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**Rex Nettleford possessed a rare and expansive intellect, says PM Douglas**

**BASSETERRE, ST. KITTS, FEBRUARY 5TH 2010 (CUOPM)** - Jamaican-born academic and cultural icon Professor Rex Nettleford personified those standards of excellence that are key to the development of human potential anywhere.

So says St. Kitts and Nevis' Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas as he paid glowing tribute to Mr. Nettleford, who died at a United States hospital on Tuesday night, a few hours before celebrating his 77th birthday. He suffered a massive heart attack last week while in the United States.

“And his was that confident and dignified spirit that is so essential to the advancement of societies the world over. Possessed of a rare and expansive intellect, he understood well the importance of history to the stabilization, and indeed the forward movement, of all nations. Indeed, a favorite saying of his was: ‘Disregarding one’s history is like driving a car without checking the rear-view mirror’ – a gem of wisdom that the entire Caribbean should forever take to heart,” said Prime Minister Douglas in a written statement on Friday.

Dr. Douglas said Professor Nettleford was keenly aware of the importance of the arts to the development of the human soul.

“Keenly aware of the importance of the human soul to the full flowering of one’s God-given potential, Rex Nettleford co-founded the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica, an entity that to this day magnificently displays to the world the beauty, the creativity, and the unique and inspiring specificity of the Jamaican soul,” said Prime Minister Douglas.

He said Rex Nettleford’s humble birth in colonial Jamaica was no match for the dynamic spirit that would propel him from primary school in Jamaica to graduate school at Oxford; from advisory roles at home to advisory roles at many multilateral agencies, including the UN; from being honored throughout the region to being honored far beyond these shores.

“Most important of all, however, were Rex Nettleford’s commitment to the pursuit of excellence in all that he did; his determination to help us see and understand and appreciate Caribbean history from our own perspective; and in the process, his having helped us to better understand not only who and what we are, but, just as importantly, who and what we can be. May the soul of this extraordinary human being rest in peace,” said Prime Minister Douglas.

For more information visit the Communication's Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister Website at [www.cuopm.org](http://www.cuopm.org) or [www.cuopm.com](http://www.cuopm.com) or contact:

Erasmus Williams  
Press Secretary to the Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Government Headquarters  
Church Street  
Basseterre  
St. Kitts  
TeL: 869-465-9698  
Fax: 869-466-9997  
Cell: 869-665-8422

Email: [sknmpressec@hotmail.com](mailto:sknmpressec@hotmail.com); [erasmuswilliams2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:erasmuswilliams2000@yahoo.co.uk)