

GUYANA FOLK

And Culture

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Issue 3

FESTIVALS OF GUYANA
MASHRAMANI, PHAGWAH

**UNIFYING THE
NATION**

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Editor

Dr. Lear Matthews

Cover Design

Claire Goring & Ashton Franklin

Copy Editors-

Edgar Henry, Lear Matthews

Layout and Design by

Claire A. Goring & Ashton Franklin

Contributors:

Dr. Lear Matthews

Gail Nunes

Janelle Tomeko Grimmond

Melvin Perry DPI Guyana

Parmanand Sukhu J.P.

The Guardian

The Guyana Chronicle

Photography:

Amanda Richards

Ministry of Education

Ava Solomon Melvin Perry

Mwanza Glen

Desiree Edghill

Eamonn McCabe

GCA Media Team

Ave Brewster-Haynes (Chairperson),

Juliet Emanuel, Edgar Henry,

Lear Matthews, Claire A. Goring,

Ashton Franklin,

Margaret Lawrence Gail A. Nunes,

Francis Quamina Farrier.

Please join our Facebook group,

Website: www.guyfolkfest.org

GCA Secretariat -1368 E.89 Street,

Brooklyn, NY 11236

Tel: 800-774-5762

*"Goobie Fall Down, Watah Run Out,
But De Goobie Nah Bruck"*

Greetings from the Guyana Cultural Association. We apologize for the gap in providing our readers with the continuous monthly edition of the magazine. However, like the falling Goobie, please do not discard nor despair. The intent is still whole, edifying and useful. We are back on track, ensuring the commitment to our mission of preserving, promoting and propagating the culture of our dear land of Guyana. Amidst the undulating weather patterns, with the slow waning of the big chill and the anticipation of spring with its potential radiance, we must persevere. Despite unprecedented social/institutional turmoil and health challenges we steadfastly hold more than a glimmer of hope, not despair, as we soulfully sing, "It is well...."



In this issue, we bring you the scenes and reports from MASHRAMANI and PHAGWAH, two of Guyana's most popular national and cultural celebrations. We note with cautious optimism the increasing ethnic group collaboration (in Guyana and the Diaspora) as these and other celebrations unfold. Participation reflects the plurality of the Guyanese society and the effort to peacefully co-exist – another example of extending the 2018 motto, "We Bridgin With Solidarity and Purpose".

Continuing our goal of showcasing aspects of the culture reflected in the arts, rich and enduring heritage, and literary discourse, such articles include: A memorial tribute to Sir Wilson Harris, writer and stalwart in post-colonial literature; report on the presentation of the Neil Chan Prize for Creativity and Pageantry; Guyana Redux by Melvin Perry who communicates through amazing photography, which accompanies his writings; a perspective on the immigration debate, focusing on the implications for the Caribbean Diaspora and a clarion call for a thoughtful government response to the

reintegration of the rising number of deportees; a report on the panel discussion featuring Sir Hilary Beckles, vice chancellor of the University of the West Indies, whose theme, Reparatory Justice and Economic Development: Critical support for the social growth paradigm in the Caribbean was well received by a packed audience; Announcement of the passing of Dr. Harold Drayton, former pioneer of the University of Guyana and biology professor and Compton Younge, former mayor of Georgetown. In honoring the centenarians among us, Louisa Grimmon, a sharp-witted matriarch is featured as she celebrates her 100th birthday. A view of embracing and protecting the survival of our heritage in Guyana represents a timely and significant contribution. We hope that you will enjoy reading this edition as we continue our efforts to engage, educate, entertain and inform through cultural connections.

*Dr. Lear Matthews,
January/March Editor.
Photograph by Amanda Richards*

Let us replenish the Goobie with fresh Creek Watah flowing from the foothills of Mt. Roraima and cradled by the mighty Kaieteur.



Happy Easter to you
and your family

Easter at
Head Start Nursery
School Georgetown.

Annual Easter Kite
Flying and Hat Show.

Great job teacher
Marcelle Tulloch. and
other Head Start teachers.

photograph by
Desiree Edghill

Mashramani 2018

A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Guyana Chronicle

*Photographs by Amanda Richards, Ministry of Education,
Guyana Chronicle, Harold Hopkinson*



Winners in the Mash 2018 competitions proudly display their trophies while posing with Dr. George Norton and other functionaries at the Prize Giving Ceremony at the National Cultural Centre on Friday evening. MORE than 100 trophies were on Friday evening presented to winners of competitions in various categories, when the Ministry of the Presidency – Department of Social Cohesion, Culture, Youth and Sport, held its Mashramani 2018 Prize Giving Ceremony and Launch of Mashramani 2019. The venue was the National Cultural Centre on Homestretch Avenue.

Best Designer, Trevor Alfred receives his trophy from Minister of Social Cohesion, Dr. George Norton. Characterized by glamour, glitz and glitter, the ceremony was a spectacular event at which the audience was regaled with the showcasing of individual masterpieces by prize winners; the likes of Dexter Copeland, Junior Soca Monarch; Chait Singh Mohanlall, Chutney Monarch; and Jovinski Thorne, Junior Calypso Monarch, along with the generation of thrilling silver sounds – a steel band performance by the winning pan duet.

Adult Soca Monarch, Brandon Harding, was at his best with his piece. Meanwhile, Adult Calypso Monarch, Onika Joseph 'brought the house down' and had the audience on its toes, as she powerfully and convincingly belted out the lyrics of her winning entry, "Woman is Boss!"

Adult Calypso Monarch, Onika Joseph receives her trophy from a Banks DIH representative Minister Norton and other members of the officiating team. Showered kudos on organizers, sponsors, musicians, participating families, revellers, members and the diaspora who had come home for Mash 2018 and for their involvement, at whatever level, in making Mash 2018 the resounding success it was.

Minister Norton extended sincere congratulations to all present and asked that they give themselves a round of applause.... "You've all played your part in making Mashramani 2018 one of the best you have ever had ... and this is because of what we have in the public. You heard it on the radios; you read about it in the newspapers; saw it on the television. Indeed, Mashramani 2018 surpassed our expectations," Dr. Norton said, with a sense of pride.

The Minister said that even though being a Minister with responsibility for Social Cohesion and ultimately Mashramani was a new responsibility for him, he has truly enjoyed it.



