

CITATION - AMBASSADOR HAVELOCK BREWSTER

**Presented by Professor Brian Meeks, University Public Orator
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Chancellor, if one thinks of a handful of names that must appear on any shortlist of Caribbean integration studies, then surely that of Havelock Brewster's must inevitably be close to the top. I crave your indulgence as I give a personal anecdote. In 1973, the very year in which Caricom was formed, I had the good fortune to read Caribbean Economics with the late Lloyd Best as my lecturer. Among the many texts of the still young sub-discipline was a heavy tome by Havelock Brewster and C.Y. Thomas, entitled *The Dynamics of West Indian Economic Integration*. It was so different from what appeared to us to be the dry and uninteresting terms of freer regional trade that Caricom sought to advance. *Dynamics of West Indian Economic Integration* was, I apologize, dynamic in its vision and breadth. Not only did its proposals go far beyond the narrow boundaries of trade, but it imagined and proposed a comprehensive vertical integration of Caribbean economies based on a series of primary industrial goods that would propel the region into the mainstream of world industrial production.

Needless to say, the proposals advanced in *Dynamics* were never adopted in whole or even in part. Yes, one could argue that it was insufficiently appreciative of the political realities of the Caribbean region, then only a few years removed from the federal experiment. And yes, looking back from the twenty first century, it is arguable that it was too centralist and statist in design and conception. But few can dispute that the ideas were visionary and that if such an approach had been adopted half a century ago, the Caribbean would be a very different place than it is today.

Therefore, Chancellor, on the basis of *The Dynamics of West Indian Economic Integration* alone, Havelock Brewster deserves the honour that you bestow on him this evening. But there is much more to say. Born in Georgetown, Guyana and a citizen of both Guyana and Jamaica, he is a graduate in economics from King's College, University of Durham and Dalhousie University. He lectured in economics at the University of the

West Indies Mona from 1963-1968, where he was a member of the New World Group of young intellectuals and at Cave Hill from 1972-1973. Since then, his career has been largely with international organizations including the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Caribbean Development Bank, where he was executive director from 1994-2006 and the Inter American Development Bank. Havelock Brewster has also served as Guyanese Ambassador to the European Union, Austria, Belgium and Germany from 1996-2000 and Economic Advisor to the President of Guyana from 2001-2002. The story of his contribution on the international stage is profound and requires a citation of its own; but this is not our primary direction this evening.

Havelock Brewster in his lifetime has produced over 200 articles, papers and chapters in books on a variety of subjects mainly associated with Caribbean trade and development policy, world trade, the theory of development and of course, integration. A few titles suggest the thrust of his ideas: “Rethinking Economic Development in the Caribbean – The Role of Social Capital in the Eastern Caribbean States”; The Caricom Single Market and Economy: Is it realistic Without Commitment to Political Unity?” The Land that Succeeds Without Trying and the End of Politics; and “Identity, Space and the West Indian Union”. The feature that separates Brewster’s work from the mainstream, aside from the rigour of his analysis and the breadth of his vision, is his bountiful creativity. Among his contemporaries, there are few who have been able to match his ability to peel away various obscurantisms and reveal the Caribbean economic condition in all its stark and often dismal reality. But equally, tied to this has been a willingness to propose alternatives rooted in a deep seated optimism in the region and the creative potential of its peoples.

By way of conclusion, a case in point is the last mentioned article ‘Identity, Space and the Caribbean Union’. Written almost four decades after the optimistic era of *Dynamics* and in a period of deep pessimism about the future of small states, Brewster still searches for and proposed a model of greater Caribbean unity, based not on the old fashioned notion

of a single sovereign state, but on multiple forms of cooperation and practical integration on the basis of what he refers to as ‘first best principles’. I quote from that paper:

This is a convenient time for Caricom to:

- Consider advancing toward some sort of union that would give expression to the West Indian people’s distinctive cultural and historical identity.
- Develop coherent policy and strategic options for development-compatible integration into the world economy, given overlapping and conflictive bilateral, regional, hemispheric, bi-regional and world trade initiatives.
- Give greater emphasis to functional integration designed to meet the test of the first-best, and exploit the potential inherent in regional commons, regional public goods and regional resource complementarity.

It is Havelock Brewster’s rare ability, captured here in brief, to look beyond the next hairpin curve in the road and imagine the possibilities for better economic and social futures that we celebrate above all others this evening. Chancellor, I present, with pleasure, Ambassador Havelock Brewster and invite you, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of the University of the West Indies, to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.