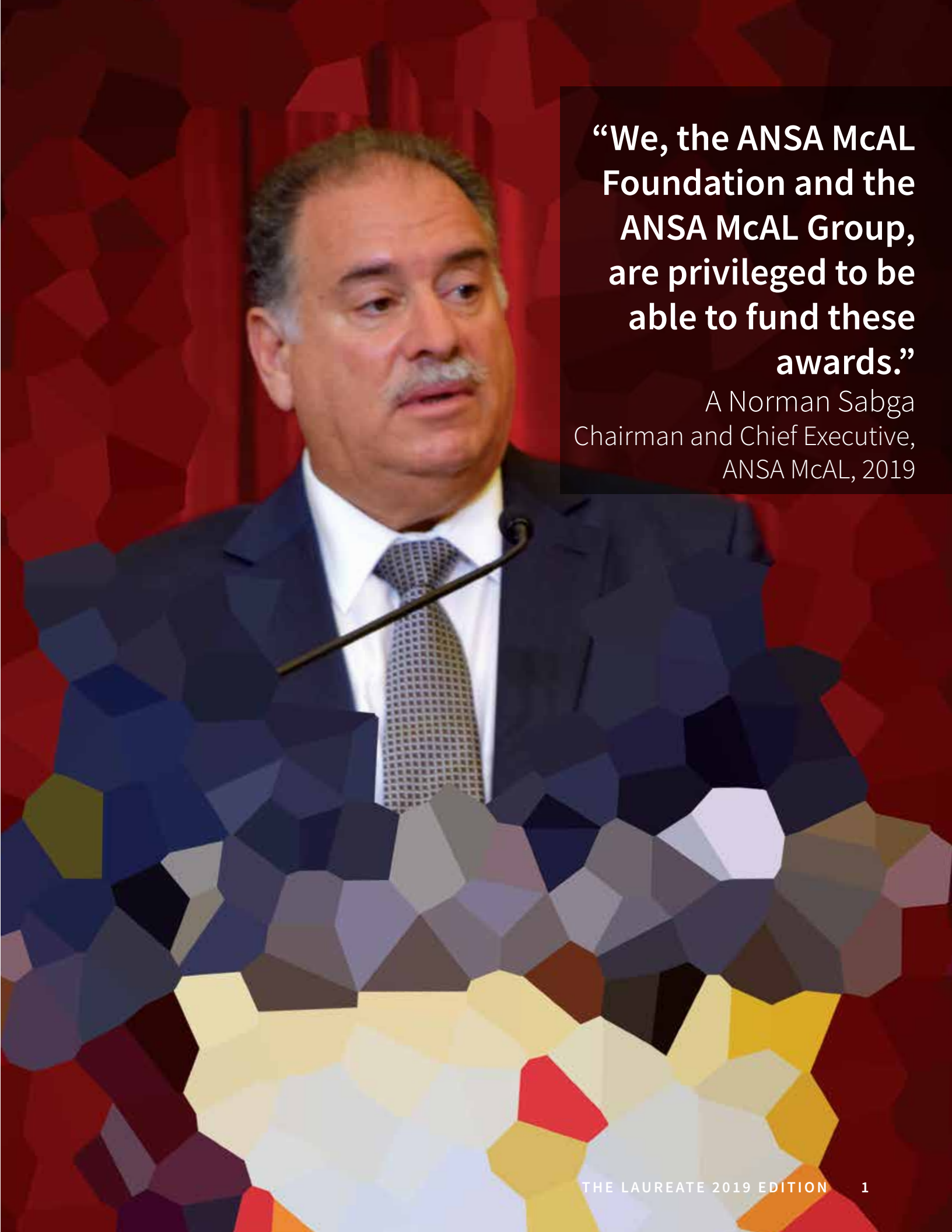


The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards of Excellence

The LAUREATE

2019 Edition





**“We, the ANSA McAL
Foundation and the
ANSA McAL Group,
are privileged to be
able to fund these
awards.”**

A Norman Sabga
Chairman and Chief Executive,
ANSA McAL, 2019



Dr Anthony N Sabga, ORTT
Founder of the ANSA Caribbean Awards for Excellence
(1923–2017)

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The 2019 Laureates: Danielle Dieffenthaler, Kimala Bennett, Corey Lane, Michael Taylor

Introduction

Between our last publication, *The Excellent Decade*, in 2015 and this one, there have been momentous changes in the awards. We lost our founder, Dr Anthony N Sabga, in 2017, and it has been my privilege to assume the mantle of Patron of these awards. I have done so many times in the last three years, but I reiterate here: I pledge my and the ANSA McAL Group's support to funding these awards for many years to come.

In a departure from the preceding decade we have, since 2016, taken our awards ceremony to Guyana, Jamaica and Barbados. Each group of laureates featured in this magazine was conferred in one of those territories.

In our second decade, we have also embarked on disseminating material on our Laureates' work and lives via online platforms and social media. We have created podcasts and videos featuring Laureates, we have hosted lectures, and we made a documentary film, *Sun Sea and Science: Trinidad After Oil*, which features the work of three science

laureates in Trinidad and Tobago. The film premiered at the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival in 2018. It has been shown at the University of London's Centre for Integrated Caribbean Research and the Society for Caribbean Studies Conference in the UK (2019).

As privileged as we at the McAL Foundation are to be able to fund these awards, we would not be able to do it without support. Our Country Nominating Committees, and our regional Eminent Persons Panel, who oversee these awards, provide us with exceptional service for which we are grateful. It reminds us, yet again, of the enormous and variegated pool of talent that lives in the region.

