

ANTHONY N. SABGA AWARDS

Caribbean Excellence



E-News

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Introducing Our 2022 Laureates



(Top left, clockwise) Dr Kim Jebodhsingh, Public & Civic Contributions (Joint), Barbados; Anuska Sonai, Public & Civic Contributions (Joint), Suriname; Marlon James, Arts & Letters, Jamaica; Prof Christine Carrington, Science & Technology, Trinidad & Tobago; Shyam Nokta, Entrepreneurship, Guyana.

As we welcome our 2022 laureates we remind our readers that our nomination period for next year's laureates closes on March 20. The details, forms and instructions are on our website, via the Nominations pull-down tab. We have undertaken a regional campaign in traditional media, but we are shifting a significant portion of our efforts to online platforms. We ask, as usual, that all our subscribers share this final call for nominations as far and wide as they can via your personal platforms.



2022 Laureate, Arts & Letters

Marlon James



plantation in the early 19th century. The work won the 2010 Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Minnesota Book Award, and was a finalist for the (US) 2010 National Book Critics Circle Award in fiction, as well as a National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) Image Award. James' short fiction and

Marlon James is an internationally acclaimed Jamaican novelist. He is best known for his 2015 Man Booker Prize winning novel, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014). He has published several other novels and has received many prizes, including the Dayton Literary Peace Prize (2010) and has appeared on numerous prestigious shortlists. He has also maintained a strong link to Jamaica and the Caribbean through presentations, workshops, residencies, distinguished lectures, literary festival appearances, and book launches.

Notable are his presentations addressing topics related to writing and the writing process, issues pertaining to the history of the Caribbean, race and gender in the US and UK, and youth subcultures as expressed in literature and music such as hip-hop. He has led creative writing workshops at the Bocas Lit Fest in Trinidad and the Calabash International Literary Festival in Jamaica.

James' first novel, *John Crow's Devil* (2005), tells the story of a biblical struggle in a remote Jamaican village in the 1950s and, though rejected 78 times before being accepted for publication, *John Crow's Devil* went on to become a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and the Commonwealth Writers Prize, as well as a New York Times Editor's Choice. His second novel, *The Book of Night Women* (2009), is about a slave women's revolt on a Jamaican

nonfiction have been anthologized in *Bronx Noir*, *The Book of Men: Eighty Writers on How to Be a Man and elsewhere*, and have appeared in *Esquire*, *Granta*, *Harper's*, *The Caribbean Review of Books* and other publications. His widely read essay, "From Jamaica to Minnesota to Myself," which appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* (2015), was a public announcement of his status as a gay man. In 2019 he was named one of *Time Magazine's* 100 most influential people.

Winning the Man Booker Prize made him the first Jamaican author to take home the UK's most prestigious literary award., Writing for *The New York Times*, Michiko Kakutani said of the novel: "It is epic in every sense of that word: sweeping, mythic, over-the-top, colossal and dizzyingly complex. It's also raw, dense, violent, scalding, darkly comic, exhilarating and exhausting—a testament to Mr. James's vaulting ambition and prodigious talent."

In addition to the Man Booker Prize, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* won the American Book Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the Minnesota Book Award, and was a finalist for the (US) National Book Critics Circle Award.



2022 Laureate, Entrepreneurship

Shyam Nokta



Shyam Nokta is the founder and managing director of Environmental Management Consultants Inc. (EMC), a Guyanese company which provides environmental services and innovative solutions to the private sector, Multilateral Organisations, NGOs and Governments.

EMC began in a small room of Mr Nokta's parents' home and today is a leading

player in Guyana's environmental and natural resources sectors. With global attention focused on Guyana as the world's newest oil-producing nation, EMC is the premier local company providing a range of specialised environmental services, offering on-the-ground expertise not only in oil and gas but across 15 sectors, including mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism,



2022 Laureate, Entrepreneurship

renewable energy, manufacturing and infrastructure. EMC's emergence, growth and development are testaments to Mr. Nokta's foresight, tenacity, and business prowess.

EMC's services include: conducting environmental and social impact assessment studies, preparing environmental management plans; conducting biodiversity assessments; providing environmental compliance support; environmental training and capacity building. The company also supports Governments to meet Multilateral Environmental Agreements, such as the UN Conventions on climate change, biodiversity and land degradation and Multilateral Organisations to ensure their environmental and social safeguards are complied with as part of projects implementation.

An Environmental Studies graduate of the University of Guyana, Mr Nokta was inspired to start EMC after noticing a growing trend of environmental awareness being translated into action by Governments and Multilateral Organisations. He saw a gap in the local market and took the bold step of starting a business that would help private sector companies meet their regulatory requirements and improve their environmental performance.

