

Laureate News



ANTHONY N. SABGA
AWARDS
Caribbean Excellence



Sept/Oct 2024 issue



About

The Anthony N Sabga Awards were established in 2005, to recognise and support excellence in human endeavour that uplifts the region.

Since then, we've awarded 62 laureates, presenting them with over TT\$30 million to further their careers.

The Awards' E-News is a bi-monthly publication – all about our laureates and the infrastructure that selects and supports them.

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Sculptor in the Sun

2020 Arts & Letters Laureate, sculptor Jallim Eudovic, received a SUNSHINE Award in October for his significant contribution to visual arts.

Known for his wood, bronze and marble sculptures inspired by St Lucian and Caribbean culture, Eudovic completed a government-commissioned sculpture commemorating St Lucia's independence at the Castries waterfront in 2019. His Sunshine was presented at a ceremony in Newark, New Jersey. Also receiving a SUNSHINE was our 2013 Public & Civic Contributions Laureate Dr Rhonda Maingot of the Living Water Community in Trinidad.

Dr Maingot founded the charitable Catholic community that caters to the poor and socially vulnerable in 1975. She was awarded the SUNSHINE with Living Water co-founder, Rose Jackman.



All-In: The 40-foot-long bronze sculpture by Laureate Jallim Eudovic. Courtesy: waymarking.com



Kerryann takes flight

Our 2024 Public & Civic Contributions Laureate, Kerryann Ifill, took flight recently with a four-page spread in the September/October issue of Caribbean Airlines' in-flight magazine, Caribbean Beat.

Kerryann related some of the barriers people with disabilities in the Caribbean encounter, and recounted some of her “tiring and tireless” advocacy for the disabled community. While noting progress on inclusivity, Kerryann also lamented “way too many instances where persons with disabilities have to beg for equal treatment.”

“To be recognised by the prestigious Anthony N Sabga Awards for Excellence this year and receiving the Order of Freedom of Barbados last year means that somebody else took time to pay attention to the things that I do, and it gives me the opportunity to reflect on what my life has done.”

Kerryann Ifill – 2024 Laureate – in the September/October issue of Caribbean Beat magazine

“I’M JUST AN ORDINARY PERSON”

Award-winning Barbadian disability rights activist and former President of the Senate Kerryann Ifill (who experienced loss of vision as a child) on the immeasurable value of integration and inclusion; what keeps her motivated and inspired; and the ways in which she hopes those with and without disabilities can shift their perspectives — as told to Shelly-Ann Inliss

My disability is blinding on most days because it’s made me who I am. I choose it to be one. People think disabilities are a curse and get depressed because they think it’ll keep them back. The only thing that keeps me back is me. Simultaneously, I’m not so blasé to think that there aren’t barriers out there.

The World Health Organisation estimated that 15% of every population has disabilities. Let’s round it down to 10%. Say you live on a tiny island with 100 children and 10 have a form of disability, but you only have a limited amount of money and can only educate 10 of the non-disabled, because to educate the disabled costs more extra training for the teacher, equipment, and infrastructure. That’s the reality. Does it mean these children don’t deserve all those things? Not at all.

On a recent trip to Kenya, I met university professors who were deaf, who were autistic, who were blind. Imagine if they didn’t have an opportunity for higher education. These amazing people wouldn’t have been able to make contributions to their communities. Apart from the fact that they’re disability activists or advocates, they make everyday contributions. What if they weren’t given the opportunity?

The challenge is we need to recognise persons with disabilities don’t need to be exceptional to be given the right to be included. I understand the economics and practicalities of it, but we need to start from the inclusive. There have a tiny dose that stop someone who is fully ambulatory from getting into the building? No. But if you have only stairs, it prevents people with mobility challenges from accessing it.

For persons with a hearing impairment, when Zoom introduced American Sign Language (ASL) and captioning — it’s not great but it’s there — does it mean that if I’m planning an event that I should rely on Zoom’s artificial intelligence (AI) to provide you with all your needs? No.

But at the very least, everybody should turn it on because the hearing impaired have the right to join any meeting or webinar. Captioning shouldn’t be foreign to anyone putting it on — it should be second nature. That’s the start. Then, these hearing-impaired persons can attend every meeting or webinar.

The norm is to start with at least the basic considerations, and that’s where we need to get or strive to. I’m now having a Cerebral Palsy make sure persons with disabilities can enjoy it, too. There are ways to make these things enjoyable.

ANTHONY N. SABGA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

I’d like to see implemented. It’s tedious trying to get 14 countries to sign on to one thing.

