

UWI bids farewell to Professor Edward Baugh

The Flair June 3-9, 2001

A di work of di man multiply from generation to generation an nobody can't calculate, can't figure out the measure of di man an im work (L 19-22) "It was the teaching for Eddie Baugh" (after "It Was the Singing") by Carolyn Cooper May 2001

Nods of agreement and spontaneous laughter greeted the reading of this tribute by Carolyn Cooper, head of UWI's English Department, Professor Edward Baugh, who after 33 years of teaching at the Mona Campus has retired.

Colleagues and students, past and present all hailed as friends by the public orator and poet, gathered in the intimate setting of the Phillip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts, on Tuesday evening for this rite of passage in the Faculty of Arts and Education.

The presence of Dr Victor Chang, former head of the Department of Literatures in English, who was a student of Professor Baugh from 1960-62 during his Kingston College days and then later

at UWI, Dr Carolyn Cooper, also a past student of Professor Baugh in the 60's-70's, Dr Katherine Shields-Brodber (60's), Dr Michael Bucknor (80's), who eloquently declared his admiration for his mentor, Mrs Michelle Ashwood-Stewart, a first class graduate in 1999 gave validity to Cooper's words, from her tribute/poem, "...for is not now you reap when you sow inna dis ya field/a no one semester, a no two, a no twenty two/you see di fruit a ya labour".

Professor Mervyn Morris, fellow poet and long-time friend and colleague, paid homage to the man whom he states "writes with unforced eloquence... with no distracting anxiety to be impressive" and who "as he lectures spreads his infectious delight in literature... with structured informality".

Seretse Small, noted jazz guitarist who was never taught in the formal classroom by Professor Baugh but constantly, heard the praises of his oratory skills being sung by his mother recalled his first encounter with the man as an experience in which he was completely

awed. "When he complimented my work and encouraged my continuance, I said well if he likes it I must be doing something good" Small shared.

Small serenaded Professor Baugh with a combination of folk music and other popular pieces. Dr Shield-Brodber also serenaded this mentor, with Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" on the viola.

Professor Baugh closed his eyes and tilted his head backward as Jean Small along with the "congregation" singing "How Great Thou Art", gave birth to his poem "It Was the Singing". Trinidadian, David Williams brought a new sound to another Baugh favourite "Carpenter's Complaint", as he took on the lamentations of the grieving persona.

Mary Gray, senior secretary at the Department of Literatures in English who has been working closely with Professor Baugh for the last 17 years remarked, "Behind the professor is a gracious man... (he) is a man of great dignity, a good administrator, teacher and human being."

A painting of Don Drummond, titled 'Don Cosmic' and a wrapped package was given to Professor Baugh, by lecturer in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Clinton Chisolm and David Williams, English lecturer. English lecturer Norval Edwards presented Mrs Sheila Baugh with a bouquet.

The former Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Education, former chairman for the UWI Library, Examination and Mona Campus Graduate Studies Committees then delighted the gathering with his oratory skills. He jokingly compared his early days on campus to his later by citing the inquiry into his marital status while teaching his first class in the 60's to the written proclamations of one of his 2001 students "I would have loved you as a grandfather.

Noting that the change involves moving house, he emphasized that life goes on after UWI and before closing with the reading of a Derek Walcott poem stated, "the greatest part of my work is my students".

Ann-Margaret Lim

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