

Harold Drayton
For the Guild of Graduates of the University of Guyana,
Toronto, Canada
October 3rd 2009

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BEFORE DELIVERING ADDRESS BY RICHARD DRAYTON

My Dear Family and Friends,

Tonight was never intended to be my “do”; it properly belongs to Richard, but unfortunately, an unexpected family crisis has made it quite impossible for him to leave the U.K. and to keep his scheduled appointment with us. He has asked me to convey to you his sincere apology, and we can only hope that you will understand and forgive

I offered to do the next best thing, and with Harry Hergesh’s consent, to deliver the Address which he had prepared for our Reunion, with an amended introductory paragraph. Although that is my primary remit this evening, I do hope that Harry and other UG alumni- former students, and now my very Dear Friends- would not mind if I made just one personal comment.

Much as I enjoy all the flattering tributes you always shower me with, I want to confirm tonight what I have always acknowledged: despite the hard work of all those who were associated with the University project, it was Cheddi Jagan who was the unfaltering sponsor of UG. And now that I have been busily engaged in looking in detail, especially at the records of 1962, I can tonight sharpen that assessment. Had it not been for Cheddi’s steadfastness, in firmly resisting those who as late as **December 1962** made their final attempt to reverse his Government’s decision to establish an autonomous national institution for Higher Education and Research, UG would almost certainly never have come into being. *That* is an essential element in the History of our University