

Press release: Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence

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Dr Shirin Haque receives her award from President Weekes

Dr Shirin Haque ended her acceptance remarks with the traditional Vulcan greeting: “Live long and prosper”, with her fingers parted in the middle, taken from the Star Trek television and movie series. She had just been presented with the 2020 Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence prize in Science and Technology by Her Excellency, President Paula-Mae Weekes, on Friday evening at the TATIL Building in Port of Spain on November 13.

Haque is an astronomer and lecturer at the UWI, St Augustine. She is the only professional astronomer in the Caribbean, and has done more than any person to advance the science, and science generally, to the public and in the academe through teaching, public education, documentary films, and television programmes. She was born in India and migrated to Trinidad in her childhood with her parents. She recalled this as she recounted her first experience of astronomy: looking at the moon through a pair of her father’s binoculars in her village in India.

Her acceptance remarks were infused with the virtues of science and the many benefits that arise from encouraging women and girls to pursue science as a career.

In his remarks, Mr Andrew Sabga, Chairman of the ANSA McAL Foundation, echoed Dr Haque’s concerns, noting four women had been awarded Nobel prizes this year, with three in science. “We are very excited that Dr Haque is part of this wave of women in science. We at ANSA McAL will do everything in our power to encourage the increased participation of women and girls in science.”

In congratulating Dr Haque, President Weekes noted the Office of the President had been following Haque’s work for some time now, and hoped to feature her in a forthcoming initiative to highlight the work of women in science.

The ceremony was one of four held in different territories in the region over the last month for the different laureates: in Jamaica, Dr Olivene Burke, a social scientist and activist in was presented with the Public and Civic Contributions prize; in St Lucia, sculptor Jallim Eudovic was presented with the Arts & Letters prize; and in Guyana, entrepreneur Andrew Mendes was presented with the Entrepreneurship prize. All presentations were made by heads of state and government of the various territories.

The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence is the first regional prize to be awarded annually in science, art, civic activism, and entrepreneurship. It originated in Trinidad & Tobago in 2005, and was the brainchild of the late Dr Anthony N Sabga. It has made awards to more than 40 exceptional Caribbean people over the last fifteen years. More information including a video-biography of Dr Haque and the other laureates, can be found at www.ansacaribbeanawards.com, on Facebook, and YouTube.

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