We believe our Laureates are rays of light breaking the canopy of the storm clouds that literally and figuratively cover our beloved Caribbean region. We hope their light reaches you, the reader, and that you share it with as many people as possible.

A Norman Sabga, LLD (Hon) UWI
Chairman, The ANSA McAL Foundation



A Norman Sabga

ABOUT THE ANTHONY N SABGA CARIBBEAN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence is the first programme of its kind in the Caribbean. Four prizes are awarded annually for achievements in Arts & Letters, Entrepreneurship, Public & Civic Contributions and Science & Technology. The philosophy behind the Awards is that in order for the Caribbean to develop, in the sense of a civilization rather than an industrial centre, excellence in key fields of endeavour must be sought out, rewarded, and promoted for the benefit of all citizens. In this regard, the Awards are similar in intention to the Nobel Prizes.

The idea was developed from the meeting of many minds. As Chairman Emeritus of the ANSA McAL Group of companies in Trinidad, the late Dr Anthony N Sabga (1923-2017) was able to give a body to an initial idea from Mr Wilfred Naimool, after consultation with Sir Ellis Clarke and various others. The idea was finally ready to be given tangible shape in 2005, and the Awards programme was formally launched in Port of Spain.

The Awards are fully funded by the ANSA McAL Foundation. The prizes consist of TT\$500,000, a medal, and a citation which are presented at a ceremony early in the year. Eight of the eleven ceremonies so far have been held in Trinidad, while the 2017 ceremony was held in Georgetown, Guyana, the 2018 ceremony in Kingston, Jamaica and the 2019 ceremony in Barbados. It is expected that the ceremony will be held in different territories in the future.

The Awards programme was inaugurated in 2005, and the first laureates were named, and received their awards in

2006. Presentation ceremonies were then held biennially in Port of Spain in 2008 and 2010. Dr Sabga announced at the 2010 ceremony that the Awards would be given annually as of 2011. This continued with a “gap” year between 2015 and 2017, and it is planned that the awards will continue to be an annual event.

GOVERNANCE

The Awards programme is governed by a panel of regional persons called the Eminent Persons Panel (EPP). It comprises people, respected in science, art, public service, commerce, the professions and academia, from throughout the region. The EPP is presently chaired by Sir Shridath Ramphal of Guyana and Barbados. Its members include:

- Justice Christopher Blackman, GCM (Barbados)
- Professor Compton Bourne, OE (Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago)
- Mr Christopher Bovell, CD (Jamaica)
- Professor Bridget Brereton (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Dr Charmaine Gardner, SLMH (St Lucia)
- The Most Honourable Professor Sir Kenneth O Hall, ON, GCMJ, OJ (Jamaica)
- Professor E Nigel Harris (Guyana, St Lucia)
- Sir Royston Hopkin, KCMG (Grenada)
- Mrs Diana Mahabir-Wyatt, MDW, Hon LLD UWI (Trinidad and Tobago)
- The Honourable Justice Rolston Nelson (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Major General (Retd) Joseph G Singh, MSS, MSc, FCMI, FRGS, RCDS (Guyana).

Each of five territories (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, the OECS, and Trinidad and Tobago) has a selection committee, comprised of people from academic, business, and civic organizations in those territories who select each territory's best nominee. The committees are presently headed by: Dr Jeannine Comma (Barbados), Mr Al Creighton (Guyana), Mr Morin Seymour (Jamaica), Mrs E Ann Henry, QC (OECS), and Mrs Helen Drayton (Trinidad and Tobago).

HOW ARE SELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS MADE?

The nomination process is an open one: anyone may nominate a candidate, and candidates may nominate themselves, using the appropriate form, which may be downloaded from the awards website. The Foundation accepts nominations on a "rolling" schedule (i.e. at any time during the year). However, to be considered for the following year, a candidate must be nominated no later than March 31, of the preceding year.

Nominees for the ANSA Awards should have already displayed excellence in their fields of endeavour (Arts & Letters, Entrepreneurship, Science & Technology, and Public & Civic Contributions). However, the Awards are not intended to be "lifetime achievement" or "crowning glory" awards. It is intended that persons who have shown exceptional promise in their fields, and have already made substantial achievements, but who have the potential for further important work, be considered.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

After nominations are received, they must pass through a three-stage vetting procedure: A Country Nominating Committee (CNC); a research-review of credentials and achievements; and a final selection process by the regional Eminent Persons Panel (EPP). The country committee selects its strongest candidates in each of the categories, and all country committees present their best four candidates to the Eminent Persons Panel, which makes the final selection. The Panel may decide (as it did in 2017) that candidates of suitable merit were not presented and decline to make an award in any category.

The decisions of the Eminent Persons Panel are independent of the Foundation, are final, and not subject to review.

CRITERIA FOR NOMINEES:

1. The nominee should show a track record of consistently superior work that demonstrates excellence, originality, and a potential to create knowledge and add to the disciplines in which the nominee works. The work must be recognized by authorities in the field.
 - 1b. There is often a lack of consensus within disciplines for various reasons. Nominees must show excellence in the opinion of a significant number of experts, but these opinions need not be universal.
2. The nominee's work should show the potential for future development,

which would be positively aided by the award. This is a function of the nominee's age, his/her field, and the particularities of each.

3. The nominee should produce work, ideas, theories, or whatever products in his/her field are referred to, which are likely to serve as models for further work, to encourage new and interesting ideas which are directly relevant to the Caribbean's particularities, and to influence the present and coming generations.
4. While it is desirable that nominees be held up as exemplars for the Caribbean people, the reality is that most heroes are created retrospectively. Therefore, personality and personal attributes, unless these are overwhelming, should be secondary to the nominee's ability, and work done.