Mr. Nokta acquired much of his practical knowledge and expertise working with NGOs to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable forestry management. Early in his career he was one of the Young Professionals at the Iwokrama International Centre and its programme for biodiversity conservation and management and was a key member of the team overseeing ranger training and management of the wilderness preserve. He was one of the founding members of the Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society (GMTCS), a local conservation NGO which spearheaded turtle conservation efforts and the setting up of Shell Beach as a National Protected Area. He served as In-Country Representative of the UK based Fauna & Flora International (FFI), one of the oldest conservation organisations globally which provided training and capacity development support for Guyana's Protected Areas System, and as Chairman of the Board for the Kaieteur National Park, Guyana's first national park and protected area, a position he held for over 5 years.

Mr. Nokta acquired policy level and international experience as Head of Guyana's

Office of Climate Change between 2008 and 2013. During this time he helped develop Guyana's response to climate change and the country's first Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) which received national and international acclaim. He was one of the principal negotiators of Guyana's groundbreaking agreement with the Kingdom of Norway in 2009 which saw Norway pledge up to US\$250 million as payment for forest climate services Guyana's forest provide.

These experiences, at the level of national and international NGOs, and Government, enabled Mr Nokta to garner knowledge and expertise to offer clients unparalleled insight into Guyana's unique geography, natural and cultural heritage as well as the country's leadership role on the environment, biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and climate change.

Mr. Nokta currently plays a prominent role in Guyana's private sector. He is the immediate past President of the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) and Vice President of the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Guyana where he chairs the Energy Committee. He also serves as Representative for the Caribbean for The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a Delhi based not for profit NGO which is a global leader in renewable energy, biotechnology and sustainable development.

In August 2020 Mr Nokta was appointed by Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali to Chair a Local Content Advisory Panel to advise the government on creating a strong local content policy and legislation for the petroleum sector. He continues to play a leading role on local content, having been appointed in January 2022 as Chair of an Advisory Team on local content to Guyana's umbrella private sector body, the Private Sector Commission.



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2022 Laureate, Public & Civic Contributions

Dr Kim Jebodhsingh



Dr Kim Jebodhsingh is a Barbadian ophthalmologist and oculoplastic surgeon who uses her skills to improve healthcare outcomes and bring about meaningful change in healthcare outcomes locally and regionally. She has been a tireless public educator, provider of pro bono medical services, and has founded a regional organisation, the Caribbean Ophthalmology Research



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2022 Laureate, Public & Civic Contributions

Alliance (CORA).

Since her return to Barbados in 2009, Dr Jebodhsingh has made a significant contribution to raising awareness about eye diseases, prevention, and treatment. She has initiated projects and plans which have increased access to those least able to access health care. She has delivered lectures to various groups, at churches, schools, clubs, and other community-based organizations, and is an advocate for the Barbados Society for the Blind.

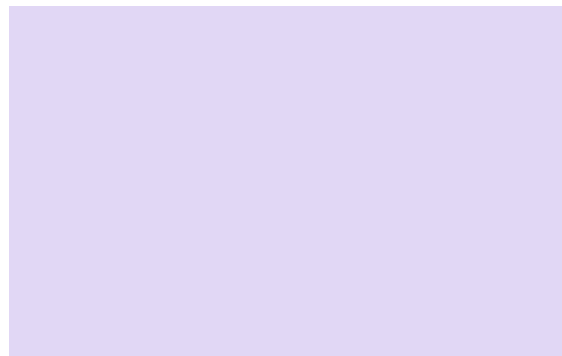
One of her primary goals is to provide universal state-of-the-art eye care to the people of Barbados and the Caribbean, to prevent visual impairment and blindness from diseases that affect Caribbean people. In 2021 she opened her own medical centre, The Eye Clinic. It is a medical treatment and educational facility, and a centre for Dr Jebodhsingh's various educational and professional initiatives.

Dr Jebodhsingh's outreach extends to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. In Jamaica she has taught doctors and performed paediatric oculoplastic surgeries at the Bustamante Children's Hospital, and adult oculoplastic surgeries at the Kingston Public Hospital in Kingston. She also provides oculoplastic services to *all* other islands of the Eastern Caribbean.

Apart from her practice and public educational work, she is the co-founder of the Caribbean Ophthalmology Research Alliance (CORA), a charity which raises funds to provide research grants for research into eye diseases that affect Caribbean citizens including diabetes mellitus, cataracts, glaucoma, and pterygium. She is also the convenor of the "Latest Updates in Ophthalmology Subspecialty Conference" (held in Barbados annually), an international forum which brings Caribbean and international ophthalmology specialties together.