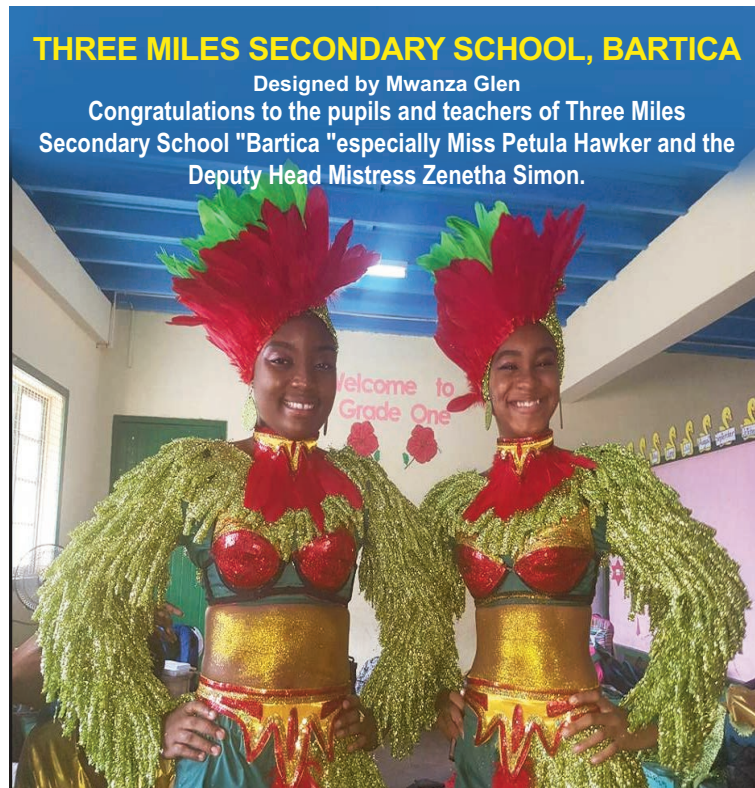
To this end the Minister thanked all those who gave their support and worked towards making Mash 2018 the resounding success it was.

Bunty Singh receives his trophy from Director of Sport, Christopher Jones Minister Norton recalled and acknowledged all contributions made at the level of the central committee and other levels, as well as those who participated in events or otherwise. The Director of Sport, in light of the overwhelming response to Mash 2018 from the masses of Guyanese and the diaspora, what resonated everywhere was that "Mash is Back and 2018 was it!" Jones said also that it was the consensus that 'Mash 2018' will linger in our hearts as "something to talk about."

Meanwhile, this year's Mashramani Coordinator was Mr. Andrew Tyndall of the Ministry of Culture, who, according to Mr. Christopher Jones has been with the Department of Culture for approximately 11 years, is well rooted and grounded in Mashramani activities. Against this backdrop, in 2018, the Hon. Minister Norton, recognizing his potential appointed him the 2018 Mashramani Coordinator.

Tyndall, acknowledging the success Mashramani 2018 was, said that it was a product of hard work and national unity. He recalled calling on all Guyanese to take up ownership of the festival and reiterated that Mashramani and our status as a Republic are judged in terms of who we are. He added that the only way we are going to continue to build on structures that we already have in place, and to improve on previous years, is by putting our national pride at the forefront.

"Overall we saw a successful Mashramani where we took Mash to various parts of the country and the response from the general public was great," said Tyndall. He added that there was an outstanding response from community leaders, regional administrators, private contractors, all of whom worked tirelessly in all regions to ensure Mash 2018 was a success.



**NEIL CHAN FOUNDATION
PRESENTS TROPHY & \$100,000.00
TO THE WINNER OF THE NEIL CHAN PRIZE
FOR CREATIVITY AND PAGEANTRY,
THE KING OF THE BAND,
MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' AFFAIRS**

Mrs. Sheila Chan, widow of Neil Chan A.A., former costume designer and Mashramani Mash Day and Mash Nite convenor, presented the Neil Chan Foundation trophy, along with one hundred thousand dollars to the winner of the King of the Band competition, the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, in his memory. This trophy will be donated yearly as part of the King of the Band competition. Neil Chan Foundation members Harold and Roxana Hopkinson donated the \$100,000.00 cash prize to the winner on behalf of the Neil Chan Foundation.

Neil Chan, who died on January 5, 2018, won King of the Band at the Mashramani Mash Nite Competitions in the 80s and 90s, on many occasions, with portrayals of different themes over the years. Chan's costumes dominated the Mashramani scene with presentations that can be described as a masterful blend of costume design and well choreographed pageantry.

Speaking after the presentation, Mrs Sheila Chan said "I was very proud that the presentation captured the criteria of creativity, workmanship and pageantry that we had hoped for and indeed I feel Mash is back to stay. Congrats to the designer and the whole band on an excellent performance."

***Accompanying Mrs. Chan, in picture:
Neil Chan Foundation members: Harold
Hopkinson, Roxana Hopkinson, Trevor
Alfred, designer of the King of the Band
costume of the Ministry of Indigenous
Peoples' Affairs, Sheila Chan, Sattie
Sasenarine and Aloma Fredericks.***



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Rituals of Holi

Rituals of the ancient festival of Holi are religiously followed every year with care and enthusiasm.

Preparations

Days before the festival people start gathering wood for the lighting of the bonfire called Holika. This ensures that at the time of the actual celebration a huge pile of wood is collected.

Holika Dahan Celebrations

Then on the eve of Holi, Holika Dahan takes place. Effigy of Holika, the devil minded sister of demon King Hiranyakashyap is placed in the wood and burnt. For, Holika tried to kill Hiranyakashyap's son Prahlad, an ardent devotee of Lord Naarayana. The ritual symbolises the victory of good over evil and also the triumph of a true devotee.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PHAGWAH

Parmanand Sukhu J.P.

Kaieteur News

Phagwah is one of the most ancient, joyous and colorful festivals of the Hindu calendar. This festival was brought down from Indian in 1838, by Indian Indentured Immigrants.



Phagwah CELEBRATIONS



Holi is celebrated forty days from the planting of Holika (Castor Oil tree). The burning of Holika takes place on the Eve of Phagwah (full moon night). A huge structure (pyre) is built and kindled at the appropriate time in a symbolic act. Phagwah commemorates the New Year for Hindus.

Phagwah started at a time when India was facing a serious drought, affecting the various crops. However, the rain eventually came pouring down to the satisfaction of the people (farmers) who came out in the fields; playing with the water in joyous jubilation as they throw it on each other. Soon after, they start reaping their bountiful harvest (crop).

There are special forms of music and songs which are associated with Phagwah; Chowtaal singing is the dominant style, which is heard from Basant Panchmi night until eight days after Phagwah.

Holi was celebrated before the Prahalad's legend. However, the story of Prahalad added new dimensions. Prahalad's defiance of the many impositions of his father, King Hiranyakasyapu is testimony and evidence of firm faith in Truth and God. The burning of Holika (Pralhad's Aunt) is reminiscent of his victory over evil. King Kasyapu contrived various diabolical means to kill his son Prahalad, who went against his will, but all his efforts were in vein. King Hiranyakasyapu; has a blessing (boon) that he would not die in the day or night, nor inside or outside of his house nor would he be killed by man or beast. So he felt that he was God and proclaimed that all worship must be henceforth Given to him.

Soon after, Lord Vishnu came in the awful form of Narsingh (half man and half lion) at twilight (neither day nor night). Lord Vishnu brought to an end the tyranny, arrogance and atrocity of the evil King (Hiranyakasyapu) in the centre of the doorway (neither inside nor outside of the house).

