COSTAATT which I did until my retirement in 2019," he says.

After earning his degree in civil engineering, Mr Chin, now 82, went on to work with Trinidad Contractors and then the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) located on the St Augustine Campus

When asked about his thoughts about UWI St Augustine, Mr Gopee says, "it is a necessary institution that has allowed the level of education in Trinidad to be lifted. It has tremendous history, infrastructure and culture; it's an excellent academic institution with the best research, especially in tropical agriculture."

The UWI produced a cadre of administrators, professionals and politicians in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. It benefitted international societies as well, Mr Chin says. To students, the pioneers advise, "this is the time of your life, make meaningful

connections; study hard, don't waste time and don't waste opportunities; focus on what's in front of you. The temptations and distractions are high and wide and there's a high chance of getting a mediocre degree. We have too many generalists and right now we need specialists."

Mrs Hodge-Christian profoundly says, "do your best because the world will create enormous challenges. Increase your awareness, opportunities and relationships, deal with the challenges and make yourself strong. Go for it!'

Read more of the perspectives of UWI St Augustine's pioneer students online at our website. https://sta.uwi.edu/uwitoday/

#### LITTCON 2020



Dr J Vijay Maharaj

With four full days of readings and discussions about local literature, UWI's "LITTCON 2020: The Literature of Trinidad and Tobago, 1980 to 2020" was "not only about presentations", but "about deliberations", and "the gathering of data". Conference founder Dr J Vijay Maharaj said in her welcome that she hoped the information collected would help to "answer questions that are very pressing in our moment".

The Department of Literary, Cultural and

Communication Studies (DLCCS) hosted the international literary conference, from September 21 to 24, via Zoom, with a broad assortment of offerings and topics for talk, centring on the literary arts.

Senior DLCCS lecturer Dr Paula Morgan argued that the nation's "pre- and post-millennial literary resurgence had been "as pivotal as the movements that predated the emergence of the islands of the Caribbean into nation statehood", cementing our collective sense of self.

She said our literature showed that "external forces had been insufficient to extinguish the yearning for home", adding that "notions of home and belonging remain constant and are taking an unexpected primacy in this time". She said LITTCON 2020 would seek to "calibrate the strength of this umbilical connection, and tell us why".

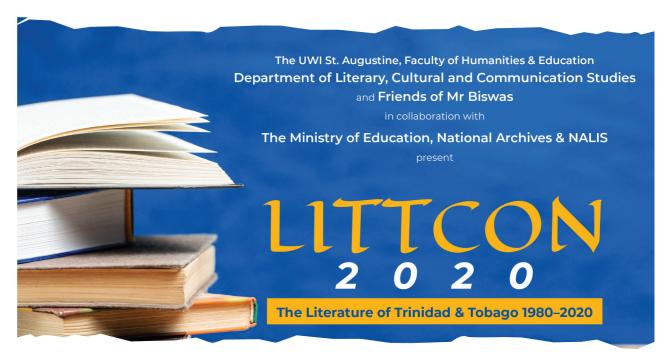
The conference was staged in partnership with the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago, Friends of Mr Biswas, NALIS and the Ministry of Education, and aimed to put the spotlight on Trinidad and Tobago's literature and "to demonstrate the urgent need to expose the nation and the nation's children to the valuable store available to them".

Across the four days of discussions, various panels went live on the popular streaming service to take on creative issues. Writers from various genres and with varying levels of renown read from their works. Educators, teacher trainers and curriculum shapers weighed in on local literature and exam curricula. Professionals from related fields like poetry, music, cinema and theatre shared their perspectives in terms of adapting written offerings for stage and screen. Academics, researchers, and journalists examined the literary landscape. Open house sessions also gave writers a chance to read excerpts from their works in a more informal setting.

## 1980 to Now

A look at Trinidad and Tobago's stories and their tellers

BY GILLIAN MOORE



The seminar kicked off with words of welcome by Dr Maharaj, and collaborators including UWI St Augustine Principal Professor Brian Copeland and Friends of Mr Biswas Chairman Professor Kenneth Ramchand. Minister of Education, Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, sent her feature address along with a pre-recorded reading from one of her favourite local books, *Nyabo (Madam) - Why Are You Here? The Truth about Living in Service, Love, and Personal Power Quotes*, by Akosua Dardaine Edwards.

