

# SIR LENNY HENRY, BARONESS FLOELLA BENJAMIN AND LORD SIMON WOOLLEY AMONG THOSE HONOURED AT THE INAUGURAL UWI LONDON BENEFIT DINNER

Submitted by: University of the West Indies

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November 27, 2024 (London) - The University of the West Indies (UWI) brought the warmth of the Caribbean to London with its staging of the inaugural UWI London Benefit Dinner on Saturday, November 16 at the Lincoln's Inn. Sir Lenny Henry, Baroness Floella Benjamin and Lord Simon Woolley were among those honoured. Held under the patronage of Professor Shirley Thompson, music composer, conductor and violinist, the black tie event was an incredible evening of splendour.

"The University is deeply appreciative of the tremendous support received in London for this historic occasion. There is much for The University to celebrate in London as it was founded over 76 years ago as a College in special relationship with the University College of London, with 33 medical students at one campus in Kingston, Jamaica. Today, UWI has an enrolment of over 50,000 students across five campuses. We are number one in the Caribbean and in the top three percent globally," said Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies.

The theme of the event this year was 'Educate to Elevate'. All funds generated will be awarded in postgraduate scholarships to students involved in climate research and environmental, social and governance research. Climate change is an existential threat to the Caribbean and The University is working assiduously to mitigate its deleterious effects on the region.

The full cadre of honourees included:

Luminary Award:

- Baroness Floella Benjamin (Actor, singer, politician, presenter and former Chancellor of the University of Exeter);
- Dr Donette Chin-Loy Chang (Entrepreneur, philanthropist and Chancellor of Toronto Metropolitan University);
- Sir Lenny Henry (Actor, comedian, co-founder of Comic Relief and former Chancellor of Birmingham City University)
- Dr Willard Wigan, MBE (World-renowned micro-sculptor);
- Lord Simon Woolley, CBE (Principal, Homerton College, University of Cambridge and co-founder, Operation Black Vote).

Vice Chancellor Award: Mr Peter Cohen (Entrepreneur and philanthropist)

Chancellor Award: bpTT

The Benefit was sponsored by a variety of generous supporters, including The Repair Campaign, whose co-founder Lucy Gaffney outlined the incredible work that the organisation is doing for reparatory justice.

The lively evening of entertainment kicked off with Kedma Macias (singer), Mo Pleasure (keyboardist) and Jaime Michael Harris (saxophonist). A highlight of the event was the live auction. A bat signed by West Indies cricket greats (such as Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir Gordon Greendige, Desmond Haynes, Sir Vivian

Richards, Joel Garner, Sir Wesley Hall and Sir Curtley Ambrose) was sold along with three autographed copies of *Why We Kneel How We Rise* by Michael Holding (one of the greatest fast bowlers of all times and former Sky News presenter). A door prize of two Club Class tickets donated by British Airways, from the UK to any of their Caribbean destinations, was won by a lucky guest.

The dinner programme was followed by an after party at The London Edition, where DJ Just Vibe had guests 'feting' until 2:00 Sunday morning. The guests expressed their delight with the evening, noting their intent to attend next year.