



# 100

## A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE

GRACEKENNEDY'S  
RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

THREE INTERVIEWS:

**FRED  
KENNEDY**

**DOUGLAS  
ORANE**

**DON  
WEHBY**



**LECTURE  
2022**



**A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE**  
**GraceKennedy's Recipe for Success**

**Three Interviews:**  
**Fred Kennedy • Douglas Orane • Don Wehby**

GraceKennedy Foundation  
2023

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## About the GraceKennedy Foundation

The GraceKennedy Foundation (GKF) was established in 1982, in celebration of the company's 60th anniversary. Its aim is to be a world-class corporate foundation driven by its mission to support its parent company, GraceKennedy, as a corporate citizen, by creating environmentally sustainable programmes, promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing access to education. This is accomplished primarily through the provision of grants, tertiary scholarships, the operation of a food bank for university students, diaspora activities, the funding of the Executive-in-Residence at the Mona School of Business and Management and a Chair in Environment at The University of the West Indies, Mona, a number of environmental and sustainability activities, and the Annual Lecture Series.

Since 1989, the GraceKennedy Foundation has used its lecture series to engage the Jamaican public, both locally and in the diaspora, to promote discussion and debate on relevant topics affecting Jamaican society. The 2022 lecture took the form of three interviews, presented both in person and online. The video is available on GraceKennedy's YouTube channel and the e-book is available free of cost at [www.gracekennedy.com](http://www.gracekennedy.com), in the hope that the lecture's reach will extend beyond those present at its delivery.

Caroline Mahfood  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*GraceKennedy Foundation*

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# **The GraceKennedy Foundation**

## **Lecture Series**

- 1989 G. Arthur Brown**  
Patterns of Development and Attendant Choices and Consequences  
for Jamaica and the Caribbean
- 1990 M. Alister McIntyre**  
Human Resources Development: Its Relevance to Jamaica  
and the Caribbean
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The New Europe, the New World Order, Jamaica and the Caribbean
- 1992 Burchell Taylor**  
Free for All? – A Question of Morality and Community
- 1993 Elsa Leo-Rhynie**  
The Jamaican Family – Continuity & Change
- 1994 Keith S. Panton**  
Leadership and Citizenship in Post-Independence Jamaica –  
Whither the Partnership?
- 1995 Lucien Jones**  
The Jamaican Society – Options for Renewal
- 1996 Elizabeth Thomas-Hope**  
The Environmental Dilemma in Caribbean Context
- 1997 Gladstone Mills**  
Westminster Style Democracy: The Jamaican Experience

- 1998 Don Robotham**  
Vision & Voluntarism – Reviving Voluntarism in Jamaica
- 1999 Barry Chevannes**  
What We Sow and What We Reap: The Cultivation of Male Identity in Jamaica
- 2000 Patrick Bryan**  
Inside Out & Outside In: Factors in the Creation of Contemporary Jamaica
- 2001 Errol Miller**  
Jamaica in the 21st Century: Contending Choices
- 2002 Lloyd Goodleigh, Anthony Irons, Neville Ying**  
Changing with Change: Workplace Dynamics Today and Tomorrow
- 2003 Pauline Milbourn Lynch**  
Wellness – A National Challenge
- 2004 Dennis Morrison**  
The Citizen and the Law: Perspectives Old and New
- 2005 Marjorie Whylie**  
Our Musical Heritage: The Power of the Beat
- 2006 Maureen Samms-Vaughan**  
Children Caught in the Crossfire
- 2007 Kenneth Sylvester**  
Information and Communication Technology: Shaping Our Lives

- 2008 Richard L. Bernal**  
Globalization: Everything but Alms - The EPA and Economic Development
- 2009 Anthony Harriott**  
Controlling Violent Crime: Models and Policy Options
- 2010 Delano Franklyn**  
Sport in Jamaica: A Local and International Perspective
- 2011 Frances Madden**  
“It’s Not About Me”: Working with Communities: Process and Challenges  
The Grace & Staff Community Development Foundation’s Experience
- 2012 James Moss-Solomon**  
Jamaica and GraceKennedy: Dreams Converging, Roads Diverging
- 2013 Anna Kasafi Perkins**  
Moral Dis-ease Making Jamaica Ill? Re-engaging the Conversation  
on Morality
- 2014 Fritz H. Pinnock and Ibrahim A. Ajagunna**  
From Piracy to Transshipment: Jamaica’s Journey to Becoming  
a Global Logistics Hub
- 2015 Michael A. Taylor**  
Why Climate Demands Change
- 2016 Marvin Reid**  
Overfed and Undernourished: Dietary Choices in Modern Jamaica
- 2017 Michael Abrahams**  
Humour, Laughter and Life

**2018 Parris Lyew-Ayee, Jr.**

Tech Charge: Smart Devices, Smart Businesses, Smart Nations

**2019 Mona Webber, Wayne Henry, Tijani Christian**

Clean Kingston Harbour: Pipe Dream or Pot of Gold?

**2020 Margaret Jones Williams**

The Decade of Action Begins: The Sustainable Development Goals –  
Leaving No One Behind

**2021 Vivian Crawford**

Jamaica's Tangible and Intangible Heritage: So Much to Tell

**Note to readers:**

The format of this lecture is somewhat different from our previous lectures. It follows the format of the actual lecture presentation, three interviews conducted by Simone Clarke-Cooper with Fred Kennedy, Douglas Orane and Don Wehby, all persons connected to the GraceKennedy Group. While the interviews have been edited for clarity they retain the content and the spirit of the presentations.



To watch the lecture presentation, Click on the following link:

***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tX5Bzq6ewDk>***



**A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE**  
**GraceKennedy's Recipe for Success**

**WELCOME AND  
OPENING REMARKS**

# Welcome

## **Dr Carol Hordatt Gentles**

It is a distinct pleasure to welcome you to the 34th lecture in the GraceKennedy Foundation's annual lecture series. We are celebrating many phenomenal events today. We're celebrating 100 years of GraceKennedy, 40 years of the GraceKennedy Foundation, and we are celebrating the fact that we are once again able to bring you our annual lecture live, in person. Today's lecture is still, however, a hybrid event, and so we take great pleasure in welcoming our guests here at the Jamaica Conference Centre, as well as those of you who are joining us online from across Jamaica and the world.

We wanted today's lecture to be a celebration of the GraceKennedy Group. So we are pleased that Grace Foods, World Brands, Consumer Brands and GK One have partnered with us on this event. Please visit their booths after the lecture to learn more about their products and services.

The culture of *We Care* is as true today of GraceKennedy as it was 100 years ago. As the oldest corporate foundation in Jamaica, GraceKennedy Foundation's mission is to improve the well-being of Jamaicans through education, healthy lifestyle initiatives and the environment. We see our mission as supporting the role of our parent company as a corporate citizen, one that is committed to sustainable development and helping Jamaica achieve developed nation status by the year 2030.

So we thank you all for joining us this afternoon. We promise you an exciting, thought-provoking and inspiring lecture presentation and we look forward to the lively and stimulating discussion that will follow. I now invite Professor Gordon Shirley, chairman of the Board of the GraceKennedy Group, to bring his remarks.



# Opening Remarks

## **Professor the Hon. Gordon Shirley**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, both here at the Jamaica Conference Centre and those online, our distinguished panellists this afternoon: It really is a pleasure for me to be associated with this event today. The attainment of 100 years by any individual or organization is a stellar achievement and 100 years of growth and success, even more so. Such an accomplishment generally prompts a question. How did you manage to do this? Thus, the habits of centenarians are analyzed and their diets and lifestyles examined to discover the secret of a long life. It is very much the same with companies. We want to know, how have you managed to grow and to thrive? What are the secrets to success? GraceKennedy, established in 1922, has achieved this outstanding milestone during one of the most challenging and dynamic eras in history and in a small, vulnerable economy.

It is also natural that many in the business world and in the population at large have asked, how have you done this? That question will be answered in large part by today's lecture, which is entitled *A Century of Excellence: GraceKennedy's Recipe for Success*. It will be a presentation in three parts by three stalwarts of GraceKennedy: Dr Fred Kennedy, educator, author, and chairman of the GraceKennedy Foundation, the Honourable Douglas Orane, retired chairman and CEO of GK, and Senator Don Wehby, our current Group CEO. They each will look at different periods of the company's evolution, from its beginning as a family business to a publicly-traded global enterprise, highlighting the highs and lows of that 100-year journey this evening. We also celebrate the GraceKennedy Foundation and the contributions it has made to nation building over the last four decades.

Founding member and former chairman of the Foundation, Mr Peter Moss-Solomon, explained that the idea of establishing a corporate foundation was conceived by a committee formed to plan the programme of activities to celebrate the company's 60th anniversary. It was decided that the foundation would focus its support in the

area of education. The then chairman, Carlton Alexander, embraced the idea and the rest, as they say, is history. The work of the Foundation over the past four decades has played a significant role in facilitating the nation's 2030 vision to make Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business. It does this through the creation of a pool of highly educated professionals in a wide range of disciplines with the skills required to provide the products and services a developing nation needs, and by rehabilitating and protecting our island's delicate ecosystem.

The Foundation also encourages intellectual discourse and dissemination of information through this lecture series, which was inaugurated in 1988. We have inspired the Caribbean community with innovative ideas, many of which have been tested and applied to practice in an effort to address the social and economic challenges faced in our region. This year's lecture panellists will join a cadre of distinguished scholars such as Reverend Burchell Taylor, Dr Parris Lyew-Ayee, Dr Michael Abrahams, Professors Patrick Bryan, Michael Taylor, Barry Chevannes, Elsa Leo-Rhynie and Mona Webber, and cultural icons Vivian Crawford and Marjorie Whylie, just to name a few.

Ten years ago, as part of GraceKennedy's 90th anniversary celebration, Jimmy Moss-Solomon presented the GraceKennedy Foundation annual lecture entitled *Jamaica and GraceKennedy: Dreams Converging, Roads Diverging*. He was a founding member of the GraceKennedy Foundation board, serving continuously for 40 years, and he also served as a founding board member and subsequently chairman of the Grace and Staff Community Development Foundation until his untimely passing in January of this year, 2022. Jimmy would've loved to be here to celebrate with us today as he was a devoted GraceKennedy man and was passionate about service to his beloved country, Jamaica. I am pleased to announce that the Foundation, in partnership with the Moss-Solomon family, will be funding the production of a collection of articles for release next year, written by Jimmy, which I believe is a fitting way to honour his legacy.

Without further ado and with great pleasure, I introduce Simone Clarke-Cooper, who is absolutely no stranger to the GraceKennedy family. She served as Group Corporate Communications Manager for a number of years before branching out to

establish SimSpeak Communication, an end-to-end communications company offering corporate communication consultancy, which produces the ground-breaking show, Sim Soul Sessions, aired Monday nights on Television Jamaica. I think you'll all agree that we could not ask for a more fitting moderator to facilitate the discussion this evening. Please therefore help me, ladies and gentlemen, to welcome Simone to the stage.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

Thank you very much, Prof. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm so happy to be here. I feel like I'm home. I always feel like I'm home when I'm around the GraceKennedy family and it is my honour to be here. Congratulations to the Foundation on 40 years. I am just a few years ahead of you. I celebrate my birthday on Monday; not at the hundredth milestone yet. Hopefully I will live to get there. It's really good to be here with you this afternoon.

So what's going to be happening today? We are going to be told highlights of the story of the distinguished corporate citizen of Harbour Street, GraceKennedy, born in 1922, who has not only survived but prospered for 100 years. The company has suffered loss, tragedy, great success and its fair share of failure, but it always rises and moves on its journey with determination and wisdom. Its ability to learn from mistakes, respect its people, staff and customers, integrity in all affairs and concern for its country are truly outstanding.

And its people have all contributed to its resilience and its longevity, as Prof. Shirley alluded to. The story today is going to be told in three parts, by some of those who know this company best: Dr Fred Kennedy, the Honourable Douglas Orane, and Senator Don Wehby.



## THE PRESENTATION

*Three Interviews:*  
Fred Kennedy • Douglas Orane • Don Wehby



**SIMONE CLARKE-COOPER**  
*Interviewer*



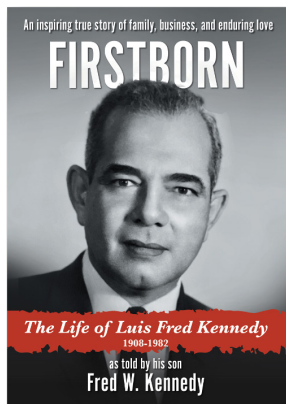
*Dr* Fred Kennedy

## Interview with Dr Fred Kennedy

### Simone Clarke-Cooper

*Let's begin. Our first presenter, Dr Fred Kennedy, the chair of the GraceKennedy Foundation, has dedicated his life to education here in Jamaica, as well as in his adopted home, Canada.*

*The grandson of Fred William Kennedy, one of the founders of GraceKennedy, and son of the indefatigable Luis Fred Kennedy, who led the company for four decades, he has unique insight into the inner workings of the early developments of the company. He shares his memories supported by meticulous research in a soon-to-be published biography of his father, **Firstborn**, which is going to be released very soon, and this scholarly yet poignant work will form the basis of his presentation this evening. So, Dr Kennedy, if you will join me on stage . . . give him a round of applause as he comes, please.*



### Dr Fred Kennedy

Thank you very much. It's the story of the life of my dad, and it occurred to me about three or four years ago that I should do something to honour his name for the centenary. Someone told me to write about it and I said maybe I should write a column for the *Gleaner* or *Observer*. He said, no, he deserves more than that. I've dedicated the book to my brother Paco, I want to mention that. His son Charles always called him the hundred percent GraceKennedy man and truly he was. I'm only sorry he wasn't around when I started the project because he had an incredible photographic memory for the history of GraceKennedy. He could

tell you about any aspect of the business. And he worked from when he was a young man; he joined the company when he was 19, and gave his whole career to GraceKennedy.

