

# GUYANA FOLK

And Culture

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Issue 9

## CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS HERITAGE MONTH 2015

MISS INDIGENOUS

2015

*Congratulations  
Miss Indigenous Heritage 2015  
Sherica Ambrose*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**C**elebrated as Indigenous Heritage month, in September, under the theme: Preserving our Customs and Traditions, we honor the indigenous peoples of Guyana, which is befitting our continuing theme "We Bridgin." In this issue, we highlight various aspects of their traditions, customs, challenges and accomplishments. As part of Indigenous Heritage Month we also welcome the announcement of the reconstruction of the Umana Yana, one of our national heritage landmarks.

We honor the legacy of Dr. Frank Williams, who has been called to higher service, and join in the celebration of his life with a tribute from his daughter Sandra (Andaiye) and others who knew him. This iconic son of the soil exemplified the best in patriotism, brilliance and humanitarianism.

This issue brings to the fore the successes of our young people at home and abroad. We showcase five students of Guyanese heritage who have developed a mobile app Five-O that rates encounters with Law Enforcement. Also, Guyanese Filmmaker Kojo McPherson has won the prize for best project ideas and pitch for a feature film.

Ruby Rudder, a centenarian who continues to embrace Faith, Love and Service, is among our special features.

September is also that time of year, when the activities of the Guyana Cultural Center of New York, Inc reach a crescendo with the Celebration of Guyana Folk Festival Day, as we mark another successful year and continue to showcase and celebrate the multiple roots of Guyana's cultural heritage.

It is that period when we see an outpouring of talent from within and without whether from the sharing of knowledge and skills at our seventh Summer Heritage Workshop, recognizing and celebrating of individuals and organizations at our fourteenth Awards Ceremony, our interactive Kwe Kwe cultural performance or to presentations from our Rising Writers reflecting on their Summer workshop experiences, coupled with the participation of the adult authors at the ninth Literary Hang. We also saw the infusion of the masqueraders live and direct from Georgetown, Guyana.

And so as our 2015 GFF season winds down, there is one more event to come, our Symposium scheduled to be held on Saturday, November 7th at SUNY Empire State College, 177 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York. We also take this opportunity to express profound gratitude to all who helped to make the 2015 Guyana Folk Festival season a success.

We urge you to keep following the GCA on line issues, as we will provide updates on plans for 2016 - our 15th anniversary and Guyana's 50th anniversary of Independence ..." We bridgin."

*Ave Brewster-Haynes*

September Editor

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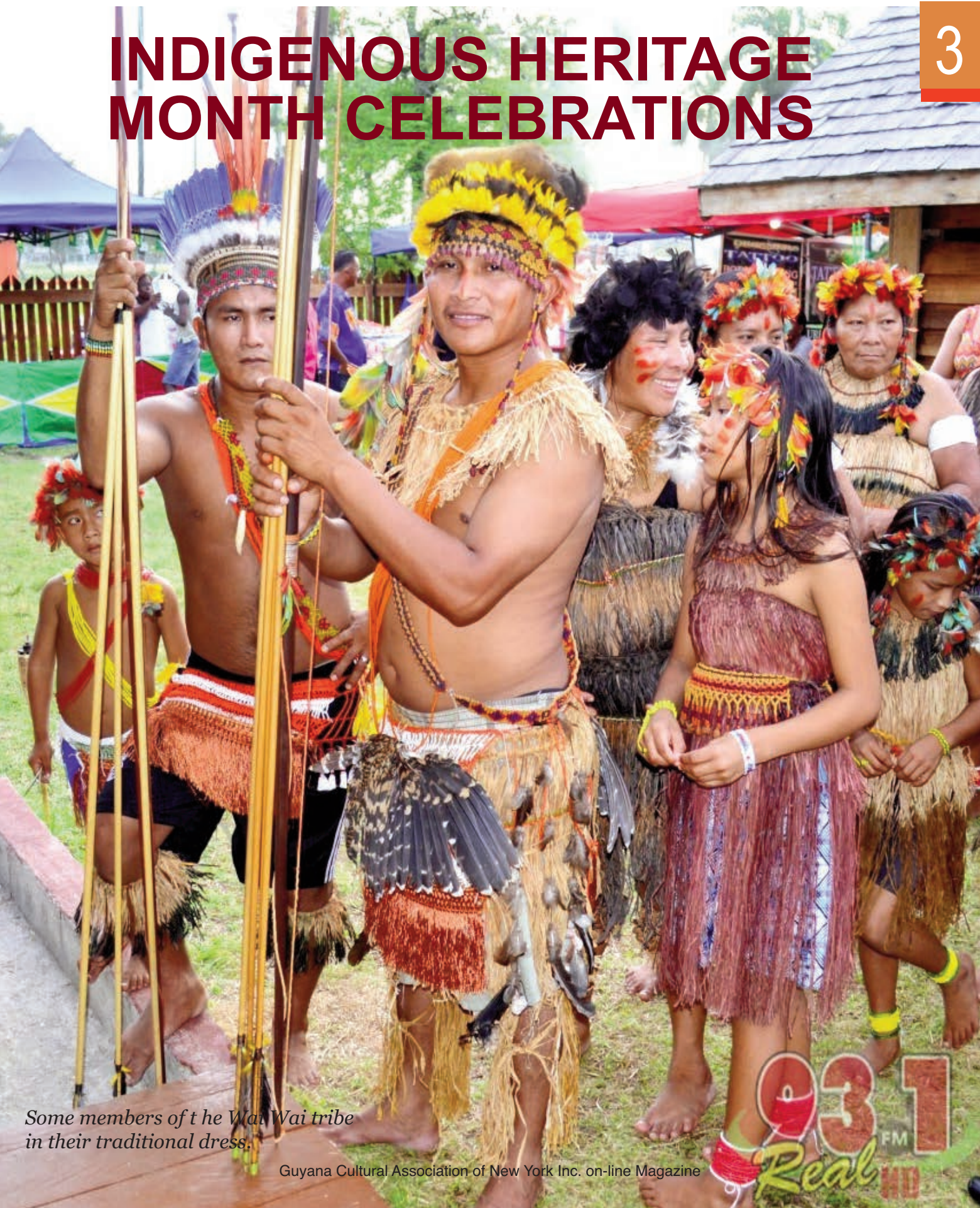
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# INDIGENOUS HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATIONS



*Some members of the Wai Wai tribe  
in their traditional dress.*



# Preserving the language & traditions of Guyana's First Peoples

Tajeram Mohabir

INDIGENOUS Heritage Month 2015 opened amid much fanfare, with President David Granger making a solemn pledge to preserve the languages and traditions of the Guyana's first people. The occasion got under way just after 17:00hrs, with the President being greeted by Indigenous Peoples of the different tribes as he made his way to the benab in the Sophia Exhibition Complex where the launch was held.

On his way to the benab, persons bedecked in traditional Indigenous attire blew their horns, and soon after this subsided, the National Anthem "Dear Land of Guyana" was played.

President Granger, in his address to kick-start activities of Indigenous Heritage Month 2015, said the rich and diverse culture of the Amerindian people needs to be safeguarded.

*"Modernisation and penetration by other cultures are threatening many of the traditions and values which our people hold dear,"* he told the gathering of government ministers, including Prime Minister Moses Nagamootoo; diplomats; and Amerindians of the different tribes of all the regions.

Culture, the President said, encompasses the totality of a people's experiences and existence, incorporates customs and traditions as well as values, and relationship with the environment and language.

Indigenous Heritage Month 2015 is being celebrated under the theme, *'Preserving our customs and traditions,'* and according to the president, emphasis will be placed on the preservation of indigenous languages as the Constitution of the land mandates.

The Constitution says Indigenous Peoples shall have the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages, cultural heritage and way of life, and the President assured his audience that this will be upheld.

But, he said, Guyanese should get to learn more about their environment.

*"We are ignorant about the names of plants, fish, birds, animals which abound in the hinterland; we are really*

*ignorant about the environment around us,"* he said, *calling for a change and an embrace of indigenous languages.*

*"Language makes human cooperation possible; language is part of our people's identity; language shapes our senses and our identity, so that we know who we are; it is a form of bonding. The heritage of our Indigenous Peoples, therefore, must be seen as the patrimony of all Guyana,"* the President told the lively gathering.

## Cultural Retention

The government, he said, favours cultural retention and continuity, and respects the identities and heritages of all peoples of Guyana.

He told the occasion that unfortunately, the language of the Indigenous Peoples is under threat of dying, as it is not part of the "BlackBerry generation."

*"We cannot allow this to happen,"* the President said, pointing out that a Hinterland Language, Cultural and Sports Commission will be established to support the preservation efforts.

The Commission, among other things, will be charged with the responsibility of promoting and preserving the Indigenous languages in accordance with the Constitution.

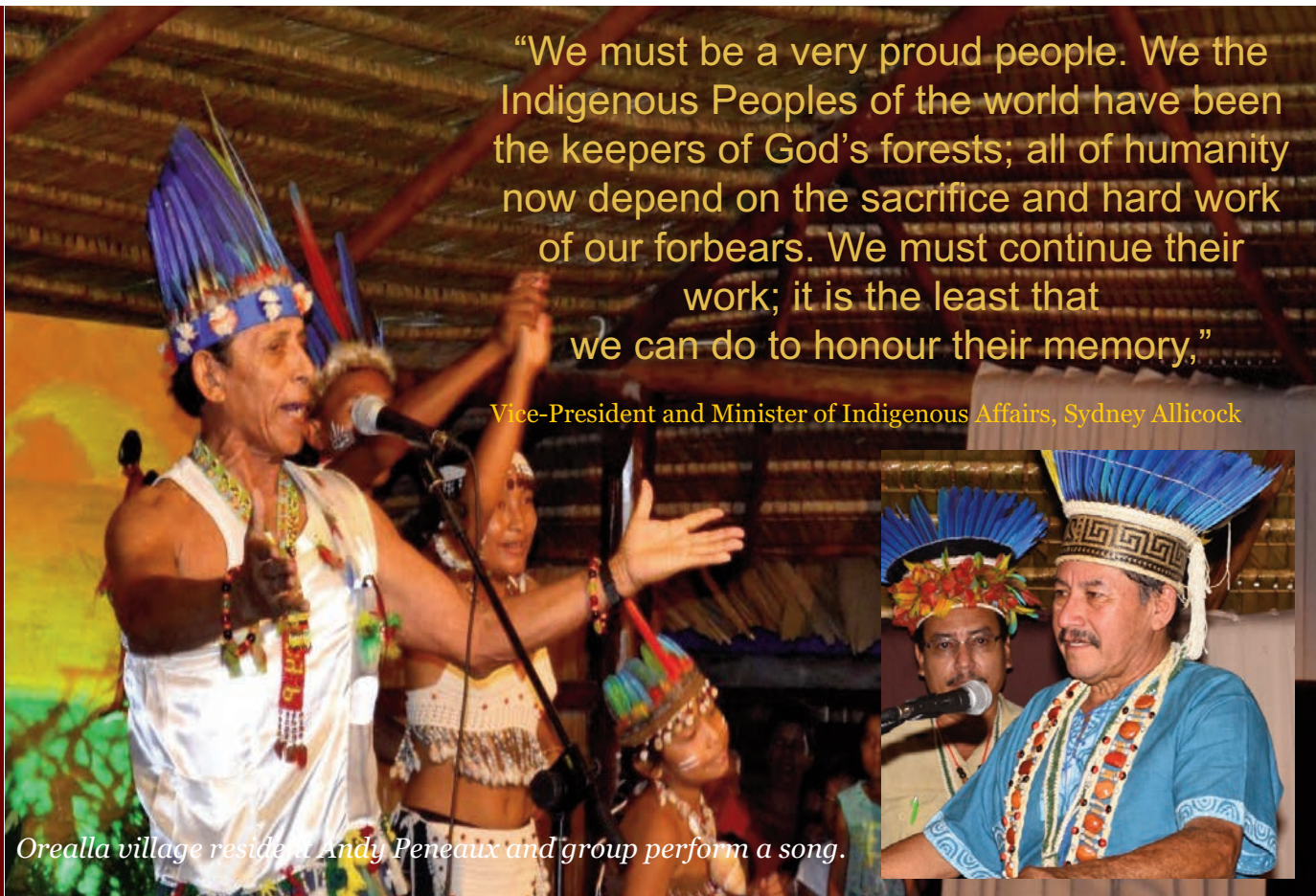
It will also take steps to ensure the culture, traditions and customs flourish, and are more widely appreciated and respected.