Winslow Craig

Arts & Letters Laureate, 2017, Guyana

Prelude

The year was 1967. It was a bright sunny day in the peaceful, tranquil setting of a clearing in the forest. The breeze blew gently, rustling through the leaves of the giant *hubudee* tree.

The air was filled with great expectation and hope, as a beautiful young woman lay on a bedding of fibre, atop a makeshift wooden bed. She gripped the edges of the wooden bed; her knuckles white from the strain of the effort she was making. Beads of sweat on her forehead rolled down the sides of her face as she grimaced in pain as the latest contractions wracked her body. She wanted to scream, but she did not. It seemed like she was in labour for an eternity. She took a deep breath and she pushed, and she pushed. “How much longer is this going to last?” she wondered, as she had been there before dawn and it was now almost past midday. Why was this taking so long, why was this so difficult? She had given birth three times before and she could not recall suffering nearly as much. Her mother seemed exhausted as she bent over her and felt with both hands, the sides and lower section of her massive belly which was filled with new life struggling to enter a new world. Her elder sister stood by her bedside with a tired look of concern, but managed to smile at her reassuringly.

The little room in the small wooden home was hot. There was one small window through which sunlight filtered, and where occasionally a cool draught of refreshing breeze would enter. Outside in the bright sunlight was a huge mango tree with wide extended branches that provided much needed shade on a day like today. Birds flitted among the branches, and whistled and sang their merry songs. The tree provided partial shade for the small home which now contained two generations, and the next.

Standing beside the mango tree was a young man in the prime of his youth. His powerful build and confident posture were in stark contrast to the look of grave concern and worry upon his face. He stared at the doorway of the house. There was a door blind made of natural fibre that blocked his view inside. He had stood vigil here for almost eight hours and he was now quite anxious.

The young woman inside who was groaning and struggling to give birth was his wife – his strong and beautiful young wife who had already given him three beautiful daughters. He stood strong, yes, but he could not disguise his concern for his wife and his unborn son. Yes! He knew he was having a son. Why else would this be so difficult? He had to have a son!

When his first daughter was born, he was quite happy especially because he knew that his wife wanted a girl. They were both happy and delighted. The little girl, as she grew, would become a good companion for his wife when he was not around and later on a good little helper, too. This was the beginning of his own family and it made him a happy man. His happiness was multiplied two years later, when he welcomed his second daughter into the world. Yes, he wanted a son, but he accepted his daughter and gave thanks and praised God that all was well. His family was now

growing and so was his responsibility, but it did not bother him one bit. He was now a husband, a father and he was a man, and it was his God-given duty to take good care of his precious family. His responsibility grew greater when his wife bore him their third child. He had desperately hoped for a son, but this was not to be; he had a third daughter. He was sorely disappointed, but he loved his child (his third girl) nonetheless. Taking care of his now expanding family was quite a job. Things were difficult most of the time, but he never shirked his responsibility; he was always up to the task. He had a wonderful family, and it was a great joy for him to come home in the evenings to the warmth and delightful laughter of his darling daughters and his loving wife; they were the purpose and his sole reason for living, and drove him to do his best at all times.

Now here he was standing, a strong powerful young man with a great responsibility, anxiously awaiting the birth of his first son. From the moment that his wife informed him that she was pregnant with their fourth child, for whatever reason he was convinced that this was his long-awaited son! It just had to be. He looked at himself as a man, a proud, strong and confident man (amongst his peers he had no equal). He always stood at the head of the line; he led the way and other men followed; yet most of his peers already had sons.

Everything about this pregnancy seemed different. From the beginning, his wife always seemed a little more sick and physically stressed; her belly was even bigger and more elongated in shape and form. He dreamt a lot about seeds and nuts, as did his wife. Things were different with the girls, as they had both dreamt of birds and fishes and flowers. Now here they were, both desperately wanting a son.

It was now sometime past midday on that beautiful day in July, and everything seemed brighter, clearer and sharper. This was a good sign. He had not eaten since last evening and he was not even hungry right now; it was as though time had stood still for him. He looked and listened and waited patiently, desperately hoping for good news.

He prayed to God and all his long-gone ancestors and all of the universe, to have mercy and bless his wife and his unborn son.

Inside the room, her mother, the old woman, seemed troubled without readily showing it. She gently placed her wrinkled hand on top of her daughter's massive orb of life and closed her eyes for a second, then she looked her daughter in the eye for a brief moment. She said not a word as she turned and walked towards the doorway. Tears welled up in the young woman's eyes as her mother walked away. Her sister held her hand reassuringly. Tears rolled down the sides of her face, mingled with her sweat.

The natural fibre blind was pushed aside, and the old woman appeared in the doorway. She looked at the young man with a blank expression in her eyes then she turned silently and walked across the warm white sand towards the forest and disappeared into its dark green depths. The forest seemed alive and, in a brief instant, it swallowed her up without a trace.

Fear gripped the young man behind his neck, and around his broad shoulders, cold fingers held his throat and clawed at his heart. He trembled from deep within and felt his heart beating in his ears at an alarming rate. He was frozen in his position as his emotional state became quite fluid; he had to do something. He was confused. Suddenly he felt a jolt in his body and spirit, and he was now in two places at the same time – he could see himself standing like a statue beside the mango tree, but was also at the doorway almost looking into the room where his wife was in labour. He heard her laboured breathing and could almost touch the air of tension and uncertainty that filled the room. He had to enter that room whether in body or in spirit. Something had to be done.