I also want to make one other announcement. The book is already paid for. I have decided to donate all the gross proceeds to the GraceKennedy Foundation and that money will be used to fully fund a scholarship to the Caribbean Maritime University in the name of Luis Fred Kennedy. He gave most of his career to the shipping side of the business.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*How does it feel being able to see it all come together and knowing that you're writing about a subject matter that's so close to you; how does that feel?*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

I learned a tremendous amount and I rediscovered a lot. I had a very good relationship with my dad. The book is multifaceted; I mean, it traces the history of Jamaica, but as well the history of the company, and it's also interwoven with family. So I tried to do three things and I had to depend on a lot of people, actually, to verify a lot of the content and make sure things were right.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*I'm sure all will be well. Your grandfather, Fred William, was a remarkable man. Can you share with us a little bit about him?*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

My dad talked constantly about him. He thought the world of him. He was not only a businessman, but he was also an artist. He was a poet. He was a cabinet maker. We still have some of the furniture that he made. He was a tremendous person. He was born in 1874, which put him in the second generation after emancipation. And historians will know that those groups of people really were the first professional native-born class of people in Jamaica. They were among the elite and privileged who were able to take advantage of a secondary school education. The state of education was appalling in those days. Only about 50% of children were enrolled in elementary school, and only about 50 or 60% of those actually attended school and a minority of those attended secondary. So he was one of the fortunate.

He had to leave school early though, at age 16, because his dad ran into financial difficulty. His father was a successful merchant but there was a downturn in the Jamaican economy at the end of the nineteenth century so his business got into trouble. My grandfather left school to support his family. He worked for the United Fruit Company, and he made his way as an auditor right up through the ranks. My dad used to say . . . how did he put it? He said that racial barriers hung ominously over the promotion of native-born people. You can imagine a man like this, a native-born Jamaican



trying to make his way through an organization that was all American, and white American. Most of those guys who came out to the Caribbean were college educated and young; they used to call them Banana Cowboys. He made his way and, eventually, towards the end of World War I, 1917, he decided it was time for change and he left.

This takes us to the story of the Graces. This young man here – it's not a very good picture, but it's the only one I could find – was Michael Sheffield Grace. He hired Fred William Kennedy as the manager of Grace Limited. The Grace group of companies bought a company in Jamaica called Wessels and Nephew. It was also a shipping company; they owned wharves and were quite a prosperous company. The subsidiary did not last long. Michael Grace died after only two years, at age 35. But my grandfather remained as manager and then the Grace family sent his brother, John Johnston Grace, to run the company. You recognize that name as one of the founders of GraceKennedy.

I dedicate a lot of the book to the Graces. They were very interesting. They were immensely wealthy, and they belonged to the House of Grace, as they called the enterprise. They owned probably more than two hundred commercial enterprises around the world. They had shipping agencies, they imported nitrates into the United States. They had headquarters in London, New York, LA, it was huge. In the book I explain the significance



of those networks, of Grace being connected to a corporation and having access to those world markets. There's also a New Zealand connection too. People familiar with GraceKennedy will know there is a very strong history with New Zealand in products, agencies and trade.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*So this is how the Graces became involved in the company?*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

Yes.

These two men are familiar to you: Fred William Kennedy (L) and John Johnston Grace (R). In 1921, there was an economic depression in the United States and the House of Grace sold their subsidiary, Grace Limited, to these two gentlemen. You can imagine the kind of trust that these two men had in each other, because they'd only known each other for two years. My grandfather managed the company, Grace Limited. Dr Johnston Grace had enough confidence in him to put up capital and form a company. I think one of the drivers too, for this man, Fred William Kennedy, was his self-determination. Historians refer to people of that second generation after emancipation, as economic nationalists. They had a tremendous desire to put their stamp on national development. They thought of themselves as the heirs to Jamaican soil because, as you know, after emancipation, a lot of colonials fled. And these



Fred William Kennedy  
(Photo, courtesy of ©  
GraceKennedy Ltd.)



Dr. John Johnston Grace  
(Photo, courtesy of ©  
GraceKennedy Ltd.)

were the folks, native folks, Jamaican-born people who took their place.

So that was one of the drivers of the formation of GraceKennedy, the urge and the desire to form a Jamaican company. I love this quote by my dad. It was said at the 50th anniversary of GraceKennedy in 1972 and I'll read. He said:

The company was founded by two men who had complete confidence in and mutual respect for each other. It was founded on the premise of full cooperation of the people involved who were to establish a tradition of complete integrity.

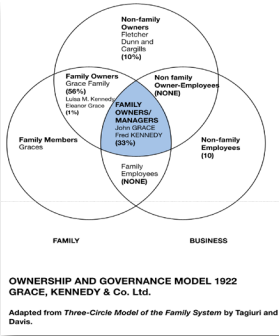
So he understood that the foundation of GraceKennedy depended on the absolute trust and integrity between his father and that man.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*And it lives on today, honesty, integrity, and trust.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

This seems academic but I'm going to go through this diagram very quickly. This is a Venn diagram that shows graphically the complexity of relationships within a family company. Family companies sometimes are more complex than a regular public company. This graph was created by a graduate student and his professor at Harvard Business School in the 1980s and is still used



to describe the kinds of relationships that exist within family companies. The top circle – you can see there are three circles – represents all those interest groups which are owners of the company. On the left-hand side, you see another circle, and this represents the family, whether they're owners or not. And this other circle on the right-hand side represents the interest groups that actually work for the company. Some of them may be family, others may not be. It was a small company when it started; they only had about ten employees. The centre of power, the nucleus of power of any family company is the owners, the family who owns the majority shares.

But I want you to notice something. These two gentlemen only own 33% of the company. Most of the company, the majority of shares, were held by Dr Grace's family, which represented 55%. They were more like absentee proprietors. They really weren't involved in the workings of the company. Dr Grace overcame that difficulty by establishing preference shares. He needn't have had the majority of ordinary shares because he owned the majority of preference shares, which gave him certain privileges including veto power over decisions made by the board.

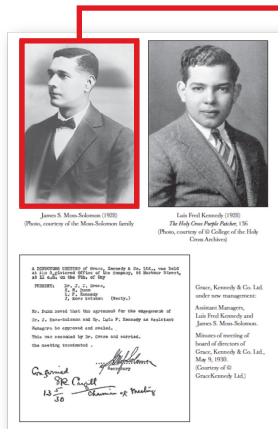
**Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Good history. Okay. So your dad . . . he assumed managerial duties with James S. Moss-Solomon at the age of 21, after his dad suddenly passed. I can imagine the challenges that they would've faced as two young managers at that time in the 'thirties and 'forties in Jamaica. Can you expound on that?*

## Dr Fred Kennedy

He was very young. He was the youngest man in his class. He went to Holy Cross College. He was the first man, the first person in his family to receive a tertiary education. He did brilliantly at university. He came back to Jamaica at age 19. He worked for the company, worked for his father for two years. And then my grandfather's death was horrific for him. He was haunted by it for the rest of his life. The circumstances of his death are explained in the book. The book, as you know, is called *Firstborn*. He was the first born of the Kennedy family and all these responsibilities were thrust on him right after his father's death.

The man on the left is James Moss-Solomon. He was a close ally and friend of my grandfather's. He was a bit older than my dad; not old enough to be his father. He was born in 1894, so he would've been 14 years older, old enough to be my father's mentor. These two gentlemen became co-managers of GraceKennedy, and managed GraceKennedy for 50 years. James Moss-Solomon started with the company in 1922 and retired in 1972.



The second pillar of strength of GraceKennedy was the relationship between these two gentlemen and it was remarkable. I have a chapter called “Uncle Jim”, about the Moss-Solomon family. This is an excerpt from an interview with Joan Belcher, daughter of Carlton Alexander:

### **Joan Belcher**



*Without a doubt, he embodied the principles of GraceKennedy as reflected now, honesty, integrity, trust, humility, and leading with a steward’s heart. My father was a man who, by his own example, placed others above self and instilled in his children and grandchildren and those who he mentored a love of country and a duty to be of service to others wherever and in whatever way he could. He was a true GraceKennedy man.*

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*There goes that phrase again, right? True GraceKennedy man.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

Yes, that comes up again. Jimmy, God rest his soul, he fell in love with this project, and I spent hours talking with him and interviewing him. He had always wanted to be part of the GraceKennedy centenary celebrations. I want to mention something that Joan Belcher said at the end about being a GraceKennedy man and about working

collaboratively with others. Things were so difficult in the early days. My dad and Mr Moss-Solomon were thrust into business when Jamaica was going through huge problems in 1938 during the labour riots. Grace owned wharves and were agents for ships. Bustamante called general strikes and shut down the wharves, and you can imagine the kinds of challenges that these men had in trying to intervene to get the wharves back up and running.

But my dad realized that the only way to solve problems in those days, and probably it still is true today, is by joining hands with others. He formed Kingston Wharves Limited in 1945 and that was a consortium of companies. The Shipping Association of Jamaica he formed in 1939 and that, too, was with fellow merchants, in conjunction with Charles Edward Johnston and Captain List. In order to solve some of the difficult challenges they had in those days, they had to collaborate, even with their competitors.

The following is an excerpt from one of his speeches. He was active in public life in the thirties, forties, and fifties. He was a loudmouth, and he was radical, and he was very outspoken in the Chamber of Commerce. And this is part of a speech he made:

We know how inadequate and generally unsuccessful individual action is in preserving to ourselves the rights which

we claim under private enterprise; for the same reasons must action by each of us individually be inadequate and unsuccessful in accomplishing the discharge of the common obligations of private enterprise which are the counterparts of our rights.

I therefore feel that acknowledging as we must a great measure of responsibility, a way must be found for combined effort to meet it.  
(Luis Fred Kennedy)

And he did; he was a leader. This tradition has been passed down through the company; all managers and CEOs have been involved in public service, and public engagement is a salient feature of GraceKennedy.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Quite so. In 1947, Dr Grace retired, a new chapter in GraceKennedy is starting at this point. So how did your father and James Moss-Solomon shape a new direction for the company in the 'fifties and the 'sixties?*

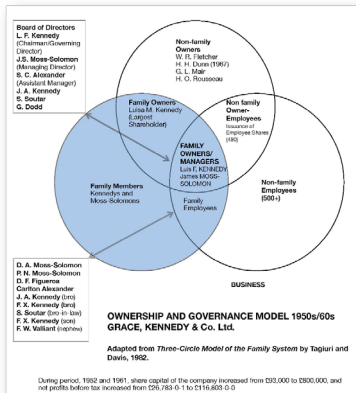
## **Dr Fred Kennedy**

Dr Grace was quite elderly when he retired. He stayed with the company well into his seventies. He was born in 1870, retired in 1947, so that made him 77 years of age. He said he was beginning to make a nuisance of himself, and he would come in to work maybe twice a week. It's significant to note that once he retired, a lot of things changed in the company and one dramatic change was that my dad in 1947 instituted employee shares.



Normally in a family company, the ownership remains exclusively with the family. In this case, he started making payment plans available so that employees could gain a stake in buying into the company. He also established programmes that were unique in those days. Raf (Rafael) Diaz says it was the first company in Jamaica to have employee benefits like these. I can't make that claim, but it was certainly one of the first that established free medical care for all staff of GraceKennedy and Kingston Wharves, and also a non-contributory life insurance policy. Later on he established superannuation schemes. Some of these are still in place at GraceKennedy.

When my grandfather died in 1930, the majority of the shares passed to my dad as the first born. His father had died intestate. He passed everything to his mother, Luisa Kennedy, who became the major shareholder of GraceKennedy for those two decades. The company carried all the characteristics of a family company where the two families, the Moss-Solomons and the Kennedys, invested their time, effort and money into building a strong private business.



The list that you see here of family employees are brothers, uncles, cousins and uncles-in-law. The owners built the company on the basis of a meritocracy. You had to prove your way in order to be promoted. In companies, capital is a peculiar phenomenon. There exists a very emotional

attachment to investment in the company, which my dad always thought of as an extension of himself. I think, to a great degree, the Moss-Solomons felt the same way.



This is a picture of my dad and Peter Moss-Solomon in Montreal in 1958. Peter was studying medicine at McGill University and was not happy in his studies. My dad got wind of that. He paid Peter Moss-Solomon a visit.

Peter told me about this in his interview. This picture really captures that meeting where my dad invited Peter Moss-Solomon to join Grace, Kennedy and Company, Ltd. And years later he encouraged him to take up accounts and Peter trained as a chartered accountant. He served as CFO of the company from 1989 to 2006, when he retired.



For my brother, Paco, it was the same. My dad invested time and effort into promoting Paco. He made him manager of virtually every subsidiary. He gave him preference shares and put him on the board of directors. Paco joined at the young age of 19 and, by 1975, he was Deputy Group Managing Director under Carlton Alexander.



The woman behind the scenes was Luisa Matilde Kennedy. She was very shy and she didn't get herself involved in the daily operations of the company, but she held majority shareholdings. I always felt like my dad . . . was living out the legacy of his father by heading up the company. When his mother died in 1962 things changed. My dad realized that he couldn't and did not want to force the family to stay together. But that's another story.

## Simone Clarke-Cooper

*Yes. Sounds interesting though, doesn't it?*

## Dr Fred Kennedy

Well, the sixties marked a big change in Jamaica. When we think of the 1960s, we think of Independence. And 1962, for GraceKennedy, was a big change. Carlton Alexander and a man called Boris Terfloth, who headed up the Montreal office, were in the forefront. Boris told me in an interview that in an airport hotel in Montreal, he and Carlton came up with this idea of the Grace brand; it has evolved over the years into the Grace label as you now know it, with the red crown on top. According to Boris Terfloth, Grace Vienna Sausages was the first branded product of Grace, Kennedy and Company Ltd. And they are still on the market 60 years later.



*The Daily Gleaner, January 28, 1960, 6.*

The Merchandise department expanded exponentially over this period and Carlton Alexander comes into the picture at this point because, as many of you will know, he was a salesman; that was his strength. He was a salesman *par excellence*. He created the market, he put the goods on the shelves, and he got them lifted off the shelves. That was the story of Carlton Alexander. His salesmanship accounted for the growth of the merchandise business during the 1960s. It also led to GraceKennedy opening factories and manufacturing their own products and packaging them. Business changed from bulk distribution to the retailing of the Grace products.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay. You mentioned his name and you've spoken a little bit about the impact he had on the company. You devote a whole chapter in your book to the life and the career of Carlton Alexander. Talk to me a little bit about his role in transforming the company during the 'seventies, 'eighties, and really forever, actually.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

It's hard to put it all in five minutes. Raf (Rafael) Diaz told me that there should be a book on him; just as there is a book on my dad, there should be a book on Carlton Alexander. I trust that someone soon will write his story. Raf himself has gathered a lot of material around Carlton. We interviewed three of Carlton Alexander's children. I'd like you to hear clips from the recordings.