*"We will ensure that wherever possible, children in Indigenous communities receive formal instruction in their native languages,"* he said, noting that dictionaries will be compiled in all the Indigenous languages.

The president also announced that the government will re-establish the Amerindian Languages Project at the University of Guyana (UG), but will rename it The Indigenous Peoples' Language Project. It will be tasked with completing the compilation of dictionaries in Indigenous languages.

**"We must be a very proud people. We the Indigenous Peoples of the world have been the keepers of God's forests; all of humanity now depend on the sacrifice and hard work of our forbears. We must continue their work; it is the least that we can do to honour their memory,"**

**Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Sydney Allicock**



*Orealla village resident Andy Peneaux and group perform a song.*

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Meanwhile, Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Affairs, Sydney Allicock said Indigenous Heritage Month is about the celebration of the work and life of the country's First Peoples.

"We must be a very proud people. We the Indigenous Peoples of the world have been the keepers of God's forests; all of humanity now depend on the sacrifice and hard work of our forbears. We must continue their work; it is the least that we can do to honour their memory," he said.

Santa Aratak of Region 3 has been designated Heritage Village 2015. The launch featured songs and dances from the Katiwau Dance Group, the Surama Cultural Group and several individual performances.



# Celebrations of Indigenous Heritage Month 2015

93.1FM Real, September 2, 2015 Photographs by Alva Solomon

During the month of September, Amerindians across the country celebrate Indigenous Heritage Month. This annual event is one where Guyana's first people are celebrated and recognized for their contributions to our rich cultural heritage. Many events are undertaken at villages across the country and this is preceded by a launch event in the city.

Here are some photographs of the 2015 launch which took place on Tuesday, September 1st at the Amerindian Heritage Village, Sophia Exhibition complex.



*The Tuma Pot. Here, the Haimarra fish is being cooked and sold from the pot. The meal is one of the more nationally known dishes of the Amerindians.*

*Hand crafted baskets and trays*

*Carved canoes!- These miniature canoes are attractive and can be utilised as a heartwarming gift to someone special.*







**“We will ensure that wherever possible, children in Indigenous communities receive formal instruction in their native languages,”**

H.E. President David Granger





## *Region Nine*

*(Upper Takatu-Upper Essequibo)*

# *Wins Miss Indigenous Heritage 2015*

WINNER - Sherica Ambrose - St. Ignatius, Region #9

1st Runner-up: Candacy Willams, Region #7

2nd Runner-up: Marcelina Welcome, Region #1

3rd Runner-up: Gracelyn Campbell, Region #10

4th Runner-up: Surujanie Williams, Region 8

*J. Pinder, Guyana Times, September 29, 2015*

*Photograph: Guyana 360.com- compliments of Nicholas A. Chesney*

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine



**S**herica Ambrose, the twenty-one-year beauty of Region Nine 9 (Upper Takatu-Upper Essequibo), was crowned Miss Indigenous Heritage Queen 2015 at the National Cultural Centre. She emerged winner after competing against nine other young women from the hinterland regions of Guyana.

Ambrose, who holds a Diploma in Accountancy from the University of Guyana, stated that she was very overwhelmed but at the same time felt extremely happy for making herself, her Region, and all others who supported her, proud.

The young woman awed the audience with an interpretive dance and musical rendition as her contribution to the Pageant's talent segment, in which she played a pan flute made of bamboo.

Her performance depicted an indigenous woman's ability to charm the animals before hunting them, and highlighted the strong survival skills needed in the jungle.

Ambrose stated that it is the greatest feeling, knowing that her hard work has paid off. She added that it was not easy leaving home to come to Georgetown, wanting to emerge victorious but still feeling intimidated by the other beautiful and intelligent delegates.

She explained that training for the big night was intense

but added that the girls all worked hard to perfect their individual roles. This, she added, was despite the fact that their schedules were filled with various activities, including travelling to Santa Aratak in Region Three, spending a day at the palms making the elderly feel special by providing manicures and pedicures, and various television and radio appearances. She said the group had also made a trip to the Walter Rodney Museum.

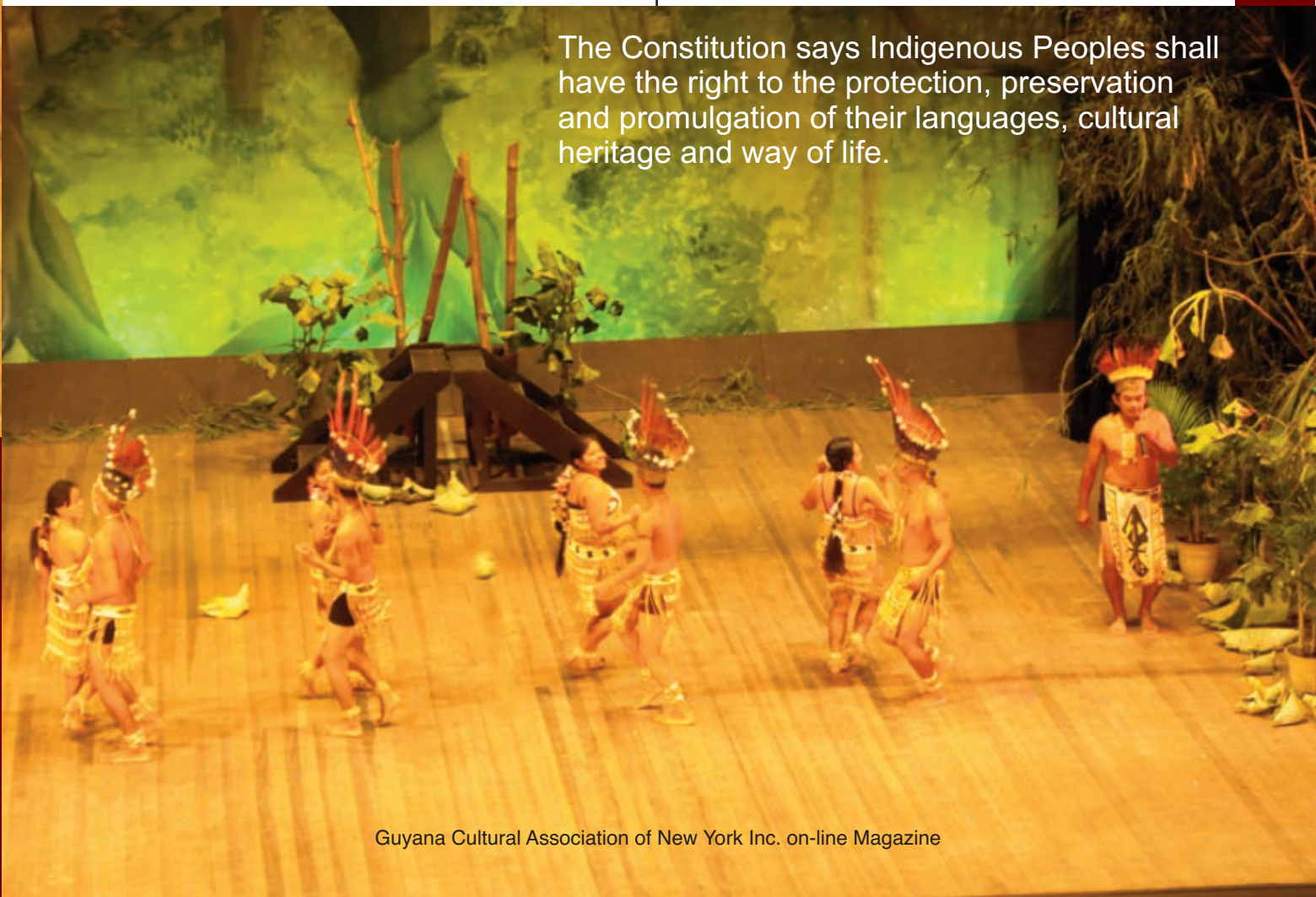
The former Central High School student said that now she has won, she is excited about being a role model for other young women. She added that she has founded a fitness group in Lethem and plans to build on that.

She also noted that she has always been interested in the idea of hosting an indigenous fashion show in her Region and plans to accomplish that dream soon.

Other than activities she considers fun, Ambrose implied that she plans to visit villages within her community to speak about any issue they may be facing and find ways to assist them. Ambrose said she plans to engage in discussions with the relevant authorities on matters affecting her community and plans to do her best to help benefit her indigenous siblings.

She said that the other delegates are willing to work alongside her, and for that, she is very grateful.

The Constitution says Indigenous Peoples shall have the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages, cultural heritage and way of life.





# INDIGENOUS HERITAGE MONTH 2015

## CONSTRUCTION OF UMANA YANA TO BE COMPLETED IN TIME FOR 50TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY

### SOLAR PANELS TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY

**T**he reconstruction of the Umana Yana is expected to be completed within the next six months. This is according to Minister within the Indigenous Peoples' Affairs Ministry, Valerie Garrido-Lowe.

On Wednesday, the Minister made the announcement at the sod-turning ceremony for the reconstruction of the heritage site. The sod was turned by Toshaos Lennox Shuman and John Derrick at the High Street, Kingston location.

Speaking at the event, Minister Garrido-Lowe said that it was a significant occasion to mark the ending of Indigenous Heritage Month.

"It was historic in 1972 when the Umana Yana, 55 feet in height, was built for a visiting foreign delegation as a conference centre and it was a total disaster and a sad day in 2014 Heritage Month, the ninth of September, that this building was burnt down...due to electrical problems," Garrido-Lowe said. She added that the rebuilding of the Umana Yana was a reminder that the nine indigenous nations were the first peoples of Guyana.

