

NewsExtra

■ Veteran calypsonian receives honorary degree

Supie: It is a superior moment

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"IT IS a superior moment."

Veteran calypsonian Andrew Marciano (Lord Superior) made this pronouncement minutes after Chancellor Robert Bermudez conferred him with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) at the graduation exercise for the Faculty of Science and Technology at St Augustine Campus, The UWI Centre and Physical Education Sports, The University of the West Indies (The UWI), yesterday.

Among those present were Chancellor Robert Bermudez, Vice Chancellor Prof Sir Hilary Beckles, St Augustine Campus principal Prof Brian Copeland, Deputy Principal Prof Indar Ramnarine, University Registrar William Iton and Valedictorian St Lucian national Zia Barnard.

Marciano was accompanied

by his ex-wife Dr Janet Stanley-Marciano, and a complement of entertainers including Lord Relator (Willard Harris), Brother Mudada, Abebele, musician Mike Germaine and calypsonian/songwriter Gregory Ballantyne. As he made his way for UWI official photographs, scores of people congratulated Marciano on his milestone. Graduands seized the opportunity to pose for selfies. Marciano's tertiary recognition coincided with Calypso History Month.

Marciano: Zenith of my career

Asked to share his sentiments, Marciano, 79, said: "This is the zenith of my career. I am grateful to the university and all may fans and well wishers who have supported me for years. It is truly an honour. It is a great day for calypso and the artform."

As Marciano set about polish-

ing his craft, he studied the late calypso greats including Cristo (Christopher Laidlaw), Mighty Spoiler (Theophilus Phillip) and Mighty Viking.

He said: "You have to take the artform seriously. You have to study diligently. Read. Write the lyrics. Learn to write music," he said.

Dr Stanley-Marciano added: "It is a privilege to see him as 'Dr Marciano'. I am happy to see this accolade bestowed upon him. I remember the days when he hustled in the hotels in Port of Spain. When he started, you would see signs 'No dogs and calypsonians allowed. He is a calypso champion. He has overcome challenges like the radio station issue. He had his dream crushed. He started the all year round calypso tents. Now calypsoes are being performed all year round."

Pleased as punch, Mudada said: "Lord Superior made me feel proud as an artiste. He has



DR MARCIANO: Veteran calypsonian Andrew Marciano (Lord Superior), left, accepts his Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) Honors Causa from Chancellor Robert Bermudez at the graduation ceremony for the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, Science and Technology at UWI Spec, St Augustine, yesterday. In the background is Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles. —Photo: STEPHEN DOOBAY

lifted the visibility of the fraternity. I have known him my whole career from 1976 to now. I remember when "Supie" had the all year round calypso tent at Legion Hall."

Harris added: "I am elated and excited. He worked hard for many years. He deserves the best. Superior is superior."

Abebele welcomed the prestigious award, and said "it was better late than never." Germaine said he has always enjoyed accompanying Superior during a live performance. Ballantyne said he was working with Marciano on his 2018 composition Pan On The Road.

Paying tribute to Superior, Ballantyne said: "He is truly a statesman of calypso."

Barnard: Thanks to family

Barnard said it was important for

graduands to recognise the immense contribution of families to their accomplishments.

She said: "They provided us with the necessary tools, acted as generous banks of financial resources, motivated us to succeed and to push beyond our shortcomings. With their encouragement, we harnessed our potential, recognising mediocrity was not on the agenda. Our friends became our "second family" with whom we experienced some of the most important moments of our lives. You provided support during seemingly never-ending times of hardships; company in the lonesome hours, and daily stress-relieving humour. Together we have reached higher heights than we could have on our own. Continue building on those existing friendships."

Barnard reminded everyone Prof Copeland said "as UWI graduates we are the ultimate face of The UWI brand."