

**THE INDUCTION CEREMONY
OF
PROFESSOR ROSE MARIE BELL ANTOINE**

Saturday, January 21, 2023

6:00 p.m.

**DAAGA AUDITORIUM
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

**The Most Hon. P. J. Patterson, ON, OCC, PC, QC;
Statesman-in-Residence and Director of the P.J. Patterson
Centre for African Caribbean Advocacy**

Salutations

Eminent Chancellor & Vice Chancellor

Pro Vice Chancellors

Ministers of Government

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies & Gentlemen

I feel like a batsman coming to the crease after Greenidge, Haynes, Sobers, Kanhai, Richards, Gayle and Lara. Not even fast bowler Courtney Walsh was invited to bat at No 13.

As a student who entered UCWI as a Jamaican and left as an unrepentant Caribbean devotee, I'm honoured to bring Greetings as we install the first female as Principal of this venerable campus.

I have only met Professor Antoine face to face on very few occasions- the first being at the start of her honeymoon- which is hardly an opportunity for any other than her husband to get acquainted.

But she has good reason to know the extent to which I have followed closely the evolution of her illustrious career as a brilliant jurist who seeks to create sound pillars on which to build our own Caribbean jurisprudence.

Her formidable record of achievements speaks for itself. There is no need to burnish pure gold.

Her steps at every stage in her life and professional undertakings have never failed to earn the stamp and brand of excellence.

Her eminence as a legal luminary is apodictic. She has that intuitive grasp of the awesome power and transformative force of the law which has made her a Revolutionary in addressing the thorny issues of indigenous rights, gender identity, racial discrimination, abuse of government. She is a formidable advocate for the protection of constitutional rights within our parliamentary democracies as we still contend with the plagues of terrorism and violence alongside the scourge that slavery and the obscene plantation system have left behind.

THE REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

75 years ago, UWI was founded in the interaction of cross currents of Caribbean history and geography as a "a shining list in the West" to fulfill the demands of our own destiny. What began in a single location, is now multi-purpose and multi-layered.

Professor Antoine is one of its brightest and most amazing daughters.

On three distinct Campuses, Pro Vice Chancellor was able to garner and build personal relationships and friendships, at the most granular levels. That has enabled her in professional life to know and work with people across the entire region through constructive engagements in learning, teaching, research, projects, and community service.

She comes fully equipped and uniquely suited to take the helm at St. Augustine amidst a period of unprecedented global turbulence which demands extraordinary skills if our University is to fulfill its destiny in the entire Caribbean landscape.

Her UWI provenance will be an admirable asset as she now joins the leadership hierarchy, devoted to preserve and promote a holistic development of a Regional University which seeks to bring unity, solidarity and prestige to our Caribbean.

But faculties and students beware: for she has a strict work ethic, and her template of excellence does not permit mediocrity or indolence.

Her commitment to building this University as a whole is unquestionable but that should not conceal her insatiable appetite to compete - so no campus can bask in the glory of previous accomplishments for she is determined to make this Campus No 1. We shall see.

Already she has started to break new ground in marketing with an Advertorial promoting exciting opportunities at St. Augustine.

I welcome her highlights of entrepreneurship and innovation. Among her key objectives are food security and disaster management- which demand greater emphasis in tertiary research to meet the severity of these challenges.

A BETTER LIFE

Once upon a time, it was claimed that Cricket and UWI were the only two institutions binding the West Indies together. With our fluctuating fortunes in the game, UWI remains the only sound, cohesive source on which we can rely to overcome the dynamics of insularity, of diversity in continental ethnic origins, of political factions and differences in religious beliefs. As the late Black Stalin (Alias Dr. Leroy Callisto) advocated

"To push one common intention
For a better life in de region
For we women, and we children
Dat must be the ambition of de Caribbean man."

I am confident that under her astute and innovative leadership, she will work assiduously to make sure that St. Augustine manages to safeguard the Caribbean dream while inculcating in Faculties and Student alike, a truly regional ethos of excellence and inclusiveness that defies common and prevalent stereotypes of us as a people.

Professor Antoine, I'm convinced that as one committed to an egalitarian society you will in your Principal's tenure, use your "voice and expertise to the upliftment of the Region, not just in legal matters but extensively for social justice and equitable development."

Today's ceremony is therefore more than symbolic. It marks the pedagogic ascendancy of a visionary leader who is fully equipped and ready to sustain

excellence in our University; rooted in the Caribbean that is fully geared to advance learning, create knowledge and foster innovation for the positive transformation of the Caribbean.

By any test, Professor Antoine is plainly and simply the best.

I regard it as a unique privilege to join in resounding salute to a catalytic force as we celebrate the appointment of a Principal who now takes the forefront in the quest at St. Augustine to generate knowledge, innovation, wisdom and thereby to release the creative potential of our people in making this Caribbean the most precious jewel on Mother Earth -.