### **Beverly Alexander Valentine**



*My name is Beverly Valentine. I'm Carlton Alexander's eldest daughter. And I'm honoured that my father is recognized as one of the most outstanding leaders of his time. As a young man, he could not go out to further studies. His father died and he had to assume the leadership of his family, of a large family of nine children.*

### **Phillip Alexander**



*The other big influence in his early life was Jamaica College, where he learned humility. He learned to be a team person and he also learned that whatever he achieved would be through hard work and through his personality and integrity.*

### **Teddy Alexander**



*He was a great father. He was always there for us. And one thing we knew, he always wanted the best for us as his children. First of all, his humility and modesty; for all he achieved and all that was lauded on him he lived a very simple life, a very humble person, very modest. Then there was love of country. He loved Jamaica. He really believed in Jamaica and that also extended to the people. He really, really believed in people, and that was genuine. He always wanted to give people a chance. His*

philanthropy; he was always giving. That's something that has also continued. I feel it myself. And then there was the belief in education. Even though he himself never got a chance to go to university and get a tertiary education, he always believed that education is a very important part of people's development and that it is a very important part of what's required for Jamaica to succeed as a country.

### **Beverly Alexander Valentine**



*This, I think, accounted for his success, the combination of his natural brilliance, his feeling of dedication, his vision for the company, and his inclusivity. He wanted everyone to succeed.*

### **Phillip Alexander**



*He was trusted and worked with all sectors, his competitors, his customers, his suppliers, the public, politicians, government, and everyone respected him. So he was able to influence what happened and, as a result, it helped to strengthen GraceKennedy through a very trying time in the 'seventies and 'eighties.*

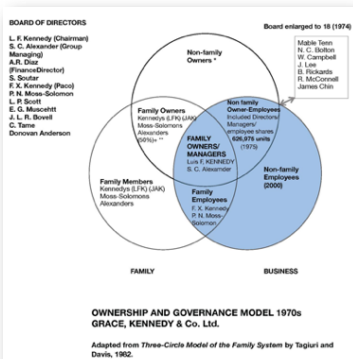
### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

1972 was the zenith of my dad's career. This was a year before he handed over the management



of GraceKennedy to Carlton Alexander. The relationship of mutual trust and respect that these two men had for each other was one of the strengths of GraceKennedy. In 1972 at the 50th anniversary of Grace, Kennedy he praised him and James Moss-Solomon for a bumper year in sales, in revenue. In that year, the company posted a revenue of \$85 million, which was huge. In 1922, the sales had been £15,000 and by 1972, the company had grown exponentially over a 50-year period. It had become an international enterprise with foreign subsidiaries and it had established an insurance division. Through mergers and acquisitions, Grace, Kennedy had expanded enormously. Eighty-five million dollars (\$85 million) was a lot of money in 1972. The Jamaican dollar, believe it or not, was worth more than the US dollar. Hard to imagine.

Carlton fulfilled a very special role during that period. My dad handed over the management in 1973 and, as Raf said, Carlton became the cheerleader in those difficult times. GraceKennedy had its 50th anniversary on 14 February 1972. Michael Manley was elected, it was a leap year, on 29 February. There were changes to private enterprise that no one could ever have anticipated. My dad always used to say, “Capital is a funny animal; it gets scared very easily.” And it’s true. A lot of people fled. Manley was not a communist but that was the perception by many based on what he was saying about private ownership of the means of production and its control over the “commanding heights” of the Jamaican economy.



\*\* After the company was listed on JSE (1986), insurance companies and other corporations invested in the company. Top management continued to purchase shares and Kennedy family ownership was significantly reduced from majority shareholding to 18.91% in 1990s.



In this third Venn Diagram you see how ownership has shifted to the right side of the chart. By the 1980s when my dad officially retired, he was preparing the company to go public. It was very clear. He had given up preference shares. He did not make Carlton the governing director. He said, "I can't have anybody playing God like that. And it was stressful for me too." According to Donovan Anderson and others, he never, ever used his veto power over the board in the 30 years that he was governing director. But he didn't want to put anyone else in that position. So he changed the Articles of Association. He abandoned the preference shares and established the Employee Investment Trust, which set up a purchasing plan for employees. By the early 1980s, 626,970 shares had been taken up by staff, and by the 1990s when Raf and Doug were there, the Kennedy majority shares had fallen to under 20%.

So my dad created the shift and told Raf and Carlton that he wanted the company to go public by 1976. Well, 1976 came, Michael Manley was re-elected in December of that year, and that put a hold on everything. I think Doug will talk about GraceKennedy going public. My dad died in May 1982 and the company went public in 1986.

◀ This picture was taken in February 1982. The future management of GraceKennedy was in place.



Carlton Alexander was chairman and CEO by that time, and Raf Diaz was the finance director and CFO; Ed Muschett was a managing director. He had been hired early on as the insurance man and headed up all the insurance companies for GraceKennedy. Ed Muschett did an amazing job. Doug Orane, who you're going to hear from very shortly, joined the company one year prior to that, in 1981. And he'll tell you his story.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Well, finally, you write in the book about the paradoxes of leadership. Can you explain for us how this is relevant to GraceKennedy at 100 years?*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

Doug and I have done a lot of research for this presentation in terms of what it is about companies that survive a hundred years. A lot of companies, especially family companies, fold; the statistics are frightening. GraceKennedy was able to reinvent itself during different periods in its history and the right kinds of decisions were made. But one of the salient features that we discovered was a traditional set of values that are ascribed to companies that last so long. Not that they're conservative. In fact, the opposite is true: they are adventurous, they are entrepreneurial and they take risks. But underpinning all that is a set of family values that steer it on the right course. When I hear Mr Wehby talk, he still talks about the company as a family. I just want to read an excerpt from the book. It talks about the paradox of leadership that Simone was

referring to. And I think it's true of not only my dad, but of his predecessors and those who followed him.

My dad was not meek in any sense of the word, but he was humble enough to recognize that there was a loftier purpose in life than the pursuit of his own interests. Influenced by his Jesuit education, he pursued social justice and made, as priorities in life, actions of service and love to others. Yet he was fiercely competitive and he was driven to succeed and this meant putting himself first.

Barack Obama in *A Promised Land* tells of his own struggles in wanting to be first. I quote from his book:

I recall the sermon by Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, called the “Drum Instinct”. In it, he talks about how deep down, we all want to be first, celebrated for our greatness. We all want to lead the parade in one way or the other. And he goes on to point out that such selfish impulses can be reconciled by aligning that quest for greatness with more selfless aims. You can be first in service and first in love. And for me, that seemed a way to square the circle.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*First in service, first in love. GraceKennedy is a company of love.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

GraceKennedy, first in love.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*GraceKennedy is a company of love, born on Valentine's Day. It makes complete sense. And the values that you mentioned still run thick, which is a large part of why we're celebrating a hundred years. Honesty, integrity and trust.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

It's a real celebration.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

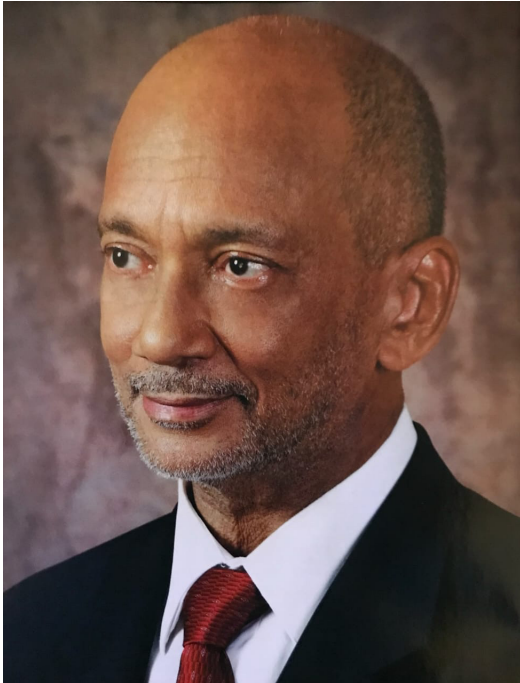
*What's fascinating to me is that such an iconic brand is GraceKennedy that sometimes we forget that they're actual people, right? The names Grace and Kennedy – there are people back there with families and stories and children. It's fascinating to be able to dig and get this information from you. Doc, thank you so much for writing this book. Thank you so much for sharing this story of your family with us. And thank you on behalf of all of us for what your family has done for this company and by extension for this nation. You know, in large part GK 100 could not have happened without that contribution.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

Thank you very much.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Thank you so much. Dr Fred Kennedy. Give him a round of applause as he goes, please. Fantastic. This is a real education, everybody. A real good study could be done from the information we're getting today and we are about to get some more.*



*Hon.* Douglas Orane

## Interview with the Honourable Douglas Orane

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*So, the Honourable Douglas Orane, retired chairman and CEO of GraceKennedy, is also well known and admired for his transformative leadership of the GraceKennedy Group. Having received his early professional training in engineering, he successfully made the change to business leader and distinguished himself with his expert and strategic management to give GraceKennedy a competitive edge with the ability to grow not only domestically, but regionally and globally, while maintaining the founding principles of honesty, integrity and trust. Like other GraceKennedy executives before him, he served the nation as president of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) and as an independent senator, and demonstrated commitment to the company's role of corporate social responsibility through the two GraceKennedy foundations. Since his retirement, he has added the title of author to his accomplishments with the penning of his successful book, **The Business of Nation Building**. So, today, Douglas Orane will provide some insight into the strategies used to prepare the company for globalization, free trade and the twenty-first century.*

*Welcome Mr Orane.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

I have this feeling of déjà vu. We used to have all our business conferences right here. And I suppose we'll start them again in 2023.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

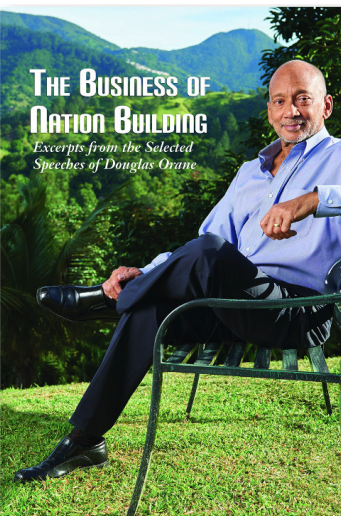
*God willing. That's the plan.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

But before you get into it, it's something very profound. You said there are individuals who started this company, the Graces and the Kennedys. When I used to travel the world to expand GraceKennedy, people would come to me all over the developed world and say, "What's it like working for that woman?" I would ask, "Which woman?" They would say "GraceKennedy". I would say, "No, no, no. Let me explain the history". But now I'll be able to do it. I'll just walk with a few of Fred's books and say, "Okay, read it".

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*So good to have you, Mr Orane. I'm so excited about what you're going to share. Talk to us a little bit about this book, which I had a hand in in helping us get off the ground when I was here. What motivated you to do this?*



## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, first of all, I have to thank Don for that. I retired as CEO in 2011 and handed over to him, and a few months later, he said, "Doug, why don't you produce a book?" "Write a book?" I said, "What you talking about, a book? Me?" He said, "Yes, you have given all these speeches during your career." I said, "Well, I have never thought of it." He said, "Yes." I said, "Okay, good idea! Let me explore." When I did explore, I discovered that in fact I had actually given 200 speeches during my career at GraceKennedy, from 1981 to 2011. And I realized what really happened: from I was a young person in

the early 'eighties, I was following in the footsteps, particularly of Carlton and also Raf, to proselytize: whatever is good for Jamaica, we need to make it good for GraceKennedy. And so in continuing that, I would speak about all the issues that affected not only the company but our nation.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*And the book is doing really well.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, it sold out the first edition. The second edition printed . . . the Ministry of Education bought a thousand copies – thank you very much to the Ministry of Education – and circulated them in all the high schools in Jamaica. You know what young people are most interested in, in that book? Entrepreneurship. I have seventeen topics and that's the one whenever I go to do rap sessions with them, they say, "Mr Orane, tell me about entrepreneurship. I want to start my own business."

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Well, let's talk a little bit about this business. The transformation of GraceKennedy.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, before I leave that, let me tell you some other points about the book. You can buy the book, it will be for sale over there afterwards. And once you buy it, every dollar of it, it's \$2,500, goes to Grace and Staff Community Development Foundation to

help, in particular, young disadvantaged people to educate themselves. And I promise you, I will personally autograph every book bought today. In fact, buy two, one for you and one for somebody else. A special gift.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Yes. Moral of the story: buy the book! Mr Wehby, you're going to have to come up here and have a book that you need people to buy.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

But the purpose of the book, to be more serious, is, first of all, it documents the history of GraceKennedy, the massive transformations we went through. In addition to that, it gives prescriptions for solutions for the company. Also, it gives the younger generations some tips on how to get ahead, which I only learned by trial and error. Right? I said, "Why should they trip into a pothole that I went into when I can tell them, avoid it this way?"

And then finally, for each of us to ask ourselves this question, when you go through it, what can we learn from the last 30 years of our history to make Jamaica a better place to live in? That is what I'd like to hear from folks. In fact, that's what I ask young people whenever I speak with them.



## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay. Well thank you for doing it. Certainly serving a great purpose. So let's go back to the transformation you mentioned because it documents, you say, how the team charted GraceKennedy's transformation. So how was that done?*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

That transformation? Let me start where Fred was, in the early 'eighties. Carlton and Raf were prescient. They realized that the world was changing around us and they were preparing the organization accordingly. So was Luis Fred Kennedy because, he said, "Let's make sure that we become a publicly traded company." Couldn't do it in '76, but then Carlton did it in 1986 and that changed the whole perspective of the company to widen the shareholding to thousands of individuals, including our GraceKennedy people.

But there was something else that was happening at the same time. The world was changing in a way we couldn't predict. Trade licences disappeared. Foreign exchange was deregulated. We found ourselves with massive devaluations taking place. We found foreign companies coming into Jamaica to compete with us and as a result of that, we said, "This can't continue any longer. We need to find a different way to work."

Now, Carlton was very informal in the way that he interacted with us. He would get a group of us young people together in the 'eighties and have sessions

and one of them I've christened the *extinction risk*. Now what is that? What Carlton would do is have us sitting around and he would say, "Young people, you ever heard of these companies?" And he'd reel off the names of eight or ten different companies. He'd say, "You recognize any one of them?" I said, "Hmm. The only one I recognize is Bryden and Evelyn." And he said, "When I joined the company in 1933, every one of them was bigger than GraceKennedy. And today they no longer exist." What a lesson he was teaching us! What he was saying was that the world doesn't owe us a living. We may think we're a big company but, we have a responsibility, in fact, an obligation to our customers and the society to make ourselves relevant.