This conference started with 10 speakers and 70 attendees and has grown to 21 speakers and 150 attendees from the USA, Canada, UK, and the Caribbean. It started as a two-day meeting and then a third day was added to facilitate teaching world class surgical techniques to nurses and ophthalmologists in training. This practical surgical day led to her spearheading the first ophthalmology Microsurgical Wet Laboratory in the region used for doctors in training to practice surgical techniques on pig eyes or artificial eyes which is located at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados. This facility was recently used for teaching nurses and doctors from the Caribbean during the ORBIS flying eye hospital teaching mission to the Caribbean.

Dr Jebodhsingh's work has been recognized. In 2021, she was invited to be a member of the International Women's Forum (IWF) (Barbados Chapter). The IWF is an invitation-only women's organization with some 7,000 members. She was also President of the Barbados Squash Association (BSA) (2019-2021). Under her leadership, the association charted a path for the development of the sport throughout Barbados including the development of the Squash School Programme, linking it to health and national development. In addition, she has provided several opportunities for young people to excel and share their talent with the world.





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2022 Laureate, Public & Civic Contributions

Anuskha Sonai



Anuskha Varsha Sonai is an ICT entrepreneur from Suriname. She is at the center of many Surinamese and regional initiatives for young people and women in Suriname to access training, hands-on experience and opportunities in order to work and thrive in the burgeoning technology sector. She is also active regionally as an advocate for awareness and training in ICT skills, and the creation of an inclusive digital economy and an ICT-friendly ecosystem. It is her ambition to be one of the leaders of a strong private sector.



2022 Laureate, Entrepreneurship

where the focus lies on development of micro small and medium enterprises and women empowerment.

Ms Sonai is the Founder and President of Creative Tech Hub Caribbean, a cluster of companies that aims to develop the Caribbean's creative technology ecosystem. It currently comprises five entities, 4 of which she co-founded: 21Q Caribbean; Cloud Engine; Spang Makandra ; Digital Talents Academy; and the Creative Talents Foundation. All the profits made by the first three are invested into the latter two, the Digital Talents Academy and the Creative Talents Foundation which are charitable initiatives.

The services offered by the three commercial companies include web development, mobile app development, social media services and cloud services to companies in the Caribbean, Europe and USA. Through the Digital Talents Academy, young people (aged 13 to 30) are offered free courses to help them into creative tech jobs such as Animators, Game Developers, Digital Designers, Content Creators, Social Media Marketers and Virtual Assistants. The Academy has also run courses for civic organisations and schools.

Ms Sonai also designed, launched and led the NxtGen Digital Professional programme in 2019 and 2020 through the Creative Talents Foundation, training 60 participants between the ages of 18 and 30 in social media, web development, internet marketing and digital content creation. A few years before that she introduced the Learn.Work.Grow Programme of Creative Tech Hub Caribbean where young talents are trained and shaped to become professionals and digital entrepreneurs in the creative industries.

Keen to see more women in Suriname's tech industry, Ms Sonai has spearheaded two scholarship programmes: the Women in Tech Scholarship and the NxtGen Women in ICT Scholarship. She is also a member of the Women in Tech Caribbean community and the steering committee of the Caricom Girls in ICT Partnership to help encourage more women to step into the tech industry. In 2020,

she was elected the second female Chair of the ICT Association of Suriname, and has led the association to engage with several key stakeholders to develop the ICT sector, and has teamed up with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to produce a webinar series on digital inclusion – an important consideration given the number of people who are unbanked or without access to technology. In February 2022, she was the first female to be assigned as the representative of the Business Services Sector (a group of 70 member companies) of the Suriname Trade and Industry Association.

Additionally, Ms Sonai is an advocate for regional ICT development and collaboration. With input from other professionals in Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, Bahamas, Grenada (including creative studios, private sector organisations, government), she developed a Digital Entrepreneurship Ecosystem model for the Caribbean – a model of the key focal points for development, including legislation, human capital and funding.

She is also the festival manager of the Trinidad-based Anima Caribe Animation Festival and collaborates with the Guyana Animation Network (GAN), Jamaica Animation Network (JANN) and Trinidad Animation Network (TTAN).

Apart from creating advocacy and industry education, Ms Sonai is also involved in research. She produced a Suriname ICT sector monitor to analyse the local ICT sector; and helped produce a market assessment, Identifying Training Needs for ICT Skills. She also teamed up with ICT professionals to design and produce the region's largest ICT event, ICT Summit Paramaribo, over three consecutive years (2013, 2014 and 2015). Additionally, she has been the chair of the Marketing & Communications Committee of CANTO (Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations).

Ms Sonai was nominated by the Guyana Nominating Committee, the first committee to nominate a candidate from outside its geographical area.



