



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

Doddridge Alleyne

Chancellor, the plight of men, according to Stoic philosophy, is likened to that of dogs tied to a wagon; to the inevitable pace of the wagon which cannot be resisted. But this might be true only for ordinary men. Today, I shall bring before your eyes a man who outstripped his wagon. Indeed he became the charioteer and not only led a full personal life but helped steer his young nation through challenging and turbulent rapids to a rising tide of prosperity!

Doddridge Alleyne was born at the easternmost tip of Tobago. His innate intelligence quickly became apparent and he is one of Charlotteville Methodist School's most illustrious alumni. I will not ask you to trade places with his generation but, for a moment let me take you back 60 years. It was quite natural for intelligent young men of this time to gravitate to the then Mecca of secondary education – Queen's Royal College – far away from home and family. If native intelligence took him from cozy Charlotteville to the quarrelsome corridors of QRC then it took intelligence combined with diligence to take him on his onward journey to one of the most prestigious colleges in Oxford, Balliol. Balliol has always been a place of academic excitement but stop for one moment and imagine the loneliness so well enunciated by Samuel Selvon and the enigmatic Naipaulian arrival of a teenage Tobagonian boy to shores so distant and strange and wet. And not to mention the legendary blandness of the food! Especially so, if one understands that

Tandoori was not yet the national dish in The United Kingdom. But to the determined these were but minor distractions. Fortunately there were also no major distractions for a young man since women were only accepted to Balliol some three decades after his very successful departure.

Choosing to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics would have provided him a good foundation for his future contributions to Trinidad and Tobago and the world. But if it takes intelligence and diligence to complete one's formal academic training then it takes character- and men are ultimately judged by their character- to do what he has achieved in his lifetime...His is a character not developed in ease or comfort but through trial, experience and perhaps suffering...

To quote from the writings of the distinguished historian and scholar Professor Bridget Brereton: The young Alleyne joined the colonial civil service, working through the era of decolonisation and independence, giving forty years of selfless and outstanding service to his country. With the assumption of power by the PNM led by Eric Williams in 1956, and especially after national independence in 1962, he became one of a small group of dedicated public servants who worked with the government to lay the foundations of the modern state and economy. Their salaries were small and their perks were few; they worked with a notoriously mercurial leader; their hours were long and irregular, and family life and personal financial security were often sacrificed to the demands of public service. Mr. Alleyne was one of the most outstanding members of this small coterie. He rose to the top, serving as Permanent Secretary in the three crucial Ministries of Petroleum and Mines, Finance, Planning and Development and then as Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister and Head of the Public Service. In all these positions he was central to the remaking of Trinidad and Tobago in the 1960's and 1970's. (end of quote)

Chancellor, if the world's a stage then this cousin, from the Tobagonian side of the Alleyne clan, developed the talent to play many parts before ever-demanding audiences – national and international. Mr. Alleyne was one of the drivers of national ownership of the energy sector and is dubbed a pioneering hero for his role in establishing control over the country's burgeoning oil industry. With his vast

experience, he later served as UN Petroleum Adviser to the Government of Kenya, establishing that country's National Oil Company. Between 1983-88 he served as Trinidad and Tobago's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations serving stints as President of the Security Council. During this tenure he chaired two most important Committees. The first on the Arms Embargo against South Africa – an important tool towards the dismantling of apartheid there and another which crafted a resolution that eventually led to the end of the unnecessary Iran-Iraq war.

Chancellor, it is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen. Doddridge H N Alleyne has achieved that Aristotlean ideal. So in presenting him to you I ask you to receive him and confer upon this good man, this loyal citizen and this statesman the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

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