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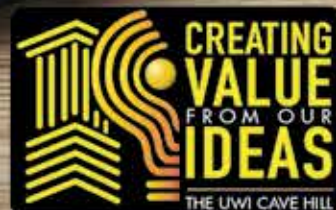
Cave Hill Campus

ISSUE 28 March 2024



Bonus Edition

Licence to Flourish
UWI – a Unifying Force
AI: Opportunities and Threats
Revenue-Generating Centre Open for Business





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A PUBLICATION OF
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Contents

DISCOURSE

- 1 An Entrepreneurial Revolution

NEWS

- 2 Licence to Flourish
4 New Economic Model
6 Chemistry BOND
8 VC Forum Discusses Bridgetown Initiative
11 Tech Exec Praises UWI Grads for His
Company's Success
12 Governments Warned Against Inaction on
Marine Resources
14 New Aviation Programme Soars to
Success
16 CERMES Leading the Charge Against
Invasive Species
18 Transatlantic Medical Programme
Launched in Spectacular Fashion
20 Symposium Examines Critical Canada-
Caribbean Issues
22 UWI - a Unifying Force
24 Exploring Strategies for Enhancing
International Trade
26 Public Health Joins the Fight Against
Crime
28 Novel Health Proposal to Tackle Climate
Change

OUTREACH

- 30 Environmental Commitment

IN FOCUS

- 32 Centre on Alert for Avian Influenza
34 Beckles Goes to Bat for Beyond a
Boundary
36 Region Achieves Cricket Success When
We Come Together as a People
39 University Enriches Society
40 The Caribbean and China: A Win-Win
Partnership
42 AI: Opportunities and Threats
44 The Sprit of Cave Hill @ 60
46 A History to Be Proud of

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

- 48 Block Solution
50 Revenue-Generating Centre Open
for Business
52 Sargassum Conundrum
56 Nursing Stigma, Diabetes & Hypertension
Feature in Student Research
58 Research on Voice Commands in the
Banking Sector

- 60 Putting Pesky Mosquitoes to REST

- 62 Medical Researchers Champion Enhanced
Cancer Care

- 64 Sargassum Sustains Inventors and Innovators

- 66 Cutting-Edge Agro-Facility Takes Shape

- 68 Awardee to Focus on NCDs

PUBLICATIONS

- 70 New Publication Earns Sterling Evaluation
72 Poet Jacinth Howard Launches Single-authored
Book
74 Twin Volume Examines Impact of COVID
76 Monumental Tribute
77 Unlocking Economic Insights

PARTNERSHIP

- 78 Japanese Book Drive
80 Retiree Delighted to Make Historic Donation
82 Sport Nutrition Among Specialised Courses
from UWI, Rajasthan Royals Pact
84 Sport Facilities Get Major Upgrade

ANALYSIS

- 85 Criminal Justice System Perpetuates Crime

ACTIVISM

- 86 CERMES Scientist Joins International Advocacy
Initiative
87 Lindxee Collins Cops Inaugural Art Prize

TECHNOLOGY, TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 88 AI Not the Enemy
90 Nurturing Young Scientific Minds
92 Magical Way to Solve Long-standing Math
Performance Problem
94 Transforming Education to Entrepreneurial
Vision
96 AI Can Make Regional Sport More Competitive

AWARDS

- 98 Professor Barriteau Honoured by Gender Unit
100 Patrick Foster Recognised for Outstanding
Achievement
102 Jones Awarded for Exemplary Tourism Service
104 Five More Earn Professorial Status
106 Science Honour Roll

GOVERNANCE

- 107 Scathing Assessment of Constitutional Reform
Within Region
110 Distinction Between Prime Ministerial Power
and Authority

AROUND CAMPUS

- 112 An Unveiling of the Artist Within
- 114 Another Milestone for Confucius Institute
- 116 Law Faculty Launches Third Unit
- 118 Charting a New Legal Future

PEOPLE

- 120 Alum Trades Baking for Academia and Makes Giving Back a Key Ingredient
- 122 Charles Miller: Artist and Athlete Beyond the Uniform
- 124 Joyous Homecoming for Pioneering Student
- 126 Raashid Ifill's Storyboard
- 128 Lewis Legacy: A Family's Academic Odyssey

STUDENT-CENTRED

- 130 High Achievers Saluted for their Endurance and Resilience
- 132 Calls for Repeat of Cultural Showcase

- 135 Melony Shoye Awarded 2023 BARP Trust Scholarship

- 136 Scottish Sojourn Hits a Right Note

- 138 Cultural Researcher Wins Thesis Competition

TRIBUTES

- 140 Passing of Foundation Student Who Built Out His University

- 141 Fond Remembrance of Justice Jefferson "Jeff" Cumberbatch

- 142 When A Mighty Tree Falls: Remembering Sonia Suzette Williams

SPORT

- 144 Akeem Rudder Championing Inclusion Through Sport

- 146 Volleyballers Rebound to Capture Double Crowns

“The UWI, Cave Hill Campus comprises a community of students, scholars, support staff, alumni, and retirees who, with the consent and support of the Government and people of Barbados, have created a public university that is faithful to the development vision set out by the founders of the institution in 1963. The same settlement and unity of purpose will drive the university safely into the future. The campus thanks all who have journeyed with us over the past 60 years to help create this beloved institution dedicated to the educational and development needs of Barbados and the Caribbean.”

Professor R. Clive Landis

*Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus*





Professor Clive Landis
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus

An Entrepreneurial REVOLUTION

I invite readers of CHILL to witness the newest phase in the evolution of the Cave Hill campus as we transition to become a more entrepreneurial institution. This issue of CHILL showcases an academy brimming with ideas and entrepreneurial genius among staff and students, which will ultimately translate into value for society and value for the university itself. The transition towards an entrepreneurial university sits within the overall framework of The UWI's five-year Strategy 2022-2027, "The Revenue Revolution".

The Cave Hill campus has a rich history of excellence in research and teaching quality. In this new phase of the campus's development, we are seeking to leverage our strengths to translate research excellence into innovation products and teaching excellence into knowledge products capable of being exported. An example of an innovation product reported in this Issue of CHILL, which is under development at the Centre for Biosecurity Studies, is the **Renewable Energy Silent Terminator (REST)** prototype, a novel device designed to attract and kill mosquitoes and other biting insects; in other words,

send them to their eternal REST! The prototype development was made possible through partnership with both government and the private sector. Examples of how to export knowledge products are also featured herein by two teaching programmes specifically tailored to the international student market: the **English for Aviation** programme developed by the **Centre for English Language Learning**; and the unique joint medical degree programme offered by the **Faculty of Medical Sciences** with the **University of Ghana**.

The entrepreneurial transition of the campus is encapsulated under the medium-term vision "**Creating Value From Our Ideas**", as we seek to translate the campus's considerable strengths in research into creating value for society and value for The UWI itself through entrepreneurship. Examples of the creative thinking and novel approaches needed to drive innovation and entrepreneurship are contained throughout this issue. Further partnerships will be needed both with government and the private sector to build the robust innovation systems required to take ideas from creative spark to commercially viable product. This is an exciting time in the evolution of the Cave Hill campus, and I invite all members of the community to contribute their creativity and energy to implement the medium-term vision "Creating Value From Our Ideas". ♦



LICENCE TO FLOURISH

by Carol Williams

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The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus has become the first institution in Barbados to receive a licence for research and development (R&D) into medicinal marijuana. The licence, granted by the **Barbados Medicinal Cannabis Licensing Authority (BMCLA)** on 19 January, also allows the campus to import and export cannabis products for research purposes.

The licence is the result of a long-term collaboration between the campus and the BMCLA that began in 2019 after the Government of Barbados passed the **Medicinal Cannabis Industry Bill**. The campus and the BMCLA signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 with the aim of advancing cannabis

research, education, and innovation.

The R&D licence enables the campus to conduct experiments and testing on various forms and derivatives of cannabis, including live plants, fresh and dried plant material, seeds, oil, and wax. The campus will also be able to pursue drug discovery and pharmacological research on cannabinoid compounds, such as phytocannabinoids, synthetic cannabinoids, endocannabinoids, and other related phytochemicals from the cannabis plant.



BMCLA CEO (Ag) **Shanika Roberts-Odle** presents Principal of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus **Professor Clive Landis** with the research and development licence for medical cannabis.

Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences **Dr. Damian Cohall** said that the campus will take an inclusive and socially accountable approach to its research, in recognition of the social inequities surrounding the use of cannabis. He also expressed confidence that the licence will lead to increased grants and commercially viable projects for the campus.

"A significant portion of this revenue will be derived from research and development activities from the cannabis value chain, that is [from] seed to sale," Dr. Cohall said. "It is anticipated that our research in the Faculty of Medical Sciences on cardiometabolic syndrome, diseases affecting the central nervous system [like] epilepsy, and the use of cannabinoid products to manage patients with related qualifying diseases will lead to transformative medicinal interventions against CNCs [chronic non-communicable diseases] and neurodegenerative conditions.

"The benefits are endless as these medicinal interventions can create wealth and health opportunities impacting the quality of life of Barbadians who can benefit directly and indirectly via an upward trend in the country's gross domestic product."

Dr. Cohall, an ethnopharmacologist, has developed a Massive Open Online Course on medicinal cannabis. He is among a select number of academics at Cave Hill who have conducted extensive research and published papers on cannabis.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the campus **Professor Clive Landis** said that the campus has all the elements required to create value from ideas by translating its research excellence into tangible value for society and the university itself through entrepreneurial activity. He noted that the campus may apply for additional licences to regulate the production and certification of cannabis products in the future.

"... we have a flourishing pharmacology programme with an in-house animal facility; we have a commercial analytical laboratory equipped with cutting-edge technology, and we have agri-industry facilities nearing completion at Dukes in St. Thomas. Most importantly, the university is operating in a conducive environment in Barbados which will support cannabis research and extension work in collaboration with the relevant government ministries and regulatory bodies," Landis said.

The BMCLA, which is responsible for the development and regulation of the industry, has 11 licencees with a combined 30 licences, including the campus.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of the BMCLA **Shanika Roberts-Odle** congratulated the campus on its achievement and encouraged all Barbadians to interact with The UWI on this front. She said that the BMCLA understands and respects the long history and expertise which a certain segment of the population has with the plant and that it is doing a balancing act to ensure the industry is safe and sustainable.

Permanent Secretary in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Nutritional Security**, **Terry Bascombe** commended Cave Hill for its achievement and noted that the global medicinal cannabis industry is projected to reach US\$65.8 billion by 2025.

According to Bascombe, any institution that advances the collective understanding of the therapeutic uses for the plant and that designs and produces innovative



Dr. Damian Cohall
Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Terry Bascombe
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
and Food and Nutritional Security, Barbados

cannabis products will set itself apart from the competition.

Cave Hill had joined its sister campus in Mona, Jamaica in being able to conduct such research, after legislative changes were made by the Government of Jamaica in 2015. ♦

New Economic Model

by Carol Williams

Persistent fiscal constraints of Caribbean economies due to climate change vulnerabilities, inadequate access to resources, heavy dependence on tourism and foreign direct investments, among other issues, have led the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, Dr. Kevin Greenidge, to propose a new economic model.

While not all elements of the five-pillar plan are novel, the Governor said it was tailor-made to fit the unique characteristics and challenges of the region.

The key areas of the recommended model are the blue economy, digitisation, green energy transition, agrirevolution and intensified regional integration. Dr. Greenidge said its implementation will require diversified and innovative sources of financing.

His recommendation was made while presenting the third **Distinguished Owen S. Arthur Memorial Lecture** hosted by the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade, Law, Policy and Services (SRC) last September. His presentation was titled “**A New Dawn – Charting the Course for Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth in the Caribbean**”.

Throughout his presentation, the Governor invoked the words of the late Athur, a regionalist and respected economist who was Barbados’s longest-serving prime minister and who is commemorated by the annual event.

Dr. Greenidge has worked as Senior Economist at the **International Monetary Fund**, Senior Economic Advisor to the **Government of Barbados** and has published extensively on financial liberalisation and the challenges of policymakers in small developing countries, exchange rate misalignment in the Caribbean, cross-country monetary effects, and growth and convergence in the Caribbean.

During the lecture, the bank Governor touted the transformative effects of economic growth and its ability to put states on a path of sustainable growth.

He defined sustainable, inclusive economic growth as *“an economic system that thrives without depleting the natural resources it depends on, while also ensuring social equity and meeting the needs of future generations”*. He further identified eight determinants –

- environmental sustainability,
- robust institutions,
- development of human capital, productivity,
- technological innovation, inclusive growth,
- a stable and vibrant financial system,
- and deepened regional integration.

Therefore, he said, implementation of the model will require nuanced approaches given the complexities of the different countries.

As for the possible sources of financing his economic model, he said this can be facilitated through public-private partnerships (PPPs) that were essential for launching projects that are both economically viable and beneficial to society at large, as they *“provide a practical avenue for blending the agility of the private sector with the scale and reach of the public domain”*.

Dr. Greenidge said financial markets were another source of financing: *“The significant liquidity surplus in the Caribbean’s financial markets presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Central banks have a pivotal role in devising and executing strategies to channel this abundant liquidity into investments that promote sustainable growth. Their focus needs to be on directing funds towards green initiatives, technological advancements, and infrastructure projects that resonate with the region’s sustainable objectives.”*

Green bonds and climate finance, coupled with foreign direct investments, were identified as avenues through which dedicated capital for environmentally and socially responsible projects can be accessed.

The Governor said the entry of export-import banks like the **African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)**, which has established an office in Barbados and is making US\$1.5 billion available to support sustainable development in some states, as well as the **Export-Import Bank of China (China Exim Bank)**, which supports infrastructure and development projects, have enriched the regional landscape.

“These institutions amplify the Caribbean’s access to a diverse array of financial instruments, trade opportunities, and international markets. The synergy between these banks and the Caribbean nations promises to weave a narrative of enhanced economic resilience, diversified trade portfolios and collaborative innovation, positioning the Caribbean at the forefront of sustainable, global economic integration.”

During his interaction with the audience, he was engaged on issues like the role of export-import banks, a global carbon tax to help deal with carbon emissions, the development of human capital and related literacy, and the re-establishment of a national bank of Barbados. ♦



Chemistry BOND

by Camille Russell

Chemistry teachers have established an inaugural grouping for membership support to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. The **Barbados Network of Chemistry Teachers** was launched last October during a brief ceremony at Cave Hill Campus aimed at empowering chemistry educators through collaboration and continuous professional development.



Dr. Leah Garner-O'Neal

Director, Barbados Network of Chemistry Teachers
and Lecturer in Chemistry, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Founder and Director of the network **Dr. Leah Garner-O'Neal**, a Cave Hill-based UWI lecturer, said the idea was conceived during the COVID-19 lockdown when teachers pivoted from in-person classes to online instruction.

"[During] COVID ... I saw that some of the chemistry teachers were struggling. As I spoke to them and heard that they were struggling with teaching students online, I began to reach out to them, and this was

the genesis of the support group. We met online, and we shared our experiences in the online space. Soon, what started as a group of four persons, kept increasing as word spread about the network, and soon we decided we have to make this network official," Garner-O'Neal told the launch ceremony.

The initiative was lauded by Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology **Dr. Jeanese Badenock** who expressed her support: "Education is evolving rapidly,





Dr. Jeanese Badenock
Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Professor Avril Williams
Head, Department of Biological and
Chemical Sciences
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

the lives of chemistry teachers and students in Barbados and will help to ensure that students have access to the high-quality chemistry education they need to succeed in school and to pursue their careers."

She added that she looked forward to the expansion of the network to the benefit of both teachers and students of chemistry: "I would love to see the network thrive and grow to the extent that it is efficient and relentless in its promotion of chemistry education through advocacy for increased funding, teacher development and the creation of a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students." ♦

and to keep up with the latest pedagogical advances, we must collaborate and share best practices with our peers. This network will create a platform for educators to connect, exchange ideas, and access valuable resources," Dr. Badenock said.

She also reaffirmed The UWI's role in training high school teachers to be effective in the classroom: "This university stands committed to assisting and training teachers, as they are the bridge between secondary

and higher education. By sharing our resources, expertise, and collaborating with secondary and other tertiary-level institutions, I truly believe we can raise the quality of chemistry education across the board."

Head of Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences **Professor Avril Williams** also underscored the need for the network: *"I am confident that this network will make a real difference in*

Staff of the Faculty of Science and Technology and members of the Barbados Network of Chemistry Teachers attended the launch.



VC Forum Discusses Bridgetown Initiative

Barbados is a small country with big ideas, and it continues to show that size does not matter as it champions an ambitious plan to reform how climate adaptation and resilience are financed for developing countries.

Its latest efforts are bearing fruit in intangible ways. The **Bridgetown Initiative**, which seeks to give greater protection to climate-vulnerable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and elsewhere, has become a talking point in regional and international public spaces since its introduction in 2022.

It has garnered the attention of the **United Nations**, the **World Economic Forum**, and other global organisations and was discussed at a meeting in March 2023 between its chief spokesperson Barbados's Prime Minister **Mia Amor Mottley** and President of France **Emmanuel Macron**. Prime Minister Mottley received the **2021**



Prime Minister of Barbados, **Mia Amor Mottley** (left) and President of France **Emmanuel Macron**

Champion of the Earth Award, which is the United Nation's highest environmental award; and at the recent Minuch Security Conference, the **2024 Ewald von Kleist Award** for her efforts to advance climate action, justice and security.

In the Caribbean, The University of the West Indies (The UWI) sought to raise awareness about the measure and its implications during a **Vice-Chancellor's Forum** held on 30 March 2023.

The discussion involved Minister

of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, **Kerrie Symmonds**; UWI Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Sir Hilary Beckles**; Special Envoy to the Prime Minister of Barbados for Investment and Financial Service, **Professor Avinash Persaud**; Head of the European Union Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM, **Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska**; and Director of Greening Sovereign Debt, The Nature Conservancy, **Kevin Bender**.

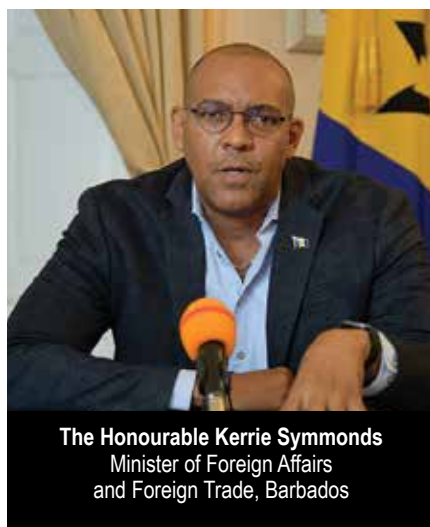
Host and Professor of Finance at The UWI, Cave Hill **Justin Robinson** said the **Bridgetown Initiative** was possibly “one of the most significant policy initiatives coming out of the Caribbean with impact on the global stage”.

The proposal was also lauded by Sir Hilary as being consistent with the economic thinking that has emerged in the region and one which was enrooted in the economics of the university.

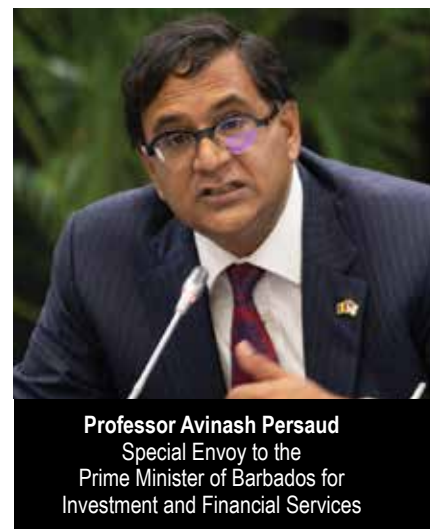
The initiative proposes a three-pronged approach to financing climate change adaptation and resilience: adjusting the terms of loans and how they are repaid; expansion of multilateral lending to governments by US\$1 trillion; and implementing a mechanism for the private sector to help fund climate mitigation and reconstruction.



Professor Justin Robinson
Professor of Corporate Finance
& Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic -
Industry Partnerships and Planning



The Honourable Kerrie Symmonds
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade, Barbados



Professor Avinash Persaud
Special Envoy to the
Prime Minister of Barbados for
Investment and Financial Services

In 2022, major Western oil companies made a record \$219 billion in profit while a Saudi Arabian oil giant reported US\$161.1 billion in net profit for the same year.

On the other hand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade said developed countries have yet to contribute the US\$100 billion a year that was promised at the **Conference of the Parties 2022 (COP15)** to finance climate action and that should have taken effect in 2020.

He said developing countries face countless challenges in their push to adopt climate-friendly measures. For Barbados, accessing the required technology was problematic and the cost to fully transition to being fossil fuel-free and renewable energy-driven was immense.

“It is only fair that if we’re trying to talk about adaptation and climate resilience that we also have the private sector and private enterprise [involved], in circumstances where companies are making unprecedented and what could really be called egregious profits. [They should] leave some of the profits on the table to assist the planet in making the adjustment. The simple moral message is ‘If there is no planet, there can be no profits’,” Symmonds said.

“There is no priority given to small states and that puts us in a significant degree of risk of double jeopardy. We are the ones on whose blood, sweat and tears the industrial revolution was created. We cannot now be asked to carry the cost of the correction of the greenhouse gas emissions created as a result of that industrial revolution.”

Professor Persaud said with climate conditions worsening, the people of this and other regions cannot afford to wait for the debate on climate change to peter out.

“We have focused on the things that can be done today that will impact the climate, that are ambitious and achievable, that would change global finance, that would



Ambassador Malgorzata Wasilewska
Head, European Union Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States,
the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM



Kevin Bender
Director of Greening Sovereign Debt,
The Nature Conservancy

change the course of climate change, and change the course of development.”

The envoy believes the **Bridgetown Initiative** has a strong chance of success even though other proposals of a similar nature have not succeeded.

“Other efforts have been unsuccessful because they’ve relied heavily on one set of countries writing a very large cheque

*for others. The **Bridgetown Initiative** recognises that that is not going to happen in the short term ... We’re saying even that cheque wouldn’t come from the Government; it’d be coming from the windfall of three major sectors – fossil fuel industry, shipping industry and sustainable agriculture, and that is a very different equation than we’ve ever put forward before.”*

Head of the European Union Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/CARIFORUM accepted the argument for more accessible financing to address global challenges, such as climate change, to better support the most vulnerable.

Ambassador Wasilewska said the multiple long- and short-term crises faced over the past years have proven that the global financial system should be adjusted, but at the same time, public finance was not enough to respond to the climate crisis.

*“We welcome the objectives of this initiative and recognise its potential to mobilise more and different forms of finance globally for countries to address climate challenges more comprehensively ... The proposals under the **Bridgetown Initiative** are particularly relevant for multilateral development banks and the reform process they recently launched. We, as the **European Union**, will continue to work with the **IMF [International Monetary Fund]**, multilateral development banks and their stakeholders to identify practical ways forward.”*

Bender, a former World Bank employee, said the **Bridgetown Initiative** provides real opportunities to make much money available to deal with climate change. ♦

Tech Exec Praises UWI Grads for His Company's Success

by Marie-Claire Williams

A leading export manufacturer has put forward a strong case for companies to invest in The University of the West Indies, saying graduates of the Cave Hill campus have been crucial to the growth of his company since it began operations nearly three decades ago.

President of **Lenstec (Barbados) Inc.**, **Ian Hickling**, who received an honorary Doctor of Science (DSc) degree at last October's graduation ceremony, made the call while speaking at a fundraising dinner held in his honour and that of fellow honorees, entertainer Alison Hinds-Walcott (DLitt) and business executive Trisha Tannis (LLD). The businessman and biochemist attributed much of his company's success in Barbados to its association with Cave Hill.

"I just want to go on record as saying that none of this would have happened if we didn't engage with UWI on day one. And for 27 years, we have been working with UWI in all sorts of different ways. The first thing that happened was when we came here, we found out that there were lots of tests required that couldn't be done here; so, we went to the Faculty of Science and arranged for some honour students to come in and set up a microbiology lab. We have continued that relationship ever since,

and we get the best microbiologists, who graduate from here, that come through our lab and work with us," he said.

Lenstec (Barbados) Inc. is a subsidiary of **Lenstec Corporation**, a commercial medical device company based in Florida. The company opened its global manufacturing facility in Barbados in 1995. It manufactures intraocular lenses, which are artificial replacements for the natural ones removed during cataract surgery.

Hickling added that ten per cent of the staff at Lenstec are graduates of The UWI, including ten research and development scientists.

Principal of Cave Hill Campus **Professor Clive Landis** told attendees that The UWI remains committed to contributing to the overall development of the Caribbean.

"As an academy, we are resolved; we are coalesced around a strategy which is to take our research and to apply it at all levels of society; to enmesh ourselves in society with the ministries, with the private sector, with industries, to help drive innovation [and] entrepreneurship and to help drive the development of Barbados and the Caribbean," Landis said. ♦

"Probably the most visual thing is that all of our production databases ... and remember we make three quarters of a million lenses a year ... control every single one of those [lenses]. So, every lens we've ever made, which is more than seven million, has a record and a database which was written by a UWI graduate," he added.

Governments Warned Against Inaction on Marine Resources



Professor David Berry
Professor of International Law
and Regional Integration Law
Faculty of Law, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Having served as one of the lead CARICOM negotiators on an international treaty that has significant implications for the entire region, **Professor David Berry** of the Faculty of Law is now cautioning the governments against inertia regarding that treaty.

The legal scholar is so passionate about the issue that he used his professorial lecture, an event held by The University of the West Indies (The UWI) to celebrate the elevation of an academic to the university's highest academic rank, to analyse the agreement. The Cave Hill academic was officially recognised as a **Professor of International Law and Regional Integration Law** by The UWI in May 2022.

The international legally binding instrument under the **United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea** on

the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) was adopted at the UN in June 2023.

Less than six months later, it was the subject of Professor Berry's Professorial Lecture titled "**Blue Economies and the 2023 BBNJ Agreement – another treaty commitment without tangible benefits for Caribbean States?**" which he delivered 9 November 2023.

He recognised that each country has a 200 nautical mile jurisdiction beyond their territorial sea known as the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

However, beyond national EEZs are vast areas of ocean, the high seas. These international areas, labelled **Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**, fall within the scope of the agreement and represent almost two-thirds of the global oceans.

Professor Berry said the BBNJ Agreement seeks to establish a regime for the use and conservation of marine biological diversity in those underregulated

areas of the high seas and on the deep seabed. More specifically, marine biological diversity will be protected from existing and future activities that threaten the marine ecosystem, and there will be strict regulation of marine genetic resources as well as their related digital sequencing information.

Noting the tremendous scientific and economic potential for marine genetic resources, he said this must be fairly and equitably shared and provisions have been made to facilitate this. Systems will, therefore, facilitate capacity-building, marine technology transfer, marine genetic resource access, and financing.

Although the Caribbean Sea covers less than one per cent of the world's ocean, Professor Berry said all countries in this region will be affected because the agreement does not give benefits based on proximity or adjacency.

“So, Jamaica has just as much right to the marine genetic resources outside Barbados’s 200 nautical mile EEZ in the Atlantic as Barbados does.”

In his examination of the benefits, he said provision has been made for the identification and classification of species that are found and to map the ecosystems in which marine species live, which would help with their conservation and sustainable use.

Moreover, he said the agreement will help, through area-based management techniques, correct existing practices that threaten marine biodiversity, and prevent future harm through environmental impact assessments.

“The BBNJ agreement can potentially provide strong benefits for Caribbean states. Indirect benefits [include] helping to preserve and maintain marine biological diversity which, in turn, will help our blue economies and help counteract global warming. Direct benefits [include] access to benefit-sharing provisions, capacity-building, transfer of marine technology, the financial mechanism, and monetary benefits. It must be recalled that simply having access to information and data on marine genetic resources, including digital sequencing



Professor David Berry (left) and **Dr. Leo Brewster**, Director of the Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU), Barbados

information, will enable Caribbean scientists to do research and Caribbean industries to potentially develop new commercial products.”

He said these benefits can have spillover effects in other areas of the economy.

On the other hand, the legal expert said that although it was unlikely that marine genetic resources and digital sequencing information would produce immediate financial benefits for the Caribbean, our region needs to position itself to receive them, if such resources are commercialised.

He said while states should conduct a cost-benefit analysis before joining any new treaty framework, time was of the essence given that the BBNJ agreement was opened for signature last September and discussions were actively underway on its provisional application.

*“It would not be beneficial to Caribbean states if we played no role in the formal development of the BBNJ agreement’s rules and processes. Many important decisions of the **Conference of the Parties (COP)** have to be made at its first meeting ... and only states that are party to the agreement in attendance at the COP will be able to participate in those first decisions.*

“If CARICOM member states act with the same urgency, same high levels of coordination and activism as they did when negotiating the agreement, then we may help shape the institutions and processes favourably to Caribbean interests.”

In so doing, Professor Berry said Caribbean countries will not only demonstrate continued leadership in protecting marine biodiversity in BBNJ, but they will be able to help shape the BBNJ’s rules and processes and ensure that the agreement benefits the region and its people.

The BBNJ was the product of nearly two decades of negotiations, including by CARICOM members. ♦





New Aviation Programme SOARS TO SUCCESS

by Camille Russell

The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus has launched a groundbreaking programme to teach English for aviation professionals, the first of its kind in the region. This programme, which started on 3 April 2023, has already graduated two cohorts of pilots and aviation mechanics who have improved their aviation English proficiency, even meeting the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** standards.



Programme Coordinator, **Dr. Stacy Denny**, congratulates students of Cohort 2 on completion of the programme.

Programme Coordinator, **Dr. Stacy Denny**, said the programme has evolved and adapted its approach based on feedback from the initial cohorts: *"We have refined our teaching methodologies, resources, and assessments to align with the latest developments in aviation language and to enhance real-world communication skills."*

The third cohort will consist only of flight attendants, for whom a new curriculum has been designed and tailored to address their specific language needs. The focus will be on language skills related to in-flight communication, passenger interaction, emergency procedures, and general hospitality.

Dr. Denny stated the programme faces both challenges and opportunities



Dr. Stacy Denny presents student **Brice Leopoldie** with the special prize for Best Student Engagement.



Piétrick Voyer, Director of Operations, Grantley Adams International Airport presents student **Chloën Louis-Sidney** with her Certificate of Completion.

in catering to a diverse group of aviation professionals and noted its aim to customise content for each group's needs while ensuring a cohesive learning experience. She pointed out that this programme offers opportunities for cross-functional collaboration and a better understanding of the varied language requirements across different roles within the aviation industry.

Dr. Denny outlined ambitious plans

for the programme's future: *"We plan to continue expanding and refining the programme. Future initiatives include expanding partnerships with aviation training centres, both regionally and internationally; integrating advanced language technologies and simulation tools, and collaborating with industry experts and professionals."*

Also, she expressed her commitment to making this programme a benchmark

for worldclass language training in the aviation industry: *"The **English for Aviation** programme at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus is a historic and innovative initiative that will enhance communication and safety within the aviation sector."* ♦

Cohort 2 of the English for Aviation programme with instructors (from left) **Shernell Joe** and **Michelle Reece-Herbert**, and (from right) **Dawn Farrell-Boyce** and **Shana Jones**



CERMES Leading the Charge Against Invasive Species

In a compelling showcase of environmental stewardship, scientists at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus are taking centre stage in the battle against invasive species in Barbados.

On the occasion of **World Environment Day**, 5 June 2023, the **Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences**, within the Faculty of Science and Technology, hosted a public lecture at the **Barbados Fisheries Division**. The lecture highlighted the pioneering efforts of UWI scientists to manage invasions by flatworms, lionfish, and sun corals, thereby contributing to the island's ecological well-being.

Professor of Conservation Ecology **Dr. Julia Horrocks** initiated the discourse by delving into the realm of invasive alien species and their detrimental effects on native biodiversity, economies, and public health. She underscored the pivotal role UWI Ecology lecturers play in supporting the Barbados Government's initiatives to prevent the arrival of new invasive species and manage existing ones. Professor Horrocks shed light on the Cabinet-appointed **Working Group on Biodiversity (WGB)**, a collaborative effort involving UWI

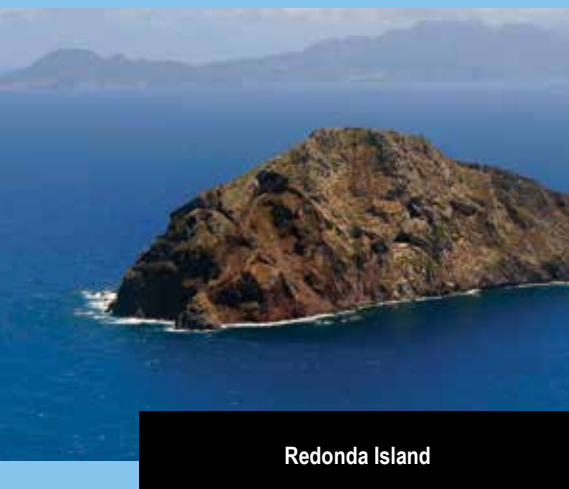
staff, aimed at providing crucial advice on invasive species management.

A notable highlight of the lecture was the success story of **Shanna Challenger**, an Ecology major (2016) at Cave Hill, whose work led to the restoration of Redonda, a small Caribbean island. The removal of invasive species allowed native fauna to thrive, showcasing the potential impact of strategic conservation efforts.



Professor Julia Horrocks
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus





Redonda Island



Leaf-toed gecko



Flatworm

The focus then shifted to the creation of a biosecure area for the leaf-toed gecko, a species unique to Barbados. **Connor Blades** (UWI

MPhil 2020) presented insights into the gecko's limited distribution and the fencing measures implemented to protect it from invasive threats.

Biologist **Dr. Darren Browne** took the audience on a journey into the world of flatworms, emphasising the ongoing citizen science project's collaboration with governmental bodies. His research highlighted the dangers posed by these worms to earthworms, essential for maintaining healthy soil structure and supporting food production. Dr. Browne cautioned against the potential spread of flatworms through the movement of topsoil.

Ecologist **Dr. Henri Vallès** navigated the waters to discuss the GEF (Global Environment Facility)-funded pilot projects on marine invasives, focusing on the much-feared lionfish. Contrary to expectations, research indicated no negative impact on native fishing communities or fish catches in Barbados. Dr. Vallès recommended continued targeting of lionfish by commercial and recreational spear-fishers to maintain ecological balance.

The discussion concluded with insights into sun corals, introduced to the Caribbean in the 1950s. Dr. Vallès and his graduate student **Robert Bourne**, conducted a coast-wide survey, revealing the presence of sun corals on artificial structures. A sun coral removal experiment suggested that manual removal could be a cost-effective measure to control sun coral abundance on these structures.

The UWI, Cave Hill scientists' dedication to combating invasive species reflects a commitment to environmental sustainability and underscores the university's role as a key player in Barbados's conservation efforts.



Connor Blades
UWI MPhil Student (2020)



Dr. Darren Browne
Lecturer in Biology
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Dr. Henri Vallès
Senior Lecturer in Ecology
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Transatlantic Medical Programme Launched in Spectacular Fashion

A historic day of joy and jubilation marked the official inauguration of the UWI-UG joint Transatlantic Medical Programme, last November.

The Great Hall of **University of Ghana (UG)**, Accra was filled with excitement and anticipation as officials from **The UWI, Cave Hill Campus** and the **University of Ghana Medical School (UGMS)** celebrated their groundbreaking partnership in medical education.

This visionary initiative offers a unique opportunity for students from both institutions to pursue a world-class medical degree that transcends national boundaries. Cave Hill students will spend the first three years of their studies at Cave Hill, earning a BSc. Preclinical Science degree, before joining the fourth year of the MB ChB programme at the UGMS. Similarly, Ghanaian students will complete a tailor-made BSc in Preclinical Sciences degree at Cave Hill before returning to Ghana to finish the clinical phase of their MB ChB degree.

Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, **Professor Clive Landis** expressed his delight at the successful launch of the programme that

he described as a “*true collaboration of equals*”. He emphasised the programme’s authenticity, highlighting its accreditation by the professional medical bodies of both Ghana and Barbados.

Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, Vice-Chancellor of UG, echoed his sentiments, saying that the launch was a “*major milestone*” in the academic journey of both universities.

She said, “*It is my belief that this launch will serve as a major springboard to the realisation of the vision of promoting international visibility for our universities and a new chapter in the academic journey for both universities.*”

The launch was followed by an insightful public lecture by **Dr. Kenneth Connell**, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, The UWI, Cave Hill. His lecture, titled “**From Bridgetown to Accra – Hypertension as a Threat to the Diaspora: Lessons from COVID-19**”, urged for a holistic approach to the universal health system, stressing the need to address hypertension, a global concern.

Dr. Connell shared data from the recent World Health Organization **Global Report on Hypertension** that showed the alarming prevalence of hypertension and the importance of mass testing to detect undiagnosed cases. He advised households in Ghana to acquire blood pressure monitors as essential tools for identifying hypertension.

The UG Vice-Chancellor concluded the session by highlighting the significance of lifestyle changes, including incorporating physical exercises like walking and cycling into daily routines.

She advised, “*We cannot say hypertension is a disease for the elderly. It*



Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, Vice-Chancellor of UG; and **Professor Clive Landis**, Principal of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus sign the Student Exchange Agreement.

is catching up with everyone of us, so we need to take these precautions. It is easier to form certain healthy habits while you are still young than much later in your years.”

The event ended with a warm exchange of gifts between Professor Landis and Professor Amfo, accompanied by captivating Ghanaian cultural performances by the **Ghana Dance Ensemble** from the **Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana**.

Officials from the High Commission of Barbados in Accra, members from the College of Health Sciences of UG, members from UGMS, students, and the broader university community were in attendance, making the launch a truly collaborative and memorable occasion. ♦

Students and faculty of the University of Ghana in attendance at the launch.



Dr. Kenneth Connell
Deputy Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

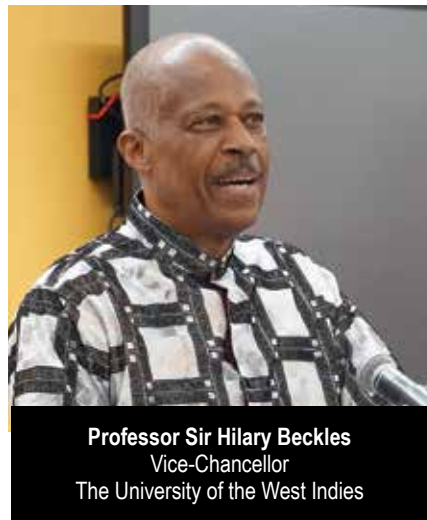


Symposium Examines Critical Canada-Caribbean Affairs

A range of issues were put under the spotlight during last year's third **Canada-Caribbean Institute Symposium** hosted at the Cave Hill campus of The University of the West Indies.

The two-day event, held 23-24 February at the Sagcor Cave Hill School of Business and Management, brought over 55 scholars and researchers from the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States for discussions on **"Decoloniality: Past, Present and Future Directions"**.

The conversation centred on ten broad themes that included **Alternative Livelihoods and Economies; Decoloniality and Indigeneity Across Contexts; Decolonializing Educational Practice; Decolonializing Regional Politics; and Making Decolonization Visible on the Ground: Towards a Memorial Relief Sculpture for the "Negro Burial Ground" in Niagara-on-the-Lake.**



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

In the prelude to the discussion, several speakers noted historic race relations within Canada, the treatment of its indigenous peoples, and the complex relationship

between the North American country and the Caribbean.

UWI Vice-Chancellor **Professor Sir Hilary Beckles** noted that although Canada did not colonise externally, domestically it conquered indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans. He pointed to the groundbreaking nature of the discussions that he said were both relevant and timely, as they took place a week after talks between Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and CARICOM Heads of Government during their conference in The Bahamas.

