

Laureate *News*



About Us

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

Since then, we've awarded 66 laureates, presenting them with over TT\$32 million to further their careers.

The Awards' Laureate News is a regular publication – all about our laureates and the infrastructure that selects and supports them.

[Learn More](#)

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Chairman's Christmas Message

Dear Laureates and friends,

First off, all the best for the Christmas season!

The Anthony N Sabga Awards, Caribbean Excellence celebrated our 20th anniversary this year. It was an opportunity for us to reflect on the programme's trajectory and take stock.

Our 20th anniversary ceremony at the Hyatt Trinidad was an incredible success that included a cinematic history of the programme, narrated live and backed by a mini orchestra. The ceremony ended on a high note with a powerhouse performance by a sextet of Grammy-nominated jazz musicians led by our 2025 Arts & Letters Laureate, composer and trumpeter Etienne Charles.

The infrastructure that makes the Awards possible by screening nominees and selecting awardees bid farewell to Justice Christopher Blackman as he retired from the regional Eminent Persons Panel (EPP). Justice Blackman served on the EPP since inception in 2005, and his wit and insights will be missed.

In his stead, the EPP has appointed another Barbadian – former CEO of the Cave Hill School of Business, Dr Jeannine Comma, who had previously served as Chair of the Barbados Country Nominating

Committee. The panel welcomes her discernment and business expertise.

In other news, we stepped up our social media presence in 2025, sharing the ongoing accomplishments of our College of Laureates. We intend to accelerate the effort next year, highlighting the efforts of Caribbean professionals who set the standard in their respective fields.

As always, we'd like to thank the entire EPP and members of all five Country Nominating Committees (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, the OECS, and T&T) for stellar work that brings the region's best talent to our attention. Our thanks and best regards also go out to our five researchers. Their groundwork produces exceptional nominee dossiers that form the basis of EPP deliberations.

We anticipate a great new cohort of Caribbean Excellence awardees in 2026, certain that each will continue to do their small part to move the region forward. I hope that you, too, have had a productive year. May you enjoy your Christmas vacation to the fullest with those nearest and dearest to you.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew N Sabga

Mr Andrew N Sabga
Chairman
The ANSA McAL Foundation



A new Teague in town

17-year-old Jaden Teague-Nunez – son of our 2014 Arts & Letters Laureate Professor Liam Teague – shared the stage with his father at the prestigious Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC50) at the Indiana Convention Centre in November.

The duo was the only steelpan performance at the percussion showcase and they highlighted the instrument's versatility by playing a set that ranged from Rhapsody in Steel to the fiery Grotesque by composer Ben Wahlund, and Liam's own original composition, Hands Like Lightning.

The T&T Newsday described Jaden's performance of A Visit to Hell – a multi-movement piece composed by his dad – as “one of the afternoon's most riveting moments.” It was the same composition performed when Jaden earned the honour of becoming the first pannist to win the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Competition, in 2024.



Liam and Jaden at a recent performance
(Photo courtesy Newsday/Marna Niebergall de Rojas)

Prof Haque describes a strange visitor

Astronomer Professor Shirin Haque has kept up her series of YouTube videos explaining cosmic events, recently posting about the passage of 3I Atlas – a comet that swung by our solar system in November/December.

Our 2020 Science & Technology Laureate explained that the comet was being hyped in astronomy circles because it wasn't behaving typically. "The cometary tails that we are so accustomed to seeing are barely visible in this one," elaborated Haque. "The tail is even pointing towards the sun, when normally the solar radiation and the solar wind causes it to point away from the sun." She added that the comet is a whopping 7 billion years old, much older than our solar system.

Professor Haque has posted over 100 videos on her YouTube channel. These include safety tips on viewing a solar eclipse, and her amazement at research which suggests that evidence of an ancient planetary impact between Earth and the hypothesized planet Theia may actually still exist, hidden within planet Earth.

You can check out Professor Haque's explainer on 3I Atlas [here](#).



Mustard Seed recovery

The Mustard Seed home for people with disabilities in Montego Bay, Jamaica continues to recover after being battered by Hurricane Melissa. The home, founded by our 2006 Public & Civic Contributions Laureate, Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon, is still without electricity and running water after being completely flooded, but the road leading to it has been partially cleared and staff continue to provide care for over 30 residents “amid difficult conditions.”

