



Anthony N. Sabga Awards E-News

March-April 2015 | Volume 10 | Issue 2

Celebrating the Excellent Decade



We celebrated the induction of four new laureates, and culmination of our first decade, at the Trinidad Hilton & Conference Centre on April 11, with a gala attended by more than 300 people.

The convocation was addressed by one of our first laureates, Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon, who was awarded the Public & Civic Contributions prize in 2006 along with Jamaican scientist Prof Terrence Forrester, and Trinidadian filmmaker, Robert Yao Ramesar.

In his speech, Monsignor Ramkissoon said the award had enabled him to expand the

activities of his Mustard Seed Community, which had since spread to Latin America and Africa.

Sir Shridath Ramphal also addressed the convocation for the first time in his capacity as Chairman of the EPP. He said: "The urge to excel is the very essence of that compulsion for self-improvement. With betterment as the driving force of Caribbean civilization, excellence had to be the ultimate goal of our most ardent endeavours."

Pictures are available on our Facebook page. We also invite readers to view our Flickr photo-stream at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/anscafe>

Mr Herbert Samuel, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Entrepreneurship



thanks: To the Anthony N Sabga nomination and selection committees, thank you for seeing value in my journey.

To my father Claude, who ignited my curiosity by instilling a love for reading at an early age – thank you. To my wife Sherie, who is constantly teaching me by example to be a better person – thank you. And thanks be unto God the creator, who gives us life, grace and hope for a better tomorrow.

It is with a deep sense of humility and appreciation that tonight I accept this Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence.

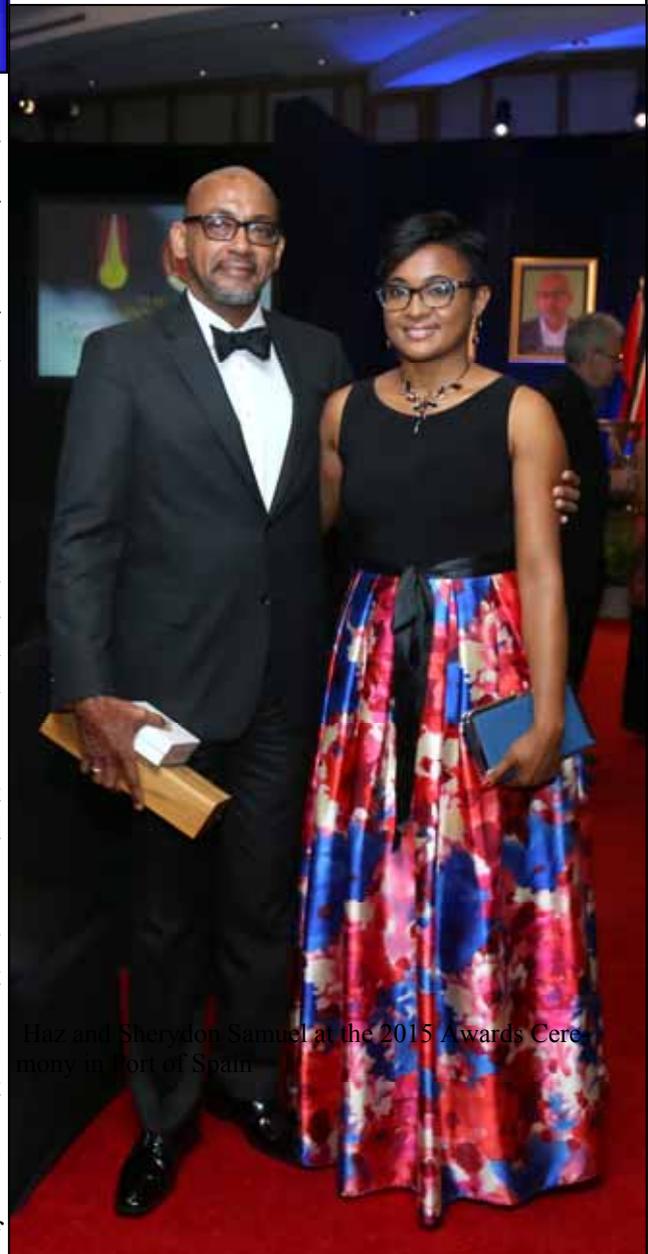
I am truly humbled when I read the stories of my fellow laureates, Dr Mohamed, Professor Hosein and Professor Narine.