His words have always stuck with me in that regard. So we have avoided the extinction risk because here we are today. So I'm going to go back to how we actually managed to do it. In the turmoil of the 1990s, what we discovered was that we couldn't live that way any longer. Our GraceKennedy people came first but our standard of living as a group of people was actually going nowhere. It was actually declining because we had such massive inflation. For example, we'd give an increase of 20% at the beginning of the year and, by the end of the year, inflation was 40%. So, it felt like we were running up a down escalator, and we had a total rethink. We got into a huddle and said we have to redefine how GraceKennedy moves forward. And in fact, that is the genesis of what we now describe as the

2020 Vision where we said, “This is what we want to be in the year 2020.” We actually launched it in this building.

The first question I got from one of the managers was, “But Doug, isn’t 25 years a long time?” I said, “Not really. It goes very quickly.” In fact, it’s now two years in the past. But there are certain things we did that made it work and I want to describe some of them to you. The first one is that we said we needed to double the productivity of everybody in GraceKennedy within five years, from 1996 to 2000. And people said to us, “Doug, you’re crazy. You don’t know this is Jamaica, it can’t be done.” And I said, “Absolutely it can be done.” And we had a slogan in order to communicate it to everyone from – Raf to Rupert – to double the productivity of everyone. Raf was the chairman and Rupert was one of the messengers.

It worked. We made it in four years. We completed that objective before the time we had allotted to do so. So the genesis and the foundation of the 2020 Vision was to increase the standard of living of our GraceKennedy people. Of course, the corollary is the wider society and the foundation for that was to satisfy the unmet needs of our Jamaican people and Caribbean people wherever we live in the world, because we knew we had a distinctive competence that we could turn to competitive advantage in that regard. Later, I’ll explain where that distinctive competence came from.

So, if I move on, we have got over the extinction risk. And one of the things we did was, we said we need to make life exciting. You know, business conferences used to be very staid and rather sombre and serious. We said, we need to make it exciting to engage our people. We said, “Let’s play music in it.” So this is the very first song that I ever played at a business conference in the 1990s. So here goes, folks.

[Song plays, Ain’t No Stoppin’ Us Now by McFadden & Whitehead (1979)]

Douglas and Simone dance around the platform.

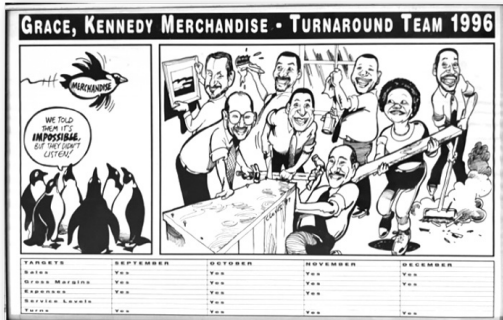
## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Short excerpt.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

That was fun, but listen to the words of the song:

“Ain’t no stoppin’ us now. We’re on the move.” That really energized us to say we’re going to make things different. We used teams that we formed in order to increase the productivity of all of us in the company. This is one of the teams. We had a cartoon and I’ll share what we did. We turned around Merchandise, the main food business in the company



that was having a lot of difficulties at the time. That person there with the big glasses, I think that one looks like me, and I think that looks like Don Wehby, with the saw. You may recognize the others in there but from a serious point of view, one of the things we did was, whatever we did, we measured, and if you could look at the bottom chart, what is measured gets done. Interestingly, we didn't meet all of the objectives; you notice some blank spaces here. But that's fine. And the reason for that is that if you achieve the majority, you're likely to be okay. Don't look for perfection, just excellence.

And the cartoon I really like more than any other is this one of these penguins where they say, "We told them it's impossible, but they didn't listen!" And here we are flying up above everybody else.

So thank you to all those who are in the picture. And I think some of them in the cartoon are here either physically or online.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Ooh, like who, Sir Doug? Tell us who they are.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

You want to know? Okay. Here goes, folks! All right, that's Fay McIntosh, retired CFO; John Mahfood, now president of the Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association; Gregory Solomon, retired executive; Derrick Cotterell, who is now a successful entrepreneur. And this is Mike Ranglin,

retired GraceKennedy director, and kneeling is Peter Sangster, logistics expert.

So one of the morals of this is: every time you have a success, get a cartoon drawn. Because 25 years later you can go back. People will throw out most other documents, but they won't throw this out.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Mr Wehby has quite a few in his office. So, I hear some common themes, Mr Orane, as you move forward. I hear opportunities in the crisis, which is something Mr Wehby talks about a lot. I hear the importance of vision, and I hear that what gets measured gets done, which is also a talking point. Obviously those three things would've been germane to our success. Now, what are your views on GraceKennedy achieving this milestone of a hundred years?*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, I'm delighted. It's a thrill to be around. But Fred and I did something really interesting when we started to think about this and he invited me to be part of this exercise. That is, on reflection, what causes companies to last a hundred years? We're glad we have but what makes companies last that long is not unique to us.

The records are there: less than one in every hundred companies formed lasts a hundred years. So we are unique in that regard. We did some research and we discovered that there are, in our opinion, four unique characteristics; that if you do those, any entity, whether a company, an NGO or a charity, you will be able to last 100 years. And that's

what I'd like to spend my time explaining. And the reason for that, folks, I'll explain it to you. In our Grace We Care philosophy, this is a gift to Jamaica because it's not just saying we, GraceKennedy, do this; any company out there can do that. And I would love to see others following those footsteps. So this lecture is a start in circulating that information to the wider society.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Free of cost.*



## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Free of cost. But of course you have two books to buy.

I mean, we are a commercial organization and we care. So, get the money and then we will pass it on to those who need help.

So what are those longevity characteristics? There are four: sustaining our values, building a strong core, innovating “at the edges”, and ensuring effective leadership succession. There may be others, but these are the crucial ones. You may ask, “Hmm, why is this person dressed up like Santa?” Well, because it’s part of our values, which is to give back to the wider society; not only to do well on competing in business. So if we can explore the first one, sustaining values. That goes right back to the beginning. Fred has covered a lot of that. But I want to give some examples of what is enduring

in that regard. Carlton has something important to say here.

- Sustaining our values
- Building a strong core
- Innovating “at the edges”
- Ensuring effective leadership succession

### **Carlton Alexander**



*Also a thing that motivated me . . . I believe in people. And when I was a young man coming up, I used to set my goal with Grace. By my efforts, how many new people could I get employed each year in the company? So I’m very, very happy when I can create a job for a person.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

So what Carlton was saying there . . . You want to clap? Go ahead and clap!

By the way, this is so important what we’re doing. I asked somebody near here this morning, “You ever heard of Carlton Alexander?” and he said, “Not really, you know”, and he was in his thirties. So I think one of the things for us to do, you’re right, Fred, is how do we communicate these values to others? But let’s go back in history. In 1922, Fred W. Kennedy, a renaissance man, had a tremendous



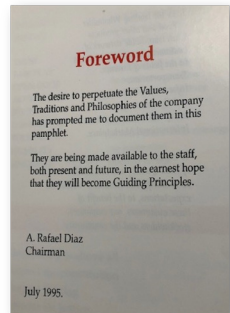
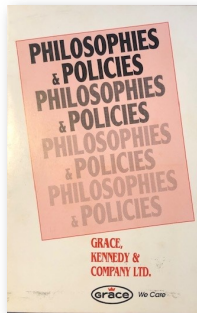
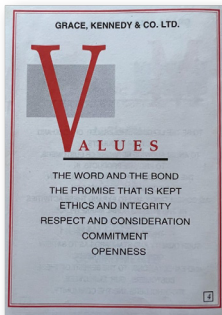
respect for people and one of the ways he demonstrated that was through his commitment to punctuality and timeliness. And here is an example. First year of the company, 1922, management accounts were prepared as of the end of December 1922 and the external audit accounts were ready and issued on 31 January 1923 – within a month. Now I ask you, how many small companies do you know that employ ten people have their external audited accounts out in a month?

And this obsession with timeliness continues in GraceKennedy and will continue because it's actually a source of competitive advantage. And I'll share this with you since I'm getting emotional. I'm very concerned that in Jamaica, we're slipping away from that respect for timeliness and we need to turn it around. The way we do it is by those of us who believe in it demonstrating it. It actually got to a point, Don might remember this, where we said, "Look, people need to be timely coming to meetings, and if you don't come on time, we're going to lock the door at the appointed time and you can't get in as of next week, Monday morning." But I tell you this, we never had to lock the door. Because people said, "Oh, they're serious now."

Luis Fred Kennedy, to build on what Fred has said, he was very egalitarian in terms of his assistance to staff with health benefits, pensions, and so on but he was meritocratic. He allowed anybody to work their way up the organization, and that is

so, so important because it attracted talent to the company that normally would not have been there. Carlton Alexander created the *Grace We Care* mantra. We have seen that in his expansionist approach.

Raf did something very important following on. He committed to writing our values. So he created and wrote these booklets, philosophies and policies. In it, one page says Values. To me, the most important one there is “My word is my bond”. To do business, if you want to do it efficiently, your word has to be your bond otherwise people won’t trust you. And so let’s hear what Raf has to say about why he did this.



### Rafael Diaz



*Mr Alexander had died. Mr. Kennedy had died.*

*I was chairman. I knew what Mr Kennedy had done. I was just curious about what*

he had done and I found out. It occurred to me, you know, I can't leave without continuity of what I inherited which worked so well all what Grace is. I decided to start to write you can hear the words now that Mr Wehby uses, because I wrote a pamphlet. I wrote a pamphlet on it and distributed it to all the staff.

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

I know Raf is watching. Thank you, Raf. We appreciate so much what you have done for us. And now Don has continued; Raf mentioned it there. My role was to implement strong corporate governance methodologies. Don Wehby talks about honesty and integrity and trust continuously. It's part of our DNA now and continues in that regard.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay, fantastic. Let's springboard right to this next topic we have . . . What is involved in achieving this, building a strong core business?*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

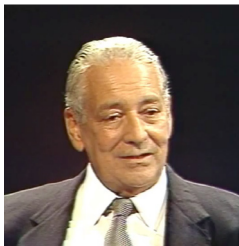
Okay, so this is a crucial one, but how do you actually do it? The way that you do it is to choose to do a few things really, really well. We had some tough decisions to make. We actually had to decide which businesses to exit, which ones to sustain, which ones to enter for the first time, and then invest behind every one of them, in particular in terms of the people who are involved. We chose two

industries: food globally, and financial services regionally. What was the reason for this? Because we recognized we had a distinctive competence in both. Food – we recognized because of our diaspora, we could go global with it. With financial services regionally because we understood the English-speaking Caribbean well. And there's something else that really binds all of this together. I want to hear again from Carlton what he had to say. This is an interview with Ian Boyne:

### **Carlton Alexander**



*And when I look back, there were seventeen people when I joined the company in 1933 and we all worked very well. But from a very early time in joining the company, I saw opportunity. And as I've said before, and I'll say it again, the opportunity I saw at the time in moving in the company was being able to do something that I thought the company needed that wasn't being done. And that was to develop a good relationship with our customers and to play that part and to do it better than anybody else. And doing that, then of course you would've made yourself. And it's the advice I give to anybody. If you join a company, look for what is needed and play that part and fill that need.*



### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

< This [Carlton Alexander] is one of the best salesmen I have ever met in my life and I had the privilege to work with him for nearly a decade. So one of the things that I learned from him and I continue to do, and it became a way of life, in fact, lots of fun. I would spend my weekends driving around Jamaica in rural areas visiting customers, and customers of customers.



This gentleman is a small shopkeeper in southern Clarendon who buys his products from a wholesaler in May Pen that's our customer. I just stopped in and said, "Hi, how are you? Are you getting the supplies you need?" The answer was, "Yes", and if you look there [indicates image slide], you'll see Grace products on the shelf, and I did manage to refresh myself by buying a Grace Tropical Rhythms. But when we are out there, people say something very significant, they say, "But wait, you're

the only company I see out here. I don't see anybody else." And that's the source, the key source of GraceKennedy's competitive advantage in Jamaica and the world.

So we have used that competitive advantage to be able to sell Grace-owned products around the world. Every dot represents a country.



The same with financial services around the Caribbean. We have also done something that's crucially important if you're expanding internationally. We have made sure we have the ownership of all our intellectual property, all our brands, all our trademarks worldwide, wherever we're going to do business.

And you can see how the Grace logo has changed over the years and we own the rights to that as well as all the others worldwide. And so we are building on a solid foundation.



Grace Logo Over the Years



## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay. I have heard you use a phrase about GraceKennedy and innovation that I think is fascinating. I'm not going to give it away. I'm just going to ask you to go into it and tell us a little bit about how GraceKennedy has innovated over the years.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

You will see that phrase, *innovating at the edges*. What does that mean? What that means is taking big entrepreneurial risks but nothing that, if it fails, threatens the existence of the core business. So, you will find in life that the companies that are most successful have the most successes but they also have the most failures, and individuals who are the most successful, great. But they also have the most failures as well and that's true of GraceKennedy. One of the biggest changes in my career, I will share this with you, is that failure was frowned on when I was a young man. Today, failure is actually celebrated, to say, "Well, you tried something; it didn't work. Get up again, brush off your knees, and off you go again." And that's a very healthy sign for our society, to build for the future. So, don't be afraid of failure; let's see if we can learn from those who have failed or from our own mistakes.

So, let's see how GraceKennedy has been doing with some examples. Some have worked and some haven't. I'll come back to Halse Hall. I'll tell you a little bit about the past before the 1970s and 1980s.

So Luis Fred Kennedy was a tremendous entrepreneur. He initiated the international expansion, started subsidiaries overseas for the purpose of sourcing food products to bring back to Jamaica, which again gave us a competitive advantage, and to finance it from abroad. That actually created the bridge for us to go in the opposite direction now, when we wanted to expand globally and export our products to the diaspora and the wider society.

But some things didn't work. In Luis Fred Kennedy's era, GraceKennedy used to produce sea salt at Pigeon Island. We had salt ponds there; you dry out the sea water and you have salt. We had a boat, GraceKennedy, we shipped salt to Kingston . . . by the way, you know where Pigeon Island is? South Old Harbour Bay . . . and they'd sell it, which is great.

It's now a premium product, by the way. But, sadly, the boat sank. And that was the end of that initiative.

