



## *Glegg Lionel Watson*

Chancellor: Since word got round that Glegg Watson was to receive an honorary degree from this university, the telephone lines and fax lines and e-mail lines into Jamaica have been choked with calls and messages from his admirers on both sides of the Atlantic, each anxious to make sure that we knew just how splendid a fellow he is, and that we had acted none too soon. We now have an archive of personal citations which render *this* citation superfluous. Herein lies a salient truth about the man, one that is witness to his achievement and merit. I refer to the immense esteem and affection in which he is held by all who have had to deal with him. Chancellor, I present the jolliest good fellow of them all, Glegg Lionel Watson, Vice-President for Public and Urban Affairs of the Xerox Corporation.

Born in Kingston in 1944, he left Jamaica at the age of fifteen, to join his parents in Washington, D.C. If the U.S.A. is the fabled land of opportunity, Glegg Watson is one of those who had the ability to turn the fable into exemplary reality. Through his dynamism and talent for leadership, he soon became the first black President of a virtually all-white high school, one that catered to children of Washington's diplomatic corps. In this achievement, Glegg was only building on the industriousness and innovativeness that he had shown at Rusea's High School in his native country. While reading for the B.A. degree in Political Science and Economics at Howard University, he found time to become an All-American in soccer. In 1972, he gained the Master's degree in Public Administration, in a programme offered jointly by Syracuse and Cornell Universities.

While at Howard, he began to distinguish himself as a writer for *The Washington Post*. He travelled with, and wrote about B.B. King, and he was one of only two black journalists to cover man's first trip to the moon. He also covered the integration of the country clubs of Washington's so-called 'silk suburbs.' In 1968, he played a major role in the publication of *Ten Blocks from the White House*, a book produced by the staff of *The Washington Post* on the assassination of Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. His book *Black Life in Corporate America*, 1982, analysed issues of race and gender as experienced by men and women in the Fortune 500 companies. This ground-breaking work was a best-seller, second only to Alex Haley's *Roots* for hardback sales among non-fiction books by black writers. Watson was invited to speak at some of America's leading business schools: at Harvard, Stanford, Yale, and Wharton, to name a few.

By then he had begun to make a name for himself in the corporate world. One of his guiding principles has been: 'If you want to get somewhere, you must work with the best, you must run with the best.' After a stint as Placement Director at the State University of New York, he was recruited, in 1972, by Booz, Allen and Hamilton, one of the top three management consulting firms in the U.S.A. As Senior Consultant, he was responsible for major reorganisation of private companies and public sector institutions, including the restructuring of various urban school systems. Then, in 1976, he joined Xerox, as Manager for Human Resources. At the time, he had many friends at Xerox. Some of them were on a 'head hunting' mission to find someone who would give the company a new fillip. They found Watson; the choice was elementary.

He has been with Xerox ever since, eventually rising to his present position, in which he serves as the corporation's interface with its customers, employees and suppliers. In this capacity, he has brought an enlightened and forward-looking policy to the management of Xerox philanthropy, being, in the words of Charles F. Harris of Amistad Press, 'an energetic and enthusiastic supporter' of academic institutions, as well as 'artistic and literary endeavours.' To quote Kingsley Obaji of N.I.S. Communications and Computers, Watson 'is tirelessly travelling from one university to another, delivering corporate cheques, equipment, or opportunities for internship or employment for young graduates.' Small wonder, then, that he has also been giving great service as a member of the Boards of Trustees of various tertiary institutions, including Howard University, Lincoln University, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. And here we must especially recognise this evening his contribution as a member of the Board of the Partnership Campaign of the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies. We welcome him as our benefactor and friend.

He has received numerous honours and awards. For instance, he was 'Outstanding Young Man of America' for 1971. November 14, 1984 was named Glegg Watson Day by the Office of the Mayor of Washington, D.C., and in 1987 he received the Mayor's Award of the City of Los Angeles. In 1988 he received the Chairman's Award of the Congressional Black Caucus, for distinguished service to the nation. He is the holder of honorary doctorates from several universities.

The material generosity which Glegg Watson has been able to dispense on behalf of Xerox is only an extension of the remarkable generosity of spirit with which he has been blessed, an abundance of the Christian virtue of considering oneself one's brother's keeper. This is an expression of the strong sense of family which he got from his Jamaican upbringing. Now, all whom he has helped or befriended become part of his extended family. Tonight, to talk Jamaican, 'the fambily glad can't done.'

The worth of the man is summed up definitively by his beloved Aunt Pearl, Mrs King, who says, 'He is a splendid fellow, a nephew whom any Auntie would like to have.' He has worked with the best, he has run with the best, he has emulated the best. His childhood hero was Norman Manley, who was to become one of Jamaica's National Heroes. One of his earliest mentors in the U.S.A. was the highly respected Clifford Alexander, first black Secretary of the Army. Now Glegg is himself most worthy to be emulated, a superior example of Caribbean initiative, industry and resourcefulness.

Chancellor, for his high achievement in managerial and corporate skills, for his great good-neighbourliness, for his contributions to the cause of West Indian peoples and to peoples of colour, for his tireless efforts in the cause of education, and for his beneficence to this university, I call upon you, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of the University of the West Indies, to confer on Glegg Lionel Watson the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.

Mona  
13 November, 1998