



Roy Marshall

MR. CHANCELLOR, may I call upon you to welcome back into our academic community our former Vice-Chancellor - Oshley Roy Marshall, Kt., C.B.E., M.A. (Cantab.), Ph.D. (Lond.), Hon. LL.D. (Sheffield), of the Inner Temple Barrister-at-Law. I must first confess that my presence here at this University which makes it possible for me to perform this duty is almost totally Sir Roy's responsibility. It was on a suggestion from him that I indicated that I could be available to fill a vacancy which had arisen in the Faculty of Law, and not very long afterwards I received an offer which in due course I accepted. Now that I have myself taken part in the proceedings of the Assessment and Promotions Committee my respect for Sir Roy has grown immensely. Despite his other successes it may well remain his most outstanding achievement to have secured the appointment to a chair of a candidate without a single publication in a refereed journal.

A Barbadian born and bred, Sir Roy belongs to that band of West Indians of talent whose career choices compel them to live abroad, but who treat that period of exile as one of intensive preparation for service in the region when the opportunity arises and the call is made. In England he carved for himself an academic career in law of exceptional distinction. Testimony to the solidity of his reputation can be seen in his having been chosen to edit two standard text books - one commonly used by students - Nathan on Trusts, the other a practitioner's text book often quoted in the courts Theobolds on Wills. He prepared one edition of Theobold - the 12th - but such was his contribution to Nathan's that he was named co-Author. Thus in a practical way the many students at Cave Hill who acquire Nathan and Marshall on Trusts each year pay tribute to Sir Roy's scholarship from his native land.

The foundations for this academic success were laid here in Barbados - principally at Harrison College where he became head boy and from which he won an island scholarship in Classics in 1938. He read law at Pembroke College, Cambridge, from 1942 graduating with first class honours in 1945. From Cambridge he moved to University College, London, where in 1946 he was appointed an Assistant Lecturer. In 1948 he earned the Doctoral degree and was promoted Lecturer. The following year he was appointed sub-Dean of the Faculty of Law, a post he held till 1956 when at the age of 36 he moved to the Chair of Law at Sheffield University and the Headship of the Law Department there.

Throughout that period his interest in West Indian students and his connections with the West Indies remained strong. His all consuming hobby - racing - served as a link for he arranged for the shipment of thoroughbreds to these parts through a bloodstock agency he founded. The consensus is that his judgement in that field lacked the unerring touch which marked it in the field of law.

There was a break from Sheffield in 1963 for two years of service as Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ife for which he was honoured by the Nigerian Government. His selection as the founder of that Faculty was no doubt a recognition of the impact he had made on the many West African students whom he had met and taught in England.

On his return there in 1965 there were significant developments. Race relations had deteriorated sharply since the enactment in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962. He was in the forefront of those agitating for legislation to help correct the palpable injustices. He was Chairman of the Conciliation Committee for the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire, and in 1968 when the revision of the Race Relations Act of 1965 was under serious consideration he headed a lobby group called Equal Rights to ensure that the proposed Race Relations legislation was comprehensive in scope and capable of effective enforcement.

His involvement in West Indian affairs continued. Even while far away at Ife he was chosen to be a member of a commission appointed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to report on subversive activity in that country - undoubtedly a delicate and invidious assignment. In 1966 he was an adviser to the Barbados delegation at their Independence Conference. If not a founding father of the nation he can claim to be numbered among the consultant obstetricians. In 1967 he held consultations with the late Sir Hugh Wooding to hammer out the compromises which were eventually accepted and formed the framework for the system of legal education in the West Indies today.

In 1969 he was installed as Vice-Chancellor of this University, an office which he held for five years. He brought to it wide scholarly experience and familiarity with the problems of academic administration in both new and older universities. In addition there were his own innate qualities of energy, drive and determination.

His tenure saw the beginning of the work of remodelling the structure of the University and a significant movement towards the involvement of students in decision making. For Sir Roy has always been deeply concerned about students. At Sheffield one day he walked into the Senior Common Room at the time when examination papers were being marked to find members of staff engaged in anxious discussion over the possibility that some 30% of the final year class were likely to fail. After a moment's thought his comment was that should this happen then something must be seriously wrong either with the marking or the teaching. The comment was effective. The percentage of failures did not exceed the usual norm.

His presence at the summit during the early days of the development of the Faculty of Law was invaluable. Although he could not be directly engaged in the venture his wise and sympathetic counsel was always available, and there was the reassurance that wherever possible the administrative channels would be cleared of bureaucratic blocks.

Vice-Chancellors like all others at the pinnacle of power must necessarily fight battles every day to shape the institutions over which they preside in conformity with the idealized image of it which they hold. In the process they do acquire friends and admirers, but inevitably they create foes. The passage of time makes judgement more objective. It is a tribute to Sir Roy's achievements that both Universities at which he gave leadership have thought fit to honour him.

MR. CHANCELLOR, Sir Roy is already part of this University. His ideas and his plans are an ineradicable part of its structure, and in recognition of this and his other accomplishments I ask you to receive him by the authority of Council and Senate into the membership of our community with the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

24 th November, 1976