Monday's schedule brought out some heavy lit hitters. Panels featured readings and chats with popular T&T writers like Barbara Jenkins, Monique Roffey, Danielle Boodoo-Fortune, Andre Bagoo and Ingrid Persaud. They looked at the process of writing a first novel, their motivations and inspirations, and facing the challenge of conveying their creative vision.

Later in the day, writer and journalist BC Pires moderated a conversation entitled "Centrifugal to the Literature", featuring Emeritus Professor, author, researcher and filmmaker Patricia Mohammed; animator and educator Camille Selvon Abrahams; filmmaker Michael Mooleedhar and directors Danielle Dieffenthaller and Mervyn de Goeas.

Dieffenthaller and de Goeas, collaborators on the popular local soap opera *Westwood Park* (1997–2004) discussed the dialogue-writing and storytelling choices they made while creating the show, at times taking inspiration from actual news stories for a more realistic feel.

Selvon Abrahams spoke about her goal of representing Caribbean people in animation, especially against a mainstream international context which often portrays black and brown people as "other".

Mohammed discussed the challenges of reworking



Minister of Education, Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly



Journalist Lasana Liburd



Ira Mathu



Ingrid Persaud

#### **LITTCON 2020**

cherished Caribbean literary works for film, referencing some that have already been made and proposing others that she felt were promising candidates for adaptation.

Day One offerings also included a panel on literature for young people with authors Jeanelle Frontin, Danielle YC McClean, Lisa Allen-Agostini and Summer Edward; and a talk about oral and performance literature with poet Derron Sandy, rapso artists Wendell Manwarren and Brother Resistance, performance artist Sat Balkaransingh, and Chutney performers Tina Ramnarine and Timothy Bally.

Tuesday's panels included discussions of postcolonial trauma in Caribbean literature, creative nonfiction, poetry and popular culture.

There was also a discussion about online news reporting within the sociallydistant Covid-19 paradigm, featuring veteran journalists Sheila Rampersad, Judy Raymond, Lasana Liburd, Ira Mathur and Mark Lyndersay, with Liburd and Lyndersay calling for more coverage for sports and the arts. Lyndersay said art reviewing needed greater focus: "if we don't evaluate our work from our own perspective ... we end up waiting for someone else" to affirm our cultural offerings.

He said the journalist "has a responsibility' to report on art and culture "with authority, style and intelligence," to challenge readers and encourage them to question and think critically.

Rampersad argued for more investigative journalism that went beyond the headlines. She said mass media was "failing" to reflect the real lives of citizens. Raymond agreed, saying our journalism was losing depth, detail and variety in the face of shorter news cycles. She said the fact that the internet had make it easier to access information did not mean it was easier to get the facts.

Literature in education was the topic of the day on Thursday 24, with teachers, students and education administrators weighing in on academic issues.

Student representatives from Arima Central Secondary School, St George's College, Lakshmi Girls' Hindu College, ASJA Girls' College San Fernando and Fatima College spoke about the enriching effects of studying Literature at school.

During a talk on 21st century poetic developments, featuring teachers Jolie Wong, Maxine Archer, Kenneth Ramchand and Susan

Dubay, Dubay said she observed that some students were unable to write in their spoken tongue - non-standard English - and did not possess higher-order analytical skills. She said she had found an integrated approach to teaching poetry was useful in allowing students to "see themselves as poets" and "engage their emotions" in the process.

Curriculum Officers from the Ministry of Education, working in districts across the country, discussed the challenges of monitoring language arts education at primary and secondary schools. Panellists offered their perspectives, based on their experience as former teachers and observing other educators while on school visits.

Another education panel took on teaching literary appreciation. Marin Gonzales, a literature teacher at Malick Secondary School, spoke of the challenges of teaching with limited resources, and working with students who often felt disenfranchised in the school system. He said it was important to keep their interest by "staying abreast of what they are into," including music and cultural trends.

