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We must create our

November 21, 1986.

Speaker 23/11/86  
own model of  
development

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tradition of academic  
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this model*

**M**r. Chancellor, the acting Vice-Chancellor, pro Vice-Chancellors, members of the Council and the Senate of the University of the West Indies, staff and students, members of the graduation class, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

At the outset I would like on behalf of Mr. Aaron Matalon and on my own behalf to thank you Mr. Chancellor, and all the members of the University for the honour you have conferred on us in elevating us to membership in that select group of persons who hold honorary degrees from your esteemed University.

For me the sense of honour is even more profound in that you have paid me the compliment of inviting me to address this graduation ceremony. The honour that you have bestowed on Dr. Matalon and myself, though a symbol of your recognition of our contribution as businessmen in the society at large, has a very special significance for me. This honour which symbolises a recognition of our achievements also symbolises a recognition of the contribution of the private sector to the society.

### Achievements

We both started our working lives in small businesses having left school at an early age to contribute towards the livelihood of our families. Whatever successes or achievements which motivated you to honour us today were as a result of hard work, dedication and commitment to our work throughout our lives. Our achievements, however, would not have been possible without the help of many who worked alongside us

— our families, our fellow workers and our friends. They have all contributed to the end product that stands before you today.

This ceremony, in a sense, marks the culmination of a long process. It's a process that breaks down the barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust that have for too long clouded the relationship between your institution, the foremost institution of learning in the region, and the regional business sector.

### Barriers

Many people have contributed to the removal of those barriers and their efforts should not go unrecorded. I would like to single out for particular mention the role played by your late Vice-Chancellor, the Honourable Dr. Aston Preston. He brought a commonsense approach to the business of University administration. Dr. Preston successfully bridged the gap between town and gown.

He performed with distinction in both spheres. He was able to demystify the University and he was able to persuade the private sector to reappraise its assessment of the institution. At the same time, the University, while under his administration, became more receptive to the needs of the private sector. More business related programmes were introduced and a closer working relationship developed between your academic and administrative staff and business leaders.

### Challenge programme

Among the significant developments that have taken place during his administration is the Challenge programme which enables several private sector employees to pursue, on a part-time basis, an under-grad-

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uate programme leading to the B.Sc in management studies. Both Dr. Matalon and myself are proud to have been associated with this programme from its inception in Jamaica. We are proud of the achievements of the students in the programme and particularly our own employees, many of whom are graduating today. Dr. Matalon joins me in congratulating these students and the lecturers who worked with them for many years, on a job well done.

It is not the case that the ramparts of the ivory tower have been breached, but rather that the tower has rendered itself more accessible.

Other individuals and other factors played a part. One factor which is often overlooked is the contribution that the graduates of this institution have made in all facets of life in the region; in health, in education, in engineering, in law, in politics and public administration. I would like to acknowledge the contribution that they have made to business development and the growth of the regional private sector.

## Graduates' skills

In Jamaica, and I am sure the same applies to the other Caribbean territories served by the University of the West Indies, graduates of the Institution have taken their place in a wide range of business activities. Without their contribution and the scope of their skills, the private sector in the region would not be as diversified as it is today.

Another sector that benefits, to a large extent, from the skills of your graduates is education. Our teachers have been in the limelight recently or more appropriately, their fight for better working conditions has enjoyed considerable publicity. Their cause is a just one and if the teaching profession is to continue to attract the best qualified minds in our society, as indeed it should, we will all have to pay a little more attention to the needs and aspirations of our teachers.

## Rightful place

Many years ago a teacher enjoyed social status that bordered on the divine. A teacher was well-respected and idolized as the embodiment of all that's powerful and good in a society. Today this is not the case. Consequently, many people shy away from this profession. But we need our teachers and we must have the best.

We must therefore create the environment that will motivate people to enter the profession. Improved



— says Hon. Carlton Alexander as he addressed the graduation ceremony of the UWI on Saturday, November 15

remuneration, and better physical conditions in our schools are some of the factors that will help to return teaching and teachers to their rightful place in our society.