She added that the first Umana Yana was built without nails by the Wai-Wai nation, adding that "once again the Wai-Wais will be constructing the new Umana Yana, supported by the village of Moraikobai and the people of St Cuthbert's who will be providing the materials."

She expressed her appreciation for Education Minister, Dr Rupert Roopnaraine whom she revealed designed the new building.

Public Infrastructure Minister David Patterson also made some brief remarks, emphasising how pleased he was that the Ministry would be playing a part in the reconstruction of one of Guyana's most revered monuments.







## GY\$66M FOR NEW-LOOK UMANA YANA

The villages of Moraikobai and St. Cuthbert will be gathering the troolie leaves to thatch the building with Wai-Wai labor. Master Builder is Mr. Colin Isaacs.

He revealed that the reconstruction project was budgeted to cost Gy\$60.7 million and would be a joint initiative between the Public Infrastructure Ministry and the indigenous people.

He also revealed that the Public Infrastructure Ministry would be involved in the construction of the building's foundation, stating "we are expecting to raise the foundation by 12 inches above the existing one so that it can withstand all the elements. Gy\$9.2 million of the Gy\$60 million will be tendered, and that will start very shortly, for the foundation".

He added that the villages of Moraikobai and St Cuthbert's Mission would be providing the leaves for the construction of the roof, revealing that Gy\$16 million was budgeted for the installation of

solar panels to provide the structure with power. He further revealed that the master builder would be Collin Andrews, of the Wai-Wai people, who he called on to ensure that the Umana Yana was completed in a timely manner. "We expect it to be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2016, in six months' time...well in time for our independence anniversary," he said in closing his presentation.

Also present at the event was Tourism Minister Cathy Hughes, who stated that the Umana Yana played an important role in Guyana's history and heritage. "Myself, along with most Guyanese, felt the tremendous loss when this historic building went up in flames. A lot of visitors to Guyana that I had the pleasure of showing around, for them... this was a regular path," she reflected. "Today is really a celebration; it is a celebration that we are going to put back that very, very important landmark in our city. It is important that it is rebuilt in the same manner, by the same experts," she stated.

The iconic benab was completely destroyed on September 9, 2014 when a fire of unknown origin swept through the structure, reducing one of Georgetown's most prestigious landmarks to mere ashes. The Umana Yana was erected for the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers Conference in Georgetown. Thereafter, it served as a VIP Lounge and recreation centre, and was in constant use as an exhibition and conference centre.



# UMANA YANA: MORE THAN JUST A BUILDING

*Maya Trotz*

Maya Trotz teaches environmental engineering at the University of South Florida, Tampa

In Environmental Engineering we usually say that there are 5 pillars of sustainability for projects: Environment, economic, socio-cultural respect, political cohesion, and community participation. The Umana Yana, one of Guyana's nine national monuments, was constructed in 1972 by approximately sixty members of the Wai Wai community. According to the website of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport "a circular area of the lawn, about 26.8 metres in diameter was cleared of grass and excavated, the soil leveled and compacted to a smooth hard finish by the Wai Wai who stomped the ground, feet unshod, moving rhythmically forward, backward and round and round as in a sort of tribal dance. Sand was then placed over the area and a concrete foundation slab; complete with holes for the insertion of the poles was laid to protect the structure from dampness, given the nature of the shallow water table of the coastal soils."

Under the leadership of Wai Wai Chief Elka, this construction was completed in 80 days in time for a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned nations. According to the Ministry's website, without an adequate space to host to the meeting, the planning committee chose an Amerindian benab given limited funds and time for construction. Formed after the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) established criteria for membership to countries that maintained their independence and resisted pressure from the major powers. With 120 member countries and 17 observer countries, including China, NAM's focus has changed

from its early preoccupations with the cold war and colonialism, to addressing socio-economic challenges facing member states' and resistance of western hegemony. Founding member countries like Yugoslavia don't exist anymore as one entity, breaking up more than two decades before the Umana Yana fire on September 9th of this year.

Social media posts by Guyanese demonstrated a general sentiment of sadness as pictures of the fire emerged. As forestry expert Racquel Thomas-Caesar noted, the "Umana Yana belonged to all of us. I went to so many activities there, recently a jazz concert. A friend got married there years ago. I have attended fashion shows, horticultural shows, lectures, exhibitions and Amerindian heritage events there." Social media posts also registered a sense of distrust that the fire was set on purpose to provide space for private interests. And sadly, this is the Guyana of today.

The fire at the Umana Yana brings up many topics that can be used to discuss and understand this topic of sustainability. This "meeting place of people" was erected in time to host a meeting of foreigners, brought an indigenous group from deep within Guyana to the coast to erect a structure used by them, and then 2 years later was the chosen site for the installation of an African Liberation monument in the front of the compound. If one went back in time, how would this space be discussed through a sustainability lens? Global to local connections?





# Umana Yana

I have had the privilege of visiting Masekanari, the current village in the Konashen district where the Wai Wai live in southern Guyana, and where their benab sits in front of a forest so vast. One of the few remaining tropical forests still standing in the world, these are places struggling to resist pressures from all forms of mining and destruction. The benab in town that was gifted by the Wai Wai over forty years ago sat in the midst of tall wooden and concrete structures, just minutes away from where Georgetown's raw sewage gets discharged into the Demerara river, and a stone's throw away from the controversial Marriott hotel under construction. For Guyanese living on the coast, most of whom have never had the opportunity to travel into the interior parts of their country, this was one of the only spaces that represented the construction methods of the Wai Wai. I limit it to construction methods here (and Wai Wai as I also do not know whether it represents the construction methods of the eight other indigenous groups, like the Arawak, Akawaio, Arecuna, Macusi, Warrau, Wapisiana, Patamona and Carib), as perhaps we need to ask ourselves if we have ever really drawn on this incredible opportunity to reckon with the indigenous philosophies, the ways of being that were woven into the thatched roof of the Umana Yana. Did we fully understand what it meant to have "meeting places of people" that are truly places for people, from all walks of life, to meet and do more than meet, to build consensus, learn from each other, imagine, create and be creative? What would those look like? What lessons have we learned from the Umana Yana that can be used to create a Guyanese appropriate space to do all of these things? Or a series of spaces all over the country?

When I first heard of the fire I immediately thought of anecdotal stories I had been told of the difficult living conditions that many of the Amerindians who helped with repairing the roof sometime prior to 2006 endured while in Georgetown. What an irony! Then I saw pictures of the fire at the Umana Yana. And loads of engineering questions ran through my mind. It was just a few days ago that I was discussing this building in the context of Caribbean spaces for creativity with a friend. In Trinidad and Tobago, a National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) stands as a beacon of Caribbean performance space. Copied directly from

Sydney, built by Chinese workers with a ceiling that has caused its recent closure due to dropping parts, and air conditioned to the max. One would hope that up and coming students look critically at the world around them and not only imagine the world they want, but also figure out what works and is relevant in a given context, and how to make it happen.

I currently teach a course on sustainability development engineering this semester and we have partnered with a local Florida community made up of diverse partners, some of whom are English language learners. My students will develop and apply sustainability matrices to the various projects they work on for the community's farm. For each of the five pillars of sustainability a series of questions will be used to score the various phases of their project: needs assessment, conceptual design and feasibility study, design and action planning, implementation, operation and maintenance. While their projects may not reach the implementation phase, a major lesson taken away from the course will hopefully be the importance of community engagement/stakeholder participation and knowledge sharing. The last time I was in the Umana Yana it was for the 2013 national competition of the Sagikor Visionaries Challenge, a sustainability challenge that has since expanded to schools in Tampa Bay, Florida. Teams of secondary students from across Guyana shared their project ideas with the public on how to improve their schools and/or communities. It was an emotional and overwhelming moment to see students arriving in minibuses early on a Saturday morning with peers, family, and exhibits to participate in a competition that asked them to address sustainability, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The use of that space by Sagikor and the Ministry of Education seems even more significant now that I am reflecting on sustainability and the Umana Yana as that day was truly a meeting place filled with Guyanese of all ages, from all parts of the country, with all sorts of creative ideas and discussion. And just a few weeks ago, the Janus Cultural Policy Initiative hosted their important Conversations on Citizenship in this meeting place that for now is no more, bringing Guyanese together to talk about their hopes for themselves, each other and the country, and to begin to address difficult issues like race.



## TRIBUTES

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

**Dr. Frank Williams**

DECEMBER 28, 1916 - SEPTEMBER 5, 2015

**A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS**

physician, healer, intellectual,  
quiet champion for justice,  
journey man for integrity  
and fair play.

extract from tribute by  
**Nigel Harris**

Uncle Frank was a constant in my life as he certainly was in so many others – he was the doctor of doctoring – the model that I sought to emulate when choosing my medical career. He has stood by our own family as he must have with many others though the best and worst times, for our lives invariably encounter both and doctors are often the person we turn to for comfort and even spiritual support. It was Uncle Frank who was nearby at the dreadful time of my mother's final illness. It was he who attended to one of my sisters through a harrowing illness, intervening on one or two occasions when she was at the brink – enabling her to live a productive life.

Within the context of Guyana, I can think of no family illness in which Frank Williams did not play a significant role and we must be just such a small part on the many for whom he cared. Through the worst and the best of it, he imbued one with the trust and assurance that the best that could be done would be done.

Most of all, I admired his ability to talk on wide ranging subjects extending far beyond the boundaries of medicine – literature, politics, philosophy, or of life itself. As a conversationalist, there were few his equal, perhaps because he was from a generation where knowledge was not about getting certificates or university degrees but a joyful journey of self-realisation and personal fulfilment. He was not a man afraid of talking truth to power – in societies where expression of an opinion different from those of the powers that be can invite vengeful reprisal, where one's integrity can be compromised in accommodating wrong doing, Uncle Frank's quiet defiance, his rejection of bullying and malfeasance was a clarion call to the faint of heart.



# Frank, my father

## Tribute from Andaiye

That's what I called him in my mind when I was a child – Frank my father. He'd left to study medicine in England when I was about two (followed a year after by my mother) and when he returned about six or seven years later I didn't remember him – though I knew from the time I saw him on the ship that he and my mother sailed back on that he was my father. He looked just like me, and when we got to my aunt's house I quickly noticed that he even pulled his hair out from the very same spots on his head that I pulled mine out from. But as Joy Pilgrim has written, those were days before social media and skype and cheapish overseas telephone calls so I was seldom in touch with my parents while they were in England. When they came back "Daddy" was an unfamiliar word to me so at first I said "The man" as in "The man calling you" – and then later, quite a long time later, I found myself thinking of him self-consciously as "Frank, my father".

My mother always claimed that my father was to blame for everything that was wrong with me. She said that when they were in England he told her about a book he'd read about parenting which said that children should be allowed to make decisions for themselves. She was never really persuaded to adopt this approach, but it was the approach which shaped my growing up in the house with my parents. At first I found it odd – I had after all been raised until they came back by my Aunt Leila, a mother like most people's mothers – one who knew that who don't hear must feel.

But not my father. When I was about 10 or 12 he told me one day that Miss Garraway had complained to him that I had been missing piano lessons. "I don't want to go back," I said. "Alright", he answered. Many years later when I said in the presence of both my parents that I wished I could play the piano my mother laughed out loud.