Closing the day's session, spoken word poets Derron Sandy, Abdul Majeed Abdal Karim, Camryn Bruno and Marcus Millette engaged in a friendly poetry slam.

On the final day, viewers were taken on a "verbal literary tour from San Fernando to Mayaro", while exploring "the Michael Anthony Landscape", led by Roydon Salick, Brinsley Samaroo and Ken Ramchand. They analysed the geography of his The Year in San Fernando and Green Days by the River.

Director Michael Mooleedhar returned to discuss his award-winning film adaptation of Anthony's Green Days. He showed clips from the movie, while describing his storytelling aims, directorial choices and logistical challenges, also giving some behind-the-scenes background.

Author Teresa White read excerpts from Ian McDonald's The Humming-Bird Tree, alongside clips from the film version, exploring the challenges of translating books to the screen. She showed gaps between the novel's portrayals and the movie, which she said did not ultimately capture societal nuances or the characters' "deep introspection," and seemed geared toward a foreign audience.

The conference ended with the organisers' vote of thanks, leaving viewers and participants with a wealth of ideas and insight to ruminate on.





Monique Roffey

## **COTE 2020** focuses on the way forward from

ROXANNE AND BRADLEY OSBOURNE

Crisis is opportunity. A crisis is a chance. The crisis is the turning point. Likened to a revelation, and a portal-gateway between one world and the next, COVID-19 presents an opportunity, a chance for developing economies of the Caribbean to break the past and create conditions for renewed economic growth and development.

Issues surrounding the economic challenges and opportunities linked to the COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed in the 2020 installation of the Conference on the Economy (COTE) and the COTE Youth Activities. These two form the annual landmark event of the Department of Economics and will be delivered virtually under the theme "Crisis is Opportunity: COVID-19 the Way Forward".

COVID-19 has exposed our vulnerabilities as countries and as a region and policy makers continue to grapple with its effects. The impact of the pandemic has been felt in every segment of the population. It has dramatically altered the socio-economic landscape and has caused major shifts in operations for individuals, small and micro enterprises, educational institutions and health service delivery.

While the recovery and the transition from the effects of this pandemic will be no easy task, our goal must be the development of more inclusive, resilient and sustainable Caribbean economies. Therefore, while addressing the effects of COVID-19, there is a need to examine and find strategies to manage our challenges and vulnerabilities in ways which lays the foundation for stronger, healthier economies in the long run. This means being prepared to do more with little resources, finding ways to be more efficient in resource use while keeping people at the centre of the development dialogue.

Ultimately, it requires balancing short-term recovery with a clear long-term development trajectory. While political will is critical, there is the need for increased collaboration and cooperation amongst societal actors. This will entail synergising academic, corporate, policy and community agents with the aim of strengthening and deepening ties to people, communities, and the region. In many discussions, regional cooperation has been highlighted as a critical component in mitigating the effects of the pandemic and paving the way for the region's recovery.

"Crisis is Opportunity: COVID-19 The Way Forward" is free to the public. All interested individuals are encouraged to register at http:// conferences.sta.uwi.edu/cote.

Dr Roxanne Brizan-St. Martin is an Instructor with the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Science.

Bradley Osbourne is the Research Analyst for the Economics Society and Undergraduate student with the Department of Economics.

#### **UPCOMING COTE 2020 EVENTS**

October 22.....COTE Youth Armchair Discussion October 29.....COTE Youth Debate Knockoff Competition November 12.....Finals COTE Youth Debate November 25-27 ..... Conference on the Economy 2020

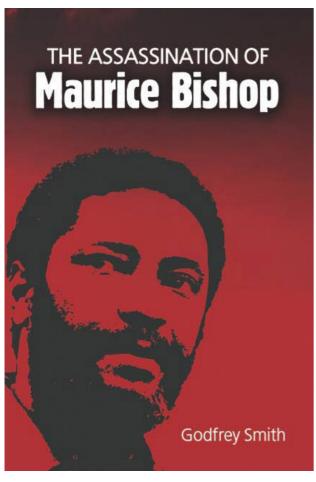




# P.J. PATTERSON

## MY POLITICAL JOURNEY

**Jamaica's Sixth Prime Minister** 





# DESTINY had brought us together

PJ Patterson, former Jamaican PM, reflects on the importance of UWI in the emergence of Caribbean identity

BY ZAHRA GORDON

According to former Jamaican Prime Minister PJ Patterson, attending The University of the West Indies played a key role in the development of his Caribbean identity. During the virtual 2020 NGC BOCAS Lit Fest held from September 18-20, Patterson was one of four panellists in the discussion, "A Question of Leadership: What have present leaders learnt from the past to take us forward?" Patterson credited some of his political successes to the friendships he developed as a student.