Holi in all embracing has a historic meaning with a strong social content which caters for reunion, social exchanges, greetings and visits, it also provides for spiritual communion and economic assessment so that the New Year can experience the emergency of a world free from want, poverty, full of justice and goodwill.

When the winter is over and nature rejoices, it is time for us to bring out the abeer, abrack, powder, perfume, beat the drums, sound the jhaal, sing and dancing for it is harvest time. The spring crop is reaped and everyone is in a happy mood, bubbling with enthusiasm and in joyous jubilation as they celebrate.

The coloured water/powder symbolized the unique floral beauty of spring and the vanishing of hatred feelings, jealousy and enmity, and bringing into the community a feeling of togetherness. This celebration sees all cast and class as one. The red does not represent anyone's blood.

Let us celebrate Holi in the true spirit of friendship, joy, merriment and love.

'Let noble thought and actions be your guide and the fragrance of Bassant rejuvenate your life'



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Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brunch-honoring-males-tickets-42587389027>



St. Rose's Alumni Association USA Inc.

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February 16, 2018

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Dear Fellow Alumni and Friends:

The US Chapter of the St. Rose's Alumni Association will be celebrating and honoring males at our Brunch on Saturday, June 23, 2018 at the Marine Park Golf Club (www.golfmarinepark.com) located at 2880 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11234 from 11:30pm to 3:30pm.

On behalf of the Planning Committee, we are cordially extending an invitation to come and celebrate with us. The cost of the event is US\$60.00 per ticket. The event will coincide with Father's Day Week to honor all fathers as well as male relatives and friends because we believe that our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and males who make a difference in our lives are just as precious as our mothers, grandmothers, aunts and females who make a difference in our lives are worth equally special recognition. We will also have a surprise token for each male present.

Proceeds from this event will finance special projects, including supplying chemicals for the science labs, for our Alma Mater in Guyana. For purchasing tickets, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brunch-honoring-males-tickets-42587389027?aff=es2#tickets>. For RSVPs, kindly call the following telephone numbers: 917-569-6794; 917-504-6002; 917-232-0904. For further info, please email: info@strosesalumni.org.

To mark this special event, the first of its kind, we will create a Souvenir Journal to capture the spirit of the celebration. We would like to offer you an opportunity to purchase advertising space: whether to say congratulations to fellow male alumni, relatives, and friends, to honor deceased male alumni, relatives, and friends), to advertise your business, or to simply share an expression of congratulations or remembrance. Enclosed are the Advertising contract and rate sheet for review. Please choose your ad size and return the completed contract with your check or money order payable to St. Rose's Alumni Association no later than June 1, 2018.

Again, please come and bring your family and friends to our event for Honoring Males.

Thank you for your continued support to the St. Rose's family!

Sincerely,
SRAA Brunch Honoring Males Committee

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Sir Wilson Harris

Writer and leading figure in postcolonial literature whose work was inspired by Guyana, the place of his birth.



Wilson Harris in 2006. After publishing his first poetry, he found it 'impossible to stay in Guyana and write'. So, in 1959, he moved permanently to Britain. Photograph: Eamonn McCabe for the Guardian

Sir Wilson Harris, who has died aged 96, was a towering figure among the writers of the Caribbean and Central America. Concerned with the human condition, in particular with the marginalised, Harris sought a revolution in form as well as approach. The writing style he developed succeeded in conveying what William Blake called "four-fold vision": grounded in the real world, transformed by metaphor,

cultivating empathy, and having a universal perspective.

It was while working as a surveyor in Guyana in the 1950s, discovering the enigmatic silences of remnant Amerindian cultures and the haunting landscapes of the rainforests, that Harris pioneered his individual and expressive voice, first revealed in poems published in Georgetown in the magazine *Kyk-Over-Al*

and later in a privately printed collection, *Eternity to Season* (1954). On a visit to London he met his future second wife, Margaret Whitaker, and he moved to England permanently in 1959, when they married. He had already experimented with the novel form before leaving. However, it only became clear what power sprang from Harris's newly forged language when his first novel was published in London by Faber and Faber, which went on to publish all his subsequent novels.

Palace of the Peacock (1960) describes a racially diverse crew driven by their obsessive and domineering leader to pursue an elusive "folk" towards the upper reaches of a rainforest river, as far as the ultimate barrier of a waterfall. Harris makes it clear that their journey is towards a death that has already occurred, but which they can still revise.

The protagonist, the dictatorial man of action Donne, is also the sensitive and reflective narrator, and indeed the whole crew. What he is in fact pursuing is a resource of human potential – muse, increasing awareness and relationship with the natural world. Harris created "thought-plots", here and in later fiction, to overcome the restrictions of time and space.

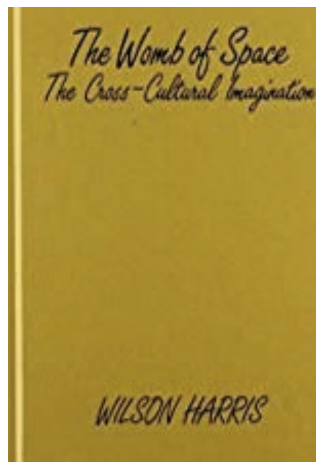
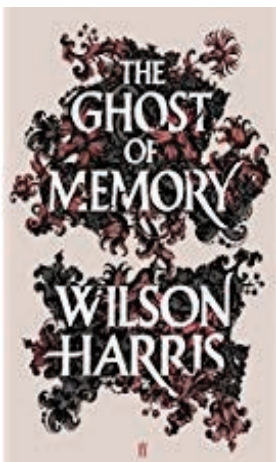
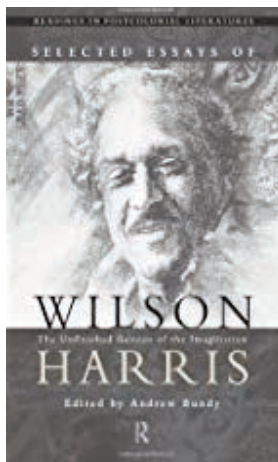
Harris was born in the small community of New Amsterdam, in what was British Guiana and is now Guyana. His mixed ancestry reflected the diverse interaction of cultures and races in Britain's only colony on the South American mainland. His father, an insurance broker, died when he was two, and his stepfather disappeared, believed drowned, in the rainforests in 1929. This and other childhood memories were to influence the themes of his future fiction. Georgetown, the capital, to which the family had moved in 1923, was a provincial and racially divided place, yet Harris found educational opportunities at Queen's college. After leaving Queen's in 1937, he trained as a surveyor, and subsequently led expeditions charting the great rivers of the Guyanese interior and their effects on the flood-prone coastlands.