President and Vice-Chancellor of **McMaster University, Dr. David Farrar**, said he was born at a time of racial segregation in Southern Ontario, Canada and agreed that many issues needed to be



Dr. David Farrar
President and Vice-Chancellor
McMaster University, Canada



Dr. Lynn Wells
President and Vice-Chancellor
Brock University, Canada



The Honourable Kerrie Symmonds
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Foreign Trade, Barbados

addressed. President and Vice-Chancellor of **Brock University**, **Dr. Lynn Wells** said she became aware of the issues around colonialism and its intergenerational effects during the years she spent working with indigenous people in Canada. All agreed that the institute presents opportunities for Caribbean and Canadian scholars to collaborate in areas of interest across disciplines.

"It's playing a valuable role in generating the knowledge and analysis needed to inform some of the most pressing issues that both regions are challenged with today, from social and economic development to trade and addressing the very urgent issue of climate change," Dr. Farrar said.

Meantime, Pro Vice-Chancellor and

Principal of Cave Hill Campus **Professor Clive Landis** noted that Canada has partnered with the Caribbean in its development, a relationship that has extended to The UWI and became visibly evident in the makeup of its international students. Currently, Canadians comprise the largest cohort of international students at Cave Hill, while the majority of students from the Barbados-based campus who go on exchange programmes abroad travel to higher education institutions in Canada.

Landis was hopeful the **Canada-Caribbean Institute** will continue to *"provide a vehicle to strengthen this bilateral exchange and broaden it to staff and more specific collaborative research agreements to deepen the overwhelmingly positive and multifaceted relationships that exist between Canada and the Caribbean."*

The symposium was also addressed by the **Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Kerrie Symmonds**. His wide-ranging keynote address touched on the need for global strategic leadership, offshore oil exploration,

climate change, climate financing, renewable energy, the need for a deeper pool of financial resources in the **Caribbean Development Fund** (a monetary facility established by the **Caribbean Community** to help disadvantaged countries, regions and sectors), and trade relations between Canada and the Caribbean.

He said while Canada has been an indispensable partner in Barbados's developmental journey, particularly in the areas of international business, investments, and migration, the relationship between the two countries has not been without challenges. The minister said Barbados's trading relationship with the country, much like with the United States, was a source of concern, as it had stalled and was not based on *"genuine economic development thrusts but on a paternalistic approach, which is incompatible with World Trade Organization rules."*

The **Canada-Caribbean Institute** was founded in February 2020 by **The UWI** and **Brock University** to collaborate on pertinent economic, environmental, and social issues.

McMaster University recently took over from **Brock University** as the lead Canadian partner in the institute. ♦





UWI - a Unifying Force

**An agent
of regional
unity that has
helped to drive
Caribbean
development!**



Senator Rev. Dr. John Rogers

That's how prominent Barbadian priest, Senator Rev. Dr. John Rogers described The University of the West Indies

while invoking the enduring lyrics of late calypsonian Black Stalin to remind Caribbean citizens of their shared heritage.

The rector of **St. George Parish Church**, Barbados praised the Caribbean's premier institution of higher education for its contribution to regional integration as he delivered his sermon at an Interfaith **Thanksgiving Service** to commemorate the 75th anniversary of The UWI and the 60th anniversary of the founding of Cave Hill Campus.

Rev. Rogers told the congregation, which included staff, retirees, alumni, friends, and well-wishers of the campus, that while the goal of full integration is yet to be achieved, the university has been facilitating the process for more than seven decades.

"Our University of the West Indies has served as an agent of unity in this region, bringing people who were geographically isolated for centuries together and helping us to see, as the great Leroy [Black Stalin] Caliste said, that the Caribbean man is one race from the same place, who took the same trip on the same ship," he said.

“Over the decades, bonds have been built up across the waters which once divided us. Marriages have resulted, families have been built; the gene pool has been expanded through The University of the West Indies. And though the goal [of] full regional unity is yet to be realised, thanks to the light rising in the west we have started the process.”



Professor Clive Landis
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Among attendees at the February 2023 event were President of Barbados, Her Excellency Dame Sandra Mason, one of the first graduates of the Faculty of Law; Chairman of the Campus Council, Sir Paul Altman; government ministers, and religious leaders.

Addressing the matter of spiritual leadership, Rev. Rogers hailed The UWI's success in forging affiliate relationships with religious schools across the Caribbean.

*“Just two years after the formation of the Cave Hill campus, **Codrington College**, the oldest theological seminary in this hemisphere, became a part of The University of the West Indies, training priests from the Anglican faith from The Bahamas in the north to Guyana in the south, and Belize in the west, ensuring that the highest levels of theological*

education could reach the people of this region so that they could be enlightened.

*“Likewise, **St. Michael's College in Jamaica**, and **St. John Vianney and the Ugandan Martyrs** in Trinidad and Tobago became affiliated with The University of the West Indies, promulgating the Roman Catholic faith throughout this region. **The United Church in Jamaica**; the **Jamaica Baptist**; the **Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas**; **The Moravian Church, Eastern West Indies Province**; the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana**, all of these institutions now issue certificates under the aegis of The University of the West Indies.”*

Another major achievement, he noted, was The UWI's contribution to the social development of the Caribbean.

“This institution has also been an agent of social transformation in this region, ensuring that our leadership is grounded

in the struggles of its people; that our leadership understands the journey: that the people who once walked in darkness must be enlightened as we go forward,” said Rogers, a member of Barbados's Constitution Reform Commission.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Cave Hill Campus, **Professor Clive Landis**, told the congregation that there is much to be thankful for.

“The rooting in society of The UWI as a Caribbean institution with a clearly understood development mission, evokes the Ubuntu philosophy ‘I am because we are’. Our meaning and purpose as a university is derived in relationship to those around us, as a public university both for and of the people.

“Let me therefore ask each of you, no matter whether you are a member of the university community in attendance today, or whether you are supporting The UWI from outside, to rededicate ourselves to the development mission of The UWI and pray, each according to our faith, that God will keep this university safe and prosperous far into the future as we deliver on our mission to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean and the wider world,” Landis said.

The service included performances from honorary graduates and performing artistes namely, Dr. the Most Honourable Stedson “Red Plastic Bag” Wiltshire, Dr. the Most Honourable Anthony “Gabby” Carter, Dr. Nicholas Brancker; as well as the Dance Ensemble of The UWI, among others. ♦





Exploring Strategies for Enhancing International Trade

Panellists (from left) **Vicki Marshall**, Corporate Secretary and Head of Compliance and Governance, Canada Life Reinsurance (Barbados); **Professor Don Marshall**, Director of SALISES; **Glenna Smith**, Managing Director, Smith Compliance Consulting, listen on as **Cindy Sadaphal**, General Counsel and Compliance Manager, SAGICOR Bank makes her point.

Cave Hill took another rewarding step towards strengthening its academy-industry relationship with the private sector when it hosted a roundtable discussion aimed at finding ways to push Barbados's International Business and Financial Sector. The emerging consensus was that more work needs to be done if Barbados is to make greater gains in this sector.

Nonetheless, the discussion, hosted by the **Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)** last November, yielded critical awareness on the steps required to achieve the outlined goal.

The event titled “**Propelling Barbados' International Business and Financial Sector**” was moderated by Director of SALISES **Professor Don Marshall** and featured a distinguished panel of experts, including **Vicki Marshall**, Corporate Secretary and Head of Compliance and Governance, Canada Life Reinsurance (Barbados); **Glenna Smith**, Managing Director, Smith Compliance Consulting; and

Cindy Sadaphal, General Counsel and Compliance Manager, SAGICOR Bank who shared invaluable insights in outlining the path forward for Barbados.

Delivering opening remarks at the event, Campus Principal **Professor Clive Landis** underscored the campus's aim to build a mutually beneficial relationship with the international business and financial sector and pledged a desire to work with digital nomads.

“We want to be part of the virtual work transition taking place worldwide, where mobile and successful business people can work from anywhere. I have no doubt that Barbados can leverage its unique attractions as a safe and desirable

destination to establish itself as a hub of international business and finance within the global market space."

The principal also underlined the importance of research, which he pointed out was a major strength that The UWI brings to the academy-industry partnership. Stressing that research excellence was deeply ingrained in the institution, he reflected on 2018 when research played a pivotal role in catapulting The UWI into the top tier of global universities as ranked by **Times Higher Education**.

"Research is in the DNA of The University of the West Indies," Professor Landis stated. "With this strong foundation in research, The UWI is well-equipped to contribute invaluable insights and innovative ideas to the international business and finance sector in Barbados."

On invitation to share their perspectives, each panellist offered unique insights into the path forward for Barbados.

Vicki Marshall stressed the importance of proactive measures to ensure regulatory bodies in Barbados and the region are well-equipped and adequately resourced to respond effectively to international finance bodies.

"A robust regulatory environment is critical for attracting and retaining international businesses," she urged.

Glenna Smith raised the issue of adequately measuring the impact of corporate tax contributions to the economy: *"This sector plays a vital role in Barbados's economy, offering a financial lifeline that can be drawn upon in times of economic uncertainty, such as the tourism sector's decline during the COVID-19 pandemic," she said.*



Professor Clive Landis
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Cindy Sadaphal encouraged stakeholders not to shy away from risks but to address them head-on. She made the call for a collaborative approach in shaping legislation and managing risks effectively.

"Demonstrating the country's ability to address and manage risks while enforcing effective laws is crucial to gaining the trust of rating bodies and international businesses," she advised.

Professor Marshall drew attention to the need for urgently improving the exchange of knowledge between researchers and practitioners in the international business sector. He also argued for Barbados and other regional jurisdictions to have a seat at the table where international decisions are made about the global business and financial services sector.

*"It is vital that our countries be included in these crucial international discussions to ensure the success and security of Barbados's international business and financial sector. We should also be part of the **Financial Action Task Force** as a right, as an entity."*

The roundtable concluded with an air of optimism, as the discussion underscored that Barbados, with the support of institutions like The UWI, is well-positioned to tap into the vast potential of the international business and financial sector. ♦

Students posed questions to the panellists at the roundtable event.



POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Public Health Joins the Fight Against Crime

In a novel approach to fighting crime, several agencies, including public health stakeholders, have joined forces to tackle the root factors and effects of gun violence.

The initiative titled **“Pathway to Policy, Integrating Security and Public Health Responses to Firearms Trafficking and Violence in the Caribbean”** focuses on a transdisciplinary and a whole-of-society approach in the fight against crime. It is driven by a multisectoral Advisory Committee of experts drawn from regional and international agencies including the **Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS)**, the **Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)**; The UWI, Cave Hill-based **George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre (GA-CDRC)**; and the **Small Arms Survey**, an associated programme of the **Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies**, Geneva.



Lt. Col. Michael Jones
Executive Director of CARICOM IMPACS

Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director of CARICOM IMPACS, emphasised the importance of moving beyond a law

enforcement perspective to tackle crime. According to him, research indicates that the most effective way to tackle gun violence is through a multisectoral approach, with a particular emphasis on involving the public health sector as first responders to firearm-related incidents.

A pivotal two-day inception meeting of the Advisory Committee took place in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 20–21

November 2023. This committee, comprising experts in diverse fields such as economics, governance, forensic ballistics,

public health, law, clinical psychology, anthropology, forensic pathology, education, youth, communications, epidemiology, criminal justice, research, and security, will assist in critically informing the substantial and procedural work of the **Pathway to Policy** project.

Dr. Joy St John, Executive Director of CARPHA, explained that the project aims to support evidence-based measures against firearm trafficking and violence. It also strives to produce new research on the socioeconomic costs of armed violence in the Caribbean region. The initiative will implement a regional strategy to engage and disseminate research findings among key security and public health stakeholders. Additionally, it will develop an early warning social media dashboard on firearms crimes.



Dr. Joy St. John
Executive Director of the Caribbean
Public Health Agency (CARPHA)



Dr. Natasha Sobers
Senior Lecturer
in Public Health and Epidemiology, GA-CDRC



Professor Simon Anderson
Director, George Alleyne Chronic Disease
Research Centre (GA-CDRC)

Following the Advisory Committee meeting, a two-day research workshop, organised and led by **Dr.**

Natasha Sobers and **Professor Simon Anderson** of the GA-CDRC, was held to bring focus on methodologies and data collection tools for the project, particularly regarding the costs of gun violence. The workshop, attended by colleagues from The Bahamas and Jamaica, delved into individual, community, and regional systems facilitating firearms trafficking and violence, with an aim to inform further research.

The foundation for these discussions was the ***Weapons Compass: the Caribbean Firearms Study***

published in April 2023. The study, a joint report from **CARICOM IMPACS** and the **Small Arms Survey**, highlighted that the homicide rate in the Caribbean is almost three times higher than the world average. It also revealed that violence in the region is closely associated with gangs and exacerbated by the availability and use of illicit firearms.

The 'Pathway to Policy' project, with funding from the **Federal Foreign Office**, Germany is set to run from 2023 to 2025.





NOVEL HEALTH PROPOSAL TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

The heatwave that swept the globe in 2023 has prompted a team of public health professionals to propose a One Health approach to address the impact of climate change on the population in the Caribbean. That proposal was put forward during a panel discussion hosted by the Faculty of Medical Sciences last September, under the theme **Climate, Population & Planetary Health – A Hot Topic at 60?**

Statistics from the **Barbados Meteorological Services** show that temperatures soared to 35 degrees Celsius in July last year and continued to the later months of the year. Similar patterns were also recorded in other parts of the world, and in January 2024, the **World Meteorological Organization** declared 2023 the hottest year on record to date.

Executive Director of the **Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)**, **Dr. Joy St John** noted that the One Health approach would comprise all sectors, including the vital tourism and agriculture sectors.

“One Health in the Caribbean Public Health Agency means that we don’t just talk to other sectors, we plan with other sectors. So even with our planning for the Cricket World Cup, we’re trying to bring all the sectors together to see what could be the challenges, what could be the threats; and make sure that we are planning for anything that could happen, any outbreak,” St John said.



Dr. Joy St. John
Executive Director of the **Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)**

She added that the One Health approach will also be part of the Pandemic Fund, which was created as part of the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to be a catalyst for change and improvement in operating systems to allow countries to better manage the next pandemic.

"The One Health approach was a requirement for the proposals that were sent into the Pandemic Fund. And it didn't mean that agriculture did a proposal in a country, health did a proposal in a country, and it didn't come together. It was supposed to be a joint writing of proposals."

St. John, the former Chief Medical Officer of Barbados, stated that countries would need to implement smarter healthcare goals, and CARPHA is already working with other regional agencies in that area.

"CARPHA, along with PAHO [Pan American Health Organization] and the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology [CIMH], does a bulletin, a forecasting of the weather and the likely illnesses. When it's Saharan dust time, they tell us about how to protect persons who have issues with respiration, like asthmatics. When it's flooding time, they talk about how to avoid ... water that might [cause] infection [such as] leptospirosis. And now that it's the extreme heat time, they're pointing out what parts of the Caribbean we need to put what interventions in place."

"And there are also things like early warning systems to deal with the environment that are being worked on."

This is under the umbrella of a PAHO project funded by the EU [European Union] that CARPHA, CCCCC [Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre], CIMH, that we're all working on together. So, the solutions have to be thought of with

something in mind. It's not going to work right away [but] it's going to make things better for my grandchildren," she said.

While acknowledging that extreme weather patterns are not unusual in the Caribbean, Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies and Research **Dr. Mike Campbell** highlighted what he said are new phenomena affecting the population as a result of climate change.

"We understand that heat affects mood, mood disturbances, and community mental health are exacerbated by heat. Suicide rates go up as temperatures go up, and so does violence. Violence of different types: interpersonal violence, crime, also political violence and cultural violence ... are associated, over the long run, with temperature changes," Campbell said.



Dr. Mike Campbell
Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies
and Research

He added that researchers at Cave Hill added that researchers at Cave Hill are part of an ongoing, international collaboration examining the impact of climate change on the attitudes and experiences of young people, aged 16-24.

"And so, concepts like eco-anxiety—that sense of unease, anxiety about the future [and] how does that impact their

plans: their plans for having kids, their plans for finishing school, their expectations about their livelihoods? Will they be as well off as their parents?

"Also, the concept of solastalgia [which] is the kind of anxiety, sadness, distress that you feel when familiar landscapes have changed. The best definition of this is homesickness when you are still at home. I've been in Barbados since 2005, so I haven't seen as much. But I hear friends talking to me about what beaches looked like in the 1960s and 70s and being very acutely aware and wistful about the changes they see in the climate," Campbell stated.

Head of the Public Health Group in the Faculty of Medical Sciences **Dr. Heather Harewood** raised the possibility of workplace interventions to cope with periods of intense heat in the future.

"Do we need to shift working hours a little earlier?" she asked. "We think that it is important to identify high risk groups so that we can actually target information to them," Harewood added. ♦



Dr. Heather Harewood
Head of the Public Health Group in
the Faculty of Medical Sciences

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

by Marie-Claire Williams

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WATCH VIDEO



In a sterling display of UWI in the community, two of Barbados's popular recreational sites were given a facelift when Cave Hill staff and students answered the call to participate in the observance of World Cleanup Day last 16 September.

The event was organised by The Nation Publishing Company as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations. The Cave Hill campus of The UWI and The Nation Publishing Company collaborated on a number of events during the year to mark their respective anniversaries, including hosting a blue-ribbon lecture series.

From as early as 7am, the first group of volunteers, including Campus Principal Professor Clive Landis and Campus Bursar Lisa Alleyne, gathered at **Barclays Park** on the Ermy Bourne Highway to remove litter from the beach and roadside. Later in the day, a second group comprising mainly students, travelled to **Bath Beach** in St John for a similar exercise.

Cave Hill's participation was coordinated by the 60th Anniversary Secretariat, which organised the campus's commemorative celebrations. Chairman of the Anniversary Committee **Dr. Henderson Carter** was pleased with the participation, saying the institution welcomed the opportunity to give back to the community.

"It [was] also an opportunity for us to make a ... sociopolitical statement about dumping, about littering. So, having taken up the garbage, we're saying to individuals 'Look, desist from dumping. If you have even a little piece of paper, keep it on you; but don't throw it on the roadside, don't throw it on the beach, and dispose of it properly'."

"It is also a statement to encourage others to clean up their communities. For example, we've concentrated on the beach now; but in villages, in communities, along roadways, there's plenty of garbage, and that is really causing numerous problems. And we need a big community effort ... to clean up [the island's] garbage," Carter said.

For the students who participated, it was also a chance to earn give-back hours, under a national programme where Barbadian students enrolled at The UWI provide voluntary service under a quota system of work hours in exchange for state-sponsored tuition.

"I decided to come and help because I like going to the beach, but it's kind of off-putting to see how much garbage people just leave everywhere. And also, other things live here too, lots of animals; I know turtles come to nest on this beach, so the garbage being there is just going to get in the way of that," said Biology student **Crisciann Cumberbatch**.

President of the **UWI Cave Hill Circle K International Club, Hakeem Best**, criticised the amount of litter found on the beach and wants the public to do better.

"We found glass bottles, plastic bottles, wrappers, and various containers along the route. I want to say to Barbados, 'Please do not put your garbage along the side of the road; take it and put it in the bin'," he stated.

His vice-president **Fazeena Bassalat** welcomed the opportunity to clean up the environment as well as engage in fellowship.

"It showed the importance of keeping our environment clean, especially our beaches, since [they are some] of the main attractions for tourism," she said, referencing the sea turtle project and native species.

"It's also a good opportunity to support the environment, support our beaches, and of course, always give back ... especially at [The] UWI. All this is about giving back, with the Give Back Programme, and it's also about the [networking]. I met so many amazing persons here, especially from The Nation [Publishing Company], even from the Office of Student Services and Development [of the Cave Hill Campus], and persons outside of [The] UWI that I have never met before," she said.

Carter stated that Cave Hill's contribution to keeping the environment clean will continue beyond **World Cleanup Day**, in an effort to preserve the island's beauty. ♦





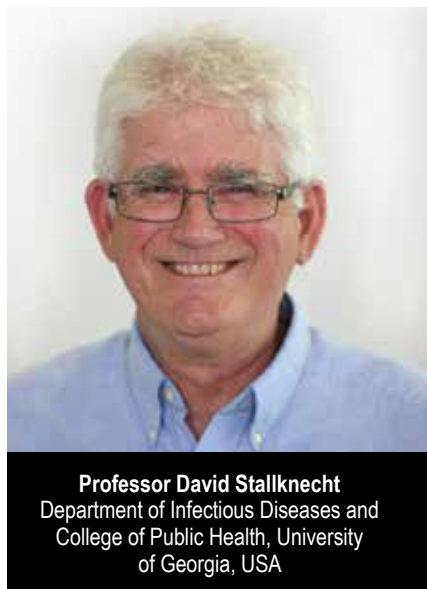
Centre on Alert for Avian Influenza

The nascent **Centre for Biosecurity Studies (CBS)** is on high alert as bird flu continues to spread across continents and poses an imminent threat to the Caribbean.

The centre situated at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, views the issue with such seriousness that it brought together a high-powered, international panel of experts for a forum to discuss the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in detail. The forum took place in February 2023 on the topic “**Bird Flu: Where Are We Now?**”

While **Professor David Stallknecht** of the **Department of Infectious Diseases** and **College of Public Health** at the **University of Georgia** in the United States of America (USA) mainly focused his presentation on the situation in North America, the wildlife biologist said the Caribbean was at risk.

“These birds — gulls, shorebirds, ducks — routinely visit the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. These birds are going to be infected with the flu; there’s no question in my mind. When it gets into these areas, we’ll be dealing with



completely different wildlife interactions that probably need to be looked at and considered.”

Avian influenza is already in Latin America and the Caribbean. Cases have been reported in Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Columbia, Honduras, and Venezuela. In February last year, it was discovered in a zoo in Cuba. The situation poses a major food security threat as millions of birds have died through infection or have been culled.

Professor of Comparative Pathology at **Erasmus University Medical Center** in the Netherlands **Thijs Kuiken** said mammals have not escaped unscathed with mass mortality events recorded in harbour seals in the USA, sea lions in Peru, and farmed mink in Spain.

“We can say that the higher prevalence of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds is an important factor in explaining the higher frequency of bird-to-mammal transmission and mainly in carnivores that we’ve seen in the last two years. There is moderate to good evidence that there is efficient spread of this virus in some mammal species ... The relevance of these outbreaks for efficient spread among humans depends on the similarity of their respiratory tracts, in particular, the pattern of virus attachment of H5N1 virus in these species.”

Based on studies, although humans remain at low risk of infection, mutations have been discovered that could make it more deadly and contagious.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has reported around 870 cases of human infections across 21 countries between 2003 and 2023. Almost half of the cases have been fatal.



Professor Thijs Kuiken
Erasmus University Medical Center
Netherlands



Dr. Richard Webby
Director, World Health Organization (WHO)
Collaborating Center

Director of the **WHO Collaborating Center for Studies on the Ecology of Influenza in Animals and Birds** at **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**, **Dr. Richard Webby**, said the United Nations agency has been preparing for any eventuality.

"What are the WHO and other entities doing about this? Regarding pandemic vaccine production, we're not at a point yet where we need to go into full-blown vaccine manufacturing. We're not seeing evidence that this virus is adapting to the human host yet. But what we do know is that it takes six months to make a matching strain should that change tomorrow," he said.

"The first part of the production system

is to make seed viruses [viruses used to produce a batch of vaccines] that are manipulated in various ways before they can be sent to manufacturers. This occurs within WHO laboratories and takes a six-week period. So what the WHO is doing is trying to get a head start on this. As we see variants of the H5N1 emerging, we make that seed virus against some of the emerging strains just to have on the shelves so that if they change their minds from being a bird virus to being a human virus, we've shaved six months off the response."

The current strain of the avian influenza virus has become more widespread in the Eastern Hemisphere and the Western Hemisphere. But eradication programmes are expensive, said former director of the **Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory** in Georgia **Dr. David Swayne**. That facility operates as an international reference laboratory for avian influenza and **Collaborating Center for Research on Emerging Avian Diseases**.

The avian pathologist concurred that the virus has become endemic in some wild bird populations that migrate across Asia, Africa, Europe, and North and South America. However, he said the process

of stamping out or eliminating the disease, which is preferred in developed countries and by the **World Organisation for Animal Health**, is not feasible. The United States alone spent US\$14.2 million on the first HPAI outbreak in 1925-1926. That figure ballooned to US\$1.7 billion in 2022-2023

"It's really not sustainable with the increased outbreaks in poultry we're seeing today and the reoccurrence of these outbreaks even in developed countries. This has become a huge economic burden just thinking of the US\$1.7 billion that the US Government has paid and the losses that farmers and companies have had. It has also threatened food security. Just as an example, in the United States, a dozen table eggs which normally sell for about US\$1 is now upwards of US\$5, and the supply is quite short."

To prevent the introduction and spread of the pathogen, Dr. Swayne said the focus has been on implementing structural barriers to safeguard poultry raised inside barns and preventing the movement of the virus from the outside contaminated environment into the facility.

However, as outbreaks continue across continents, there is now discussion on whether the vaccination should be used as a control tool. So far, 15 countries in which the virus has become endemic have undertaken the vaccination of birds for food security reasons.

Dr. Swayne continued, *"I think a question each country, including those in the Caribbean, will have to ask themselves is 'Can we continue with just a stamping out programme or do we need to examine vaccination as an additional tool?'"*

"If you do use vaccination, you need to make sure that you match vaccines antigenically close to the outbreak virus so that you'll have predictable protection, because poorly matched vaccines do not provide predictable protection." ♦



Beckles Goes to Bat for *Beyond a Boundary*

Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) Professor Sir Hilary Beckles remains a staunch defender of CLR James' acclaimed book *Beyond a Boundary* despite critique by some in academia that it is Eurocentric.

In fact, the erudite historian describes the seminal work on cricket in the West Indies, first published in 1963, as "one of the finest examples of the dialectical method of understanding reality".

As he delivered the **CLR James Distinguished Lecture** at the Cave Hill campus of The UWI on 24 February 2023, in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the book, Sir Hilary said the argument that James was a victim of European culture and celebrated the English literature and Victorian values could not be further from the truth.

"James was saying 'Hold on a second! This is what you should tell the English: Thank you for exposing us to this magnificent game, which is yours; and thank you for giving us the opportunity to improve upon it.' Therein lies the dialectic of CLR James."



The UWI Vice-Chancellor, a renowned former cricketer, has also served as a member of the West Indies Cricket Board.

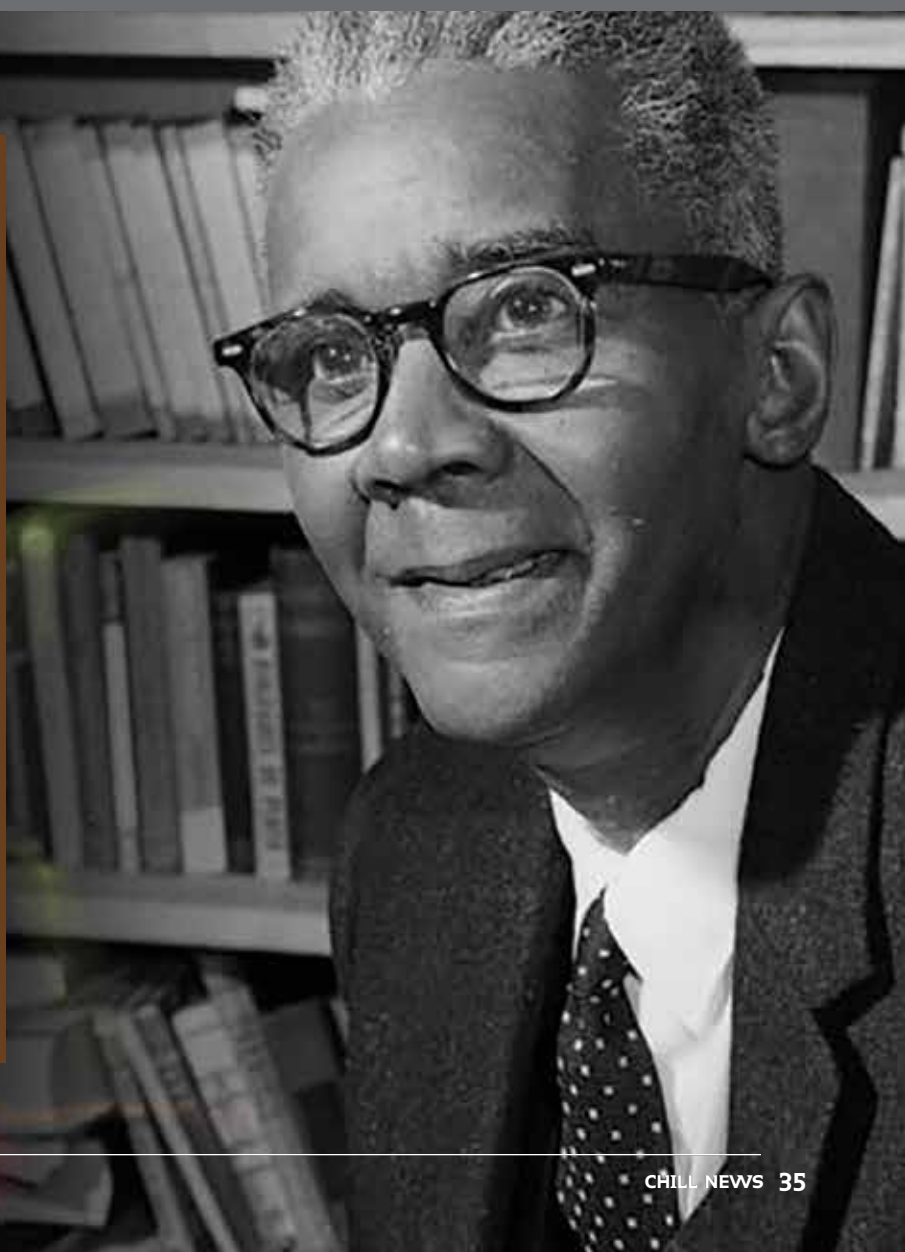
In his musings on the Trinidad-born author, historian, political activist and cricket journalist, Sir Hilary said James was a “*phenomenal, complicated man*”.

He spoke of James’ philosophical belief that leaders should always be in a state of transition; the struggles to get the ***Beyond a Boundary*** manuscript published; how he was able to obtain James’ original manuscript that contains an unpublished chapter with his handwritten notes; and the role George Lamming played in the latter two situations. According to the historian, the reason the chapter was not included in the book remains a matter of speculation.

The treasured manuscript is housed at the **CLR James Cricket Research Centre**, which Sir Hilary founded and served as a director. The centre is located at Cave Hill Campus.

The **CLR James Distinguished Lecture** was one of two activities held on campus to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of ***Beyond a Boundary***, the other being a two-day symposium held the same and previous day. ♦

“This book is a classic example of a Caribbean people who were bombarded with this British institution. They were deprived of institutions of their own and they were imposed with this hegemonic culture from Victorian Britain and we, the Black people, had to love it even though it wasn’t our own. It wasn’t indigenous to us ... but we took it, and we improved upon it; and what we have done is our own. It is now something called the West Indian brand. That is the creativity of a people despite their oppression.”



Region Achieves Cricket Success When We Come Together as a People

by Carol Williams

In a sobering assessment of West Indies cricket, Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley has called for urgent action to address inequalities and improve the overall standard of the game. Her delivery of the 22nd Annual Frank Worrell Memorial Lecture on 25 July 2023 was much anticipated as the event coincided with the continued inconsistent performance of the regional side.

With cricket administrators, regional and international cricketers, cricket enthusiasts and others listening keenly as part of the in-person audience attending the event at the Cave Hill campus, the Barbadian leader pulled no punches, yet steered clear of finger-pointing.

She addressed four main issues in her lecture on the topic “Cricket Lovely Cricket – It Is More than Bat and Ball!” She said the unequal playing field for West Indies Women cricketers, governance, the deteriorating structure of cricketing clubs and associations, and ownership were germane to being successful in international matches and to stoke continued interest among West Indians. Furthermore, she insisted the region needed to get its act together and set aside insularity and fragmentation since cricket played a key part in Caribbean civilisation.

“Thirty-one years after the **Governance Report** of 1992, then the **Patterson Report** in 2007, the **Wilkins Report** of 2012, and the previous principal’s report, the Most Honourable [Professor] Eudine Barribeau of 2015, and the reviews that were ordered in between

... and finally, the most exceptionally encapsulated in the **Wehby Report**, we continue to believe that we can rewrite the future of cricket in the Caribbean by an approach of fragmentation rather than cohesion; by insularity rather than unity.

“At every stage of the game, we have been battling with the status quo ... The bottom line is that we have reached a point where the absolute imperative must be to change the governance of our game. New Zealand understood it, and it took them a while too as, one may argue, one of those Commonwealth countries that paid obeisance to Her Majesty at the time. In 1995, they had a report, but it wasn’t until many years later that they were able to move from that position.”

The regional leader said the sport is so revered in India that the country’s Supreme Court declared cricket a public good some years ago. However, as she noted such action was unlikely in the Caribbean since the Privy Council remained the highest court for some states while the Caribbean Court of Justice was for others.

Beyond these issues, the Prime Minister spoke at length about discriminatory practices against West Indies Women cricketers,

“At every stage of the game, we have been battling with the status quo ... The bottom line is that we have reached a point where the absolute imperative must be to change the governance of our game ...”

more specifically, about the pay disparity and how they previously travelled in “last class”, while their male counterparts travelled business class.

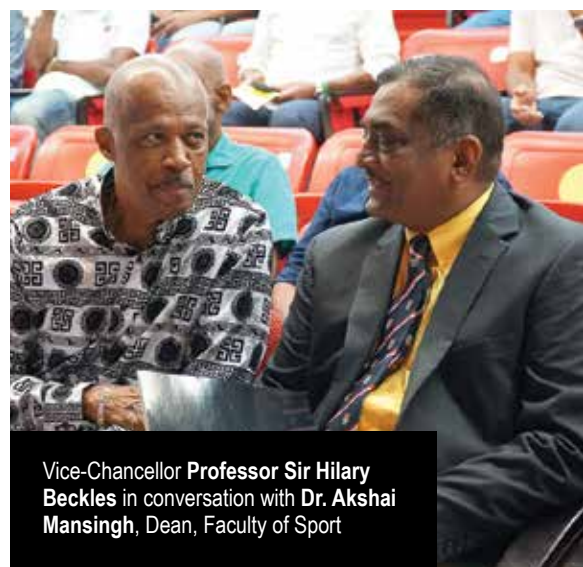
Mottley, who was involved in the opening of the Women’s World Cup in Paris, France in 2019, said women’s sports have been growing in popularity internationally, including in football. Giving validity to her argument, the **International Federation of Association Football (FIFA)** reported in August 2023, an almost 30 per cent increase in attendance at the Women’s World Cup over that of 2019.



Members of the sports community attended the lecture.

“[Emerita Professor] the Most Honourable Eudine Barriteau contextualised the circumstances of women in cricket better than anybody else as she did in her 2015 report. The problem is that in 18 months’ time, it would be a decade since that report came. The problem is that we still have almost a disdain for them. The Government of Barbados, when it came to my attention, removed the awful discriminatory act where only the men who played for West Indies benefitted from the duty-free cars. The women who play for West Indies now benefit from duty-free cars as well.

“Even if you say, as some [may argue], there’s a lot more money in the men’s game, the truth is that West Indies have already been relegated to two tests and two or three one days. The money has already started to diminish, but the men are still paid [at a certain level] and the women are paid three to five times less; indeed, men are paid more for a regional game than the women get for playing in a non-regional game. I don’t know if it has changed in the last few months, but something has to be fundamentally wrong where a woman gets \$200 for a regional game and the men \$900, or women get \$750 for non-regional ODI or T20, and the men get \$2,500 and \$4,000 for those games respectively. Even if you feel you can’t get there in one fell swoop, women certainly shouldn’t be paid a quarter or a fifth or a third of what is being paid to the men.”



Vice-Chancellor **Professor Sir Hilary Beckles** in conversation with **Dr. Akshai Mansingh**, Dean, Faculty of Sport

In the September 2023 **International Cricket Council (ICC)** rankings, West Indies men were eighth in the Test, tenth in the One Day International (ODIs), and seventh in the Twenty20 (T20). For West Indies women, they were ranked sixth in both the ODIs and T20s.

The Prime Minister said many Caribbean people have declared their displeasure by staying away from games involving West Indies Men when they are played in the region which, she said, undermines arguments about the financial basis for the continuance of the current payment structure.

In August, slow ticket sales prompted the Government of Barbados to sponsor 1,500 students to watch the two ODIs between West Indies and India at the country’s **Kensington Oval** after only 600 tickets were initially purchased by patrons.

“This region can do better and must do better ... We will not do well until we remove all vestiges of discrimination from this game in the same way that we must remove all vestiges of discrimination from our societies. That is who we are! If others globally don’t want to do it, then we must lead the way.”

The Barbadian leader said Caribbean governments have an obligation to help in the development of the game as stakeholders, while leaving the business of the actual running of cricket to administrators.

*"Cricket West Indies has an obligation, once again, to change its governance model, and this is where I differ from the **Wehby Report** again. I believe strongly that we have a duty to establish a public company that is capitalised by shareholding from the **Cricket West Indies**, but which is also open to equity participation by every Caribbean person ... because deep down, even when we get upset, we love bad and we love hard, but we have to start to put our money where our mouth is. We need money in the game to finance the technology; we need money in the game to be able to carry our players and put them on a level playing field with those other teams who have access to the best that the world has to offer.*

We understand that it would be difficult for governments who may be fiscally strapped at the time when the world is reeling from pandemic to climate to global supply disruptions to crime. But I also understand that every time we have been successful as a nation hasn't been when governments act alone or entities act alone. It is when we come together as a people."



Prime Minister Mottley turned the spotlight on club cricket and lamented the lack of proper structure and sufficient mentors to help guide up-and-coming cricketers. She said this intergenerational and interclass mixing was vital.

"As governments, we have to get back into the business of serious development at the different levels. If it is schoolboy or schoolgirl cricket alone, you're not going to get that intergenerational and interclass mixing that is so critical for us to remain a cohesive society. What we need are opportunities for people who would not otherwise have that chance to mix and get to know each other to be able to do so."

An area of regret for the Barbadian leader was that the West Indies had not reached out to Latin America during its glory days nor invested more. However, she indicated it may not be too late in some respects.

"Whether it is in food security, energy security, or cricket, we need to understand that ownership matters. There are too many Caribbean citizens in the diaspora and opportunities in Latin America for us not to

be strategic in their development to create a platform first and foremost from coaching, from other allied aspects of the game, from the ownership of franchises, the ownership of stadia, the ownership of software, the utilisation of artificial intelligence with others who are in the area of information technology and artificial intelligence, to leverage not only those current players who may rise to the occasion but the ones who are still available to us, through either video or the live person.

"I had hoped ... we would have been far more aggressive in the utilisation of the opportunities available to our legends [former West Indies Test cricketers], especially given the absence of appropriate compensation for them in the decades that they performed and played. The truth is that the technology has moved so quickly that we have to be smart about how we leverage their images and their lessons. We can still boast, as the smallest rock in the world, to have produced the greatest opening batsman pair [Sir Gordon Greenidge and the Most Honourable Desmond Haynes] who are both still alive ... But how have we leveraged it?" ♦

University Enriches Society



For 60 years, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus has been a beacon of hope and opportunity for thousands of students from Barbados and the Caribbean. Not only has it opened doors to higher education for many who would otherwise not have access to such, but it has also produced some of the most influential leaders and professionals in the region.

The campus has also been a major driver of economic and social development in Barbados, contributing millions of dollars to the local economy, enhancing the skills and incomes of its graduates, and supporting various cultural and community initiatives.

These are some of the findings of a recent study by Deputy Principal **Professor Winston Moore**, who shared his insights in a lecture titled “Valuing the Impact of The UWI Cave Campus” as part of the 60th Anniversary Legacy Lecture Series last April.

