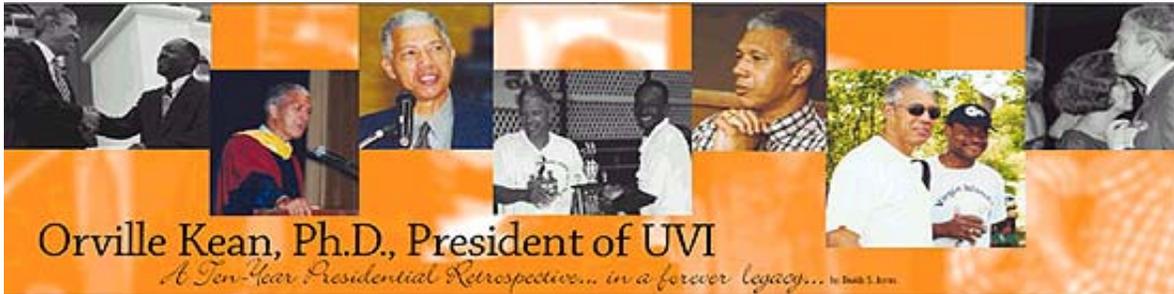




SPRING 2001



By Davida R. Siwisa, Editor-in-Chief

The medieval university looked backwards; it professed to be a storehouse of old knowledge... The modern university looks forward, and is a factory of new knowledge.
Thomas Henry Huxley, English biologist. From a letter dated April, 1892
The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations

VISIONARY BEGINNINGS

Prophetic men leave behind thoughts and accomplishments that last for all time. Huxley's forward thinking statement in 1892 is, perhaps, truer today than it was then. To have a sense of Dr. Orville Kean's leadership of the University of the Virgin Islands over the past ten years, one would first and foremost have to acknowledge that he is a man who looks forward, a visionary who has left his mark on UVI.

Orville Kean is a native son of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. He is among the many scholars who had to leave the territory to attend college on the mainland. The UVI President received his first degree in mathematics from Pennsylvania's Lincoln University in 1959, just a few short years before the College of the Virgin Islands came into being. Dr. Kean gave the keynote address at Lincoln's 2001 commencement exercises.

It could be said that Dr. Kean's earliest involvement with UVI began in 1961. Governor Ralph Paiewonsky convened a commission of government and private sector leaders to explore whether or not a community college should be established in the Virgin Islands. A young Orville Kean, Marilyn Krigger and Charles Turnbull (the current governor), as well as June Lindquist, the librarian of the now Enid Baa Library, appealed to Governor Paiewonsky to allow them to attend the meeting as non-participants. Kean, Krigger and Turnbull were educators all at the start of their public school teaching careers. The rest, as they say, is history.

For 36 of the University's 39 years, Dr. Kean has been a part of either the foreground or background of what has shaped the University. There is much to be proud of in his lifetime career at the University and UVI's president is proud to discuss the achievements of those 36 years and recognize others who have contributed to his achievements.

"I am filled with a sense of pride that the people and leaders of the Virgin Islands, particularly Ralph Paiewonsky, had this vision. We've been able to carry forward on that vision and go beyond the original vision that the framers of the University had."

Dr. Kean's presidency has been characterized by growth in every aspect of the University. The University has grown financially in its endowment and through gifts and grants, physically in terms of new construction, stronger and more self-sustaining in terms of damage mitigation, water production and distribution facilities. In the 10 years that Dr. Kean has been president, the University now offers more programs for the community and more exchange opportunities for scholars through cooperative arrangements with other universities. UVI is more widely recognized due to the accomplishments of its award-winning faculty and students.

Dr. Kean has, during his tenure, created a new administrative governance structure by forming the

President's Cabinet. He has overseen a major reorganization that provides a campus-based governance in the form of chancellorships for the two campuses. And most recently, in a move that will be better appreciated by future generations, the University purchased 213 acres of adjoining property on St. Thomas, at its westernmost border. The campus, literally, doubled in size.

Dr. Kean acknowledges that much of what he has been able to accomplish has also been due to the support and encouragement of the board of trustees through the years. They, too, have shared the vision of UVI's potential.

"Dr. Kean has provided strong leadership at the University," said UVI Board of Trustees Chairman Dr. Auguste Rimpel. "Dr. Kean brought the University out of the devastation of the hurricanes and he was able to rebuild parts of the campuses and make them better. Clearly, his efforts in working with the board and being creative allowed us, in large part, to build the Sports & Fitness Center."

***"I believe
that the potential of the
University of the Virgin Islands
is almost limitless because
the potential of the
Virgin Islands is almost
limitless. I believe that
because the two things go
hand in glove
and there is a strong
symbiotic relationship."
Dr. Orville Kean***

But Dr. Kean has mixed feelings about UVI's successes. "There is always a feeling of great pride with what we have done at UVI, but there is also a feeling of the need to do so much more." For Dr. Kean, there is a strong symbiotic relationship between the success of UVI and the territory. "I believe that the potential of the University of the Virgin Islands is almost limitless because the potential of the Virgin Islands is almost limitless. So I have a very strong and powerful vision of the University and of the territory."