Despite this, I think disability awareness in the Caribbean is getting better. In Kira has a ministry specifically to deal with disabilities, though it may not be the only thing they deal with. Barbados has the National Disabilities Unit, which is a government agency under the Ministry of People Empowerment & Elder Affairs.

The Caribbean Court of Justice this year disseminated guidelines on how legal officers should treat the issue of disabilities in the court. Barbados, Trinidad, and St Vincent have legislation pending for the rights of persons with disabilities. Also, in July the Central Bank of Barbados launched Marketing Conduct Guidelines, and it included that banks must offer more services to persons with disabilities.

All of that is wonderful, but we still have way too many instances where persons with disabilities have to beg for equal treatment, where persons still behave like they’re doing us a favour as opposed to fulfilling our rights, where governments don’t ensure that persons with disabilities can be contributing members of their societies.

I might not see us as service recipients, as objects, as subjects. They see us as passive recipients. They don’t see us as actively engaged. Banks with smart ATMs, Banking Machines (ATM/ATM), etc., yet in Barbados there isn’t one ATM that I can use independently. Persons with disabilities still have to fight to be included.

As Vice-Chair of the Commonwealth Disabled People’s Forum, we have the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, which we are encouraging Commonwealth governments to support so they have a more inclusive approach to disabilities with their various projects and programmes. That’s the next major international effort to be included.



Dr Mahendra Persaud (left) with Guyana's Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha, at the launch of GRDB 18 in October. Courtesy, Ministry of Agriculture Facebook page

Dr. Persaud adds variety

Chief Scientist at the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB), 2023 Science & Technology Laureate Dr Mahendra Persaud, has produced yet another variety of rice for Guyana's farmers.

Dr Persaud and his team launched GRDB 18 in October. It's a variety that has the ability to withstand delayed harvesting and is resistant to the blast pathogen.

New rice varieties produced by breeders at the GRDB are credited with increasing farmers' yields by 40-50%. "We have tried to mix different genetic backgrounds, local and foreign," noted Dr Persaud at the launch, "to come up with something that will be useful to our farmers."



National award for Prof Hosein

Patrick Hosein – Professor of Computer Science at UWI St Augustine – received Trinidad and Tobago’s highest award, the Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (ORTT) on Republic Day in August.

Our Joint Science & Technology Laureate for 2015 was cited by the national awards committee for an his “unwavering commitment to leveraging technology in underserved communities.”

Prof Hosein has also been credited with redesigning UWI’s MSc in Computer Science, by replacing dated courses with new ones that better reflect the country’s needs.



Professor Patrick Hosein with his wife Deborah Hosein and mother, Merle.



Living Water Community's Dr Rhonda Maingot (fourth from left) at the Inspirational Women's Forum Awards in September. Courtesy IWFTT.

The inspirational Dr Rhonda Maingot

For 50 years of service to the needy in T&T, 2015 Laureate Dr Rhonda Maingot was awarded the inaugural Inspirational Legacy Award by the Inspirational Women's Forum of Trinidad and Tobago (IWFTT) in September.

The Living Water Community that Dr Maingot co-founded in 1975 has expanded its outreach to include shelters, rehabilitation centres, and programmes for migrants, the homeless, and the terminally ill.



Musical creative Dr Stefan Walcott of Barbados with Latin Grammy Award winner, Carlinhos Brown.

Dr Walcott's Brazilian connection

Musician and UWI Cave Hill music educator Dr Stefan Walcott credited the Anthony N Sabga Awards with opening doors when he met with Brazilian musician Carlinhos Brown in August.

In an Instagram post, Walcott expressed his obvious delight at meeting with the two-time Latin Grammy “superstar” - singer of the global hit ‘Magalenha’ - and being marvellously treated by Brown’s mother.

“None of this would have been possible without the award bestowed on me by @anthony_n_sabga_awards,” concluded Walcott. “Muito obrigado!!!”



Economist Dr Terrence Farrell – the newest member of the Regional EPP.



Outgoing EPP member, Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, receives a farewell gift from Chairman of the ANSA McAL Foundation Andrew Sabga, as she stepped down as a Foundation Director in July.

New to the EPP

The Regional Eminent Persons Panel (EPP) that selects our laureates annually has welcomed former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Terrence Farrell, to the group.

Dr Farrell, an Economist and Fellow of the Institute of Banking and Finance of Trinidad and Tobago, takes up his EPP appointment as the representative of the ANSA McAL Foundation Board.

He replaces Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, who stepped down from the Board and the EPP in July. Heavily involved in civil society organisations devoted to women's and children's rights, Mahabir-Wyatt was praised by fellow directors for a "tremendous legacy of selfless service."