Moore, a former senior economist at the **Central Bank of Barbados**, used three methods to capture the campus’s impact: the **economic base**, which looks at how the university’s spending creates jobs, income and tax revenue; the **skills base**, which measures the value of the additional skills acquired by the university and their effect on graduates’ earnings; and the **existence value**, which captures the value of the university’s involvement in cultural, sporting and other community activities.

According to Moore, the campus was expected to contribute BDS\$325 million to the Barbadian economy in the 2022-2023 academic year, with \$38 million coming from foreign exchange earned from foreign student enrolment. He also estimated that the campus generates BDS\$3.42 for every dollar invested by Caribbean governments.

But beyond the numbers, Moore highlighted the personal stories of students whose lives have been transformed by the campus. He shared his own experience of being the first in his family to attend university and how his mother supported his decision to pursue higher education.

“I think those are the stories that we miss when we look just at the numbers, and hence why I wanted to pull them out first ... that is the real contribution of the university,” he added while pointing out the



significant income premium that university graduates enjoy.

Moore called on the campus to explore more avenues for innovation and entrepreneurship and to collaborate more with the private sector and other stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities facing the region.

He said the campus has a vital role to play in shaping the future of Barbados and the Caribbean and that its impact will continue to grow beyond its 60th anniversary. ♦

The Caribbean and China: A Win-Win Partnership

The Caribbean and China have a long history of friendship and cooperation, dating back to the 1970s when many Caribbean countries established diplomatic relations with China. Today, this relationship is more important than ever, as both sides seek to leverage their comparative advantages and explore new opportunities for trade, investment and development.

This was the main theme of the **Third Confucius Institute Lecture**, held last May to mark the 75th Anniversary of The UWI and the 60th Anniversary of the Cave Hill campus. The lecture titled “**The Caribbean and China in a Changing World: Dynamic Partnerships for Development**” was delivered by **His Excellency Ambassador Wayne McCook**, Assistant Secretary-General, CARICOM Single

Market and Trade (CSMT). He shared insights and perspectives on the current and future prospects of the Caribbean-China partnership.

Tourism and Spirits

Ambassador McCook highlighted the potential for the Caribbean to tap the huge and growing market of China, especially in the areas of tourism and spirits. He cited the **China-Caribbean Trade and Economic Forum** that was launched in 2005 and has been held three times so far as a key platform for enhancing trade and economic cooperation between the two sides.

“At the third forum in 2013, China [pledged] its support for efforts by Caribbean countries to expand exports

to China, including through participation in major exhibitions and promotion of products in China. China also promised to strengthen cooperation with Caribbean tourism authorities and provide support for Caribbean tourism promotions in China,” Ambassador McCook said.



His Excellency Ambassador Wayne McCook
Assistant Secretary-General,
CARICOM Single Market and Trade (CSMT)



He added that this offers a solid basis for the Caribbean to work with China to realise these commitments and pursue lucrative trade opportunities in tourism, spirits and other sectors. Ambassador McCook noted the Caribbean has a unique and attractive tourism product and a rich and diverse culture that can appeal to Chinese tourists who are increasingly looking for new and exotic destinations. He also mentioned that the Caribbean has a competitive edge in producing high-quality rum and other spirits that can cater to the growing demand of Chinese consumers who are becoming more sophisticated and discerning in their tastes.

Mutual Respect and Interest

Ambassador McCook emphasised the importance of maintaining and strengthening the cooperation and partnership with China on the basis of mutual respect and interest, and on the basis of sovereign choices made by Caribbean countries. He said that the Caribbean has a strong foundation to sustain and deepen its relationship with China which has been a reliable and generous partner for the region.

“China has provided significant assistance to the Caribbean in various fields, such as infrastructure, health, education, agriculture, energy, and disaster relief. China has also supported the Caribbean’s integration process, such

*as the establishment of the **CARICOM Single Market and Economy** and the **Caribbean Development Fund**. China has also respected the Caribbean’s position on regional and international issues, such as the reform of the **United Nations**, the fight against climate change, and the promotion of multilateralism,”* Ambassador McCook said.

Language and Culture

Another key aspect of the Caribbean-China partnership is the promotion of language and cultural exchanges that can foster mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two sides. This is the main objective of the **Confucius Institute** at Cave Hill that was established in 2015 as a joint venture between **The UWI** and the **China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL)**.

The **Confucius Institute** offers courses in Mandarin, as well as cultural activities, such as calligraphy, tai chi, and Chinese festivals. It facilitates academic exchanges and collaborations between The UWI and CUPL, as well as other Chinese universities and institutions.

Professor Clive Landis, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus spoke at the lecture and praised the role of the **Confucius Institute** in enhancing the understanding and cooperation between the Caribbean and China, particularly in the areas of language and culture.

*“The initiatives of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, through the **Confucius Institute** and through our **Minor in Chinese**, reflect the alignment of the Cave Hill Campus with the Government of Barbados in fostering a productive relationship with the People’s Republic of China, which is playing an expanding role both in the global economy and here in the Caribbean,”* Landis said.

He also mentioned the work done at the



Agricultural Research Park at Dukes, St. Thomas that is being built with the support of a bilateral grant from China to Barbados to advance agricultural research and innovation.

“This and many similar development initiatives in collaboration with China across the Caribbean Region place a burden of responsibility on regional institutions, such as The UWI, to help train a cadre of persons equipped with the Mandarin language skills along with competency in their specific fields of expertise to make best use of the development opportunities that are afforded by the growing economic and diplomatic influence of China in the Caribbean,” Professor Landis said.

The Third Confucius Institute Lecture was the latest in a series of lectures that aim to provide a platform for

dialogue and discussion on various topics related to China and the Caribbean. The previous lectures were given in 2018 by Dr. DeLisle Worrell, former Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, on **“How China’s economic success contributes to Caribbean prosperity”**, and in 2019 by Professor Hongsheng Ren, Associate Dean, School of Politics and Public Administration, CUPL, on **“One Belt One Road and the Development of China-Caribbean Relations”**. ♦



AI: Opportunities and Threats

As artificial intelligence (AI) threatens to upend traditional methods of testing students in higher education, there's a call for universities to shift from a content-based to a competency-based curriculum in order to tackle instances of plagiarism and other challenges being thrown up.

Since the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, a software developed by Silicon Valley start-up OpenAI, machine-generated intelligence has demonstrated the potential to address some of the biggest challenges in education through innovative teaching and learning practices.

However, AI's ability to produce essays, complete assignments, and generate creative works has incited an ethics debate

in the academic world, and its use has been banned in some academic institutions. Given the magnitude of the potential impact of this technological development, The UWI signalled its willingness to tackle the issue and any impending outcomes when it hosted a Vice-Chancellor's forum last May entitled Artificial Intelligence (AI) – A Blessing or Curse for Higher Education?

Moderator of the forum, Professor Justin Robinson, former Chair of the Board for Undergraduate Studies who became Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of The UWI, Five Islands Campus last August, noted that higher education was still trying to grasp the scope of AI and its likely impact on teaching and research, and how education institutions should respond.



Professor Justin Robinson
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Five Islands Campus



Dr. Emma Sabzalieva
Head of Research and Foresight,
UNESCO's IESALC



Ms. Arianna Valentini
Research and Foresight Analyst,
UNESCO's IESALC

The technological development has thrown up questions about AI's ramifications for digital literacy, the design of assignments and other pedagogical matters as well as academic integrity, among other issues.

"Since its launch, rapid adoption, rapid improvements and the launch or proposed launch of similar products, the implications of ChatGPT and similar artificial intelligence-driven products for higher education has become a major discussion point," Robinson said.

"When you have such major innovations with the potential for disruption, you can act too quickly or overreact out of fear. Therefore, what we have decided to do at The UWI is to have a forum to sensitise the university public and the wider community to these issues as we decide how to handle the change on the education landscape moving forward."

Robinson participated in the forum alongside several esteemed panellists including **Dr. Emma Sabzalieva**, Head of Research and Foresight, UNESCO's

International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC); **Ms. Arianna Valentini**, Research and Foresight Analyst, UNESCO's IESALC; **Dr. Margaret Niles**, Manager, Educational Research and Innovation, Caribbean Examinations Council; and **Ms. Patti West-Smith**, Director, Customer Engagement Team, Turnitin.

Dr. Sabzalieva said universities have tended to rely a lot on coursework and have traditionally focused on content-based learning: *"ChatGPT is only one of the many AI applications that exist. Perhaps it's better to have a competency-based curriculum rather than a content-based one. We are going to need critical thinking skills, entrepreneurship skills, and transversal skills for the future; and these are easier to reach through a competency-based curriculum,"* she added.

Her UNESCO colleague, **Valentini**, cautioned that while AI can be seen as a useful tool it can also be biased, noting that since ChatGPT depends on human input for its information, it is also susceptible to

human biases.

"The biases that ChatGPT can have are gender biases, even biases from the global south-global north debate," she added.

Dr. Niles stated that AI should not be feared but seen as an example of the creativity and ingenuity of the human mind: *"The impact that AI can have on teaching and learning can occur at any level, be it primary, secondary or tertiary; therefore, its impact on higher education is not isolated. However, it is an opportunity for the teaching-learning transaction to be re-evaluated and recalibrated."*

West-Smith, a senior official with the plagiarism checking tool, Turnitin, pointed out that apart from the opportunities that AI brings, there are some obligations which need to be understood.

"First, we have an obligation to understand AI's promise and risks, what it does well and what it struggles with. As educators, if we do not know these obligations intimately then we are not positioned well to support the students."

"We also have an obligation to equip our students to really understand what these tools can and cannot do and what purposes they serve. What we certainly learnt in the last couple months is that the world ahead of them will almost certainly require them to use these tools. So, if we are not arming them with the right understandings and experiences to use these tools affectively and ethically, then we are really shortchanging them," West-Smith added. ♦

The Spirit of Cave Hill @ 60

In our finest hour, we seized the chance to glisten and glow!
With radiance, we celebrated with joy and gusto.
We hiked the parishes, we toured the towns,
We hunted treasures, we wore our gowns.
We shared our stories, we learned new skills,
We forged new bonds, we faced new thrills.
We showed the world our strength and grace,
Our Cave Hill spirit, our pride and place.
It was a year of memories, a year of fun,
A year of honour, a year well done.





A HISTORY TO BE PROUD OF

Cave Hill's legacy of steadfast leadership and sterling accomplishments augur well for its future, according to noted historian **Professor Alan Cobley**, and he has pleaded with current campus leaders to help preserve its rich history.

He was presenting the first instalment of the Legacy Lecture Series hosted by the campus to celebrate its 60th anniversary, on the topic **"From Zero to Sixty: The Cave Hill Story, 1963-2023"**, delivered on 21 March 2023.

The Professor of South African and Comparative History singled out the legacy of continuity at its helm for having helped nurture that 'resolute and resilient spirit' that has allowed the campus to weather the myriad of challenges over the years.

He noted there have been six principals in 60 years; three of them, Sir Sidney Martin, Sir Keith Hunte and Sir Hilary Beckles, accounted for 50 of those years.

Professor Cobley said a similar pattern exists in the Office of Registrar where Woodie Blackman, Austin Alleyne, Andrew Lewis, Jacqueline Wade and Kenneth Walters accounted for over 50 years of service.

He said five chief financial officers have held the key position of Bursar, the longest serving being Victor Cooke, who presided over the Campus finances for over 30 years.



Professor Alan Cobley
Professor of South African and Comparative History



Cobley delved into the rich history of the campus touching on areas of administration, general enrolment, gender composition, postgraduate enrolment, the faculties, staff and student protests, the social life on and off campus, and infrastructural development.

He noted that the campus's journey



started from humble beginnings at the Deep Water Harbour as the College of Arts and Science on 12 October 1963 with 118 students. When it opened at the Cave Hill site in October 1967, there were just 21 full-time academic staff, two of whom were senior lecturers.

Those figures have since mushroomed, with student enrolment reaching a record 8,841 in 2011-2012. Notably, continuous growth was registered during the first 50 years of operation.

Professor Cobley's delivery was buoyed by photographs and short video extracts. Aside from the narration, the photographs told a compelling story of the transformation that has taken place at the campus over the years.

But even as he traced the history, Professor Cobley called for the individual faculties to better document their history and to interview individuals critical to their development to prevent the loss of information that is vital to the institution.

Noting the campus's remarkable physical

development and transformation, he said, "Sir Hilary [Beckles] was obviously the presiding genius behind a lot of that [building construction] and raised a lot of the money, but there was a whole team there. Andrew Lewis was a very important part of that. After he retired as campus registrar, he continued as director of planning, and so a lot of that was conceived during his time. Unfortunately, ... Andrew is no longer with us, and that's part of the institutional memory that has been lost; but Jackie [Wade] is here, and there are others who were involved in that who are still here as well. So, I hope we will make an effort to capture these memories."

To indicate the value of having such recordings, Professor Cobley said some of the historical information obtained for his presentation emanated from over 20 hours of recorded interviews with Sir Sidney Martin who retired in 1983.

"Unfortunately, nobody thought to do that with Andrew Lewis, and I don't think it was done with [the late Sir] Frank Alleyne

[former UWI economist]. Unfortunately, Sir Keith is not well enough to be interviewed; so great chunks of our institution's history are absent because we didn't follow up as we should have. I guess this is the moment for me to make a plea to all of the deans and faculties, the various units and so on, to think about your institutional history and try to keep a record because when it's gone, it's gone."

In the meantime, the historian said the theme for the 60th anniversary celebration, **Resolute and Resilient**, aptly described the history and successes of the campus.



Andrew Lewis (at right) at a Cave Hill graduation ceremony as Campus Registrar

Block Solution

Tracking vehicle history can often lead to road blocks and detours. In this regard, blockchain technology has been proposed as a solution to the challenges related to vehicle management in the Caribbean.

A team from The University of the West Indies has developed the **Decentralised Vehicle Asset Management System (DeVAM)** in response to the perennial problem.

For their research project, they defined vehicle asset management as a process in which licensing offices, banks, police, vehicle owners and interested buyers all require different information. But they said this process is often fraught with trust issues.

In addition, instructor in Computer Science **Kwasi Edwards** said each party operates in their own silo, leading to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. The technology proposes to eliminate this by allowing all parties access to required information. The data is protected by safeguards that ensure only authorised users can input data.

Edwards was part of a four-member

research team from The UWI, St. Augustine Campus that has centred their study on the indisputability of blockchain technology defined as a *“shared immutable ledger that facilitates the process of recording transactions and tracking assets in a business network.”*

He, along with the Head of the Department of Computer and Information Technology, **Dr. Wayne Goodridge**, Lecturer in Computer Science, **Dr. Koffka Khan**; and master’s student **Kumar Sookram** presented their research findings during the **CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank Research in Banking and Finance Business Forum** held virtually on 9 March 2023.

The forum, held in collaboration with the **Office of Business Development at The UWI, Cave Hill**, promotes innovative research in the areas of data analytics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, big data analytics, cloud technology, and blockchain technology.



Kwasi Edwards
Instructor in Computer Science
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

Edwards conducted a demonstration of the **DeVAM** system, and later explained, *“We know that the individual data for each entity can be represented throughout the system. For example, if I am a potential buyer looking to purchase a second-hand vehicle, I will be interested in knowing if this particular vehicle is frequently serviced, what’s its history and whether it has been in any accidents. Using the suite of applications that we have developed and verified records on the blockchain, I will be able to see all of those [relevant]”*



**Dr. Wayne Goodridge**

Head, Department of Computer and Information Technology, The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

**Dr. Koffka Khan**

Lecturer in Computer Science
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

**Kumar Sookram**

Master's student
The UWI, St. Augustine Campus

transactions associated with that vehicle. With this suite of applications, I will have irrefutable proof of the service history of the vehicle and be able to verify the authenticity and ownership of the vehicle."

The **DeVAM** system uses a variety of tokens — one is a currency called ATK that is pegged to the Trinidadian dollar, the digital representation of the vehicle asset named VTK; and the digital representation of the loan agreement, LTK. It also utilises smart contracts to automate business processes and offers decentralised applications for the relevant parties.

Khan said if implemented, the system will increase efficiency by automating the different processes within the automobile industry; increase transparency and trust by allowing the parties to view required information; reduce operational and regulatory costs, provide digital asset management, and put companies in a more advantageous position.

Sookram said their application can serve as a gateway to the adoption of blockchain technology in the region.

"Once you have an active internet connection you can use the blockchain technology, so from that perspective, the Caribbean is ready. What we may want to consider is the motivation for users to go in that direction."

A similar argument was put forward by Dr. Goodridge, who pointed out that the research has wider implications for the Caribbean: *"Projects like this open up the landscape for other developers to participate in terms of showing their creativity in how blockchain technologies can be used to improve our automation processes. The key to blockchain technology that will allow it to be adopted is the creation of innovative apps. Once you get a useful app and people are using it, that's how [the Caribbean] will get on board. We are hoping that by doing projects like this, we can spread the good*

news so that people can adopt the use of blockchain technology."

However, the department head believes government regulation will be a barrier to rolling out the system, particularly given the absence of a framework for transferring the ATK currency to that of the different countries.

"For such a project to work, you need to have agreements between all the different organisations, like the licensing office and dealerships, to roll out a currency like ATK. You need some sort of legal framework to do this; so the legal framework needs to be developed before a system like this can be put in place."

The team presented a paper on **DeVAM** at the **Frontiers of Research in Caribbean Science and Technology (FORECAST) Conference** held in August 2022. It was entitled **"A Distributed Smart Contract Vehicle Management System for Vehicle Loans"**. They have now turned their attention to having it published in a peer-reviewed journal. ♦





Revenue-Generating Centre Open for Business

In a move that signals a seismic shift in its operational model, Cave Hill Campus is now running its first for-profit business.

The Centre for Commercial Analytical Services (CCAS) was officially launched in March 2023, a year after being approved by Cave Hill's highest decision-making body, its Campus Council. It operates out of the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology.

CCAS has been equipped to identify the structure of unknown compounds. More specifically, its two nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometers have the capability to analyse environmental samples, water, food, pharmaceuticals, industrial and commercial products, and

volatile organic compounds, among others, according to Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal **Professor Clive Landis**.

"We are taking a big step towards the realisation of our five-year 2022-2027 strategy for the Cave Hill campus themed **Creating Value from our Ideas**," he said during the opening ceremony.

Professor Landis said CCAS, which offers, for effective decision making, high-quality testing, fast turnaround time, and competitive prices, positions the Cave Hill campus as a centre of economic activity in the life sciences sector.

He said the provision of on-island access to critical analytical services negates the need to send certain materials overseas, which results in a loss of foreign exchange.

"The CCAS is, therefore, creating value for society by helping to build in-country capacity to reshore such analytical services within Barbados. But we are also creating value for the university itself, as CCAS is a commercial operation."

"We will be working closely with **Export Barbados** to authenticate the geographical indication status of certain food and drink products for exportation; for example, Barbadian rum since our equipment can detect and certify the biological signatures that are specific to every authentic Barbadian rum."

Then Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology **Davidson Ishmael** said CCAS fits within the Barbados Government's vision in its bid to position the country as a hub in the life sciences sector.

Achieving this, he explained, will require commercial analytical services primarily for safety assurance and quality control. The minister said the intention is to explore and exploit all available opportunities in a range of areas, including research and development, the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology-based foods and medicines, medical devices, and food processing.

*"These circumstances will provide a golden opportunity for **Barbados Industrial Development Corporation (Export Barbados)** to work closely with the university in offering these said services to its customers on a commercial basis.*

*"Undeniably, industry and our new approach to the development thereof, is inextricably aligned with innovation, science and technology. Thus, what we have with the launch of the **Centre for Commercial and Analytical Services** stands as a physical exemplar of the pivotal and synergistic role UWI, Cave Hill Campus plays in stimulating innovation through strategic collaborations that can produce lasting economic and social value."*

Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology **Dr. Jeanese Badenock** said the development of the centre follows years of discussion, planning and consultancies. With its realisation, she looks forward to the faculty being positioned as a centre of excellence in STEM (science, technology,



Dr. Jeanese Badenock
Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

engineering, and mathematics) innovation and leadership.

She invited businesses and individuals in need of testing services to engage the analytical services that include on-site sampling, sampling preparation, data analysis, and targeted recommendations.

One such business that utilises these services is the Warrens-based **Carlisle Laboratories** where **Gary Palmer**

serves as General Manager. He told the launch ceremony that the pharmaceutical manufacturing company produces over 100 products, including medicated shampoos, tablets, powders, capsules, and ointments in accordance with strict practices and United States and British pharmacopoeial standards (*standards for pharmaceutical substances and medicinal products*).

However, the absence of accredited laboratories on the island has meant that over 250 samples are couriered annually to Canada where they undergo tests to confirm active pharmaceutical ingredients, physical characteristics, microbial and stabilities studies to determine their expiry dates.

Palmer stated, *"The benefits of having an accredited testing facility on the island would negate the need for foreign exchange, reduce turnaround, ensure better communication between the client and the laboratory, and provide the ability to use on-island, analytical data in real-time decision making. Also, for future research and development into new products, a testing facility would provide direct access to a cadre of expertise and the customisation of testing criteria best suited to our clients' needs."*

He said he looked forward to a mutually beneficial relationship with CCAS. ♦



From left: Principal, **Professor Clive Landis**; **Mark Hill**, CEO of Export Barbados; **The Hon. Davidson Ishmael**, former Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology; **Wayne Marshall**, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Wellness; and **Professor Avril Williams**, Head of the Department of Biological & Chemical Sciences

Sargassum Conundrum

Are Caribbean states facing a dilemma in their challenge to manage large swathes of Sargassum that have been washing ashore in recent years? While tourism players bemoan the seaweed that can turn pristine coastline into polluted beaches, fisherfolk are cashing in on increased catches that nestle in the floating habitat.

New research - with implications for other countries in the region - has found that Barbados could lose over 40,000 visitors annually due to these influxes. Yet authorities may have limited options since the algae is home to several species of fishes utilised in the country's fisheries sector. The research was conducted under the **SargAdapt** project that started in 2019 in response to the Sargassum infestation that began in the Caribbean in 2011.

SargAdapt is being implemented by the **Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES)**, The University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. It is helping Barbados along with Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to assist in reducing the impacts of and improve adaptation to these influxes in the Eastern Caribbean. **SargAdapt** is managed under a **Caribbean Biodiversity Fund** project that is co-financed by the **International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety** through **KfW Development Bank**.

Much like Barbados, tourism is a major foreign exchange earner for other countries

in the project. Hence, CERMES' postgraduate student and research assistant with the **SargAdapt** project **Jeanelle Irvine**, collaborated with other researchers to examine the likely effect of Sargassum on the tourism industry. They investigated whether tourists who encountered the algae were less likely to return to Barbados or might be unwilling to return should larger volumes washed ashore in the future.

The researchers received 175 respondents to their beach recreationist interception survey undertaken in April-May 2022 at **Enterprise Beach** (also called Miami Beach, located in Oistins) and the **Richard Haynes Boardwalk**, both high-traffic tourist areas affected by Sargassum.

Questions focused on visitors' encounters with Sargassum on beaches and how their decision to return to Barbados would be affected if the seaweed deposits increased by a range of 10, 30, 50 or 90 per cent. Sixty per cent of respondents said they saw little Sargassum, 13 per cent saw a lot, 25 per cent said they hadn't seen it, and two per cent said they did not know if they saw it. While most people said they would return, responses grew less favourable based on the hypothetical scenarios of Sargassum increasing.



Jeanelle Irvine
CERMES' postgraduate student



Kristie Alleyne
PhD student
World Maritime University, Sweden



"The prospect of increased Sargassum has a negative and highly significant impact on willingness to return. However, tourists who viewed Sargassum during their stay are more sensitive in their willingness to return only if the conditions involving the highest Sargassum increase scenarios (50 per cent to 90 per cent). Impacts on willingness to return are larger for visitors who viewed a lot of Sargassum versus those who saw a little," said Irvine.

"If current trends of Sargassum influxes continue, adverse economic impacts related to decreased demand should be expected in Barbados and other Caribbean destinations. Those impacts will increase with the level of Sargassum arriving on beaches and in seawater. But Sargassum will not affect the entire visitor population."

To support her argument, she said Sargassum predominantly arrives from March to October when tourist arrivals are lower, it generally affects the windward coastlines where there are lower levels of infrastructure and fewer tourists, and not all visitors spend time at the beach.

Citing previous studies on beach use, which found that between 170,000 and 204,000 visitors could potentially encounter Sargassum during their stay in Barbados, she estimated that between 17,000 to 41,000 visitors may not return.

But while the authorities may take this into consideration in formulating their management plan, it has been suggested that they utilise best practices during in-water harvesting of the algae associated with Sargassum rafts in Barbados. This recommendation is based on the findings of research conducted by a five-member team led by PhD student with the **World Maritime University** in Sweden, **Kristie Alleyne**.

They conducted 35 underwater surveys and observed 13 species of which 12 were fishes. The researcher noted that apart from comb jellies and the Sargassum frogfish, all other species observed were consumed within the Barbados fishery.

"Overall, we found there is a low species diversity associated with pelagic Sargassum arriving in Barbados. The majority of the species associated with incoming Sargassum mats are utilised within the Barbados fishery sectors. And there is a strong association between sargassum rafts and species biodiversity and abundance that will need to be considered by managers when seeking the best compromise between protecting beaches from inundation and protecting biodiversity as well as fishing opportunities."

Alleyne said the study provides the first insight for the Eastern Caribbean on the free-swimming fauna (species that swim inside and beneath floating Sargassum).

As another significant achievement, the methods utilised in the study were used to develop a monitoring protocol that can be used elsewhere to track the variability of Sargassum rafts.



Professor Hazel Oxenford
Professor of Fisheries Biology
and Management, CERMES
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Despite these insights, forecasting the influxes remains a major challenge, according to Professor of Fisheries Biology and Management **Hazel Oxenford** of CERMES, who has been involved in Sargassum research since the algae began arriving on the shores of Caribbean islands. She said it is difficult to predict when it will arrive, and satellite images that are relied on for visual detection have proven unreliable at times.

The March 2023 edition of the **Sargassum Sub-Regional Outlook Bulletin** produced under the **SargAdapt** project pointed to record amounts of Sargassum in the first quarter of the year, a period that was previously relatively free of the seaweed.

Furthermore, it reported that over two times more Sargassum was visible out in the Atlantic last year than a similar period in the previous year. Sargassum was initially found in the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic. However, a new source area has been found in the North Equatorial Recirculation Region (NERR) located in the Tropical Atlantic.

Another CERMES postgraduate student and research assistant with the **SargAdapt** project, **Micaela Small**, has been researching **Sargassum Inundation Hazard Mapping**. Known for her research on the damage being

done to coral reefs in Barbados by cruise ships, Small turned her attention to the new issue to help improve response planning for Sargassum influxes, particularly in the SargAdapt implementation countries.

To accomplish this, maps were created using imagery from Google Earth from 2011 to 2021, while spatial data used information from government institutions and other sites.

"The expectation with this data is that it will be used by technical officers as well as environmental managers to help them with the planning responses for Sargassum influxes, and we also expect that the Sargassum maps will help form the basis for a more detailed exposure analysis and for further differentiation of the impacts ... vulnerability assessment of exposed assets and strategic management responses," she said.

Her research was complemented by the investigation undertaken by CERMES Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student, **Makeda Corbin**, in her examination of Sargassum growth.

There are two main species of pelagic Sargassum - Sargassum fluitans and Sargassum natans, and between them there are three common types (morphotypes). These are S. fluitans III, S. natans I, and S. natans VIII. Corbin's research sought to assess the growth of these morphotypes



Makeda Corbin
CERMES' MPhil student
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Dr. Janice Cumberbatch
Senior Lecturer, CERMES
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

in the Tropical Atlantic, the influence of temperature on Sargassum growth and develop an IN-SITU system (a technique in which a mechanism is placed in the natural environment) for Sargassum growth assessments.

Sargassum samples were collected on the East Coast of Barbados at Consett Bay and taken to the marine-protected Carlisle Bay on the South-Western Coast. The samples were placed in growth mesocosms (experimental ecosystems), constructed out of perforated five-litre plastic bottles with floats to keep them buoyant, and deployed 140 metres offshore.

The study was conducted in May when the temperature averaged around 27.6 degrees Celsius and repeated in August

when the temperature averaged 29.6 degrees Celsius. After six days, the Sargassum replicates were collected and analysed.

*“The study revealed a significant difference in the growth rate between the three morphotypes. During the cool period *S. fluitans* III grew significantly faster than the other two morphotypes, and *S. natans* I outgrew *S. natans* VIII. During the warm period, the growth was reduced for all morphotypes, but this reduction was only significant for *S. fluitans* III. Regardless, *S. fluitans* III remained the fastest growing morphotype.*

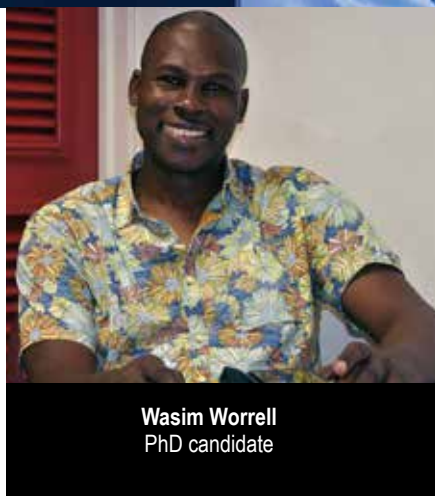
*“Overall, over the full temperature range of the study, the same trend was observed during the cooler period where *S. fluitans* III was the fastest-growing morphotype. Based on the calculations, *S. fluitans* III was capable of doubling its biomass in 13 days on average. *S. natans* I, the second fastest growing morphotype, doubled its biomass in about three weeks (22 days), and the slowest growing morphotype, *S. natans* VIII had a doubling time of around 31 days.”*

Corbin said the results match up with current trends in morphotype composition of Sargassum rafts where *S. fluitans* III is the dominant morphotype.

These research findings were presented during the **3rd UWI Sargassum Symposium** held 9-10 March 2023. Senior Lecturer with CERMES **Dr. Janice Cumberbatch** described the event as a critical step in a journey that started in 2015 when The UWI, led by CERMES, focused on understanding the phenomenon of Sargassum and how to help this region cope with and thrive under annual influxes. ♦



Deep-seated sociocultural beliefs and practices appear to be a major stumbling block to Barbados fully utilising a segment of its population that could help address the brain drain of its nurses.



Wasim Worrell
PhD candidate

Research has found that males who enter the profession continue to face societal stigma and are often ridiculed. The findings of a study by PhD candidate **Wasim Worrell** of the Cave Hill campus's Department of Government, Sociology, Social Work and Psychology have implications for other Caribbean countries that face similar shortages of nurses, like Barbados.

The World Bank has estimated that three times the number of English-speaking CARICOM nurses were working abroad than in the region — mostly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Nursing Stigma, Diabetes & Hypertension

Feature in Student Research

by Carol Williams

In its 2009 report entitled *The Nurse Labor and Education Markets in the English-Speaking CARICOM: Issues and Options for Reform*, the institution suggested that the gap between demand and supply of nurses will widen by over 7,000 by 2025.

In his research presented during the **60th Anniversary Graduate Research Symposium** hosted by the School for Graduate Studies and Research in March last year, Worrell offered insights into challenges facing male nurses. His topic was “**Using Participant Sketches to Explore the Experience of Professional Socialization**”. He said although there had been a significant increase in the number of men pursuing careers in nursing over the decades, they remained underrepresented.

Using biographical data, participants' diaries, and interviews, he analysed the work experiences of ten male nursing students operating at the Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados. Many admitted nursing was a last option. Some were influenced by family members in the profession who had travelled overseas and were successful. For those nurses, he said, they viewed the profession as a stepping stone to working abroad.

He said some participants recalled being ridiculed and being thought of as ‘soft’ for their choice: “*Some of the cultural views were, ‘My friends laughed at me.’; ‘We’re only going to last a week.’; ‘Are you actually doing this?’; ‘Can’t you find another job to do?’*”

They also recounted stereotypical views, disillusionment, dissatisfaction with pay and barriers to further training: “*They believe that people still saw nursing as a woman’s job, and they had to navigate that. Sometimes, men in practice were not allowed to go to specialty areas such as neonatal.*

They were denied certain clinical experiences. I also found that even in the terminology, you’d find notes signed by the ward sister and even books referring to nurses as females.”

He said the participants' sketches also provided valuable information about perceptions of the nurses and made it

easier to broach certain topics that the males initially found difficult to discuss.

Worrell was one of three presenters during the segment on **Advancing Health Research in the Caribbean**. The others were **Dr. Elizabeth Mandeville** and **Tricishanna Henry**.



Dr. Elizabeth Mandeville
MPhil student in Public Health

Dr. Mandeville, a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) student in Public Health, looked at “Factors Influencing Pharmacological Adherence to T2DM Treatment: The Role of Social Inequalities in an Advancing Technological Age”. Her research is critical given that Type 2 diabetes is regarded as a global public health crisis, having been responsible for the death of millions of people worldwide. She noted that Barbados has a prevalence of 18.7 per cent compared to the global average of 10.5 per cent in 2021.

Dr. Mandeville said it has been proven that pharmacological adherence to Type 2 diabetes mellitus treatment can reduce disabilities caused by the diseases, mortality rates and healthcare expenditure. At the same time, it was found that social inequalities can impact pharmacological adherence. Therefore, she studied patients living with the disease who were between the ages of 25 and 65 years in public primary healthcare clinics.

Her study was done at a number of polyclinics that were selected based on

the **2016 Barbados Survey of Living Conditions** that showed the areas with the highest poverty index.

In the first phase of her interview, which involved 30 patients and 22 healthcare workers, she found that social problems and psychological factors affected adherence. There were complaints about access to healthy foods; poor support systems, especially for the elderly; financial challenges; a lack of communication between the healthcare workers and the patient; and frequent shortages of medications in polyclinics. Additional factors were stress, depression, anxiety, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences.

“There needs to be a greater focus on the management of the disease, and an individualised model of care is needed. The global theme was then inferred and showed that a patient-centred Type 2 diabetes mellitus management strategy is needed to improve adherence among low socio-economic patients living with Type 2 diabetes.”

In the second phase of her study, questionnaires will be administered to over



Tricishanna Henry
Preclinical and Health Sciences student

400 patients in public and primary healthcare facilities.

Like Dr. Mandeville, Tricishanna Henry is conducting a two-phase study. Her research on “**The Use of Cannabidiol to Reduce Blood Pressure in an Increased Systematic Vascular Resistance Model in Wistar Kyoto Rats**” could prove timely since many Caribbean countries have budding medical cannabis industries.

Cannabidiol (CBD) is a naturally occurring chemical or one of the main phytocannabinoids in the most common type of cannabis plant, *cannabis sativa*. The chemical has therapeutic benefits, including in the management of epilepsy.

Hypertension is a major cause of cardiovascular diseases, and Henry zeroed in on its vascular effect.

The Preclinical and Health Sciences student explained, “*When this occurs it is referred to as endothelial-dysfunction in which there is an interference with the release of chemical mediators such as nitric oxide. Nitric oxide is a major mediator that produces vasorelaxation and decreased blood pressure. So in endothelial-dysfunction, there is a decrease in nitric oxide, [and] hence, a decrease in vasodilation resulting in increased systemic vascular resistance which leads to hypertension.*”

Although she noted conflicting results between CBD and hypertension, she said studies have shown CBD had a vasodilator effect (dilation of the blood vessels) that can be of benefit in hypertension. Therefore, in phase one of her study, human aortic endothelial cells will be grown. CBD will be administered in increasing concentration to the cells and assessed. Phase two involves five groups of male rats. The treatment will vary for the different groups for comparison purposes and closely assessed and analysed. Henry said these phases will be done only after the necessary ethical approval had been obtained. ♦

Research on Voice Commands in the Banking Sector



Two Cave Hill-based computer scientists are widening their research into the use of social robots and Intelligent Voice Assistants (IVAs) in the banking system in Barbados.

The husband and wife team of **Dr. Curtis Gittens** and **Dr. Mechelle Gittens** presented preliminary findings of their research on the topic “**Comparing and Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Social Robot and an Intelligent Voice Assistant in Influencing Digital Banking Service Adoption**”, last June. The presentation took place during the *CIBC FirstCaribbean*-sponsored **Research in Banking and Finance Business Forum**. The pair concluded that social robots and IVAs have a place within the local financial system.

Social robots comprise physical hardware and software components that are connected to a network and are designed



Dr. Mechelle Gittens



Dr. Curtis Gittens

to interact with people. IVAs are artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning-powered software, such as Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri, that understand and perform tasks based on voice commands by users.

Although the use of robots and AI remain an issue of debate, the team said they have proven very useful in areas like health care and as teaching assistants in education. Based on estimates, almost US\$700 million will be spent in the social robot market this year.

While research has been done internationally on using these technologies in mobile banking, it seemed none had been undertaken in the Caribbean. The preliminary study by the computer scientists involved 55 users of CIBC FirstCaribbean, Warrens, St. Michael who are at least 18 years old. Most participants were clients of the bank, used the ATM weekly or more frequently, and went to the bank teller less than once a month or never. Interestingly, although 42 per cent said they had never interacted with robots prior to the study, the overwhelming majority (87 per cent) had interacted with IVAs.

To investigate the issue, the computer scientists utilised the ASUS Zenbo companion robot, and Alexa via the hands-free speaking device, Echo. Adjustments were made to the speaking voice of both to eliminate preconceived notions.

Scripted persuasive elements were used in Zenbo, while scripted neutral elements were used with Alexa. The content came from CIBC FirstCaribbean's online marketing material. Each participant was exposed solely to a neutral interaction or a persuasive interaction.

Dr. Curtis Gittens explained that the findings did not support their hypotheses that social robots would be perceived as more persuasive than IVA in the adoption of digital banking services, that the persuasive



technologies positively influence bank clients to start using digital banking services and that these persuasive technologies would positively influence clients to use additional digital banking services.

"We believe that Zenbo was not seen as being more persuasive than Alexa because Alexa is familiar. As we saw in our demographics, 87 per cent of the participants actually used some sort of intelligent voice assistant and 42 per cent never interacted with a robot. And so, we believe the unfamiliarity within the banking context probably played into that. Another thing that we think affected the persuasiveness of the robot versus Alexa is the voice recognition system. Alexa's is superior to Zenbo's. Zenbo is known to have voice recognition challenges."

"For both Zenbo and Alexa, people were not convinced to change or consider signing up [for additional digital banking services]. But even though they did not sign up, they still thought that the information was persuasive. One of the reasons we think people weren't encouraged or didn't think of signing up or adopting new services was the scripted conversation. Scripted conversations limit the level of interaction you have because you can only say so

much, and it's not natural and free-flowing. Also, the type of persuasion that we used was limited. We had Zenbo move around and try to look for a person's face ... That's one aspect of persuasion, but there are other aspects that we couldn't incorporate because we would have had to change the conversation to accommodate those kinds of things."

His fellow investigator said based on the literature and overall reaction from people, social robots have a place within the banking system in Barbados and can offer useful services.

"People were fascinated, and although some did not necessarily want to participate in the study because of the line in the bank, enough people were interested that we recognised that the robot and IVA can have use. We also recognised that voice recognition is something that we have to deal with for Zenbo; and what I would say is being from the Caribbean, we recognised that the way we speak and the things we say, our vernacular, and our accent is something that we need to do more research into. We're already doing some of that kind of research so that Zenbo can have better voice recognition for us."

As they delve more into the research, the senior lecturer said they intend to combine unscripted conversations using an integrated generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot – most likely ChatGPT – and employ stronger persuasive techniques. ♦



Putting Pesky Mosquitoes to REST

by Camille Russell

In a significant stride towards combatting dengue, Zika, and chikungunya, The University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill Campus is in the process of developing a groundbreaking, anti-mosquito product powered by renewable energy. The prototype, known as the **Renewable Energy-powered Silent Terminator (REST)**, is poised to revolutionise the fight against mosquito-borne diseases.