Because my father so seldom told me what not to do, I remember the few things that he did tell me not to do, and two especially stand out because they go to the heart not just of the kind of parent he was, but of the kind of human being he wanted to be.

The first was when I was in my early teens. I came home one evening and told him that a policeman had stopped me because my bicycle didn't have a light. I went on, "Then he ask me my name and I tell him 'Sandra Williams' (which of course was my name then) and he write that down, then he ask me my address

and I tell him 'Public Hospital Georgetown' – which was my address then, since we lived in the hospital compound. And I continued, "Then the policeman ask me how I mean my address is PHG and I tell him is because my father is a doctor at the hospital and he look back at my name and ask 'Your father is Dr Williams?'" and I answer yes and he close his book and tell me don't ride without a light anymore."

My father asked me how his being a doctor gave me permission to ride a bicycle without a light. He said that if it happened again he would see to it that I was charged. All this was said in a calm tone but I could hear anger behind the calm. I don't think he would have done it but he had made his point.

Insecure as I was at that age about many matters which we can't discuss here, my father being Dr Williams was not only a source of pride to me, but a source of social power, or so I thought. My father said "No, it can't be."

I hated what he'd said and put it out of my mind until a day much later when I went to see him at his private practice. When I entered his office he asked worriedly, "What's wrong?" and when I told him what I'd come to ask him he said incredulously "You walked past my patients to ask me that? You think that is more urgent than their sickness?" Same voice. Same calm behind which there was anger and worse than anger, disapproval and disappointment. Tail between my legs I left, sucking my teeth to rescue a bit of pride. To this day I can't walk past people in a line, at least, not without explaining apologetically over and over again why I think I should take priority.

My father was born on December 28, 1916 in Den Amstel\*, the eldest of five children – after him came Elsen, Muriel, Audrey and Graeme (called Sonny). His father – Simon Augustus Williams, alias Soda Duff – was a teacher and later a head teacher, and I think his mother – Christobel Warner Williams – was what people call a housewife, which meant that she worked more hours than my grandfather did doing childcare and what a friend of mine calls *mancare*, plus the subsistence work that women in the countryside typically do.

My father was one of those country boys who came to town to go to Queens College, and though he seldom spoke about it, it was clear that he shared the experiences of other little country boys of that generation and later – experiences shaped by colonial era power relations of race, class and the town/country divide. Without a great deal of visible bitterness, he also talked – though less – about the discrimination that forced him to wait to get a scholarship to study medicine – that's why he was already 28 when he started, I believe. A smaller human being would have needed to use his new status as a doctor to lord it over others.



# Frank, my father

## Tribute from Andaiye

I grew up hearing what an extraordinary doctor he was; of course, as my mother often muttered, this did not extend to those of us in his home. There were whole categories of people he didn't charge; of course, as my mother muttered, this made her life more difficult. He was proud of his days as a nurse/dispenser and later, excited by the medex program of which he was the first head. He thought that his days as a nurse/dispenser had made him a better doctor. For him the work of "barefoot doctors"/ medexes deserved the highest respect.

His love of music, paintings, and theatre pervaded our house, along with my mother's love of house decoration and making what looked to me like exotic meals, for visitors. Our house in the hospital compound had writers from all over the Caribbean visiting. He mentioned often that he'd learned to play the organ quite young and used to play at Smith's Church and clearly, the Rev Holly Bryan was what would be called nowadays his mentor. He bought art when others were buying cars or houses or holiday trips. We had the earliest Stanley Greaves, early Phillip Moores, early Donald Lockes, early Ron Savorys, early Marjorie Broodhagens – he bought their work before they were well-known because he loved it, and because he thought art should be seen as a basic need not a frill and artists should be supported.

He also loved cricket but took me to only one match, disgusted by my inability to love the game for its own sake and to cheer when a batsman in the opposing team played a great shot. "What I care if is a great shot?" I asked. "Is a great shot against we team." Silence. His most frequent response when he found me disappointing.

In about 1960 he, my mother and Abyssinian moved to Cove and John where people would go up on Sundays to congregate in a room with music playing loud, my father engaging in the conversation sometimes, but sometimes sitting with eyes closed and weeping when a singer or instrument hit a high note. (A necessary aside: meanwhile my mother was downstairs doing all the cooking).

Besides medicine, the arts and cricket he was interested in politics. Our house was also visited by politicians of the day from opposing parties. It's not that he wasn't partisan but that he had a capacity for fairness. At a time when he was Mr Burnham's physician he often said that Mrs Jagan had been the best Minister of Health he'd known. He was still Mr Burnham's physician when we founded the WPA as a political party – really a movement – in 1979 and both he and my mother welcomed my WPA friends to their house even as most of their friends increased their disapproval of my waywardness and disloyalty a hundredfold.

Walter Rodney asked me more than once what it would take for "Uncle Frank" to break with Mr Burnham, and on the day of Walter's funeral when my father and mother insisted on walking next to Pat Rodney immediately behind the donkey cart carrying Walter's body I thought, "This is what it took".

My father had Alzheimers for the last 8-9 years of his life. He lost almost all of who he was. Most of his memory; eventually, almost none was left. His old sense of humour (he still laughed, but at very different things than before). His meticulousness. His sense of privacy. His reticence. Even his calm. But he still had – though diminishing – a response to music. Until very recently, the tune they play on Jeopardy when the contestants are writing down their answers to the final question always perked him up and he would conduct the music to the end.

And he still had medicine. He was, quite simply, in his mind, wherever that mind had taken so much of him, a practicing doctor. Once when he had already deteriorated a lot I changed one of his tablets on the advice of one of his doctors and he demanded, "Who prescribed this?" I answered. "On the basis of what examination and what diagnosis?" he continued. Asked his name he said not Frank Williams but Dr Frank Williams. Emphasis on the Doctor. A person who cares for people. For his patients. At the end he was house-bound, bed-ridden. But until he reached there, when he wanted to get out of the house, day or night, it was because he had patients waiting for him.

I want to close by thanking on behalf of both Abyssinian and myself, the people who made his last years bearable, who laughed with him at whatever he was laughing at and entered into whatever worlds he had entered – Weslyn, Tony, Ulanda, Daloris, Eslyn and Nichola. We thank Lanie, Aisha and Tomiya for taking their turns watching over him. We thank the doctors who came to see him, in particular Drs Imhoff and Mitchell. We thank those who made treats that tempted him to eat, especially Bonita, and Wendy for taking him to concerts earlier in his illness. We thank those who stayed in touch with him from across the seas and when they could, visited him – Elaine, Joy, Aunt Elsené, my cousin Carol, Nurse Cholmondeley and especially, his abiding friend, Dick Klautky.

Finally, in relation to today, Abyssinian and I thank the tribute makers and the music makers. And to our blood and non-blood family who were inspirers of this celebration and cooks and bottle washers for both the celebration and the cremation – Andy, Jocelyn, Vanda, Karen, Melissa, Nichola, Weslyn, Eslyn, Ulanda, Denise, Marieanne, Marilynne, Liz, Kathy, Pearson, and others roped in that we don't know about – we know you all did what you did because he was your family too but it is for sending him off as your family that we thank you. Frank, my father, go well. I know you won't ride without a light.





## “Evolution”

by Stanley Greaves

Commissioned in 1955 by Frank Williams based on his reading of “The Outline History of the World” by HG Wells

This was the very first commission the young Stanley received.

The painting always held pride of place in the Cove & John residence and all the other places Frank lived, including his last home with Andaiye in Georgetown.

“Evolution” appropriately presided over the Celebration of Frank’s Life in the Promenade Gardens.

I first met Dr. Frank Williams when I was a teenage member of the Working Peoples Art Class. He used to attend our annual exhibition openings. One day he asked if I would consider doing a painting based on an extract from one of his favourite books: “The Outline History of The World” by H. G. Wells. It was the very book I was reading for examinations for young teachers and found fascinating.

The passage he chose became the theme for a very imaginative painting that indicated what was to become my main line of enquiry in art.

Dr. Williams was my first patron, an unheard of thing in those days, and he subsequently acquired another work “The Forest of Wishbones” years later.

It was a little while after doing the first painting that he asked if I would like to do something on the walls of the Children’s Ward at the Georgetown Public Hospital where he was the physician in charge. I readily accepted the offer.

I always found Dr. Williams to be a very pleasant approachable person and had conversations about his interest in music. He was a pianist and church organist and we shared a great liking of the Nat King Cole jazz trio.

I remember him as a perceptive person, true member of the medical profession and a humanist at heart in his dealings with others.

## TRIBUTES: CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. FRANK WILLIAMS

Extract from tribute by

**Dr. Albert Klautky**

**Your father was truly a great man and a great Guyanese.**

His scholarship and erudition are well known, and the envy of many Doctors of Medicine. He was more than a Physician. He was compassionate, kind and generous. As a Physician he was respected and beloved by his patients. He shared their pain and their suffering.

It is impossible to reveal the many wonderful aspects of his character.

His breadth of interest embraced an abiding philosophical discourse and political challenges for the many years of our association; I am grateful for the memories and pleasure for our many hours of philosophical discourse and political debates. Such an intellect I could only envy.

He will be remembered for his abiding love for his country and his hope that one day we can all be proud of what we accomplished with hard work and sacrifice.

Extract from tribute by

**The Theatre Guild**

by **Ron Robinson**

**We will ensure his legacy lives on.**

Over five decades ago a group of drama enthusiasts came together and made a decision to establish an organization that would foster and encourage theatre development and performances in Guyana, and The Theatre Guild was born. And who better to ensure a successful delivery of that baby than a great doctor.

With the nurturing of that group, of which he became Chairman, The Theatre Guild would become for many years the mecca of theatre in the Caribbean. Indeed, it has produced some of the leading thespians this region has seen, including Wilbert Holder, Ken Corsbie, Clairmonte Taitt, Eileen MacAndrew, Dr. Michael Gilkes, Lawrence Thompson, Frank Pilgrim, Bill Carr, Marc Matthews, Henry Muttoo, Frank Thomasson, Margaret Lawrence, Francis Quamina Farrier, Lorna Lampkin, Elizabeth Wells, Eugene Williams (who became the principal of the Jamaica School of Drama) and the list goes on. It continues to nurture dramatists today.

I remember Dr. Williams (or Uncle Frank as many

fondly called him) being a regular supporter of TG productions, not merely on performance nights but at rehearsals as well. He would quietly offer his view about the work being staged, always insisting that he was no dramatist but a good spectator; and he certainly had great insight because he always saw something strong or weak and always had the best interest of the Guild at heart. In fact, he had that inimitable smile all the time and it was there even when the comment was something negative about your acting or directing. That smile was deceptive.

Through the years he was always there, whenever possible, to watch his baby grow. He was supportive of, and always enquired about, the renovation and expansion which took place a few years ago. He was there when his close friend and fellow TG member and supporter, Frank Thomasson launched his comprehensive book on 200 years of theatre in Guyana.

Next year the Executive Committee will be honouring Dr. Frank Williams, posthumously, with a Lifetime Achievement Award and will be hanging a photograph of him in the lobby.

