

**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
CAVE HILL CAMPUS**

Remarks

Reception in Honour of Scholarly Excellence 2018

October 19, 2018

Good evening, and welcome to the Cave Hill Campus on an evening where we gather to honour excellence and scholarship among the 2018 graduating class.

This calendar year is one of great significance for The University of the West Indies, as we celebrate 70 years of service, and leadership. To our student awardees, you are now a part of this tradition, this legacy, at a very important juncture in our region's history, and indeed at a time of national significance for Barbados.

In this UWI's 70th year, societies and economies across this region are undergoing rapid change – and in a number of cases, are undertaking monumental reconstruction in their recovery efforts in the aftermath of major hurricanes in recent years. From our OECS

neighbours of Antigua, Barbuda and Dominica, to our more northerly neighbours of St. Maartin, the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The Caribbean has not been spared from the irrefutable and devastating impacts of climate change. For us, climate change is far more than a rhetorical debate. We wear the scars of this phenomenon in a very visceral way, and its effects will dictate the decisions that we make for generations to come.

In the case of Barbados, in this 70th year of The UWI, we elected Barbados's first female Prime Minister the Hon. Mia Amor Mottley. As a Professor of Gender and Public Policy, I think this is a fact which has received insufficient, analytical attention amidst the obvious pressing priorities of the country's economic recovery and transformation agenda. I note too, that this is the first time both major political parties in Barbados are led by women, with Ms Verla Depeiza being the first woman elected to lead the Democratic Labour Party as its President. As an academy, especially with a vibrant Institute for Gender and Development Studies, we recognize the social and political significance of this accomplishment. And I know that, the Nita Barrow Unit of the IGDS will mount a series of lectures

focusing on Women and Leadership in Barbados and the Region, starting with a lecture on Women and Political Leadership in West Africa on November 21 by The Honourable Ms Ursula Owusu, Minister of Communications of the Republic of Ghana, stay tuned.

In this our 70th year, this glorious institution has attained its most prestigious accolade to date, in its recent ranking by the Times Higher Education Survey which places The University of the West Indies among the top 5% of universities world-wide, and ranked UWI as no.1 in the Caribbean. This is a globally-recognized indicator of excellence, and a badge of honour which your university now wears with pride, and one that you as graduands can now personally boast of when marketing yourselves locally, regionally and internationally. You can say with pride, I graduated from a University ranked in the top 5% in the World.

Graduands, I highlight these features to remind you that while your successful pursuit of tertiary education now places you in a very special cohort of Caribbean citizens, it is clear that the future of our societies and the improvement of Caribbean life now rests on your

shoulders. This ceremony serves more than merely acknowledging your academic prowess at the Bachelor's, Master's or PhD level, it is a public recognition of the service to which you are now called. You now hold University qualifications but your first response should be how can I serve my respective country and society? To whom much has been given, and of whom much is expected.

The University of the West Indies, and indeed here at the Cave Hill Campus, we hold the value of excellence in the very highest regard. The most outstanding performers among our academics, senior administrators and professional staff, and our technical and service staff, are recognized via Awards of Excellence bestowed by the Principal (at the campus level) and by the Vice Chancellor (at the University level). Just last week, the Cave Hill Campus celebrated 70 of our most outstanding alumni, in recognition of our institution's 70th anniversary. Further, The UWI also recognizes excellence through the annual award of Honorary Doctoral degrees to meritorious individuals who have given service to country, region and world through significant personal, professional and academic pursuits.

Therefore, it is with great pride that the Cave Hill Campus celebrates your scholarly excellence. The journey has been long and hard for many of you, but you have persevered and you have overcome. You are all aware that excellence is not a destination, but a continuous journey. You are here tonight because you hold this value as a personal truth, and one does not suddenly arrive at this place as if by accident.

Some of you may be continuing on with us for postgraduate studies, and we welcome you back to the campus and look forward to even greater achievements from you. To those of you who are entering the world of work, we wish you great success and fulfilment, knowing that you have done your best while here, and you will continue to do so as you pursue your personal and professional goals. You start a new chapter in your relationship with the institution, and especially so with the Cave Hill Campus. Go forward as proud UWI alumni, and be ever mindful of those who now follow in your footsteps.

I am confident that you will look back with fond memories on your years at Cave Hill. And I can assure you that we are making your Campus an even more special place for generations to come. Indeed, we are pressing ahead with our mission to build Cave Hill as a Smart Campus for the 21st century. We are intensifying our efforts to become a major participant in the transformative environment of artificial intelligence by helping to meet the global demand for tech-employees to participate in the fintech, blockchain and other revolutionary technologies. As we salute your own outstanding achievement this evening, I urge you to go forth and help spread the word that at the Cave Hill Campus, the best is yet to come.

Tonight I want to especially thank and ask you to join me in thanking those whose generous sponsorship facilitated us in honouring you. They are the Campus Cafeteria represented by Ms. Shirley Bowen, The Mount Restaurant, Caribbean Cuisine represented by Mrs. Stacia Graham-McGeary. You know where to go to eat nutritiously on the Campus, Crystal's Enterprises, better known as Campus Mart, who is contributing for the third year in a row, represented this evening by Senator Crystal Drakes. The Campus Mart ensures your

total comfort needs are met on the Campus and joining us this year is Profiles Caribbean Inc. represented by Mr. Peter Downes.

All of you stand before me representing many nationalities and many academic disciplines. May your UWI education and experiences lead you to attract success and blessings in your lives. I sincerely hope you will work to create opportunities for others who come after you to do the same.

When I graduated from Cave Hill in 1980, I had no idea 38 years later I would stand before Cave Hill students as their Principal. Where will you stand twenty years from now? Wherever you go take a desire to strengthen Cave Hill and improve Caribbean society with you.

Congratulations! We salute you!

Professor V. Eudine Barriteau

October 18, 2018