Suddenly something collided with his spirit at the doorway, and the stern voice of the old lady said, "Get hold of yourself, boy." He felt his two selves being slammed back together. Now beside the mango tree, again, he blinked – how long it had been, he could not say, but there was the old lady, pushing the door blind

Fear gripped the young man behind his neck, and around his broad shoulders, cold fingers held his throat and clawed at his heart.

Her body was torn asunder. She screamed as the world exploded in red and white light! Her sister exclaimed with joy, “Is a bai! Is a big fat baby bai!”

aside as she disappeared into the darkened room. He thought he saw her look over her shoulder directly into his eyes. He was not sure, but he felt hope surging from deep within his being. “It’s alright,” a soft voice whispered. Was it the old lady? He wasn’t sure.

A gentle breeze rustled through the leaves above, the birds sang their merry songs – the *kuduree* especially whistled a delightful tune. Somewhere just beyond the edge of the forest, the *fia fia*/greenheart bird, screamed “fi-fi-yeow!” These were all good signs.

Back inside the room, through pain and exhaustion, sweat and tears, the young woman saw the old lady – her mother – re-enter the room with her comforting and reassuring presence.

She was now more energetic; her movements were deliberate and purposeful. There was a sparkle in her weary old eyes. She smiled softly and her wrinkled face shed a few years. She placed both of her wrinkled old hands gently on her daughter’s glistening belly, closed her eyes and whispered softly a silent prayer. She opened her eyes and said: “It is time.”

She walked around the bed behind her daughter’s head, looked down in her face then wiped the sweat from her forehead. She climbed up onto the bed in a sort of crouching, kneeling position, placed her strong sinewy arms beneath her daughter’s upper torso, and lifted her up just as her body tensed and spasmed in contraction. The young woman took a deep breath then gritted her teeth, and pushed with all her might. The old lady held her firm around her upper back and they braced and pushed together. The moment was a fusion of the past, the present and the future, for it seemed as though all the ancestors backed and braced the old lady as she strained and pushed with her youngest child. The past pushed the present desperately so that the future might be birthed.

Her body was torn asunder. She screamed as the world exploded in red and white light! Her sister exclaimed with joy, “Is a bai! Is a big fat baby bai!”

I was quite comfortable in my “first world”; it was cavernous and expansive, and filled with life-giving fluid. This world was warm and nurturing, comfortable and peaceful. I felt loved by everything within and without, and it felt secure and safe. But I was growing and occupying more space as time wore on. My world was changing, and I did not know why – my space was smaller now. There was a restlessness in me, and an atmosphere of urgency and tension permeated my entire world, seeped into my spirit and my total being. Something critical and stupendous seemed about to happen. I did not want to leave my world, but it was closing in around me, pushing and squeezing me out. I fought and I fought, I held on for dear life – my world was coming to an end. I will not let go. Oh no! My world was collapsing around me, shrinking, shrinking. I was being pushed out/expelled. Something on the other side held on to me; it pulled, dragged and sucked me into another dimension. I screamed in desperation.

My insides expanded as a sudden rush of clean, cool, fresh, sweet oxygen filled my tiny lungs. I screamed and filled my lungs once again, this thing felt awesome – was this the breath of life! But I had already lived an entire lifetime in my own private world; this must be my second life – my second world. It appeared all red, and quite unlike my first world which I had felt and sensed and experienced with every fibre of my being. My world was me, and I, my world. I felt the need to do something more than scream to fully connect to my new world. Why was it all red?

I opened my eyes and beheld a glorious white light, it filled my being throughout with fantastic beautiful shapes and forms and countless wonderful, indescribable things – this was my new world.

I felt a soft, gentle complicated feeling as another spirit touched my own, then it severed me completely from my first world. It was shocking. I was completely disconnected for a brief moment. Then I was instantly reconnected on a profoundly deeper level – mental, emotional, and spiritual; it was inexplicably complex, but felt quite natural.

Two strong and gentle spirits enveloped me completely, and I knew then that I could not be separated again until one or both of these loving, nurturing spirits, disappeared completely from my new world.

This was my first interaction (conscious or subconscious) with my mother and father. “Is a bai! Is a big fat baby bai!”

My father heard these words then he heard me scream. These were the most delightful, wonderfully satisfying sounds that he had heard all day (maybe all his life). He had made his mark – the circle was complete. His name would go on. Together with my mother, and my three sisters and now me – my father felt whole and complete. We were all a part of him and he a part of us. We were all inextricably bound together by the fibres and strands of life forever. My father understood this to be the core foundation and the very essence of family. It was a divine blessing for him, and he knew he had a sacred duty to perform. His life was not his own, for his family was his life. Take care of his family and he took care of his life. When his family is secure his life is preserved – he will live a long time even after he is gone.

My father never articulated his thoughts on life and family in such descriptive language, but by his actions he revealed many practical lessons that have moulded my character and helped to shape my whole philosophy of life.

My earliest memory or recollection of myself as a conscious being goes back to 1969. The images and scenario are still quite vivid in my mind. I can see myself, a tiny boy, quite energetic and full of curiosity. I am standing on a patch of firm white sand wearing a little white cotton shirt my mother made for me. I wore no pants or underwear and I stood there in innocence, my left hand holding on to my tiny, soft and wrinkled scrotum. I am looking up to the sky, nibbling at the fingernail on my right thumb. My young, developing mind is being challenged as I struggle to comprehend what I am seeing. I am looking towards the branches of a tall coconut tree which at the same time appeared to be that of a *ko-r-yu* tree, which was a short distance away.