On behalf of the Trustees, Executive Committee and members of the Guild, both past and present, I offer deepest condolences to Andaiye, Abbyssinian, other members of the family, relatives and friends of this wonderful, simple man, whose legacy we will ensure lives on.

Extract from tribute by

**George Lamming**

There was a time when the name Frank Williams was synonymous with Guyana from frontier to the coast. In a land where social divisions were a constant threat to peace, it was a name that signaled some promise of relief.

For more than half a century he had provided the medical profession with a model of integrity and patient-care that gave the phrase "family doctor" the intimate bond of a blood-relation. Dr. Williams had become everybody's doctor.

Generations of Guyanese have been the beneficiaries of this generosity. And I have felt it an honour and privilege to be among his friends with equal access to the members of his family.

**I hope a way will be found to monumentalize the meaning of his life for all citizens of Guyana.**



## TRIBUTES: CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. FRANK WILLIAMS

Extract from tribute by

**Rupert Roopnaraine**

**We celebrate your life and legacy  
and we affirm your example**

It is good to see Stanley's "Evolution" facing us as we remember the ways in which Uncle Frank touched our lives. It once graced the wall of the spacious dining room at Cove and John, a place where, away from the bustle of things, we learned to think beyond ourselves, to cultivate the pleasures of conversation. We were growing to adulthood in the late 50s. I think of it now as the period of dashed hopes. Little did we know what awfulness awaited us in the years ahead.

From this distance – more than half a century later – that room upstairs at Cove and John, bathed in a light and a kind of serenity, was in every sense what the pastoral poets called a 'locus amoenus' – a happy place would be a crude translation.

It was only when I went back to Hippocrates that I understood why Uncle Frank named his hospital Medical Arts. For Hippocrates medicine was an art, something higher than mere science. I came to understand something of that art on the single occasion when I visited Uncle Frank as a patient – with a buzzing in my head. He listened patiently to my woes and after half an hour or so I began to be very concerned for Uncle Frank who was not looking so well. The worse he looked the better I began to feel. I even asked him if he was all right. It was much later that I came to realise that I had been present at a strange kind of therapy. The buzzing in my head never came back. As a doctor, he had a rare gift of empathy, of seeming to absorb into himself the pain of the other. It was medicine as an art.

In the environment provided by Uncle Frank, the idea of difference never arose. It seems strange now that in a country so tormented by differences we were growing up so indifferent to otherness. (Mr President, if there were more people like Uncle Frank around, we would not need a Ministry of Social Cohesion).

In the days of the Civil Rebellion of the seventies and early eighties, we often huddled together at Cove and John – the rebels of the Working Peoples' Alliance – in the home of Mr Burnham's personal physician. This never arose as an issue. It was this habit of reconciliation, in the absolute meaning of the word: the ability to see and go beyond conflict, that was a kind

of gift that Uncle Frank had. I feel desolate at his loss.

I feel deeply that we, whose lives he touched, were infused by his humanity.

Uncle Frank, today we celebrate your life and legacy and we affirm your example – so necessary now at this particular time in our country – and indeed, for all times.

Extract from tribute by

**Marc Matthews**

**so much of how much he inspire me jus  
wit he presence dat doh he physical  
ain't dea no moe, he fuh me part an  
parcel of me a light of grace**

Me try yesterday when Lincoln tell me, but all kinna ole mass, ring den silence den scratch scratch till a cuss. Go try again today.

Yu See Da Man dea is guh me top list of d-remarkable man dem ah me life...a giant ...afta me fadda moe dan anybody else me did wan fuh meet when me come 1969 was he, same so when me fall thru winda was he ah beg kamal tell fuh come let me see he.

Girl too much so much of how much he inspire me jus wit he presence dat doh he physical ain't dea no moe, he fuh me part an parcel of me a light of grace.

Bless you. All 2 awe me Una boy & Kamal togedda send our love, as from yesterday ... reminisce.

Ah time I did go bush help Finny cut road fuh cox Bernard, an ah jump off tractor an me barefoot get juk by cable an swell up and fever mek me had fuh come down town ...wan time ah go MedicalArts (dig duh Arts) Uncle Frank put me lay down sey he got fuh lance the abscess, he hole me foot an matthews halla, he laugh Marc haven't cut it, look an show me the sheaved scalpel...then he sey Well you turn me into surgeon.

Use fuh Walk from Beehive to C'onjohn fuh jus listen to he be in he company, when Una bin at we in London an Kamal ask she who she'd fuh see straight way she sey Frank he an Andre Procter the only 2 man mongst a devy of pearl necklaces.

Girl 3 day ago in St Thomas ah see he double ah jump.

I can go back to getting sent with message to hospital compound...seeing he Uncle Leslie, Claude Merrman togedda gaffing. Lea me done yea. Ah know Abby dea he shares our love.

## TRIBUTES: CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. FRANK WILLIAMS

Extract from tribute by

**Eusi Kwayana**

I beg those now living to regard this mortal as living, though dead...

In what beat, what rhythm shall we celebrate the life of this music - loving physician?

In his early years he played the organ at St Sidwell's church for the funeral of lawyer AB Brown, the first African Guyanese to be elected as Financial Representative (an MP of those times) in colonial Guyana; and the Honourable AB Brown was, like today's Guest of Honour, Dr. Frank Williams, a Den Amstel villager. Now at this Celebration that is for his life, there is no Church

He had fallen in love with science, that the Church had long regarded with suspicion. But pure Comfa and pure Hindu and pure Islam are not suspicious of science. As a lover of science he chose a profession where he could apply it usefully. He became a doctor of the Healing Arts. So much for these questions.

I beg those now living to regard this mortal as living, though dead, for these reasons:

He is a result of the social revolution of the 19th century from 1839 that gave us Den Amstel and other villages. He is "a citizen of no mean city." Dr. Williams, if not the first was, as he would be careful to say, one of the first physicians in Guyana to consider "Stress" as a health factor.

As a scientific mind who chose medical arts and a child specialist, he proclaimed the value of breast feeding and inspired a "Back to the Breast" campaign – one of the most important to come from the profession. It also increased respect for women as mothers.

Finally, he had warned the administrations that if they continued to neglect control measures, Malaria would return. Malaria did return when the warning was not heeded.

The things you attempted to teach, Dr. Williams, will have to be taught again and again, because the need remains and you live on in these teachings.

You and her Mother have left us a daughter of precious worth of which we are aware.

I am restrained in my tribute because the Guest of Honour had no time for self promotion and pomp. He enjoyed his mission as a doctor and the people at large had learned to trust him. In matters of race, class and gender he strove for fairness and succeeded

to a greater extent than many of his time and social and professional standing. In social attitudes he was a path-breaker.

May his works be a source of knowledge and inspiration to Guyana's population.

Extract from tribute by

**Jacqueline Cholmondeley**

Dr. Frank Williams, as many referred to him, was just Uncle Frank to me. He was a part of my life for as long as I can remember. He was a brother to my father and his brothers, and the nucleus of my Medical Arts family. His office was a space where I felt comfortable and safe; I would visit almost every afternoon on my way home from school as my Mum, Pansy, was his office nurse.

In retrospect Uncle Frank was probably the first Renaissance man I knew. Both his office and his home in Cove and John reflected his love of art and music. Uncle Frank had a quiet elegance about him whether he was moving quickly and confidently through his office in his unique Nehru collared suits, or relaxing with friends and family at home. He was generous of spirit with a gentle manner which he extended to all who were lucky enough to meet him.

He attended to Presidents, dignitaries and the common man with the same grace and demeanor which was a part of his general manner. He was that rare human being full of compassion for everyone he touched. He understood the needs of the human body because of his medical training but was also very aware of the needs of the spirit and mind of an individual.

From my seven year old memory he was my kindred spirit when I lost my Dad. We both retreated to the same place of solace, away from everyone else. He held my hand and we shared comforting words and seemed to have the same understanding as to how one should grieve.

To Andaiye and Colin (Abbyssinian) his children, my condolences to you and your extended family. I pray that you are surrounded by love at this difficult time as nothing prepares us for the loss of a parent. Uncle Frank gave unconditional love to many, and may you be the beneficiaries of his kindness and graciousness in your time of sorrow.



## TRIBUTES: CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DR. FRANK WILLIAMS

Extract from tribute by

### Ulele Burnham

I have encountered countless physicians since, but none so reassuringly jovial as Uncle Frank. His was a priceless virtue and the impression left indelible.

Between the age at which I had my first fully formed memory and the age of about 10 years old, Uncle Frank (Dr. Frank Williams) was something of a permanent fixture in the home and lives of my parents. Uncle Frank was my father, Forbes Burnham's, doctor and my father was, I am quite certain, one of his most difficult and curmudgeonly patients. He was my father's physician for, I believe, at least the first 10 years of my life and I suspect that was no mean feat. My sister Melanie and I (and I am sure my older sisters also) remember fondly his regular visits to the Residence - the name given to the Prime Minister's official residence and now Castellani House - in the course of which he would have to administer advice and treatment to a man who was ill-disposed to doing anything other than that which he himself thought fit. But Uncle Frank did it, always, with a smile on his face and his old style doctor's bag at the ready.

At my Uncle Herbie's funeral I spoke of Uncle Herbie as an avuncular figure who was warm, full of life and jocular and Uncle Frank was also one of those figures in my early childhood. He was always, always, always laughing. At times as children we had little insight into what Uncle Frank was actually laughing at or joking about; for the most part it seemed as though he was amusing even to himself and this entertained us immensely. Rarely, he would display exasperation at my father's non-compliance with basic medical advice and would call upon my father's other close medical confidante, Dr. Enid Denbow, to try to elicit her support to persuade my father to respect his own physical frailties. Neither would say, I imagine, that they had an alarming degree of success with their single-minded patient. Such were the very few occasions on which Uncle Frank's sunny disposition would be replaced by quiet displeasure. There was one incident I remember in particular when my father had serious cardiac difficulties but refused to give up smoking. I heard very little of what Uncle Frank said to my dad but saw him beat a hasty exit from the residence, Doctor's bag in hand, glasses case in the top pocket of his Shirt-Jac, telling Aunt Enid that he could do no more to convince "Odo" of the need to act in his own medical best interests (or words to that effect). I knew my father trusted Uncle Frank implicitly but even that trust could not displace

my father's determination to avoid any advice that would require him to treat his body with greater care. When we too were ill, it was Uncle Frank to whom my mother would turn. When I almost severed an artery at 3 years old by grabbing onto a broken glass table to break my fall when I was learning to ride a two-wheeled bicycle, I was shipped off post haste to Uncle Frank's surgery in Cove & John to have my hand stitched together by Uncle Frank's colleague Dr. Too-Kong - I remember only being comforted by the fact that I was, notionally, in Uncle Frank's care.

