



Kyffin Donald Simpson

Chancellor, Kyffin Donald Simpson has reached the summit of a stellar business career. Tonight, in receiving an honorary doctorate of our beloved university, he achieves the summit of his academic career. And as he was most appropriately born at a house called The Summit, in the parish of St. John, he has truly come full circle.

Kyffin was educated at the Lodge School, a few hundred yards from his home, and then in the U.K. Earlier this week he returned from half way across the globe – Japan – a trip he makes as often as those he once made, that short distance, like Shakespeare’s schoolboy, “with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like snail, unwillingly, to school”! Soon after founding the Simpson Group of companies 30 years ago, he went to Japan to seek out the franchise for Suzuki, in response to the horrendous impact of the energy crisis on the Caribbean. He made Suzuki the number one selling car in Barbados and among the top three in the Caribbean for 20 years. He helped to establish a major presence for the brand in the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, and in Brazil, as well as assisting its entry into Europe and the USA. He is also responsible for bringing Skoda and Porsche into Barbados, and bringing back Mercedes-Benz and Chrysler. The range of Simpson Motors covers both basic needs and the dreams on wheels, of every man, and quite a few women!

Kyffin Simpson is acknowledged as one of the most innovative executives in the automobile industry in the Caribbean and Latin America. He is widely regarded as the leading international entrepreneur in Barbados, and a role model in the private sector for companies wanting to demonstrate international competitiveness by penetrating global markets. And he has established a reputation for investing in the development of his own company’s workers. But his international reach includes membership of the Board of the prestigious Americas Society and Council of the Americas. The mission of this council, chaired by David Rockefeller, with co-chair

Henry Kissinger, is to promote international awareness of issues affecting the Western Hemisphere.

Over the past three decades his discreet benevolence to local, regional and international charitable organizations, churches and missionary work has been substantial, as well as his support for activities on the Cave Hill Campus. His firm belief in God, whose blessings he acknowledges in every aspect of his life, fuels his passion to sow something back into the work of those who promote and spread the word of God. But his benevolence also includes local sport and popular culture. His sponsorships enabled the phenomenal career advancement of two young Barbadian sporting icons – Ronald “Suki” King and Barry Forde. King’s career, from Bridgetown working class community to world champion in Drafts, has inspired many men and boys on the block, and revived a game long considered marginal. And Barry’s emergence as a World champion cyclist demonstrated commitment and reward for that trust.

Kyffin Simpson is the epitome of service. He enjoys the blessing and the joy of loving his work, of working with the things he loves, cars, and serving the God of love. And in the Queen’s New year’s Honours list of 2004 he was awarded the Commander of the British Empire or CBE, for his contribution to business in the Caribbean.

Chancellor, we in the University have much to learn from this very model of a Caribbean businessman; and so I invite you, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of the University, to admit him to that inner circle, by conferring on this great friend and benefactor the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.