

Portia gets honorary doctorate

TOURISM and sport minister, Portia Simpson-Miller, was yesterday presented with the degree of Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by the Union Institute, at its Florida commencement ceremony, where she also delivered the keynote address.

The university's president, Judith A Sturnick, said the Union Institute had conferred its highest honour on the Jamaican minister in acknowledgment of her exemplary service to her country. She said Simpson-Miller was the first graduate to have been honoured by being given its honorary doctorate.

She is also the first graduate to have been invited to be a guest speaker at a commencement ceremony.

"In a true sense, Minister Simpson-Miller practices what she preaches. She exemplifies the vision and mission of this university to develop leaders who create socially useful change to their communities. Her own education is essential as she attends to the challenges the nation faces and she regards her own experiences at the Union as instrumental in her endeavours," Sturnick said.

In response to the honour, Simpson-Miller said that above all, study at the Union Institute provided her with the opportunity to give full expression to her personal philosophy of giving service to the poor, through community building, mentoring and serving as a role model.

"Political power alone was not enough to give meaning to that philosophy. It is when you have the power that comes with knowledge, that you are better placed to promote the advancement of people's lives. Today, I



SIMPSON-MILLER...political power alone was not enough

can do no better than to recommend the viability of that habit to the graduating class," the minister said.

To rousing applause, the minister appealed to the graduates to show respect for their communities, applying the principles of community leadership based on technical competence and voluntarism; the introduction of socially useful change to the environment and the less privileged and the demonstration of personal integrity in which there is no gap between the 'public' and the 'private' person.

"We are fortunate to have had these lessons transmitted through the philosophy and practice of this university," she said.

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