Spearheaded by teams from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) and Centre for Biosecurity Studies (CBS), known as **Biosecure Inc.**, the initiative is generously funded by the **FirstCaribbean International Bank and Export Barbados**. The current prototype was built by **FaSoVe**, a company associated with The UWI, St. Augustine Campus and known for its multidisciplinary team who propels ideas through the innovation process and deliver market-ready solutions. **REST** is designed to tackle the persistent issue of mosquito-borne diseases and operates by attracting and killing flying, biting insects using green energy, thereby eliminating the need for harmful toxic chemicals such as insecticides.

The initiative has already received major recognition. **Biosecure Inc.** was the recipient of the **Most Promising Innovation** award during the **Innovate! Cave Hill** competition in 2022. The award, totalling USD\$8,000, was presented for their cutting-edge product. The team, comprising **Mrs. Ayanna Young Marshall, Professor Troy Lorde**, and **Dr. Kirk Douglas**, developed the product using a proprietary blend of novel attractants to selectively target female, flying, biting insects. The





Dr. Kirk Douglas
Director of the Centre for Biosecurity Studies
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Professor Troy Lorde
Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Ayanna Young Marshall
Coordinator, Student Entrepreneurial
Empowerment Development (SEED)
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

solar-powered device is designed to last up to 24 hours on a full charge in an outdoor setting, contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment and reducing harmful climate impact.

Douglas, Director of the Centre for Biosecurity Studies, emphasised the importance of REST in the fight against mosquito-borne diseases. However, he cautioned that this device should be viewed as another tool in the arsenal to fight and not to exclusively replace all other means of reducing the mosquito and sandfly populations and their related dangers.

“This device is meant to coincide with the other strategies currently available in the fight, especially in terms of keeping your surroundings tidy or even trying to reduce the number of breeding sites near and around the home or property.

Professor Winston Moore, Deputy Principal and Head of the Office of Research, Innovation and Community at Cave Hill, welcomed the development of this device, emphasising the institution’s thrust to provide an innovative solution to meet the needs of its community.

“The REST product, developed as a pivotal element of the UWI Triple-A Strategy Phase 2, aligns with the university’s commitment to the commercialisation of our research. With The UWI and its Cave Hill Campus recently celebrating their



Professor Winston Moore
Deputy Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

75th and 60th anniversaries respectively, this innovative anti-mosquito product underscores the institution’s ongoing role in contributing to the region’s sustainable development.”

Flying, biting insects, particularly prevalent in tropical climates, pose a significant threat, with tourists often falling victim to their blood-feeding exploits. The Caribbean, drawing over 25 million international tourists annually, faces the risk of infectious diseases such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya, malaria, yellow fever, West Nile, and leishmaniasis. With over one million deaths and 340 million infections annually, and at least four billion people at risk, the need for effective mosquito and sandfly control is paramount. ◆

Medical Researchers Champion Enhanced Cancer Care

In a rousing call to action, two UWI Cave Hill-based medical researchers are raising awareness about the escalating challenges surrounding cancer care in developing states. As advocates for improved education, early detection, and accessible treatment options, **Dr. Natalie Greaves** and **Dr. Cheryl Alexis** are shedding light on critical issues that demand urgent attention.

The urgency behind the clinicians' advocacy stems from a recent report released by the **Barbados National Registry (BNR)** titled **Cancer in Barbados Report 2022**. Dr. Greaves, a clinician-researcher and Co-Chair of the colorectal working group for the **African-Caribbean Cancer Consortium (AC3)**, emphasises the necessity of health education initiatives focusing on the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer. She urges clinicians to proactively educate their clients about available minimally invasive screening tests, such as the FIT (faecal immunochemical test) and M2-PK kits, even in the absence of symptoms.

Dr. Alexis, a haematologist/ oncologist and Senior Lecturer in Clinical Haematology, expresses her concern regarding the increasing trend in breast cancer deaths, particularly in light of the global decrease in such fatalities. She attributes this concerning trend to the financial challenges faced by cancer patients without insurance, hindering their ability to undergo necessary investigations and treatments.



Dr. Cheryl Alexis
Senior Lecturer in Clinical Haematology

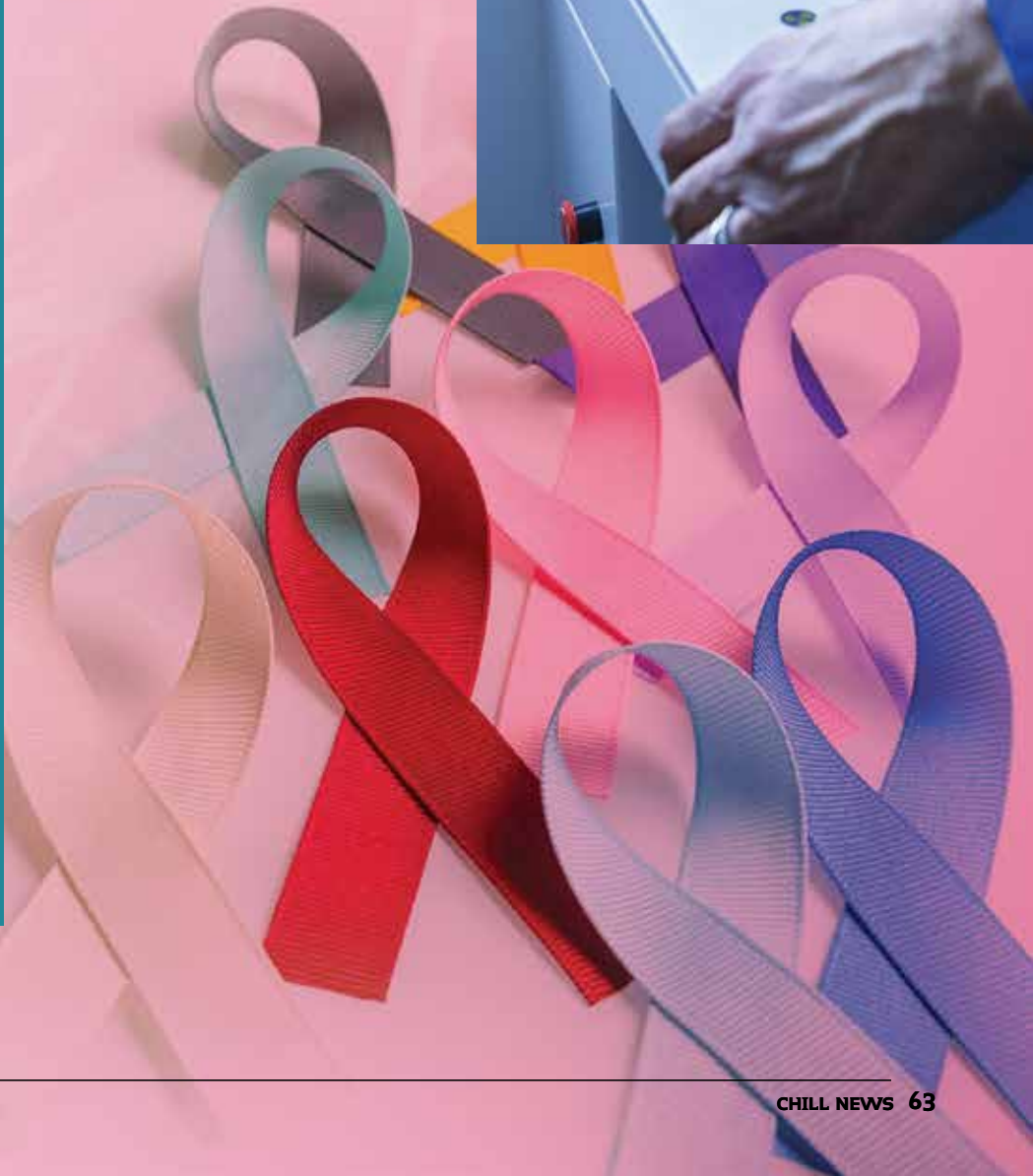


Dr. Natalie S. Greaves
Lecturer in Public Health
Programme Coordinator, MPhil/PhD in
Public Health and Epidemiology

The BNR report highlights the heightened likelihood of cancer diagnoses in aging individuals, many of whom lack the financial resources and support necessary for adequate care. In 2018, Barbados recorded 960 new cancer cases, slightly below the yearly average of 977 between 2013 and 2018. Prostate cancer was the most prevalent among men, while breast and colorectal cancers (CRCs) were most prevalent among women, with persistently high incidence and mortality rates for the latter.

Coinciding with the release of the BNR findings was the commemoration of **World Cancer Day** on 4 February, with the poignant slogan "close the care gap". The BNR report, a critical resource for the Ministry of Health and Wellness, clinicians, the board and management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, non-governmental organisations, and other partners, provides essential information for the planning and management of cancer in Barbados.

As these dedicated medical researchers passionately advocate for improved cancer care, their efforts illuminate the path towards a future where education, early detection, and accessible treatment options contribute to closing the care gap and fostering a healthier community. ♦



Sargassum Sustains Inventors and Innovators

Sargassum seaweed has the potential to become an invaluable resource, according to a growing body of research at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.

While it is viewed as a disruptor and smelly nuisance in some circles, ongoing research identifies the brown algae as a key component in an alternative to fossil fuels and in products that boost plant production. This has major implications for the energy and agricultural sectors in Caribbean states.

The biofuel and agrochemical solutions complement past research conducted at the Cave Hill campus that has seen the seaweed being incorporated into cosmetics and personal hygiene products.



Dr. Legena Henry

In one of the latest and most successful developments, the organic material has been used to help create a biofuel to power vehicles. Visionary **Dr. Legena**

Henry, a Cave Hill lecturer, has since established a business - **Rum and Sargassum Inc.** The Barbados-based biofuel company was founded in 2021 and utilises rum distillery wastewater and Sargassum seaweed, among other local waste materials, to produce fuel.

"We're taking Sargassum seaweed with rum distillery wastewater in specific ratios and adding some kind of inoculum (a source of bacteria) and have it run through a process over time (anaerobic digestion), and at the end of 30 days, we see our gas levels increasing. Different formulae produce different amounts of biomethane per gramme," the founder and Chief Executive Officer explained.

The intention is to harvest the Sargassum before it reaches the shores via a system that uses catamarans equipped with conveyor belts.

"We need to have a sustainable way of collecting Sargassum, and so for us, that's out in the deep. We're not using beached Sargassum. We wash and weigh and pretreat it ... From the biogas, you can

upgrade and inject into generators that will send electricity to the national grid, [a system] Barbados already has, or you can upgrade and drive cars and trucks."

The renewable energy expert said a provisional patent has been secured for the fuel with the application process underway for a full patent. In the meantime, the company has been collaborating with the **Barbados National Oil Company Ltd. (BNO)** to set up a four-car pilot to display the product's effectiveness.

The initiative has secured support from a number of agencies, including the **Inter-American Development Bank**, the **United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network**, **Venture For ClimateTech**, and **HIT RESET Caribbean** (Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Support Resilient Settlements on the Coastal Zones of the Caribbean).

The innovation was one of four



Dr. Nikolai Holder

presented on the second day of the 3rd UWI **Sargassum Symposium** held 9-10 March 2023 that featured presentations by experts and interactive sessions.

Another expert was researcher and entrepreneur, **Dr. Nikolai Holder**, who is known for his groundbreaking doctoral research on the creation of biomethane from landscaping waste that was used to fuel Bunsen burners in the Biology Extension Laboratory for a semester in 2018.

Dr. Holder gave insight into that research and indicated that his interest has segued into the potential of Sargassum to boost the agricultural potential of plants.

Innovators **Joshua Forte** and **Kerri-Ann Bovell** have similar interests. Forte, an entrepreneur and sustainable environmental management practitioner, created **Supreme Sea Horticultural Biostimulant** from the algae, earning the **Commonwealth Innovation Award** in 2021 and the **Canewood Award** in the **Barbados National Youth Awards 2023**.

The founder and Chief Executive Officer of **Red Diamond Compost Inc.** said it was in 2016, the year after massive piles of Sargassum began washing up on beaches and shorelines, that he thought of its potential.



Joshua Forte

In 2022, he undertook another trial. This time, it was done over an 84-day period on lawn turf in the United Kingdom. The entrepreneur said around the 42nd day, they started to see variations in the results, although all were positive.

Currently, further trials are ongoing with other food crops such as tomatoes and cucumbers, among others.

"For me, Sargassum is a biological material with so much potential to unlock; this is only the beginning. I would encourage people to look past the initial

After developing the product, he approached experts at the Cave Hill campus to conduct a 39-day trial on plants. The results showed that the biostimulant, combined with reduced rates of

synthetic fertiliser, resulted in a significant increase in leaf production.

Forte then gave the product to acquaintances and small farmers to test. But with costs rising, he decided to return to the drawing board to redesign and re-engineer the product. He later received support from the **Bloom Barbados CleanTech Cluster** hosted by **Export Barbados** (Barbados Investment and Development Corporation) and **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**.

negative effect of the influxes and explore the reaches of what it can be safely and sustainably used for, because that's what innovation demands," he said.



Kerri-Ann Bovell

Bovell, a Cave Hill alumna, is also keen on conducting further research into the potential of the seaweed.

The Chemistry graduate successfully developed a biobased and biodegradable film-like material from Sargassum and agricultural waste as an alternative to plastic wrap during her final year on campus. She said it can be used in the agricultural sector as a weed suppressant or mulch and in the cosmetic industry.

However, her efforts have been hampered by limited facilities in Barbados to conduct further research and development.

The operator of **EcoMycö**, a biomaterials packaging company, said practical solutions were needed to encourage innovation.

"It's one thing for ministerial bodies to speak of the need for innovation and the need to utilise the resources that we have here, which are invaluable, but we need a way to test them, make them, [and] to get products to the local and regional markets."

Much of the presentations during the two-day symposium centred on research and capacity-building linked to the **SargAdapt** project, Sargassum management, and hearing from innovators. ♦

Cutting-Edge Agro-Facility Takes Shape

by Carol Williams



A year ago, The UWI Cave Hill Campus broke ground for a bold venture: **Dukes Agri-Industrial Park**, a hub for agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship.

Today, the project is taking shape, with high-yield resources nestling on the fertile soil at Dukes Plantation, St. Thomas. Out of the 28 acres of land generously gifted by **Charles and Vanessa Edghill**, 14 are being transformed into state-of-the-art facilities for agroprocessing. The remainder will serve as a living laboratory for applied research.

Dr. Michele Singh, the visionary Director of the **Centre for Agricultural Research and Innovation (CAGRI)**, formerly known as the Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, has been overseeing the project. She believes it will revolutionise the regional agricultural sector, sparking new discoveries and business opportunities, enhancing technology adoption and attracting high-tech industry and investment.

The renowned agriculturalist and livestock scientist explained that the 12 buildings under construction will offer on-site leasing opportunities to local, regional, and international entrepreneurs who want to process agricultural products. Two of these buildings will be dedicated conference



Dr. Michele Singh
Director, Centre for Agricultural Research and Innovation (CAGRI)

centres and can also house approximately 14 offices. Prospective tenants will be offered business facilitation services by the **Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management**.

"Dukes Agri-Industrial Park boasts

comprehensive infrastructure, including essential utilities like electricity, cabling, telephone, internet, water, wastewater treatment, and access roads. All buildings come with ready connections to utilities, while factory shells are designed for 'Plug and Play' business setup, equipped with utilities and restroom facilities. Tenants have the option to further develop office spaces, with parking allocations provided for each lot," Dr. Singh stated.

When completed, the **Dukes Agri-Industrial Park** will join the ranks of businesses that align with the 2022-2027 entrepreneurial thrust of the Cave Hill campus. The theme of the five-year strategy is **Creating Values from our Ideas**.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Principal **Professor Clive Landis** said the site will generate significant revenue for the campus and pointed to opportunities to further explore the nascent medicinal cannabis industry.

The **Dukes Agri-Industrial Park** is being undertaken in conjunction with a sister project, the **Hope Agriculture Training Institute**. Funding is being provided under a \$34 million grant between the People's Republic of China through the China-Aid project **Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship in Barbados** and the Government of Barbados.

"Dukes and Hope will have a close functional relationship to ensure a bi-directional flow of ideas and people from research to practice, and from practice to research. There will also be links with the Faculty of Agriculture in Trinidad, such that any Barbadian studying for a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture at [The UWI] St. Augustine may be offered the choice to do their final-year extension project at Dukes. CAGRI is also happy to work with stakeholders in farming and agriculture to develop short courses to address specific

skills gaps in an increasingly knowledge-driven sector," Landis stated.

He stressed that Dukes is committed to forging global partnerships with research parks abroad to collaborate on cutting-edge research that serves the region's interest and keeps the region's agricultural sector at the forefront of innovation.

Prime Minister of Barbados **Mia Amor Mottley** pledged Government's full support to the project and emphasised the need to empower citizens with the essential knowledge to cope with the looming threat of climate change and to enhance their agricultural productivity and diversity. She recognised the unique potential of Barbados to become a leading agro-processing hub in the region, thanks to its skills and strategic location. She also expressed her gratitude to the Edghill family for their generous donation and praised The UWI for its dedication to research.

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China **Yan Xiusheng** highlighted the solid friendship between Barbados and his country. He voiced his optimism that the project, once completed, would help to ensure food security and agricultural development. ♦



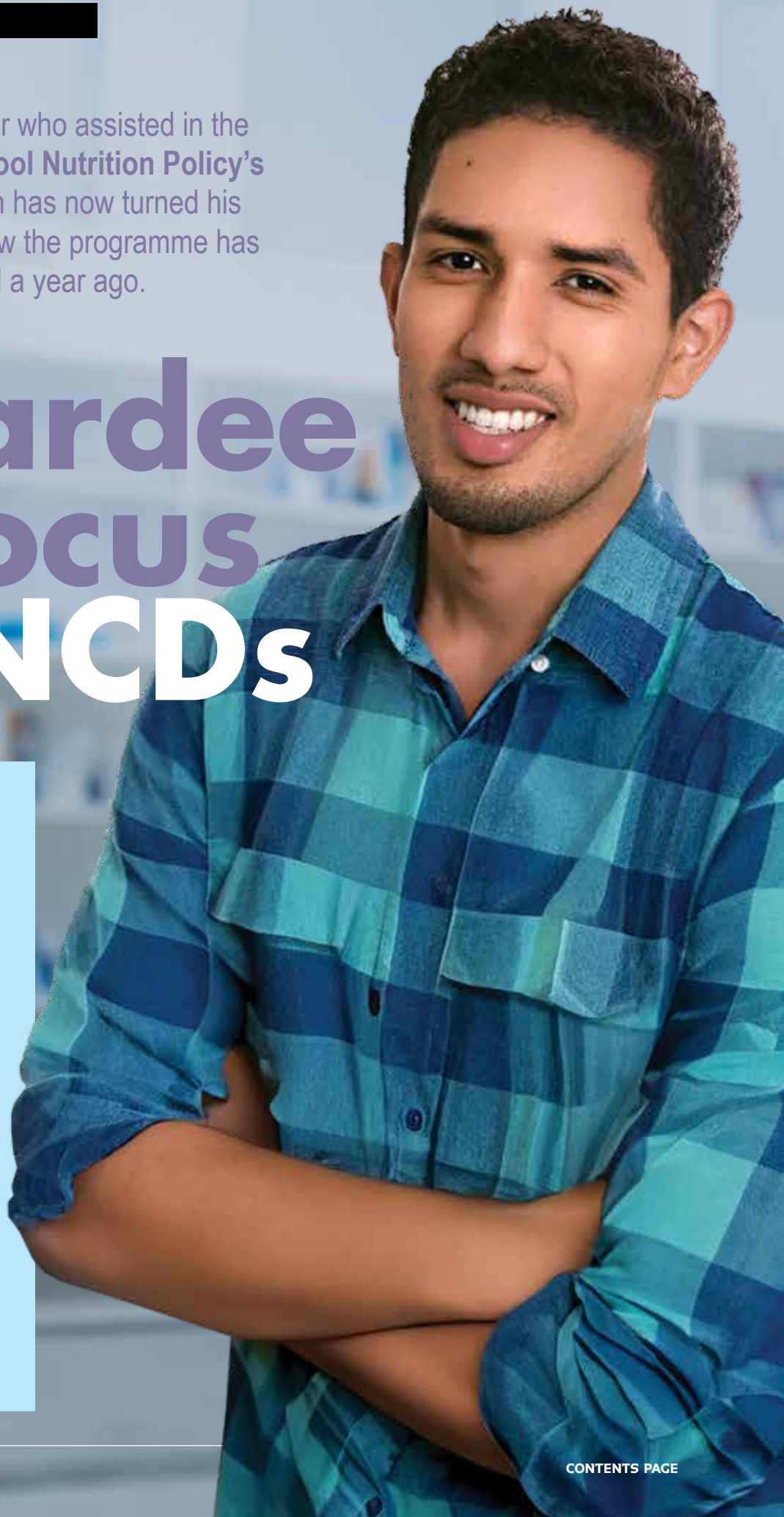
A public health researcher who assisted in the Barbados National School Nutrition Policy's implementation campaign has now turned his attention to assessing how the programme has performed since it started a year ago.

Awardee to focus on NCDs

by Carol Williams

The Master of Public Health (MPH) student **Christopher Laurie** has declared his intention to evaluate specific aspects of the policy, identify implementation gaps, and suggest areas for improvement. He said such research is essential for the country to achieve its 2030 target of a 50 per cent reduction in cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), that requires an all-of-society approach.

In January this year, Laurie became the 2023-2024 recipient of the annual scholarship granted by the **Cato Burton Foundation** and the **City of Bridgetown Credit Union Limited**. For 15 years, the tuition scholarship has been awarded to MPH students to continue their training towards a career in public health.



The foundation was named after Sir Arnott Cato, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines native who relocated to Barbados where he served in the fields of medicine, politics, and health and education.

"I am humbled to join the pantheon of awardees in the Master of Public Health programme, including Dr. Subira Franklin, a dear friend and brilliant mind lost too soon."

As he thanked his student peers, parents and others for their support, the awardee explained that he was inspired to pursue a career that combined his passion for health interventions and the arts while he attended **Harrison College**.

"In my experience, public health is a discipline that celebrates this union. Our mission as public health practitioners is not merely to heal the sick but to create new and innovative ways for people to thrive. Indeed, we must be bold in proactively creating health-promoting environments that encourage and facilitate healthy lives and livelihoods."

NCDs remain one of the most significant developmental challenges for Caribbean countries like Barbados. Currently, 31 per cent of the children residing in the state are overweight or obese, 66 per cent of adults are overweight and another 33 per cent are obese, the **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB)** has stated.

The young researcher explained that he worked alongside the non-governmental HSFB and **Healthy Caribbean Coalition** on childhood obesity prevention for almost five years.

As a youth coordinator, he said he focused on building a team of young advocates who championed various community outreach activities for health promotion and digital advocacy campaigns.

Programme Coordinator of the MPH and Lecturer in Public Health and Epidemiology **Dr. Heather Harewood** said, like Laurie, other people continue to show interest

in the public health discipline post the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The MPH focuses on equipping persons with the knowledge and skills required to provide leadership and effective management within health and allied sectors and disciplines, regionally and beyond."

"A strength of our MPH is its integrated delivery which [allows] students to benefit from interaction with technical experts from the Ministry of Health, the George Alleyne Chronic Diseases Research Centre, as well as other regional and global academic partners, many of whom are adjunct faculty. These opportunities, along with selected field trips and directed activities, have equipped our graduates with the needed authentic exposures to enhance their ability to integrate into various workplaces and fields of interest."

Some past scholarship recipients have gone on to make contributions in the areas of breast cancer research among women of the African diaspora, and food and nutrition.



Christopher Laurie (centre) receives the Cato Burton Foundation/City of Bridgetown Credit Union Scholarship from Vice-President of COB **Steve Jemmott** (left) and **Dr. Clyde Cave**, Board Trustee of the Cato Burton Foundation (right).

New Publication Earns Sterling Evaluation

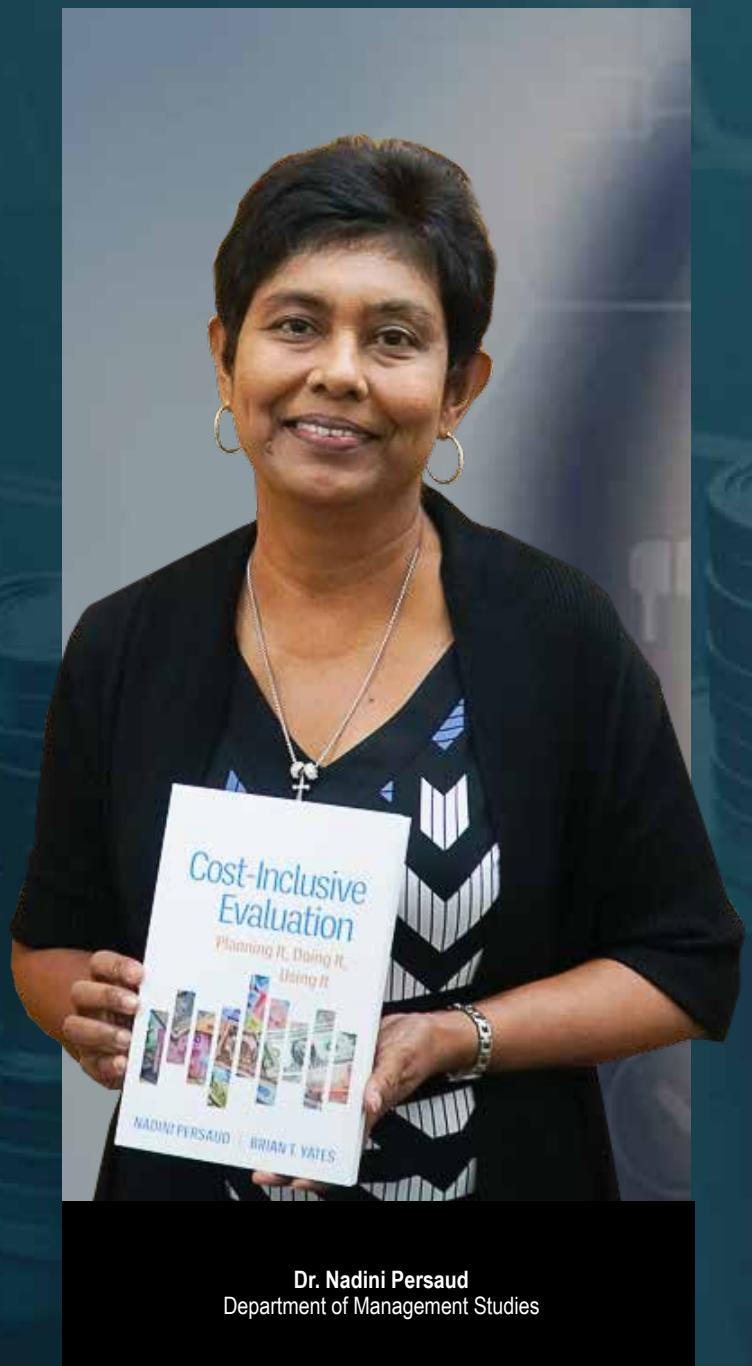
As Cave Hill scholarship continues to garner much critical acclaim, a recent publication co-authored by a UWI social scientist has received rave reviews from her international counterparts.

Associate Professor at the **University of Naples Federico II** in Italy and **George Washington University** in the United States of America (USA) **Dr. Mita Marra** said she will recommend the book to colleagues, while Associate Professor at **Western Michigan University** in the USA **Dr. Daniela Schröter** is already looking forward to a second edition.

Both conducted a critical analysis of the book titled *Cost-Inclusive Evaluation, Planning It, Doing It, Using It* and written by Lecturer in Evaluation in the Department of Management Studies **Dr. Nadini Persaud**, and **Professor Brian T. Yates** of **American University** in Washington, D.C. and delivered their reviews during the launch of the publication in March last year.

Dr. Marra said the book merged economics and accounting perspectives, examined the nature of costs, cost behaviour, explained the dynamics of costs, and showed the link between costs and outcomes. That information, she explained, would be useful to students involved in programme evaluation, economics and finance; as well as consultants, economists, accountants and other professionals conducting analytical work for public and private sector organisations.

“They [the authors] specifically link costs to resources, programme activities, and programme outcomes using a very



Dr. Nadini Persaud
Department of Management Studies

practical approach. I really think it's crucial to put emphasis on the value of resources that are consumed for sustainability purposes.

“Another issue is distinguishing effectiveness from benefits which bear different significance [based on] the stakeholder. They underline how benefits and value and, therefore, costs are to some extent subjective and are valued according to the different [players] involved in programme design, implementation and in different contexts.”



Dr. Mita Marra
Associate Professor, University of Naples
Federico II in Italy and
George Washington University, USA



Dr. Daniela Schröter
Associate Professor,
Western Michigan University, USA

Scriven has, in his academic writing, maintained that cost analysis is the missing component of professional evaluation.

The academics began working on the project in 2012 but were delayed by illness and other personal challenges. The project resumed in 2019 and was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have written this book to present a gentle learning curve. We endeavoured to make it user-friendly and pragmatic, straightforward and clear. In particular, we have attempted to avoid the complex economic and statistical jargon, notation, and formulas common in other texts

which can prevent persons without strong mathematical or economic backgrounds from using cost-related evaluation procedures," Dr. Persaud said.

She paid tribute to Professor Scriven, who, like the reviewers, delivered remarks virtually during the ceremony held at the Sagcor Cave Hill School of Business and Management (SCHSBM).

Professor Yates thanked Professor Scriven for presenting the idea and recognising its importance. He also thanked everyone who contributed, including his co-author.

"I've written a number of books, but it was the first time I'd written with a colleague. Dr. Nadini, I firmly believe it wouldn't have happened without you."

Despite her critique of insufficient critical analysis of behavioural economics or behavioural public policy in the book, Dr. Marra said it did not take away from its relevance and usefulness. She disclosed her intention to use the text in her teaching and to recommend it to her colleague evaluators.

Meantime, **Dr. Schröter** gave kudos to the authors for, among other things, their focus on financial cost considerations and how this linked to general management and accounting concepts and tools.

"I think it's the first interdisciplinary text in cost inclusive evaluation. Other texts have focused on ... education, for example, or have been on accounting or economics-specific disciplinary textbooks."

The Associate Professor commended the authors for their use of supporting graphics and tables and the inclusion of suggestions for further reference. She was hopeful there would be a second edition to expand on the current publication, allow for audible and electronic access, and provide a case study to demonstrate all aspects of cost-inclusive evaluation.

The book was influenced by the award-winning, England-born **Professor Michael Scriven**, a mentor of Dr. Persaud, who had approached Dr. Yates years ago with the idea.

This is the third book Dr. Persaud has co-authored. The others are entitled *Nuts & Bolts of Research Methodology: From Conceptualization to Write-up and The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation in the UN 2030 SDGs Agenda*.

During the ceremony, the book was officially dedicated to Professor Scriven in recognition of his sterling contribution to the development of the evaluation profession. ♦

Poet: JACINTH HOWARD

Launches Single-authored Book



When Lecturer in Literatures in English at Cave Hill Campus, Dr. Debra Providence read ***The Mother Island***, she said she had little choice but to confront contesting emotions. The motherhood-inspired poetry collection was the first single-authored book by her campus colleague, **Dr. Jacinth Howard**, also a lecturer in Literatures in English. The publication was officially launched during a ceremony held last June, when Providence gave her critique.

Providence said she not only had to deal with conflicting emotions but was forced to take a closer examination of the ideas of home and place, mothering, traditions and inheritances, generational curses, burdens, blessings, and silences.

"[The book's] layered structure invites scrutiny," she said. "Within each [of the four] sections are groupings that engage in a call and response dynamic or a call and echo where a thought is expressed in one poem and picked up and reverberated in another and another and another."

She said the poem titles were also worthy of scrutiny despite their seeming simplicity as they contained cleverly layered wordplay.

Known for her work in prose, poetry and drama, Dr. Howard is a former island scholar of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. She earned second place in **The 23rd Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Awards** competition held in 2021. Last June, she showcased her work at the 40th edition of the **Poetry Market (Marché de la Poésie)** in Paris, France.



During the launch, the poet had a conversation with the Literatures in English Programme Coordinator, **Dr. Nicola Hunte**, in which she explained the style of writing she opted to use in her most recent published work.

"A trained poet might notice ... you won't see sonnets and you won't see blank verses. It's not that I don't value form and metre; there is evidence of that in some of the poems, but the free verse was deliberate in that there is imperfection and there is chaos, especially when you become a parent. I think the biggest lesson you learn as a parent is that planning is not as straightforward as it used to be. Things become very impractical very easily, and it gives a kind of grace which I wanted to convey in my poems."

Dr. Howard said there were challenges involved in the creative process: moments of inspiration, encountering mental blocks, and demands that could affect the quality of output.

"For this entire collection, I was thinking about the tensions that exist in being a creative and creating work that's palatable but also being true to my own objectives as a creative. At one point, I just had to [acknowledge] that while I wanted to meet certain standards, I was more concerned with the authenticity of my work and less concerned about what consumers will think."

The poet said over past decades, female creatives have had to overcome numerous challenges, and she wanted that to be highlighted throughout her collection. During the event, Howard read excerpts from her poems including **"Undermining Eden"**, **"Limerick"**, **"Performances"**, **"Minding Cattle"**, **"Watercolour"**, and **"Obsidian: An Ode to Soufriere"**. She also highlighted the poem **"Quick Stitch"**.

*"I purposefully placed this poem **'Quick Stitch'** and a number of them in a domicile position because I wanted to talk about the experiences that specifically female creatives have to tackle."*

Head of the Cave Hill's Department of Language, Linguistics and Literature **Dr. Korah Belgrave** said Dr. Howard's work could be studied within the context of modern writing, poetry, gender studies and for emerging themes like social media. ♦



Pastor John Yarde
performs song *Dream Alive*



Dr. Nicola Hunte
Coordinator, Literatures in English Programme
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Twin Volume Examines Impact of COVID



Three years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Caribbean, a team of UWI-led scholars has produced a two-volume publication that documents the impact of the virus on the region's social, economic and health sectors.

Last 7 November saw the launch of *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on COVID-19 and the Caribbean: Volumes 1 & 2*, edited by Sherma Roberts, Halimah A. F. DeShong, Wendy C. Grenade, and Dwayne Devonish. Volume 1 focuses on The State, Economy and Health, while Volume 2 examines the impact of the pandemic on Society, Gender, Education and Technology.

Principal of the Cave Hill campus Professor Clive Landis had high praise for the publications, saying persons involved were committed to finding solutions to the persistent challenges brought on by COVID-19.

"The contributors and editors have robustly examined the various dimensions of the pandemic – from the immediate healthcare response to long-term economic consequences, from the social and psychological implications to political and business-related challenges, and from communication strategies to policy and governance measures."



Dr. Sherma Roberts
Deputy Dean - Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, & Programme Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Hospitality Management

*"This work, **Interdisciplinary Perspectives on COVID-19 and the Caribbean**, is not merely a compilation of research articles ... it is a testament to our collective resilience in Caribbean society, drawing on instinctive solidarity in times of need and holistic approaches to address complex challenges," Landis said.*

Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences **Professor Troy Lorde** shared similar sentiments, saying: *"The two volumes are the product of an ambitious project by the editors to deliver authentic, indigenous, interdisciplinary Caribbean scholarship on the region's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic."*

Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, **Marsha Caddle** hailed the publications as a *"stunning academic memorial to the lives lost and transformed during the COVID years"*.

She noted that the pandemic provided an opportunity to strengthen social protections and social insurance and to provide more effective delivery.

"When we look at the composition of our small businesses, our MSMEs [micro, small

and medium enterprises], we see that in many ways, the people who are principals of many of those businesses are also the people to whom we had to have first economic or socioeconomic response at the level of the household.

"And so, we see that when we have a social and economic response that are conceived together, we have a far better reach and a far better understanding of what people need," the former Minister of Economic Affairs and Investment said.

President of the **Barbados Private Sector Association**, **Trisha Tannis** told the audience that the topics covered

are relevant to the modern Caribbean businessperson and provide a lens through which regional enterprises can be more responsive and agile to the changing operational environment.

"Most importantly, from a private sector perspective, these volumes offer a number of recommendations which the regional private sector can implement to increase profitability and levels of customer satisfaction in their enterprises. Some of these include the development of appropriate risk management strategies for MSMEs in the region," Tannis said.

Deputy Principal of the campus **Professor Winston Moore** lauded the work of the editors for offering a detailed, insightful account of the pandemic: *"... a pandemic which, in many instances, forced us as Caribbean people into a trying and sometimes painful evolutionary process that has resulted in us trying to navigate an ever-changing new normal,"* he noted. ♦

Professor Dwayne Devonish presents **Minister Marsha Caddle** with Volumes 1 & 2 of the new publication.



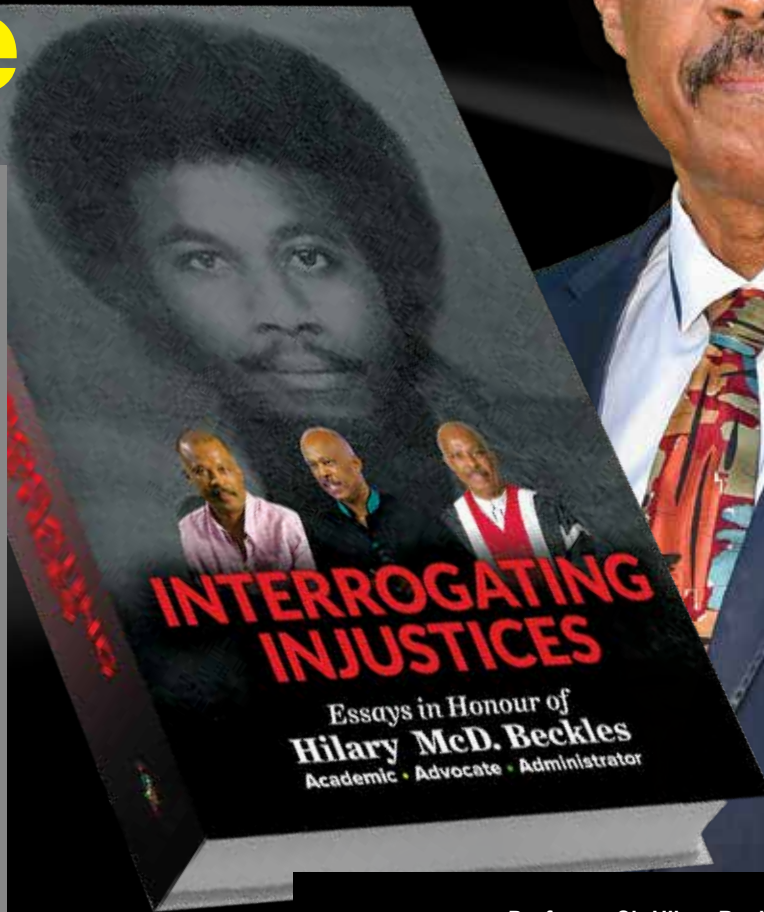
From left: **Dr. Natalie Greaves**, Lecturer in Public Health; **Dr. Sherma Roberts**, Deputy Dean, Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship; **Dr. Halimah DeShong**, Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit; and **Professor Dwayne Devonish**, Professor of Management and Organisational Behaviour



Monumental Tribute

An event unprecedented in the annals of the university's 75-year-old history—that is how one could describe the festschrift dedicated to Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, the Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) and a champion of social justice and academic excellence.

The festschrift, a collection of essays by various authors to honour a respected scholar, spans nearly 1,150 pages and features 41 articles from historians and other academics from around the world. They celebrate and reflect on the remarkable achievements and contributions of Sir Hilary, who has been a leader and a mentor in the field of Caribbean history and beyond.