After publishing his first poetry, Harris found it "impossible to stay in Guyana and write – there were no publishers in the West Indies". Once he was in Britain, *Palace of the Peacock* was followed by three further works set in Guyana and its interior, *The Far Journey of Oudin* (1961), *The Whole Armour* (1962) and *The Secret Ladder* (1963), subsequently published together as *The Guyana Quartet*, establishing their author's reputation as a leading figure in postcolonial literature.

One thing that set Harris apart was the breadth of his vision. He was interested in physics, anthropology, mythology, alche-

my and the pioneers of the unconscious, particularly Carl Jung. He also warned against the trap of victimhood in postcolonial fiction, which could lead the oppressed to become as prejudiced as their former oppressors. Harris's work, meanwhile, was striking out in new directions. After three transitional and experimental novels, *Heartland* (1964), *The Eye of the Scarecrow* (1965) and *The Waiting Room* (1967), his writing with a Guyanese setting reached an extraordinary climax in *Tumatumari* (1968) and *Ascent to Omai* (1970). A sequence of short stories with Amerindian themes then led to a series of books set in Britain, in which Harris engaged with wider themes of colonialism and post-war immigration, and beyond them with the clash between materialist and spiritual values.

Black Marsden (1972), introducing a set of powerful and shifting characters, was set primarily in Edinburgh, while *Da Silva Da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness* (1977), *The Tree of the Sun* (1978) and *The Angel at the Gate* (1982) were set in London, where the author had made his home near Holland Park. In the middle of these, *Companions of the Day and Night* (1975), inspired by a visit to Mexico, signalled great empathy with the neglected achievements of the pre-Columbian arts of Central America.



Theodore Wilson Harris, writer, born 24 March 1921; died 8 March 2018

Harris's prose style, which had been in danger of becoming mannered by the end of *The Guyana Quartet*, had by now developed a breathtaking palette, as was confirmed in a triumphant return to the Guyanese landscape in *The Carnival Trilogy* – *Carnival* (1985), *The Infinite Rehearsal* (1987), and *The Four Banks of the River of Space* (1990) – and *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* (1993). At the same time, he engaged with central European works such as *The Divine Comedy* and *Faust*.

Faust's bargain with dark forces within himself forms the implied backdrop of one of Harris's

greatest works, *Jonestown* (1996). It did not attempt to be a factual account of the Rev Jim Jones's millennial community in the Guyanese jungle or its appalling end in mass suicide and murder, but an investigation of the roots of evil and power within human personalities and civilisations, and the possibilities of redemption.

Harris was also a prolific essayist, casting unexpected and brilliant light on aspects of his own work or that of other writers and artists, or general cultural and political topics. His last works of fiction, *The Dark Jester* (2001), *The Mask of the Beggar* (2003) and *The Ghost of Memory* (2006), bridge the gap between essay, novel and poem.

He and Margaret were a devoted couple and welcomed many visitors to their homes in London and, later, in Chelmsford, Essex. Margaret died in 2010. In June that year Harris was knighted for his services to literature.

Harris's first marriage in 1945, to Cecily Carew, ended in divorce. He is survived by his children, E Nigel, Alexis, Denise and Michael, from that marriage, six grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren, and by his sister Arlene.

"In a 1987 interview with Moira Paterson (London, Observer magazine, 14 June 1987), Wilson

Harris emphasized the universality of human beings.

He is quoted as saying, "Our humanity is impoverished when we seize on either tradition or identity...

I am not interested in a multi-cultural community but in a cross-cultural community, in ways in which a myth in one can find parallels in the other.

I look to create a kind of community that has a literacy of the imagination in it, that can unlock polarisations and fanaticisms that bedevil us".

In the same interview, Moira Paterson remarked, "He speaks as he writes, in organic images of such astounding force and fecundity that the listener can only grasp some of the evolving ideas and hope to hang on."

[From a statement released by his family yesterday].

RIP Wilson Harris, author, poet and sometime surveyor of the Guyanese psyche.

[Image credit: Investiture at Buckingham Palace, Zimbio.com]