Around the late 70s, I intuited - as best a child could - that Andaiye's political opposition to my father's government created tensions in this already complicated doctor-patient relationship. I could feel Uncle Frank's sadness about the impasse that this created and, though no one told me in clear terms, I have to assume that that relationship came to an end in the context of the turbulent political climate of the late 70s and early 80s. I have never forgotten his kindness and the sound of his laughter and neither of my parents ever said a critical word about him to us, such was their regard for him despite the parting of the ways. I have encountered countless physicians since, but none so reassuringly jovial as Uncle Frank. His was a priceless virtue and the impression left indelible.

Rest well Uncle Frank, you are so, so well remembered.

### Rampersaud Tiwari

Your father was a man of generous heart, kind speech and a life of service and compassion.

He was also a leading Afro-Guyanese voice of moderation in respect of public affairs.

These were his sterling attributes to humanity in Guyana, his native land.

They are more lasting than a monument of Bronze.

### Harold Sahadeo

I knew Dr. Frank Williams since the mid-1950's when I was the Secretary of the

Medical Board in the then Medical Services department.

He was both a Specialist Physician and a Gentleman.

He was the best medico and last stop consulting physician of his generation.

He has left an indelible mark in his service to the nation.

# CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

## The 2015 GCA Symposium

### INTRODUCTION

The symposium is one of the core events of GCA's Folk Festival season. It is an important vehicle in GCA's mission to study and celebrate Guyanese heritage and promote Guyanese creativity. It is an annual space - physical, mental, emotional - in which the Guyanese community congregates to focus on a theme in Guyanese heritage and creativity. Over the past fourteen (14) years GCA symposia have focused on Guyanese creative expressions—dance, music (2003), word (2004), and dance (2005). These symposia have also engaged wider themes such as identity (2007, 2010, 2011), and national cohesiveness (2008). The 2012 symposium, held in Guyana, launched a program, in partnership with the Department of Culture, Youth, and Sport, to revitalize Guyana's masquerade heritage. The 2013 symposium was titled "Who Are We? Or, Imaging Guyana Beyond Indian and African Politics of Race." An outcome of the symposium was the launch of the three-year "We bridgin..." initiative. This initiative is geared to engaging multiple stakeholders in exploring the three interrelated questions, prioritized by the 2013 symposium:

- ***Who are we?***
- ***How can we get along?***
- ***What can we become?***

Since 2013, GCA has been encouraging research and creative projects to support a better understanding of these three questions. We are convinced that the participatory exploration of these questions will result in the building of inter-ethnic trust—the sine qua non—for sustainable national development in Guyana.

GCA is looking forward to sharing results of the "We bridgin..." initiative in 2016—GCA 15th anniversary and Guyana's 50th anniversary of Independence.

GCA is aware that planners for Guyana's 50th anniversary of independence celebrations in Guyana and in New York are proposing symposia as part of the program of activities. A symposium is anticipated in May 2016. The New York 50th anniversary Planning Committee is planning a symposium in June 2016. GCA's anticipates a symposium in Guyana during December 2016.

The 2015 symposium

GCA invites symposia planners along with other stakeholders to gather on November 7, 2015 at Empire State College/SUNY, 177 Livingston Street, Brooklyn NY 11201, in the Gallery, 6th Floor, from 10 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. to continue the conversation on the above question and to harmonize the narratives to be emphasized during the symposia to be organized during 2016 in Guyana and New York.

The organizers of the 2015 symposium are inviting academics, creative artists, and members of the community with current projects in the following areas to submit a statement of intent to participate to:

a. Dr. Juliet A. Emanuel

BMCC/CUNY

Dept. of Academic Literacy and Linguistics, N440L

199 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

For hard copies only

b. Online CFP's and SIP's may be sent to:

jemanuel@bmcc.cuny.edu

Deadline: all submissions must be received by October 28th, 2015.

This symposium will use SKYPE for international access to presenters.

### ***Who are we?***

The following topics are encouraged but not limited to :

- Update on research and scholarship on early Guyana—the archeology of indigenous Guyana
  - An inclusive profile of the Guyanese diaspora

### ***How can we get along?***

- The results of this cluster of these questions: Name a district, village, or community in Guyana that has never experienced racial/ethnic strife since 1966. What explains that achievement?

### ***What can we become?***

- Visioning Guyana in 2065
- What does the good life mean?

*Dr. Juliet Emanuel*



## **SUPPORT THE PROGRAMS OF GCA**



**With your gift, we can mentor and inspire young people in the Brooklyn community by supporting education and performance in the creative arts. Our signature events provide a space to celebrate Guyanese achievement and encourage inter-generational dialogue. Our youth programs inspire creativity, encourage learning and foster cultural understanding.**

**T**he Guyana Cultural Association (GCA) New York, Inc. is approaching its 15th anniversary, which coincides with the 50th Independence Anniversary of our homeland in May 2016. We invite you to be a financial contributor as we embark on a new and exciting initiative - the establishment of the Guyana Arts & Cultural Center (GACC). This new initiative reaffirms our commitment to the study, preservation and celebration of Guyana's rich multi-ethnic heritage, in furtherance of the GCA's vital role in our cultural landscape.

This project will include a Museum of Guyanese Craft and Folk Art and the GACC's Schools of Music, Dance and Performing Arts. The GACC will also provide video and audio production training to enhance and facilitate the inter-generational transfer of knowledge relating to Guyanese heritage and creativity.

Over the past 14 years, we have celebrated our multi-ethnic heritage. We have also recognized the contributions of many important artists-musicians, writers, dancers, composers, and producers. We have also maintained our commitment to the study, preservation and celebration of Guyana's rich multi-ethnic heritage, at home and abroad.

The annual Folk Festival season, which culminates with Family Fun Day on the Sunday before Labor Day, is currently the association's flagship program. Family Fun Day, along with the Caribbean Summer Heritage workshops, Awards Ceremony, Literary Hang, the MoBraff Performing Arts season, Kwe Kwe Night, Video and Film Festival and the Symposium, are the signature events of the annual Folk Festival season.

Your tax-deductible gift in any amount will ensure that the Guyana Arts & Cultural Center becomes a reality. This will bring us one step closer to achieving our

vision of the preservation, promotion and propagation of Guyana's multi-cultural heritage. An understanding of our commonalities is essential to building trust in multi-ethnic Guyana.

We are deeply grateful to our corporate sponsors. GCA's executive board and members express profound gratitude for your enthusiastic support over the years. We now invite you to take the next step in supporting this new initiative and to ensure our young people have access to arts and media that enrich our community and reflect the rich diversity of our Guyanese heritage.

## **MAKE A TAX- DEDUCTIBLE DONATION**

[www.guyanaculturalassociation.org/contribution/](http://www.guyanaculturalassociation.org/contribution/)

**You may also mail your check  
or money order to  
The Secretariat**

**Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc.  
1368 E. 89th Street, Suite 2, Brooklyn, NY 11236 USA.**

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT**

BOOK REVIEW

# Rave reviews for book on Caribbean Immigrants!

A new book entitled *English Speaking Caribbean Immigrants: Transnational Identities* by Lear Matthews has received outstanding reviews, the latest by Professor Diane Drachman, one of the leading scholars on immigrant issues in the United States. The book has been adopted as required reading for courses in Immigration Studies at educational institutions in the Caribbean and the US. Below are excerpts from the Review that was published in the *Caribbean Journal of Social Work*, Volume 11, 2015.

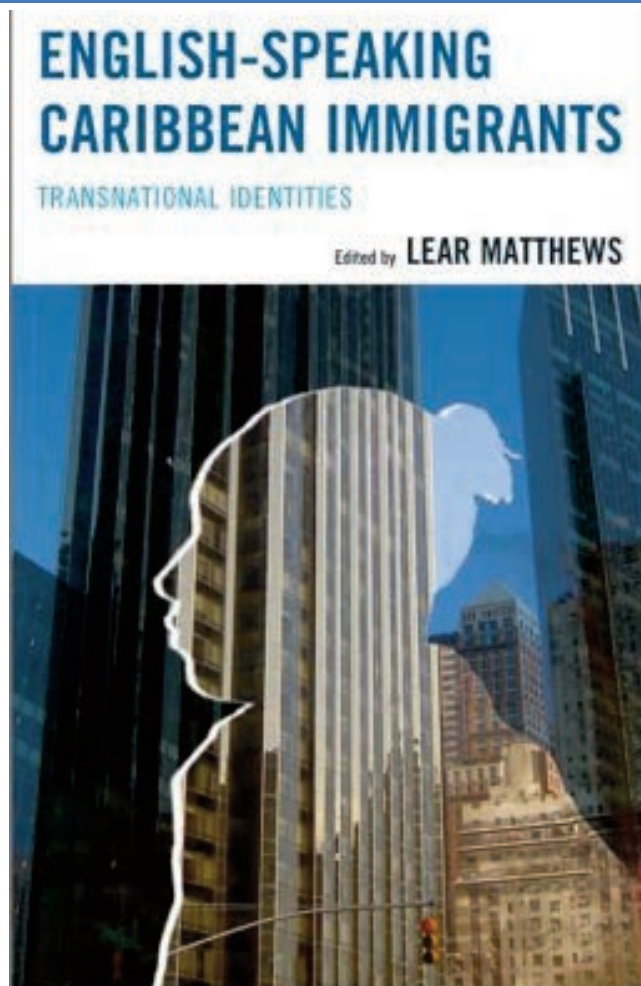
Dr. Matthews' impressive book examines the migration experiences of the large English-speaking Caribbean immigrant population. The volume is grounded in the phenomenon of transnational migration which is used as the conceptual frame for discussions by contributing authors. He highlights the connections that Caribbean immigrants sustain in both the country of origin and destination country.

The chapters can be broadly grouped under individuals, families, women and special topics... including Anglophone Caribbean women, transnational parenting, the elderly and healthcare, Caribbean immigrant families, Indo- and Afro-Guyanese communities, hometown Associations, occupational change, and culturally competent educational services.

Other issues that influence the identity of immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean are captured in the discussion on race. Race relations in the United States pose significant challenges. Afro-Caribbeans for example, are often mistaken as African-Americans. They are categorized as people of color and encounter racist experiences similar to the experiences of African-Americans.

The reader is informed of the varied ways migrants from Caribbean countries construct their lives transnationally. The content on migrants' cross-border ties and relationships implies a widening of their social field. Thus, it is important for educators and researchers to integrate their thinking and work with the broader social environment that frames the lives of transmigrants.

The book is a fine addition to varied literature including studies in migration, transnationalism, the Caribbean, and social work. The reader gains familiari-



ty with current issues encountered by migrants from the English-Speaking Caribbean and current theoretical approaches that explain their experiences. Application of theory to practice is also integrated into the volume. It is a valuable book and I recommend it for educators, researchers, services providers, and graduate students with an interest in migration.

Diane Drachman, PhD, Associate Professor  
University of Connecticut School of Social Work  
West Hartford, CT, USA





## Five High School students of Guyanese heritage develop Mobile App that rates encounters with Law Enforcement

*Submitted by Ian G Hall, Guyana Graphic*

**D**ecatur, GA, August 15, 2014 - 14 year old Parkview High School Freshman, Caleb Christian was concerned about the number of incidents of police abuse in the news. Still, he knew there were many good police officers in various communities, but had no way of figuring out which communities were highly rated and which were not. So, together with his two older sisters: Parkview High School senior Ima Christian, and Gwinnett School of Math, Science, and Technology sophomore, Asha Christian, they founded a mobile app development company— Pinetart Inc., under which they created a mobile app called Five-O.

