

## Cave Hill Anniversary

Greetings,

First let me thank all of you for coming to share in this celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Cave Hill campus. It has been indeed a moving service, and I am also grateful to the participants of the various faiths who have demonstrated that ecumenism is alive and well in our University. The presence of so many dignitaries from all walks of life and the fact that so many of you are graduates of our University and this Campus are proof positive of the extent to which this Campus has salted and flavored the life and times of Barbados and the surrounding Caribbean.

Let me also echo the thanks to the government and people of Barbados who have embraced not only the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies as an institution, but also the young men and women who have come here from other parts of the Caribbean and whom you have socialized into being West Indians. Fifty years is a short time in the history of the good and great universities, as one of the strengths of institutions like ours is that we are durable—the uncharitable might even say immutable. But even as we contemplate the inevitability of our longevity, it is fit and proper that we mark certain temporal signposts such as this one. The propriety of marking a half-century perhaps has even more salience to us who have cricket in our DNA. At the sign post of a fiftieth anniversary it is salutary to reflect on the past. This was not the first institution of higher education in Barbados, but I believe that it was the first genuinely indigenous one, born from the realization that progress here and everywhere in the Caribbean depended on creating and nurturing the necessary human, intellectual and emotional capital. For it is a truth that this capital is essential if these hills and fields are really to be our very own. The meandering of the road of history will by definition take us Caribbean people in many directions, but I think that I can affirm that this University and this Campus will allow Barbadians and West Indians to make the best of the direction in which that road takes us.

This Campus shares an anniversary with one of the greatest physical infrastructural projects of all time. The history of Barbados was in many ways linked to the building of the Panama Canal which marks its hundredth anniversary this year. The Canal claimed the lives of many of our entrepreneurial forefathers and we should take some pride in that anniversary. The anniversary of the founding of this Campus is similarly a time for acknowledging and celebrating Barbadian participation in yet another great enterprise. This participation which was evidenced from the beginning in the provision of a site on a hill that was symbolically powerful as the psalmist would note, has been constant through the years and I have no doubt that will continue over the years. Participation will be increasingly necessary, as not only change, but the speed of change increases with time. When this Campus opened with just under 200 students, the University was 2000 strong. The vertiginous rate of increase in students and the number of our academic offerings are but a reflection of the change in the demand for knowledge work that is occurring globally. The maintenance of a good University is one hedge against the kind of societal perturbation that such change can engender.

Once again let me thank you for sharing this time with us and for lifting up your voices so loudly in thanks for this Campus, for those who brought it here and for those who will see to its continuity and its quest for perfection which is one of the hallmarks of every good institution. And may the right hand of God guard and preserve this institution from generation to generation.