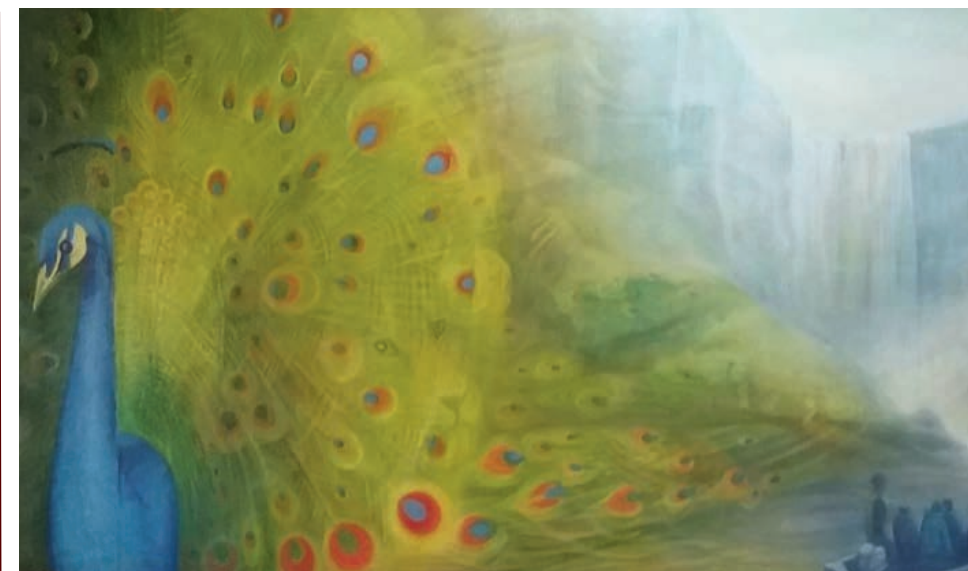
HOMAGE TO WILSON HARRIS

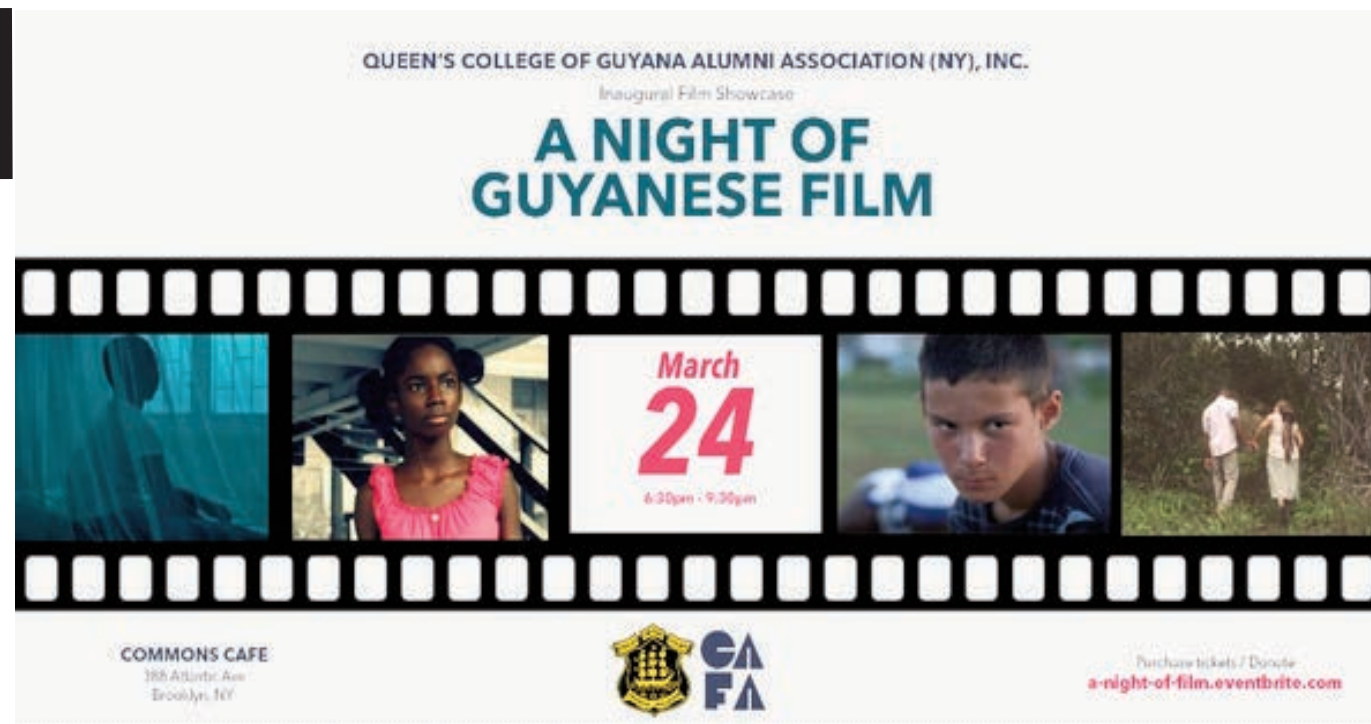
by George Simon

George Simon, "Palace of the Peacock." Oil on canvas. This homage to Wilson Harris was exhibited at the 2017 Indigenous Heritage Art Exhibition at the National Art Gallery, Castellani House.

To view other paintings by George Simon, please visit:

<http://guyfolkfest.org/george-simon/>





You are invited to attend:

A Night of Guyanese Film

Saturday, March 24, 2018, from 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

This Inaugural QCAANY Film Showcase features a selection of Guyanese short films. The Showcase is curated by **Romola Lucas, Executive Director of Caribbean American Film Academy (CaFa)**. A panel discussion among producers and artists will be moderated by QC alumna **Grace Ali, Founder and Editorial Director of OF NOTE**, an online magazine that focuses on global artists using the arts as catalysts for activism and social change.

Complimentary hors-d'oeuvres.

Wine, beer and signature cocktail will be available.

*All proceeds to benefit QCAANY



The Commons Cafe
388 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA

Dr. Lear Matthews



The ongoing media-saturated conversation about immigration in the U.S.A. has evoked widespread opinions and emotions, but the motivation and consequences that emerge from this discourse are not new. Essentially, those who advocate a restrictionist view of immigration typify a throwback to a time when the nation was gripped by nativist and xenophobic practices. The Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act) was a response to pervasive anti-immigration attitudes in the U.S. According to the U.S. Department of State's Office of the Historian, "In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity." Later, the Immigration Act of 1965 abolished the use of national-origin quotas and introduced preference categories for family ties and

employability. Today, what has long been a topic of national importance for some has become a simmering social issue churned by politics, economics and beliefs related to ethnocentric ideals. Added to this is the constancy of pernicious assumptions about the relationship of race, ethnicity and the granting of citizenship or Legal Permanent Residency. Not to mention the fact that both Republican and Democratic politicians treat immigration like a political 'football' or 'hot potato'.

The current rumblings over DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), chain migration (a slur in this writer's view), the Diversity or Lottery Visa program, TPS (Temporary Protected Status), Sanctuary Cities, insistence on entry based on 'merit', and the symbolism of border security, are at the epicenter of the debate.

However, these issues have become an albatross for those who genuinely seek to bring about comprehensive immigration reform that would benefit both immigrants and the host society. The consequences of prolonged negotiations, characterized by mistrust and posturing, can stymie such an objective. Immigrants are generally welcomed, but invariably,



they have been made the perennial scapegoat for the nation's shortcomings and lately, bargaining chips of politicians. In light of the recent school violence, moral indignation should lead to investment of resources and vigilance in prevention of both domestic and international terrorism.

Significant contributions of immigrants

A few under-reported facts are essential in this inherently caustic debate as we interrogate the history and benefits of immigration. Immigration contributes to population growth compared to natural increases. In the context of an aging U.S. population and shrinking working-age population, migration flows are not only needed, but are likely to continue

at sustained levels. Furthermore, research has shown that immigrant flows do not harm employment prospects of Americans (Boubtane, et al 2017). Business leaders tend to view immigration favorably, in terms of being a source of low-wage workers towards keeping overall product and operation costs low.

The Deception of Chain Migration and Visa Lottery

Meanwhile, there is some confusion, albeit deliberate misinformation about what constitutes chain migration. It is suspected that the focus on ending chain migration is a guise to eliminate family reunification (established under the Immigration Reform Act of 1965), in favor of immigrants with "skills" and "merit" determined to be beneficial to the United States. To this end, the president of the United States created a firestorm by implying that "merit" should be measured by race and ethnicity/country of origin – with a preferential bias toward countries like Norway. In this regard, Krishnadev Calamur (2018)

found very little evidence to suggest that because immigrants from Norway and other Scandinavian countries are Caucasian, they assimilate into the U.S. easier. He notes, "Norwegian immigrants did so poorly in the United States that about 70 percent of them returned and stayed in Norway". Furthermore, as Vibert Cambridge reminds us in his book, *Immigration, Diversity, and Broadcasting in the U.S.* (2005), the Visa Lottery Program was introduced to increase Caucasian immigration to the USA – a response to the "browning of America" concerns of the early 1990's. During that same period of time, California's Proposition 187 was designed to deny certain basic entitlements to both LPRs (Legal Permanent Residents) and the undocumented.

It is important to note that the terms 'merit' and 'skilled' are not the exclusive domain of highly educated/trained professionals, but should include non-professionals and menial immigrant employees, whose human capital is also valued and who have been admitted to the U.S. from countries throughout the world. They too are assets, not liabilities to their adopted home, contributing to the economic engine of America. Ignoring this is a repudiation of the nation's principles grounded in hard work, opportunity, and ambition. Interestingly, the USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) recently dropped "a nation of immigrants" from its mission statement.