Five-O, allows citizens to enter the details of every interaction with a police officer. It also allows them to rate that officer in terms of courtesy and professionalism and provides the ability to enter a short description of what transpired. These details are captured for every county in the United States. Citizen race and age information data is also captured. Additionally, Five-O allows citizens to store the details of each encounter with law enforcement; this provides convenient access to critical information needed for legal action or com-

mendation.

“We’d like to know which regions in the US provide horrible law enforcement services as well as highlight the agencies that are highly rated by their citizens. In addition to putting more power into the hands of citizens when interacting with law enforcement, we believe that highly rated police departments should be used as models for those that fail at providing quality law enforcement services”, says Co-founder and Parkview High School senior, Ima Christian.

The problem-solving trio developed their love for coding when, as elementary and middle school students, they were exposed to MIT’s k12 Scratch and App Inventor programs. Later, their parents encouraged them to learn JavaScript, HTML, CSS and the smatterings of Java. “We were surprised when we found a platform that enabled us to develop apps for both IOS and Android which was relatively easy to use and which allowed us to hit the ground running because of our knowledge of JavaScript”, said 14 year old Caleb Christian. “After finding a platform that was a good fit for us, we immediately moved on to creating each page for the app and Asha took over the look and feel design of the app. We all contributed to the creation of the product”, he shared.

Co-founder and HS sophomore, Asha Christian, “We expect that all parents will want this app for themselves and their kids. We hope it will be one of the must have apps on your mobile devices. Our goal is to make the app available to anyone, anywhere in the United States.” Five-O is currently in Alpha testing and rolled out to the public on August 18th, 2015, available to both Apple and Android. The Pinetart team has two additional apps in the pipeline and encourages interested users to like their page on twitter and Facebook to receive a prelaunch versions of their apps for testing and review

# ANNUAL COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

## CALL FOR PAPERS, CEA 2016

Once again, it is my happy task to invite you to take part in the annual College English Association Conference.

### ***“Creations”***

**47th Annual Conference | March 31-April 2, 2016 | Denver, CO**

***“And as imagination bodies forth The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing A local habitation and a name.”***

William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream

**Proposals are now being accepted online at [www.cea-web.org](http://www.cea-web.org) ;  
Submission deadline: November 1, 2015**

For our 2016 meeting, the College English Association invites papers and panels that explore the literary, the rhetorical, the pedagogical and the professional “creations” of our fields. To create, to study the creation of others and thus re-create in various manifestations of potential meaning, to be a creator of a text or meaning or environment, to stimulate creativity or creation in others—creation is at the heart of what we do. That perhaps wondrous act or process or phenomenon of bringing something into being that did not exist before, creation may be recognized in writing, in analysis, in the coming together of disparate elements in a class discussion during which the lecturer sees the lights come on or hears a student’s perspective remarkable in its profundity and originality. The creations of evolving conceptions of text, publication and authorship are changing so rapidly that the profession struggles to provide meaningful definition. What do we create, hope our students will create, see or reconstruct in the creations of others? We encourage presentations by experienced academics and graduate students on all areas of literature, languages, film, composition, pedagogy, creative writing and professional writing.

Proposals may interpret the conference theme broadly.

For a complete version of the Call for Papers, please visit [www.cea-web.org](http://www.cea-web.org)

For questions related to the Call for Papers please write Dr. Jeffrey DeLotto at [cea.english@gmail.com](mailto:cea.english@gmail.com). Place Program Chair in the Subject Line

I do hope to welcome you in Denver, a Mile High City.

Thank you.

Dr. Juliet Emanuel, Executive Director, CEA.



# Kojo McPherson wins Immersion prize for Adero at Trinidad & Tobago Film Festival



## Kojo McPherson wins Immersion prize for Adero at Trinidad & Tobago Film Festival

Guyanese filmmaker Kojo McPherson won the prize for best project idea and pitch for a feature film at the RBC Focus: Filmmakers' Immersion at the Trinidad+Tobago Film Festival (ttff).

Kojo won top honours and TT\$20,000, when he pitched his idea to a jury at the end of the fifth annual ttff h in Trinidad.

Kojo's pitch was for a film titled Adero, in the genre of magic realism. He revealed that it follows "Adero, a brooding 30-odd year old corporate drone, on a quest to find his true identity.

In its fifth year, RBC Focus: Filmmakers' Immersion is an intensive development program for selected emerging filmmakers from the Caribbean and its diaspora. Each filmmaker enters the program with a concept for a feature-length fiction film, from which they will be expected to develop a detailed treatment.

At the end of the Immersion the participants were all given a chance to pitch their project to a jury. The participant with the best project and pitch, as determined by the jury, won a cash prize of TT\$20,000.

Kojo McPherson is a Guyanese writer, spoken word artist, photographer and director of radio, stage and short film.

Kojo served on the scriptwriting team of popular Guyanese radio serial drama for 4 ½ years - 2 ½ of those years supervising the team as Senior Scriptwriter. He has written, directed and/or edited two short films, 'Beached' and 'To the Night', both of which have screened at international film festivals. A third short film, 'Standing' is currently in post-production.

Kojo is the sole-proprietor of Dred Scotsman, a business which provides creative writing, photography, videography and video production services and plans to expand in to production of original content.

Kojo is the proud father of two girls, Kinaya and Mapenzi with Guyana Prize winning playwright Mosa Telford.





On September 16, 2015, Mrs. Ruby Rudder nee Vigilance, celebrated her 100th Birthday with a thanksgiving party surrounded by “her people” – her immediate family, church family and friends who are a great part of her support group. Ruby’s faith in God and love of and service to humanity are pillars of her strength.

Ruby was born in Georgetown, Guyana. In 1944, she married James Rudder, now deceased, a former educator at Smith’s Church Congregational School. She was a stay-at-home Mom and seamstress. Ruby’s marriage produced four children - Wendy, organist at St. George’s Cathedral, Hazeline, Lorna and Brynmor. She is also the Grandmother of Warren and Great Grandmother of Justin and Amirah.

She was educated at Carmel R.C and St. Phillips Anglican schools. Ruby lived a very active life in Guyana. She attended St. Phillips Anglican Church and was very involved in the St. Phillips Dorcas Society. In 1980 she migrated to the United States of America. In 1984 she became a member of St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, where she gave yeoman service for almost thirty years.

She continues to faithfully serve God and remains a part of her church family.

A CENTENARIAN  
EMBRACES  
FAITH, LOVE  
AND SERVICE

# CONGRATULATIONS TO RUBY RUDDER

*Ave Brewster-Haynes*

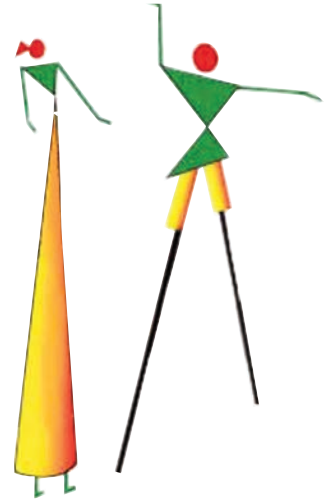


**We in GCA  
look forward  
to your  
ongoing  
support in  
2016,  
our 15th  
anniversary  
and  
Guyana's  
50th  
Independence  
anniversary**





# Thank You For Your Support



31

**W**e, the members of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. express our sincere thanks to all who helped to make our 2015 Guyana Folk Festival season a success. There were more attendees at all of the events—the Awards Ceremony, Kwe Kwe Night, the Literary Hang and Family Fun Day. More than 11,000 attended the annual Family Fun Day 2015 in Brooklyn. This represented a 22 percent increase over 2014's. Thank you, Brooklyn!

The increased presence of visitors from Guyana, as well as displays of art and products manufactured there made Folk Festival 2015 memorable. This year, GCA was pleased to welcome Honorable Cathy Hughes, Minister of Tourism. In addition, to hosting an exhibition on Guyana's tourism product and showcasing Guyanese food and beverages at Family Fun Day, Minister Hughes attended Kwe Kwe Night and the Literary Hang. At all of these events, the honorable minister spoke about the upcoming 50th anniversary celebrations and the importance of heritage in the development of diaspora engagement practice. At the Literary Hang, she congratulated the Guyanese writers present and offered a few suggestions to a strategy for getting writings by Guyanese in the diaspora to readers in Guyana.

Thank you, Minister Hughes. Please come again.

A special feature at Folk Festival 2015 was the Masquerade Ensemble, fresh from Carifesta XII in Haiti. The participation of the masquerade group from Guyana is an outcome of an ongoing partnership between GCA and the Department of Culture, Youth, and Sport in the Ministry of Education. Since 2012, the partnership has been developing a program of activities to revitalize masquerade. The participation of Guyana's Masquerade Ensemble in Family Fun Day 2015 represents an ongoing effort to increase awareness among Guyanese at home and in the diaspora about a resilient and distinctive Guyanese creative expression—one that Guyanese can comfortably identify as "we own."

The members of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York wish to extend our sincerest thanks to the Government of Guyana, the Embassy of the United States in Guyana, Enrico Woolford, and Fly Jamaica for making the visit of the masquerade band possible.

Our thanks also to all our sponsors who continue to support our events each year. We appreciate your commitment.

Our special thanks are also extended to the members of the Guyanese community who opened their homes and hearts to Guyana's Masquerade Ensemble. We extend thanks to Maurice Blenman, Lynnette Bell and Lloyd Porter for providing hospitality, accommodation and logistics for the visitors. We also thank the Guyanese at Nostrand Avenue who made the ensemble feel at home with the masquerade groove.

Our thanks are also extended to the Anything Guyanese First Facebook community! AGF rocks virtually and in reality.

GCA is a community of volunteers. This year we recognize Kojo McPherson, Kwesi Oginga, Paulette Barry, Glenna Tony, and Brooklyn Lions Transition Club.

Again, thank you for your support in 2015. We in GCA look forward to your ongoing support in 2016, our 15th anniversary and Guyana's 50th anniversary.

**"We Bridgin ..."**

Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc.

1368 E. 89 St., Suite 2, Brooklyn, NY 11236

Phone: 800 774 5762 Email: [info@guyfolkfest.org](mailto:info@guyfolkfest.org) Web: <http://guyfolkfest.org>

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine

# CELEBRATING THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT OF GUYANESE IN THE ARTS

*Gail Nunes*

In keeping with the theme, “We Bridgin’” and in celebration of our cultural heritage, the Guyana Cultural Association hosted its fourteenth Annual Awards Ceremony at the Brooklyn Borough Hall on September 2nd.

The celebratory evening which was conducted by guest MC Enrico Woolford, saluted the outstanding work of recipients whose individual accomplishments represented the many aspects of our rich culture. This ceremony which each year marks the beginning of the Association’s exciting rollout of activities prior to Labor Day, also honors the spirit of Godfrey Chin by awarding the Godfrey Chin Heritage Prize for Journalism.