Reading an excerpt from his autobiography, *My Political Journey*, Patterson said he could travel to any part of the Caribbean and meet peers and colleagues from The UWI. "In 1954, no matter the country of origin or the faculty to which we belonged, we were all one big family on the Mona campus. Professors, lecturers, and hospital staff, shared with their children on the campus and the entire student body, one commonplace and fellowship. Within a short time, most of us would become devout regionalists not by any process of indoctrination, but by intuitive acceptance that destiny had brought us together to fashion a dynamic, vibrant Caribbean identity," read Patterson.

He added that students were groomed to be leaders in all fields. "It was my view that we were being prepared for leadership and leadership was not confined to running for political office. It would include the judiciary, the church, and it would include public servants."

As a UWI student, Patterson was part of a committee that drafted a model constitution for the defunct West Indies Federation. "One of the things in which we were engaged was in the federal experiment and we had the audacity as students to draft what we regarded as the model constitution for the Federation and it is our considered view that the Federation collapsed because they did not follow our sage advice," reminisced Patterson.

The break down in personal relationships was also a cause of the Federation's decay, he said. "Indeed one of the reasons for the collapse of the federal experiment was that Norman Manley (former Jamaican PM), Grantley Adams (first Premier of Barbados and PM of the West Indies Federation) and Eric Williams (former PM of Trinidad and Tobago) – all of whom had been educated in their time in the United Kingdom – started off with a respect and a friendship that deteriorated throughout the years. They were hardly in communication with each other and I learnt from that the imperative of developing relationships with my colleagues as politicians whether we share the same ideological outlook or not. And I was able to rely on some friendships and associations which I had developed in those earlier times."

Panellist Professor Alissa Trotz, Professor of Caribbean Studies at New College and Director of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto, agreed that many Caribbean scholars, such as the late Professor Emeritus Norman Girvan (former Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States and prominent regionalist), attribute their sense of Caribbean identity to attending The UWI, but questioned the materiality of this identity in the 21st century.

"Where are we with Caribbean community regionalism in 2020? Where are the Caribbean people? What happened to the assembly of Caribbean parliamentarians, which in and of itself was limited because it was only about parliamentarians?" asked Trotz, who is associate faculty at the Dame Nita Barrow Institute for Gender and Development Studies at The UWI, Cave Hill. She identified numerous Caribbean Community (Caricom) meetings and declarations about regional integration that have yet to be implemented.

Trotz also chided Caribbean leaders for holding onto the Westminster system of democracy, which she deemed as divisive. "We need to move away from a narrow centralised definition of politics with a parliament with a big "P" and have a more capacious understanding. This notion of politics as something for rulers or of a vanguard or an elite that does something on behalf of people who are always there to be lead is deeply disempowering, deeply patriarchal and deeply exclusionary."

Former Belizean Attorney General Godfrey Smith, who is also a UWI alumna and author of *The Assassination of Maurice Bishop*, expressed similar sentiments. "In the past, we saw the emergence of some truly transformative leaders who wanted to transform their societies to make it work better for ordinary people, but I know times have changed. Regrettably, it seems to me that leaders have thrown up their hands and accepted that we're in the United States' backyard and we can't question any of these structures even though they may not be working and they just follow it. I think the time has come where we can use this [COVID-19] crisis as an opportunity to take a hard look at these structures," he said.

Patterson added that in addition to COVID-19, one of the most urgent issues facing the Caribbean was climate change. However, he lamented that there seemed to be no political will to solve the crises collectively: "Too many of our leaders are concentrating on domestic problems and not recognising the extent to which collective action can help us encounter the difficult challenges we face."