Professor Sir Hilary Beckles
Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies
(The UWI)

The book, titled *Interrogating Injustices: Essays in Honour of Hilary McD. Beckles*, was launched last 15 December at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus as part of the grand finale of the 75th anniversary of The UWI and the 60th anniversary of Cave Hill. It was edited by **Professor Verene Shepherd, Dr. Henderson D. Carter** and **Dr. Ahmed N. Reid**, and published by Ian Randle Publishers, a Caribbean-owned company.

Professor Shepherd, who is the Director of the **Centre for Reparation Research** at The UWI, said that Sir Hilary was her inspiration and that she had to unlearn the colonial history that she was taught. She also contributed an essay to the

book and explained how they approached the massive project.

"We had to turn away a few articles ... but we tried to accommodate as many people as possible. The whole project was meant to almost pattern the 10-point plan of the CARICOM Reparations Commission ... It was a big project for a big intellectual, and it took [a lot] of hours."

Dr. Carter, who is the Head of the Department of History and Philosophy at Cave Hill, wrote three essays for the book. He said that the book was a celebration of the long and distinguished journey of Sir Hilary, whom he met in 1985, and described

as a teacher, fellow cricketer, and friend.

The idea to compile scholarly works in honour of the academic was first conceptualised in 2013 but stalled, according to the Cave Hill historian. He said it was revived and reimagined in 2019 by Professor Shepherd.

"This book is our way of saying 'thank you for your inspirational teaching, your inspirational supervision, your leadership in research, your foresight in creating heritage assets ... I'm proud to have been one of your students, proud to have been one of your cricketing friends.'"

Professor Clive Landis, the Pro

Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Cave Hill campus, who hosted the event, also contributed a chapter to the book titled “**The Triple Three Threat to the Caribbean**” with reference to chronic diseases, climate change and COVID-19. He said that the festschrift was fitting for one of the greatest intellects in the Caribbean.

Barbados’s Ambassador to CARICOM **David Comissiong** echoed this sentiment in his reflections on Sir Hilary, whom he said was important to Caribbean civilisation.

“Your contribution has made a tremendous difference to our society. Our society is so much richer by the fact that you ... chose to come back here and to place your intelligence and your intellect, your energy and your services at our disposal, and we would forever be grateful to you.”

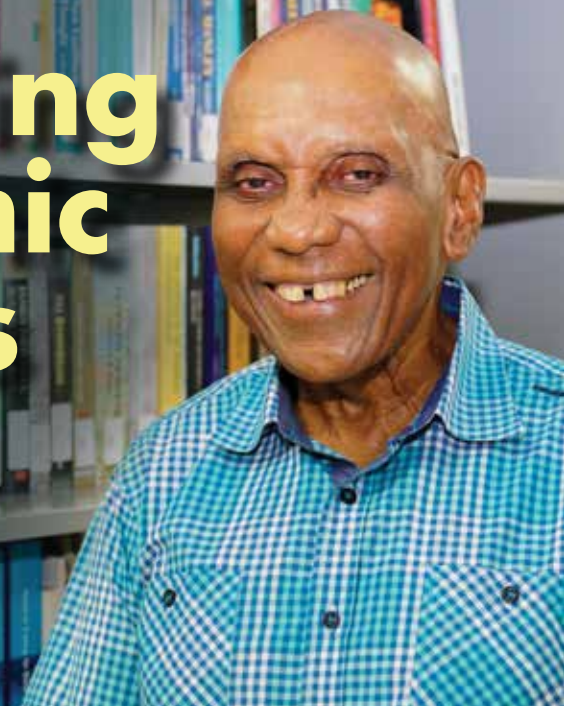
The event also featured a musical tribute by Barbados’s Cultural Ambassador, **Dr. the Most Honourable Anthony “Mighty Gabby” Carter**, a longtime friend of Sir Hilary.

Sir Hilary, who was visibly moved by the honour and received a standing ovation from the audience of friends, family, diplomats, and academics, said he was overwhelmed and thoroughly appreciated the honour.

In his remarks, he shared some of his experiences and explained what kept him motivated over the decades, as he referenced advice rendered by his late father.

“You just do what’s in front of you. You get on with it, and do your best and help out. And that was always my perspective especially since, as an administrator of higher education, I could promote and assist in something that I believe in, which is making university education available to all.” ♦

Unlocking Economic Insights



Dr. Delisle Worrell
former Governor of the
Central Bank of Barbados

Former Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados **Dr. Delisle Worrell** has presented his latest work ***Development and Stabilization in Small Open Economies: Theories and Evidence from Caribbean Experience*** to the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) at The University of the West Indies.

Addressing the pressing issue of exchange rate devaluation in the Caribbean, Dr. Worrell's book delves into the intricate web of economic policies influencing small economies and provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping economic development.

“I explain what makes an economy competitive and the factors that promote investment and productivity,” Dr. Worrell noted.

The donation ceremony took place last

1 June in the Audine Wilkinson Library of SALISES at the Cave Hill campus.

University Director of SALISES

Professor Don Marshall expressed his department's gratitude and highlighted the book's significance for both social and economic professionals and students with a keen interest in the region. He commended Dr. Worrell for skilfully intertwining key issues from his central banking career with the contentious debates found in academic journals.

The book, published in January 2023, provides in-depth insights into the political economy effects of interest rate adjustments, tax policies, government subsidies, allocation of government expenditure, foreign reserves stockpiling, and government debt.

Touching the intersection of Economics, Finance, Business and Industry, and Politics and International Relations, Dr. Worrell's book promises to be a pivotal resource for those seeking to unravel the complexities of economic dynamics in small open economies. ♦

JAPANESE BOOK DRIVE

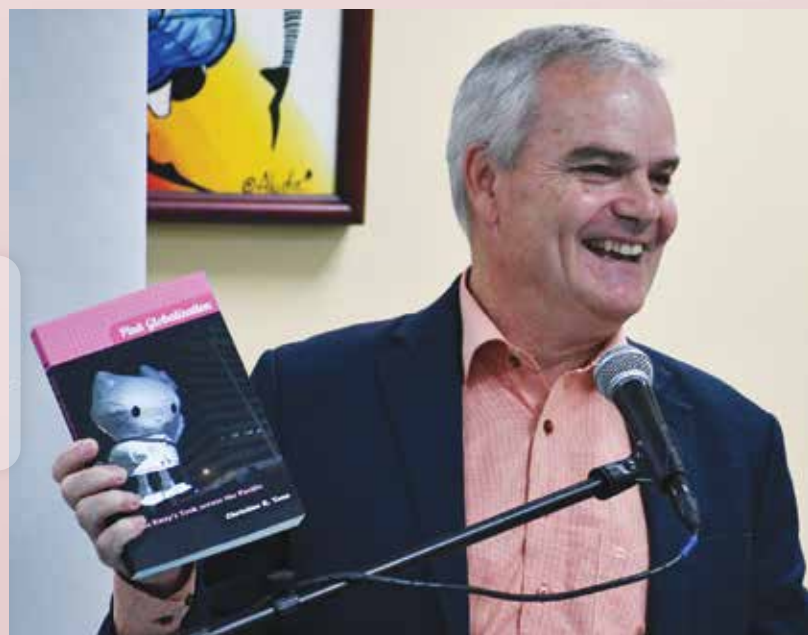
Students wishing to expand their knowledge of Japanese culture now have access to a growing collection of literature, following a donation of books from the **READ JAPAN PROJECT**. The **READ JAPAN PROJECT** is an initiative of the **Nippon Foundation**, a social innovation organisation, and aims to foster an understanding of the country through the donation of books on Japan to universities and libraries around the world.

Ambassador of Japan to Barbados Her Excellency Kayoko Fukushima made the presentation to Principal of Cave Hill campus Professor Clive Landis in the Sidney Martin Library last 12 September.

"Books are very powerful things. And throughout history, there have been attempts to burn books, to destroy them, to destroy collections, [and] to destroy knowledge. And what we have here today is the very opposite. We have a book donation from another culture, from the Embassy of Japan, to help enrich our knowledge base here at the campus, and to enrich our knowledge and understanding of Japan as a country," Landis said.

He also stressed the need for individuals to read widely in order to be better informed on various issues: *"The most important books are those which would be self-critical. We have here a number of books from the Japanese Embassy [which deal with] the nuclear station disaster, what lessons can be learnt; it's speaking about the long stagnation of the economy in Japan and what lessons can be learnt. And that is the sign of a mature democracy, when you can critically assess where things are going wrong and make that decisive step in logic, which will take you forward,"* he stated.

Barbados and Japan established diplomatic relations in 1967, and Ambassador Fukushima pointed to areas in which the Embassy has been strengthening its ties with Barbados, including through culture, sports, and person-to-person exchanges to promote mutual understanding and cooperation.



Professor Clive Landis
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

She added that Cave Hill has been active in promoting bilateral exchanges, and the books will be particularly useful to students who plan to participate in the **Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme**, under which holders of bachelor's degrees are invited to teach English in schools in Tokyo from the elementary to senior high school levels.

*"Against this background, it is very timely that Japanese books arrived at this campus through the **READ JAPAN PROJECT**, which aims at promoting an understanding of Japan through the donation of books to [universities]."*

"I hope these books will provide a wider, clearer and deeper insight of Japan through the educational and cultural activities of The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, thereby contributing to the strengthening of the bilateral relations," she stated.

Ambassador Fukushima told the brief ceremony that she is also looking forward to the observance of **Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year** in 2024.

A similar donation was made to The UWI, Cave Hill Campus in 2019, when the then Japanese Ambassador Teruhiko Shinada presented a collection of books to former principal, Professor Eudine Barriteau, the first such donation made to the campus. ♦

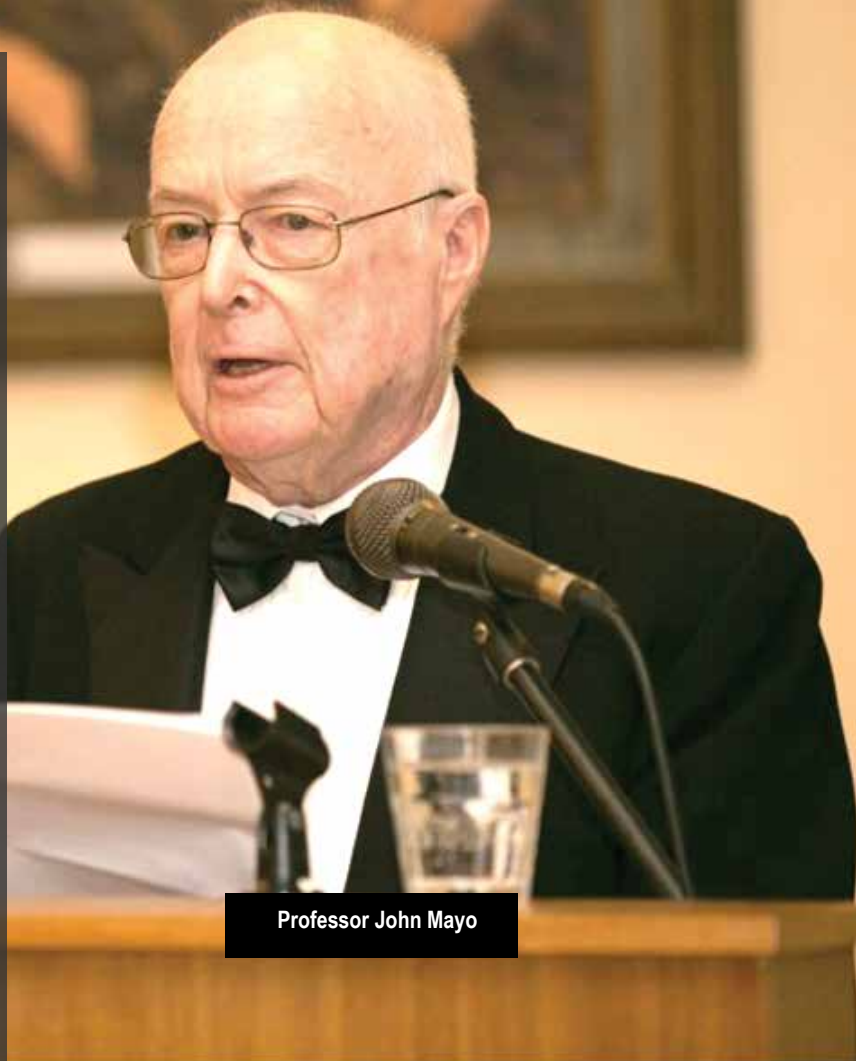


Her Excellency Kayoko Fukushima
Ambassador of Japan to Barbados



Retiree Delighted to Make Historic Donation

Nearly two decades of retirement has not caused John Mayo's love for Cave Hill to wane.



Professor John Mayo

The former Professor of History, who now resides in Australia, reached out with a \$100 000 donation to his former department last August saying it was a delight for him and his wife Mary to make the gift.

It was the single largest donation to the department since its establishment more than half a century ago, and Campus Principal **Professor Clive Landis** said the couple's gesture was humbling.

"The word humble is so overused, it has almost lost its meaning in today's

culture. But when we were made aware of this gesture, I think we all felt humbled. This was really an extraordinarily generous donation and my job is simple, but at the same time, it's hard. Because how do you thank someone for a donation of such a magnitude?" Landis said. *"In our academy, we have a tradition of acclamation and so it is my simple job, on behalf of the Cave Hill campus community to thank John and Mary most sincerely for their donation."*

The donation was acknowledged during a brief virtual ceremony that saw senior campus officials in an early morning



Dr. Henderson Carter
Head, Department of History and Philosophy
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

gathering at Cave Hill while the benefactors were located in an Australian time zone that placed them thirteen and half hours ahead.

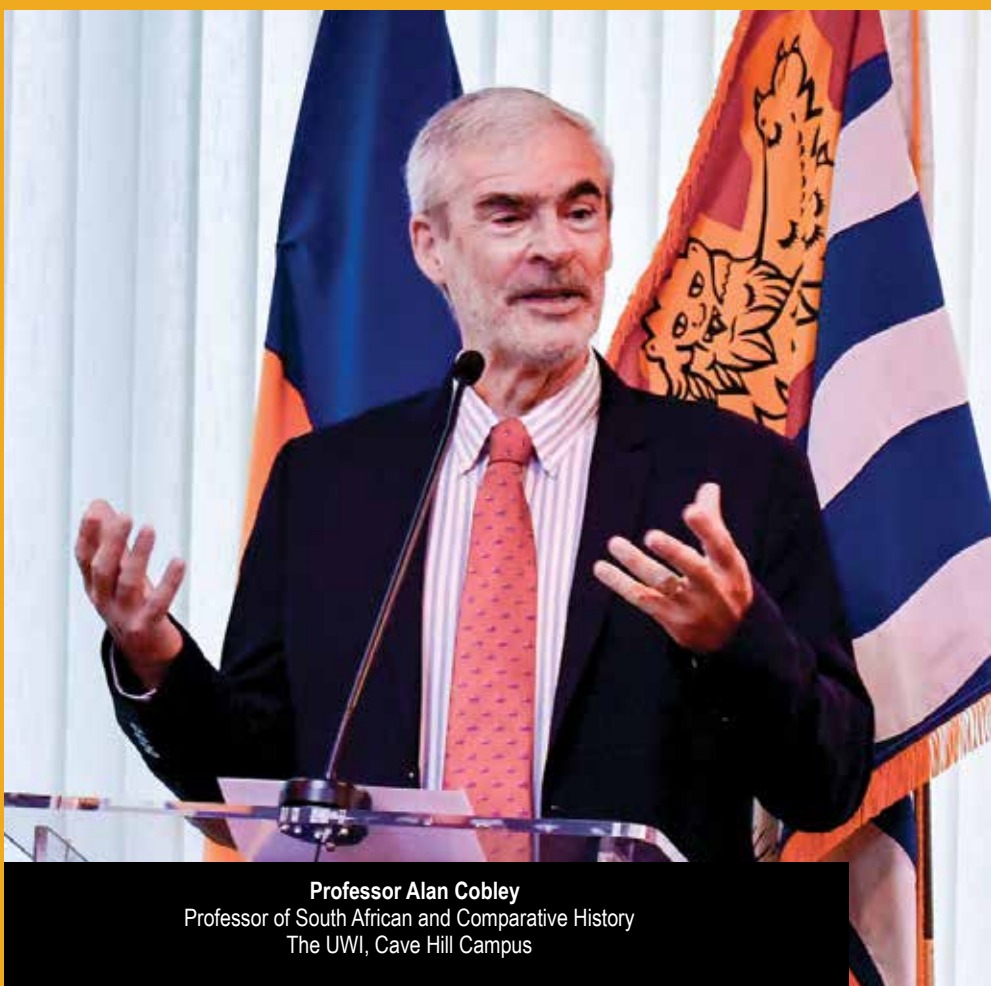
Head of the Department of History and Philosophy **Dr. Henderson Carter** also expressed his thanks to the couple and gave the assurance that the donation will serve to assist student development, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, while popularising the discipline and financing the department's publications.

"I want to thank you, John, for your character and your example of humility. You spent almost 30 good years in our department. And now you are giving back in a tangible way, and we are indeed happy for that donation. I want to say that that donation will help our students in the many endeavours that they will pursue." Dr. Carter shared.

The event was chaired by Professor of History **Alan Cobley** who not only shared fond memories of working with Mayo but also joined in thanking him and his wife for their generosity.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank them again, on behalf of everyone here, for this wonderfully generous donation and to wish them every blessing as they continue this latest chapter in their lives," said Cobley, a former Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education in which the department is located.

Professor Mayo is an Australian-born educator who joined the Department of History at Cave Hill as a lecturer in October 1977 to teach Latin American History. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1993 and became a professor in 2003. He is widely remembered for teaching courses on Latin American and United States History to generations of UWI students at Cave Hill until his retirement in 2005. He returned to Australia where he resides with his wife. ♦



Professor Alan Cobley
Professor of South African and Comparative History
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus





Sport Nutrition Among Specialised Courses from UWI, Rajasthan Royals Pact

Specialised education for budding sport scholars across the globe — This is what lies in store following a landmark partnership between **The University of the West Indies (The UWI)** and India's Royals Sports Group-owned franchise, **Rajasthan Royals** who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for both parties to work together to cocreate the educational courses.

The signing occurred last September when **Jake Lush McCrum**, Rajasthan Royals Chief Executive Officer, visited The UWI, Cave Hill Campus. Dean of The UWI's Faculty of Sport **Dr. Akshai Mansingh** signed on behalf of Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles in the presence of the Faculty's Project Officer, West Indian cricket legend Daren Ganga.

Since the 2020 inception of the **Royals School of Business (RSB)**, its online platform, which offers educational



courses covering 360-degree aspects of the sports industry, the **Indian Premier League** franchise has developed 16 world-class programmes contributing to the development of more than 40,000 scholars and budding present and potential professionals keen on working in the sport industry.

This new alliance will see the cocreation of an **Advanced Sport Nutrition Programme** for young athletes and professionals. The programme aims to help participants better understand the vital role nutrition plays in developing and sustaining an athlete's career. The course will be designed by industry subject matter experts from both entities and will consist of various assignments, assessment tests, and live athlete testimonials to help prepare scholars to excel in sport nutrition.

At the signing ceremony that formalised the agreement, **Dr. Akshai Mansingh** expressed his excitement to partner in delivering UWI courses to a franchise with a fan base much larger than the West Indian population.

He disclosed, *"We were able to bring together the best experts across our many faculties at The UWI to produce high-*

quality programmes, and Advanced Sports Nutrition is hopefully just the start."

He lauded the commitment shown by the franchise in deepening its footprint in the region, noting that scholars have already enrolled in the myriad courses on offer at RSB.

Commenting on the milestone association, the **Chief Executive Officer of Rajasthan Royals** said, *"One of the driving pillars for the Royals School of Business has been the abundant potential for growth that lies within the talent that is either working in or dreams of working in the sports industry. This exciting association with The University of the West Indies comes from the vision of combining the best brains from various parts of the world to create learning modules that impart deep knowledge and live testimonials from professionals to budding individuals. Our presence in the Caribbean, through our franchise group, has certainly helped connect us with one of the best universities in the world, and we are delighted at the prospect of further contributing to the sports education ecosystem together."*

Following the MOU signing, The UWI and the Royals School of Business have been finalising the Advanced Sport Nutrition programme towards its imminent launch.



Dr. Akshai Mansingh, Dean of The UWI's Faculty of Sport and **Jake Lush McCrum**, Chief Executive Officer, Rajasthan Royals, completes the MOU signing.

Sport Facilities Get Major Upgrade

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

A major makeover of two key sporting facilities lies in store for Cave Hill's Blackbirds as the campus rolls out renovations at the **Ryan Brathwaite Track** and the **3Ws Oval** undergoes a substantial upgrade, thanks to significant funding.

Dr. Rudolph Alleyne, Head of Department at the Faculty of Sport said the track upgrades have been on the cards since February 2023. However, hiccups delayed the start of work until last December.

"Careful monitoring of the track revealed extensive wear and tear to the extent we had to patch quite a bit of it," Alleyne stated. "The decision was made that once the 2023 track and field season was over, we would commence the repair work. However, that process is still underway as the extent of the work includes the total removal and replacing of the top layer of the track with new rubber granules."

The ongoing renovations at the **Usain Bolt Sports Complex** aim to extend the lifespan of the track by 10 to 20 years to facilitate future zonal and national sports events.

Simultaneously, the **3Ws Oval** is in line for major improvements as part of a \$50 million loan secured by Barbados from the **African Import-Export Bank** in 2023. This money not only helps to fix up the famous **Kensington Oval** but also provides funds for boosting the facilities of the 3Ws Oval and other cricket grounds to be used for practice matches during this year's **T20 World Cup** in the Caribbean.

As part of the upgrade, the campus is benefitting from a collaboration with **Melbourne Polytechnic** of Australia that is seeking to make cricket pitches and turf management in the region better. Australians **Mark Burchell** and **Stephen Connolly** visited Cave Hill in February to assess the grounds.

Dr. Kevin Grant, Operations Manager at the Faculty of Sport, along with members of the ground staff at Cave Hill, accompanied the visitors on the tour that included turf inspections. The ongoing rehabilitative work on the 3Ws pitch, in preparation for the **International Cricket Council (ICC) T20 World Cup** in June, was a focal point.

Lauding the reconnaissance mission by the Australian pair as a significant step, Deputy Dean of International Partnerships and Business Development at the Faculty of Sport **Amanda Reifer** foresees the Australian collaboration producing outstanding results.

"It is going to revolutionise the sporting industry ... [and] provide jobs [and] opportunities for people to get qualified in the area and effect change in terms of the developmental component of ensuring that our athletes get the best turfs for their own development," she said. ♦

Criminal Justice System Perpetuates Crime

by Carol Williams

One of the region's leading criminologists has charged that remnants of the colonial system continue to permeate the education, police, and correctional system in the Caribbean.

Professor Corin Bailey remains firm in this conviction and says there're resultant implications that prohibit the region from getting a handle on its crime and violence problem, unless serious conversations are held and hard decisions made.

His position is informed by his extensive research and publication on crime and violence in the region, which earned him promotion to the university's highest academic rank in February 2022 when he was named Professor of Sociology, Crime and Social Inequality. The Jamaican-born criminologist currently serves as Director of the **Centre for Criminal Justice and Security** of The University of the West Indies.

In his inaugural professorial lecture titled **"Postcolonial Reflections on the Regional Crime Problem"**, held last October at the Cave Hill campus, he said Caribbean society and culture continue to be significantly affected by its colonial past; and he contended that continued application of colonial-influenced measures of oppression and exclusion was not the answer.

Professor Bailey cited and agreed with studies showing that Caribbean schools reproduce societal inequalities, and he argued that anything that restricts access to education has a significant impact on crime. Using Jamaica as an example, he pointed to the level of education in the public *versus* private school system and the entry requirements that facilitate certain



Professor Corin Bailey
Director, Institute of Criminal Justice and Security, The University of the West Indies

high schools receiving the top performers. He surmised that this system of privilege and structured inequality has resulted in the exclusion of teenagers from poor families, many of whom are intelligent, leading to them being *"trapped in a cycle of intergenerational poverty"* and resorting to a life of crime.

He said the system of policing also breeds contention between law enforcement and the citizenry, particularly involving marginalised communities. The professor took issue with the use of a paramilitary and coercive style of policing and contended that, while this was exported to the colonies by Britain, it was styled after the **Royal Irish Constabulary**. He said this approach is erroneous, much like increasing the size of police forces to tackle crime. In fact, he said there was no strong evidence linking larger police forces with improved crime detection. Rather, such measures foster more resentment among vulnerable groups.

"My belief is that there has been a historical over-reliance on a security-focused approach or what we can call crime suppression, that regional spikes in crime have been traditionally met with harsh policing rather than social approaches to crime prevention and that this has largely been unsuccessful in tackling crime."

"The post-colonial environment has created fragmentation and exclusion. There are large portions of Caribbean society that have and are being failed by structural inequalities that are embedded within institutions that have been handed down to us by imperial powers. These are the sectors that are overrepresented in regional prisons; the ones that inevitably come into contact with the justice system. This is not a coincidence."

Turning to corporal punishment, the academic described this as a *"relic of British colonial and penal policies"* used by slave owners. He said it contravened the **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child** that most countries in the English-speaking Caribbean have signed and was exposing children to social and psychological problems that could lead to future offending. Furthermore, he said, it was not acting as a deterrent or rehabilitation in the prison system given the high rate of recidivism.

"The notion that the harsher the penalty the more positive the impact is an erroneous one. Corporal punishment has long-term negative effects as it relates to violence. Incarceration has long-term negative effects as it relates to crime. If our intention is to prevent crime, then we are doing it wrong. Locking people away and releasing them back into society with no hope of ever becoming a productive member of it again does more to increase crime than anything else."

As an unapologetic advocate of restorative justice, the criminologist suggested the region has hard conversations on these issues. ♦

CERMES SCIENTIST

Joins International Advocacy Initiative

In a significant stride towards advancing environmental dialogue on the global stage, **Dr. David Yawson, Director of the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES)** at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, has been selected as part of the inaugural cohort for the **American Association of Geographer's (AAG's) Elevate the Discipline** programme.

The programme, designed to enhance scholars' capacity to engage with the public on environmental issues, brings together 15 geographers from institutions in the United States and the West Indies. Participants were slated to undergo training in leadership, media skills, and policy strategies, followed by opportunities to connect and advance their work in public discourse.

Dr. Yawson, whose research focuses on agronomic and soft approaches to efficient water, land, and nutrient use in agro-environments, expressed his honour at being selected: *"It's a great privilege to be part of the first cohort of the **AAG Elevate the Discipline** programme. This opportunity will greatly enhance my skills and the CERMES toolbox for engaging different audiences with our research and knowledge on climate and society."*

The overarching theme for the

inaugural training programme is **Climate and Society**, reflecting a dedication to fostering community-oriented, justice-based work on climate change.

Rebecca Lave, AAG's 2023-2024 President and Professor of Geography at **Indiana University Bloomington**, emphasised the significance of supporting scientists engaged in such work, stating, *"We want to open up avenues to value and protect geographers' opportunity to do public and engaged scholarship."*

Elevating Geography in the Climate Dialogue

The programme kicked off in July 2023 and included frequent virtual meetings and a week-long intensive training onsite at the AAG headquarters in Washington, D.C. The AAG will continue to collaborate with participants and their institutions to promote their public scholarship, aiming to highlight the crucial role geography plays

in addressing climate change and critical social issues.

Gary Langham, AAG's Executive Director, underscored the importance of geography in addressing global challenges: *"Geography is essential to understanding and solving the world's most pressing issues. We created **Elevate the Discipline** to help geographers raise the profile of their work, showing how instrumental our discipline is to addressing climate change and critical social issues."*

The participants in this groundbreaking initiative represent a diverse array of practices within the discipline, including hydroclimatology, political ecology, climate and health, disaster geography, geoinformatics, and soil science. As they embark on this transformative journey, they aim to amplify the role of geography in shaping conversations around climate change and societal well-being. ♦

Lindxee Collins Cops Inaugural Art Prize

by Leigh-Ann Worrell

Lindxee Collins, a first-year law student, has emerged as the winner of the inaugural **Arts for Activism—A Youth Art Competition**, a collaborative initiative between the **Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit** and the **World Food Programme (WFP) Caribbean Multi-Country Office**. The competition was organised in commemoration of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**, an international campaign that spans from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

The theme of the competition was **Violence and Vulnerabilities**, focussing on addressing the vulnerabilities that women and girls face during moments of crises and disaster, in alignment with the **World Food Programme's** strategic areas of work. Collins' winning digital art piece, titled **"Not Forgotten"**, poignantly highlights women's vulnerabilities during times of crises while proposing measures to reduce these harms.

During the prize-giving ceremony held last December, 18-year-old Collins shared her thoughts on the pervasive issue of violence against girls and women, emphasising the need to recognise them beyond mere statistics.



"Violence against girls and women is not a foreign issue to our society; unfortunately, it is a problem that has pervaded all our societal institutions, especially for us in the Caribbean region ... It is only when we recognise that girls and women are more than statistics, and when we truly recognise their identity as human beings, worthy of recognition, can this be combatted. It is only when all girls and women and all those who truly wish for the best interests of women and girls firmly unite to advocate in holding individuals, systems and governments accountable, will these vulnerabilities be combatted. I believe that there must further be a caribbeanisation of this movement [against gender-based violence] to see these vulnerabilities in our indigenous countries and so effectively work to fight against them and rise above them," Collins added.



World Food Programme Representative and Country Director **Regis Chapman** (left) presents **Lindxee Collins** with her prize.

Juliette Maughan, Senior Partnerships Officer at WFP Caribbean, underscored the importance of investing in social protection responses to disasters and crises, specifically tailored to protect women and girls from the unique violence they face. She highlighted support pathways, such as offering cash assistance, food, and implementing monitoring systems to capture vulnerable individuals.

Dr. Daniele Bobb, Lecturer at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, expressed gratitude to the **World Food Programme** for their continued collaboration in raising awareness on gender-based violence through the sponsorship of communications and awareness products. She also emphasised the significance of artistic expression in advocacy and social justice, noting that art serves as a powerful tool for inspiring, provoking thought, and fostering dialogue.

"Caribbean women's fight for gender equality and justice is founded on attentiveness to intersections among ethnicity, nationhood, class, gender, economic exploitation, development, global capitalism, and the state, and it embraces a commitment to outreach and activism to better the lives of our women and girls. We are seeing the emergence of young women who develop this consciousness with more accessible forms such as art," Bobb said. ♦

As educators seek ways to prevent students from cheating by using artificial intelligence (AI), a United States-based professor is urging educational institutions in the Caribbean to explore new ways of testing them.

AI Not the Enemy



Technology proponent, **Professor Craig Skilling of Florida International University** said the institutions need to adapt as some students have begun utilising AI to write essays. Essays are a common method of assessment in secondary- and tertiary-level institutions in the region.

Skilling made the comments during the third annual **Science and Technology Festival** held in March 2023 at Cave Hill. The event was hosted by the **Ministry of Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology (MIIST)** in collaboration with the **Faculty of Science and Technology**.

"Don't worry about them [students] cheating on an exam. Stop giving them so many essays to write. Assess them in a different way, in a different modality. Those students can go online and download ChatGPT and have their paper completed in ten seconds. Unless you have the software and the technology to check that, you will not understand what they're doing."

The award-winning educator who serves as Director of Innovation, Technology, Entertainment, and Esports and Associate Professor at **Florida Memorial University** insisted that technological advancements should be embraced and not shunned.



Professor Craig Skilling
Director of Innovation, Technology, Entertainment and Esports at Florida Memorial University

Since its global debut in November 2022, **ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer)** has been the subject of widespread discussion. The Microsoft-backed chatbot can write codes, generate essays, jokes, and perform other functions using human-like language. Developer **Open AI** said it is able to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

Within three months of its introduction, it had over 100 million users, a record adoption rate for technology software. Scientists, AI experts, and global technology leaders, including X (formerly Twitter) Chief Executive Officer **Elon Musk**, have since called for a pause in the technology to allow it to be studied. They also raised fears it could eventually replace humans and remake civilization. In response to privacy concerns, the Italian Government has banned the chatbot.

However, Professor Skilling contended that digital transformation should be embraced as it could position students to become innovators and entrepreneurs and boost overall productivity.

"Let's not be resistant to change. Let's educate ourselves. The tools are there for us. Artificial intelligence is not the enemy; it's just a matter of finding out where it fits within our everyday life and understanding that we can all make a difference within it."

The educator noted rapid changes in technology, such as virtual reality headsets replacing 3D glasses and growing interest in Web3 or Web 3.0. This is an evolved World Wide Web that incorporates AI and blockchain technology.

He spoke of being introduced to the Barbados-developed AI assistant, Patsy, during the festival. If successful, it could perform the same functions as virtual assistants Siri and Alexa.

Prior to the opening ceremony of the festival, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal



Principal **Prof. Clive Landis** (third from right) was among campus representatives who attended the exhibition.

of the campus **Professor Clive Landis** toured the exhibition with the Minister of MIIST **Davidson Ishmael** as well as Deputy Dean and Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry **Dr. Thea Scantlebury-Manning** and Director of Science, Market Research and Innovation in MIIST **Charles Cyrus**.

Addressing the ceremony, **Principal Landis** said the university remained committed to the development of science and technology and Barbados's nascent life sciences sector.

"This would require close partnership with government and industry to expand these sectors purposefully while creating a more conducive environment for innovation in which staff and students can convert their research and ideas into commercially viable products and start-ups."

Interest in the areas of science and technology has been growing on campus. **Dr. Scantlebury-Manning** said since the 2017-2018 academic year, incremental increases have been recorded annually at the undergraduate level. Enrolment reached 1,214 in the 2021-2022 academic year, an all-time high. Over the last five years, registration has climbed by 47%. She attributed the growth to the Science and Technical Festival and other outreach activities.

Ishmael and **Cyrus** also believe the festival has been achieving its objective of stimulating interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The latter praised the collaboration between the ministry and the campus and said initiatives like the festival have contributed to popularising science and technology and promoting a culture of creativity and innovativeness.

"It has always been my view that universities play a critical role as major actors in national innovation systems, and while it's the duty of each country to create its own blueprint for development based on its culture and resources, it's imperative that we all develop a national innovation system to guide policy formulation and allocate scarce resources."

"The system should allow us to develop strategies for scientific research and technology development in public, university, and corporate laboratories and build technical human resources for a knowledge society."

An estimated 65 exhibitors representing nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary learning institutions, and private and public sector entities showcased at the event.

The theme of the festival was **Resilience: Purposeful Innovation for Sustainable Living**. ♦



Nurturing Young Scientific Minds

by Carol Williams

The **Caribbean Science Foundation (CSF)** has played a pivotal role in moulding hundreds of young minds in the areas of science and technology over the past decade. Its efforts continue to bear fruit with a number of its graduates gaining entry into some of the world's top universities and going on to achieve professional success.

It is a labour of love for Interim Executive Director **Professor Cardinal Warde** of **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** who has been a driving force behind the non-profit that was launched in 2010 and is based at the Cave Hill campus.

"All we're trying to do is to help the region move forward with education reform so that people are more competitive in finding jobs here or overseas, and [to help] young students to be competitive if they want to enter the top universities or wherever they want to go," the Professor of Electrical Engineering explained.

Professor Warde, a Barbadian, is an award-winning physicist, entrepreneur, and inventor. He has received numerous accolades, including the **Companion of Honour Award** from the Government of Barbados and an honorary **Doctor of Science** degree from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill.

Professor Warde's vision to foster a culture of science and technology in the region is shared by **Dr. Dinah Sah**, the



Executive Director of the Caribbean Science Foundation, **Prof. Cardinal Warde** (left) and Co-Executive Director **Dr. Dinah Shah**

Co-Executive Director of the CSF, and a business executive.

"The economies in the region are heavily reliant on tourism, and we saw how COVID-19 affected tourism; so science and technology would be a fantastic economic pillar to grow in the Caribbean [to increase resilience]. It can be harnessed for high-tech jobs and to create technology-based companies. We believe that it's critical to promote science and technology through STEM education, hence these

programmes," the biotechnology executive and inventor said.

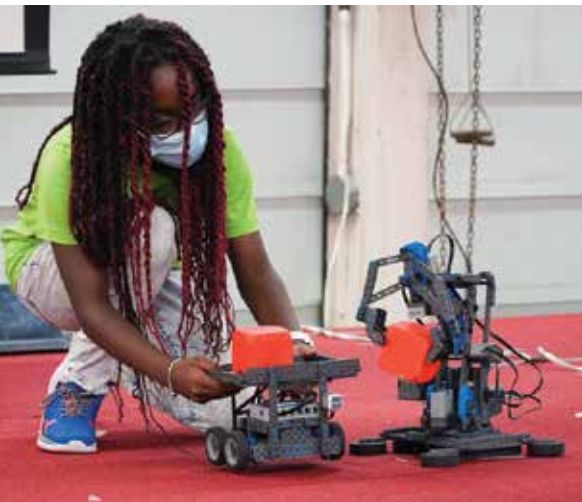
To achieve its vision, the CSF stages four major initiatives annually: the **Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering (SPISE)**, the **Barbados Junior Robotics Camp (BJRC)**, the **Caribbean STEM Olympiads** that were held for the first time in January 2023, and **Computer Coding Workshops**.

In the 2023 edition of its flagship programme, **SPISE**, students from across the region showed they were not only aware of some of the major issues facing the Caribbean but had thought of possible solutions, albeit theoretically. On completion of the five-week programme, the 16 to 18-year-old participants designed businesses centred on climate change, the Sargassum seaweed challenge, clean energy, and non-communicable diseases.

Using what they learnt about entrepreneurship, they presented business



plans involving the utilisation of Sargassum seaweed to develop an eco-friendly alternative to traditional plastics; technology to provide real-time glucose analysis



and delivery of precise measurement of insulin injection into the body when needed; and the installation of technology in the floors at stores that were capable of converting footsteps into electrical energy to power the same businesses.

It was evident in the **Final Project Presentation**, held on 11 August 2023, that the 19 students were not only

taught the rudiments of entrepreneurship but how to think of creative solutions to real-life problems which can require them pivoting, even if that meant adjusting their business model.

During their presentation, the students faced probing and, at times, tough questions from Caribbean-born inventor and entrepreneur **Nicholas Brathwaite**; former **Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados**, **Dr. DeLisle Worrell**, and others. This presented realistic examples of challenges they will likely face as entrepreneurs to secure buy-in

from market players and leaders. Later in the day, the participants presented their capstone projects in the areas of Computer Programming and Electronics.

Overall, it was another successful showing for the CSF that has had 225 students from 17 Caribbean countries graduate from SPISE in the 12 years that it has been staged.

A week after **SPISE** culminated, the CSF hosted the **Barbados Junior Robotics Camps' Students Robotics Showcase**, which featured around 55 youngsters between the ages of 10 and 18.

The **Barbados Junior Robotics Camp** has four levels with each stage progressively more complex. It was a combination of classroom teaching and hands-on building of robots. The CSF explained that the campers were also exposed to confidence-building sessions; and social, communication and conflict-resolution skills.

Their instructors were drawn from The UWI and other universities and colleges in Barbados and overseas. Dr. Dinah Sah described the entire experience as transformative for the students. ♦



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Magical Way to Solve Long-standing Math Performance Problem

by Carol Williams

What could be more mystifying than pulling a rabbit out of a hat? Try calculating large numbers mentally faster than the data can be entered into a calculator.

What hitherto may have seemed an impossible feat was witnessed first-hand by hundreds of students from two dozen schools during the “**Mathemagics**” shows held at the Cave Hill campus last June.

The lightning-fast calculations were just one of the many tricks on show by internationally acclaimed mathematician **Professor Arthur Benjamin** that caused

jaws to drop and eyes to open wide in amazement.

The event was organised by the **Faculty of Science and Technology** with the support of the campus’s **Student Enrolment and Retention Unit** and the **Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training**.