I am grateful that the programme's selection committee has thought me worthy of their company and of those that have gone before us.

My appreciation of this recognition and this award is at two levels. On a personal level, I feel that I have been elevated to a great height, and I am grateful.

On a philosophical level, I suppose, I see this recognition as a vital statement about the value of entrepreneurship and innovation to the development of today's Caribbean society. I believe it is unfortunate that, even in this 21st century entrepreneurship, particularly where it involves innovation, is under-recognized, undervalued and therefore under-represented in our region – and it is my sincere wish that this award will be a catalyst and inspiration for others like me.

I wish to say a few specific words of



Herbert and Sheridon Samuel at the 2015 Awards Ceremony in Port of Spain

Dr Paloma Mohamed Martin, Guyana Arts & Letters



Fellow laureates, dignitaries, special invitees, ladies and gentlemen, I bring you greetings from the sleeping giant of the Caribbean, the bounteous and lush Guyana. Guyana, my lovely native land, teeming with promise and poised for greatness for such a long time like so many young artists of this region. I was born in Guyana but raised by the region. Today, I stand here humbled by this moment and truly thankful for this Caribbean.

Sublime moments such as these cause us to reflect deeply. The more we reflect the more we understand how fortunate we are when we are chosen from among so many deserving others. Today's artists inhabit a world in which support for the arts is dwindling. Those in the Caribbean, especially young creative people, are generally without platform from which to launch, without successful indigenous role models, without supportive structures and training opportunities which would link them to business, without respectful non-exploitative engagements which enable them to live dignified and fruitful lives. I am often saddened and deeply disturbed by the misunderstanding that the arts are not important. I want nothing more than to see this erroneous perception and the poor conditions it helps to engender for artists to

change for the better. So for me this award is less about what I can do for myself but what it can help others to do.

I am often inspired, awed and excited at what is produced in the arts even in dire circumstances. So in accepting this award, I do so with full clarity and in homage to all those artists who have not stood here. Thank you for what you do for this region. Thank you.

It is a special thing when a company can express understanding and caring for the conditions I just described with an initiative such as the Sabga award. Here things are not done in platitudes but with substantive support. This in itself is something to celebrate. Dr. Anthony N. Sabga, his family and foundation have demonstrated much like successive Guyana governments have done with the Guyana Prize, The Caribbean Press and CineGuyana, that tangible support of the arts pays exponential dividends if allowed to blossom in freedom and if managed judiciously. I therefore salute the family and foundation on behalf of Guyana and laureates present past, and future for their vision and generosity. Thank you.

I want to challenge other mega businesses in this region to join this movement. If Dr. Sabga and his family can do it, surely you can too?

The chair of the Regional Eminent Person's panel, irrepressible Sir Shridath Ramphal and members of that committee, the inexhaustible Chair of Guyana's eminent person's panel Dr. Seeta Roath and her members have demonstrated their own commitment to excellence in their lives and work. They have with their Laureate choices over these 10 years not only celebrated but validated the Caribbean presence on the planet. I never cease to be amazed at what people from this little space have been able to do and I feel particularly honored to be joining these esteemed ranks as the first woman laureate in 10 years for Arts and Letters. For

Dr Paloma Mohamed Martin, Guyana Arts & Letters

leading the process of transforming the way we see ourselves I thank you selection panels. People like me always know we have work to do but we never expect it be noticed beyond those who are impacted directly. My journey to this moment has been long and the investment great. The truth is that though Guyana birthed and raised me, Trinidad also nurtured and the Caribbean nourished me. I was profoundly influenced by Dr. Efebo Wilkison, Rawle Gibbons, Eintou Springer, Norvan Fullerton and the Centre for Creative and Festival Arts here in Trinidad and by Dr. Dennis Brown and Al Creighton of Jamaica. Beyond that I thank all those others in so many countries who have trained, shared, worked with, trusted and supported me these past 30 years.

