

# UWI family honours

## Nettleford

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Senior Gleaner Writer

**A**N IMPRESSIVE gathering of colleagues, friends and the University of the West Indies (UWI) family braved the elements to attend a cultural evening and reception for outgoing Vice Chancellor Professor Rex Nettleford last Friday evening. The formalities took place in the Assembly Hall on the Mona campus, followed by a reception at the Mona Visitor's Lodge and Conference Centre.

In an entertaining departure from convention, public orator emeritus, Professor Edward Baugh, delivered the citation to Professor Nettleford in both poetry and prose formats. He extolled Professor Nettleford's achievements – and there are many – including: the first of the university's graduates to become its vice chancellor; the only university vice chancellor to be the artistic director of a dance company; the first student to be chosen male student of the year and in 46 years of employment at

UWI, he has taken study leave only once.

### SUCH IS THE MAN

Professor Baugh went on to say, "Such is the man. A head that would delight the artistry of sculptors of ancient Benin, a stance that would inspire Michelangelo, the distinctive sartorial style that marks the liberated man – these bespeak a man Tailor-made to take the footlights. As quick-witted on his feet as he is nimble of foot, he has held audiences with his word-wielding art, his puns and

his aphorisms, whether 'weapons of mass distraction' or the definitive 'a butu in a Benz is a butu.'"

In acknowledging the accolades, Professor Nettleford returned to his roots and thanked those whose influence shaped his formative years. Chief among them were his grandmother who stressed the importance of a good education "which no one could take from you. He also shared some personal and cherished anecdotes of campus life, as he experienced it.

He was also grateful to Sir Philip Sherlock, whose influence

and teachings helped to propel him on his ladder to personal educational development and professional advancement.

### LEADERSHIP

But the presentation would not be complete without some of the professor's well meant exhortations. Among these: 'Sustain, maintain and retain the regional integrity of the UWI;' 'Let's tune into each other's strengths rather than weaknesses; leadership must get the best out of each other' and 'bring more care and

compassion to the students, without them we are nothing'.

Professor Nettleford received a standing ovation for his words and a diplomatic passport from the Prime Minister and Government of Jamaica.

There were cultural presentations by: The Mighty Sparrow, Ernest Ranglin and the Ernie Ranglin Trio, The University Singers and the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC). The programme was chaired by Sir George Alleyne, chancellor of the UWI.



WINSTON SILL/Freelance Photographer

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