However, the show was not just entertainment, although it delivered that in spades. Its overarching goal was to stimulate interest in mathematics, a subject area plagued by declining interest and poor student performance over the years. At the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) level administered by the **Caribbean Examinations Council**, only 37 per cent of students passed mathematics in 2022.

The declining interest was not reflected



Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, **Dr. Jeanese Badenock** (right) pays keen attention at Professor Benjamin’s lecture.

in what occurred at the 7-8 June event at Cave Hill. From the very start, the Professor of Mathematics at **Harvey Mudd College** in the United States, who is also inaugural holder of the **Smallwood Family Chair**, had students captivated and held their attention for the duration of his performance. Students eagerly volunteered to be on stage, raised their hands to ask questions and used calculators to verify the mathematician's mental calculations.

Professor Benjamin said, *"I think it's important that students see the fun and magical side of mathematics; that's what I present to them. Also, they get to see math presented in a more creative way. They learn different ways to solve problems, [and] I think it's valuable to learn early in your math career that there is more than one way to solve a problem."*

"Math is often taught as a subject that's very rigid and not so creative. But the fact is it really is a beautiful, creative subject that allows for many different problem-solving approaches. Maybe some of these kids have already been turned off by mathematics. If so, I wanted to turn the light switch back on. The point of my show is not for them to see how smart I am, but how smart they can be."

The mathematician explained his decision to combine Mathematics—a



Professor Arthur Benjamin
Professor of Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, USA

subject which many see as daunting—and magic: *"I've always enjoyed entertaining and showing off, and I've also always enjoyed math. When I was in high school, I would perform at magic shows for children's birthday parties. It had nothing to do with math; it was just to make the kids laugh and have fun. Then as I started doing shows for older audiences, my father said I should include some math. He thought that was more impressive than some of the magic tricks I was doing. I said, 'Okay, let's see if they like it', and to my surprise, people really liked it. And so then, I developed a whole show around mathematics and magic, which I call mathemagics."*

Professor Benjamin has appeared several times on **TED Talks**, has authored books on making mathematics easy and

interesting, and is credited as being the only living American with a biography in ***The Great Mental Calculators: The Psychology, Methods, and Lives of Calculating Prodigies, Past and Present***.

Surprisingly, in his 40-year career, he had never performed in the Caribbean, which made Cave Hill a first: *"I've travelled to other countries like Puerto Rico, but this is my first trip performing in the Caribbean."*

Professor Benjamin said the approach taken in the **Mathemagics** shows is simple. The first 20 minutes follow a standard format, and the remaining time is dedicated to answering questions from the audience. He noted the feedback received over the years had been positive, with indications that his shows may be achieving the intended purpose.

"I've heard from people who were turned off by mathematics because they thought it was too hard but said my methods made it easy. There were also some people who thought it was too easy and boring and didn't see the creative, fun side to the subject."

The mathematician said he was deeply appreciative of the opportunity to perform at Cave Hill and thanked The University of the West Indies for hosting him. ♦



Students were captivated by Professor Benjamin's lecture.

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, young trailblazers like Jasmine Greene are reshaping the future.

Transforming Education to Entrepreneurial Vision

by Camille Russell

In 2020, at age 16 and faced with the challenges posed by school closures in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jasmine embarked on a mission to bridge the educational gap by founding an online learning platform named **Private Caribbean Study Goals (PCSG)**, based on a peer-to-peer tuition model for Caribbean students. What started as a response to the immediate needs of

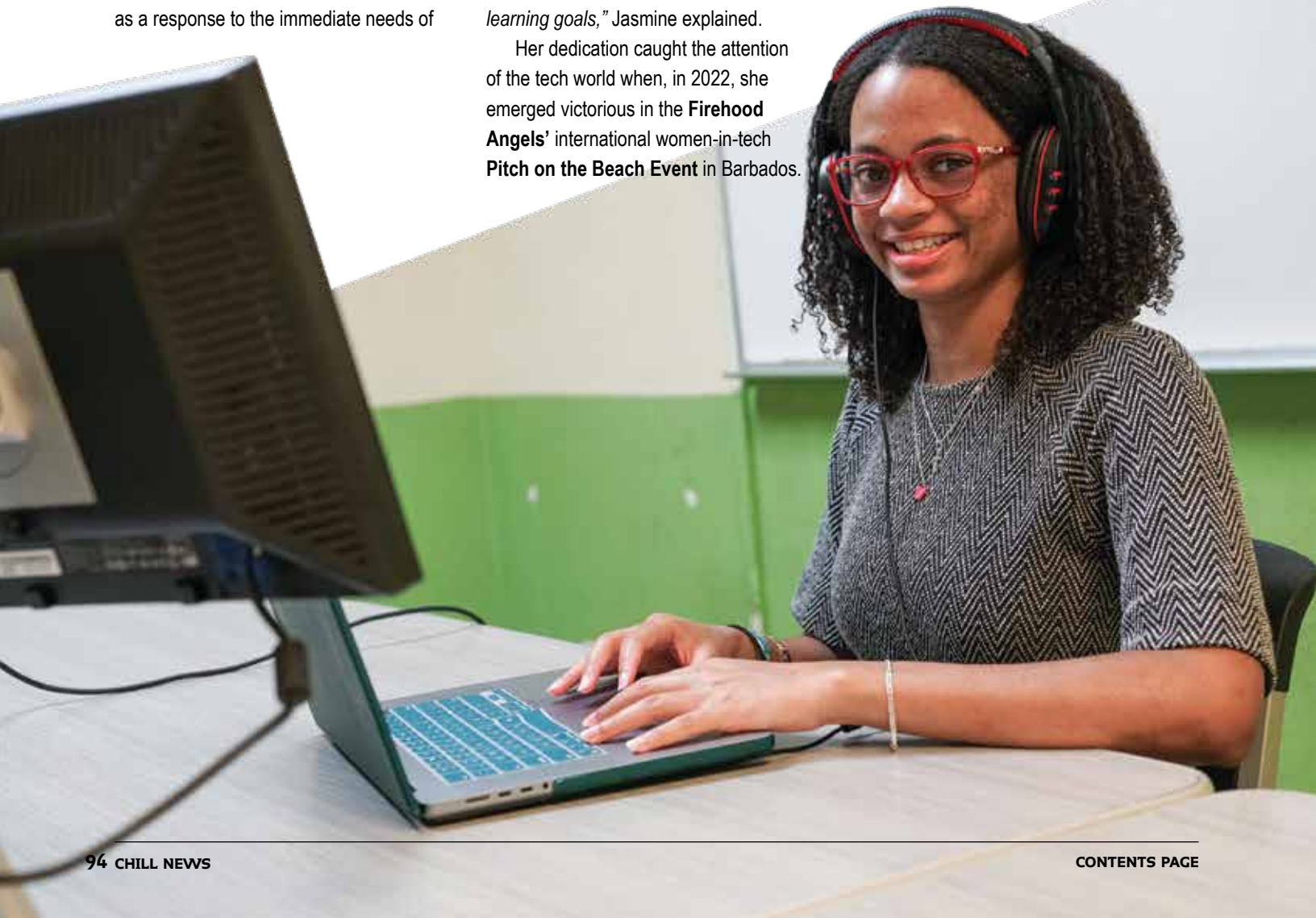
her peers has now evolved into a regional online learning academy, promising to be a global educational enterprise.

"The PCSG platform allows students to share their educational goals and struggles with their fellow Caribbean classmates and study buddies. In addition, it not only seeks to help students prepare for exams but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning goals," Jasmine explained.

Her dedication caught the attention of the tech world when, in 2022, she emerged victorious in the **Firehood Angels' international women-in-tech Pitch on the Beach Event** in Barbados.

With a \$25,000 prize, she set her sights on enhancing PCSG's capabilities and addressing the limitations imposed by the Zoom model.

"With the prize money, we were able to invest in unlimited Zoom to not only facilitate our class demands but to invest in other future plans of PCSG," shared Jasmine.

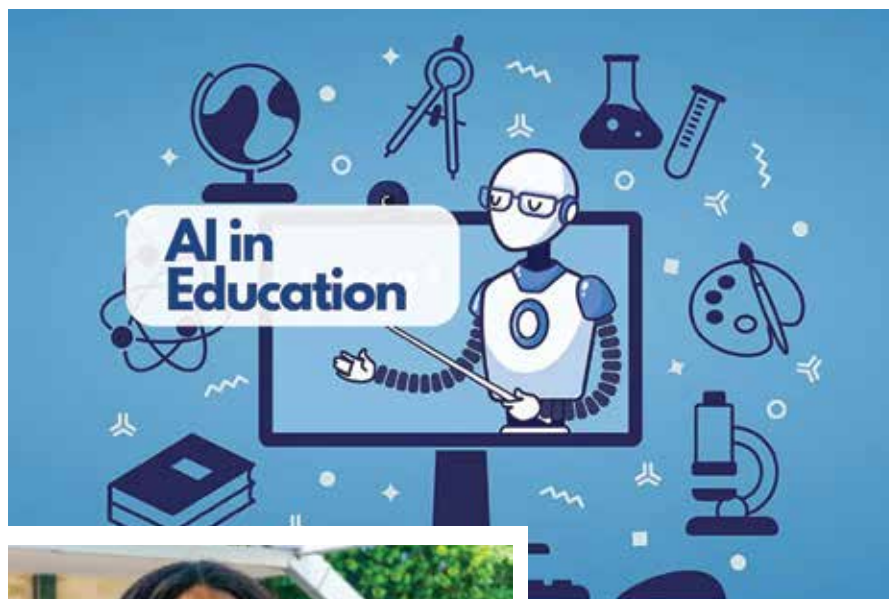


As the success of PCSG grew, so did Jasmine's vision. Currently, she is working on transitioning the online learning platform into a company called Studucate Inc. However, she admits that this evolution has already presented its own set of challenges.

"Not only did the management team have to understand business and financial management, requiring us to enroll in business courses and seek mentorship, but the transition also required formal training for our student-teachers, soon to be known as 'studucators', to enhance their tutoring skills," said Jasmine.

She also shared that Studucate Inc. is not merely a transition but a leap into the future of education. The company is actively exploring innovative approaches, with a notable focus on artificial intelligence (AI).

"We are working on AI that uses the CXC syllabus for a better and more efficient experience for both tutors and students. We are currently in ongoing discussions with CXC to explore an endorsement for the distribution of AI tailored to the CXC syllabus. This collaboration aims to position Studucate Inc. as a premier student-experience company not only in the Caribbean but globally," Jasmine revealed.



Jasmine Greene
Founder of Private Caribbean Study Goals (PCSG)

The student-entrepreneur also expressed her commitment to keeping the platform at the forefront of educational advancements, constantly researching and exploring new technologies that can enhance the learning and studying experience.

Currently, success at PCSG transcends grades. With a 100% pass rate and exceptional performance in various subjects, the metrics used showcase the positive impact of this transition, a trend Jasmine believes will continue with Studucate Inc.

While the transition from PCSG to Studucate Inc. is gradual, Jasmine is keen on being strategic. Starting with mathematics and English as the core subjects, the company plans to expand its offerings to

cover a broader range of CXC subjects.

"This is to ensure an efficient and effective learning experience for the entire community," she explains.

As Jasmine Greene reflects on her entrepreneurial journey, she expresses gratitude to God, her family, and friends for the support she received. Enrolled at The UWI from 2022 to pursue a BSc in Computer Science with Electronics, she has temporarily taken a semester break to nurture her

dream of transforming the online learning academy of PCSG into a global education powerhouse.

Her entrepreneurial spirit, dedication, and vision are bound to leave a lasting impression on the future of education. In Jasmine's words, *"PCSG and eventually Studucate Inc. will not just be a company but a community of support, learning, and the collective pursuit of knowledge among students across the region and eventually the world."* ♦

AI

Can Make Regional Sport More Competitive

The jury is still out on the full implications of artificial intelligence (AI); and it is for this reason that Deputy Dean in The UWI's Faculty of Sport **Amanda Reifer** thinks deeper discussions are warranted on the technology, though she believes it is a game-changer for those involved in sport.



Amanda Reifer

Deputy Dean, International Partnerships and Business Development,
Faculty of Sport, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Reifer said the fast-moving, fast-learning AI had become virtually impossible to ignore and had major implications for how business was being conducted in the areas of data analysis, equipment design, fan engagement, officiating and sport broadcasting.

Her comments were made during

her presentation on the topic “**Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Sport**”, the fourth installation in Cave Hill’s 60th Anniversary Legacy Lecture Series held last June.

The sport administrator described data as king and said the ability to analyse related statistics and other information in real time, in addition to the provision of critical insight, could be immensely

beneficial to athletes and coaches.

"[If] player performance data can be analysed in real time, you can imagine the impact [that would have on] coaches being able to make better decisions in strategising, and this gives them a competitive edge. [This] isn't done right now in the way it needs to [be done] in the Caribbean, but this is where we need to go."

The Deputy Dean outlined some of the many benefits of the technology but said there were also downsides.

She noted warnings from American tech giant Elon Musk and other big names in the global technology industry about the potential harm of AI if it is not effectively controlled and managed. She predicted the billion-dollar, sport-betting industry would not escape unscathed as people placing bets could do with the assistance of AI, and some athletes could also use it unethically and likely escape detection because of AI's vast capacity to learn.

Despite these issues, Reifer cautioned the Caribbean against being left behind in the AI race and suggested it be introduced responsibly. Concomitantly, she said there also should be a push for more research and development. She said her faculty was already holding discussions on the technology and how it can be utilised in some of its academic programmes.



Amanda Reifer, Deputy Dean, International Partnerships and Business Development, Faculty of Sport; and **Haydn Gill**, Daily Editor, The Nation Publishing Co. Ltd.

"We need to sound the alarm that these conversations have to be had now if we are going to attempt to regulate, far less, try to control this beast that has been unleashed on the world. In the Caribbean, we always talk about levelling the playing field ... and I always like to look at the glass as half-full, so I'm very optimistic. If we invest and get on the AI train early, we could compete; but I don't believe we will have a level playing field ..."

"From a sport perspective, we can look at AI-powered sport analytics programmes, and we can incorporate those into our programmes; all the wearable technology we can use and the AI-powered fan engagement tools."

According to the sport administrator, with the world becoming more interconnected and technological advancements occurring at an unprecedented pace, the Caribbean needed to stay ahead of the curve rather than being content with past glories. ♦





From left: **Dr. Halimah DeShong**, Head of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS): Nita Barrow Unit; **Emerita Professor, the Most Honourable Eudine Barriteau**, feminist activist and former Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus; and **Dr. Tonya Haynes**, Lecturer, IGDS

Professor Barriteau Honoured by Gender Unit

Retired educator Emerita Professor the Most Honourable V. Eudine Barriteau has added to her list of stellar accomplishments when the unit through which she became renowned honoured her for her pioneering activism.

The feminist scholar, activist and regionalist who served as principal of two University of the West Indies campuses – Cave Hill and The Open Campus (now The UWI Global Campus) - received the accolade from the **Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit (IGDS: NBU)** which celebrated her last June.

Professor Barriteau headed the Centre for Gender and Development Studies that transitioned into the IGDS: NBU from

1993 to 2008. She was instrumental in institutionalising the **Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development (CIGAD)**, which she also chaired for several years. CIGAD is the unit's flagship outreach programme.

Current Head and Senior Lecturer of the IGDS: NBU **Dr. Halimah DeShong** presented the former principal with her award during the opening ceremony of the 15th CIGAD held on 30 June 2023. Dr. DeShong credited the feminist activist with steering the institute on a path that has seen it become the premier regional training programme for gender and development and gender analysis.

"Your insistence that such training should be grounded in feminist analysis, a Caribbean feminist intellectual tradition, and in experiential learning has stood the test of time so much so that for many professionals working in the field of gender and development in the Caribbean, a single gender analysis qualification is the CIGAD certification and the rigour it provides."

Although the former principal has



Dr. Halimah DeShong
Head, Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit

received numerous awards and honours, among them the **Order of Freedom of Barbados** and **The Order of Grenada Gold Award for Excellence**, she said this latest award was special as the IGDS: NBU had served as her intellectual, scholarly, and activist home for 15 years.

"I am overjoyed that all the planning we undertook in 1993 to establish this intensive training programme has paid off so abundantly. I am also so very pleased and proud of the leadership over the years which has taken us to today."



**Emerita Professor
the Most Hon. Eudine Barriteau**
feminist activist and former Principal of
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

The professor of gender and public policy recognised contributions made by current and past heads towards the enrichment, expansion and continuous upgrade of the curriculum. She said they accomplished this while staying true to the unit's philosophy.

"Working with a diasporic team of national, regional, and international activists and scholars, the NBU continues to ensure that The University of the West Indies offers knowledge and training on exposing and seeking to correct the

material and ideological aberrations flowing from the nexus of power and multiple, intersecting inequalities. Whether these inequalities arise in unequal relations of gender or other manifestations of social injustices, the IGDS has been addressing these through sharpening and creating new tools of gender analysis, offering advocacy and undertaking activism. They have been doing this while maintaining the highest standards of scholarly excellence in feminist studies."

Professor Barriteau expressed hope that graduate students would document and analyse the work that she and others did: *"I was honoured to serve The University of the West Indies and the region by being involved in creating and institutionalising this intensive training programme. Over the years, I have gained tremendous satisfaction in observing the contributions made by those who have completed this training."*

Over 500 graduates have been trained by CIGAD. In its 2023 instalment, 28 participants were drawn from Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada,

Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Several institutions support the programme, including **the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** and **UN Women**.

Representative of the UN Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean **Tonni Brodber** said the institute continued to play a pivotal role in helping to correct misunderstandings, even in the news media, about gender equality and women's empowerment.

She urged participants: *"Claim your space; be proud of what brought you to this space; acknowledge who created opportunities for you to be there, and while there, make space for others. That is the legacy of Professor Barriteau [and] that is the legacy of others."*

Gender Specialist at the CDB, **Dr. Maria Ziegler** said the training provided by CIGAD was important to transforming lives, and she underscored the value of learning the techniques necessary to improve policymaking that relate to gender-sensitive issues. ♦



Emerita Professor the Most Hon. Eudine Barriteau (seated, centre)
with the 2023 CIGAD cohort, staff and partners of the IGDS.

Patrick Foster

Recognised for Outstanding Achievement



Patricia Warner (sister of Earl Warner) presenting lifetime achievement award to **Patrick Foster**

It had been years since Patrick Michael Foster performed theatrically on stage. But he was back in the limelight during the **Earl Warner Memorial Lecture** last November, and it was like he never left.

His abbreviated versions of *Send in the Clowns* and *The Best of Times* were his way of saying thanks *via* song to the theatre, those who have helped him along his decades-long journey, and to The University of the West Indies.

Minutes earlier, Foster had been presented with the **Earl Warner Trust 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award** much to the delight of the scores of creatives, well-wishers, and others in attendance at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination. The event was organised by the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts in collaboration with the charitable non-profit **Earl Warner Trust (Barbados)**.

All who addressed the 14 November event spoke glowingly of Foster, a celebrated actor, director, producer, playwright, novelist, set and costume designer, and visual artist. He was born in Guyana, attended acting school in England, and has called Barbados home since 1976.





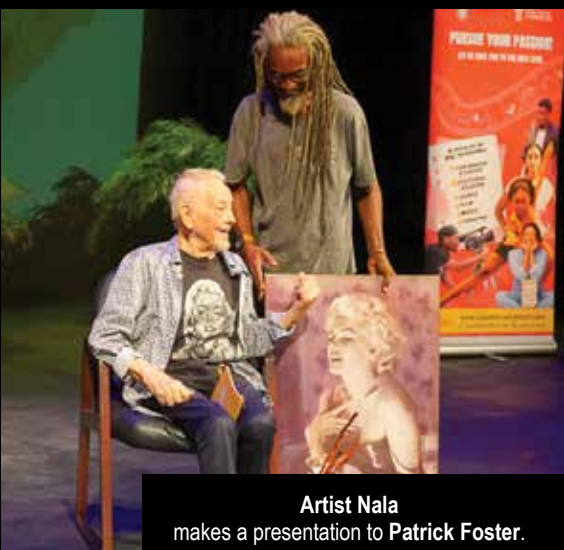
Lisa Amanda Cumberbatch delivered remarks on behalf of Karen Ford-Warner, widow of Earl Warner.



Guest Speaker **Denis Foster** cousin of Patrick Foster

me he can sing and dance too! And like Sir Garry, he has stamina. He has been a class act for five decades."

The scroll presented by the Trust stated in part, "*Patrick is an artist whose whole energy is clearly in the work. From production to exhibition and back again, with a host of other interests thrown in and a lot of hard slogging away. He is fun to work with and a little bit magical too. We say thanks for his tutelage and inspiration to so many others – students, artists, and audiences alike.*"



Artist Nala makes a presentation to **Patrick Foster**.

over 25 theatrical productions, at least 10 docudramas and movies, and painted numerous riveting paintings. Several of these paintings were on display during the event.

Foster admitted his bias as he summed up his cousin's contribution this way: "... *Patrick is the Sir Garry Sobers of the arts in Barbados. His all-round ability is matched by no other Barbadian. He is a producer, director, actor, set and costume designer, and playwright. He is a novelist and a recognised artist, and by the way, he tells*

Following the ceremony, the honouree said he was "*absolutely floored*" by the comparison to Sir Garfield. While he said he has been focused on directing in recent years and remains guided by his love of the arts, he said he would love to act again before he leaves this mortal world.

In remarks read by Lisa Cumberbatch on behalf of the widow of Earl Warner, Karen Ford-Warner, the honouree was described as witty and possessing a myriad of undeniable artistic talents that have been displayed over the decades.

Head of the Department of Creative and Performing Arts **Andrew Millington** said the contributions of Foster and the late Warner offer guidance that could help young artists claim their identity and articulate what it means to practise their craft within a creative economy.

In his tribute, **Denis Patrick Foster** said his cousin once referred to himself as an actor who could paint. Over 46 years, the celebrated Foster acted in





Jones Awarded for Exemplary Tourism Service

by Camille Russell

Sylvia Jones
Housekeeping Supervisor
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

When **Sylvia Jones** started her career in housekeeping, she considered it to be another opportunity to follow her life's mantra of "service to others". Now over 20 years later, she has been recognised not only by those she works with but by the Government of Barbados for her contribution to the island's hospitality and tourism industry. The housekeeper of the Frank Worrell Hall of Residence at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus was one of five women awarded the **Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc's (BTMI's) 2023 Woman in Tourism Award** for her contribution to the growth of the tourism industry over the years. The other awardees were: Angela Garraway, Carmeta Burrowes, Shontelle Edwards and Janice Clarke.

From the time Jones began her service to the university as a housekeeper in 1997,

she has always striven to make resident students feel at home, often befriending and encouraging them to excel at their studies. Such an attitude accords with Campus Principal **Professor Clive Landis's** often espoused belief that international students are *de facto* long-stay visitors.

She also shared that she feels a sense of pride whenever the residents inform her about how their studies are going: "*Not only do I like to make the students feel at home but it's important to me to encourage them to do well. I feel really proud of them and for them when I hear about their accomplishments.*"

I know how hard it can be for young people to leave the familiarity of their homes and move to a foreign country, especially for the new students. That is why I always make it a point to make them feel as comfortable as possible, so that even though they are in a different country, they still feel a sense of home," Jones said.

Department Head of Student Accommodation, Halls of Residence, **Ms. Diana Bryan**, who officially nominated Sylvia for the award, praised her for her sterling service and exceptional attitude.

"Sylvia is a rare find. She has been and is a great member of the Frank Worrell Hall team. Not only has her work been exceptional but she has a way of making everyone around her feel at ease. She is very deserving of this award which recognises her in this way," Bryan said.

Coordinator of Cave Hill's tourism graduate programmes **Dr. Sherma Roberts**, who has served on industry advisory bodies, also added her kudos to Sylvia on her achievement.



Diana Bryan
Halls Administrator
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus



Dr. Sherma Roberts
Coordinator, Tourism Graduate Programme
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

"Congratulations to one of our own on this significant achievement. Quite often, those rendering the service on which tourism is built are often overlooked. However, on this occasion, the contribution of women to the industry is being lauded, and it is great to have one of our own recognised in this way," Dr. Roberts said.

The **Woman in Tourism Award** is an initiative of the BTMI's **#EmbracingEquality** campaign that started in 2022 to recognise women who are making an impact in the tourism industry and their community. The awardees are nominated and subsequently chosen based on specific criteria and via a judging panel.

According to representative of the

BTMI **Ms. Rhe-Ann Prescod**, in 2023 the BTMI once again set out to celebrate women in tourism by launching a call for the people of Barbados and international markets to nominate their favourite tourism 'superwomen'.

"The objective was to highlight five women who are making a positive impact within Barbados's tourism industry. This year, we mainly highlighted women in non-managerial roles who are instrumental in the industry. Each woman that won received special prizes handed to them personally by the Minister of Tourism and International Transport, the Honourable Ian Gooding-Edghill," Prescod said.

The BTMI representative also shared that the objective of the award is to recognise women in the industry who work assiduously but are often overlooked.

"The award is to uplift and show appreciation to the women in tourism who work tirelessly to make this industry a success. We want these women to feel rewarded and know that their work does not go unnoticed. Each year, we will continue to show appreciation and celebrate all the women in tourism." ♦



Five More Earn PROFESSORIAL STATUS

A special education expert who continues to blaze the trail in her field was among five Cave Hill academics joining the professorial ranks at The University of the West Indies. **Dr. Stacey Blackman** earned the accolade last October along with fellow scholars in electrochemistry, law, music, and medicine.

Each of the newly appointed professors brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to their respective fields, contributing to the university's reputation as a hub of intellectual growth. Their diverse expertise spans various disciplines, enriching the academic environment for both students and fellow faculty members.



**Professor of
Inclusive Education
and Disability Studies**

**Dr. Stacey
Blackman,**

a seasoned scholar in the field of special (needs) education, has been a cornerstone of the university's academic landscape. An educator at the School of Education in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at Cave Hill, she has served as Discipline Coordinator of the BEd Special Education and MEd Inclusive Practices as well as the Coordinator of both the Associate Degree and Bachelor of Education programmes. Her groundbreaking research, coupled with a passion for teaching, has left an indelible mark on both students and colleagues alike.



**Professor of
Supramolecular Chemistry
and Nanotechnology**

**Dr. Avril
Williams**

is a respected expert in electrochemistry who has consistently demonstrated a commitment to academic rigour and intellectual curiosity. Her research is tailored to the design and development of sensors for real-time field monitoring using self-recognising molecules that can be controlled at the atomic level. This work has offered invaluable knowledge advancements in the creation of new, smart electrode materials for sensors; novel electrochemical sensing; signalling techniques; wireless or bipolar electrochemiluminescence signal transduction methods; and biosensors for disease biomarkers, all having significant relevance to poorer countries where testing and analysis resources are minimal or nonexistent and oftentimes expensive and time-consuming.



Professor of Music Dr. David Akombo

is an internationally recognised educator, researcher and scholar in the fields of music education and interdisciplinary research in the arts and health, has consistently demonstrated a commitment to academic rigour and intellectual curiosity. Professor Akombo's eclectic research interests include Music Education, Ethnomusicology, Community Music, Comprehensive Musicianship, Music and Cognition, Music Technology, Psychology of Music, and interdisciplinary Music and Biomedical Sciences. He is the author of 14 books and book chapters, over 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and encyclopaedic entries published in *The SAGE International Encyclopaedia of Music and Culture* and *Encyclopaedia of Society and Culture in the Ancient World*. He has also produced several non-refereed publications.



Professor of International Law and Regional Integration Law

Dr. David Berry,

a prominent expert in those fields, has demonstrated unwavering dedication to both research and teaching throughout his tenure at the university. Professor Berry practises in various areas of international law. He is currently serving as a Key Legal Expert with **CARICOM's Consultancy for the Review of Caribbean Community Institutions**, as an Expert and member of the **CARICOM Regional Advisory Group on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction**, and as an arbitrator in an **International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes**. His peer-reviewed publications include eight journal articles, one independently authored monograph, one co-edited book, nine book chapters, and three technical papers. He has also published four non-refereed journal articles and three book chapters and has been invited to make over 80 academic presentations. His book *Caribbean Integration Law* (Oxford University Press, 2014) was widely cited in academic circles and before the **Caribbean Court of Justice**. His innovative approaches to pedagogy and commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge have positioned him as a leader in his field.



Professor of Family Medicine Dr. O. Peter Adams,

former University Medical Dean and Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Cave Hill Campus, is lauded for his world-class clinical research addressing primary healthcare issues. His focus includes chronic non-communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections, notably through the **Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network (ECHORN)**, which gained international acclaim. Collaborating with **Yale University**, his research earned recognition and over \$1.8M in grants. He is renowned for introducing web conferencing technology into medical education in 2006, thereby facilitating medical teaching to the Eastern Caribbean. Prof. Adams' contributions span publications, conference presentations, and leadership roles, notably ensuring re-accreditation of medical programmes at The UWI.

The diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise represented by the five newest professors exemplify the commitment of the campus, and by extension the university, to fostering a rich and vibrant academic community. Their achievement is a cause for celebration and pride. Their elevation not only acknowledges their outstanding achievements but also underscores the institution's unwavering commitment to recognising excellence. ♦



Professor Avril Williams
Head, Department of Biological
and Chemical Sciences
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

SCIENCE Honour Roll

Ever wondered which biological and chemical scientists at Cave Hill Campus received The UWI's highest academic recognition? Then look no further than a recently established wall of honour that has been created to acknowledge them.

The so named **Professorial Wall** which features portraits of the honorees was unveiled by the **Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences** to pay tribute to its retired professors. The unveiling took place during a week of activities held by the Faculty of Science and Technology last October to mark its 39th year of existence.

Head of the department **Professor Avril Williams** expressed her delight at the initiative, stating it will serve as a lasting

reminder of their contributions to that department and to the field of science.

"These professors have shaped the minds of countless students, and their contributions to the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, the Faculty of Science and Technology, the Cave Hill campus, The University of the West Indies and to the field of science as a whole are immeasurable. For 75 years, our university has been a centre of excellence in education and research in the region, and our faculty has played a leading role in that success for 39 years," Williams said.

She also offered special appreciation to past and present professors in the faculty for their dedication: *"You have inspired and mentored generations of students to pursue their passions and to make a difference in the world. Your ground-breaking research activities have advanced our understanding of how the world works and have contributed to solutions that have redounded to the benefit of Barbados, the*

region and, dare I say, the world. You have made a difference in the lives of countless students and colleagues."

The wall is the brainchild of Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry **Dr. Angela Alleyne** who has been reflecting on the contribution of the past professors.

She noted, *"It is important that we acknowledge those who have gone before us and laid the groundwork for where we are today. We are standing on their shoulders."*

Alleyne anticipates that many more portraits will be added to what she called a *"living project"* as other scientists join the professorial ranks.

The wall currently features professors Oliver Headley BSc (UWI), PhD (UCL), Prof. of Chemistry; Wayne Hunte BSc, PhD (UWI), Prof. of Ecology & Environmental Sciences; George "Ted" Mathison BSc (Bristol), PhD (Nottm.), Emeritus Prof. of Biology; C. M. Sean Carrington BSc (Edin.), DPhil (York-UK), Emeritus Prof. of Plant Biology; Leonard O'Garro BSc, PhD (UWI), Prof. of Plant Pathology; Julia Horrocks BSc (Reading), PhD (UWI), Prof. of Conservation Ecology; Winston Tinto BSc, PhD (UWI), CSci, CChem, FRSC, Prof. of Organic Chemistry; and Mark Lavoie BSc, MSc, PhD (Montreal), Prof. of Microbiology. ♦

Scathing Assessment of Constitutional Reform Within Region

Regional expert on constitutional governance and politics, Professor Cynthia Barrow-Giles has delivered a damning assessment of the overall reform process in the Caribbean.

In her inaugural professorial lecture entitled **“Constitutional Reform in the Commonwealth Caribbean: Some Insights, Compromises and Possibilities”** delivered in March 2023, The UWI, Cave Hill academic said while there was general agreement that constitutions ought to be adjusted as societies evolve, the process to bring about the required changes was flawed.

She critiqued the selection processes of some of the Constitutional Reform Commissions (CRCs) and stated there was a need to properly consider their leadership, the strictures under which they operate, and to ensure they were genuinely representative of the wider society.

In some instances, she argued, constitutional reform was imposed by international organisations and Western governments, pointing to Guyana in 2000 as an example.

Six of the post-2000 constitutional review processes in the Caribbean had stalled or failed and only two were successful, according to Professor Barrow-Giles, a Distinguished Senior Fellow attached to the Constitutional Studies Program at the **University of Texas**. She said there were lessons to be learnt from those stalled and failed processes and agreed with the former chair of the Belize 1999 Political Reform Commission, **Dr. Dylan Vernon**, that *“it ought not to be driven by the single issue of removing the monarchy from our existing political order”*.



Both St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada have made unsuccessful attempts to amend their constitutions in recent years.

In fact, Professor Barrow-Giles said very little change had taken place since she wrote a paper in 2010 titled **“Regional Trends in Constitutional Developments in the Commonwealth Caribbean”** that explored constitutional re-engineering in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The paper was one of her many publications. She has authored, co-authored and co-edited several books, and book chapters, and published in peer-reviewed journals about democracy and elections.

An award winner of two of The UWI's highest distinctions—the **Vice-Chancellor's Award** and Cave Hill's **Principal's Award for Excellence**—both for public service, the expert has been part of election observer missions to countries in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia.

The professor is a former member of St Lucia's Constitutional Reform Commission, advisor to Barbados's **Republican Status Transition Advisory Committee** and currently serves as Secretary to the Constitutional Reform Commission in Barbados.

She stated that most countries in the Caribbean have maintained high levels of civil liberties, political rights, and peaceful transitions during periods of regime change. However, Professor Barrow-Giles was critical of the lack of positive response by many Caribbean governments to CRC reports.

“I now, unfortunately, have drawn the conclusion that the process and outcome of Caribbean constitutional reform are not buttressed by big visions and the need to transform relations. They are not necessarily processes that aim for remaking our constitutional fabric, and they are not always even processes that aim for obvious amendments that present themselves time and time again, nor are the processes always defined by



Professor Cynthia Barrow-Giles
and moderator **Dr. Tennyson Joseph**,
former Senior Lecturer in Political Science

substantive discussions of critical issues. If anything, I would say that some processes are marked by too many limitations and narrow elite and politically controlled objectives of the post-colonial political elites.”

She said she was heartened by attempts to have ordinary citizens be central to the process in some countries even though some governments remained wary due to the perceived political risks, particularly in cases where referendums were mandated.

“Often reform that is necessary can be killed by the referendum which has led some critics to describe the referendum as an ‘odious mockery’ and handcuffs that shackle. Others contend that on closer inspection, the referendum should be maintained given our understanding of the democratic principle. It is, too, part of the amending procedure in most Caribbean jurisdictions, and therefore, binding on a government seeking major revision or dismemberment of the constitution, and that is, of course, critical to legal constitutionalism,” she said.

And while the expert encouraged bipartisanship, she also issued words of caution: *“It is not a panacea for success as St. Vincent and the Grenadines clearly shows. It has not always been consistent and especially so at the tail end of the process. So, while it is useful to be cautiously optimistic that toning down the adversarial nature of Westminster politics in the context of much-needed constitutional reform is healthy and good, our history has shown that it can die a rather quick but painful death.*

“The fact is we cannot continue to be scrupulous observers and retainers of the present governance arrangements when reform is required. Indeed, ring-fencing the system is not in the best interest of the nation. For the most part, this is what has occurred; and history will repeat itself if we are not fearless, if the public does not vigorously voice its disquiet with the present circumstance, and if the political elite does not see the value of reform.”



Turning her attention to the matter of no-confidence motions, Professor Barrow-Giles described the approach taken by some governments as deeply flawed and said the process was a caricature of the Westminster system of governance. As examples, she pointed to St. Kitts and Nevis where there was a prolonged dispute over a no-confidence motion and questions of the illegitimacy of the Government, a similar occurrence in 2012 in Grenada under then Prime Minister Tillman Thomas and in Guyana in 2018.

In contrast, she said Britain amended its constitution to fix the term of office of the parliament and to provide for dissolution under the conditions of a no-confidence motion in the Government and when a two-thirds majority in parliament agreed it was in the best interest of the nation to take such action.

"The time has certainly come for the Caribbean to do likewise and to prevent such undemocratic tendencies. If we fail to deal decisively with such matters during this constitutional moment offered to us by the revisiting of our constitutions, which is triggered primarily by the transition of Barbados to a Republic, the reparations narrative, the declining interest in the British sovereign, Windrush and its fallout, we will continue to face the potential threat of despotic power."

She stated that there was a need to have "the necessary checks on the political elite that would stay their inclination towards dictatorial behaviour". She went on to suggest,

"We need to insert into our Constitution some minimalist restraints on this too powerful individual [Prime Minister]. We need these constitutional guarantees. These will not unduly fetter a Prime Minister but will serve to build into the system the kinds of ex-post behavioural mechanisms that are shockingly absent in constitutions which are, after all, not first-generation Westminster constitutions but second-generation."

Professor Barrow-Giles said what currently exists is an exclusive electoral system that hurts the opposition and citizens, one in which the votes of all citizens do not count for the same.

"For the most part, based on experience and observation of the double standards, partisan-driven public pronouncements, and often legal instruments, I argue that in the absence of constitutional certainties, we cannot be assured that the political class will do the right thing at all times and not resort to political expediency. I believe that the political class is motivated primarily by self-interest, and for that reason, I prefer to speak of constitutional guarantees that will guillotine attempts to manipulate the parliament for instance. I prefer to leave little to the capriciousness of that class and opt instead for certainties."

"Equally important is the need to include the political opposition even though such inclusion is not undergirded by any intrinsic belief in bipartisanship, because such bipartisanship is clearly a mechanism inbuilt into the constitution for securing constitutional change except where, of course, there is not a requirement for a referendum. Where this is absent in the final outcome of our constitutional rebuilding efforts, we are merely doomed to a repeat of the all-too-familiar path of abuses and dysfunctionalities." ♦

Distinction Between Prime Ministerial Power and Authority

Former Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. Keith Mitchell has laid out his blueprint to help guide anyone aspiring to reach the highest elected political office and others already serving in the position.

He has suggested that they should not only command both prime ministerial authority and prime ministerial power to govern effectively, but also learn how to motivate others to work towards a common goal and lead from the front when necessary. The current Opposition Leader in Grenada was presenting on the topic, "Reflections on the Role of Prime Ministerial Power and Authority in Regional and International Spaces" during the 18th Patrick A. M. Emmanuel Memorial Lecture, last November.

Dr. Keith Mitchell
Former Prime Minister of Grenada

The Grenadian is one of the few prime ministers in the Caribbean to win all seats in three general elections, having done so in 1999, 2013 and 2018. During his political career which spans four decades, he led his party to five general election victories.

Dr. Mitchell differentiated prime ministerial power from prime ministerial authority. The former referred to the authority granted in the constitution to the head of government to exercise control and influence over the Cabinet and other executive branches of government, while the latter related to recognition of the prime minister's position within the political system.

"There are times when prime ministers must lead from the front. Others may catch up, but there are these times when leading from the front is the right, the only strategic action to take."

In his reflections, he said leaders needed to be guided by humility and respect for members, and this was especially critical for prime ministers who do not have unbridled authority, and as such, should ensure they continued to receive the support of their colleagues and the populace.

"To maintain the legitimacy of political office, prime ministers must ensure they carry other members of parliament, members of their own political party and the electorate along, particularly during challenging periods or where difficult decisions are necessary. Without bringing these groupings along, political power will soon be lost."

One such difficult period occurred between 2004 and 2005 when Hurricane Ivan and Hurricane Emily affected Grenada. Hurricane Ivan left 49 people dead and damaged or destroyed over 90 per cent of the country's housing stock. The situation was worsened with the passage of Emily the following year.

