



Michael J. Kelly

Chancellor, Michael Kelly was born 75 years ago in Tullamore, Ireland, a country imbued with strong spiritual connections – both liquid spirits and holy spirits. Michael's family spirit was Roman Catholic – he was one of seven children, three of whom became Jesuit priests. He joined the brotherhood at 17 to begin his religious training.

He earned a B.A. in Mathematics and mathematical Physics in 1951 and an M.A. in Mathematical Science in 1952 – both with First Class Honours. He added a licentiate in Philosophy (Maxima cum Laude) in 1955. Armed with this unique combination of skills in science, maths, philosophy and theology he moved to Zambia, as a teacher of maths and science, and has lived and worked there for almost 50 years, becoming a Zambian citizen. He became Headmaster of Canisius College in Chisekesi. But after re-tooling in child psychology and educational psychology, with a PhD in 1974, he became Senior Lecturer and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Zambia, in 1975. He served as Pro-Vice-Chancellor and as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and was promoted to Professor in 1989.

But this recital of outstanding educational achievements says little about this extraordinary man. The direction of his life changed completely 10 years ago, faced with the ravages of AIDS in Zambia. When a son of President Kenneth Kaunda died, and the President acknowledged that AIDS had killed him, Professor Kelly was moved to action.

He began researching and writing about AIDS, and his work became known to people all over Africa. He is part of the faith-based and civil society leadership against AIDS, starting a Mobile Task Team, and working, writing, speaking and organizing - throughout Southern Africa. He has worked with the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, DFID, OXFAM and every AIDS related organization in Africa. His commitment is total, and as they say in Jamaica: "His fame gone abroad"!

Professor Kelly visited the Caribbean in 2002, giving a series of distinguished lectures across the campuses. His knowledge, his vision and his humanity moved his audiences everywhere, and forced people to review their position on AIDS – to go beyond their comfort zone – and he inspired us to redouble our efforts in the UWI Response to the HIV / AIDS Programme, or UWIHARP. He collaborated with Professor Brendan Bain, University Chairman of UWIHARP, in production of a book “Education and AIDS in the Caribbean” – a seminal and definitive text on our tasks and challenges in fighting AIDS. His words are powerful: on orphans, he says we are being deluded by one of the AIDS myths, that families are coping. On the elderly he asks “Who will care for the care givers?” His powerful motto is: “HIV / AIDS is a weapon against education, but education is a weapon against HIV / AIDS”.

Chancellor, it is no coincidence that the University of the West Indies will be assisted by UNESCO in establishing a Chair in HIV / AIDS Education, but it is serendipitous that Professor Kelly is here to be honoured in the very week that this Chair has been announced! And I believe that this year, 2004, which has been so eventful for our Caribbean and our University, will be remembered, among other things, as a watershed in the fight against AIDS.

And so Chancellor, in recognition of the eloquent efforts of this ever enthusiastic educator, the pure passion of this priest, the sheer humanity of this humble man of God, I invite you, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of this University, to confer on Michael J. Kelly the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.