Throughout my life I have received so much love and so many kindnesses that it is impossible to recount everyone who has supported my development. I will only be able to refer to a precious few by name here but my memory for such things is good and I assure you I do remember all past kindnesses. In this particular moment I wish to pay homage to researcher Roxana Kawall and four special people for supporting my nomination with references: Prof. Eddie Greene who has given his life to the service of others and who is still working assiduously against stigma and discrimination in this region; Prof. Vibert Cambridge whose lifelong commitment to researching and documenting the vibrant cultural history of the Guyana is monumental; Prof. David Dabydeen our most prolific contemporary prize winning writer and an amazing intellect; Dr. Bruce Paddington, whose singular contribution to building a film culture and industry in the region is incalculable and under-appreciated. What can I do but to live up to your inspiring lives as my way of thanking you?

I am also thankful for the absolute professionalism and patience of Dr. Raymond Ramcharitar and Ms. Maria Superville-Neilson of the Sabga Foundation and for the love and support of close family and friends, Beverley Reynolds, Volderine Hackett, Fr. Montrose and Dr. Mark Tumbridge, Darryl and Debra Woo, Arnold, Ceronne, Brenda, Nan, Sisters Gloria Gray and Anne Bradshaw, Simeon, Barry, Petamber, Vanda, Philip, Winston and Marcia Riley, Kris, Tivia and Lisa, my Mothers Mariee Fedee Mohamed, and Dorthy Smartt who are generous giants, Sandi, Carri, Jackie, Ramon, Ray, Raoul, Nephews and nieces Akeem, Mario, Josh, Elijah, Denizil, Leah and Julian and my own beloved boy Shabaka, and the special and enduring memory of his father, Prof. Tony Martin; special mention to my nieces Lilia and Tyra and my nephew Tyrease for your endurance these last few months.

In accepting the award I contemplated the tremendous boon it would present to the projects upon which I work, Healing Arts, Theatre Guild, CineGuyana, Moray House and Just off the Street Foundation whose founder is here with us tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, everyday in my prayers, I ask God not to make me a liability but to make me a light in the world.

I truly feel that this award is a "godsend" to this work and his way of saying here child, be my light. I therefore see this not as a moment of personal glory but of regional affirmation and I am truly thankful to all who have worked to create it.

May this prize and the laureates it creates continue to grow in stature and strength for another 100 years and may the fruit of this bough be bounteous.

I Thank You.

Prof Suresh Narine, Science & Technology, Guyana



Thank you for taking the time to be here this evening to celebrate this year's Sabga laureates, thank you for punctuating this important evening in our Caribbean archipelago with your presence and your support. This evening, to my mind, is about recognizing Caribbean potential, forging Caribbean identity and celebrating Caribbean successes, but most of all, endorsing and watering the garden of Caribbean unity. And in so doing, we recognize the role that vision and selfless philanthropy play in enabling our region to be all it can be. I therefore, with admiration and a deep sense of gratitude, first of all thank Dr. Anthony N. Sabga for his leadership, his vision and his love of all things Caribbean. You, sir, have been able to see above the throng to Caribbean horizons of prosperity, unity and shared vision, and you have had the courage and the skill to create a lasting and pivotal mechanism to help achieve and celebrate these goals, in the Caribbean Awards for Excellence.

