

UWI honours Nettleford

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Staff Reporter

ON FRIDAY evening, alumni, educators, friends and colleagues of Professor Rex Nettleford, vice-chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, St. Andrew gathered to honour him. A dinner and dance were held in recognition of his contribution to the university.

The celebrations, at the UWI's Visitors' Lodge and Conference Centre, were the culmination of the annual 'Commemoration Celebrations and Alumni Week' staged from February 13 to 21, at the Mona campus of the UWI.

In a citation read by Professor Barry Chevannes, Dean of the Faculty of Social

Sciences, Professor Nettleford was described as an astute contributor to the development of the university.

The citation lauded him as having "flair, presence, grandeur, grandmother-centred wisdom. What a light, what a man, king, indeed, of our university!"

COMMENDABLE EFFORTS

Dr. George Alleyne, chancellor of the UWI, said it was commendable what Professor Nettleford had done for the university.

"The miracle that we must commemorate is not that the seed was sown here at UWI, but that it flourished here," he said.

The annual commemoration celebrations focus on the founding of the institution and are usually dedicated to an individual who has made a significant contribution to it.

Professor Nettleford was recognised for his contribution to cultural development and his overall contribution to the growth and development of the UWI. His pioneering work as an educator was also recognised, in particular, his outstanding intellectual leadership at the international level.

He holds the distinction of being one of four Rhodes scholars from among thousands worldwide to be awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Laws by Oxford University in the the United Kingdom. It was conferred in celebration of the centenary of the establishment of the Rhodes scholarship.

In his response, Professor Nettleford said he felt happy to have interacted with the different student personalities he came in contact with at the UWI and despite the challenges, he never wanted to be anywhere else.

"This is a wonderful country and wonderful region and I haven't wanted to go anywhere else, because there is a texture about this place," he said.

He said that while many were sceptical about him being able to manage as vice-chancellor, his previous experience of running a dance company adequately prepared him for the job. And he was optimistic about his future beyond retirement.

"I look forward to continue working in my proper corner in my proper place," he said.

Following Professor Nettleford's retirement in September, Professor Eon Nigel Harris, Dean and senior vice-president for academic affairs at Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, will assume the post of vice chancellor, from October 1.