Our 2015 awardees are:

Ron Robinson – Lifetime Achievement  
 Noel Denny for “Last Lap Lime” – Exemplary  
 Damali Abrams – Visual Arts  
 Lorna Campbell – Community Service  
 Ameena Gafoor – Literary Arts  
 Nadia Jagan – Performing Arts  
 Jonathan Locke – Visual Arts  
 Deo Persaud – Cultural Enabler  
 Keisha Scarville – Visual Arts  
 The Main Street Art Group – Visual Arts  
 Star Party Rental – Business Enabler

The youth awards which this year include impressionable eight-year-old author Anaya Lee Willabus, are:  
 Abigail Brower, Mwainza Mwanza Glenn  
 St. Albans Episcopal Church – Rally of the Nations

The Godfrey Chin Prize winners for Heritage Journalism are: Vidyaratha Kissoon, Dr. Maya Trotz Akima McPherson & Stanley Greaves.

Present at this year’s ceremony were Assemblywoman Roxanne Persaud, Consul-General Brentnold Evans, and Council Member Dr Mathieu Eugene.

Anthony Alleyne’s memorable renditions of the national anthems of Guyana and the USA and solo serenade, received hearty applause, as did the invocation by Summer Heritage youth Terrance Bobb and a performance by soloist Cherlyn Maloney.

The evening’s events were infused with a nostalgic dose of folk fusion by the resident band of Jeggae, Akoyah, Saxie, and Hilton Hemerding on keyboards. Other entertainment included Youth in Fashion, the work of young but remarkable fashion designer and Charmaine Noel prodigy, Mwainza Glenn of Mwanza’s Designs.

In their welcome addresses, GCA President Vibert Cambridge heaped praises on the Awards Committee and volunteer support for their dedication to the success of the presentation. And in his presentation, Awards Chairman Ronald Lammy also lauded the expansive 50-year career of Lifetime Achiever Ron Robinson whose daughter accepted the award on his behalf.

The Guyana Cultural Association is privileged to recognize and showcase the various achievements of those whose work satisfies the necessary criteria. We look forward to another successful year and thank our supporters for your continued commitment towards the success of this initiative.



## The GCA Literary Hang: Whetting our Cultural Appetite

*Carlyle Harry*

The Guyana Cultural Association held its ninth annual Literary Hang on Saturday, September 5, 2015 at St. John's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, New York through the courtesy and generosity of Rev. Shelley McDade, the Wardens, Vestry and parishioners of that church.

In the formal, but quite relaxed part of the event, the opening presentations were made to a very large and enthusiastic audience by The Rising Writers, the young teenagers, Chaniece Allen, Liann Aris-Henry, and Tiffany Herod all former students of the annual GCA Summer Workshop Series read their essays reflecting on their experiences as Counselors in Training. A fourth Rising Writer, Terrance Bobb, also a former student of SWS read one of his short stories. They were well received and encouraged as they answered questions from the capacity audience.

The adult authors included Florence Yukon, Maurice St. Pierre, Kwesi Oginga, Charles Liverpool, Yvonne Sam, Ingrid Griffith, Reuben Freeman, Kimani Nehusi, Brenda Richards, Francis Quamina Ferrier, Ted Matthews, Rosalind Kilkenny McLymont, Angela Massiah, and Lear Matthews. Offering their works, informally, were Courtney Noel, Claudia Persaud, Valerie Coddett, Roy Brummell and Percy Haynes. The wordsmiths presented a variety of essays, poems, lived experiences, musings, ancestral myths and stories which explored dimensions of a tradition craved by a Diaspora yearning to sustain its cultural identity. All writers responded to questions and comments. The art of Kwesi Oginga was also on display. In keeping with the motto 'We Bridgin,' participants lauded the multi-modal exposure that the forum has provided to both young and mature writers over the years, with some of those attending expressing the hope that the event could be held at least twice a year.

The featured presentation of the proceedings was the book launch by Dr. Vibert Cambridge, President of the Guyana Cultural Association of New York. He was introduced by Romesh Singh, a Friend of The Hang. Dr. Cambridge's book, "Musical Life in Guyana," is a masterfully documented manuscript of the historical, cultural metamorphosis and global impact of musical genres of Guyana. After expressing his gratitude to the organizers of the Literary Hang, Dr. Cambridge executed an intellectually stimulating delivery, flavored with

nostalgic, colloquial groundings that captivated the mostly Guyanese audience.

In authentic Guyanese cultural style, Dr. Cambridge's presentation was preceded by the much appreciated performance of the Guyana National Masquerade Band, fresh from their much praised participation in Carifesta in Haiti. The source book which highlights a range of musical developments in Guyana within the context of social, economic and political changes fills a gap in an important dimension of the cultural history and legacy of the nation. Dr. Cambridge emphasized the often ignored contributions of women to music in Guyana, noting the pioneering work of a number of accomplished female icons. He entertained questions and comments from the enthusiastic audience which, at one point in his delivery, had been moved to sing along in one of Guyana's national songs, "Oh Beautiful Guyana."

Participants also welcomed the appearance of Guyana's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Cathy Hughes, who commended the GCA for convening such a significant cultural gathering. In particular, she emphasized the importance of creating a forum for literary expression, of documenting writings, as well as the necessity of facilitating an environment within which to read and absorb the information presented in various literary works. The Minister introduced the idea of connecting writers to bookstore owners in Guyana as sources and conduits through which they might publicize and market their publications in Guyana. She further noted that the authors represented a blending of history and current affairs which needed to be shared, especially with younger Guyanese.

The Minister went on to encourage the audience to travel to Guyana next year, in order to celebrate the Nation's fiftieth anniversary of Political-Independence. Ms. Hughes stated that her Ministry was involved in on-going negotiations with Caribbean-Airlines, Fly Jamaica, Dynamic Airlines and other carriers in order to facilitate affordable flights to and from Guyana for the upcoming anniversary celebrations. After convening for approximately six hours, participants mingled, while savoring GT pastry delicacies, mauby and sorrel, the successful Hang came to a close.

This event has been coordinated by Juliet Emanuel each year.













**GUYANA ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER**

# CHOIR AUDITIONS

## **GUYANESE IN NEW YORK**

**Do you love to sing?**

**SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR, BASS**

GACC Director of Music - Mildred Lowe.

The Guyana Arts & Cultural Center announces auditions for the soon to be formed GACC International Choir, which is part of its Music School.

Professional and non-professional singers are invited to audition. The Choir will serve our country as a goodwill ambassador of Guyana, bringing Guyanese music to communities in the Diaspora.

Our repertoire will include Guyanese national and folk songs, classical, spiritual and gospel.

**FOR AUDITION DETAILS**

CONTACT THE GCA SECRETARIAT

**800 774 5762**

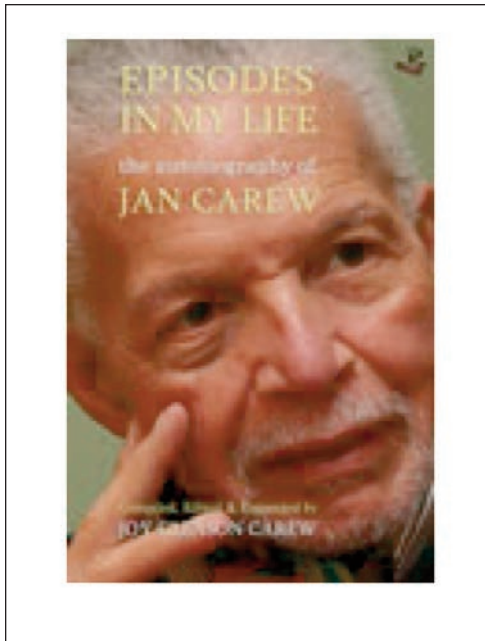
### **REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITION**

Please bring along a prepared song to your audition. Pick a song that best suits your voice and shows off your range and vocal quality.



# JAN CAREW: DOUBLE BOOK LAUNCH

## LONDON, NOVEMBER 26, 2015



### ***Episodes in My Life***

(Peepal Tree, £19.99)

### ***Return to Streets of Eternity***

(Smokestack Books, £9.95)

#### **Claudia Jones Organisation,**

103 Stoke Newington Rd, London N16 8BX

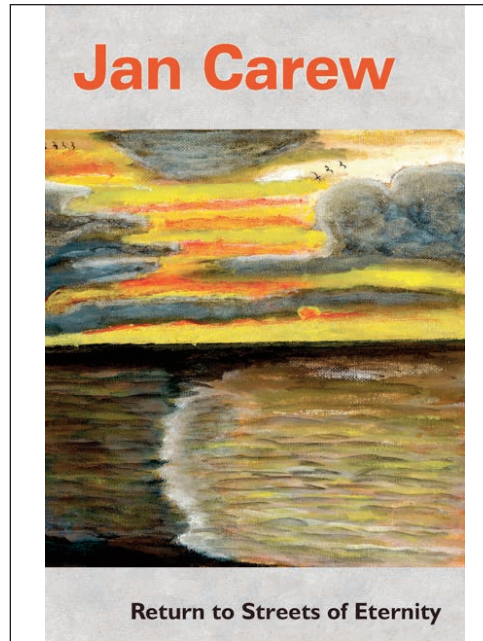
Thursday 26 November, 7pm

speakers Joy Gleason Carew and Chris Searle

For more details contact:

Smokestack Books ([info@smokestack-books.co.uk](mailto:info@smokestack-books.co.uk))

or Peepal Tree [jeremy@peepaltreepress.com](mailto:jeremy@peepaltreepress.com))



The Guyanese writer Jan Carew (1920-2012) was a prolific author of fiction, history, essays, children's books and poetry. His books include *Black Midas*, *The Last Barbarian* and *The Guyanese Wanderer*.

He reported from inside Cuba during the Missile Crisis, was working in Ghana during the 1966 coup, and lived in revolutionary Grenada.

*Episodes in My Life* tells the story of the multiple lives of this extraordinary writer, activist and revolutionary, godfather of Black Studies in the US, theoretician of the Columbian origins of racism in the Americas and the personal advisor to several heads of government, including Cheddi Jagan, Kwame Nkrumah and Michael Manley.

*Return to Streets of Eternity* brings together, for the first time, poems written during a life-time of passionate engagement in anti-colonial, civil rights, black power and liberation movements, including many previously unpublished tributes to nineteenth and twentieth-century revolutionary leaders and writers.

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# GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE **Rudolph "Putagee" Vivierios Fund**

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Make check payable to  
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Subject: Putagee Health Fund

**100% OF DONATIONS  
WILL GO TO THE  
"PUTAGEE HEALTH FUND"  
TO DEFRAY MEDICAL,  
& LIVING EXPENSES**





## St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church

The Very Reverend Eddie Alleyne & Kay Alleyne  
cordially invite you to the

# *Annual Rector's Ball*

FRIDAY

06  
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2015

## St. Gabriel's Golden Hall

331 Hawthorne Street, Brooklyn, NY 11225

Cocktails: 8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Dinner/Dance: 10:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.

Donation:  
\$90.00



RSVP no later than  
October 6  
Contact us: 718-774-5248