

Keynote Remarks of The Hon. Winston Anderson

The 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Establishment:
St. Andrew Technical High School
(STATHS)

Pegasus Hotel
New Kingston

JAMAICA

9th April 2011

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Salutations

Master of Ceremonies;
Honored Guests;
Administrators, Staff and Students;
Fellow Alumni and Classmates;
Spouses;
Significant others; and
Friends...

Good Evening and Welcome!

It is with great pride and pleasure that I greet you here at The Pegasus in New Kingston on this joyous and splendid Saturday evening. I consider it a great honor and privilege to have been asked to be your guest speaker at this the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of a great and iconic Jamaican institution of secondary education: the St. Andrew Technical High School.

Of course, strictly speaking, I am not a guest; indeed, I feel much more like the prodigal son, returned to a loving family of innately familiar faces. In fact, truth be told, many of us are prodigal sons and daughters of STATHS, returning to circles of fellow alumni, some of whom we have not seen for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty years! Right now we can thank God for vitamin supplements and strong spectacles. In a few years we shall be thanking him for hip replacements, reliable dentures, and (who knows, possibly) Viagra.

The return of the prodigal sons and daughters is always marked by a royal banquet and feast, such as we have had prepared for us this evening. Those of us still

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possessed of an efficient sensory apparatus would have detected that the fatted calf; mannish water; curried goat; the rice and peas; are not far away. Those still capable of active locomotion are already hearing melodious strains in the air.

But before we partake of the food, wine and the dance, it is proper that we should thank and pay tribute to those who remained to keep our Father's house whilst many of us wandered in a far country:

- Former students who live and work here in Jamaica, and who have kept in touch with the school and taken a committed and tangible interest in its development, we salute you!
- The Staff, Administrators, and Boards of Governors of the School, we honor you!
- And we acknowledge *all* our hardworking principals, whether or not still with us in this reality: from the foundational Mr. E. G. Roper; through the legendary Mr. S. W. Isaac-Henry; to our current much beloved Dr. Curline Christie - all of whom have preserved the school as an oasis of peace and learning in a challenging neighbourhood.

Dr. Christie, as representative of our eight inspirational principals, please accept, on behalf of five scores years of present and past students, our sincere and profound gratitude for the sterling service that the administrators of the St. Andrew Technical High School have provided to the young people of Jamaica. Thank you Madam! And through you, we thank your predecessors!

As we are all aware, in the years just prior to Jamaica's independence in 1962, Sir Florizel Augustus Glasspole, then Minister of Education, conceived of the "*Technical High School*" as a means of democratizing and expanding secondary education to meet the growing demand for qualified personnel in *every* field of

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human endeavor, not just in the white collar professions. I recall quite vividly that the merger of STATHS with the Trade Training Centre in 1971 was a source of irritation to some in the student body who were reluctant to associate with others who intended to dirty their fingers for a living.

Yet, fifty years have been both a great leveler and a great teacher. We have learnt that Jamaica needs both the artisan and the artist; the white collar professional and the hard hat worker; the gloved hands of the surgeon and the greasy fingers of the mechanic; the learning and erudition of a law professor and the skilled craftsmanship of the cosmetologist; the man of business and the man of God.

I am proud to have spent a part of my life in a place capable of producing all of these people and personalities. I am proud to have shared with you a diverse classroom; the rough and tumble of the cricket and the foot-ball fields; the morning assembly; the first flirtations; and the maturation of boys and girls into young men and women. The grounds of STATHS have been hallowed as the place where our life experiences were allowed to come to expression and where we found our place and voice in the world.

And in that milieu we have learnt a lesson of lifelong significance. The commingling of diverse backgrounds on a 15 acre plot at 64 Spanish Town Road has enriched our capacity to first imagine and then create our individual and collective future. That acknowledgement and revelry in our common humanity is no prison for our individual dreams. And that our imagination is the only limitation on our capacity to manifest our desires and wishes.

To my way of thinking, therefore, STATHS has been a wonderfully successful experiment in testing the limits of the possible. We, its students, drawn from country and town and all walks of life in-between, following our separate dreams

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and interests, received the foundational instruction necessary for us to have excelled in almost every field of human endeavor. In the diversity of our backgrounds and preferences; in the excellence and multiplicity of our contributions to society both home and abroad; and in remaining true to the vision of our founding patriarchs, we the Alumni of STATHS both present and represent the authentic face of the Jamaican people.