The Caribbean Diaspora

It is a known fact that since the 1950s and throughout the end of the last century, the U.S. systematically destabilized Latin/Central American and Caribbean nations to favor large corporations and to the detriment of poor people, many of whom belonged to indigenous groups. Migration flows from this region must be understood with this reality in mind. The conditions created by waves of interventions (military, diplomatic, and economic) and the effects of 'structural adjustment programs' across the region became the impetus for many to seek better life opportunities in countries like the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain.

More specifically, English-speaking Caribbean immigrants are among the burgeoning numbers of people comprising the most recent wave of new global citizens to settle in North America. They have become a part of an expanding "Caribbean Diaspora". Information about their transnational experience, like other new comers, has been subject to the perceptions, biases, stereotypes and misconceptions portrayed by the media, politicians and civil society. One such impression that is framed by these forces is the assumption that political decisions regarding DACA and other immigration policies only apply to Mexicans and Central Americans. Contrary to this view, immigrants from other countries, including those from the English-speaking Caribbean are also affected. For example, thousands of Nigerians faced deportation following the repeal of DACA (Meyerson, 2017).

The increase in deportation and

suppression of family reunification because of changed policy are traumatizing for immigrant families, causing fear, anxiety, vulnerability and victimization. The social and emotional costs could be devastating and unprecedented. The unrelenting deportations to the Caribbean has continued under the present administration. When immigrants are uprooted and sent back to their country of origin, not only is family life disrupted, but children in particular, whose parents are deported face mental health and social dislocation consequences. As observed by Caldwell (2017), this is true for those who remain in the U.S. separated from deported relatives, as well as those who leave the country in order to preserve the family's cohesion and interdependence. Notably, the following deportation numbers for the Caribbean region in 2017 are quite revealing. Jamaicans 782; Trinidad and Tobagonians 128; Guyanese 137; Haitians 5, 578 (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations Report, 2017). Comparatively, in the first three months of 2017, ICE ordered the deportation of more than 1,200 Africans (S. Solomon, 2017).

Reintegration of deportees: A hidden dimension of the Caribbean immigrant experience

The reintegration of deportees in the home country is challenging. In essence, they are exiled from their adopted country, some for violation of sundry laws of America, while others are victims of ambivalent, albeit biased immigration policies. Regardless, they are all subject to the reali-

ties of forced re-migratory experience. There is the need for them to be re-socialized into Caribbean cultural values and practices or to be introduced to a social environment they hardly know. Unfortunately, deportees are generally labelled as a deviant group and often accused of being responsible for the increase in crime. But many who are detained by ICE and subject to deportation are non-violent offenders or not 'criminals' at all (Iannelli, 2018).

Diaspora Hometown Associations and Immigration Advocacy Groups in collaboration with government and non-governmental agencies could be instrumental to the reintegration process. The Family Unification and Resettlement Initiative (FURI) established by a New York-based Hometown Association working with the government of Jamaica and other local agencies to assist deportees, has provided a promising model to address this problem. Since many deportees do not have close relatives in the home country, FURI initially arranged accommodation to assist them in the early stages of their return. Sustained financial and other needed help is provided, including the provision of land for commercial farming with the use of greenhouse technology. The goal is to help them adjust to the new home environment. Other countries could benefit from similar programs. The response of Caribbean governments to this potential crisis will determine their legacy in the realm of humanitarianism for birthright citizenship.

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UWI Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles spearheads riveting Caribbean Diaspora Panel Discussion in New York



From Left to Right: Sir Hilary Beckles, Dr. Nadine Wedderburn, Dr. Lear Matthews, Dr Rosalind October-Edun

On February 24, 2018 the SUNY Empire State College Black Male Initiative sponsored a panel discussion on Exploring the Caribbean Diaspora featured keynote speaker, Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. Other presenters were SUNY faculty members Drs. Nadine Wedderburn, Rosalind October-Edun and Lear Matthews. The event was in commemora-

tion of the College's Year of the Caribbean and Black History Month. Sir Hilary, an accomplished historian and Chair of the Caribbean Community Reparations Committee delivered the keynote address. A large and enthusiastic audience of SUNY students, faculty, alumni and members of the Caribbean Diaspora community were in attendance.

REPARATORY JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL GROWTH PARADIGM IN THE CARIBBEAN

In her opening presentation, Dr. Wedderburn set the tone and depth of the forum by giving a comprehensive overview of Caribbean history, geography, diverse culture, ethnicity and identity. She framed her presentation with a spirited selection from cultural literary icon Louise Bennett (Ms. Lou). Dr. October-Edun explored adjustment issues of Caribbean immigrants in the areas of family, employment, the retention of cultural elements such as music, food, traditions and social networking institutions. Dr. Matthews focused on the emergence of Hometown Associations among Caribbean immigrants, highlighting their characteristics, challenges and role in sustainable development.

Sir Hilary's theme was "Reparatory Justice and Economic Development: Critical Support for the Social Growth Paradigm in the Caribbean" based on his research and expertise in the area of the economic and social impacts of colonialism



and the African slave trade. According to Sir Hilary, reparations lead to democracy and democracy is founded on the notion of inclusion. He reminded participants that the unpaid Africans who were enslaved contributed to the wealth of the British Empire and the extent to which their lives were decimated. He further asserted that Caribbean nations were impoverished following the withdrawal of the British having extracted the value of their labor for nearly 200 years. With regards to reparation, the Vice Chancellor outlined how education and health initiatives could help alleviate a number the remaining post-colonial crises that Caribbean countries have been unable to conquer on their own despite heroic efforts against unimaginable odds. The 10-point Reparation Plan developed by the CARICOM Reparation Commission includes a formal

apology, aid with reparation, development programs for indigenous peoples, cultural institutions, addressing the public health crisis, eradicating illiteracy, transfer of technology and debt cancellation.

During the Q and A period, Sir Hilary described the degradation and inhumane treatment of the Africans who were enslaved and the continuation of institutionalized depravations after emancipation. Many in the audience were visibly emotionally affected by the vivid reiteration of these historical realities. He expressed optimism that the reparation movement is gaining momentum in the Caribbean, North America and the African Diaspora. Overall, the presentations of the four panelists were complementary in promoting the need, not only to engage the Diaspora, but to actively seek to engage the youth.

Guyana Redux

Reflective Photos

Melvin Perry

March 24, 2018 - April 28, 2018

Schaffner Room

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Pound Ridge, NY 10576
(914)764-5085

Opening Reception:
March 24, 2018 - April 28, 2018



Guyana, the tiny English speaking ex-British colony, is wedged between Venezuela and Brazil. It is a land of savannah, rain forests, and sugar cane plantations.

Largely ignored by McDonald-land developers, cruise ships, and tourism in general, it has no high rise condos; no beach clubs. Wild parrots still live in Georgetown, the capital. Much of the colonial architecture survives.

In the post-independence 60's Guyana was flush with post-war affluence, enjoying the bounty that rich nations showered on it to thwart the dreaded Communist menace.

