

## **Floyd Morris makes history as first blind professor at UWI**

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Senator Floyd Morris has become the first visually impaired person to be appointed a full professor at The University of the West Indies (UWI).

Morris, who was advised of his promotion yesterday by the UWI Appointment Committee, will be professor of disability studies at The UWI.

This is the first such appointment of a visually impaired person to a full professorship in the 75-year history of The UWI and is believed to be the first such appointment in the Caribbean and Latin America.

“This is a significant achievement,” Morris told The Gleaner when contacted yesterday. “This is indeed seismic and a smashing of the academic glass ceiling by a person with disability in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.”

He pointed out that to become a professor at The UWI, the person has to distinguish himself or herself in the areas of research, teaching, and public service and enhance the reputation of the institution.

### **A CHALLENGE**

Morris, pointing out that 90 per cent of all research material is in printed form, said that conducting research and publishing is a challenge for any ordinary person, much more for the blind.

“I had, therefore, to go the extra mile to gain access to reading and other research materials to successfully complete the publication of four books, nine peer-reviewed journal articles, seven non-peer-reviewed book chapters and eight non-peer-reviewed journal articles,” he said.

He added that the use of assistive technology has been quintessential in his efforts and he thanked The UWI for giving him the opportunity to practise his craft and achieve this monumental feat.

“I have been very disciplined in my work, dedicated to the cause of improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities and allowed God to be at the centre of my life in all things that I do,” he said.

Morris said he was grateful to all those who have given him support on his obstacle-filled journey.

He said his promotion to a full professorship shows what a person with a disability can achieve when he or she is prepared to persevere in spite of challenges.

Morris recalled that in 1986, he graduated from St Mary High School without any academic subjects and became totally blind in 1989 because of glaucoma.