No civilization can effectively progress towards shared values without the celebration of positive role models. When I examine the laureates of the Caribbean Awards for Excellence in past years, and also my fellow laureates this year, in addition to being humbled to be in their company, I am convinced that the Caribbean will continue to move from strength to strength in the pursuit of our cultural identity and its expressions and a sustainable future of prosperity. I therefore wish to recognize the

hard work of each of the country nominating committees in identifying and nominating deserving Caribbean women and men for the Caribbean Awards of Excellence. To the panel of eminent persons whose job must not be easy to choose from the wide pool of accomplished Caribbean personalities nominated for this award; on behalf of all the laureates, past and present, I thank you for your time, your leadership and your commitment to excellence.

To this year's laureates: thank you for your spirit, your scholarship, your accomplishments and your citizenship. I am deeply honored to be in your company. The value of this award to me has been greatly enhanced because it counts you among its laureates. The award for the Science and Technology category is particularly valuable to me also, because it presumes to place me, if in this instance only, in the exalted company of Professor Hosein, whose track record of accomplishment and service can only be described as sterling. To share a spotlight with my fellow Guyanese and Queen's College alumna, Dr. Paloma Mohammed, is particularly special, for she represents both country and school with distinction and grace. And to Mr. Herbert Samuel; you epitomize the spirit of entrepreneurship which is so pivotally important to the development of our region – your work in reducing energy consumption is of utmost importance to the Caribbean.

I have been fortunate to receive a number of accolades related to my scientific work over the course of my career, but this award is easily the most special to me. It is special, first and foremost, because it is from home. But this distinction also encourages me, as this celebration tonight should also encourage us all, to think critically of our shared future and the challenges that future Caribbean generations face.

Our world today faces a nexus of so-called WICKED problems: collapse of the world's financial systems, dwindling fossil fuel resources, growing shortages of fresh water and food, climate change, and skilled labor. The Caribbean is particularly vulnerable to ALL of these issues – as all of you Caribbean folk

Prof Suresh Narine, Science & Technology, Guyana

know, the banana trees only have to hear of the hurricane coming, and they does all lie down flat. To craft successful responses to these challenges, the Caribbean needs regional strategies which harness **all** of our collective resources.

The countries whose citizens are eligible for the Sabga Awards contain scarcely 6,000,000 souls. Are we to fulfill the ancient Zimbabwean prophecy: “When the level of the water hole drops, the animals look at each other differently?” We all remember Dr. Eric Williams’ poignant mathematics – 1 from 10 leaves nought. Imagine, we have a handful of countries, with a collective marketplace of only 6,000, 000, with a shared language, shared heritage, shared cricket team, common culture and facing common threats, but we have as many approaches to food security, science and technology and security as we have countries?

As we celebrate a few scant miles from the lapping waves of the Gulf of Paria separating Trinidad and Tobago from the South American mainland and sister Caribbean country Guyana, CARICOM’s net food import bill is more than a whopping US \$4.5 billion. Right here, in T&T, the food import bill is US \$950 million, second only to Jamaica, with a food import bill of close to US \$1 billion. The region spends nearly US\$0.5 billion on imported rice and sugar, even as across the Gulf, Guyana struggles to find markets for its rice. The Jagdeo Initiative in CARICOM on Agriculture and Food Security has disappeared into the void created by a lack of regional leadership within CARICOM. And so, despite the demand, Guyana, Suriname and Belize, with large tracts of arable land, significant fresh water resources and low population densities remain relatively undeveloped with regards to their vast agricultural potential.