On Dr. Kean's inauguration on March 16, 1991, as UVI's third president, the new president inherited a university that was still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Hugo in September of 1989. But that University was his home. Dr. Kean had already spent 25 years of his professional career at UVI as he assumed his presidency. In his inaugural speech, **he spoke of magic**.

***"If magic is the achievement of amazing results by the application of vision, courage,
dedication and hard work, then the University of the Virgin Islands is our "magic kingdom"
and its magic has worked on the minds of tens of thousands and,
with time, shall work on the minds of hundreds of thousands.
The magicians sit beside and in front of me today. They are the members of the Board of Trustees,
the faculty and support staff. If you do not believe me, ask the students.
Or, better yet, enroll in one of our courses
and let our faculty transform you to another time, place or dimension."
Dr. Orville Kean, 1991 Inauguration Speech***

Staying true to his own words, the first bit of magic that Dr. Kean needed to perform was to capitalize upon the destruction of large portions of both campuses from Hurricane Hugo to either make buildings better or build anew. Towards the end of Dr. Arthur Richard's presidency, Dr. Kean, in his capacity as executive vice president, had been involved in the aftermath of pulling the campuses back together. The framework for Dr. Kean's presidency was set from those experiences.

"The first thing I determined was that we should concentrate on building new buildings, rather than renovating old ones. Or, if we were going to do anything with old structures, that we should gut them and go back to the bare bones and use what was good to build a new structure." Consequently, the first projects became new structures. Dr. Kean's tenure has been characterized as one of rebuilding the campuses and using disaster as an opportunity to improve and update the University's infrastructure.

The newly constructed Sports and Fitness Center on St. Thomas is a prime example of this. The new fitness center was built around the metal framework of what was once a 1930's navy airplane hangar. It was later converted and used for over 30 years as a gym at UVI.

Dr. Kean recognizes the value people in the territory place on hard work. But that hard work is often coupled with a colonial history and territorial existence that has a dependency on gifts, grants and special exemptions. "Hence, we are advised to supplement our legislative appropriation by gifts, grants and special

exemptions. Our strategic plan includes pursuing an increase in gifts," said Dr. Kean, "but I look at gifts and grants as the basis for investments for revenue generation." To Dr. Kean, such additional funding should not be viewed as a permanent solution to UVI's fiscal needs, but rather as the vehicle to fulfill the purpose of gifts and provide the means to make appropriate investments to generate steady revenues. The strategy is not unique to UVI. Dr. Kean points out that many universities are looking at endowments and investments as ways to generate revenue.

In these last years of Dr. Kean's presidency, he has a purposeful focus. It is driven by major thrusts of UVI's strategic plan. "My interests, during my last years as president," said Kean, "are to help revitalize and expand the economy of the Virgin Islands and to aid in the development of the islands." You cannot, according to the president, have economic development without social development as well. "They go hand in glove. The quality of the schools you have, the families you have, law and order, are all part of the social and economic fiber of a society."

It's well known that universities are becoming agents in the economic expansion and revitalization of areas by providing intellectual capital to attract the right kinds of businesses; they provide human resource support through the students, faculty and programs. A growing number of universities have helped revitalize their local economies through research parks and workforce training.

The land purchase offered a wonderful opportunity for expansion of the University. There are configurations that have to do with community development and community engagement. So it's not that the

"Dr. Kean brought the University out of the devastation of the hurricanes and he was able to rebuild parts of the campuses and make them better."

**Dr. Auguste Rimpel
Chair, UVI Board of Trustees**

University will be just offering education leading to degrees but also programs that upgrade our territory's workforce, particularly for jobs in the "new economy."

The Research and Technology Park, for which initial feasibility plans are still being studied, is a key element in UVI's strategic thrust to both revitalize the territory and the University financially. It will provide a Virgin Islands home for high tech businesses. "We need to have a research park on St. Croix first, because that's where the economic revitalization is needed most. Later, we'd like to have one on St. Thomas as well." Dr. Kean said the park will provide opportunities for the development of the University around more non-traditional lines. Eventually, it could also lead to the development of Ph.D. programs, since the professionals in the park are expected to function as adjunct professors.

"We are losing our brightest and our best," said Dr. Kean. And the UVI president believes that no society can survive and thrive with this kind of brain drain. "The societies that do well are not only able to retain their brightest and their best, but are able to attract the brightest and best from other places." It is a position the Virgin Islands once held that is failing. By helping to revitalize the territory's economy, UVI will provide a critical step in helping the territory keep its scholars and future leaders at home.

Applying that same concept to the University, Dr. Kean recognizes that UVI must become more economically sound. The current strategic plan (see article in this issue) hopes to address the economic growth of the University with its emphasis on sustainable development. The University plans to put forces in motion to increase its revenues. Part of that plan may soon be evidenced through the Sports & Fitness Center.