"If there was ever a time where political power alone would have been inadequate to the challenge, it was after these two hurricanes."

Dr. Mitchell said the COVID-19 pandemic also tested the limits of prime ministerial authority and power in all countries as emergency powers and regulations were required to give governments far-reaching powers that otherwise they were not vested with.

Within the global context, he said the efficacy of that power and authority was limited for leaders of small states like Grenada, and this necessitated formal and informal coalitions with other countries and groupings. Even in these circumstances, he said countries had to adopt a more sophisticated and nuanced approach to global and regional integration.



Moderator **Dr. Kristina Hinds** in conversation with former Prime Minister of Grenada **Dr. Keith Mitchell**



For the CARICOM coalition, he said cohesion has been an invaluable asset even on potentially divisive issues.

The former Grenadian leader served in the **CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet** as Prime Minister with lead responsibility for Science and Technology. He also served as Lead Head within the **CARICOM Prime**

Ministerial Sub-committee on Cricket.

Regarding the latter, he said there were evident limitations of political power and authority when concerns arose over the possible encroachment of politicians in the business of the **West Indies Cricket Board**. As a result, the former Grenadian leader said he opted to take a back seat despite his enduring passion for West Indies cricket. ♦





An Unveiling of the *Artist* Within

The artistic flair of the Cave Hill campus community came to the fore last November when staff and students joined alumni and retirees to showcase an array of talent.

Patrons had high praise for the works on display as they set aside their regular work activities to show support for an exhibition of culinary arts, visual arts, literary arts as well as fine arts and craft. The display also highlighted a visual arts competition, a fashion show featuring top Barbadian designer Raj Paul, trendy African wear, a



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literary presentation that included an open mic, a mixology competition, and a concert.

The 3 November event entitled **The Artist(s) Within Showcase** was held in recognition of Cave Hill's 60th anniversary. Chair of the anniversary celebrations, **Dr. Henderson Carter** said it was important to show another side of the campus.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to show campus creativity. It shows the world we

are not just academics, writing essays and giving lectures, but there's a lot of creativity among all sections of our staff and this creativity is on display. This inspires me and it inspires you."

The power of culture within any given community was noted by Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, **Frederick Ochieng'-Odhiambo** who declared the event open.

"If one wants to destroy a community, destroy its culture. If you want to interfere with a community, all you need to do is interfere with its culture. At the same time, if one wants to understand and appreciate a given community, one must look at that community's culture."

He deemed the extravaganza a great exemplification of the campus. ♦





ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

The serves and volleys were lightning-fast, but the friendly rivalry between the Barbados and Chinese table tennis players was fittingly indicative of the close relationship between the two countries.

For decades, China has used table tennis or ping pong, a much-loved sport and an integral part of the country's culture, as a bridge of friendship. It was no different last April when the Confucius Institute (CI) at the Cave Hill campus capped off its eighth-anniversary celebration by putting on a table tennis showcase that entertained and displayed those close links.

The competition and exhibition match featured players at different levels of the game and were the perfect buildup to the final matchup between Barbadian table tennis coach **Clifton Mark** and visiting Chinese counterpart **Wu Cong**.

Wu Cong was the second Chinese coach assigned to Barbados, after the first had been assigned back in 1979. The skill and experience displayed by the duo excited the scores gathered at the 3Ws Oval of the campus and spurred calls for an encore. Much to their delight, their request was granted.

Among those present were Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Barbados, **His Excellency Yan Xiusheng**; Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Brazil, **Carlos Kessel**; Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

and Education, **Professor Frederick Ochieng'-Odhiambo**; Co-Directors of the CI, **David Bulbulia** and **Dr. Li Renyan**; and representatives of the **Barbados Table Tennis Association**.

"The Confucius Institute, as a bridge between our two peoples, has also made significant contributions to promoting understanding and friendship between the people of China and Barbados," said the ambassador.

He spoke of the symbolism of the match, the outstanding skill and tenacious spirit displayed by the athletes and urged a deepening of relations between the two countries.

"Let us work together to promote not just cultural exchanges between China and Barbados but also bilateral cooperation in key areas, such as infrastructure, food security, medical and health care, and culture and education etcetera, and build an even closer China-Barbados community with a shared future so as to deliver greater benefits to both Chinese and Barbadian people."



His Excellency Yan Xiusheng
Ambassador of the People's Republic
of China to Barbados



Professor Frederick Ochieng'-Odhiambo
Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Education
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Dean Ochieng'-Odhiambo said table tennis holds a significant place in Chinese culture and was an important tool for diplomacy and improving relations with other countries. He said the establishment of the CI at Cave Hill Campus *"reflects the recognition at the highest levels of the campus leadership that the campus needed to be internationalised if it was to transform and also remain relevant to its community."*

"The decision to establish the CI also had the

purpose of keeping the campus aligned with the goals and objectives of host country Barbados, and all countries served by the campus, to deepen and expand cooperation with China.

One can, therefore, say that the CI not only reflects the close relationship between Barbados and China but also seeks to maintain that close relationship."

The Co-Directors of the CI said they were heartened by the outpouring of support as evidenced by attendance at the activity. ♦



Law Faculty Launches Third Unit



Already credited for providing stellar education that has shaped much of the region's jurisprudence and helped to define our legal landscape, the Faculty of Law continues to provide guidance for Caribbean social and economic development. Within the past three years, it has established three units to address issues critical to regional states.



Alana Lancaster
Head, Caribbean Environmental Law Unit
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

The **Caribbean Environmental Law Unit (CELU)**, established last December as the faculty's newest, has as its focus - the environment, ocean governance and climate justice. Earlier in the same year, the faculty introduced its **Alternative Dispute Resolution Unit (ADR Unit)**. Closing off the trifecta is the **Law and Health Research Unit (LHR Unit)** launched in July 2021.

Headed by lecturer **Alana Lancaster**, the CELU will apply an interdisciplinary

approach in its collaboration with experts within and outside the university.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal **Professor Clive Landis** said the groundbreaking initiative reaffirms the commitment of The University of the West Indies to use its legal and research expertise to help fight climate change.

He said the trio of units is a testament to advocacy and activism in areas of importance to the Caribbean region and its peoples, and he commended those leading the charge for their foresight and leadership.

"The establishment of this unit reflects the faculty's steadfast commitment to fostering academic excellence, driving meaningful research, and equipping our students with the knowledge and skills needed to confront the complex environmental issues of our time. It has not gone unnoticed that the Faculty of Law has launched three units in three contemporary areas of law and policy crucial to the sustainable development of our region."

The newly established unit falls under the 2022-2027 *Strategic Plan* of the Faculty

of Law that prioritises education, research and entrepreneurship, internal engagement, and external engagement, explained Dean of the Faculty, **Professor Eddy Ventose**.

“The Faculty of Law at Cave Hill is at the forefront of two of the most challenging issues facing small island states and the world—climate change and public health. There is a lot of work to be done, and I have no doubt that the CELU's new Head, Ms. Alana Lancaster, is up for the challenge.”



Jennifer Doherty-Bigara
Senior Climate Change Specialist,
Inter-American Development Bank



Professor Eddy Ventose
former Dean, Faculty of Law
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

Lancaster said the intention is to establish the unit as a legal centre of excellence in environmental law, ocean governance and climate justice, which are three distinct yet interlinked thematic areas of importance to the region. To accomplish this, she said partnerships would be formed with local, regional, and international stakeholders and institutions.

“The unit aims to place our students, the university community, and our stakeholders at the centre of an indigenous and authentic Caribbean legal experience.”

Senior Climate Change Specialist at the **Inter-American Development Bank's Barbados Office**, **Jennifer Doherty-Bigara**, indicated her institution's willingness to collaborate with the unit. The IDB representative said such relationships will ensure that climate justice and environmental sustainability become a reality.

As she congratulated the campus on this latest achievement, she said legal expertise was always needed concerning arrangements on the environment that involved the public and private sectors. ◆

From left: **Professor Eddy Ventose**, former Dean of the Faculty of Law; **Alana Lancaster**, CELU's Head; **Jennifer Doherty-Bigara**, Climate Change Specialist, IADB; **Dr. Antonius Hippolyte**, acting Dean, Faculty of Law; and **Professor Clive Landis**, Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill



Charting a New Legal Future

Documenting its history, deepening engagement with regional governments, and reaching out to alumni were among suggestions put to the Faculty of Law at Cave Hill as the curtain came down on the campus's blue-ribbon lecture series to mark its 60th anniversary.

It was a fitting end to the 2023 **Legacy Lecture Series** as the spotlight was shone on the Faculty of Law, the faculty whose story is an integral part of that of the Cave Hill campus.

This inextricable link was noted by lecturer and Head of the faculty's Law and Health Research Unit **Nicole Foster** as she presented the ninth and final lecture on 29 November 2023 titled "**The Cave Hill Law Faculty – A Legacy of Excellence, Charting New Paths for the Future**".

With the Faculty of Law's establishment in 1970, what started out as a College of Arts and Sciences in temporary housing at the Bridgetown Harbour soon transitioned to the full-fledged University of the West Indies campus that had moved to a permanent home at Cave Hill.

Foster looked back at the faculty's modest beginnings, student enrolment, staff complement, and some of the individuals who were instrumental in its development. Among those were former Vice-Chancellor **Professor Sir Roy Marshall** and eminent Caribbean jurist and former Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago **Sir Hugh Wooding** who each served as leaders of the faculty and promoted its establishment; the faculty's first dean, **Professor Keith Patchett**; and legal luminaries **Professor Ralph Carnegie**, and **P. Telford Georges**.



Nicole Foster
former Deputy Dean, Faculty of Law
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

She said the journey was not always smooth as the faculty has faced infrastructural challenges, such as the law library, which has a critical function, initially having to house its law journals offsite due to space constraints.

However, conditions have improved for the law library, and its initial collection of around 10,000 books, periodicals and other reading materials has mushroomed to around 500,000 currently housed onsite together with a wide range of electronic resources, and most recently, the creation of a state-of-the-art learning commons space for students.

She said the faculty's student enrolment has blossomed to an estimated 500, a drastic change from the 38 enrolled in its early years. The full-time staff complement has moved from three to the current 11.

Turning her attention to the programme offerings, the lecturer said these have been expanded beyond traditional topics to important areas like Alternative Dispute Resolution, Gender and the Law, Commonwealth Caribbean Sports Law, Global Health Law, and Corporate and Commercial Law.

More meaningful for the award-winning

legal scholar and Cave Hill alumna was the fact that the faculty's curriculum is based on Commonwealth Caribbean law, with many of the texts written by legal experts from the region some of whom have lectured at the faculty.

"What stands out for me as the defining contribution of the Cave Hill Law Faculty is its contribution to Caribbean identity and the development of Caribbean jurisprudence ... That legacy is invaluable. The ideas of Caribbean people have worth and are relevant. It is not necessary for us to just blindly adopt what our former colonial masters did."



Marsha Loughheed
Deputy Solicitor General, Barbados

The former deputy dean said the faculty's impact was visible in institutions like the **Caribbean Court of Justice** which, at one time, had six judges who were Cave Hill alumni.

While she commended the faculty for being actively engaged on issues critical to Caribbean civilisation, she identified priority areas for action to promote its continued growth.

Foster said the law faculty needed to properly document its history and have the information housed in a central location accessible to staff and students alike, place more emphasis on the teaching of comparative law, increase its publication output, deepen engagement with regional governments, improve alumni outreach, and

upgrade the physical plant.

The Legacy Lecture Series was organised by The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus and **The Nation Publishing Company Limited.** ♦





Alum Trades Baking for Academia

and Makes Giving Back a Key Ingredient

Dr. Samantha Cross dreamt of becoming a French-trained pastry chef and opening a beachside café in the Caribbean. Her passion for baking remains, but her life has taken a far different path. This Cave Hill alumna is now fully glazed in academia.



Based in the United States, the Fulbright Scholar is Associate Professor of Marketing in the **Debbie and Jerry Ivy College of Business at Iowa State University** where she is the only tenure-track, black, female professor in the college.

With consumer behaviour as her area of specialisation, she examines family decision making, binational families, cultural and sensory influences on consumption, using qualitative and mixed methods approaches. Her exploration of these issues has earned her numerous awards. Despite these achievements, or rather, due to her success, Dr. Cross is committed to giving back.

"I always say I've been very fortunate.

I've had lots of amazing opportunities, and as the saying goes, with great privilege comes great responsibility."

Dr. Cross was born in the United Kingdom (UK) to a Barbadian father and a Trinidadian mother. Her early years were spent in Trinidad before her family moved to Barbados when she was six years old. She attended Queen's College and earned her *Bachelor of Science degree* in Management Studies at Cave Hill in 1993. Though she planned to continue her studies in the UK, she received an offer she could not refuse from **DePaul University** in Chicago to undertake the Master of Business Administration degree.

It was a time of firsts for Cross: She was the first graduate assistant at the

university's newly opened International Business Center and the first business student to volunteer at the university's Writing Center. According to Dr. Cross, as a business student, she was an anomaly at the time since students in that area of specialisation were not known to have strong writing skills. She credits this to her education at Queen's College and Cave Hill.

After graduating, she worked for around 10 years in different companies before deciding to return to school for her PhD. Her decision was cemented when a former professor pointed out the shortage of business school professors in the country.

To help her along that part of her journey, she reached out to **The PhD Project**, an organisation that promotes diversity in the

workforce. The institution had linked this to the underrepresentation of students in business schools. With their support, Cross earned her PhD in Marketing from the **University of California**, Irvine in 2009.

From there, the mother of two went straight into teaching at **Iowa State University** where she remains to this date.

In May 2023, the award-winning scholar partnered with the School for Graduate Studies and Research at Cave Hill to stage four sessions with faculty and research students. A session was conducted on the topic **“Reviewing Papers with Rigor and Sensitivity and Responding to Reviewers”**. Workshops were also held on **“Transformative Research”**, and **“How to Develop a Career-defining Thesis Topic”**.

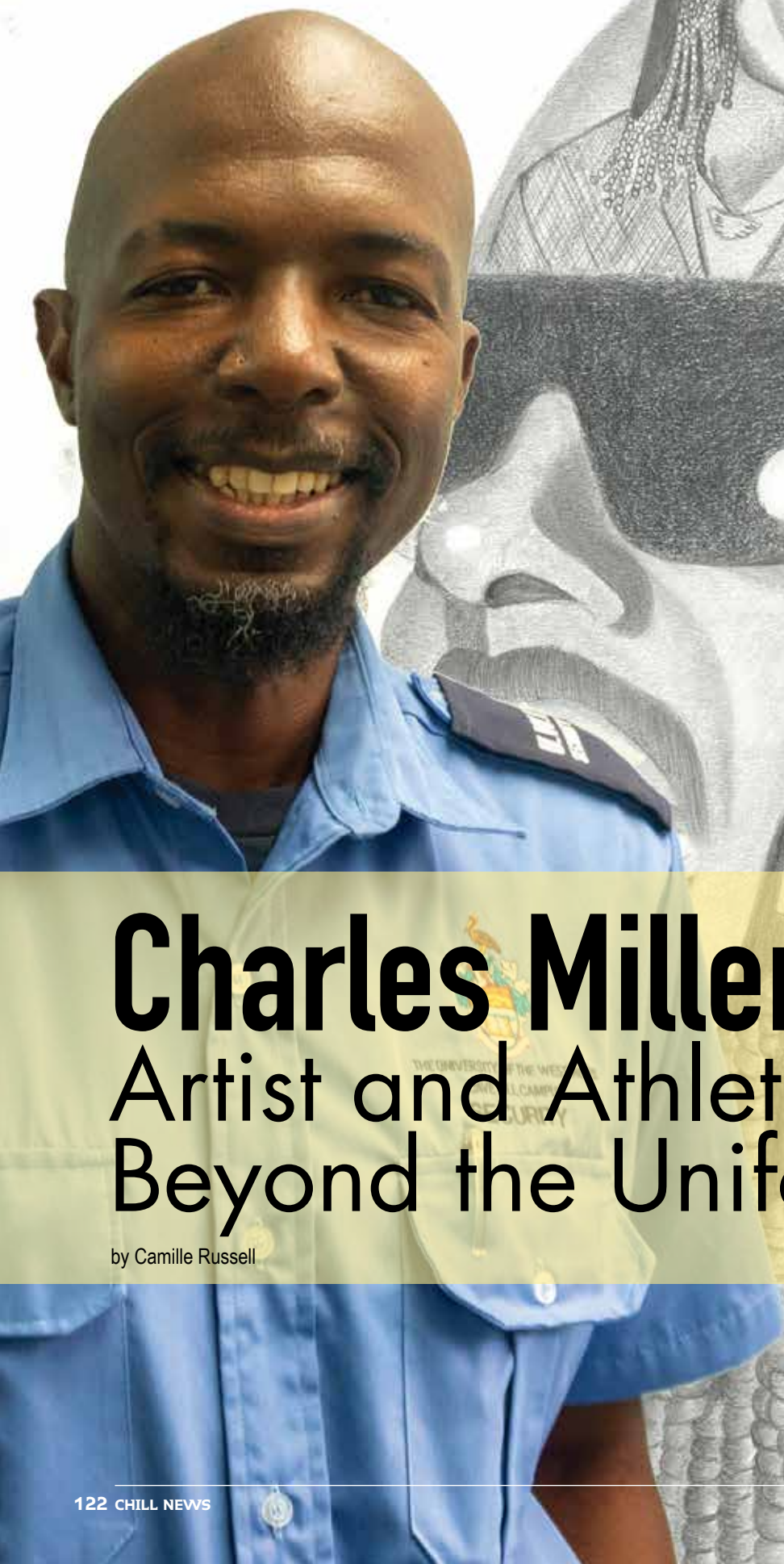
For Dr. Cross, it was the fulfilment of her dream to give back. She had previously returned to the institution in 2019 to conduct a seminar on research methods and approaches but did not think this was sufficient.

“If I can assist The UWI, that would be my priority. I’ve been working with graduate students a lot at the thesis level and above. I’m doing it for all these graduate students elsewhere, so it’s pretty special to be able to come back to Cave Hill and help here. I also give back through The PhD Project. Service is not just at the department level or the college level, I do a lot of service in the wider academe level, like on associations, councils, and boards.”

In light of her experiences and what she has been able to accomplish, Dr. Cross has encouraged students to remain focused, and fully embrace the Cave Hill experience and the diversity it offers, much as she did. To this date, she has fond memories of some of her former lecturers like the late Wendell McClean, his sibling Maxine McClean, and Professor Justin Robinson. ♦



Dr. Samantha Cross shares tips on conducting research with faculty and students.



Charles Miller: Artist and Athlete Beyond the Uniform

by Camille Russell

Many employees journey to work daily seeking to make a difference in the lives of those they encounter. Though regularly accomplishing this, simply stepping outside their normal roles, at times, reveals talent that might have gone unnoticed. Such was the case of Charles Miller whose security officer uniform conceals a world of creativity and athletic prowess as he traverses the university community.

For nearly 15 years, Miller has patrolled the grounds of the Cave Hill campus, safeguarding the institution and its occupants. However, beneath the uniform lies a man of diverse talents—a visual artist and an accomplished athlete with a story that encapsulates resilience, passion, and a quest for self-discovery.

His journey into the world of art began during his formative years at Coleridge & Parry School. Despite consistently ranking among the top three in art, external pressures forced him to abandon his dream of pursuing an art qualification in the CXC examinations. Miller's guardian's disapproval, claiming that *"art is stupid,"* stifled his artistic ambitions, albeit temporarily.

He redirected his energy towards sports, becoming an avid player in football, cricket, road tennis, basketball, swimming, and track. Growing up with six neighborhood friends who shared his love for sports, Miller honed his skills, establishing himself as an all-round sportsman.

However, it wasn't until his twenties that he witnessed his athletic abilities truly blossom. In 2002, at the age of 22, he

represented Barbados in Martinique as a track athlete. Subsequently, he earned a track scholarship to **Wayland Baptist University**, majoring in art. Miller not only excelled as an All-America (an honor bestowed upon an amateur athlete) in the 400 meters and 4x4 relay but also achieved academic excellence, making the Dean's list with a remarkable 3.9 grade point average.

Misfortune struck when a career-threatening injury ended Miller's athletic pursuits and scholarship after two years, and he returned to Barbados in 2005. Despite the setback, he saw the experience as an opportunity to chart a new path in life.

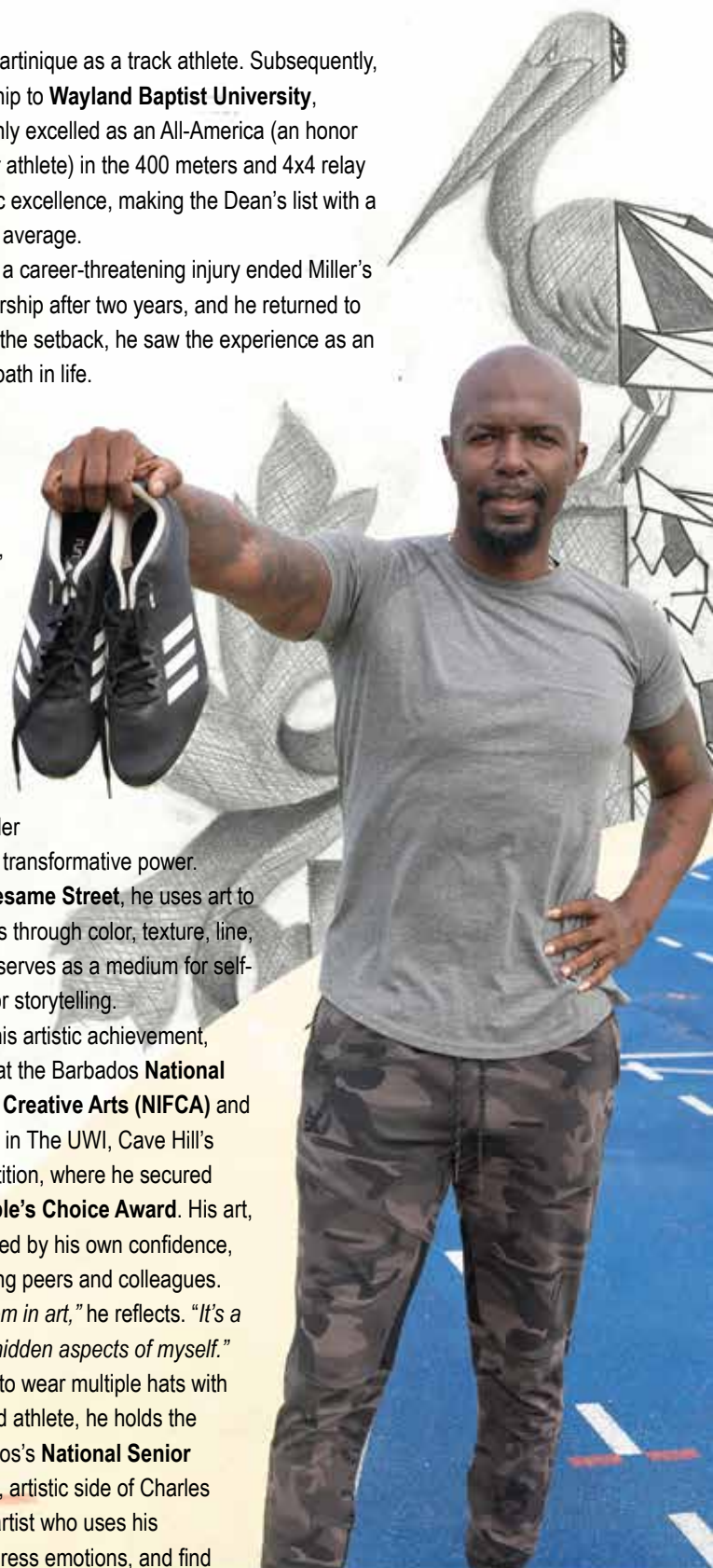
In 2006, Miller became the team manager of the winning team in the **Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) Games**, showcasing his versatility by also earning the title of **Best Goalkeeper**. Subsequently, he rekindled his passion for art, emerging as a self-taught sketch artist.

"Art is my getaway," Miller confesses, emphasising its transformative power. Drawing inspiration from **Sesame Street**, he uses art to express emotions and ideas through color, texture, line, shape, and form. His work serves as a medium for self-expression and a canvas for storytelling.

Though modest about his artistic achievement, Miller has exhibited his art at the Barbados **National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA)** and recently earned recognition in The UWI, Cave Hill's **Artist(s) Within** art competition, where he secured second place and the **People's Choice Award**. His art, though not yet fully embraced by his own confidence, has found recognition among peers and colleagues.

"For me, there is freedom in art," he reflects. *"It's a space for the discovery of hidden aspects of myself."*

Today, Miller continues to wear multiple hats with grace. Still an accomplished athlete, he holds the high jump record at Barbados's **National Senior Games**. Yet, it's the quieter, artistic side of Charles that truly defines him—an artist who uses his creations to tell stories, express emotions, and find freedom through canvas. In the unassuming security officer, there exists an accomplished artist and athlete, proving that true talent often hides in plain sight. ♦



When Cave Hill marked its 60th anniversary last year, one of its earliest students came back to the institution that shaped her remarkable journey.

Joyous Homecoming for Pioneering Student

by Marie-Claire Williams

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Lilith Haynes was among the trailblazers who studied at the campus's original site at the **Old Trade Fair Site** at the **Deep Water Harbour** in Bridgetown. She was one of 12 students who travelled from other countries to join the College of Arts and Sciences, as it was then known.

On a recent trip to the campus, she shared her memories of her long and distinguished career in higher education that started when she was a young graduate at **Bishop's High School** in her native Guyana.

*"Guyana had pulled out of The University of the West Indies to start the **University of Guyana**, and there was no way I was going to take my grandmother's hard-earned money to go to a university starting in Guyana that I didn't know*

anything about. The UWI was actually 15 years old at the time," she said.

Her group comprised 18 full-time students and 100 part-time ones. She signed up for French, Spanish and Latin.

"The equivalent of the French Peace Corps sent a young man to be our French teacher; Dr. [Richard] Allsopp came from Guyana, he did all kinds of stuff [including] the use of English and some French; we had Charles Hollingsworth coming from Mona ... to teach Spanish; and for Latin, we had Arthur Sealy who taught at Combermere. And that was the core," she said.

"We had no library, but I lived in a convent which had a library and which had French students from Martinique and Guadeloupe. It was a boarding school back then. They had Spanish students from Venezuela, including the President's

children; nuns who taught French and Spanish ... I could speak in French and Spanish at home," she said.

The students at the new institution faced a challenging curriculum: *"When we started, the Caribbean was gaining independence ... It was decided, very wisely, that we would all have to do theses in our second and third years, which had to do with Caribbean life. You could choose whatever you wanted to choose, but it had to do with Caribbean life," she said.*

Haynes graduated with honours and went on to read for a Master's in Linguistics at the Mona campus, from which she graduated in 1971. Two years later, she earned a PhD in Linguistics from **Stanford University**.

At a time when Linguistics was not a popular field of study, Dr. Haynes carved a path that led her to universities in the

United States, such as **New Mexico State University**, and later **Harvard University**, where she spent 22 years.

She also worked at the **Ford Foundation's** Regional Office in Egypt, where her responsibilities included managing programmes in language research and teaching in Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Jordan. She also taught for several years in Germany.

Now retired, Dr. Haynes had this advice for young people who are considering non-traditional careers.

"If you do the work, and continue doing the work, the rest will follow. If you take the work and start to make all kinds of dances around it and play with other things, you will weaken the importance of the work."

She is proud of Cave Hill's growth from a fledgling college at the Old Trade Fair Site to a thriving campus that is shaping thousands of future Caribbean leaders.

She attributes her successful career to her early education in Guyana and her training at Cave Hill: *"Cave Hill was not easy. I failed Latin here, but then I got the support I needed and I learned how to deal with the things I was not good at,"* she said.

"It's Anthony Appiah who said an intellectual is interested in everything. And that's what Cave Hill, building upon the Bishop's High School at home, did. Because we had to do three subjects in our first year, and two theses, and you learned to look around you and to do it properly."

Even though Haynes maintains regular contact with her former students and colleagues, she made it clear that she has no intentions of joining them on social media, branding it *"a waste of time"*.

"This nonsense about putting yourself



Lilith Haynes receives a token of recognition from Cave Hill's Campus Registrar Rommel Carter.

out there and everybody making comments and you spend half your life on Facebook, I don't do that!" she declared.

"I have a landline; if I miss somebody calling me, I get it as an email and I get back to them. I have a cell phone for emergencies, and I don't give out my number. I want to be able to control my life."

Unlike many of the current generation, Haynes has no fear of missing out on current events: *"I get up in the morning and ... I have about 20 newspapers around the world [that] I read every morning. I know what's happening around the world; I don't miss anything."* ♦



Lilith Haynes (right) in conversation with students at the quadrangle

Raashid Ifill's Storyboard

Animation is known to be an illusion of movement in a sequence, but there's nothing illusory about Raashid Ifill's meteoric rise in that and related artforms on the international stage.

The Cave Hill alumnus is carving out a name for himself in a field that not many in the Caribbean have ventured into, let alone achieved the kind of international success he enjoys today.

The Canada-based Ifill is a 3D Generalist, Senior 2D Animator, Rigger and Motion Graphics Artist, specialised areas that see him working with animation, audio, and visual effects to create moving content and graphics for television, film, and other media.



To date, the 34-year-old Barbadian has already worked on the American animated science fiction sitcom *Ricky and Morty*, the last season of *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz*, Disney's *Jake and the Never Land Pirates*, and the animated television series *America: The Motion Picture*. The latter two have been broadcast on the streaming service, Netflix.

A 3D Generalist possesses broad skills and knowledge of 3D computer graphics or the creation of moving three-dimensional images. These objects can be viewed from different angles and appear more realistic. The artform differs from 2D animation where images appear flat but also show action and movement when viewed sequentially.

In 2022, the fast-developing animation market was valued at US\$394.6 billion globally and is expected to reach US\$528.8 billion by 2030, according to the global market research and management consulting company, **Markets N Research**. However, the animation industry remains fledgling in the Caribbean despite its decades-long history of existence, notably in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados.

Ifill, a native Barbadian, earned national success after the 2D animation film "**Lizzy Comes to Bridgetown**", for which he was the lead animator and editor, placed first in the inaugural **National Animation Competition** held in 2013 by the **National Cultural Foundation**.

These accomplishments came through steadfastness and a refusal to bow to the many obstacles he faced in his educational and professional journey. Through it all, he learnt valuable life lessons that also affirmed values instilled in him at a young age by his parents, both of whom were teachers.

Ifill's introduction to computers came at a young age. Before age 10, he and his older brother Akil, now Principal of the privately-operated **Ifill School**, were introduced to computers and computer games by their father, Patrick.

While most children his age played with toys, he was learning about the technology and the internet that was not widely accessible at the time. Coupled with that, he began dabbling with drawing cartoon characters. Although he was not very good, he persisted and improved over time.

It was in secondary school where he got into digital animation, and on leaving sixth form, he immediately enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science programme at Cave Hill Campus. He supplemented his knowledge with courses in film production at the **Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination**.

To gain experience and assist himself financially, he became a teaching assistant at Cave Hill and taught part-time at an educational institution off-campus. However, the workload proved to be too much, and his grade point average plummeted to a negligible level.

"It really was a low point for me, and I had to leave the part-time teaching job. My mother, Corine, was a really strong force of compassion [and] she really helped bring me back up."

It was while he was at university that he began taking animation seriously. He had been approached by award-winning Caribbean filmmaker, **Marcia Weekes**, to

animate the logo for the movie series, *Hush*. It was his first professional animation.

His big break came in 2012, the same year he graduated with first class honours. During a training programme in the use of *Toon Boom* animation software, Canadian tutors who were on the island conducting the training noticed that he quickly adapted to the technology. Ifill credits this to his Cave Hill education.

"I know I talk a lot about what I learnt at the Errol Barrow Centre, but it was Computer Science that really helped me on the technical side," he said.

Consequently, he and a select few were chosen to work on a project. He later discovered it was the animated series, *Rick and Morty*. During that time, Ifill attained Toon Boom Harmony Associate Level.

More work came his way as a result, and eventually, the Cave Hill graduate was among a group invited to Canada to work. He was soon joined by Nikita, another Barbadian animator, who has become his wife.

While settling into his new environment has not been without challenges, Ifill has not allowed that to deter him. He has gone on to establish **Ifillium Animation & Game Studios** in Canada.

He explained the decision not to restrict himself by working solely as an animator also worked in his favour: *"The voice actors and animators get most of the glory, but to animate something, somebody has to design the character. In order for the character to move, you have to take the design, optimise it and split it up, and get it ready for the animator. That process is called rigging. So being technical helps with rigging, and I've been rigging for half of my career—five to six years—and for another five to six years, I've been an animator. When there aren't animation jobs available,*

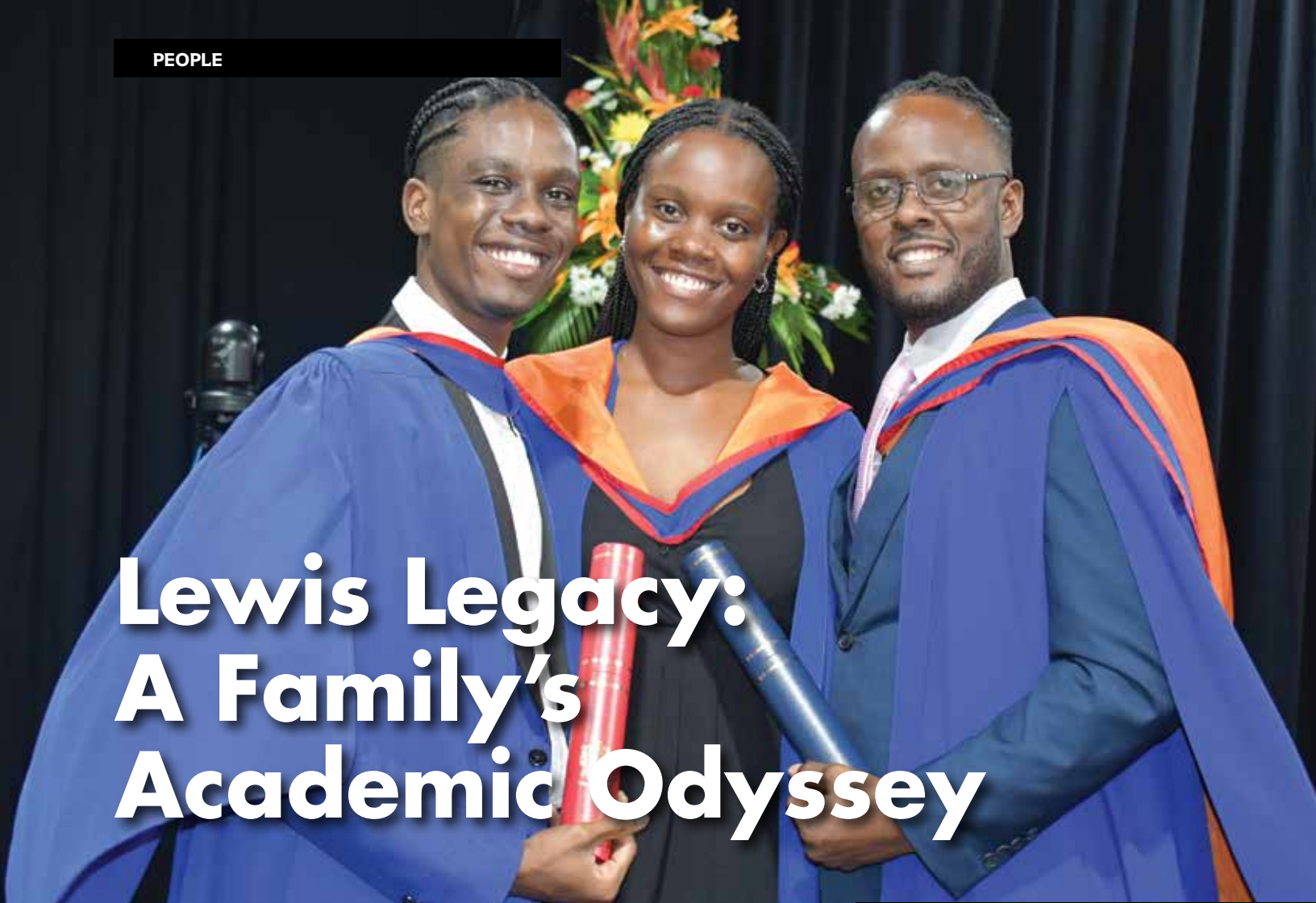
there are definitely rigging jobs, and I was able to keep a job because of that skill set."

In all of this, the motion graphics artist continues to hold the Caribbean close to his heart. He has contributed through the design of questions for and marking of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Animation and Game Design course offered by the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Currently, he serves as Director of Curriculum Development of the **Animated Arts Learning Institute (AALI)**. The online training platform that he and others created seeks to help fill the training gap in the region.



Looking at the animation industry in the region, he said, *"It is obviously young, and we're not at the level where people come to us to do the big projects etcetera. In the Caribbean, the industry is only taken seriously in certain places and at certain levels. I've been in rooms where there have been conversations about US\$100,000 contracts and US\$1 million contracts. However, in the Caribbean, animation is treated as an afterthought. I can't tell you the kind of proposals or requests that we get because people don't understand animation. People don't respect it enough to give it what it deserves."* ♦



Lewis Legacy: A Family's Academic Odyssey

In the heart of academic excellence, the Lewis family's journey unfolds as a captivating narrative, a beacon illuminating the transformative power of education. Led by the example of their father Rodney Lewis, their achievements are rooted in a shared passion for learning.

2023 marked a milestone for the Lewis family, with Rodney and his son Jabari walking the same graduation stage at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. This shared triumph followed daughter Adiella's attainment of an MSc the previous year, solidifying their legacy as proud alumni of The UWI.

Rodney's academic journey led him to **The St. Michael's School** and later **Barbados Community College**, where he excelled in chemistry, biology, and mathematics. He then pursued natural sciences at Cave Hill. Throughout the years, Rodney expanded his knowledge with Information Technology certifications from various institutions, including **The UWI** and **University of Illinois**. His journey resulted in the award of a Bachelor's degree in Management in 2005, and a Master's in E-Governance for Small Island

Jabari (left) with sister **Adiella** and dad **Rodney Lewis** were all smiles on graduation day.

Developing States last year, after he had returned to Cave Hill in 2022.

What sets the Lewis family apart is not just their academic prowess but the remarkable parallel journey of father and children.

Rodney, reflecting on walking the same graduation stage with Jabari, revealed: *"I honestly just wanted to share the moment with Jabari and used that as my driving force to complete as many courses as I feasibly could."*

This shared accomplishment deepened the father-son bond, instilling in them the belief that no goal is impossible.

Jabari, expressing pride in his father's achievements, emphasised the valuable lesson learnt: *"I am extremely impressed with my dad's hard work and seeing him rewarded for all those hours made the evening [ceremony] even sweeter. Overall, it's taught us that we don't have to think of these things as impossible or out of reach."*

"I was and am incredibly grateful for the opportunity. When I started my degree [in Theology], my main goal was just to get through it, but I soon learnt to love my field of study. Thus, being able to share that moment of victory with my dad, and celebrate him also, was amazing," Jabari continued.

Adiella's completion of a Master's degree in International Trade Policy sparked friendly family rivalry, inspiring Rodney's return to university, hinting at a future where academic success becomes a cherished tradition.

Rodney's motivation extends beyond familial competition; he aspires to set an example for his younger son Nicholas. With a commitment to a legacy of learning, Rodney envisions a future where academic success becomes synonymous with the Lewis family name.

Amidst challenges and sacrifices during his educational journey, Rodney's determination to graduate alongside Jabari led him to sleep on campus some nights. Buoyed by success, his career aspirations now align with e-governance, leveraging

skills to navigate the intersection of information technology, communications and politics, and addressing issues from cyber security to change management.