A Question of Leadership was chaired by Andy Knight, Former Director of The UWI Institute of International Relations and current Professor of International Relations in the Political Science Department at the University of Alberta in Canada.

The UWI St Augustine was a main sponsor of the 2020 NGC Bocas Lit Fest.





## Merle Hodge's Crick Crack Monkey CELEBRATES 50

BY ZAHRA GORDON

Dr Merle Hodge

Dr Merle Hodge's classic novel, *Crick Crack Monkey*, was celebrated with a commemorative dramatised reading during the virtual 2020 Bocas Lit Fest in September as this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication.

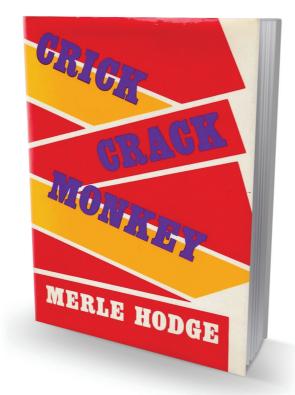
The reading was adapted and directed by elisha efua bartels and featured actors Isoke Edwards, Mandisa Granderson and Conrad Parris. The quartet was able to bring to life Hodge's *bildungsroman* of the young protagonist, Tee, and the conflicts of class, colour and race that impact her life.

Hodge, who is a retired lecturer from the Faculty of Humanities and Education at UWI St Augustine, is the first black woman novelist of the post-Independence period. *Crick Crack Monkey* is a mainstay on literature curriculums around the world and has been the subject of numerous literary studies.

*Crick Crack Monkey* is the story of a girl named Tee, her family and the differences between rural and urban life in Trinidad and Tobago.

Last year, the novel was named one of the top 10 books about Trinidad and Tobago by Claire Adams for the *UK Guardian*; writer Erna Brodber sites the novel as one of the top five must-reads for Caribbean teens; writer and University Director of UWI's Institute of Gender and Development Studies Opal Palmer Adisa has said that Hodge opened doors for other female authors such as Jamaica Kincaid and Tiphanie Yanique; and there is even an anthology of women's writing edited by Pamela Mordecai and Elizabeth Wilson which gets its title – *Her True True Name* – from one of the final scenes in *Crick Crack Monkey*.

The novel was critical to adding female voice to the Caribbean literary canon, which had previously been maledominated. In the book, *Writing in Limbo*, Simon Gikandi writes: "...the absence of female texts in the Caribbean canon meant that political independence had not restored speech to the Caribbean female subject, an important producer



of West Indian culture." Hodge was able to fill this gap not only by being a female writer, but also by centring women in her writing.

Reflecting on the significance of the text, bartels said in an interview with **UWI TODAY** that it was a clear portrait of T&T still relevant today. bartels also noted that its publication normalised the concept of being a woman writer. "It's a huge and wonderful undertaking that Merle Hodge sat down and wrote this book and had the strength and confidence to send it out into the world and I'm glad that publishers paid attention at a point in time when she had no real example to follow. It's a huge gift to the rest of us."



Poet Vahni Capildeo

"It's a huge and wonderful undertaking that Merle Hodge sat down and wrote this book and had the strength and confidence to send it out into the world and I'm glad that publishers paid attention at a point in time when she had no real example to follow. It's a huge gift to the rest of us."

#### BELOW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Extempo champion Phillip "Black Sage" Murray performs while accompanied by Errol John on keyboard.

UWI Mona graduate Amanda Choo Quan, winner of the Johnson and Amoy Achong Writer's Prize, gives a socially responsible greeting to Dr Kongshiek Achong Low, sponsor of the prize.