Halse Hall, the reason I mention Halse Hall . . . this had tremendous emotional resonance with our society at the time because people said, "Thank goodness, our

big companies are going into primary agriculture." At the time, Carlton and Raf recognized we needed to earn more foreign exchange. So the company



Drip Irrigation of Sweet Peppers  
at Halse Hall





**GK's Success in Agriculture: Hounslow**

leased land in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties at Halse Hall in Clarendon, and planted hundreds of acres of tomatoes and melons and other winter vegetables for export to the United States. What happened? We succeeded at the technology. We had a great product. We brought in Israeli technology. You can see it there in the way the fields are laid out, but there were two things that proved virtually insurmountable for us.

The first one was logistics. How do we get short shelf life products from a small island to the destination? Getting it there either by air – you can see we used Air Jamaica – or by sea, proved extraordinarily difficult. The second one was marketing. The competitors were in Mexico and the rest of Central America. They had land access. They're much larger than us so they had much better economies of scale. So, sadly, we had to close the project in the mid 1980s.

But here is some good news. And using our Jamaican language, "Wi wheel an' come again". And so what happened? Don Wehby and his team in the 2000s started Grace Agriprocessors Hounslow, this time to produce raw materials for the products that we export overseas: hot peppers, escallion, callaloo. And it's worked extraordinarily well. You can see that we are now an exporter not only of branded products, but of pepper mash to other countries. So here is what we have done. And the key to this is vertical integration from the farm to

the factory to the market overseas, which is very, very difficult for anybody else to replicate, other than ourselves, and that's why this one has worked.

We now look at another form of innovation, and that is remittances. So, satisfying the unmet needs of our Caribbean people. What happened in that regard? Well, the late Joe Lee, he was an executive director of GraceKennedy in the 'eighties, bless his soul. He used to travel the world looking for products for us to buy, and also to visit the diaspora to find out, if people were getting the Grace products that they wanted. He went to visit some cane cutters in Central Florida, Jamaicans, and said, "Are you getting all the Grace products that you like to eat?" And they said, "Yes, Mr Lee." And then they said, "But Mr Lee," and again I will switch to our Jamaican language, of which I'm a big fan of. So they said, "Missa Lee, mi well waa sen mi money to mi baby modda yu kno, but when we put it in di post, dem tief it out, an' when we give it to anodda man, she only get half a it. Missa Lee, you cyan help us?" And he came back and said, "We need to find a way to be in the remittance business." And lo and behold, literally within weeks of that, what happened? Western Union walked in the door. And here is Raf's story about it.

### **Rafael Diaz**



*We still had bills, a lot of bills unpaid in 1990 and I was very sad about it. And then that same day I get a notice. Somebody*

informed me that Western Union is looking for an agent. Things fly around, what a break! But it would bring in US dollars to the country, through us. I gave an order: Go! We were in crisis and thanks to that connection with Western Union, [which] brought the results and we became partners to this day. And if I can tell you, you can tell me better, it expanded itself into new businesses, all connected, but new businesses, right throughout, till eventually they have now covered CARICOM.

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**



So that's the story. So we launch scores of products every year, and not only Grace brand, but overseas now, the La Fe brand in the United States, which we now own; we have Encona and Dunn's

River and Nurishment in the UK, and Don will tell you more about what the future holds without breaching confidentiality.



But also, we have a lot of financial services and here are the brands that we're using to expand regionally. So in conclusion, we're entrepreneurially aggressive but financially conservative, and we don't bet the company on any one initiative.

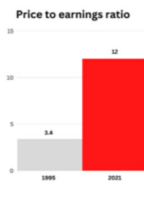
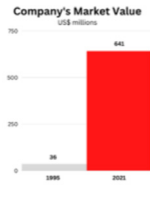
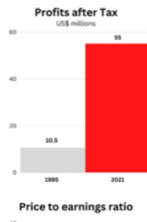
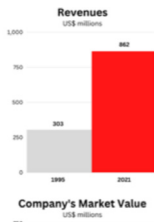
## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Great strategy. Let's talk about what would've been considered the biggest change under your tenure.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, I just spoke about one, which is how the attitude to failure in our society has changed remarkably to the positive. The other one, in terms of my own personal career, I believe it is the crucible of adversity in the 1990s that caused us as leaders in the company to say, "We can't continue this way. We're getting poorer, because our standard of living was going down over the previous few years." And that's how we developed the 2020 Vision and said, "Let's dream about what we want to be as a global consumer group." And one of the things we did to achieve that was that we started doing scenario planning. At the time it was a new technique. So we'd have three scenarios: the pits, which is the world in turmoil and chaos;

## 2020 Vision Results



we'd have another one, which is business as usual, which is steady state; and then another one, which is the digital world where everything is changing. And we'd say, "Let's develop a strategy for each one so that we're prepared."

A lot of people said we were being negative. They said, "How can you think about such negative things?" I said, "So we are ready for them." And, lo and behold, when we did the three approaches, what did we discover? The strategies were exactly the same. What were they? Have a set of good values that we respect, protect our core businesses, innovate, and have good leadership succession. And if we did those four, we'd be okay in any scenario. And it's proving to be true.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Quite so.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

So I wanted to show you the results of that. The red columns, that's last year. And the small grey columns are 1995. So everything, sales, profits,

market value, the company price to earnings ratio – you can ask Andrew Messado in the break what that means – have all gone up. And that's because the 2020 Vision has worked for us.

Not everything has worked; there are things we still want to do. We want to earn at least half of our profits from economies outside of Jamaica. We want to be listed on a foreign stock exchange. So the price to earnings ratio will go from 12 to 25, which is incidentally what similar companies trade at outside of the region in developed countries.

But the other point about this is that this is intergenerational; this is not Douglas Orane. This started from when Raf was active in the company in the mid 1990s, then me, and now Don has been carrying that forward for the last 10 years. And that's where we come, I think, to probably what your next question is going to be.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*How did you know? Leadership...*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Prescience!

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Yes, go ahead, Mr Orane.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Okay. Succession. So this probably is the most crucial one. So, my advice to anybody listening or following this: learn from our Olympians at the Olympics – Don't drop the baton in the relay change. Don't! You need to make sure that it goes right. It is absolutely crucial.



So, in that regard, here's the most recent relay team. I just want to recap quickly how the baton changes work. From Luis Fred to Carlton; they worked together for decades. They're very different personalities, but highly competitive. They understood each other, they respected our values. And it worked really, really well. From Carlton to Raf; again, different personalities, but worked together for two decades. So again, they understood all the issues that were central to the

company. From Raf to me; we worked together for about 15 years or a bit more, before I became the group CEO and then the chairman. And I want to thank Raf. Raf, I know you're watching out there.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Can we give him some love, please! Hi, Mr Diaz!*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Raf, I want to thank you for everything you did as my mentor. He was tremendously helpful. He gave me a lot of freedom to do what I thought was best. And there's something else that he did. Every tough decision, every painful decision we had to make, he backed me a hundred percent. And so thank you. I'm so grateful. By the way, Raf is a techie, so anybody having a problem with your iPhone app, just get in touch with him and he'll tell you how to do it. And Raf is 92 years old this year.

The transition from me to Don, we worked together . . .

It's a good thing I kept the cartoons so you can see how long we've been working together. But we are very similar in our personalities. In fact, we have a joke. We say sometimes we're the two brothers that we never had. 'Cause neither one of us has brothers. But there's something that shows the similarity. When I am in a group of people having a conversation, before I ask a question, I'll take a deep breath and pause for five seconds before I ask it. But at second number three, Don asks the same question. It's uncanny, it's as though our



brains work in the same way. So that transition has worked exceedingly well.

You have any more questions?

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*I might, I might.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Oh, I have one more slide. Here we have Raf talking about leadership.

## **Rafael Diaz**



*And that's how I ran GraceKennedy. I didn't run it because I knew everything to do, but I knew how Mr Alexander did it, how Mr Kennedy did it And then I just, I just learned from that, and I did it. And I had to finish the place in good stead. Luckily, when I retired, I left it in strong hands. Good hands.*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Thank you, Raf. So the future . . .

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*You want to tell us about it? Is your crystal ball nice and shiny?*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, there's a simple answer to that.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

Yes?

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Ask Don.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*I knew you were going to say that! Mr Orane, what a fantastic story that you shared with us today. Oh, we thank you for your contribution to GraceKennedy and for all you are still doing for nation building.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

You're welcome.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*I must tell you, I spoke to Mr Orane last week, I said, Mr Orane, you know, I started my business and I might need to call you, and he said, and these were your words, he said, "Simone, I live now to make young people with businesses stronger. Call me any time."*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Well, listen, most of the people in this audience are younger than I. So there are a lot of people out there for me to help! And I'm happy to do so. You know, what really strikes me is, why are we here? We are here so that when we go, we leave Jamaica a better place than when we first entered this world. And that's my objective. I am optimistic about the future because I find that young people just want to get ahead with their lives. Including you.

**Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Including me, sir. From your lips to God's ears.*

**Hon. Douglas Orane**

Thank you, Simone.

**Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Thank you so much Mr. Orane. Lovely. Bless you. Bless you. All right.*



*Senator* Don Wehby

## Interview with Senator Don Wehby



### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Now we're heading to the anchor leg of the baton changes. A flawless baton change was executed between Douglas Orane and the current CEO of GK, Don Wehby, in 2011. He continues to perform his leg of the journey with consummate professionalism and business savvy. Under his stewardship, the company has continued its growth trajectory as the demand for products and services increases regionally and globally. Don Wehby received the American Foundation for The University of the West Indies Chancellor's award for excellence in global business leadership in April of this year (2022).*

*Mr Wehby has expanded the scope of the company's already considerable outreach with its investment in the ISSA Boys and Girls Championships, which has taken the implementation of that event to a world-class level, providing outstanding exposure for our talented athletes. Maintaining the tradition of public service, Mr Wehby served*

*for two years, between 2007 and 2009, as government senator and minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service. He was reappointed senator in 2016 and continues to serve in that capacity. His presentation, which will be delivered TED Talk style, will give insight into what is in store for the company as the twenty-first century progresses. Please help me welcome the anchor leg, ladies and gentlemen!*

*Mr Don, Senator Don Wehby, sir, over to you.*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

Thank you, Simone.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*You're welcome.*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

Good afternoon, everyone. It's really a pleasure to be here doing the anchor leg. So, you know, we spent a lot of time as an executive team trying to come up with a mantra for this special occasion, and we came up with the tagline, *Our Story Is Your Story*. And it is my responsibility this afternoon to say to everybody in this room and to the audience online on YouTube, thank you. Everybody in this room has been part of this great story of GraceKennedy. So, as we'd say, clap yourself.

[video plays]

So, you've seen the group CEO getting crazy with the confetti and most of you would know that I'm a

real Disney World fan. But there's an important part there. Because of COVID-19, we could not have a face-to-face celebration to cut the cake. So we had virtual events throughout the GraceKennedy Group to cut the cake. I heard Carlton Alexander saying that seventeen people were employed and that was his ambition. Well, I'm happy to say that GraceKennedy employs 2,700 people now, 700 of whom are overseas.

[video plays]

I show this video every time I'm presenting, not only because of the physical infrastructure of GraceKennedy. We started with Fred in 1922, then we moved to 73 Harbour Street in 1996, and now our new corporate headquarters. But, if you think about it, what that signifies is the transformation of GraceKennedy over the years and our firm commitment to downtown Kingston. Marjorie Kennedy, every time I play that video, wherever I am in the world, I think of your dear husband, Paco Kennedy. It was actually his dream to see GraceKennedy's corporate headquarters in downtown Kingston and I salute him.

So, my story began at GraceKennedy, 5 October 1995. But before that, let me tell you a story about a young man who went to a high school on North Street, the right side of North Street. At 16 years old, he would sit in the O'Hare Building and he would sign his name over and over, Don G.

Wehby, Don G. Wehby. And they would ask, “What is happening?” I remember Father Feres asking, “Why are you signing your name like that?” I said that one day I would be signing the balance sheet and the profit and loss of a large company and, in 1998, I was appointed CFO and I signed the balance sheet, with Douglas Orane.

That story may be about me, but it’s more about GraceKennedy. If you work hard, if you are committed, if you’re loyal, if you get the right education and you’re very focused, your dreams can come true. And my dream came true when I signed that balance sheet in 1998. You know, I got very emotional when I saw Douglas presenting. He is my mentor, my friend, and he carefully guided my career throughout the Grace, Kennedy era. And that’s why I’m here today.

When I saw Mr Diaz, who is a brilliant accountant, and Peter Moss-Solomon, I said to myself, Don, you are truly blessed. I’m blessed that I’m working for such a great company and I had the opportunity to work with some great people, like Douglas Orane. Sir, I salute you. I hope you don’t mind, there’s another person in the audience who had a very big impact on my career . . . not at GraceKennedy, but Mr OK Melhado is here. OK, it’s really nice to see you.

So when you look at this picture, somebody went like this to me [rubs head], but I hope you’ll all agree that I’ve aged gracefully. And you know one thing,



when you're in business and you're a CEO, Beverly (Valentine), you have to keep your overheads low! [rubs head again]



Board of Directors

So, here's my team, the board of directors. We have a very, very strong board of directors. Professor Shirley, our chairman. Prof. is an outstanding chairman and a really, really good strategist. Prof., I really enjoy working with you. Indianna [Minto-Coy], one of our directors.



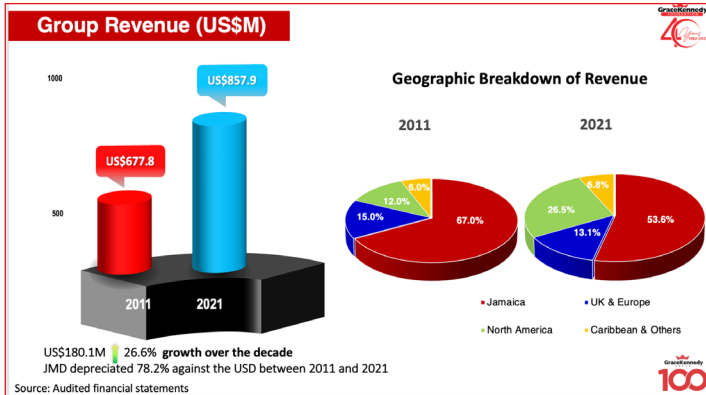
Executive Committee

And our executive team. Can I ask my executive to stand at once? At GraceKennedy, here's another secret, we don't believe in I, our individual stars. We work as a team. Together Everybody Achieves More. We're not in the individual star business. And thank you, team, and thanks for your support over the last decade.