It is a cool windy day with blue skies, white clouds and bright sunshine. Somewhere within this picture I can see the black and yellow *kuduree* bird, flitting and fluttering, jumping around singing a sweet and happy song. The wind rustled the leaves of the *ko-r-yu* and coconut trees. They are separate and different, but somehow there is a fusion in the sky, and they are one. The blue sky seems far away with its beautiful, soft white clouds. The rustling leaves and branches of the coconut/*ko-r-yu* tree reached up to the seemingly endless sky like long arms with green leafy fingers tickling the white fluffy clouds as they slowly drifted by. The sun smiled and shone brighter and the *kuduree* bird sang and whistled a happy song.

I am mesmerized by this wonderful picture within which I am standing, clothed in a cotton shirt and my innocence, fiddling with my scrotum and nibbling at my nails. I believe with much conviction that this was truly my first artistic adventure. Many years later in art school I would realize that this was surrealism come alive in the fertile imagination, and the fluid reality of an infant’s artistic mind.

This first conscious memory of myself was a prelude to and a microcosm of, my life in my formative years, growing up in an environment that nurtured, supported and sustained every aspect of my existence – from the physical to the emotional, the educational, the mental and the spiritual.

My family home was nestled quaintly on the shoulders of a low, sandy hill with the family farm nearby, surrounded on every side in the protective embrace of the forest and its mighty trees. Some of these trees standing on massive trunks were supported by wide flaring buttresses and roots that penetrated the earth deeply. Some snaked across the ground like lazy sleeping *camoudis* (anacondas). These green giants such as the *hu-bu-dee*, the *sow-a-ree*, the *baromali*, the *kamahora*, and the *packuri* trees stood strong and faithful, like towering sentinels with knarled and knotty branches; their numerous outstretched arms always providing

This first conscious memory of myself was a prelude to and a microcosm of, my life in my formative years, growing up in an environment that nurtured, supported and sustained every aspect of my existence.



shade and juicy delicious fruits when their season came around.

Sometimes it was sad when one of these giants fell. It felt like the loss of a dear old grandparent or some other ancient ancestor who was always generous and kind. I vividly remember when the big old *baromali* tree fell. It was an awesome and terribly frightening sight to see the old guardian bend and sway in the storm then bow his last farewell as it rumbled deeply and groaned. Then with an ear-splitting, thundering crack and a mighty shudder, with the wind howling and hissing through its leaves, the massive ancient form came crashing to the ground. The impact was tremendous as its massive trunk slammed its huge bulk back into the earth – its birthplace in ancient times, now its final resting place. I remember questioning in my childlike mind, full of curiosity and wonder: “Why did this tree have to fall? Can it get up? Will it live again?”

Many years later I would answer this question for myself when I would

transform fallen trees into sculptures. Sculptures that took forms filled with movement and energy, possessing a different life of their own. Thus, did fallen trees live again.

When my father’s day was done and his sun had set, as he passed into the night, I remembered the “big old *baromali* tree” and I wondered: “Will he live again?” Then I look at myself and he is looking back at me. I look at my sons and I know that he will live a long time, even after he is gone.

Growing up among trees in the midst of the forest, I learned to accept and appreciate the natural environment as an essential aspect of my life as a child. As much as I needed the nurturing relationships provided by my mother, my father and my siblings, together as a family we needed the environment around us to support and sustain our way of life, continually. Nature was generous and kind like a loving mother, and we like her children understood her cycles and seasons and lived accordingly in harmony with her ways.

Knowledge about the environment had been passed down from generation to generation. We knew every kind of tree in the forest and what fruits they bore. We knew every kind of animal, bird, frog and insect and every sound that they made. Every creek and stream was known by name, as were the fishes that they contained. We were familiar with every bush/herb and their benefits. Everything was connected and we were just a small part of a greater whole that pulsed and throbbed with a living energy and constant rhythm, a rhythm by which we moved to a song, a voice, a language that we understood.

These snippets and glimpses of the past are but a few of the conscious and subconscious memories of my early life. Inconspicuous as it was, this was a time of great expectations and significance, for it was here that beautiful people, scenario, circumstances and energies converged at a point of fusion that gave birth to a strong, creative soul.

A portrait of Kwamé Ryan, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a dark bow tie. He is standing behind a podium with a microphone in front of him. The background is a red curtain. The image is overlaid with a colorful, abstract geometric pattern of various shades of red, orange, yellow, and brown.

Kwamé Ryan

Arts & Letters Laureate, 2017,
Trinidad and Tobago

How does a boy growing up on a Caribbean island depart its shores at a tender age, become an international symphonic and operatic conductor, travel the globe for two decades in that capacity, only to return to that island as the Director of its fledgling Academy for the Performing Arts?

The explanation I have grown most accustomed to giving always starts the same way: “When I was a boy, no older than six, I wanted to be a professional conductor.” As true as that statement is, it is also a somewhat romanticized oversimplification. At the age of six, I had also wanted to be an airline pilot, (ludicrous, since I have a terrible fear of falling from heights), or a lawyer, (equally ludicrous, given my aversion at the time and ever since for rote-learning). So, in reality, between the ages of six and 10, my idea of a future path was mounted on the career carousel of lawyer, conductor, pilot, a fact I recall so clearly, because my mother had given me a book to record just such childhood vacillation. Each page of the book was an envelope, on which one could, as a birthday activity, write down what one had done during the previous year, what one hoped to do in the coming year, attach a recent photo, and then fill the envelope with souvenirs and keepsakes, making it akin to a time capsule. Recalling what I wrote on those pages not only describes the swirling, spiralling path of my childhood intentions, but also makes it abundantly clear that I had not the vaguest inkling of what any of those three professions truly demanded.