Rodney's life experiences enriched not only his personal journey but also the values passed down to his children. He emphasised the importance of diligence, stating: *"I am a strong believer that you will have to work hard at some point in your life."*

His belief in the power of education as a universal language resonates in his conviction that good education is the key to overcoming barriers.

In acknowledging those who supported him during his academic journey, Rodney expressed gratitude to mentors and role models. He singled out his late mother, mentioned several friends and gave special mention to lecturer **Dr. Pearson Broome** for delivering thought-provoking courses that challenged individuals to think outside the box.

A standout moment for Rodney is the conceptual design he developed for the implementation of ICT in public transportation to reduce traffic congestion and the carbon footprint. This project showcases his innovative thinking, practical application of his academic knowledge, and reflects his commitment to using technology for positive societal change.

Looking ahead, Rodney envisions a future where the Lewis family's unique dynamic contributes to building a formidable enterprise, benefitting not only the nuclear unit but black families at large.

In Rodney Lewis, we discover not only an accomplished individual but the architect of a family's educational legacy, inspiring future generations to reach for the stars and break through barriers. The Lewis legacy stands tall, a testament for the transformative power of education and the unwavering pursuit of knowledge. ♦



Jabari Lewis (left), dad Rodney Lewis (second right) and Adiella Lewis (third right) were joined by family members to celebrate their achievements.

High Achievers Saluted for their Endurance and Resilience



Professor Clive Landis
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

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The top performing students were saluted for outstanding scholastic achievement two days ahead of last year's annual graduation ceremony.

In a special recognition ceremony, awards were presented to the 121 undergraduates who achieved First Class Honours, 57 who received their master's degree with distinction, one recipient of the Master of Philosophy with High Commendation, and five PhD graduates.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal **Professor Clive Landis** said the awardees displayed endurance and resilience in the face of numerous challenges, attributes that contribute to character-building and place them on a strong footing to overcome future challenges and achieve further success.

Among the challenges he identified were the existential threat of climate change, and the use of artificial intelligence to propagate misinformation and disinformation.

"You, on the other hand, being information literate, and socially and culturally responsible can make sense of it all, even the deepfake pranks using artificial intelligence (AI). So it is, therefore, important that your voice is heard as the voice of reason to inform public debate in Caribbean society."

Professor Landis urged the students to remain well-grounded in their regional identity while being globally aware, while issuing a caution about AI.

"AI can be deployed effectively and responsibly as a tool to project Caribbean values and creativity in the global imagination. As critical and creative thinkers, you are able to embrace AI literacy to amplify our unique culture and the fine ethical viewpoints of the Caribbean"

region; or, to put it another way, you can help the Caribbean be master of its own destiny using AI as a tool, not the other way around."

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) graduand **Nathan Lovell** cited the benefits he gained from embracing technology when he delivered acceptance remarks on behalf of the awardees.



Nathan Lovell
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) graduand delivered remarks on behalf of the awardees.



He said he adjusted his learning style to one that incorporated more technology, which proved to be a game-changer for him. To further aid his learning, Lovell said he embraced study groups, which also proved to be helpful.

The graduand spoke of his university journey and said while he has fond memories, it was equally important that students not become complacent but continue to strive for further excellence.

"I'm not saying we should overwork ourselves; rest is necessary, and we need to enjoy our victories, but let our thirst for knowledge never be quenched; continue to persevere, and let passion drive purpose. Be brave and take risks." ♦



Janelle Skinner
attained a Master of Science in Counselling Psychology with distinction.





The inaugural **Youth Summer Programme Showcase**, hosted at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, was a major hit with the youth who have called for an encore and for the two-week activity to be staged over an extended period.

Calls for Repeat of Cultural Showcase

Held from 8 to 18 August 2023, the activity exposed dozens of pre-teens and teenagers to the arts and technology.

The programme was organised by **Humber College** from Toronto, Canada; the Barbados **Blue Escape Arts and Culture, Community and Technology (ACT) Festival and Summit**; and Cave Hill's **Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts** and **Faculty of Science and Technology**.

Under the guidance of camp instructors from **Cirque du Soleil**, **The 7 Fingers**, **Square Circle** and **Humber College**, the sixty participants honed their skills in acting, dancing, clowning, juggling, and creating displays using virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI).

On the final day of the programme, they delivered high-energy performances to the delight of parents, guardians, politicians, and academics who were present.

Kaeli and **Janae Worrell**, ages 12 and 13 respectively, were enrolled by their mother Janelle who said she was thankful

The University of the West Indies (The UWI) had officially recognised the potential of the orange economy.

"My daughters are into arts and crafts; they are creative and there aren't many outlets for them to express that at their age, so I grasped this opportunity and really enjoyed this. I was totally impressed, and after these two weeks, I'm even more impressed [and] so very happy."

For years, The UWI has emphasised the contributions and importance of creatives and the creative arts. This was underscored when Cave Hill Campus

launched the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts in 2020.

Deputy Principal of The UWI, Cave Hill **Professor Winston Moore** said worldwide, the orange economy has recorded annual growth of 14 per cent and has become one of the most successful parts of Caribbean economies in the post-independence period. He said the showcase illustrated what was possible through hard work and dedication.

A similar position was put forward by Prime Minister **Mia Amor Mottley**, through whose support the number of programme participants doubled. In a vote of confidence for the initiative, the Barbados Head of Government said it could help develop global citizens with Bajan roots and instill in them discipline and an appreciation for excellence in the arts.



The Hon. Mia Amor Mottley
Prime Minister of Barbados

make your journey sincere, more powerful, and more authentic. In today's world, people pay for authenticity."

Minister of State in the Office of Attorney General with responsibility for Crime Prevention **Corey Lane** said the programme not only empowered the youth

but it taught them ways they can merge art with technology. He encouraged them to become ambassadors of this type of programme in schools and communities.

The two-week pilot programme catered to children ages 10-17. Initially, Executive Producer of the **Blue Escape ACT Festival**, **Steve Koskie**, said he and

others personally provided seed funding before they got the attention of the Prime Minister and were able to secure additional financial support. This allowed them to increase the number of participants. He said some of the top technology and circus instructors in the world helped hone the skills of the youth, most of whom had little to no experience in the arts.

One of those participants was **Rohishia**



Sampson, 14, a student of Combermere School who had no previous acting experience but is now interested in pursuing a career in the arts.

"My experience was amazing. I was introduced to the programme by one of my friends. I came here the first day and was shy. When I finally opened up, I made amazing friends. I was put into a group called KFC, and these were some of the best people I've worked with; they were fun and amazing. The programme was amazing. I loved every minute of it and would love to do this again."

Like Sampson, 14-year-old **Kamaria Boyce** of Frederick Smith Secondary School had no previous experience in acting.

"When my mother first told me it was a circus camp, I asked her if I was going to be a clown. But when I came, I was told it was acrobatics, juggling and so on. The



From left: **The Hon. Corey Lane**, Minister of State in the Office of the Attorney General responsible for Crime Prevention; **The Hon. Mia Amor Mottley**, Prime Minister of Barbados; **Senator Shantal Munro-Knight**, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office responsible for Sustainable Development, Commitment for Results and Culture; and **Prof. Winston Moore**, Deputy Principal, Cave Hill

"When we create an environment where people can emerge as artists and sportspeople, they become global citizens with Bajan roots. You never forget where you come from. Rihanna has never lost her accent because she is faithful to who she is."

The Prime Minister told participants: *"Do not ever forget who you are or where you come from because that is what is going to*



Professor David Neumann
Humber College



first day I was shy because I didn't know anyone, but I got to know a lot of people. I would come back for a longer time because two weeks was too short. This was a very good experience."

Eleven-year-old **Rory Morris**, a student of Harrison College, also enjoyed the summer programme: *"When I was introduced to the camp, I wasn't too excited about it. It was very confusing because I didn't know what we were going to do, if*

we'd have to dress up like clowns and wear wigs. But I hoped for the best and I had a very good time. The two weeks flew by and now I would prefer [the programme] to be three to four weeks."

It was precisely such passion and enthusiasm that Head of the Department of Creative and Performing Arts **Andrew Millington** was hoping would be stirred. He said the programme not only taught skills but contributed to the development of

competence, self-esteem and other aspects that are key to building the character of young people.

Professor David Neumann of Humber College was enthusiastic about the partnership with Cave Hill. He said he looked forward to further collaborations with the campus, including deep discussions on technology such as artificial intelligence (AI).



Melony Shoye Awarded 2023 BARP Trust Scholarship



From left: **Clyde Williams**, Acting Secretary to the BARP Charitable Trust; **Melony Shoye**, MPhil student; **Dr. Sharon Marshall**, Trustee of the BARP Charitable Trust; and **Professor Winston Moore**, Deputy Principal, Cave Hill

Research into elderly affairs in Barbados is getting a major boost through the ongoing partnership of The UWI, Cave Hill and the Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP) Charitable Trust.

The Trust grants scholarships to Barbadian students at the Cave Hill campus who are pursuing full-time postgraduate studies related to ageing.

Last July, the charity awarded **Melony Shoye** with the 2023 scholarship valued at BDS\$5,000. She is pursuing an MPhil degree in Social Work with a focus on resilience of the elderly affected by flooding, specifically in the communities of Holetown, St. James and Belleplaine, St. Andrew. Shoye also intends to make a case for electronic mapping as a tool for disaster management during her course of study.

Speaking at the scholarship

presentation ceremony held on campus at the Sidney Martin Library, she expressed her gratitude to both the university and BARP Trust for supporting her research and work in this area of elder resilience.

"I am cognisant of the initiative of the university in putting forward my name and the generosity of the Trust in considering me, a part-time student, for this award. I am immensely thankful to both," Shoye said.

Deputy Principal of the campus **Professor Winston Moore**, who attended the presentation ceremony, used the opportunity to thank the Trust for its support of students and the university.

*"For donors like the **BARP Charitable Trust**, today we are very happy that you are helping us to provide support for our students, and you are also providing direction for our students as well. One of the requirements of the BARP Trust is to look for students who are doing research on the elderly, and I think that's a useful initiative for support and direction for a really important issue. One of the things you might notice about the Barbadian economy is that we have a fairly elderly population where the average age is over 40. We are therefore very thankful for the role that*

our donors play not only in the lives of our students but also for the university as a whole," Moore said.

Acting Secretary to the Trust **Clyde Williams** congratulated Shoye on being chosen for the award and wished her success in her undertakings.

He added, *"The Trust is pleased to share this moment with The UWI in the knowledge that we are both providing assistance to a very worthy student whose research will strengthen the capacity of professional practitioners, carers, and students of the discipline to better deal with the issues that confront them as they face the challenges of an ageing society."*

Previous winners of the scholarship were Juliet Cumberbatch in 2016, Wasim Worrell in 2017 and again in 2018 when he upgraded from an MPhil to a PhD, and Jamie Hinds in 2019.

The scholarship provides tangible means by which the Trust can execute one of its mandates of promoting studies in gerontology, whether medical, economic, or social and is intended to assist in covering the cost of books, others materials, and tuition. ♦



SCOTTISH SOJOURN HITS A HIGH NOTE

Dominic Serrao's life has been a symphony of music, composed of different movements that reflected his passions and aspirations. As a second-year student pursuing a BA in Music with Education at Cave Hill Campus, Dominic's musical journey reached a crescendo when he secured a full scholarship to attend a prestigious three-day piano workshop at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

This opportunity, presented by the **Faculty of Culture, Creative, and Performing Arts**, took him to this renowned institute that is one of the world's top ten performing art schools. Upon receiving an email about the scholarship, Dominic applied without a second thought, following his dream with courage and determination. To his delight, within a few weeks, he received confirmation that he had been selected to attend the workshop.

Reflecting on the experience, Dominic described the workshop as *"enlightening,"* emphasising the impact of the high-calibre teaching he received.

"It was a very eye-opening experience because of the level of teaching up there. It was very inspirational because the teachers treated me as an individual, not so much as

a student, and helped me through teaching, not only with specific techniques but using my personality and my reasoning to bring up my level of performance."

The significance of this opportunity was further underscored for Dominic when he discovered that he was the sole participant from Barbados and the Caribbean. Despite the brevity of the workshop, he is grateful for the wealth of knowledge imparted to him by the renowned instructors.

When asked about the potential impact of this workshop experience on his studies and future career, he shared, *"For the course of study, my grades for performance courses would hopefully be higher, and then professionally, because of a higher knowledge of performing, I can transfer that information to my students which would help them."*

Dominic's musical journey began at

age 8, but he pressed paused on his piano passion for nearly a decade (2003-2012) to venture into the vibrant hospitality industry. He honed his skills at **The Hospitality Institute of the Barbados Community College** and worked at various hotels in Barbados. However, his musical flame never flickered and he resumed his harmonious journey.

His achievements include Grade 2 in Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Music, as well as Grade 8 in Piano and Grade 7 in Theory from **The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM)**.

As a seasoned performer, Dominic has entertained audiences at various venues across Barbados, including James Street

Methodist Church where he participated in the **Barbados Classical Music Festival 2019**, St. James Parish Church, and St. Mary's Anglican Church.

Beyond his academic pursuits, Dominic demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit by launching his music school and academy, **DJ'S Music Studio**, in 2019. Specialising in piano and music theory, the academy caters to students studying up to Grade 7 theory, Grade 8 in piano, as well as steel pan. Currently, Dominic provides mentorship to 8-10 students studying at either the CXC Level or the ABRSM, sharing his musical wisdom and passion.

The unique opportunity presented to Dominic at the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland** not only enriched his personal and academic journey but also inspired him to aspire to the global music scene.

Dean of the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts, **Professor David Akombo** acknowledged that a current partnership between **The UWI, Cave Hill** and the **University of Glasgow** facilitated this remarkable training opportunity.

*"The connection to the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland** was made through Professor William Cushley, Assistant Vice-Principal for International Programmes at the **University of Glasgow**, in consultation with Mr. Andrew Millington, Dr. Stefan Walcott and me from the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts at the Cave Hill Campus who selected Mr. Dominic Serrao to attend the 2023 summer camp," Dean Akombo shared.*

The experience was also made possible through generous support by the **Glasgow-Caribbean Centre for Development Research (GCCDR)** for which Professor Simon Anderson from the **George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre** at Cave Hill is co-Director, sponsorship that not only enhanced Dominic's musical proficiency but promises to enrich the lives of students he guides at **DJ's Musical Studio**. ♦



From left: **Jennine Knight**, Librarian, Faculty of Medical Sciences and Chair of the Organising Committee; **Gloria Haynes**, second-place winner; **Ireka Jelani**, competition champion; **Dexter Alleyne**, third-place winner; **Judith Toppin**, former Officer-in-Charge, Sidney Martin Library; and **Prof. Winston Moore**, Deputy Principal, Cave Hill Campus

Cultural Researcher Wins Thesis Competition

PhD students from the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts and the School of Education emerged as the top winners in the inaugural Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition hosted by the Cave Hill campus.

Ireka Jelani of the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts earned the top spot while **Gloria Haynes** and **Dexter Alleyne** of the School of Education placed second and third respectively. Haynes also

walked away with the **People's Choice** award and went on to place second in the cross-campus competition which involved other UWI campuses.

The students each had three minutes to deliver a convincing orated summary of their research and its significance in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

The overarching aim was to increase the academic, presentation, and research communication skills of researchers, according to **The University of Queensland** that first developed the research communication *competition* in 2008.

The competition was adopted by The University of the West Indies, Mona in 2021, and the following year, it invited sister campuses Cave Hill and St. Augustine to participate.

In the 9 June 2023 competition hosted

by Cave Hill, five students entered and were judged by **Dr. Korah Belgrave** (Chief Judge), **Senator Dr. Kristina Hinds**, **Dr. Thea Scantlebury-Manning**, and **Lt. Col. Junior Browne**. The other two competitors each represented the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (**SALISES**) and the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (**CERMES**).

The victorious **Jelani**, whose research topic is "**Bush Medicine: The Curative Powers of Sacred Herbal Remedies**" said she is passionate about her area of focus.

"I'm appreciative and I'm humbled. I want to thank everyone who had a part in organising the treatment of this competition, and I'm happy they thought it worthy enough for me to be judged the winner, especially with it being the first three-minute

competition for the Sidney Martin Library. In the meantime, I continue to work steadfastly to fulfil the requirements of my PhD.”

Professionally, Jelani wears many hats, including cultural practitioner, teacher, consultant, farmer, artist, and reverend.

She explained that her research explores the use of plants and herbs in Afro-Caribbean spiritual and ritual practices mostly among spiritual Baptists and Rastafari in Barbados and other Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries.

“I find the use of plants and herbs very interesting in terms of health, preventative medicines, and alternative health care, as well as for spiritual, physical, and mental well-being. I also find it interesting in terms of the ways they are used by Spiritual Baptists in their worship, the way they deal with their healing sessions, their healing worship, using it in bush teas, bush baths, sprinkling, smudging, and the way they decorate their altars and sacred spaces.”

Haynes, Education Officer for English in the **Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training**,

Barbados is pursuing her PhD in Education with an emphasis on educational leadership.

Her mixed-method research is entitled, **“The Elephant in the Room: The Prevalence and Perceived Impact of Destructive Leadership in Secondary Schools”**.

“We constantly see research on the positive side of leadership, and I recognised that the dark side of leadership is becoming more prevalent in terms of research, but it is still under-researched. We have a lot of abuse in the workplace. There are many people who get abused by their leaders, but nobody wants to talk about it. A lot of people are silent because they believe they’ll be victimised, they’ll be ostracised. I want to



Professor Winston Moore
Deputy Principal, The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

bring that to the fore. I want to bring light to the dark side of leadership.”

As for her performance in the competition, Haynes was satisfied she did her best: *“I expected to do extremely well because I do not compete unless I’m going for the gold. I was very impressed with my performance ... The mere fact that I participated in the competition and got an opportunity to put my work out there was a win. The opportunity to showcase my talent in terms of public speaking was a tremendous reward for me. So, I came first in my estimation because it was not just about winning. I felt like a winner because I was able to present my work so a wider audience could hear what I have to offer.”*

Both competitors were presented with prizes during a ceremony held on 7 July 2023 and at which the sponsors and judges were officially recognised.

The competition was organised by the **Sidney Martin Library**, with librarian **Jennine Knight** serving as Chair of the Organising Committee. She was supported by six other committee members.

Officer-in-Charge of the library **Judith Toppin** (now retired) said all challenges that crept up were addressed effectively to ensure the successful staging of the 3MT.

“Let me just congratulate everyone



Judith Toppin
former Officer-in-Charge,
Sidney Martin Library
The UWI, Cave Hill Campus

because I was very impressed with what we produced. I hope this competition will continue, and we may also look at expanding to other types of competitions for postgrad students; so, we look forward to really, really exciting times.”

Deputy Principal **Professor Winston Moore** said the competition will help ensure students received needed feedback in a timely fashion and that full-time students remained on track to complete their dissertation within the three to five-year window.

“The thesis combination provides a platform to showcase exceptional research as well as the opportunity to inspire others with your intellectual curiosity. May this competition ignite a spark within each of you, propelling you further in your scholarly journey.”

Professor Moore acknowledged the support, guidance and resources offered by the library, which he said was a testament to its commitment to empowering lives, nurturing scholarship, and facilitating the exploration of ideas. ♦

Passing of Foundation Student Who Built Out His University

A campus “icon” and “a true giant in the Cave Hill pantheon.” — These were among the many accolades which flowed from across The University of the West Indies community following the passing of former Cave Hill Campus Registrar **Andrew Gordon Lewis** in March 2023.

Lewis was a member of the campus's first student cohort in 1963 and later joined the Cave Hill staff in 1980, after spending some time in the public service. After his formal retirement from Cave Hill in 2003, he remained to serve as Director of Planning and Special Projects enabling the campus's expansion to benefit from the richness of his knowledge and his devotion to the institution. He was largely responsible for charting much of the strategies for development and for guiding the projects for Cave Hill's physical expansion, felt by many to be his enduring contribution to the campus.

He truly mastered the “operations and complexities” of The UWI. From funding proposals and negotiations to design and coordination, he was instrumental in the transformative development of 33 acres of land at Black Rock that now boast the Usain Bolt Sports Complex, the School for Graduate Studies and Research, and the Keith Hunte Hall.

Responsibility for the expansion of Cave Hill's built environment extended beyond the Black Rock or Lazaretto Lands and included the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the Cllico Centre for Teaching Excellence and the Sagicor Centre for Lifelong Learning, among numerous other notable initiatives.

In 2006, Mr. Lewis was awarded the **Vice-Chancellor's Special Award for Outstanding and Distinguished Service to the University**, at that time the second recipient of such an honour in the history of The UWI.

Colleagues who served with him, including academics and administrators, remember his warm and keen mentorship, his guidance towards appreciating the values and phenomenal contribution of The UWI, and his example, which helped to shape a culture of adherence to standards of the highest quality. ♦

Fond Remembrance of Justice Jefferson "Jeff" Cumberbatch

In the halls of academia and the chambers of justice, the legacy of Justice Jefferson Cumberbatch resonates deeply. His recent passing at age 66 has left a void across the region especially in the hearts of those who knew him. Fondly known as "Jeff," Justice Cumberbatch was not only a distinguished legal scholar but also a cherished member of the academic community.

His tenure as Senior Lecturer in Law and Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Law at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus, followed by his appointment as Justice of Appeal at the Supreme Court of Barbados in January 2020, showcased his unwavering commitment to the pursuit of legal excellence. Throughout his nearly thirty years of service to the campus, Justice Cumberbatch left an enduring mark, shaping the minds of future legal practitioners and contributing to the academic and administrative fabric of the institution.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles remembered the late Justice as a 'salt of the earth' colleague "whose dignified and silky presence within our academy was always felt but never loudly heard".

Acting Dean of the Faculty of Law Dr. Antonius Hippolyte acknowledged Justice Cumberbatch's invaluable legacy and reflected on his far-reaching influence. "His impact was felt far outside the walls of the Cave Hill Law Faculty as he also lectured in Sports Law and Medical Law in the Faculties of Sport and Medical Sciences and did extensive consultancy work and public service including as a member of the local **Consumer Claims Tribunal** as well as Chair of the **Fair Trading Commission**. He was deeply loved and highly respected by staff and students alike and will be sorely missed."

Justice Cumberbatch's academic journey at Cave Hill began in 1980 and spanned nearly three decades, during which time he held various administrative roles and made significant contributions to legal scholarship. From his early days as Temporary Lecturer to assuming the ceremonial role of Public Orator, his dedication to legal education remained unwavering.

Personal tributes offered poignant glimpses into Justice Cumberbatch's impact on those fortunate enough to have crossed his path. Colleagues recalled his invaluable guidance on various issues and his steadfast commitment to fairness and objectivity. Former students reminisced about his exceptional teaching style,

characterised by clarity, grace, and unwavering support.

Solemn mourners bade farewell to Justice Jefferson Cumberbatch at his funeral service on 8 February, many pledging to honour his legacy as a legal luminary, mentor, and friend. Though his physical presence may be gone, his spirit lives on in the countless lives he touched and the enduring principles he upheld. ♦



WHEN A MIGHTY TREE FALLS:

Remembering Sonia Suzette Williams

by Yanique Hume, PhD

Like a majestic baobab with its wide and sturdy girth and root system and branches that stretches far beyond its base, Sonia's presence and reach was tremendous. She often came like a gust of wind, announcing her arrival in her long cotton garments, bold ethnic jewelry and an effervescent smile that could light up even the most overcast skies.



Everyone knew the cadence of her voice which moved between being bold and full-bodied, but when excited, the high octaves would ring through like a bell; and, oh, when she laughed, the whole room would be embraced by its rumble.

This was Sonia! A woman who slid across a spectrum of deep ancestral wisdom and knowing and childlike curiosity and play. "*Let your light shine through*" was one of her abiding mantras and what she beckoned all she encountered to do, and especially for those whose light had been dimmed by life's trauma and pain.

She knew the importance of not only inhabiting our bodies but also unashamedly claiming space and moving through the world with confidence. The theatre in many ways is what shaped this lion-hearted spirit. It is what allowed her to find her voice and the channel through which she lovingly shared her talents. It was her innate gift that would transform many minds and hearts within and beyond the Caribbean.

Light shone brightly

Born in the parish of St. Peter, in the Northwest of Barbados, the sea was

her steady companion. It was a space where she went to recharge, restore, and renew her spirit that was in a mode of constant creativity. The saline waters would be her first playground. As she grew into adulthood, it would ferry her across to the United States of America (USA) where she completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Arts and Women's Studies (1988) at **Hamilton College** and then over to Nigeria on the **Thomas J. Watson Fellowship** (1989), where she was immersed in African performance and ritual practice, then across the archipelagic zone of the Caribbean to Jamaica, where she studied Theatre Arts at the **Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts** and worked with members of the **Sistren Theatre Collective** and among theatre giants and acclaimed writers, such as Dennis Scott, Trevor Rhone, Earl Warner, Eugene Williams, Leonie Forbes, Rawle Gibbons, Henk Tjon, Rhoma Spencer, Kendal Hippolyte, and Winston Farrell. While not quite the lone woman, she was certainly one of the few women whose light shone brightly alongside these other Caribbean thespian luminaries and writers. In her native Barbados, Sonia was known for her epic stage production, centering

ritual theatre as an aesthetic language and imperative for reconnecting with the roots of West African performance traditions and their connections to Caribbean expressive forms, along with the means to reaffirm our African ancestral memory and lineage.

Critical works

Her unflinching investment and interest in the power of performance and love for the theatre and its development in the Caribbean is what would animate much of her critical works, public lectures, workshop and performance poetry.

Among some of her more noted plays she directed and/or wrote/adapted include "*Pilgrimage to Freedom: A One Woman Show*" (1994), which premiered in *Martha's Vineyard* and later would be restaged in Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba; "*Amandala*" (1997), "*Return to the Source*" (2006); "*Odale's Choice*" (2008), which premiered in Barbados and later restaged for CARIFESTA X in Guyana that same year; "*Shepherd*" (2012), "*From Bussa to Barrow*" (2016); and in the United Kingdom

(UK), she directed “Mary Prince” (2020) and “Mother Country” (2020).

Her poems and short stories have been published in journals and anthologies. Among some of her most popular poetry performances include “Bloodline”, “Girl Boy”, “The Royal Vessel”, and “The Last Embrace” (2019) and “One Must Know the Meaning of One’s Name” (2023) in Barbados, Columbia, the UK and the USA. Her noted publications include a novella, *This Too Will Pass* (2014) and a collection of poetry, *Embodied Knowings* (2019).

Decentering and reconceptualising

Sonia’s MPhil thesis which she was writing at the time of her passing focused on decentering the western story of theatre in the academy and reconceptualising performance from a Caribbean-centered perspective. This current work grew out of her earlier explorations of the performance of everyday life: King Dyal and street characters in the city of Bridgetown. Her interest in embodied techniques for performance intersected with her deep investment in the use of performance technique for empowerment and social development. This is particularly noted in her feminist work and exploration of women’s lives in the Caribbean and how they intersect with sexuality and spirituality. For Sonia, performance provided a methodology for going beneath the surface of things.

She had the ability to draw out strengths and energies people did not know they had, and many students found her sessions nothing short of transformative. Her exceptional personal resources likewise suffused her work as a writer, playwright, director, and actress who touched audiences across the Caribbean with her daring and innovative scripts, interpretations, and performances. She created dangerously, merging, and moving

fluidly and seamlessly across a range of expressive traditions and practices. Through it all, she was never afraid to be raw in the authenticity of her embodied expressions and knowing. She knew of herself as an African spirit being having a human experience. She lived in the world of ritual, recognising the false binary of sacred and profane. For Sonia, all was sacred, chiefly the creative process, and as such, was to be managed with meticulous care.

Sonia started her tenure at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus from 2007 to 2013 as Temporary Assistant Lecturer in Theatre and returned to the newly founded Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts as Temporary Assistant Lecturer in Theatre for contractual periods between September 2021 and May 2023.

In the Department of Cultural Studies, we also knew her as a student of profound intellectual subtlety, someone always ready to dig deeper rather than simply moving on when the going got tough. And it did get tough, but she never complained. Instead, the dignity she exuded became even more pronounced, especially in those moments of her deepest challenges and pain. She used the hurt in her work to conjure and channel her magic to move the pendulum beyond its natural swing! This made some uneasy, but she knew the work she came to do and did it well. She dared to ask questions and was meticulous in her undertaking to find the answers, never quite satisfied that the story could ever be fully told. She therefore kept asking and kept digging.

Enormity of impact

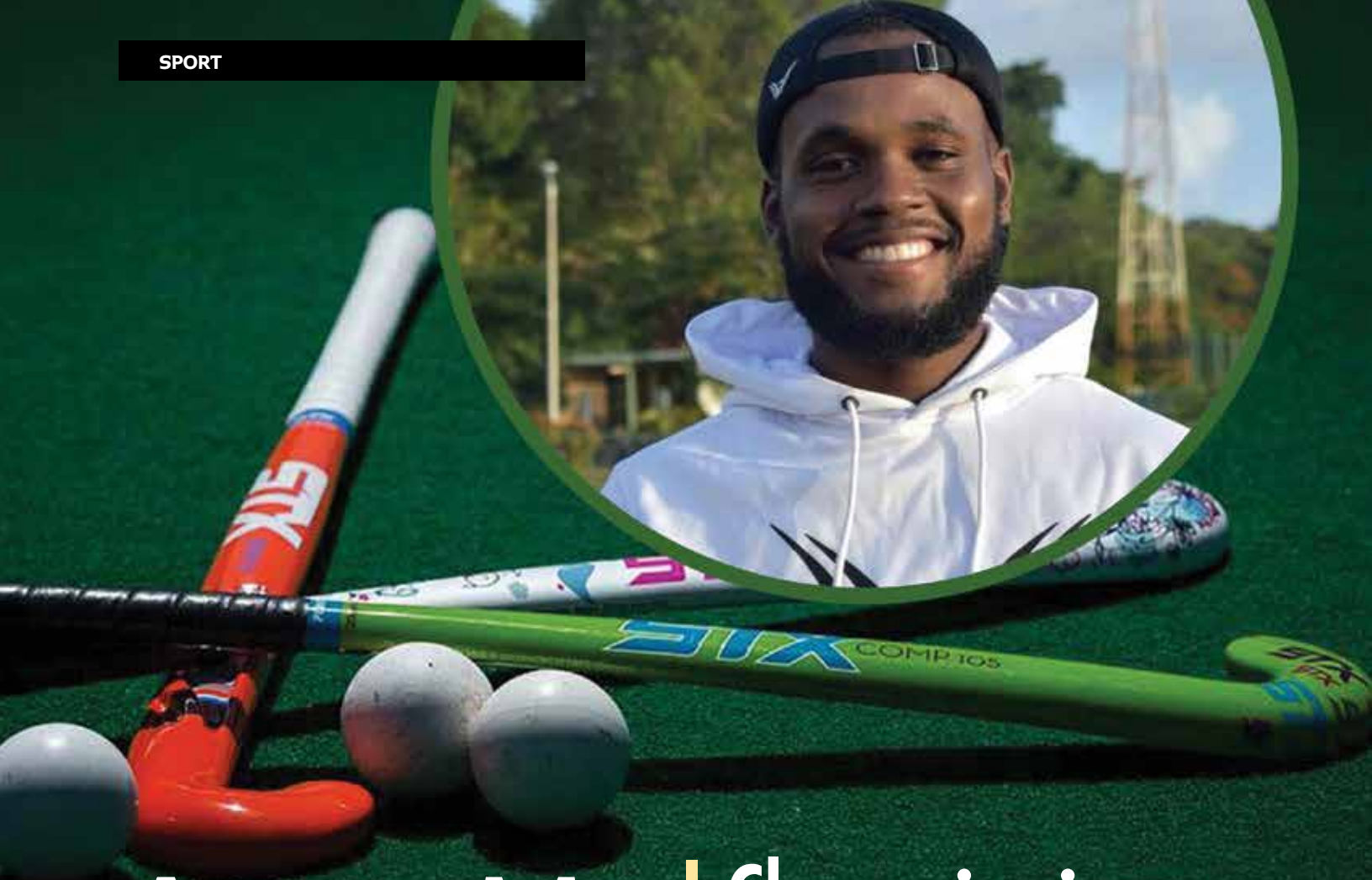
Many witnessed the enormity of Sonia’s impact and breadth of work across this region when scores of tributes filled social media pages with her image and videos of time spent in the company of others. From Cayman Islands to Suriname, creatives of island-nations and mainland territories and

across the Atlantic to the shores of West Africa and Europe expressed their collective sorrow of a light that was extinguished too soon. In our grief, we are called upon to hold each other even while we mourn with those who had the privilege to study and debate with Sonia, experience her teachings and facilitation of classes and workshops. We grieve with those who worked with this lion-heart gal and had the honour of seeing and experiencing her in the majesty of her craft; those who felt the magic of her laughter, the tenderness of her gaze, the sassiness of her wit, the comfort of her hugs, the power of her intellect and her clearly defined sense of divine purpose!

We find comfort in knowing that our beloved colleague and friend, teacher and mentor, mother and sister will join the celestial ancestral realm and be an eternal flame that will continue to illuminate our paths. Like the mighty baobab and silk cotton tree that stretches its reach, may the work that she has left us to do keep animating us and allowing us to stretch and grow even when it gets uncomfortable. May we “grow trees for shelter” and dare to be courageous in our choices and create art that makes a difference. May the expansive nature of her presence fill us with memories that serve as a balm to the void that we now feel. And ... may we hold her children in our thoughts, and when inclined, offer a prayer for their well-being.

Iba Ibae Tonu Omi Sola.
Rest Well and Rise in Glory
Sonia Suzette Williams!

Dr. Yanique Hume is Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Cultural Studies in the Faculty of Culture, Creative and Performing Arts. ♦



AKEEM RUDDER | Championing Inclusion Through Sport

by Camille Russell

Akeem Rudder is a beacon of inspiration who has devoted his life to opening doors and creating opportunities for those often ignored in the world of sport.

He graduated from the **Academy of Sport** at The UWI, Cave Hill Campus in 2020 with a BSc in Sport Science, a degree that has ignited his passion for making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

He now teaches part-time at his alma mater where he learnt about the many aspects of sport and sport management. It was there he dreamt up a project called “**Hockey for Persons with Disabilities**” for the Sport for International Development

course. This project was the seed for what would later grow into the **IncludeU Sports Academy**. With the encouragement of his lecturer, Javier Reid, Akeem turned his dream into a reality, driven by a desire to improve people’s lives through sport.

But setting up the academy was not just a walk in the park; Akeem faced social barriers that limited the physical activity of persons with disabilities, barriers that came from ableist perspectives, which imposed psychological, physical and logistical restrictions to participation in physical activity.

“Persons did not see the benefit immediately. In particular, funding was and remains a significant hurdle. In addition, there needs to be ongoing support for the creation of inclusive spaces if we are to have the community of disabled persons actively participating in these sports and sports-related activities,” he remarked.

Despite the obstacles, Akeem has triumphed over the past four years, witnessing a positive shift in societal acceptance of physical activity for special individuals. His commitment to evidence-based practices and special educational needs has helped



him to shape the academy to meet the specific needs of his students. However, Akeem says that **IncludeU Sports Academy** is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour. To serve the local disabled community better, he studied the systems around special education and disability, designing strategies that address the unique needs of this community.

*“The academy is based on and guided by sports science, evidence-based practices, and special educational needs. In fact, at the core of **IncludeU Sports Academy’s** success is its commitment to inclusive practices. We use customised interventions for all participants, focusing on their strengths,” he explained.*

Akeem emphasised that by providing high success environments and empowering participants, the academy ensures that every person, regardless of ability, feels welcome and supported.

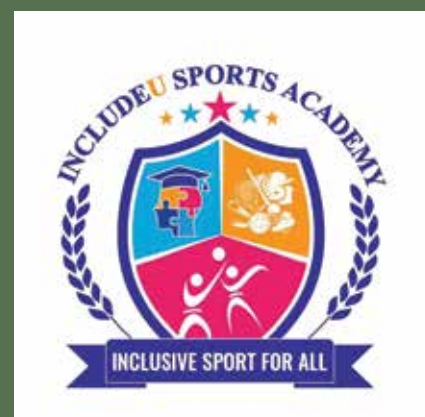
His dedication to inclusion goes beyond his academy. He collaborates with various organisations, including the **Barbados Council for the Disabled**, the **Autism Association of Barbados**, the **Barbados Down Syndrome Association**, and other similar groups. He hopes these

collaborations will signal to others the importance of working together to bring positive change for people with disabilities.

Akeem admits it is not a smooth path, but he is encouraged by the success stories he sees daily: *“When I look at my participants, I see the progress in behaviours, speech, learning ability, and overall well-being, especially among children with autism. And parents beam when they see their children participate in ways they never thought possible. These milestones are my true measures of success.”*

Looking ahead, Akeem plans to extend the academy’s reach to all Caribbean islands. His goals include creating more opportunities for sport events, competitions, and travel for individuals with disabilities. Akeem aspires to produce more Paralympic athletes and Special Olympics athletes, adding to a region-wide culture of inclusion.

As Akeem continues his journey as a champion of inclusion, he is not just on course to change lives but to reshape the landscape of inclusion through sport. ♦



Volleyballers Rebound to Capture Double Crowns



The UWI Blackbirds women are the new royalty of the women's Division 1 volleyball after convincingly claiming the title of double crown queens.

In a remarkable turnaround from their lacklustre 2022 season, the **UWI Blackbirds** soared to victory in both the **Goddard Enterprises Limited** volleyball knockout round and the championship final during the 2023 campaign, crowning them as the new queens of the court.

Team Coach **Renier Grace** expressed his pride in the team's remarkable 2023 performance highlighting their resilience and determination.

He noted, *"The mere fact that we lost last year, they used that as inspiration to come back this year with a fighting spirit. During the tournament, we played excellently in the knockout round. This gave the team a sense of accomplishment, and they honed the feeling from that victory to go on to win the championship."*

He also disclosed that the team went through a restructuring process, welcoming

new players into the ranks: *"Not only did we have national players join the team but some of the team members also played in Division 2 prior to the season; so, it didn't take that much time to get up to date with Division 1 preparation. Even so, I also have to state that the pre-season preparation was quite intense, as we did not want to have a repeat of last year's performance."*

Team captain **Shakera Hall** echoed Grace's sentiments, emphasising the seamless transition despite changes to the team: *"This year, we had some changes to the team. While we had a transition of new players to the UWI squad, I would say that we had a seamless transition. We came together, trained hard, and diligently worked on our cohesion as a team."* She added, *"This helped us to figure out what the strengths and the weaknesses are of each player, and we capitalised on the strong areas, and we worked hard to correct the weaknesses. Once we found that balance, it was smooth sailing for the team in both*

the knockout and the league."

The team won the knockouts in September 2023, with the championship round culminating on the weekend of 9-10 December 2023. On the Saturday night, the Blackbirds won a riveting game against defending champions **Burger King Clapham Toners'** with a scoreline of 25-21, 25-19, 25-15 at the Sir Garfield Sobers Sports Complex. The next night, the Blackbirds defeated **Warrens Jaguars** 13-25, 27-25, 25-15, 25-20 assuring themselves of the championship crown.

With an impressive record of 14 wins and only two losses for the season, accumulating 59 unassailable points, the Blackbirds secured their well-deserved victory.

Looking ahead to the next season, Coach Grace is determined to ensure better preparation, aiming to establish the team as a dominant force in volleyball.

"I want us to be a dominant force in volleyball so when other teams come to compete against us, there is some type of fear in them."

Team captain Hall shares Coach Grace's aspirations for the upcoming season, expressing her hope not only to defend their crown but to retain it.

"Not only do I hope we defend our crown, but I hope we retain it," Hall said, setting the stage for what is hoped to be another triumphant year for the UWI Blackbirds women in 2024. ♦



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