So, I was appointed CEO on 1 July 2011 and, of course, as a new CEO, you want to create your own vision for the company. Douglas spoke about meeting the Caribbean needs, et cetera. I wanted to lift the game in terms of where GraceKennedy was going. So I met with the team and we spoke about a global consumer group. Douglas is right; I learned this from him: What gets measured gets done. So we were very clear. What is a global consumer group? Fifty percent (50%) of our profits outside Jamaica, revenues of 60% outside Jamaica and leveraging our relationship with international partners. I always make it clear that we're not saying that we're not going to grow in Jamaica but because of the huge market outside of Jamaica, we're going to be growing faster outside of Jamaica.

You know what I found really, really encouraging? We did a survey . . . we do a survey actually every year with all the employees, the 2,700 employees . . . and the question was asked, "Do you understand and appreciate the vision and the strategy of the GraceKennedy Group?" Ninety percent (90%) of our staff said Yes. That is significant for success, where you have alignment with your staff.

We, the board, then spoke about innovative solutions in food and financial services because we are going to be very focused, and, most important of all, we discussed highly skilled and motivated people. So how have we done in terms of the performance? We have done exceptionally well in terms of revenue growth.



You know, when I was doing the numbers . . . OK [Melhado], you would appreciate this, and a lot of you would appreciate this. When you look at the last ten years, you realize that the dollar actually devalued by nearly 80%. But what this is showing is that, because GraceKennedy is a diversified company geographically, we're able to withstand the impact of devaluation on the company. And in the breakdown, there's something significant. You notice that in 2011, 12% of our revenue was in the United States of America. Now it's 26.5%.

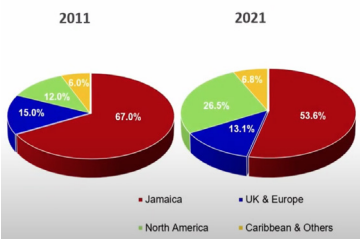
I don't like to be put in a pigeon hole. I had this vision of being a global consumer group and we had this distributor who saw us as a Caribbean company. So I said, that's not going to work, and we took the brave decision, the tough decision, to change our distributor and buy our own company with a Hispanic brand. And it has worked because we have a great team in place and we're very focused.

So in 2011, you know, our revenue in the United States of America was under US\$30 million. As I stand here today, our revenue is US\$165 million and the profits reflect the same story of our improvement outside of Jamaica.

But you saw that cartoon that Douglas showed? I think I've lost some weight. You agree? So my assignment to turn around Merchandise was to find US\$6 million in terms of expenses. Sometimes, as nice as he is, he holds you accountable. "Don, you have to find US\$6 million." I was a young CFO, I wanted to do well, but I was overthinking the objective and I basically got writer's block. I couldn't come up with that solution. I think I was trying to find a silver bullet to hit the ball and get the six.

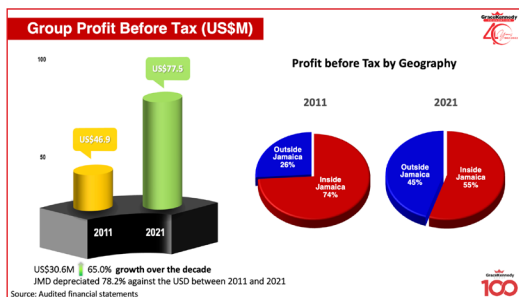
So I was at the coffee counter, looking quite concerned and sad and the lady that serves me coffee every morning, her name is Stella, she said, "Mr Wehby, you don't look yourself." So I told Miss

Geographic Breakdown of Revenue

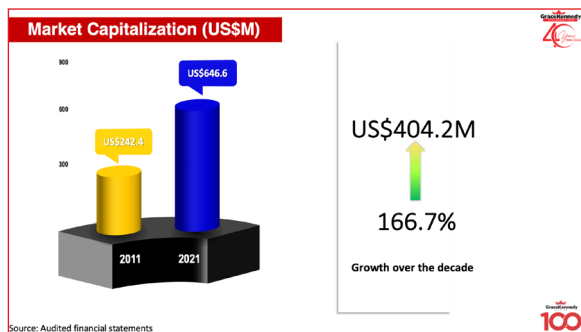


Stella the story. I said that I had to find this \$6 million but I couldn't. And she said, "Wha?" And she starts telling me how to save the \$6 million. After I consulted with all the MBAs, "dem cyaa help mi!" So I said, "Miss Stella, I tell you what, hol' di thoughts deh, I goin get pen and paper and start write". And you know that I found the \$6 million. Stella helped me to find the \$6 million.

The story behind that is that in business and as a leader, you must listen to everybody, from the lady that is serving your coffee to the chairman of the board; and you must show them respect and be humble. Stella was the person who helped me find the \$6 million. And it can be simple things that get you going. Another person said to me, "Mr Wehby, I see the person beside this person getting a new envelope and passing it over. Why not cross out the name and give the person the old envelope?" It's simple little things like that. And it worked. She's a darling, God bless her soul. Stell, I love you.



So this is one of the biggest achievements, certainly, under my portfolio, where the market capitalization, the value of the company, has gone up significantly by over 166%, and it continues to grow. In addition to that, Mr Messado will tell you that our dividend payout ratio has also gone up by 200%. So we're quite pleased with the revenue growth, the profit growth and the market capitalization. There's work to be done, but we've been on the right track in our performance for the last decade. So, when you think about the company's value going up by US\$400 million it's quite an achievement, and it's showing you that the market and the investors are paying attention to our past results. But more important, they have confidence in us going forward.



So, on 13 February, we celebrated our 100th anniversary at the Holy Trinity Cathedral. The archbishop is here; Archbishop, stand and be recognized. This is the archbishop of Kingston.

I was so pleased for two reasons, selfishly. The Holy Trinity Cathedral is right beside St George's College, and it is located in downtown Kingston. It was really a special moment for me. I'm going to play an excerpt from my presentation and I'll explain to you why after.

[video starts]

### **Senator Don Wehby**



*Throughout the years I've been asked in many forums, by investment bankers, by investors, by shareholders and just ordinary men on the street, Don, what is the secret to GraceKennedy's success? The simple answer for me is that we have always, without fail, remained guided by the core values which were established by our founding fathers in 1922. The core values, which are now in our DNA, are honesty, integrity and trust. At GraceKennedy, we stay true to our mantra, We Care. In the best interest of our team members, We Care. Our customers, We Care. The communities we serve all over the world, We Care. GraceKennedy, We Care.*

[video ends]

## Senator Don Wehby

You can clap, you know! Our word is our bond. We Care. Beverly, I heard it from your dad, I heard it from Mr Diaz, Peter Moss-Solomon, Jimmy, Douglas, and I'm the biggest preacher of We Care. And as long as this company is under my leadership, We Care.

So, in 1995, Douglas was giving me his briefing and he mentioned, Teddy, who is here, that Carlton Alexander said, "If it's good for Jamaica, it's good for GraceKennedy"; the Honourable S. Carlton Alexander. And that has always, throughout my career at GraceKennedy and even in my personal life, really resonated with me; this phrase has guided me in my thoughts: If it's good for Jamaica, it's good for GraceKennedy.

I want to share a story with you. This chart could be a little bit confusing, but let me explain. This

is the Grace Hot Pepper Sauce, and I know everybody knows the Grace Hot Pepper Sauce. When I became CEO, there was a shortage of this hot pepper sauce and Douglas mentioned it. I said, "Fred, why?" "We are importing the pepper mash from Costa Rica and there's a





problem in Costa Rica.” So I said to myself, “That’s crazy. How can you have a company in a country like Jamaica with all the arable land, and we’re importing pepper mash?” I said, “That cannot continue.” I remember Irwin Burton was there.

So we met with the farmers in St Elizabeth and we said to them, “Listen, we are going to invest in a plant in Hounslow. We are going to buy any amount of pepper you produce.” We produced the pepper mash there and we bought escallion. This pepper sauce is Jamaican. Instead of importing the pepper mash from Costa Rica, we are now exporting the pepper mash all over the world.

But you know, the most heart-warming interaction I’ve had that almost brought me to tears? I’m a product of Mr Orane, so I’m in the market, the trade, visiting customers, visiting our stakeholders. So, I went to Hounslow to visit the farmers and this farmer came up to me and said, “Mr Wehby, thank you, sir, thank you.” I said, “No, thank you. You are producing all the escallion and the onion and the pepper.” He said, “No, let me tell you a story. Because of the contract that I have with GraceKennedy, I’m able to send my daughter to university, the first in my family to go to university.” You know how that feels?

That’s what you call a win-win-win: a win for the farmer, a win for GraceKennedy and a win for Jamaica. And that’s why our company has been so

successful. What is good for Jamaica, is good for GraceKennedy. I go further. I must confess, this is the best jerk sauce in the world. So if you think Mr Alexander can sell, I can sell a little bit too.

So, we went further. We started a factory in Denbigh, Clarendon, to produce the jerk sauce. So think about this, and what that graphic is showing you there. We engage the St Elizabeth farmer – from the grounds of St Elizabeth, the escallion and the pepper. We process it in Hounslow and then we send it to Denbigh, and this is the product. You can't get more authentic than this as a Jamaican product. And the picture that you're seeing there is that this product is now on shelves all over the world. That specific one is in Walmart.

[video plays]

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**



*Let me give you an anecdote. In the 1990s when I first became chairman of GraceKennedy I was CEO before so I was chairman and CEO. We wanted to expand internationally. And what we found is that we had no other choice but to adopt good corporate governance. Why is that? Because people were looking for people who they could trust. This is what it's about. If you demonstrate honesty and integrity, then people will trust you. To do business internationally, you have to have that trust.*

*So we actually caused this to happen in GraceKennedy. It took us several years to implement but one of the things I want to get across is that corporate governance is not an abstract philosophy or principle. Of course, it's about honesty and integrity. It's about good business practice. It makes sense to do it because you will actually be able to increase your productivity and live at a higher standard of living.*

[video ends]

### **Senator Don Wehby**

It's very profound, eh? And Douglas, in his humility, would not say this, but I will say it: it started with Raf Diaz, and Douglas Orane especially transformed the GraceKennedy Group of companies into a world-class company in terms of corporate governance. Without that transformation, all the numbers that

I've shown you this afternoon would not have been possible.

Mr Orane, I'm going to show this slide. I'm sure you'll be proud of us, sir. We won nearly every award by the Jamaica Stock Exchange in 2020, including the Governor General's



Award for Excellence [silence from the crowd].  
“Well den clap us den nuh man, Lord have mercy!” I salute you, sir. We can talk about the Crowne Plaza meeting. That is a fantastic achievement and thank you very much, Mr Diaz. Mr D, thank you, sir! And Mr Orane, you’ve made my job a lot easier, along with Prof. Shirley.

So one of the biggest challenges I have faced . . . It has not been an easy road with the dreaded COVID-19. We got the call, saw the numbers, and and were following it. Everyone was saying, “Oh, it can’t happen, it can’t come to Jamaica.” And you realize that you’re living in a different world, a totally different world. And I asked myself, as the Group CEO, “What should guide how I manage the company through COVID-19?” I thought about it and I said to myself, “As the Group leader, the safety and health of my staff must come first.” You’re all family, as Fred said. Maybe not by blood,

but once you’re in the GraceKennedy Group, you’re my family and you’re my responsibility.

### Overcoming Challenges

GK #StrongerTogether during the COVID-19 Pandemic



- #1 priority: **safety and well-being** of our team  
(> 60% working from home)
- Two GK vaccination blitzes
- **91% vaccination rate** among GK team
- **Supported communities** we serve around the world

So, right away we made the decision to work from home. And it happened so quickly! The technology and Zoom and Teams and all of that. We had 60% of our staff actually working from home. It was challenging but we all rallied around each other and we did it. Then I said to myself, “How can we ensure that our staff are safe?” Of course, the first thing to do is to encourage them to get vaccinated. We brought in professionals, I had weekly meetings, vaccination blitz, and you know, when I look at that slide I get a little emotional, but I’m proud to stand here. I asked my team, I said, “Help me to keep you safe, I beg you.” And as I stand here, I’m so proud to see and announce to this audience and those online, that 91% of the GraceKennedy staff are fully vaccinated.

And while we were going through difficulties, we didn’t pull back. We stepped up our contribution to the communities, giving more despite the challenges that we had. I know there are some youngsters, some budding entrepreneurs here – and this might be a little bit detailed but I think it’s important and I’ll show it. Sometimes when you’re going through a difficult time you tend to go into a shell, and you can’t afford that. I’ve always said, you heard before, “Where there’s a crisis, there’s an opportunity.” And there has been a lot of opportunity for GraceKennedy’s growth during this crisis.

You have to communicate. We have weekly meetings – nine o'clock every Monday morning. And you know, the truth is that we recorded our best performance ever in 2021, despite the pandemic. Some of you know that every second Saturday in January, in this very room, before COVID, we hosted five hundred of GraceKennedy's senior executives or top managers here. It was time for us as executives to change gear and create a vision for 2030. I thought about what would be important to communicate to the five hundred executives and I came up with this quote from a Japanese poet and I think it's so, so powerful. I showed it to the five hundred executives and it simply says, "Individually, we are a drop. Together, we are an ocean." I said to them that if we work as a team, we're going to be a force to be reckoned with. Then I showed them a video and I explained why I had shown it to them. I want to share that video with you.

[video plays]



Announcer:

5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Release, release, release. Fire, fire. Welcome to space!

### **Sir Richard Branson**

*To all you kids down there, I was once a child with a dream looking up to the stars. Now I'm an adult in a spaceship with lots of other wonderful adults looking down to*

*our beautiful, beautiful earth. To the next generation of dreamers, if we can do this, just imagine what you can do!*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

I showed my team that in order to say that when I present the Vision 2030, don't be afraid to dream. Branson said to us that he was once a child looking up, and now he's there. I said, "Don't be afraid to dream." Because in this context, the team is the child looking up and the sky is the limit for the GraceKennedy Group. We must dream. A part of that dreaming, and this is generally in terms of objectives and vision – the first thing we need to do as individuals, as a company and as a team, is to believe in ourselves and that we can do it. What I'm going to show you of GraceKennedy by 2030 is that I believe GraceKennedy can do it. And I believe we have the right team to do it.