Mentally putting myself back in *school shoes*, I can just about assemble the following rationale: the pilot gets to sit at the pointy end of a complex, shiny, and expensive machine, with the responsibility to deliver its cargo and occupants safely to a given destination, while the lawyer gets to be in the business of persuasion by means intellectual, theatrical, and above all, creative. By these definitions, can there be any doubt that the orchestral conductor enjoys the best of both worlds? Complex, shiny and expensive machine to “fly”? Check! Jet-setting, through sometimes turbulent but always seemingly glamorous lifestyles? Check! Career trajectory based on the power of rhetoric and persuasion?

Check! No danger of falling to one’s death, or ever having to do the same thing exactly the same way twice? Double check! The only problem was that in Trinidad of the late 70s and early 80s, there was no path upon which a child harbouring these orchestral ambitions, could realize such a goal.

I only knew there was such a thing as a symphony orchestra thanks to the then Trinidad and Tobago Opera Society, whose annual productions quickly became the high point of my year. An Irish conductor by the name of Havelock Nelson was tasked with bringing together the best members of the Police and Regiment bands, and by adding the few string players on the island, create a pit-orchestra from the podium of which he directed the Trinidad, and possibly the Caribbean premieres of such works as *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *I Pagliacci* and other timeless classics of the standard operatic repertoire.

Otherwise, because my parents had studied, lived, worked, and given birth to their children (my sister and me), in Toronto, Canada, they frequently returned there for summer holidays, and I was afforded the occasional opportunity to hear The Toronto Symphony at Roy Thomson Hall or Ontario Place. It was on one such occasion, that I pointed to the stage and said: “I want to do what that guy at the front is doing.” That guy was the Japanese conductor, Seiji Ozawa.

On our return from that holiday, I started piano lessons, and an instrument was purchased so that I could practise at home. At the same time, I also began “composing”, which to my mind at the time, entailed committing to paper, in some form or fashion, the melodies and harmonic musings that I had improvised in my spare time. Great art they were not, but I found the freedom of expression and the privacy of emotion encoded in music quite addictive at that age! Hungry for more, I quickly outgrew the limits of my weekly piano lesson and the basic musical training obtained at The University School, St Augustine, and was enrolled in a full-fledged music school called Pan Pipers, which added an entire Saturday of music-making to my weekly regime. Dropped off mid-morning by my mother or sister, I revelled in the playground that was an entire day spent singing, studying music theory, playing the violin, the

recorder and the pan into the early hours of the evening.

By the time I had spent a few years in this environment and had become a veteran of multiple Music Festivals, Pan is Beautiful Festivals, and even one Junior Panorama, thoughts of any career path other than one in music were all but gone. And yet even as my professional intentions crystallized, I became aware that the training and exposure available to me were not commensurate with the high ambitions I held. I would watch and rewatch the one recording of a professional conductor that I had on videocassette, a concert “Live from Studio 8H” which featured The New York Philharmonic led by its Indian music director, Zubin Mehta, (whose ethnicity was nothing but an encouragement to me), and wonder how I might ever attain such heights, building on the pedagogical platform on which I found myself at the time. Nonetheless, I remember being encouraged by that concert, not only because of Maestro Mehta, but because of his soloists – the Black soprano, Leontyne Price, and the wheelchair-bound violinist, Itzhak Perlman. It occurred to me that they had all overcome considerable challenges to be standing together on a New York stage for the money, and I took hope.

As it transpired, soon after I had made the transition from The University School to Fatima College for my secondary schooling, the hope I had found in such recordings became exponentially more important. I would sit in front of the TV, watching, and trying to enter into the world I saw on screen: *Studio 8H*, *Fame* and *Carmen* live from Queen’s Hall were my sanctuary, because where The University School had taken great pride in its young musicians, had an excellent school choir and instrumental ensemble, and would present fully staged musicals from time to time, the Fatima College of the early 1980s was a musical wasteland.

Music was not taught, nor were any extracurricular musical pursuits encouraged beyond the annual Calypso Monarch competition, for which I co-wrote a number of winning pieces for my friend, Robert Wickham. In fact, the circumstances became so impossible to

bear that Robert, myself and a group of other boys who refused to accept such a chasm in our education, took it upon ourselves to stage scenes from musicals from time to time, and even persuaded the then principal of the school, Mr Mervyn Moore, to outfit the stage with a brand-new, (and very expensive), curtain, and purchase some theatrical lighting to support our activities.

The difficult situation at secondary school was exacerbated by internal drama at Pan Pipers Music School, when, following a series of disagreements between the school director and a subsection of parents, a large number of senior students were “expelled”, and found themselves in a musical wilderness searching for new teachers. The already brewing storm in my young life was then made complete when, in quick succession, my parents separated, my sister (and only sibling) left home for studies at the University of Toronto, and my best friend from University School, and emotional anchor at Fatima College was sent off to boarding school in England. If I had immersed myself in music as recreation to that point, I now dove as deeply into it as I could, just to hold it together.

I did eventually find piano and violin teachers to replace those I had lost in the exodus from Pan Pipers, and looking back, I can say without a doubt, that each of them, in particular, my piano teacher, Nellie Bailey, played a critical role in the next phase of my musical development, setting standards that were higher than I had ever known, and making me believe that I could attain them.

Even as I continued to excel in my musical pursuits, the circumstances of my domestic life and secondary school environment weighed heavily on me. Attending a so-called “prestige school” though I was, my academic progress was middling at best, no doubt a product of the common uncertainties and frustrations of puberty, quickened by an all-pervasive loss of foundation, which did not sit well with me, cloistered and sheltered child that I had been up to that point.