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2022 Laureate, Science & Technology

Professor Christine Carrington



Christine Carrington of Trinidad and Tobago is Professor of Molecular Genetics and Virology at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus. She is perhaps the foremost regional authority on virus evolution and molecular epidemiology, respected in the scientific community regionally and globally, with an impressive record of publications and international collaboration. Professor Carrington has been instrumental in developing the human and infrastructural capacity of Trinidad and Tobago and the region to deal with the threat of viruses to public health. Her



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expertise is routinely sought by Caribbean government institutions, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for addressing viral outbreaks which have a major impact on people's lives all over the world.

Currently, she is a member of the UWI COVID-19 Task Force and an expert advisor to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. She has been a key player in understanding the molecular epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 in the Caribbean. More specifically, as principal investigator of the COVID-19 IMPACT project, she leads a team that has been carrying out whole genome sequencing for genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 variants for Trinidad and Tobago and 16 other Caribbean territories.

Professor Carrington's research has contributed to the understanding of the evolutionary and ecological factors underlying the emergence and epidemic behaviour of viruses that are of public health importance to the Caribbean, and she has gone a long way in demonstrating that Trinidad and Tobago is a hub for serious viral genomics research. Her reputation has enabled her to establish research collaborations with several institutes including the University of Oxford, University of London, University of Edinburgh, Imperial College, University of Colorado, Colombia University, University of Texas Medical Branch, Virginia Tech, Vitalant Research Institute, and J. Craig Venter Institute.

Her past and present international collaborators include world-renowned leaders in the fields of virus evolution, arbovirology, viral phylodynamics and viral ecology. In recognition of her scientific achievement, she has been an invited speaker or panel member at

prestigious scientific forums, including in June 2021, the online WHO Global Consultation on SARS-CoV-2 "Variants of Concern and their Impact on Public Health Interventions".

Professor Carrington serves in several important public health and scientific capacities, including as Trinidad and Tobago's representative on the Board of Governors of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology; Coordinator of the Pan American Health Organisation Reference Sequencing Laboratory at the UWI; Director of the Global Virus Network Affiliated Centre of Excellence at UWI, St. Augustine and Committee Member of the Pango Network, an international team of experts who oversee the identification and naming of different lineages of SARS-CoV-2.

Professor Carrington also engages in public outreach work where, drawing on her expertise and deep understanding of virology, genomics and epidemiology, she simplifies complex concepts for lay audience from various sectors of society in order to educate and raise awareness. She has been the recipient of significant awards for her research and mentorship. These include the UWI Research Award for Outstanding Research Mentorship (2012) and selection as one of UWI's "60 under 60" leading academics (2008). She was awarded the Commonwealth Research Fellowship in 2004.



News of Laureates and Our Eminent Panel



Our 2018 Science & Technology Laureate, Dr Adesh Ramsubhag, was recently promoted to the rank of Professor at UWI, St Augustine. We will post the date and time of his inaugural lecture to our FB page when they are announced by UWI.



Our 2020 Science Laureate, Dr Shirin Haque, also of UWI, St Augustine, was a featured speaker last month, at the Indian High Commission in Port of Spain on Atomic Energy in India. Dr Haque is also active on social media, and hosts discussions on science on YouTube.

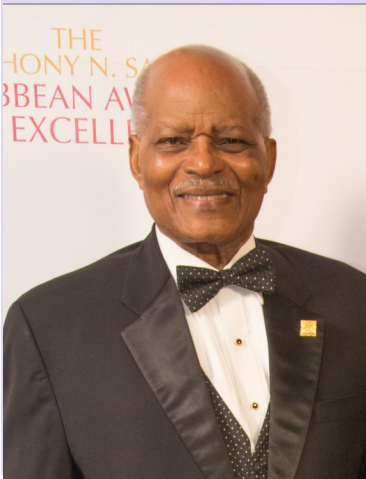


Our 2021 Laureate in Entrepreneurship, Dr Guna Muppuri of Jamaica, has donated his prize of (TT\$) 500,000 to fund scholarships for medical students in

Jamaica. He is chairman of the Bioprist Group, which is leading Jamaica in refurbishing commercial infrastructure for medical tourism and learning facilities. He was recently awarded the Jamaican national award, the Order of Distinction for his philanthropy.

Our 2019 Laureate in Public & Civic Contributions, Mr Corey Lane of Barbados, has been appointed to the Cabinet of Barbadian Prime Minister, Mia Mottley. He is Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs.

Mr Lane is a social activist who has worked to rescue at-risk youth in Barbados for the last decade via the Nature Fun Ranch and other initiatives.



Sir Kenneth Hall, one of the Eminent Persons Panel members from Jamaica, has recently launched an edited volume titled *Caribbean Regionalism*, which he co-edited with Myrtle Chuck-A-Sang.

The book is a compilation of essays and other documents around the theme of regionalism. It features essays from Caribbean academics, politicians and technocrats, and policy documents produced by the CARICOM Secretariat and various other regional organisations. The book contains an introduction by His Excellency, President Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana.