Actors perform a scene from the novel

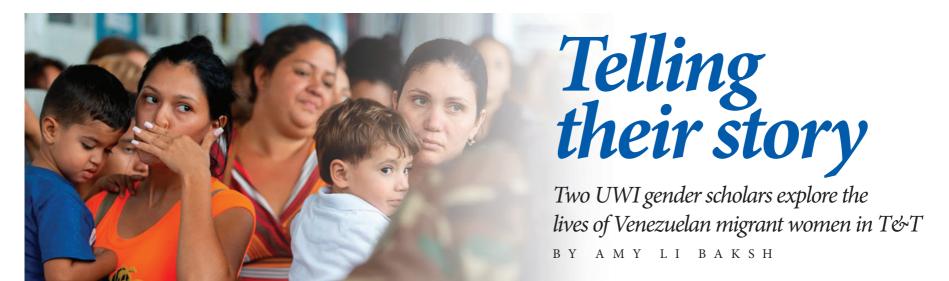
PHOTOS: COURTESY NGC BOCAS LIT FEST







#### RESEARCH



As a region, our diverse migratory history has shaped the people we are today. Now, Trinidad and Tobago faces a deteriorating crisis regarding the Venezuelan migrant community. Tivia Collins, a PhD candidate at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), and Richie Daly, a graduate student at IGDS, have been engaging with the community of Venezuelan migrant women here in T&T to explore their stories— in their own words.

Collins and Daly recently published an article titled "Reconstructing Racialised Femininity: Stories from Venezuelan Migrant Women".

"My work actually looks at the lived experiences of Guyanese migrant women in Trinidad and Tobago; I have always been interested in doing research on migrant women," says Collins, a migrant to Trinidad herself.

Daly, who is the child of a Venezuelan migrant, has focused her career on the experiences of Venezuelans in T&T. "I was always very cognisant of the challenges of migration," she says. "Getting involved, working with the migrant community and being interested in working with the migrant community genuinely came about because I am bilingual... it's in part because of the studies I've done and because of my language skills."

After seeing a call for papers in Marketing and Communications' "What's On" column (a staff and student e-update/newsletter), Collins reached out to Daly to collaborate on a piece that would delve into the real, varied and meaningful lives of the Venezuelan women in the migrant community.

"Anyone can see that what is happening in Trinidad and Tobago with Venezuelan migrants is a cause for concern," says Collins.

The two students wanted to focus on writing a piece that spoke authentically to the experiences of these women. "There is a need for a more nuanced perspective of migratory experiences, because it's easy to dismiss migrants as, oh, this is a wave of migration, using that language of multiplicity to make it seem that this is homogenous, without recognising that these individuals have their own narratives, their own experiences, their own motivations, and their own personal interests in what they want to get out of their migration experiences," says Daly.

By amplifying the voices of the 12 women who shared their stories in the project, the goal is to reposition Venezuelan women as subjects rather than objects; as, Collins says, "human beings who experience fear and joy, and who are working towards a goal of survival, which is similar to many other migrants and many other Trinidadians here."



Tivia Collins



Richie Daly

"In the article, we talk about the horrible conditions under which Venezuelan women work in Trinidad and Tobago," says Collins. "These are not normal conditions. These conditions are based upon, unfortunately, their migrant status and their gender. We wanted to position the realities vis-a-vis the posts that you see on social media for example, comments about Venezuelans coming to 'take things', when in fact, they are here, as we all should be allowed to, to make money to provide for their family, which is a basic human need.... It is about the economics of it; it is about eating. And as a country, Trinidad and Tobago should not, culturally, politically or economically stop people from eating, even if they weren't born here."

Daly says, "It's really easy to talk about a 'migratory

outflow', a 'wave of migration', and not recognise that each individual in that supposed 'wave' has their own life story, their own familial connections, their own loved ones, their own personal motivations, and even their personal desires."

One of their intentions with this work is to change the type of conversation surrounding this crisis and honour the personhood of the people at the centre of it. With visibility comes safety and reduction of harm, and highlighting these personal narratives is part of a much-needed effort to protect and uphold human rights and dignity.

For Daly, the incentive is also to reframe the migratory relationship between Venezuela and Trinidad—one that has existed in many forms since humans have inhabited both landmasses:

"This is not the first time Venezuelans have migrated to Trinidad, or Trinidadians have had to interact with Venezuelans, be it here or in Venezuela. That is something I want to work on—historicising Venezuelan migration. I just want to continue to honour their stories, their perspectives, and honour their understandings of their situations, because as much as I have ties to the community, I am not the community."