Mustard Seed Communities operates 12 homes in Jamaica that provide care for nearly 500 children and adults with disabilities. Many of those homes were damaged by the Category 5 storm that hit Jamaica on October 28. Being interviewed on CNN shortly after the hurricane, Monsignor Ramkissoon estimated that repairs would cost the community over US\$1 million. “And that’s not even talking about things like broken furniture and all that kind of stuff. But I know we’ll get the help.”

You can donate to Mustard Seed’s recovery efforts [here](#).



Etienne scores Alvin Ailey dance

Our 2025 Arts & Letters Laureate, jazz composer and trumpeter Etienne Charles, has composed an original score for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's "Jazz Island", which was scheduled to debut December 5 and run through early January at the New York City Center.

"Jazz Island" is actually adapted from a folklore story recorded by the late Trinidadian actor and dancer, Geoffrey Holder. Choreographer Maija Garcia told the New York Times in November that she had reached out to Etienne because they're "both interested in the Afro-Caribbean aesthetic inside of American music and dance."

Etienne told the Times he immediately saw the choreographer's vision when she described it. For the music to accompany a dance set in a market, he drew on memories of going to market in Trinidad as a child: "The ladies shouting to get everybody's attention to what they're selling, lots of little noises of different people talking."



Etienne Charles
(Photo by Luigi Creese)

Ayo pleased with increasing prosecutions

Family therapist Dr Ayodele Dalgety-Dean (familiarily known as ‘Ayo’) recently appeared on a half-hour interview on the Guyana Standard’s “Frank Discussions”. The founder of Blossom Inc, a Guyanese NGO that promotes interventions and education to children and families affected by sexual exploitation, told her interviewer that she is heartened by year on year increases in successful prosecutions of sexual violence in Guyana. “Ultimately that is the outcome we are looking for,” said Dalgety-Dean.

Our 2025 Public & Civic Contributions laureate also said that receiving the Anthony N Sabga Award was timely recognition for her entire staff. “Everyone works so hard in such a trauma-related field. And I think a lot of time, people do not know or appreciate the amount of trauma that’s involved in hearing stories of sexual abuse and exploitation every single day.”

You can watch Dr Dalgety-Dean's full interview [here](#).

In T&T, Dr Adesh Sirjusingh and his team at the Directorate of Women’s Health received an award for Service Excellence in the Public Service. The honour was presented by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank.



A fitting sendoff for Danielle

Hundreds of film and television creatives gathered for a memorial service for T&T filmmaker and 2019 Arts & Letters Laureate Danielle Dieffenthaller at the Anchorage, Chaguaramas on December 2.

As producer/director of the six-season, 86-episode Westwood Park series (1997-2004) Dieffenthaller was passionate about promoting the Caribbean film industry. “She was a storyteller,” recalled Westwood Park actor Natasha Jones at the service, which streamed live to an audience of almost 2,000, all of whom were encouraged to attend in bright colours. “She could hold court with a real good story, and I really really miss that about her.”

The service also included performances by her brother, soca artiste Kes Dieffenthaller, and rapso group 3 Canal. You can watch it in its entirety [here](#).

Danielle died of complications of kidney disease at 60. The Awards programme would like to extend our sincere condolences to her family and myriad friends.



And in news of the infrastructure that supports the Awards

Prof Bourne launches his memoir

His Excellency Professor Compton Bourne's memoir, launched at the University of Guyana in November, "interweaves the evolution of his own personal journey with the region's own development trajectory." So said former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Shelton Nichols at the launch, adding that the book captured the aspirations of many who were privileged to study under its author, a noted Caribbean economist.

Currently serving as Guyana's Ambassador to Brazil, Prof Bourne is also former Chancellor of the University of Guyana. He noted in his remarks that his central concern has been "how to make universities more central and effective in their roles as agents of social and economic development and social cohesion. And how to make higher education more accessible to students from less advantaged economic circumstances."

"Building a Better Future: Memoirs of a Caribbean Economist" is available on Amazon. You can watch the entire launch [here](#).

In other news, Professor Bourne will chair the annual

meeting of the regional Eminent Persons Panel (EPP) on January 17 at the Hilton Trinidad. The EPP will select the 2026 laureates at that meeting from a shortlist of candidates from the 5 Caribbean territories covered by the programme.

Since the first Caribbean Excellence awards were made in 2006, 66 laureates have been recognised.



Professor Compton Bourne, OE presents a copy of his memoir to Acting University Librarian Dr Simone Bernard



Major General Joe Singh – a member of the Awards' Eminent Persons Panel – chats at the launch