I taught Math at University of Guyana from 1968 to 1970. The photos in this show are a combination of my slides taken then and more recent digital photos when I returned after a 45 year absence.

A companion photo book of *Guyana Redux* is available on amazon and blurb.

Melvin Perry, a reformed mathematician, toiled for many years in the bowels of the financial industry before turning to literary endeavors. He resides in Pound Ridge, NY and is a member of PRAS -- Pound Ridge Authors Society.

His most recent book is *Aesop's Fables for the 21st Century* — 21 didactic tales that will resolve your moral dilemmas and start you on the road to Damascus.

Earlier publications include *The Impurgated Austen* – the previously expurgated salacious stories of Jane Austen; *The Exquisite Corpse Boogies* – the first work of fiction completely written by a computer; and two volumes of *Mondo Sudoku*. All are available on amazon.

Louisa Grimmond

It was my privilege to attend the birthday celebration for Centenarian Louisa Grimmond. Born on November 28, 1917, Louisa spoke with passion and sincerity about her life and the lives of her four children with a joy that radiated throughout the elegantly decorated hall. To each she attributed their individual qualities as she spoke with pride about what each child meant to her. In her response to the tributes, Louisa expressed her thanks to God for longevity. Her astuteness and sharp wit, likely contributors to her long life, were ever-present. In this tribute to her, granddaughter Janelle Tomeko shares touching sentiments in love and gratitude.

Gail Nunes



Born November 28th, 1917, my beloved grandmother, Louisa Amanda Grimmond, made it a point to emphasize that message during her interview. She wanted to make sure her message to her grandchildren was loud and clear. So clear it became the theme for her royal blue and gold themed Centennial Celebration. The grand occasion inspired me to create a short film about her life. With over 250 friends and family gathered in her honor, my family and I presented the film, as told by Louisa. I wanted everyone to hear her tell her own story. I also wanted to make sure future generations would have the chance to enjoy her spicy wit

**Honor Thy
mother and thy
father so your
days will be
long on the
land.**

and graceful charm. She was about to turn 100 years old -- a blessing, a privilege and a rare accomplishment.

Mid way through the filming and editing process I began to notice just how vital it was for her offspring to acknowledge the importance of honoring each other. "Long ago, when our parents would tell us something and we didn't agree, we couldn't express ourselves [she says], you had to go by what they said. Now it's essential we allow children to express themselves. It gives them a little space to interpret life for themselves. But you have to know, as old people would say, when not to give too much freedom." I've come to understand that, children should have a tremendous amount compassion, love and respect for their parents, and likewise, parents

Louisa Grimmond Celebrates 100 Years

Janelle Tomeko Grimmond

should show the same for their children. "But it starts with the parent. You have to lead by example" she says. When asked if there was something she would like to say to her grandchildren, she replied "Listen to your parents, be obedient, they may not have all the answers, but they're trying their best to guide you onto the correct path."

After my grandmother got married and moved to New Amsterdam, Guyana, her Aunt convinced her to join the Mothers Union -- A worldwide Christian faith based charity that was established in the United Kingdom in 1876. Its purpose was to encourage mothers in caring for their children, not just physically and mentally, but also spiritually. I grew up overhearing stories about the Mothers Union, but had no idea my grandmother held the position as President for the Guyanese chapter for two consecutive terms.



"I was on the Board of Trustees and would often have to correspond with the chapter in England. I served five years and have been a member since 1949" she says. From the very beginning, she understood that strong relationships, and the leadership role of a mother within a family, were crucial in building healthy bonds with her children and the community. Their main goal was to show their faith by transforming and nurturing families. They did this through promoting stable marriages, family life and most importantly the protection of children.

The same ideology was applied when she moved to the United States in 1978. She lives on a quiet residential block in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn, New York. "I would babysit and keep all the children in the yard when their parents went to work. The children that lived on the block would come and spend time with me. I would chat with them, watch them play games and would share the food, breads, and pastries I

CENTENARIAN LOUISA GRIMMOND a mother is a gift from God

made." She brought those same community values here with her to the States. With an obvious passion for faith and family, she lives by the mantra - it takes a village to raise a child.

Her Reflection.

Fast forward to today, I've come to appreciate that my grandmother is not just the matriarch of our family. She has been a fine specimen of what it means to be a mother to everyone who came out to pay homage at her 100th birthday celebration. She's nurtured all of them in some way as if they were her own. "I can't expect more from my family and friends [she says]. Sometimes I've asked myself, Why me? Why do people care about me so much?" I don't know if my grandmother knows this, but what she's feeling now is the same energy she has put into all of us. The love she has shown is reflected right back to her.

When it comes to her children, I love that she doesn't sit back and allow discord amongst us. She's not afraid to speak up when necessary. "I have a close knit family [she says], and I

want them to stay that way when I'm no longer here. There is strength in unity." Because she continues to lead by example and express her love through God's Good Grace, she has been blessed with the gift of longevity. Through observing her, I've acknowledged that a family will only be as good as The Mother. So to my dear grandmother, I say, Bravo! Cheers to a life well lived and job well done.

If you'd like to hear Louisa share more about her life. Click here https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBQTfmPpO_cHvpcmUgKlmg to see her short docu-film "*as told by Louisa.*"



Embracing the Arts

The Guyana
man has to
recreate himself
in his own
image as an
indispensable
basis on which
to realise the
image of a
national identity

There is much more than meets the eye in the creative arts, and according to Dr. Natalie Hopkinson, Guyana can benefit significantly if investors pump capital into the industry. Dr. Hopkinson, a Howard University and University of Maryland graduate, was the guest speaker at this year's Republic Anniversary Distinguished Lecture held today at the Umana Yana. "It doesn't cost anything to be creative, but you do need some help outside," she told the gathering. "They have been pulling all of the riches out of Guyana forever. So, it is a matter where you have to gravitate and make it go to places that reflect your values." Dr. Hopkinson delved extensively into Guyana's pluralistic cultural society and the richness of its diversity.

Art is about radical imagination, it is about imagining a future we cannot now see. It is not just about the poets and the painters; it is also for the women and men on the street. We are in trying times and we really need all-hands-on-deck, no voice and no vision should be left behind," she emphasised.

Cultural Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Education, Ruel Johnson explained that the Republic Anniversary has both a celebratory and reflective aspect. This year's reflective aspect took the form of the public lecture, he related. Johnson said he wanted to explore the nexus between the creative arts, culture and the concept of citizenship within the Republic.