"We have some recommendations after doing the research," says Collins. "First being that the government of T&T implement a migration policy that guarantees the rights of migrants, particularly in vulnerable situations. Trinidad and Tobago signed the UN's Refugee Convention and Protocol in 2000 but has not put anything legally up to this point that allows refugees to seek protection from prosecution in a blanket way. Trinidad considers requests on an individual case-by-case basis. When you have mass migration happening in your country, that is not going to work. Also, there has to be local legislation on asylum-seeking and refugees. It does not exist currently. We recommend that there be a formal system that allows Venezuelans to legally live and work in Trinidad and Tobago beyond the one-year work permit that was granted last year and now has expired, with no system in place that allows for renewal."

She adds, "we encourage training at the level of immigration officers and police officers, which allows them to understand how to address Venezuelan migrants, especially Venezuelan migrant women, who are particularly vulnerable because of their socioeconomic status and their gender. Finally, one of the big things for us is—how do we address xenophobia and xenophobic sentiments across the country? I do believe that there may be some knowledge passed down when there is visibility."

# Virtual 'Vybz' but still a nice time

BY VISHANI RAGOBEER









At the beginning of the new academic year, tents decorate the JFK quadrangle. There is a cacophony of voices, inquisitive yet excited, coupled with the buzz of activity associated with a week-long introduction to how the UWI St Augustine campus will make any academic journey worthwhile. That is Guild Fest, normally.

However, Guild Fest 2020, like innumerable events in 2020, was anything but normal. Instead, the 2020/2021 Academic Year started, and two weeks later, an intriguing virtual Guild Fest followed.

Kareem Charles, the Vice-President of the Guild of Students, was the person with the responsibility of planning and executing this year's Guild Fest. Charles and his team had to contend with drastic, uncontrollable changes. First, it was anticipated that by the time the new academic year began, the student population would be back on campus. Then, the COVID-19 situation worsened, resulting in schools remaining closed for the rest of the calendar year.

"I had to quickly accept the fact that we were now operating in a 'new normal' and so the mode of delivery of our events had to change, and so the process of planning ensued," Charles reflects.

As per normal, the virtual Guild Fest was centred on connecting students with the various clubs and national associations on campus, which might pique their interests, while delivering entertainment. Realistically, Charles contends, students would quickly become saturated if this was done over the usual one-week period, Moreover, maintaining their attention would be difficult. Cognisant of this, Kareem and the Guild team had to reconcile those challenges with the need to orient new students and give older students the opportunity to explore more.

And so, the increasingly popular "Sip and Chat" event, via Microsoft Teams, was tapped as the mechanism through which a virtual, condensed Guild Fest would be done. It was held in two parts, on September 29 and 30. The organisation of Sip and Chat allowed for clubs and associations to make presentations at a general, relaxed forum – where students in distant locations would have their beverage-filled glasses to sip on during the conversation. Then, there were "breakout rooms" managed by the clubs which allowed interested students to interact with the members and sign up for the clubs

On the first day, all of UWI's clubs and associations,

save for the national associations, showcased their activities online. These included the religious societies, academic societies and just about every club you can imagine. On the second day, the national associations had their individual rooms where they represented their countries just as they would under their tents at JFK Quadrangle – with their flags out and their food on showcase, while blasting the island tunes.



Charles explained that these events allowed for the objectives of Guild Fest to be achieved, despite the campus lockdown: raising awareness of the clubs, associations, and activities on campus; providing the opportunity for extracurricular engagement; and of course, having a good time.

"Though I missed the ability to physically go from tent to tent to visit the clubs with my friends, I truly enjoyed the virtual experience. Some clubs truly put a lot of effort into marketing themselves and making the Sip and Chat experience enjoyable," says Chrisette Benjamin, a third year international relations student.

Chrisette, like many other, did not know what to expect from a highlight event going virtual, and, going virtual in a space that had more than 30 different, simultaneous activities at that.

As expected, the seamless execution required meticulous

planning. Aaron Payne, the Co-Deputy Chairperson of the Guild Publications Committee, was one computer science student who spearheaded the technical organisation required.

"The approach I took was one that was meant to inspire and equip them to produce their own virtual events beyond Guild Fest 2020," he says, happily relating that he was proud to see the "innovative" styles various groups took in their breakout rooms.