Our region receives less than one percent of the world’s foreign direct investment, and other than for T&T and Suriname, has a crippling dependence on imported fuel. Yet, we do not have a regional strategy for

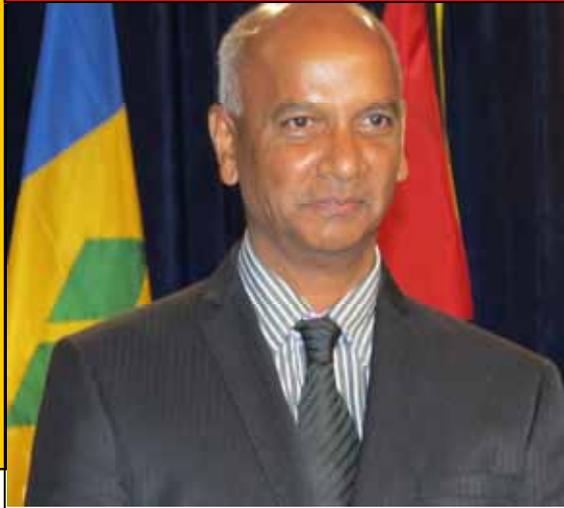
alternative, green sources of energy. The vast potential of hydropower in Guyana and Suriname could benefit significantly from regional investments and regional supply agreements for electricity, to the benefit of energy security for many of the neighboring states.

Science and technology and their potential for providing quantum improvements in well-being of Caribbean peoples is indisputable among our member nations. Much more needs to be done in integrating the University of the West Indies, University of Guyana, Anton de Kom University, University of Technology, Jamaica, University of Trinidad and Tobago and other colleges and universities across our region. There is an urgent need to share resources, remove fragmentation and reduce duplication. In this regard, the Caribbean Examinations Council stands as a living, successful example of embracing regional standards in education. There is an urgent need to promote a culture of scientific entrepreneurship, and a concomitant and urgent need for the region to continue to improve the way it handles intellectual property.

In my own efforts in Guyana, I have seen firsthand how important a tool science and technology can be in leap-frogging the developmental process. I firmly believe that our region’s science and technology portfolio should be heavily focused on technology transfer and the harnessing of S&T for development and well-being of our people. Even as we pursue technologies appropriate to our particular circumstances, critical mass cannot be accomplished without pooling our regional resources. The problem is not our individual peoples, who collaborate quite naturally – I firmly contend that the problem resides with our political leadership lacking the political will to address this problem.

I know I should have used these five minutes to talk about my own career, but my career is less important compared to the urgent need to work towards true regional unity, shared strategies and goals. In closing, I wish to gratefully accept this award on behalf of the staff of the Institute of Applied Science and Technology in Guyana, and the many students, postdoctoral fellows, research associates and collaborators who have contributed so incredibly to my career.

Prof Patrick Hosein, Science & Technology, Trinidad & Tobago



Dr. Anthony Sabga, fellow laureates, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. The Anthony Sabga Caribbean Award of Excellence is, without doubt, the most prestigious award in the Caribbean region. Tonight I am honored to receive this award jointly in the Science and Technology category. I wish to thank Dr. Sabga, and all committee members who volunteered their time towards the evaluation process.

I have many people to thank for my achievements over the years. First and foremost I wish to thank my parents, my father the late Amizool Hosein and my mother Merle Hosein who is in the audience. I love both of you and appreciate your dedication to me as well as to my siblings especially during the hard times. My mother happens to love technology so is probably busy posting, texting or tweeting on her iPhone right now.

My siblings, my older sisters Jennifer, Margaret and Deborah and my younger brother Anthony, must also be thanked for their love and support. I am also lucky to have many relatives here in Trinidad who have always shown an interest in my career and I wish to thank them all.

Thirty-seven years ago during my free year before attending university I met a young woman, Deborah, who would eventually become my wife. We have been blessed with two wonderful children, my son Nicholas a brilliant PhD electrical engineering student and a Lecturer at UC Davis and Patricia, an incredible singer, songwriter and musician also known by her stage name Trishes (Google it).

I wish to thank them for their support and understanding especially during my many work related trips. I am sure many of you are familiar with the butterfly effect and I believe that this phenomenon also applies to our career paths in that small, at the time inconsequential events, can have a profound positive or negative impact on one's future. I was fortunate in this respect by having some of the best educators who provided me with the right guidance during my childhood. I especially want to thank the late Mr Steve Oudit from the Curepe Presbyterian School and the late Frs Lai Fook and Valdez from St. Mary's College for their teaching, encouragement and guidance.

