



Errol L. Miller

Degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD)

Chancellor,

We can be certain of your approval, following the recent triumph of the West Indies cricket team, albeit in the shortest form of the game, that cricket should be returned to its rightful place as a metaphor suitable for use at graduation ceremonies of the University of the West Indies. And this graduand, whom we honour this morning, is not only a metaphorical captain, pace bowler and supreme all-rounder, but an actual player of the glorious game, representing his school, Calabar, in the Sunlight Cup, playing twice on the All Schools team and having been called up, though unsuccessfully, for the Jamaica Cricket Team.

Errol Laurence Miller in his long career as a professional and public servant is, above all else, an educator. Starting from his first degree at the University College of the West Indies, he has been a high school science teacher, a university lecturer, a college principal, a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, a President of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, an independent Senator to the Parliament of Jamaica with a remit to address educational issues, a university professor, a prolific author, an international consultant and, more recently, Chancellor of Mico University College. This honour roll of appointments, shortened inevitably to meet the requirements of a brief citation, fails, nonetheless, to begin to capture his many accomplishments.

Let us, Chancellor, indulge in some randomly chosen details. Following receipt of his MA and PhD degrees, both being the first awarded by the UWI, Miller was appointed Principal of Mico Teachers College in 1972. Under his leadership, both

the management and curriculum of the College were radically transformed. Teachers were required to be more rounded and follow courses including ethics, art and practical skills far beyond their disciplinary specialties. Novel programmes were initiated with the Netherlands to train teachers in recognising and teaching students requiring special education and equally original programmes were established to encourage members of staff to publish books, leading to a significant increase in publications.

These features, of innovation and creativity, accompanied by an eye for organisational detail, are hallmarks of Professor Miller's many interventions in public life. Under his watch as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education from 1974-1975, the Ministry instituted the policy of tuition-free tertiary and secondary education; the policy of providing boarding grants for secondary schools was implemented; and the Ministry dropped the former 70-30 ratio between primary and preparatory schools for Common Entrance acceptances to one based on merit, leading immediately, to an increased proportion of students from primary schools receiving awards.

In 1984, in the face of an acrimonious salary standoff, the closure of one teacher training college and concerns about Government's support for education, Miller was elected unopposed as President of the Jamaica Teachers Association (JTA). Under his presidency, the salary dispute was settled, the teachers' college was reopened and the JTA assisted the Ministry in its policy to integrate all secondary schools into a single system of secondary education.

In 1981 Errol Miller was appointed Professor of Teacher Education at the University of the West Indies, initiating a new phase of his career, in which greater reflection now accompanied the still prevalent tendency to intervene in public, educational affairs. While serving as head of department and on various university committees, he was the author of thirteen books and monographs, edited four others, authored, 31 book chapters, 23 articles in refereed journals and produced 30 major consultancy reports.

And then there is his trajectory beyond education. In December 2000, following a six-month impasse between the Government and the Opposition, Errol Miller was appointed as chair of the Electoral Advisory Committee (EAC). In the twelve years, including three general elections, three local government elections and numerous by-elections that have elapsed, the EAC has evolved into the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) with Miller presiding over the normalisation and consolidation of the Jamaican electoral process.

Any of these individual accomplishments, I suggest, would merit serious consideration for the honour we bestow today. Yet, Chancellor, here we have them all, batting, fielding, bowling and captaincy in one sublime player which is why I invite you to invoke the powers vested in you by the Senate and Council The University of the West Indies and confer on Professor The Honourable Errol Miller the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.