"At first, the thought of it being virtual, with everything that was going on, was exciting," says Arnel Edwards, a third-year Grenadian student in the Faculty of Science and Technology. "However, plans kept changing, and with every plan change, the date was pushed back. With that, all the excitement vanished and it was like 'if it happens it happens."

Though she was taken aback by the postponement of Guild Fest a few times, she was happy that this staple event still took place. In the Grenadian students' breakout room, they had the opportunity to win an Amazon gift card if they could guess the weight of a breadfruit. True to their "Island of Spice" title, the Grenadian association also walked students through the spices you could find in their homeland.

The Saint Lucians brought out "Lucian Jeopardy" to engage any person stopping by their room, while the "Vincey" students took you on a journey through Caribbean music. In each of the rooms, it was easy to feel as though you were being transported to another country.

But Guild Fest was not just the two-day Sip and Chat sessions. In the weeks leading up to the event, the associations found ways to connect with students through social media. Wellecia Mullings, a second-year medical student and the Events Coordinator for the Guild's Internal Affairs Committee spearheaded the "Get to Know your Associations" virtual trivia game

"This was an opportunity to inform students about our neighbouring Caribbean countries and to bring awareness to Guild Fest," she explains, relating also that the enthusiasm of students trying to show that they know more about their regional and international friends (and to win prizes) was infectious.

Though this year's Guild Fest was certainly different, different clearly did not mean not as good.

"I must say that I am indeed pleased with the outcome of the event as the UWI Guild 2020 created history by planning and executing this event," Chrisette says.

## UWI Calendar of Events | NOVEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

#### Campus Talks Live

The Division of Student Services and Development (DSSD) and The UWI St. Augustine Guild of Students invite you to watch Campus Talk Live – a new weekly edu-tainment web series designed to engage students through discussions on themes and matters relating to student life experience.

These include trending topics, news updates, interviews, special features, live entertainment, and giveaways.

Campus Talk Live takes place every Thursday at 6:00pm (EST) on DSSD's Facebook page and continues until November 12.

Check out new and past episodes here: https://www.facebook.com/UWI.DSSD/



### Help Children Succeed in the Classroom with PEDIC

Attention parents, teachers and students: The UWI Psychoeducational Diagnostic and Intervention Clinic (PEDIC) is here to assist all children – whether struggling, typically developing or gifted. This service helps them reach their full potential by addressing barriers to learning. PEDIC now offers remote and in-person services to the public. They include psychosocial support (counselling), consultations, psychoeducational assessments and reading assessments and reading intervention.

For more information or to book an appointment, please email pedic@sta.uwi.edu or call (868) 663-8914 or (868) 662-2002, exts: 84511 and 84512.



#### Laptop Repairs, X-Ray Diffractometry, Electron Microscopy + more

The Department of Physics offers a range of services to the public, including the above. Check out their Electronics Workshop at https://sta.uwi.edu/fst/electronics/index.asp or email ews.s@sta.uwi.edu.

Visit https://sta.uwi.edu/fst/ physics/services for more information.

## Gain knowledge in Occupational, Environmental, Safety and Health (OESH) concepts

**November to December** 

#### ONLINE

Register now for Occupational, Environmental, Safety and Health (OESH) Professional Development courses hosted by the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST).

Courses include:

- November 7 to 29
  Advanced Ecotoxicology
  Risk Assessment (30 hours) | \$2,500.
- December 4 to 6
   Advanced Hazard Recognition Evaluation and Control (18 hours) | Cost: 1,500.

For further information, please contact: mscoesh@sta.uwi.edu or Tamika.Elcock@sta.uwi.edu or call 662-2002, exts: 83268 and 83269, or 662-6013



## SAVE THE DATE The UWI St. Augustine Graduation 2020 Ceremonies

January 11 and 12, 2021

#### ONLINE

The UWI St. Augustine Graduation 2020 Ceremonies will be completely virtual.

Celebrate with the Class of 2020 on January 11 and 12, 2021. Stay tuned for more updates and follow the hashtag #UWIGrad2020 on social media as we share our graduands stories.

