



Professor Sir Kenneth Stuart

Chancellor, I present Sir Kenneth Stuart, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) of Queen's University, Belfast, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and of London, Fellow of the American College of Physicians, Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Fellow of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine.....He **surely** is a jolly good Fellow! He receives fellowships the way other men get haircuts.

Kenneth Lamonte Stuart was born on June 16th, many, many years ago, into a deeply religious home in Bank Hall. He learnt his three Rs at the famous Wesley Hall Boys' School under the legendary Charles F Broome, and proceeded to Harrison College. There he was part of that sixth form galaxy that included Sir Roy Marshall, Sir Carlisle Burton, Sir James Tudor and National Hero the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. He played cricket and football, of course, but his great physique was acquired by swimming for miles off Brighton Beach, in the company of Sir Carlisle. I first met Sir Ken as a freshman medical student at Mona in 1962, in the annual staff student tennis match. He showed us that while brains were more important than brawn at the hospital, at tennis the combination of brain and brawn was invincible.

He won the Barbados Scholarship of 1940, in classics, and after a B.A. at McGill in classics and philosophy, he went on to study medicine in Belfast, paving the way for other great classical scholars like Sir George Alleyne, Dr. Richie Haynes and Dr. Oscar Jordan to transmutate from arts to science. He graduated in 1948, and wasted no time gaining a diploma in Tropical Medicine and the Royal College Memberships. In "two twos" - four years to be exact - he was appointed Senior Registrar at the new University College Hospital of the West Indies in Jamaica. A year later he became Lecturer in Medicine, and was promoted at great speed, to become the first West Indian Professor of Medicine, in 1966.

His career as researcher, teacher and international consultant can be divided, like Gaul, into three parts. The first is the glorious early period of UWI, the founding years, from 1952 to 66. He relished the challenge of blazing a trail and the wealth of research to be done. Like a medical King Midas, everything he touched turned to gold. First came the description, with Bras and Jelliffe, of Veno-occlusive Disease of the liver, or V.O.D., an aggressive liver disease which was killing Jamaican children. It was caused by a popular bush tea made from *crotalaria retusa* - one of many "cure-alls" of our grandmothers.

This was followed by the discovery of a toxin, hypoglycine A, in the unripe Jamaican ackee, cause of the feared vomiting sickness. Sir Ken tells how Lady Standard, then Sister Francis, arranged a special bedroom on the paediatric ward for him, so he could do emergency liver biopsies on these babies, at any hour of night. A Ministry of Health education unit was set up to educate the public about these two dreaded diseases. There is no better demonstration in the world, of the impact of research on public health, of the benefits of health education, and of partnership between medical researchers and Ministry of Health.

Some of his research in those years was also directed towards the gentler sex - a scientific challenge which Sir Ken undertook with typical energy and enthusiasm, culminating in marriage, in 1958, to Barbara, Lady Stuart.

The next ten years saw a steady flow of papers on malnutrition, rheumatic fever, cardiomyopathies and high blood pressure, and recognition on the world scene. He criss-crossed the globe with the medical jet set. I remember an issue of the medical student magazine, the *Stethoscope*, which reported under News: "Professor Ken Stuart visited the Department of Medicine this month".

The second part of his career combined that international reputation abroad with his role at Mona, as Dean and Head of the Dept of Medicine. He promoted teaching in Barbados and Trinidad, & recognising the demands of the young Turks of the day, he led the development of our own postgrad programmes. Abroad, he was made a Member of the WHO Expert Panel on Cardiovascular Disorders, Chairman of their Committee for Control of Hypertension, Honorary Lecturer at Harvard and Member of the Board of the London School of Hygiene.

And so in 1976 it was a natural step to move fully on to the World Stage, and into the third phase of his career, first as Medical Adviser to the Commonwealth Secretariat. Much of his message was visionary, with timeless wisdom and practical advice that is even more relevant today. And later, as Consultant Adviser to the Wellcome Trust, Chairman of the Court of Governors of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, member of the Board of Governors of the IDRC, Chairman of the Caribbean Health Research Council, consultant to the World Bank, and prestigious Gresham Professor of Physic, to name just a few, he has continued in this role, as international medical adviser and visionary. He was knighted by Her Majesty the Queen in 1977 for services to medicine in the Caribbean and the Commonwealth.

In this phase of his career his body of written work has been enormous and on going. Let me quote from just one report, on the Contribution of Medical Schools to National Health Development, 17 years ago in 1982: "Ministries of Health, Ministries of Education and Deans of Medical Schools should jointly strive to establish National Health Councils", and again:

"Subcommittees of these councils should advise on all aspects of national medical and health education policies.....health manpower planning, health services research and medical research....." Words twice as relevant today as 17 years ago.

Sir Ken's secret of success has been his canny ability to convert thought into action, and action into words. Many an academic career has foundered at the mere thought of action. Many have the urge to write, but lie down until the urge passes. Sir Ken has taken to heart the lines of both W.H.Auden and the Elizabethan poet Francis Bacon. Auden wrote:

“Those who will not reason
Perish in the Act -
Those who will not act
Perish for that reason”.

Francis Bacon wrote: “Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man”. These are the marks of scholarship, which Sir Ken mastered in full measure.

This third phase of his work continues at the same pace as 20 years ago. He is re-writing the message of health promotion, which he takes to heart himself, and which gives him the gift of eternal youth. He has taken his messages to all corners of the globe - and although he is quintessentially Barbadian, he is now very much a citizen of planet Earth, crossing oceans more easily than most of us can find our way to Boscobel. From Bank Hall to Brazzaville, from Mona to Micronesia, he has been both a caring physician and an ambassador for Barbados. Chancellor, I beg you to receive a distinguished doctor, a celebrated scholar, a renowned researcher, a Brighton boy, a Bajan Bard and Caribbean luminary, a light out of the West, and confer on Kenneth Lamonte Stuart the Degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.

23rd October 1999