

# Valedictorians 2017



**Mr Yenver Caesar**  
Bachelor of Science,  
International Relations  
(Special), Public Sector  
Management (Minor)  
First Class Honours,  
Faculty of Social Sciences

**Mr. Caesar** switched from Biochemistry to International Relations when he realized he loves global affairs, public speaking and debating. His goal is to work with

regional bodies such as Caricom and the OECS, and eventually, to enter politics in his country, "with my eyes set on the portfolio of Minister of Tourism and my ultimate dream is to one day become the prime minister of St. Lucia."

While some decry the state of politics and shun it, he takes a different view. "Many people try to deter the youth from political ambitions because of its unscrupulous reputation," he says, "but I believe that the onus is on the youth to offer themselves as candidates and aim to be the change which we all dream to happen."

In 2016, he was elected International Affairs Committee Chairperson of the Guild of Students, and in 2017, he was Treasurer.



**Mr Rondelle Keller**  
Bachelor of Laws  
First Class Honours  
Faculty of Law

**At The UWI**, Mr. Keller took advantage of the opportunities available to students and that propel them beyond a strictly academic experience. He was on both the Debate and Swim teams; he learned

Chinese at the Centre for Language Learning; took advantage of the study abroad programme to spend a year in China; and was part of the team that represented the Campus at the Jessup 2017 International Law Moot Competition in Washington, DC. He says UWI has made him a "global citizen."

He says the secrets to his success are late nights, early mornings, and surrounding himself with people who are positive and supportive. His parents are a great influence in his life.

Mr. Keller plans to attend the Hugh Wooding Law School and then be admitted to the bar. Ultimately, he would like to serve his country by entering the political arena, perhaps as a future Attorney General.



**Ms Karisa Bridgelal**  
Bachelor of Arts, Literatures  
in English with Double  
Minors in Human  
Resource Management  
and Psychology First  
Class Honours Faculty of  
Humanities & Education

**Ms. Bridgelal's** love for literature began while she was a student at Holy Faith Convent in

Penal, where she was influenced by the passion of her teachers. At the UWI she found further inspiration from her lecturers, particularly the late Dr. Giselle Rampaul, in whose footsteps she wanted to follow as she plans to lecture in Literature one day.

Karisa is currently pursuing her Master's in English Literature. This sci-fi and fantasy buff is examining the work of Caribbean writers in that genre.

"My hope is to someday add to the literary canon in the Caribbean as a critic or writer and have students use my work as a frame of reference. I am currently pursuing my thesis in Caribbean Science Fiction, a genre that is fairly new to our region and I hope I can add something of substance to this community," she said.



**Ms Zia Barnard**  
Bachelor of Science,  
Biology with Specializations  
in Biotechnology and  
Microbiology,  
First Class Honours,  
Faculty of Science &  
Technology

**Zia Barnard** attended the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College in her native St. Lucia, where she developed

a keen interest in Mathematics and Biology. After graduation, financial constraints forced her to delay continuing her schooling. She spent a year teaching while applying for scholarships. In 2014 she was awarded a UWI Open Scholarship which covered tuition, fees, books and housing. Without it, she says she would have never been able to attend UWI.

The last of four children, Zia says her generous, caring and goal-oriented older sister, Zanna, is her ultimate mentor. With her love of nature adventure, between 2007 till 2011, she was a member of the Youth Environment Forum of the St. Lucia National Trust, advocating for the conservation of her country's natural biodiversity. Her environmental work combined with her academic studies helped her understand the biological purposes of plants and animals in the food chain.



**Ms Amy Victor**  
Bachelor of Science,  
International Relations  
(Special), Spanish (Minor)  
Second Class Honours  
(Upper Division)  
Faculty of Social Sciences

**While at Naparima** Girls' High School, Amy Victor developed an interest in languages, but her fascination with International Relations began shortly before

entering the UWI when she participated in a model United Nations seminar.

She is still uncertain of where she will go now that she has done some of both.

"Many persons would like to believe that as a university graduate they must have their future all figured out. This is the biggest myth because only upon graduating, I realised that is impossible to have it completely figured out."

What she does know is that she wants to make a difference to this world.

One issue she is working on in the short term is the lack of affordable child care, which limits the economic opportunities available to single women. Her first step will be to launch an early childhood centre that provides 24-hour child care at affordable rates.



**Ms Sofiyya Hassanali**  
Bachelor of Science,  
Optometry  
Second Class Honours  
(Upper Division)  
Faculty of Medical Sciences

**Service has always been** a part of Ms. Hassanali's life. Born in Trinidad, she grew up in Florida, where she worked with Islamic and non-profit organizations.

In Trinidad, she organized the Barakah Foundation Free Medical Clinics, which take place every four to six months in Chaguanas. At UWI, she and her classmates conducted a Vision Mission trip to Jamaica, providing eye care to people in need. She strives to be a good role model, and believing in the importance of inspiring children, she hosts a television show, 'Story Time with Sofiyya' on the Islamic Broadcasting Network. She also works with the Islamic Home for Children in Gasparillo.

While she wants to make a difference in the world, she believes in setting realistic goals. "I believe in fixing my own backyard first," she said. "I want to help our people of Trinidad and the Caribbean reach a higher standard of living."