During my University life at MIT I was similarly fortunate. I wish to thank the late Professor Amar Bose who was a great mentor and friend, my MSc thesis supervisor Professor Dimitri Bertsekas who taught me how to think like a mathematician and my PhD thesis supervisor Professor Michael Athans who helped to mold me into an Electrical Engineer.

I have also been fortunate to collaborate with some of the best researchers in their respective fields while working at various internationally renowned labs. I would just like to highlight a few individuals who were especially helpful in developing my career, Dr. William Short at Bose Corporation, Dr. Ronald Skoog at Bell Labs, Dr. Gagan Choudhury at AT&T Labs, Dr. Irfan Khan at Ericsson Communications and

Prof Patrick Hosein, Science & Technology, Trinidad & Tobago

Dr. Anthony Soong at Huawei.

Finally during my first return to Trinidad in the early 90s, Professor Kenneth Julien provided the resources that I needed to tinker with the then little-known thing called the Internet. In recent times several technologies have come together to revolutionize how we communicate, how we do business and how education is provided.

These technologies include, the Internet, Cellular Networks and Broadband Wired Communications. Anyone of you

can, right now, use your smart-phone to broadcast this event to a worldwide audience because of the Web and advances in wireless communications. Any student worldwide can take the online version of many courses made available by universities such as Berkeley, Stanford and MIT and so be able to gauge their abilities at an international level.

We in the Caribbean now need to take the next step and use these technologies not only for entertainment and education but also to create novel

applications, services and processes so that we can compete globally in this space.

We have started mainly with web and mobile applications but these are the low hanging fruit. The next step, the development of novel services and processes, requires more in-depth expertise and of course significant investment in advanced research.

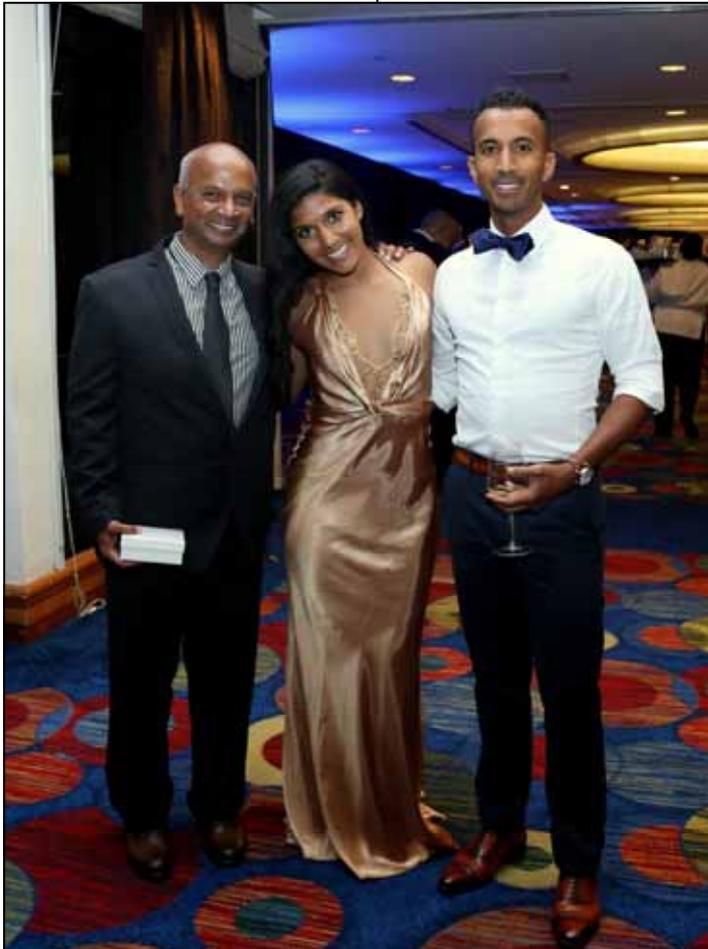
Google, for example, improved the process for searching content on the Web while Facebook improved the process for keeping in touch with friends and family.