It is fitting that the public orator has very graciously referred to the role that Dr. Matalon played in the development of the management studies programme. It was through the vehicle of the Institute of Management and Production (IMP) which is now called the Aaron Matalon Management Centre, that members of the private sector have been able to pursue the B.Sc in management studies on a part-time basis. Dr. Matalon jolted us into the recognition that business in the twentieth century is a discipline that can be enhanced by the analytical approach of a university.

Now that our mutual interests have been aroused, what then should be the next step in the relationship between the University and the private sector. I can foresee many exciting developments. For instance, increasing reliance must be placed on the initiative of the individual if societies are to successfully tackle the problems that come with underdevelopment. This reality, and indeed, priority, must take precedence over any philosophical debate such as capitalism versus socialism.

Increasingly, global trends are indicating to us that the welfare state cannot keep the promises of providing a better quality of life for all the people — the focus of attention is shifting once more to releasing the drive up and the initiative of the individual. It is time that we wake up, take note and act.

## New course

The implications of this trend cannot be lost on us herein the Caribbean. In Jamaica, we have

tended to place increasing reliance and dependence on government to correct all the ills of our society. This has given rise to our own brand of messianic politics, and having endured the painful experience of finding out that the political leadership does not possess the capacity to fulfil the expectations of the people, we should now be depending on our individual capabilities to improve our welfare. The time span between the shouts of adulation and the groans of frustration and cries of rejection is becoming ever shorter and shorter.

There is a need then to chart a new course based on our own experiences and traditions. We must create our own model of development. This model must be a product of our historical experiences but with a main focus of development as its primary objective.

### **Ethnic diversity**

Our model must be cognizant of the cultural and ethnic diversity that has forged our peoples into one nation. Our model, however, must not be overwhelmed by the irrelevance of any dominance of colour of skin or social status at a particular point in time. In short, our model must be dynamic and progressive with programmes structured to meet the challenges of the future.

It is my belief that we have the ingredients in place to develop such a model. Ingredients such as our traditions of sharing and the spirit of cooperation, have been the best defense against what we perceived as an unjust and uncaring society. We have them in the entrepreneurial spirit of our people which provided us with the determination to achieve, despite the odds. We find them too in the richness and variety of our cultural expression and we find these ingredients also in the physical resources with which we are so well endowed.

### **Inter-disciplinary nature**

The University with its tradition of academic excellence and the inter-disciplinary nature of its scholarship, is integral to the development of this model. There can be no greater challenge to the intellectual capacity of our thinkers than to seek to build on our past traditions. There can be no greater challenge to them than to find the best avenues through which the entrepreneurial spirit of our people can be released, their cultural, artistic, and other creative talents find expression and our physical resources exploited. All this can be done in the context of improving the welfare of our people.

It is my belief that you will find in the private sector and in the trade union movement, willing allies in the

development of this model. The time to act is now. People and institutions should be organised to work towards the creation of this model if we are to prepare ourselves to cope with the challenges of the fast approaching 21st century.

### **Development of theories**

Quite apart from the national concerns, there are other areas in which the University and the private sector can collaborate. The time is right for a process of cross-fertilization to take place which will be to everyone's benefit. You at the University, conduct research and develop theories, we in the cut and thrust of the world of business, often can ill afford the time to research and develop new ideas and to take the long-term view.

But, we both could benefit, if the systems were in place to enable some of the experienced men and women from the business sector to spend periods of time at the university. Periods of time where they could share their experience of the business world and the issues that confront them with the faculty and the students. For the business people, it would provide the opportunity for reflection, an exposure to young inquiring minds and the chance to recharge their energies.

### **Research**

By the same token, Faculty members could gain tremendous insights into the world of business if they were able to spend a period working in a business enterprise and dealing with the issues that confront the enterprise on a practical day to day basis.

There are endless possibilities in the area of research and product development. In some metropolitan countries, it is commonplace for universities to conduct research and develop new products and then sell or licence the production rights to the private sector. For the University, it means an additional source of income; while for the private sector, it means savings in man hours and capital by not having to undertake the research.

### **Greatest assets**

I am aware that some of this has already happened at the University of the West Indies on a limited scale. But I believe I can take the liberty of speaking for the regional private sector, in stating that we are ready to enter into a much more dynamic relationship with the University than has existed in the past, for the development of our own economies and the betterment of the lot of our people.

**TO BE CONTINUED  
TOMORROW**