

Jamaicans in Toronto pay tribute to Professor Nettleford

Toronto (JIS):

A Cultural Tribute/Memorial Service to celebrate the life of the Vice Chancellor emeritus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the late Professor Rex Nettleford, was held recently at the Revivaltime Tabernacle, one of the largest churches in Toronto.

The event featured the Dancers of Toronto, an impressive group of young persons dancing to a variety of music and dub poetry, somewhat reminiscent of the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC), which was founded by Professor Nettleford.

Equally moving was Tereka Tyler-Davis, who danced solo to *'Many Rivers To Cross'*. Andrea Douglas, a former dancer with the NDTC, now living in Toronto, choreographed all the dances.

Jamaica's High Commissioner to Canada, Sheila Sealy Monteith, paid tribute to the late professor, describing him as Jamaica's equivalent of a Nobel poet laureate.

"The Government and people of Jamaica join with us today on yet another occasion where we are allowed to reflect on and pay tribute to his life and work. He was an extraordinary man with an extraordinary life and who had an extraordinary impact on his fellow human beings. Yet even as he walked with kings, he maintained the proverbial common touch," she said.

"We are aware that we can never adequately express the depth of the appreciation we have for the difference he has made in the life of our country — its culture, politics, education, the trade union movement, so many facets of national life," the high commissioner added.

She said the professor's life was grounded in excellence and service, and that he found common cause with those who sought to harness good for the improvement of self and country.

Greatness

In his remarks, Consul General to Toronto, George Ramocan, described Professor Nettleford as "an intellectual giant, cultural scientist and historian who was truly

engaged in the affairs of Jamaica, the Caribbean and the world."

"The victorious life of this world-class intellectual who emerged from the cane fields of Trelawny is a testimony to the great potential that lies within our youth, who if given the opportunity, can soar to heights beyond the shores of Jamaica," he said.

Delivering the homily, Bishop Dr. Audley James, who was born three miles from Rex Nettleford's home in Trelawny, described him as a great Jamaican, and said his greatness was probably as a result of a single mother's prayer to her son.

"He was endowed with greatness; he was gifted with greatness; he modelled greatness; and every time he opened his mouth and spoke, he spoke greatness," Dr. James told the congregation.

Other tributes came from Elizabeth Parchment of the UWI Alumni Association (Toronto); president of the Jamaican Diaspora Canada Foundation (JDCF), Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams; president of Jones & Jones, Denise Jones and head of the Caribbean Studies programme at the University of Toronto Professor Alyssa Trotz, Professor Alyssa Trotz

Maud Fuller, former president of the UWI Alumni Association (Toronto) read the scripture lesson. Glenda Roy-Hamilton and Marie English-Critchlow, respectively, delivered stirring renditions of *'Our Father'* and *'I'll Walk With God'* while The Heritage Singers did a medley of folk and gospel songs.

Proceeds from the service would be donated to the newly established Rex Nettleford Foundation for Caribbean Cultural and Social Studies.

B/N Nettleford, Ralston "Rex" (Prof.)



Dancers of Toronto, perform at the Rex Nettleford Cultural Tribute/Memorial Service, held recently at the Revivaltime Tabernacle in Toronto, Canada.



Jamaica's High Commissioner to Canada, Sheila Sealy Monteith (second right), and Jamaica's Consul General to Toronto, George Ramocan (second left), at the Cultural Tribute/Memorial Service for the late Professor Rex Nettleford, which was held recently at the Revivaltime Tabernacle in Toronto, Canada. Others (from left) are president of the Jamaica Diaspora Canada Foundation, Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams and senior pastor of the Revivaltime Tabernacle, Bishop Dr. Audley James.



Drummers performing Kumina, at the Rex Nettleford Cultural Tribute/Memorial Service, held recently at the Revivaltime Tabernacle in Toronto, Canada.



Folk group, The Heritage Singers, performing at the Rex Nettleford Cultural Tribute/Memorial Service, held recently at the Revivaltime Tabernacle in Toronto, Canada.

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