So we came up with this vision. Douglas said to me earlier, "Don, read the vision, read the vision." So I'm going to read it. I always follow the boss's instructions. It says, "To be the #1 Caribbean brand with Jamaican roots" – so you notice now that we have stamped brand Jamaica, so powerful – "and a global reach, by building on our core pillars of Foods and Financial Services to provide strong returns to our shareholders and improve the quality of life of our team members, customers and the communities we serve."

We actually engaged Price Waterhouse International in an exercise that created about 1,000 pages in terms of developing this vision. And what I'm going to share with you is really the highlights of where we're going. And it's easy to remember . . . Think about GraceKennedy now. We're a US\$900 million company. By 2030 we're going to be a US\$2.1 billion company. In profits, we're going to be making US\$250 million by 2030. In terms of market capitalization and in terms of the geography, 70% of our profits are going to be outside Jamaica and 30% inside Jamaica. I must emphasize, again, that we're going to be investing and growing in Jamaica but we're going to be growing faster outside of Jamaica. And the market capitalization . . . we're going to be a company valued at US\$1.9 billion. So if you think about it, \$2.1 billion in revenue, \$250 million in profits and \$1.9 billion in market capitalization.

Now I know that 90% of you are saying, "Don is mad!" I'm not going to feel bad if you say that, you know! But I believe – and you have to believe in yourself, you have to believe in your team – that we can do it. This is going to be the biggest company in the Caribbean, and I'm going to share some thoughts with you. It may seem very simple here. We're going to be growing our Grace brand and the Grace-owned brand.

Let us use Walmart as an example. There are five thousand Walmarts in the USA. GraceKennedy is in



only three hundred of them. So can you imagine if we are very focused, even if we only focus on the West coast, if we are very focused about growing the GraceKennedy brand in the Walmart stores? We are in there already. It's just a matter of growing.

**How will we achieve our 2030 vision?**  
*Growth of Grace and Grace-owned Brands*



- Geographical **and channel** expansion in Europe and North America
- From a Caribbean-**focused** to multi-cultural food brand **with mainstream appeal**
- New product innovation

This is the one that I like. This is in Canada. I love the name: Bag n' Cook. You put the meat in the bag and you cook it with the seasoning. I want to tell you something, "It sell off, Prof., it sell off!" Jamaican

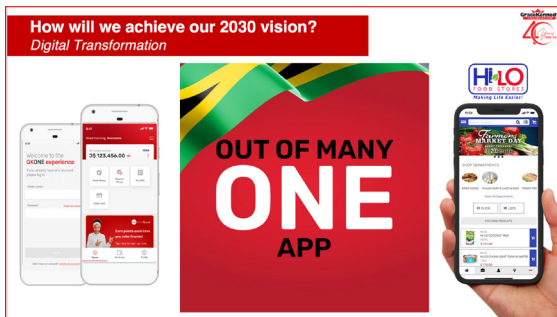
people in Canada are buying it like nothing. Bev, have you bought it? [Bev Valentine replies No.] I'm going to get it for you! Maybe you haven't bought it because it sell off!

What you are going to see here is a lot of innovation in the Grace products and what we are selling. So, think about the future and the growth of the Grace brand and the Grace-owned brand not only in Jamaica, but outside of Jamaica. There are a lot of wide spaces that we're going to grow into.

[video plays]

## **Senator Don Wehby**

Colleagues, I was in a meeting with McKinsey. This is a top consulting company. It was a very sobering meeting. The gentleman said to me, Marjorie, Don, digital transformation is not a nice-to-have. You have to do it for survival. Plans that we had pre-COVID that were going to take three or four years had to be brought forward, and some of them were achieved in six months.



Steven Whittingham is here, our digital factory. Steve, do you want to stand and be recognized? So we actually have a digital factory in the Allied building on Belmont Road, creating all of these apps, primarily being done by Jamaican

youths. Yes, Jamaican people bright! This is going to be a big focus: I'll share with you – Gail, I hope I don't get in trouble – but we have spent over J\$700 million on our digital factory consultancy, on developing apps, with a lot more in the pipeline.

There's going to be a transformation of financial services in the GraceKennedy Group, primarily financial services on a digital platform. So, when you hold up your phone, you basically can do everything without going into any of the financial

companies. And that's what the young people are expecting. I'm so excited about that.

And then when you look at Hi-Lo, we have an app for Hi-Lo so that you don't have to actually go into a physical store; you can go on your phone, order your groceries and they will be delivered promptly. So we're going to grow the Grace brand and Grace-owned brand, and financial services are going to be transformed on a digital platform.

We've been very successful at acquisitions and Douglas showed a few. The 2014 acquisition of La Fe was a game changer. Gray's, that's the hot pepper sauce manufacturer – we've done backward integration and bought into Gray's, the hot pepper manufacturer, and Majesty, which is a very interesting story. It's actually our patty factory located in Florida, and it's doing exceptionally well. So, as we approach 2030 and as Douglas

said, we're not making any big bets, we're going to be doing our due diligence, you're going to be seeing a lot more growth by the GraceKennedy Group of companies through acquisitions. The latest one that you've seen is that we bought Scotiabank in the

How will we achieve our 2030 vision? Mergers & Acquisitions			40
2022		Scotia Insurance®	
2021		GraceKennedy Life Insurance	
2020			
2019			
2018	  		
2017			
2014	 	GraceKennedy Foods (USA) LLC	

Eastern Caribbean. Then we bought Scotiabank in the southern Caribbean and we are going to be in fourteen countries by January with GK Life in the Caribbean. And that's a game changer for the GraceKennedy group of companies.

Then of course, we have the two best water brands, 876 and Catherine's Peak, both owned by the GraceKennedy Group. So I have no books to sell; I'm not at that stage in life. I can aspire to get there. What I do have to sell is two good waters. So acquisition is going to be a big part of the GraceKennedy group strategy. This is so huge. And Ali Matalon is here. She has been doing some work with us and we are working with NASDAQ.

ESG – Environmental Social Governance (ESG) . . . we used to refer to it as corporate social responsibility (CSR), but it's much deeper than

that now. In other words, the comment that the McKinsey consultant made to me about digital is a comment that I would make to all of you in this room about ESG. If you don't have a robust

### How will we achieve our 2030 vision?

*Integrating Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Principles*

As part of our ESG approach, we have aligned ourselves with a few United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



1 No Poverty

Increasing Financial Inclusion



13 Climate Action

Addressing Climate Change



2 Zero Hunger

Alleviating Hunger



3 Good Health and Well-being

Developing Better for You Products



8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Engaging our Diverse Talent



11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Investing in Communities



12 Responsible Consumption and Production

Promoting a Circular Economy



ESG statement and policy and implement it, it's going to be hard for you to survive in the future. It's going to be very hard. So Gail Moss-Solomon is leading it for us, and we have decided to adopt a few of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including financial inclusion and climate change . . . our beach project clean-up is a big, big part of that. Engaging our diverse talent and investing in communities. Investing in communities, investing in communities. And I thought of Jimmy Moss-Solomon a while ago.

So, after I became CEO in 2011/2012, one of these hard-hitting journalists – you know those gotcha journalists? – he said, “Don, what do you want your legacy to be at GraceKennedy?” I was going down the road of talking about strategic planning and that and that . . . and it's like God spoke to me. He said, “Don, don't get on that road. You'll never win.” So I said to the journalist, “I want my legacy to be that when I leave GraceKennedy, we're helping over a thousand children from the inner city to be educated.” That's what I said. And he was so caught off guard. He said, “Oh, that's great.” No more questions.

I went back to the office and I announced to my staff that I needed a thousand children to be educated and we're only at 400, so we needed to see aggressive growth! What gets measured gets done; what gets measured gets done. On 23 November 2021, I got a call from the head of the

Grace and Staff Development Foundation that we were at 1,081. Douglas used to do it and now I do it. I go through every result of every student that we're paying for. Every student. And let me tell you something: those children are so bright. I've seen eight As in sciences, nine As . . . children from Southside . . . we host them at our homework centres; getting fantastic results. I said to myself, "I'm so happy because all these children wanted was an opportunity, somebody to stand by them and help them to get a good education. That's all they wanted." At GraceKennedy, we have played that role and I'm so happy about that. Of course, those of you who know me know that the new target is 2,000. Gotta keep going, gotta keep going.

My mother was a teacher for 40 years. Beverly taught with her – Beverly Valentine, Carlton's daughter. I'm even more convinced now, and I say it all the time, that education in Jamaica should be a right. A good education in Jamaica should be a right, not a privilege. Education in Jamaica should be a right, not a privilege. And that's where we need to move. I'm a storyteller. I hope I'm not going too much over time. I'm going to wrap up now.

I'm very passionate about Grace and Staff and I'm actually chairing the board. Jimmy Moss-Solomon was the previous chairman and I'm sure that he's happy, he's looking down and seeing what is happening. In this very room, we have Grace and Staff make PowerPoint presentations to an

audience of the staff. And I said, “Listen, I want to change it this year. I want a beneficiary of the Grace and Staff Development Foundation to come and address us.” Of course, the gentleman came; I remember him very clearly.

He started off in a nervous way, but he told the story in his own way. He said, “I was playing domino, an you know in Jamaica how we stay, when you win the game, you slam the ting an di domino fly, and den di man dem accuse yu of codin di game”. An a man box im. He said he got upset, went to a bredren yaad an borrow im gun to com kill di yute dat box im. An he said dat when he was walkin down, somebody said, “Don’t do it, yute. Don’t do it. ‘Low im [Let him be]. ‘Low im.” He went and he gave back the gun, and he said, “I felt lost.” So he spoke to a lady that his mother knew who said, “Go and check Mrs Madden at Grace and Staff and have a talk with her.”

To cut a long story short, when he was standing right here, he said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I just graduated with a marketing degree from The University of the West Indies.”

I tell these stories because I hope all of you can relate. That is why GraceKennedy is 100 years old. And I can tell you many more stories like that. We Care. It is in our DNA.

So Ali, I hope you’re gearing up to get us across this line with NASDAQ.

Alright, this is a big one for me. I've been saying this for a number of years. I want to list GraceKennedy on an international stock exchange, on the NASDAQ or the New York Stock Exchange. Fred, I understand that your dad was thinking about the London Stock Exchange? But I've started discussions with investment bankers and we are on train to get this done by 2030. This is how I think we're going to truly unlock shareholders' value.

You know, I've shared a lot and I'm getting the wind-up signal but I could not finish my presentation without speaking about the staff. That's one piece of advice I have to give any entrepreneur or anybody here in any leadership position: you can have the greatest strategy in the world. You can be the brightest MBA from wherever. But the greatest asset that you'll have is not on your balance sheet. Not on your balance sheet. The greatest asset that you'll have is your staff. You have to treasure them every day and give them thanks. So when we did an employee engagement survey the world best was 65% and GraceKennedy came out at 72%, that verified what I was saying.

And there's one final piece of advice that I give about guiding a company. There's a strong correlation between employee engagement and profitability. The point I'm making is that if you want a profitable and successful company, ensure that your employees are engaged. That is the start of running a successful company.



## GraceKennedy kicks off 100th anniversary by gifting shares to staff

**G**RACEKENNEDY Group recently launched its 100th anniversary celebrations (GK100) with the announcement of a share offer for its more than 2,800 employees.

The announcement of the offer, which is geared at broadening the share ownership of the GraceKennedy (GK) team in the company, was made by GK Group CEO Don Weibly during the virtual launch of GK100. The launch was streamed live to hundreds of GK employees from around the world on Saturday, January 15, 2022, one month ahead of GraceKennedy's official 100th anniversary date on February 18, 2022. In his address to the online audience at the launch, Weibly said GK100 is not only an opportunity to celebrate the company's growth and successes, but also the positive impact GK has made on its team and the communities it has served over the past 100 years, as well as its contribution to spreading the spirit of Jamaica across the globe through its food and financial services. Weibly added that the secret to GK's success lies in the company's continued commitment to its core values of honesty, integrity, and trust, instilled by its founding fathers over 100 years ago. He also reiterated his belief that there is an indelible correlation between GK's highly motivated team and the profitability of GK's business.

"As we mark 100 years of being in business, we have made it a priority to ensure that a major part of our celebrations involves GK giving back to our amazing team who have made it all possible. A few years ago, I made a promise that we would give GK employees the opportunity to own a piece of GraceKennedy, and I can think of no better way to celebrate our 100th birthday than to give the gift of ownership in this great company to our team. Today, I am thrilled to announce that in 2022, in celebration of GK100, our GK



Don Weibly, GraceKennedy Group CEO, celebrates the virtual launch of GK100 with host Simone Clarke-Cooper. GK100 will feature a year-long calendar of events and activities to celebrate the company's 100th anniversary and will be reflected across its brands and subsidiaries in Jamaica and overseas.

employees will be given the opportunity to own a piece of GraceKennedy," said Weibly.

The announcement was met with cheers from those viewing the launch online and a slew of comments from team members expressing appreciation and jubilation. Persons in attendance at the virtual launch were also advised that the share offer would be subject to the company's rules governing stock

options. The announcement of the share offer has come on the heels of GK being awarded the 2020 Governor General's Award for Excellence at the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) Best Practices Awards in December 2021. GraceKennedy is consistently one of the top performing stocks on the JSE and recorded the best financial performance in its history in 2020.

"We had a record-breaking year in 2020 and 2021 is looking great too. With the GK100 wind in our sails, I am confident that 2022 will be even better!" said Weibly. GK100 will feature a year-long calendar of events and activities to celebrate the company's anniversary and will be reflected across all its brands and subsidiaries in Jamaica and overseas.

6 JANUARY 16

6 JANUARY 16

There you see Simone and myself, giving away shares. Thank you, Simone. I made a commitment that every GraceKennedy employee was going to have shares by 2022, and we fulfilled that promise.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I know I have been probably a little bit long but, you know, it's almost surreal for me standing up

here as the leader of this great company. As I said in my beginning, I am blessed. I always finish my presentations wherever I am in the world, wherever I'm speaking, by saying, God bless Jamaica, the greatest country in the world. Thank you.

