



Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, B.A.

Chancellor, the Bible tells us, in Joel Chapter 2, “Your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions.” The life and legacy of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford is paved with the many visions of a young man, translated into many realities with extraordinary speed.

Indeed his precocious talent was recognised so early by Prime Minister the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow that he became Minister of Education at the tender age of 30 – the youngest Minister with the biggest Ministry.

But our distinguished Honorary graduand has broken many records associated with education – even in his youth, after primary education at St. Alban’s Elementary School, literally down the beach from the Sandiford home, he attended no less than three secondary schools – The Coleridge School, the Coleridge-Parry School, amalgamated in 1951, and finally Harrison College. From Harrison he won the Barbados Scholarship in 1956 with distinctions in English, History and Latin, and proceeded to the then University College of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica in 1957.

At Mona he not only acquired an Upper Second Honours degree in English, but achieved two other distinctions critical to his ultimate achievement of Prime Minister – first, the Presidency of the University Guild of Undergraduates at Mona – a cut and thrust political arena that makes Barbadian politics look like the Queen’s garden party; and second, a Jamaican wife, the Lady Angelita, thus, as so many Barbadian public figures have before and after him, pledging his troth so eloquently to the cause of regional integration!

After completing a Masters in Economics and Social Studies at the University of Manchester he returned home to teach, initially, but joined the Democratic Labour Party and was appointed Personal Assistant to the then Premier the Honourable Errol Walton Barrow from September 12, 1966 until August 1967 when he was appointed DLP Senator and Minister of Education. He was elected to Parliament in 1971 in the constituency of St. Michael South, serving for a record 28 continuous years, and he was reappointed Minister of Education, with additional portfolios from 1971 to 75.

But in his very first term he made his mark, translating his visions into reality. He established the Barbados Community College – the BCC - on January 5th, 1968, and almost two years later to the day, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, after our National Hero the Right Excellent Samuel Jackman Prescod. He served again as Minister of Education and Culture when the DLP returned to power in 1986 ... a case of coming home, as the longest serving Minister of Education in our history – 9 years. And other visions to come were the National Sports Council, established in April 1973, and the Sherbourne Conference Centre. This great asset is now most deservedly renamed after him, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference and Cultural Centre. It has been suggested that the Sandiford Centre rolls more mellifluously off the tongue, while the SCC may be the ultimate acronym, matching Sir Lloyd's favourite child, the BCC, down the road.

But Sir Lloyd's gigantic contribution to education and development in Barbados did not stop there, for on the untimely death of Prime Minister Barrow in 1987 he walked confidently to the crease, and returned the DLP to power in 1991. His greatest challenge came with the economic crunch of 1993 / 94, when he courageously cut civil servants salaries by 8 %, the key issue said to have cost him his job and his party the government. But Barbadians will be eternally grateful to Sir Lloyd for refusing to devalue our precious dollar, saving us from the downward spiral of loss of confidence and everlasting devaluation suffered by so many victims of the IMF "badvisers"! Devaluation was simply not part of Sir Lloyd's vision for Barbados. And he presided over the origins of the Social Partners Protocol, the governance mechanism that continues to save this country.

Sir Lloyd has contributed to integration in the Caribbean in many ways. And he has received numerous awards, including that of Knight of St. Andrew, in 2002, and his recent appointment as Ambassador to China. Here I have no doubt that his Barbados Scholarship with distinction in Latin is proof that he will have no difficulty learning Chinese.

And so Chancellor, it is with gratitude to the man who saved the dollar so the pennies could take care of themselves, the man who built the SJP, the NSC, the BCC and the SCC; teacher, parliamentarian, statesman, scholar, Prime Minister, Ambassador, that I invite you, with the authority vested in you by the Senate and Council of our great university, to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.