



Fenton Ramsahoye

Those who know him speak of his wisdom.

Those who have done battle with him have witnessed his courage

Those who have had to bear the yoke of oppression have experienced his charity

But Chancellor, all of us are beneficiaries of his supreme jurisprudence and pursuit of justice.

He comes from that enigmatic place where one breathes a purer breath. Up to today, Guyana maintains an enviable reputation. The reputation to produce a unique breed of scholars – scholars like Sir Fenton Ramsahoye.

At the age of twenty he graduated from London University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. By the age of twenty four he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. By age thirty he had completed his PhD at the prestigious and progressive London School of Economics and Political Science. His thesis focussed on the development of land law and fifty years later his work is a source of reference, if not reverence.

His precocity was not confined to academic success. He was equally responsive to the call to national duty. At age thirty two he became Attorney General of his beloved Guyana and from all accounts, fulfilled this role with distinction. He was a young man with big dreams of freedom and independence. He served in the Parliament for 12 years during which time he was at the forefront of that country's Independence movement. He contributed in no small measure to the development of the University of Guyana. In addition, he was charged to lead the development of legal education here at St Augustine when the Hugh Wooding Law School was established in 1973. But not only was he teacher, he was also practitioner.

His exploits in the arena of the practice of law are legion. Some of his cases have resulted in landmark decisions, many of which are, today, still subjects of academic debate. In the Dickensian novel, "Oliver Twist", a frustrated and hen-pecked character, Mr Bumble, hits out at the administration of justice with that now famous quip, "the Law is an ass". If indeed the Law is an ass, then it is difficult to find a beast of burden upon which society so heavily relies. And to extend that metaphor, it is nigh impossible to identify a finer master than Sir Fenton. His knighthood for service to The Law recognises this.

But, Chancellor, there is another honour worthy of mention. The pavement stones leading to the Privy Council in London are polished with the tread of his noble and nimble feet. No other Caribbean attorney has made as many appearances nor has been as successful at that final Court of Appeal.

Chancellor, today we recognise and celebrate Guyanese scholarship and Caribbean excellence. Receive this virtuous citizen of the Caribbean, a man whose work and wisdom has injected intellectual life and hope into the region and, by the

power vested in you by the Council and the Senate, confer upon Sir Fenton, the title of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

St. Augustine Campus

Thursday 27th October, 2011