## 4

### Questions and Answers

#### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Mr Wehby, I'm going to invite Mr Orane and Dr Kennedy back on stage as we rejig the outfit up here and take some questions. Alright, ladies and gentlemen, I think we can give our speakers today another round of applause. Fantastic information, rich, entertaining, heartfelt. We're all better off for having been here this afternoon into evening. I feel like the belle of the ball. I'm in such great company. Okay, so we're ready for questions, gentlemen?*

*Let's start with the ones we're getting via Slido. The first one says, "What has GK done to ensure maintenance of the legacy of the critical principles of integrity and trust over the century?" I think we alluded to that a little bit, but . . . Don?*

#### **Senator Don Wehby**

One of the books we have, and Raf referred to it, is a code of ethics which speaks to honesty, integrity, trust, commitment and respect. It explains the responsibility of all the stakeholders in GraceKennedy and I think that's a powerful document. I certainly use it at every orientation for every new staff member. I go through the code of ethics and I explain why GraceKennedy is such a great company. Douglas said earlier that he spoke to a 39-year-old who did not remember Carlton Alexander. That stuck with me. So, I probably need to go back and think of how we can ensure that the legacy that you refer to will continue.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Yes. And I know once it sticks with you, Don, then something will absolutely be done about it.*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

Yes, we need to. That's why I insisted Douglas write the book. He's such a great leader and we have a lot to learn from him. It needs to be documented. It has been a tremendous success and it's benefiting Jamaica, not only GraceKennedy staff.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*That's right. Mr Orane, I'm going to pose this next one to you because you spoke to doubling productivity. What were the top three ways GK was able to improve the productivity of employees? And somebody asked further down, What are some of the strategies that you employed to do that? You achieved it within four years. How?*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

I had a head start because I'm an engineer by training and an industrial engineer at that, which is all about productivity improvement. But Don has said it: what gets measured gets done. Let me share with you how I look at it. There's something that Bill Gates, you in the audience, I, and the man who begged me money at the corner of Trafalgar Road and Hope Road earlier today have in common – we all have 24 hours in each day. The question we have to ask ourselves is, how do we use those 24 hours most effectively? And there are very simple ways of doing it.

I mentioned punctuality. We have an endemic issue in Jamaica. We don't realize if we are ten minutes late and there are 20 people, that's two hundred minutes that have been wasted. We need to inculcate simple things like that into the culture of the company in order to move us ahead. It's not rocket science.

And then the other one is that I read a lot about what happens. I read *The Economist* and the *New York Times*. I read the *Wall Street Journal* every day when I was at GraceKennedy to get new ideas and see how other companies did what they did. If I could just share one quick example with you that inspires me: Nestlé is the largest food company in the world. It started in a little village called Vevey in Switzerland over 150 years ago. And Vevey had a population of 20,000 people. There's no reason why we can't do the same thing from Kingston, Jamaica, provided we are world class in the way that we implement.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Thank you. Yes.*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

In relation to what Douglas said, over a decade ago, we implemented the Balanced Scorecard. We have here a performance-driven culture and financials, and at every board meeting, management has to report on productivity. Again, what gets measured gets done. And at the board we actually make suggestions for how to improve one's productivity.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay. Dr Kennedy, can you speak to some of the challenges of working for a family company and how those challenges were overcome?*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

I think in the early days, the challenge really was to hold the members of the family as owners of the company. As time went on, when my grandmother died, they discovered – and this is typical of a lot of family companies – that individual family members had their own objectives and their own financial needs to take care of. But my dad recognized that and certainly enabled his brothers and others to sell their shares, if they wished. But at the beginning, he certainly saw himself as a steward of that family ownership. There's no question about that. And when people wanted to buy into the company, he was very reluctant to allow that to happen. I know Boris Terfloth made an offer to buy a large amount of shares in the company in the early 'fifties. The offer was declined. But that's another story.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*You'll have to buy the book!*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

You'll have to read the book, but Terfloth and Kennedy was formed as a result of that. A compromise was made but the desire was to buy into the family company and buy into Grace, Kennedy and Company Limited. The way to read

that is that he saw himself as a steward of that family capital. But when the time came he was realistic about people wanting to migrate and find their way. And he made it happen. And, as I demonstrated earlier, he encouraged Peter Moss-Solomon and Raf to prepare the company to go public.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Don, somebody's asking whether you would say that GK remains a family company?*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

Well, in the sense of share ownership, no. As you know, when you look at the share register, a number of pension funds own GraceKennedy. The family and the staff still have a significant amount of shares in the GraceKennedy company. But the reason that I do view it as a family company is because we all care about each other. And that's how we work together. To me, family means that we support each other and we want to see each other do well. That's why I refer to it as our family. In the strict sense of the word, in terms of ownership, it's not a family-owned company any more. As Fred said, it went public in 1986. But our values and how we relate to each other is like a family.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Excellent response. Thank you for that. You all mentioned mentorship inside of GraceKennedy, which is so key. We have a question about whether GK has a mentorship programme. But on a broader scale, how important is mentorship to being able to have the impact that the company has had, to keep leadership growing and to keep morale high? How important an ingredient is that to GraceKennedy's recipe?*

## **Senator Don Wehby**

We do have a mentorship programme. But one of the things that I would encourage all young executives to do is not to be shy. If you see somebody out there, you shouldn't be afraid to approach them just because you think they're very bright and very smart. However, to be an effective mentor, they must have the same values as you. That's most important. I am a product of having great mentors. OK Melhado was one of my mentors. Douglas Orane is one of my mentors. I have many mentors. I try to identify my weaknesses and my fears, and someone who can help me to overcome those weaknesses and fears. And it has worked exceptionally well for me. As I said before, and I make no apologies to anyone, I'm a product of Douglas Orane in my career at GraceKennedy.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Mr Orane, your thoughts on the question?*

## **Hon. Douglas Orane**

I have some very specific thoughts on this. In my time, we achieved great success in GraceKennedy.

We have seen that in the last couple hours. But one of the things I believe, that I have not been able to do yet, is to find a way to transfer those skills and that approach to the wider society. Obviously we are tremendously productive as a company, expanding internationally, opening up opportunities for our people. But what about the rest of Jamaica?

My short-term solution to this is that every single one of us has to go out and find at least one individual and say, I am going to mentor this person. When I was a youngster, the word mentor wasn't used. Nobody knew what a mentor was. But today it's become very clear what it is. So find somebody in your own family, at your high school or somebody who comes from the inner city and help to guide them. It's so important in our society where the traditional family structures have not been surviving well over the last 40 or 50 years. Those of us who really believe in mentorship need to step in and act. I say to my friends who get upset with me: Go out and light a candle rather than curse the darkness.

### **Senator Don Wehby**

That's so true.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*That's profound. Dr Kennedy, since most businesses fail in the first year, and many of those that survive the first year don't survive the first 10 years, what does it take to get past those two hurdles? GK is now at a 100.*



### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

In the case of GraceKennedy, I think it was the rise to challenge those difficult times. The first ten years of GraceKennedy took them through the turbulent years of the 1938 riots, and also World War II, 1939. Those young men had to be extremely innovative to make it through that time. Dr Grace really was elderly at that time, for those days; he was already in his sixties. It was really up to young James Moss-Solomon and my dad to take the company through those first ten years. It really goes back to the relationship between those two men and the kind of trust that they had in each other. That is what allowed the company to thrive.

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Could I just give an answer to that one? When I retired, I said to Don, "You don't need me around but you have my cell phone number, so call me anytime you want." I've now spent the last decade being an angel investor, investing in start-ups where the young people have an idea. So I'm very familiar.

Here's my advice. First one, do like what Fred Kennedy did. Keep your accounts so that you can get out your first-year audited accounts within 30 days. What I find with most entrepreneurs is that they are not disciplined enough to have an accounting system in place. They say, "Yeah, but I'm just starting from scratch." Well, here's a solution.

Develop an informal board of advisors. You must know somebody who went to university with you who did accounting. Ask them to do it, to help you out for free. You must know somebody who went to Norman Manley Law School. Get them to advise you before you sign a contract. You must know somebody who understands digital marketing. Ask them to help and guide you. Have an informal group of advisors who help you as a young person starting your own business so that you're not trying to do all of those things yourself. That is what will make the big difference. If you look at GraceKennedy in 1922, that's what made the difference. They were very organized and accountable.

### **Senator Don Wehby**

There's one thing that I'd say. A lot of young entrepreneurs or businesses . . . I'd say this to them: that profit is an opinion and cash is a fact. You see a lot of start-up businesses in the first few years take money out of the company instead of reinvesting in it, and then they realize that despite the profit that they're showing, there's no cash. And that is very important. You have to be frugal in your first couple of years and reinvest in the business. Even at GraceKennedy, over the last 10 years, we have invested US\$216 million in technology and capital and manufacturing in the business. We are a mature business, but we realize that if you're going to stay competitive and grow going forward and be world competitive, you have to reinvest in your business. That is advice that I would give any

start-up business in their first few years. Be careful of how you manage your cash in the business and reinvest for the future.

## **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Good advice. I'm writing all this down! Don, there's a question here. You just spoke to profit and you're talking about the way forward for GK. The question says, Your profit from Jamaica has been significantly reduced over the years. How does GK balance its drive for international growth and your growth plan locally?*

## **Senator Don Wehby**

I'll repeat what I said. The profit from Jamaica has not reduced. It has grown significantly over the years. But as a percentage of our overall profits, that percentage has reduced because overseas is growing quickly. When you look at the United States of America and that market, remember I said that in 2011 our revenue was \$30 million. Now it's \$165 million because that market is so huge; and because we have bought a Hispanic brand – and there's a fusion in the US food market. Caribbean food and Hispanic foods are basically merging – GraceKennedy as a company has crossed over into the Hispanic market and the mainstream market.

When I'm in the USA, I stand up by the aisle where the GraceKennedy products are being sold in Walmart. I've seen that five out of ten people picking up the Grace products are non-Caribbean. We have crossed over. The market is huge. So just to be clear: Jamaica is growing both in revenue and profits, and it's actually growing at double

digits. We will continue to reinvest significantly in Jamaica. However, when you look at the overseas market which is so huge, it's bound to grow faster than Jamaica.

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

Simone, if I could add a philosophical view of this? The aspirations of all Jamaican people, the 2.8 million of us, are vastly greater than an island of 4,000 square miles. The world is our oyster. Today, it is far easier to access the wider world than ever before. Our ancestors have been doing this since 1834, seeking opportunity outside of Jamaica. We have been continuously migrating. Our companies need to follow that example. The families where half live abroad and half are here . . . that doesn't say they're worse off; they're actually better off. And that's what we are doing. We are creating opportunities for Jamaicans in Jamaica. But also, because we have businesses outside, which Don has shown, like the farmer in Hounslow.

Here is what I see as the wider dream. And I have the time now as a retiree to dream about these things. Don dreams the GraceKennedy dream and I am able to dream about Jamaica. I dream about Jamaica as the innovation and financial centre of the Caribbean, and I'm absolutely certain we can do it. Look at what's happening with the Jamaica Stock Exchange, where companies are coming from other countries to list here. We can do that as well. There's a colleague of mine, a Jamaican

who lives in Silicon Valley, a serial entrepreneur. He said there's no reason why WhatsApp could not have been invented in Jamaica because we were one of the first early adopters of WhatsApp in the world. And this was just four guys who used to work at Yahoo, who left and started their own business. They weren't techies. So all these possibilities are here for us to be the crucible of innovation here in Jamaica, and then export it to the rest of the world.

### **Senator Don Wehby**

One of the things that we don't often publicize is that we actually distribute products for other Jamaican companies into international markets. We have partners, Jamaican companies with Jamaican products that are not owned by GraceKennedy, but we distribute them in the USA, Canada and the UK. Through those partnerships, we are actually facilitating a need, which is to ensure that the export figures for Jamaica will increase through partnership. Fred, you spoke about that collaboration. We're doing it now – Seprod, Wisynco. We're working together with some of our competitors in the local market to grow their export business to overseas markets.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Okay. All right, Don, thank you for sharing that. Gentlemen, I'm just going to ask you for your closing comments as we look to close this lecture. Don, you always say that you're so optimistic about the future. I think that sentiment has been echoed tonight. So let me start with you, Dr Kennedy. I'm going to give you 30 seconds to wrap up.*

### **Dr Fred Kennedy**

To me, this is a celebration of 100 years of a tremendous enterprise. In reflecting on this whole experience, I've found that the people who have led the company, including these gentlemen here, really embody the values of the corporation. There's been a lot written about CEOs and the characters of CEOs and the influence that they have over an organization. I was a principal of a school, and just like the principal of a school is tremendously influential over its success, so is a CEO. The CEO is key. The success of an organization has a lot to do with the moral character of those who are leading it. [Crowd applauds] Thank you.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Mr Orane!*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

I want us to ask ourselves a question: How can we take what we have shown in this lecture and transmit it to all the young people in Jamaica? I want us to say to them, "Hey, you could do what Fred Kennedy did in 1922. There's nothing to stop you." We need to find a way to communicate to young people, to tell them, use this as a model, because for us to transform Jamaica into the country we want to live in, we have to replicate this scores and hundreds of times. I know there are academics in the audience, so that's one possibility. I also know there are others who may have ideas as to how we communicate what we're talking about here.

Of course, I know GraceKennedy Foundation is planning a series of podcasts coming out of this. This is a new way of doing a lecture and it's just right for the twenty-first century because we now live in a short attention span society. So if you came up here and read from a document, you would see people on their cell phones within five minutes. I've looked at this audience; thank you very much for being so engaged, everyone! But that's what I really dream about. How can we pass on the lessons we have learned to others?

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*We need to call it Project Candlelight, to encourage everybody to go and light a candle.*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

And by the way, remember my book? I'm standing by to sign. It's only \$2,500.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*It's outside. It's available for sale!*

### **Hon. Douglas Orane**

It's right over there! And that goes to help all those youngsters who are in Southside and Tel Aviv.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*By the way, Dr Kennedy also has a book in case you didn't know. Mr Wehby, the final word is yours.*

### **Senator Don Wehby**

As I sit here and reflect this afternoon, I feel honoured, I feel privileged, I feel blessed to be leading such a great company. Listening to Fred and to Douglas and looking at the videos, sometimes it is almost overwhelming in terms of my role as leader of the company. But what I can say with confidence to all of you in this room is: We are 100 years old, but the best is yet to come.

### **Simone Clarke-Cooper**

*Thank you very much, Mr Wehby. My first boss at GK.*

*You taught me a lot. This company has taught me a lot. And, to go back to that question about a family company, when you are here, you just become a part of the company. Even if you leave, you just never leave. I think that, too, is one of the real reasons for the success of this company. It is the way people become invested because of just how fantastic a company it is. I'm grateful to have been a part of this experience today. I'm so honoured to have been asked. Thank you, Caroline and the Foundation. This is where we leave it.*



*The* **End**

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