Both of these required use of advanced mathematical, engineering and computer science techniques which are much more difficult to learn and understand than, for example, mobile application programming.

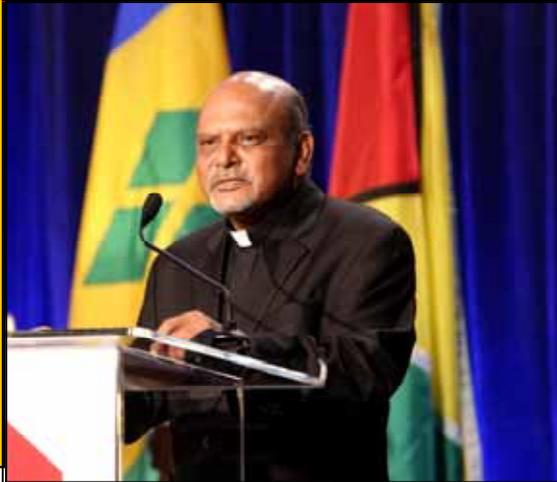
So far we seem to be underestimating what it will take to achieve what these companies have achieved.

Hopefully, with the help of this award, I can help produce graduate students who can get us

where we need to be. So on that note let me once again thank the ANSA McAL Foundation, and the Eminent Persons Panel of the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence for choosing me.



Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon Public & Civic Contributions (2006)



First of all I would like thank the ANSA McAL Foundation for allowing me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you on this auspicious occasion. Congratulations to our laureates tonight — Dr. Paloma Mohammed of Guyana, Mr. Herbert A Samuel of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Prof. Suresh Narine of Guyana and Prof. Patrick Hosein of Trinidad & Tobago.

Time certainly flies! This is the tenth Award Ceremony and it seems as though it was just a few years ago I was honoured by the ANSA McAL foundation for our work.

At that time, I wondered about the usefulness of such an award — notwithstanding the monetary benefit, of course! Since then, I have seen the long-term reach and vision of Dr. Anthony Sabga and his team in the foundation. As I understand it, these awards were meant to honour those who have excelled in their varying fields of endeavour and to bolster and support the efforts of the awardees in their respective fields. They are NOT lifetime achievement awards, *per se*, but instead were meant to provide an incentive, both personal and financial to the beneficiary, so that his/her work can continue in full throttle, so to speak, and to encourage others to take-on the passing baton.

I could have done three things with the money and the recognition gained by this award. One, I could have taken the award as a personal recognition of the work done thus far and pat myself on the back, full stop. But

where would that have put me? Secondly, I could have seen the award as a springboard to do many other things related to what was already being done. In part, I chose this path. I used the recognition and the money to expand our work in the countries in which we served.

Using the money as seed money for project proposals, and so we started our fourteenth home in Jamaica. We also started farming programmes in Zimbabwe. This seed money also helped us to get funds to expand our Christ in the Garbage programs in both Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. So, the idea of the Awards to be given to works in progress was a well needed shot in the proverbial arm! Lastly, we used some of the funds to train people from Zimbabwe, the Philippines and Kenya, and of course, Jamaica in the methods and principles of setting up and maintaining Mustard Seed Communities in the countries in which we find ourselves.

In my opinion, excellence is born internally, nurtured by external factors, and will reach its maturity when it serves the greater good. In my knowledge of these awards, the people chosen have all proven that this concept of excellence can be legitimately proven. I have kept track of some of the men and women who have been chosen over the years and I am here to testify that they have all been portraying excellence in their respective fields. We may wish to remember what Vince Lombardi had to say on the matter: “perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence”.