"Dr. Kean brought best practices to the management of the University through a comprehensive strategic planning process," said Dr. Rimpel. "This planning led to an administrative restructuring that will provide for a more efficient organization."

If you ask Orville Kean what he is most proud of, he will tell you that it is putting together a team of people who have been able to achieve professional and personal growth, to some extent, because of his influence as a leader.

Dr. Kean recognized, after the hurricanes, that it would be more beneficial to the governance of the University to have the joint counsel of his top administrators. "I needed an administrative structure with the people who have been charged with certain responsibilities working together with the president to provide the framework and context for policies. It became clear to me, sometime before I became president, that I would be more effective with a cabinet." The President's Cabinet consists of the University's vice presidents and chancellors.

Malcolm C. Kirwan, UVI's vice president for administration and finance, has worked with all three of UVI's

presidents and is also distinguished by a 30 year plus tenure at UVI. "Dr. Kean motivates the people around him to embrace his direction and vision as their own. He gets things done through personal empowerment, giving team members the room to be creative and innovative, while keeping them clearly focused on the goals he wants accomplished. It has been a rewarding and growing experience working with Dr. Kean," said Kirwan.

Dr. Kean's presidency in UNICA, the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes, has



Leo Francis, Senate President Almando "Rocky" Liburd, Board Chair Dr. Auguste Rimpel, Principal Architect Basil Ace from DMJM Architects, Lt. Gov. Gerard Luz James, President Orville Kean, and Shawn-Michael Malone of U.S. Delegate Christensen's office cut the ribbon at the Sports & Fitness Center grand opening

"My interests, during my last years as president," said Dr. Kean, "are to help revitalize and are to help revitalize and expand the economy of the Virgin Islands and to aid in the social development of the islands."

elevated the esteem in which UVI is held in the Caribbean. The UVI concept of leadership has been extended through the English, French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean because of Dr. Kean's successes as president of UNICA.

"Dr. Kean's presidency of UNICA has provided UVI with much broader regional recognition than in previous years," said Dr. Rimpel.

Leaders hone their skills in a variety of ways. They lead by example and with the advice of their counselors. They lead with the support and backing of others. Dr. Kean recognizes that his strong family unit, powered by his loving wife Julie, has been instrumental in all he has done. "Julie has been supportive of me throughout my career," said Dr. Kean.

But it's a family affair, according to the president. "It starts with my parents who have always been supportive and includes my children and my brother. It's based on the fact that we know and respect each other and are supportive of each other. We know when there's a need to come in and pinch-hit and when there's a need not to do that... everyone understands their role and plays it very well."

For Dr. Kean, that carries over to his presidency as well. "You have to know how to pinch-hit and when not to. People have to know that their leaders aren't perfect any more than they are. We all have to allow people room to make mistakes and to grow from them," said Dr. Kean.

Reflecting on how he might be remembered, Dr. Kean said, "I would like to be remembered as a transforming agent and that my input helped to transform the University, the people who come to the University, the territory and the region. I'd like to be remembered as a person who solved problems and as a person who made a difference." ➡

POSITIONS HELD AT UVI SINCE 1966

(several held concurrently)

- President (1990 to present)
- Acting VP for Academic Affairs (1985)
- Executive Vice President (1985)
- Director of the Eastern Caribbean Center (1984)
- Dean of Instruction and Professor of Mathematics (1981)
- Acting Dean of Instruction (1980)
- Acting Director of the Caribbean Research Institute (1979)
- American Council of Education Fellow in Administration (1978)
- Vice Chair of the Science and Mathematics Division, Associate Professor of Mathematics (1972)
- Assistant Professor of Mathematics (1966)

SELECTED MAJOR INITIATIVES COMPLETED DURING DR. KEAN'S PRESIDENCY

- Research and Extension Center, St. Croix
- Water production and distribution system, St. Thomas
- 72-bed residence hall, St. Thomas
- 102-bed residence hall and ancillary facility, St. Croix
- A management information system Banner, to provide better management, coordination and reporting capabilities between administrative units and the campuses
- Department of Information Technology
- Video teleconferencing rooms on each campus
- Microwave system to link the campuses and facilitate distance learning
- Music Education Center, St. Thomas
- Music Education Center, St. Thomas
- Sports & Fitness Center, St. Thomas (Grand Opening January 2001)
- Underground electrical system project, St. Thomas (St. Croix project 80% completed)
- Plans for renovation of the Harvey Student Center into an administrative complex for administrative and support functions
- Principal Investigator on grant awards from U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services; Education; Energy; and Interior and Insular Affairs.
- Increase in University's endowment from approximately \$2.8 million (1991) to \$15.8 million (2000)
- Principal Investigator on \$3.5 million National Science Foundation grant
- UVI website upgraded to augment enrollment and marketing initiatives
- V. I. 2000 Census conducted through the Eastern Caribbean Center