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In the 73rd installment of our weekly series at emeagwali.com, we present newspaper reviews of Philip Emeagwali’s lecture at the University of the West Indies, Saint Augustine, Trinidad.

Computer Genius Thrills at Lecture

Transcribed from various newspaper articles including the radio spot:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPGtUABfLMI>



On June 8, 2008, Philip Emeagwali presented to Trinbagonians a poetic lecture which took place at the flagship institution of learning of the Caribbean – The University of the West Indies.

He took the audience on a fascinating journey of the interconnectivity between humanity and the Internet and revealed his vision of how “the Internet, as we know it, will become obsolete and disappear into our collective memory,” as well as using the metaphor of the Internet as “our shared planet-sized supercomputer.” His futuristic lecture generated a buzz on the Net with *Dissident Voice* hailing it as “utterly wondrous, yet frightening in its ultimate disconnect.”

The Nigerian Ambassador praised the fluid delivery of his lovely lyrical lecture and summed it up as “a good day to be a Nigerian.”



Emeagwali spoke before this capacity crowd of 500 at the John F. Kennedy Auditorium of The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.



Behind the Internet

Computer genius thrills at Emancipation lecture series

June 11th 2008

(TrinidadExpress.com)

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Dr Philip Emeagwali takes us from the blackboard to the drawing board to the motherboard and then to what he considers as the mother of all motherboards-the super computer. A mind which engineered the linking of 65336 electronic processors, to be able to compute 3.1 billions calculations per second using physics, mathematics and computing, and won the Gordon Bell Prize in 1989, (considered the Nobel Prize of computing), was last in class at the age of five and has been a child soldier in Nigeria during a vicious war. Called by President Bill Clinton, "one of the great minds of the Information Age.", Dr Emeagwali has certainly overcome some grand challenges to achieve significant milestones in his lifetime.



Dr Emeagwali was the guest of the Emancipation Support Committee (ESC) for the launch of the Kwame Ture Memorial Lecture Series 2008 last Sunday at the

Philip Emeagwali

University of the West Indies. "It is truly a privilege to have someone of Dr Emeagwali's stature in our midst," said Tracy Wilson, Chairman of the Education Committee, ESC. "We continue to seek out speakers and thinkers who can share a different paradigm of thought. Persons, who by their experiences can give our younger generation some hope for their future. Dr Emeagwali is undoubtedly an inspirational speaker, and his presentation marked the beginning of what the Emancipation Support Committee expects to be its most stimulating and enlightening lecture series yet."

Noted as the "Bill Gates of Africa", Emeagwali spoke on this year's theme 'Crossing New Frontiers to Conquer New Challenges,' having risen from humble beginnings in Akure, Nigeria, to become the individual TIME magazine recognised as the 'unsung hero of the Internet,' for his contributions to Super Computing. Dr Emeagwali grew up in Nigeria during a time of war and turbulence that forced him to drop out of school, yet he was still able to complete his education abroad, receiving a general education certificate from the University of London and later degrees from George Washington University and the University of Maryland. He also studied in the doctoral fellowship programme at the University of Michigan.

At the launch of the Kwame Ture Memorial Lecture Series, at the JFK Lecture Theatre, a capacity 500-strong audience listened attentively as Dr Emeagwali painted a picture of the internet from the moon, "Just picture the Internet as an electronic web over the earth, the 8th continent, with millions of twinkling points, a feast for the eyes and the mind."





