



## Philip Louis Ulric Cross

Mr. Chancellor

This University takes particular pride today in honouring a true friend, nay much more, a distinguished son of the soil, an exemplar of rare distinction who for fifty years and more has brought honour and glory and pride to all West Indians.

I present Philip Louis Ulric Cross, hero of World War II, barrister-at-law, former Justice of the High Court and the Court of Appeal, former Professor of Law and High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago.

Looking back we find that Ulric Cross grew up in Woodbrook in Port of Spain, receiving his early education at Tranquility Boys Intermediate School from which he won his first important prize—first place among the eight students awarded Government Exhibitions in 1928. After five years at St. Mary's College he obtained the School Certificate and with this necessary matriculation qualification firmly in his grasp, elected to leave school to take employment in the Civil Service and later to be articled to a prominent solicitor of the day.

Shortly after war was declared in 1939, he was among the first of a band of youthful but brave adventurers in Trinidad and Tobago, who, convinced of the justness of the cause and giving no thought to their own mortality, volunteered for service in the British armed forces. He began his training as an aircraft navigator for the Royal Air Force in Trinidad, on this very campus, completing it two years later in Scotland. His contemporaries tell of his easy mastery of the navigator's art, of his quick understanding of the intricacies of Dead Reckoning and Position Fixes. By 1942 he had graduated, seemingly effortlessly, and was commissioned Officer of the Royal Air Force. Assigned to a squadron flying the famous Mosquito fighter-bomber, he flew more than eighty bombing and combat missions over German territory including two over Berlin. Such was the quality of his skill, his calm bravery under fire and his unswerving devotion to duty that he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and then decorated with that rare honour—Companion of the Distinguished Services Order (DSO). The war ended. Alas, the bright flare of the conquering hero soon dims—trumpets are muted, drums fall silent. Using a scholarship for war veterans, he entered Middle Temple Inn, was called to the Bar in 1949

and returned to Trinidad that very year to take up an appointment as Legal Adviser to the Controller of Imports and Exports. This then was the inauspicious beginning of an illustrious career in the Law which was to follow and which, in retrospect, lends splendid credence to Burke's assertion that the study of Law:

*"...renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources..."*

Not finding his employment as challenging as he had expected he moved once again to London where he became a successful radio producer for the BBC Overseas Service. A chance holiday visit to West Africa was to put his career on an entirely new course, for it was in Africa that his talents came into full flower.

*"There is a tide in the affairs of men  
which taken at the flood leads on to fortune...  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries"*

While in Ghana, President Nkrumah offered him an appointment as Senior Counsel. He promptly accepted. Over the next sixteen years there followed a series of appointments—in Ghana, the Cameroon and Tanzania—the details of which would be tedious to mention. Suffice it to draw attention to a few highlights such as his elevation, in the Cameroon, to the Order of Merit—1st Class and to Chevalier of the Order of Valour for his exceptional contributions as Senior Counsel and Attorney General, or to his establishment of the Labour Courts in Tanzania where he was appointed Judge and President of the Industrial Court, or to his entry to the world of academia as Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Tanzania. With an international reputation well and truly established, he returned to Trinidad as High Court Judge, then Justice of the Court of Appeal and for many years was Chairman of the Law Commission.

When our Vice Chancellor invited him to head the Trinidad section of the Endowment Fund of the University he willingly accepted and with his colleagues was able in a short time to raise the considerable sum of \$2 million. Regrettably, his service to us in this capacity was abruptly terminated when he was appointed High Commissioner to the United Kingdom in 1990.

Urbane and dignified in all his endeavours, he seeks neither to proselytise nor to be forbidding and while holding firm to his views retains an infectious humour. At the age of 76, to use the idiom of the airman, he continues to defy gravity by remaining tall and erect and retains a considerable athleticism. We wish him well and seek now to record and honour his achievements. I request you Chancellor, by the authority of Senate and Council to admit **Philip Louis Ulric Cross** to the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.