In this way, our St. Andrew Technical High School is a microcosm of another experiment in which we are all engaged, some more active than others, namely, the building, from diverse islands and countries, of a cohesive Caribbean Community (“CARICOM”). Above all else, CARICOM is an experiment in whether our shared history, culture, and legal traditions can overcome the perceived differences in our size, stature in the world, and levels of development.

When STATHS was established in 1961, the Caribbean territories (including Jamaica) were under British colonial rule and had formed the ill-fated West Indian Federation. In those days, we had colonial Governors, our laws were dictated from Westminster, and the final court of appeal was the Privy Council in London. By the time of this school’s Twenty-Fifth Anniversary in 1986, there were 12 fully independent, sovereign Caribbean states, all proud members of the United Nations; our Heads of Government were our Prime Ministers; and our Parliaments had power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of our countries.

What has happened in the region since the first of us achieved independence in 1962 represents significant progress. We have sought to build an ever more perfect Caribbean integration from the ashes of the West Indian Federation. In 1973 the original Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed in Trinidad in order to create a Caribbean Community and a Common Market. However, these arrangements were

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found to be deficient in several respects, so that in 2001 the region adopted the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which fused the political and economic dimensions of the Community and created the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (“CSME”).

It is important that it be appreciated that the Revised Treaty of 2001 gives to each and every national of a CARICOM country, whether living in the region or abroad, some very significant legal rights. For example:

- Each of our nationals has the right to enter and reside in any of our twelve Member States in order to set up a business or to provide a service. Of course the individual must be capable of providing the service.
- Each national is entitled to sell goods which he has produced into any national market in CARICOM without being subjected to discriminatory taxes and barriers. Of course, some Jamaican exports which might pose a health challenge are not included in the permissible trade!
- And every skilled national is legally entitled to enter any CARICOM country to seek employment.

In the enjoyment of these rights, each government is obliged to treat all CARICOM nationals in the same way that it treats its own nationals. This principle of “national treatment” ensures that within the scope of the CSME we build a genuine community with equal opportunity for each individual to pursue his or her own dream and interest. In this way our community can be enlarged beyond our individual schools and countries to include our Caribbean region.

In those instances where there are disputes a regional judicial body, the Caribbean Court of Justice (“CCJ”) has the supreme authority to make authoritative decisions concerning the rights and obligations contained in the CSME. These decisions are

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binding on governments as well as on private entities; so that the Court serves as the guardian of the experiment in regional integration.

The CCJ also serves another important function. It is intended to be the final court of appeal for Caribbean countries in replacement of the Privy Council established in colonial times. In the exercise of its office as the final arbiter of Caribbean constitutions and laws, the CCJ has the vital role to play of vindicating the rights, and therefore the worth and dignity, of the Caribbean people. By virtue of its very existence the court is also a statement; and that in this Caribbean of ours there are men and women of integrity and competence to be our arbiters of justice and therefore of our juridical destiny.

The establishment of the CCJ as the final court of appeal for consenting Caribbean countries is therefore a supreme act of self-realization, and the completion of the edifice of sovereignty left unfinished at the time of political independence. More than any other aspect of our Caribbean integration, it is an eloquent statement of our solidarity; of our conviction that there is more in our legal systems that unite us than there is in our national prejudices that divide us.

The sovereign states of Barbados, Belize and Guyana have already embraced the Court not merely as the forum for settling integration disputes but also as their highest court of appeal. I sincerely hope that Jamaica will soon provide leadership for the remaining Member States of CARICOM in accepting the appellate jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice. The court needs Jamaica in order to enhance the dream of Chaguaramas of a strong and vibrant Caribbean Community.

Mr. Master of Ceremonies, I could go on at length about STATHS, CARICOM and the CCJ. But I rather suspect that I should give way to the promise of other, more interesting interactions.

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Permit me again, on behalf of all Alumni, to pay tribute to the rich heritage of St. Andrew Technical High School and to salute that iconic institution of Spanish Town Road on her land-mark achievement of half-a-century!

Long live STATHS!

May her offspring continue to do her proud.

And May she continue to grow from strength to strength; an oasis of peace and inspiration.

Thank you all very much.