

*Mona Campus Principal Professor Archibald McDonald*

On behalf of The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, I congratulate Sir Hilary Beckles on his elevation to the position of UWI Vice-Chancellor.

*It was Harry Truman who said "Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."*

Sir, under your leadership The UWI will not stand still. Under your leadership, our Caribbean nation will not stand still. I have no doubt that you will seize the opportunity to make things better.

Professor Beckles, a decorated academic who has also established a rich and diverse career in the public and private sector, brings decades of expertise, experiences and knowledge to the Vice-Chancellor position.

Sir Hilary is the Quintessential Caribbean man. He has had a brilliant UWI career. I was informed by some of his former students that he started as a bright, extremely confident, young lecturer in the Department of History at Mona in 1979. He continued as Reader, and became one of the youngest UWI professors at the time. He is the longest serving PVC and Principal: He is a Historian of note, who has published widely; the breadth of his work is seen in the following areas: Caribbean social history: varied subjects including women; Cricket; Caribbean regionalism and Reparations. He is an Administrator par excellence: A former Department chair; Dean; Pro Vice-Chancellor, Board of Undergraduate Studies; Principal and PVC.

One of The University's primary goals is to be able to transform our institutional framework so that we can create a teaching and learning environment that will not only attract an international student body, but will also produce graduates who will become formidable leaders in their society.

In order to do so, The UWI requires a leader who has a firm appreciation of our needs as a society; one who has dedicated his life's work to improving the educational capacity of our regional community; and one who recognises the need to incorporate lessons learned from our past experiences in order to build a better future for tomorrow. A great leader for The UWI is one who recognises the value in expanding his professional boundaries outside the four walls of our institution in order to develop a more comprehensive appreciation of what our society requires in order to progress.

And, finally, The UWI requires a great leader who is committed to education, who recognises its power in the development of society and who believes that everyone deserves the right to receive a first class education that will provide them with the tools that will help them lead exceptional lives.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, The UWI has gained such a leader, an outstanding academic and innovator who has made significant waves in developing the social and educational fabric of our regional community.

Sir Hilary has established a distinguished career in the public and private sector and has served on the boards of several international organisations that have been committed to improving the social welfare of people across the globe. Yet, I believe that some of his greatest achievements have been highlighted by the many accolades he has received from higher education institutions for his work in education. His tireless commitment and outstanding contributions to advancing education has made Sir Hilary one of the Caribbean's greatest champions for learning.

A true educator as well as a decisive and forward thinker - Sir Hilary personifies a type of leadership that will not only build on our position of regional dominance in higher education but will chart a new course as the leader in regional development.

As an innovative thinker, Sir Hilary recognises the urgency in moulding tertiary education to meet the varied and changeable demands of the modern day student – an awareness in leadership that will help to drive this institution in achieving ultimate success.

Sir Hilary, this new position will undoubtedly be challenging and you will be faced with issues that you have never before tackled. Yet I believe that as a strong willed intellect with a varied professional background who knows how and when to go against the norm in order to yield optimum results, you will fit comfortably into the new professional frontier.

As Principal of the Mona Campus, it is indeed my honour to welcome Professor Sir Hilary Beckles as our new Vice-Chancellor. I again extend my deepest congratulations to you on this truly outstanding occasion. The Mona Campus Senior Management Team, academic and administrative staff and indeed our student body look forward to working with you in , not only building on the past, but in reshaping The UWI into the intellectual engine of our Caribbean nation.

From student to Vice-Chancellor, you epitomise a form of success that many of our students will strive towards; and as such I cannot envision any other individual more suited for this role.

Congratulations Professor Beckles. I wish you success as we work together in transforming our beloved UWI into a global giant among universities. I end with advice from freedom fighter Nelson Mandela: *May your choices reflect your hopes and not your fears.*