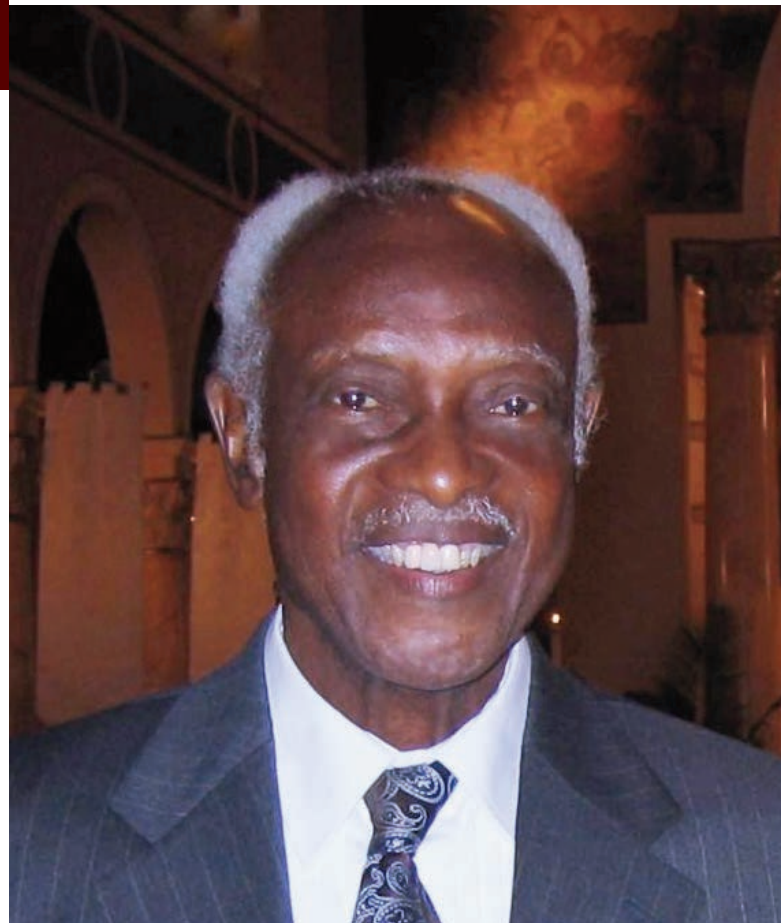
Addressing the point raised by Dr. Hopkinson, Johnson said he is interested in using oil revenue investment directly with the expectation that the "orange economy" is going to be a viable component of whatever future economic diversification that will come.

Quoting the renowned Poet, AJ Seymour, Dr. Hopkinson said for the artist of Guyana, the revelation of a national identity is the most revolutionary possibility that exists. "The Guyana man has to recreate himself in his own image as an indispensable basis on which to realise the image of a national identity," she said.

The distinguished lecture was part of a series of activities organised by the Ministry of Education leading up to the 48th Anniversary of Guyana's Republic.

(A DPI feature)

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Accomplished playwright, actor and multi-media producer, broadcaster and journalist, Francis Quamina Farrier, celebrates his 80th Birthday. Francis is the writer of the first Guyanese produced radio soap opera The Tides of Susanburg, and founder of Radio's first 80 Plus Club. He continues to be active in the fields of journalism and broadcasting.



**UNIVERSITY OF
GUYANA
HAS A NEW
PRO-CHANCELLOR**

Major General (Rtd) Joe Singh, has been appointed Pro- Chancellor of the University of Guyana (UG) by the University's Council. The University's new Council will serve for a three-year period with effect from February 22, 2018



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34 CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Compton Young was key in maintaining Georgetown as the ‘Garden City’



Former City Mayor, Compton Young, has passed away. Young served as Mayor of the nation’s capital from 1990 to 1994. In his mayoralty, he encouraged citizens to improve the aesthetics of their local communities and to take responsibility for the physical condition of their neighbourhoods.

He was particularly passionate about restoring Georgetown to its pristine state, which earned it the reputation as the “Garden City”.

Even after he left City Hall, the late Young remained unwaveringly committed to the vision of a clean, green and healthy city.

Moreover, it was underscored that Citizens of Georgetown have lost a strong civic crusader with Young’s recent passing.

“Mr. Young will be long remembered as a visionary city leader and for his good works and wisdom,” said Mayor Patricia Chase-Green and other former city Councillors, who worked and served with him at the Georgetown Municipality.

They said despite being elected mayor with the ticket of a political party, the late Mr. Compton Young managed the City Council rising above partisan politics and thus became a true city father and change-maker, of the City.

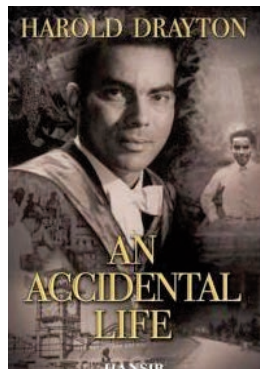
In his last days, he lived in a senior residential care home, but despite this, and having a leg amputated as a result of diabetes, he did what he loved best, making floral arrangements.

In an interview, he said that after 45 years, he decided to sell his shop, World of Flowers, on Middle Street, as he felt more than four decades of success was a lot to be thankful for, and he could not keep up with taking care of himself and managing the business simultaneously.

“My son lives in Australia and my wife in New York so I did not have anyone living with me.”

Kaieteur News

Dr. Harold Drayton



Dr Harold Drayton, the individual who was tasked by then Premier Cheddi Jagan to establish the University of Guyana (UG) in 1963, passed away in the United States.

Harold Drayton was born in Georgetown, Guyana (then British Guiana) in 1929 and grew up with a doting mom and stepfather. Of them, in his memoir published late last year under the title *An Accidental Life*, he writes “together and cooperatively [they] made it possible for me to survive, to grow and develop both physically and intellectually, and gave me my earliest insights into the world, beauteous and hideous, that mankind has made”.

Drayton received his secondary education at Modern High School where one of his classmates was Sir Shridath Ramphal, whose father was the founder and Principal of the school, and later, at Queen’s College. In 1948 he won an open scholarship to the University College of the West Indies, Jamaica, but was soon expelled because of his left wing political activism. He entered the University of Edinburgh, Scotland where he completed his bachelor’s and doctoral degrees before taking up a lectureship position in Ghana. In December 1962, he heeded Dr Jagan’s call to return home and take on the “university project”.

As Technical Advisor on higher education to the Guyana Government, he worked feverishly and under difficult conditions to transform the government’s vision into reality, thereby creating a national institution which, in 2013, celebrated its 50th anniversary.

He was instrumental in establishing a core curriculum of compulsory courses to provide a well-rounded education to students in all faculties. The benefit of courses such as Social Biology, which he taught, and Caribbean Studies were later recognized and promoted by older and more prestigious universities. And his initiatives in the Biology Department such as the training of medical technologists, etc, subsequently evolved into a full Faculty of Health Sciences for the training of health care professionals.

After leaving UG in 1971, he joined PAHO as a consultant in Human Resources Development, stationed in Barbados. During this time he worked extensively to improve health education in the region while still maintaining contacts and providing advice to UG and the Ministry of Health. In 1989 he moved to the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas, USA, as Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for International Health and Professor of Preventative Medicine where he remained for ten years. Again, he visited Guyana frequently providing advice to the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Ministry of Health, occasionally securing funding for various projects.

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