To the laureates then, this is the right time to start thinking of how this occasion may be used for the advancement of your particular area of interest - be it scientific research, entrepreneurship or the arts. In my humble opinion, the recognition derived from this award can be used in the same ways in which we began. The Caribbean is going through very challenging times economically, socially and even culturally. We all know of the economic challenges faced by a large proportion of our respective populations. From a social standpoint, we are experiencing, in all our territories the creeping attack of criminal activities and the erosion of our social fabric from all sides. Not so obvious, but just as serious, is the “invisible” hand of the world wide web that’s also chipping away

Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon Public & Civic Contributions (2006)

at our sound cultural practices and creative growth. We have been stopped in our tracks on the way to the structural transformation we started many moons ago. More than ever we need leaders in every field of endeavour to get us back on this track and to continue the journey to self-determination. We can't put the full responsibility of persistent development solely on the backs of the political elite. We all have to contribute in the creation of engines of growth so that the yawning gap between the elite and the masses can be addressed in a timely manner.

Politics aside, there aren't many institutions in the region that that we could look to for help in the business of advancing multiple strategies in the broader developmental agenda. Of course there are institutions that help us get there in many different ways, but the ANSA McAL Foundation kills two birds with one stone. It both recognises excellence in different fields and at the same time encourages this excellence (through grants and continued follow-up) to foster maturity along the same continuum started by the person in their respective areas of interest.

This evening is about the awardees, mentioned above. When I look at the calibre of persons chosen for these awards, not only this year, but since the inception of this event, I am truly amazed at what we have achieved in the English-speaking Caribbean. Dr. Mohammed, with her blending of academics and the arts will no doubt continue to show the way forward for the strengthening of our cultural traditions among our young people. As mentioned earlier our culture is under attack and what better place to start fixing this but to recognise the problem and to take off there!

As Joichi Ito puts it: "Most creative work is a process of people passing ideas and inspirations from the past into the future and adding their own creativity along the way".

Mr. Samuel, what good can come from Galilee? In this Easter season, we all recognise the place that was rejected by many has become the central place in Christendom. We may never know but St. Vincent and the Grenadines may in the future, become the only island in the

world totally changed by solar energy and universal alternative energy practices – and becoming that shining example to the rest of the world. We are all behind you when it comes to using alternative energy and cutting the cost to beneficiaries – especially the poor and the vulnerable.

Professor Narine, the many things you have done to advance the cause of applied science and bringing this to the Caribbean is a testament to the great deposit of knowledge and expertise we have in the English-speaking Caribbean. Indeed, we are well-placed to positively affect the world in terms of our discovery and application of new ways of using technology in reference to the physical and chemical sciences. Keep going, Sir.

Finally, Professor Hosein, we continue to need people of competence in the area in which you find yourself, not only for the next few years, but indeed for the next few generations! I hope this honour and the money that comes with it will take you further along the line that you have charted out for yourself and others in our region.

All in all, we have over the years spotted talent in different fields which will not be left to get stale and stunted. With the increasing use of these talents to broaden and widen our social and technical capital, we will be in a good position to make an impact not only regionally, but increasingly so, on the International level.

Indeed, as Mahatma Gandhi once said..."we can be the change we want the world to be". It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who reminded us that..."what you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say. Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail". As we honour you here today, and indeed to all present in this room, I recall the words of R L Stevenson..."Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant". I am indeed proud to be in the company of such men and women not only now but for the long haul.

Explore. Dream. Discover.



The Excellent Decade

2005 – 2015

In commemoration of our first decade, the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence has produced a permanent record of our activities from our launch in 2005.

In The Excellent Decade are autobiographical essays from all our laureates, photographs, the forewords provided by Caribbean heads of state, our founder, and

the chairmen of our Eminent Persons Panel. In it can also be found the all the members of territory nominating committees, past and present members of the EPP, and other ephemera.

The book was presented to guests at the ceremony, and will be sent to libraries and other institutions regionally and further afield in the next few months.

The Anthony N. Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence

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