It is said that the human organism has not one but two digestive systems – one physical, and one mental/emotional –

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In 1985, following a two-year search for a suitable boarding school, and a lengthy period of impatient waiting, I set off for the United Kingdom to attend Oakham School, a progressive and ambitious co-educational school in Rutland.

linked, and mutually reactive. So, in the same way that food not fully digested might lead to “indigestion”, so too can undigested thoughts remain with us subliminally, forgotten yet potent. It may be that none of us will ever truly fathom the quantum of memories sacrificed on the altar of survival. I certainly have no memory of ever having told my mother that I needed to be “saved” from the predicament in which I found myself in 1983, but she assures me that this transpired, and that it was the catalyst for a process that was to set my life on an entirely new trajectory, away from the shores of Trinidad and Tobago, and toward a second childhood.

And so it was that in 1985, following a two-year search for a suitable boarding school, and a lengthy period of impatient waiting, delineated by ticked boxes on my wall calendar, I set off for the United Kingdom to attend Oakham School, a progressive and ambitious co-educational school in Rutland, England’s smallest and arguably proudest county. Oakham School had vibrant and extremely active music and theatrical departments, but in the spirit of its motto, “A Preparation for Life”, insisted that students emerge as well-rounded as possible, with strong academic fundamentals enriched by most any and every extracurricular pursuit they could dream up.

Because it had been decided that I would write 10 rather than eight O-Level subjects, I repeated the Fourth Form, relinquishing Accounts and adding Music, History and Chemistry. And yet, even with more subjects to study, plus a new curriculum and culture, the strangest thing happened. Perhaps made newly

buoyant in a community of like-minded children, and with abundant support from not one or two music teachers but an entire department thereof, all of my other academic pursuits profited. Somewhere between rehearsals and performances with Oakham’s Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Chapel Choir, Big Band and Choral Society, not to mention conducting my own orchestra, I switched from violin to double bass, on which instrument I was accepted into the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (NYOGB), and was earmarked for Oxbridge entry, all within the space of two years.

As luck would have it, as I joined Oakham School, so too did its new Headmaster, Graham Smallbone, whose previous position as Director of Music at Eton College made him the ideal mentor for me during my four years at Oakham. With two of his own children having attended Cambridge University, he knew exactly what it would take for me to achieve that goal, and proceeded to see to it that I remained on track despite the occasional distraction or loss of focus. During my entire A-Level schooling in England, it was of enormous help to me that I could escape to Christmas, Easter, and summer courses with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. It is impossible to over-represent the mental gear-change that ensues when a young person is accepted into a community of peers living a mutual dream at the highest level, and finds that he or she not only belongs, but can excel there.

During my two years as a member of the NYOGB, one of which as principal of the double bass section, I was twice allowed to conduct the full orchestra of 125

musicians, was afforded the opportunity to meet and chat with the eminent conductors who graced the podium, and cajoled my peers into chamber orchestra projects which I conducted in our free time. It was at NYOGB that I began to believe that I not only could, but would become a professional conductor, and once exposure, opportunity, and self-belief were provided for, there was, in my mind, little else that could stand on my way. As it transpired, it was during my final course as a member of NYOGB, which took place in Valencia, Spain, that I received my A-Level results, and knew full certain that, come the following October, I would “go up” to Cambridge University with scholarships and bursaries paving the way.

My first of three years at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University, was undoubtedly one of the headiest periods of my entire life. There is something very special about the induction into an elitist institution with a history many centuries long, and the rituals and traditions to show for it. The terms are only eight weeks long, but so much is packed into that short space of time that one invariably ends the year utterly exhausted. The Cambridge curriculum or “Tripos” as it is called, referring to the three-legged stool on which BA candidates once sat for oral examinations, is essentially our “do-it-yourself” degree, in the sense that while immense learning resources are put at the students’ disposal, and supervisors keep track of the process, the learning itself is in large part left up to the students themselves.

And so it was that during my three years at Cambridge University, I played



I would complete my time as a student in Europe, in high orbit over a Caribbean isle whose gravity I had eight years earlier managed to escape, only to find that orbit decay into a fiery return, through an atmosphere thick with disappointment.

in multiple orchestras, conducted the University orchestra, had my own orchestra, and sang in the chapel choir every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday as my core pursuits. For me, the degree in Musicology for which I was studying was destined only to support my evolution as a performer, an entirely legitimate, and as it turns out, long-practised approach to the study of music at that venerable institution!

What all the music I made at Cambridge could, however, not prepare me for, was the reality that there was a transition to be made from academia into the business of music, and that not one cubic centimetre of the rarefied air I had been breathing for three years would ever help me get an agent, or a job – far less start a career. It was in the last term of nine at Gonville and Caius College that this dawned on me, and I decided to take action rather than allow my greatest fear to be realized: that I would complete my time as a student in Europe, in high orbit over a Caribbean isle whose gravity I had eight years earlier managed to escape, only to find that orbit decay into a fiery return, through an atmosphere thick with disappointment. One course of action was deliberate: an application to attend the International Bartok Festival in Szombathely, Hungary, and study with the great composer/conductor, Peter Eötvös, who eventually became my long-time mentor. The other was rather more accidental and ultimately, opportunistic.

I remember sitting with friends on the grass of one of Gonville and Caius' beautiful courtyards, when one of them, a German exchange student from the University of Tübingen, mentioned that the reverse leg of the exchange she was on was as yet unspoken for. Though the Tübingen Exchange programme was originally intended to permit students of German to spend a year honing their grammar and accents before returning to Cambridge for their final exams, in that particular year, they had all wanted to visit bigger and more glamorous cities such as Berlin, Munich and Cologne. Nobody wanted to go to Tübingen, and so the College offered the opening to any student who wanted to spend a year in Germany on its tab, contingent upon successful application in the form of an essay explaining why he or she should be the one to go.

