



Earl W. Jarrett

Chancellor, there are business people who dabble in public affairs with varying degrees of success; and there are public personalities who occasionally set their gaze on business, though the success rate, I suspect, is probably lower here than in the former instance. And then there is the graduand whom we honour tonight, who defies both of these categories and boldly charts his own path of public engagement. I speak of none other than Earl W. Jarrett, CD, LLD, Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and General Manager of the Jamaica National Building Society who is resetting the bar for what it means to be an engaged and committed Jamaican and Caribbean citizen.

Earl Jarrett, a graduate of St George's High School and Exed Community College, completed his bachelor's and master's in Accounting from the University of the West Indies, Mona before pursuing a brilliant career in the Jamaican private sector. Beginning in 1984 at the auditing firm KPMG Peat Marwick, he quickly moved through the ranks from accountant to senior auditor and then manager. Following senior managerial stints at NEM Insurance Jamaica Ltd. and T. Geddes Grant, he moved to the Jamaica National (JN) Building Society, where he has been General Manager since 1999.

Under Jarrett's leadership, the JN, an International Jamaican company whose main business, as the name implies, focuses on providing housing and business loans for Jamaicans at home and abroad, has grown consistently. During the critical half

decade leading into the global recession from 2005-2010, JN managed every year to significantly increase total assets, capital and reserves, total number of loans and total revenues – indeed, all the criteria of a growing and healthy company. In addition to his membership on the various subsidiary boards of the JN, he is also Chairman of the Jamaica Automobile Association, on the boards of the Gleaner Company, the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Jamaica Business Development Centre and Walkers Wood Caribbean Foods Ltd. Alongside these already hefty commitments, he has found the wherewithal to play a leading role as a trustee of the Dudley Grant Memorial Trust, Honorary Treasurer of the Council of Voluntary Social Services, sometime President of the Rotary Club of Kingston, Chairman of the Jamaica Cancer Society and member of the National Task Force on Political Tribalism.

Lest it be thought that his memberships on this wide diversity of voluntary concerns were only token, I suggest, on the contrary, that they are all quite substantial. Chancellor, one need only browse the proverbial Google for proof that Jarrett's contribution is phenomenal. Click over [here](#) and he is talking in the Gleaner about the need to improve driving on the roads to save lives and contribute to economic development; over [there](#) he is talking about the massive potential for national development that exists in the small business sector. Click again and he is commenting on the role that 'centres of excellence' can play in transforming the country's educational system; click finally and he is talking about the new book soon to be launched on the history of King's House, sponsored by the Jamaica National.

Chancellor, I crave your indulgence as I give my own experience. Late last year, I sat with Earl Jarrett in Grand Cayman as part of an initiative to explore the economic, cultural and social potential that exist in the Northern Caribbean as a unique sub-regional dimension of the wider region. The Conference, sponsored by JN was fertile and opened the door to a set of possibilities for deeper integration that I hope will eventually be pursued. On one of the evenings, Jarrett and his board used the opportunity to re-launch the JN's corporate presence in the Cayman Islands and it struck me then that in the ability to bring together and find synergy between seemingly disparate engagements – conference on the one hand and the re-launch of a company branch on the other – lies the genius of Jarrett's intervention, as a genuinely enlightened businessman, who recognises that without

the success of the parts, the whole cannot flourish. But equally, he is clear that without a generous donation of time and energy to the public sphere, the parts cannot survive, indeed, may wither and die.

Chancellor, for his enlightened and unique contribution of time and effort to both the private and public sectors in Jamaica and for charting a path that all graduates of the University of the West Indies might wish to emulate, I present **Mr. Earl Jarrett** and invite you, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of this University, to confer on him the degree of **Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa***.

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