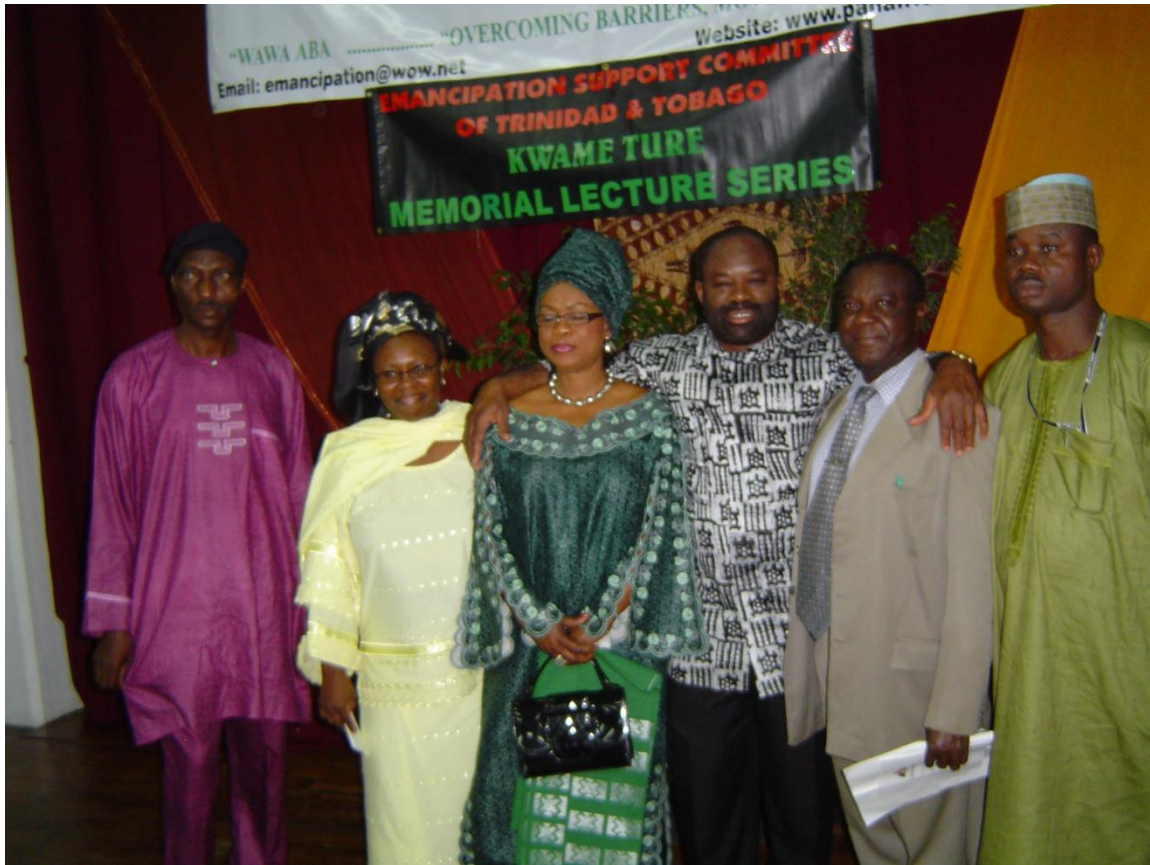
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Asked what was the transforming moment in his life-Dr Emeagwali stated, "When I was 5 years old, my father recognised that I was slow in Math, he worked with me, pushing me until eventually I could do 100 questions in an hour. His efforts pushed me beyond my comfort zone. Parents must set higher standards for their children and push them beyond their comfort zone. We must remember that every genius is an ordinary person who did extraordinary things." His prowess in mathematics earned him the nickname "Calculus" at University.

Asked about his experiences as a black man in the white-dominated area of computing and mathematics-Dr Emeagwali recounted the fact that in the early days he often had to deny his blackness, and to be accommodating to everyone, just to fit in. However, because of his blackness-he was forced to work alone, and it is this work that has brought him international success and recognition. He also tells the story of an artist preparing a sketch of him for a publication using his features, but portraying him as a white man. "We must never allow others to project their image of us, on us. We must maintain our own identity."

Philip Emeagwali

"Emancipation means for me, not just a freeing of the body-but also of the mind, we must be at the edge of knowledge in all our fields. We can not be fully emancipated if we lack intellectual capital. Five thousand years ago Africa was the intellectual capital of the World, with the pyramids, science and Math, we must regain that position by being more conscious, by investing more in education and by understanding our past."



"In the past men fought with swords and bayonets, today you must be equally armed, not with weapons but with knowledge and new techniques to achieve our own emancipation."

The Kwame Ture Lecture Series continues with another free lecture by lecturer, economist, columnist; Dennis Pantin on the topic Capitalism and the destruction of the Environment; New Challenges to Human Survival and Development at the National Museum Annex, Fredrick Street, Port of Spain from 7 p.m. tomorrow. For further information call the Emancipation Secretariat at 628-5008.