Four pages of explanation later as to "The importance of the German language for any Conductor-wishing-to-work-in-Opera", and a year in Germany, all-expenses-paid was mine! There was just one problem: I didn't speak a single word of German.

Of the three months between the end of the academic year at Cambridge and registration at the University of Tübingen, two weeks were spent on tour in the United States with the Choir of Gonville, and Caius College, Cambridge, and the other seven were spent taking an Intensive one-on-one course in German – five days a week, three hours per day. In speaking about this period, I often jokingly make reference to the character Neo in the film *The Matrix*, who learns by having a spike-like probe inserted at the back of his head, via which entire skill-sets are downloaded into his brain. Learning German at breakneck speed was not unlike that for me initially, and I arrived at Stuttgart airport in October 1992, scared out of my mind, but determined to be, or at least appear, courageous. Things got off to an ignominious start when, on my way through Customs, I mistook the officer instructing me to bring my luggage to the counter for inspection for a taxi driver, and kept walking, chirping, "Nein Danke" as I (almost) exited into Germany.

I never believed that I would spend more than one year in Germany. After eight years in England, I truly believed that my career would be made there, and that Germany would be nothing more than a pit stop to replace tread-free tires after three years of burning rubber at Cambridge University. As it transpired, Germany, far more than the United Kingdom, is the land of milk and honey for professional musicians of all varieties. Historically divided into 16 independently governed federal states, each with its own cultural infrastructure, often including one or more orchestras, an opera house or theatre, plus specific regional festivals and traditions, the Federal Republic of Germany which today embraces all 16 states, is a rich tapestry of artistic opportunity that engages more performing musicians per square kilometre than probably any other European country.

Within one year of arriving in Germany, and with the help of my new teacher, I conducted my first concert as a professional and was paid to do what I had dreamt of eight short years earlier in Trinidad. The concert was with the orchestra of the South German Radio, and was organized to celebrate the 60th birthday of a great and famous Hungarian composer named György Kurtág. As a result, most of musical Europe of any influence was in attendance, and I was promptly (as in, the very evening of the concert) offered other engagements, and discovered what it felt like to get a good review in a national newspaper.

It is not an overstatement to say that I rode the wave of that burst onto the European contemporary music scene for many years to follow. Entering the business at such a high level gave me the credibility to quickly achieve two goals which are key in any career: agency representation, and the music directorship of an orchestra or opera house. In 1999, having been referred to the city of Freiburg by my then agent, Jürgen Erlebach, I successfully completed the arduous three-step evaluation process to become its *Generalmusikdirektor*. Becoming a GMD at the age of 28, made me the youngest music director of a German opera house ever (at the time),

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though as I was soon to learn, early success does not always translate into sustainable happiness.

There is no school for the training of conductors who wish to become music directors. The job, self-evidently enough, involves conducting the orchestra, choosing its repertoire and its soloists, and hiring, (though almost never firing), its personnel. Traditionally, the ins and outs of this complex role are learned in an apprenticeship of many years; but because of my rapid rise through the ranks, my apprenticeship at the Stuttgart Opera House was perilously short. In fact, on my first day as assistant to the Music Director in Stuttgart, I already knew that I had been tapped for the GMD job in Freiburg and would be an assistant no longer than a year before becoming the boss of my own opera house.

Having therefore signed a four-year contract in Freiburg for a job I barely understood, it is safe to say that the first year was particularly difficult. I had come to the job with solid credentials to do everything but what the job actually required, and so I was learning everything on the job from scratch, with the press looking over my shoulder. Once I had survived the first year, however, during which I took on an insane number of productions, I settled into a rhythm which saw me successfully through the remaining three.

From 2003, when I left Freiburg Opera, to 2006, I returned to freelancing. After the heavy responsibility of leading, inspiring, organizing and disciplining over 100 musicians for four years, being responsible only for myself was utterly blissful. Highlights of this three-year period included opening The Edinburgh Festival, and making my debut at The Paris Opera, the Stuttgart Opera and English National Opera (ENO) in the West End of London.

It was after my last performance at ENO in the Spring of 2006, that my agent joined me in my dressing room to enquire as to whether I might be interested in putting my name forward for the music directorship of the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine (ONBA), and having recovered, and learned from my experience in

“Take It from the Top” was my memory of the desperate, frustrated musical child that I was in the early 80s, who would have given nigh-on anything to have the opportunity to interface with international peers in his chosen field, musicians of his age, following the same dream.

Freiburg, I was open to this possibility. I was attracted by the quality of the orchestra, and the staggering beauty of the city (a UNESCO World Heritage site), but also by the fact that the position carried no direct responsibility for the National Opera of Bordeaux and yet afforded the opportunity to conduct there.

Just over a year, and a further three-step audition process later, I was named musical and artistic director of ONBA, a responsibility that I undertook with a certain trepidation, not least because I had only done French up to O-Level, and then had three months of private lessons before working at The Paris Opera! Doing a job that required no end of networking and small-talk in French remained one of the major challenges of my six-year tenure at the head of that organization, but just as had been the case with German, being dropped in the deep water certainly does make you swim.

When I had been at ONBA for no more than a year, my boss called me into his office, and asked whether I might be interested in accepting a parallel music directorship with The National Youth Orchestra of France. My ears instantly pricked up, of course, because of the happy memories I still held of my time as a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in my teens. I was interested, but uncertain as to what a 38-year-old conductor, by no means yet venerable or learned in any form or fashion, could conceivably have to offer the elite musical youth of the entire nation of France. He advised that I should

have a conversation with Pierre Barrois, the Managing Director of the orchestra, and discuss my concerns. Pierre entirely put my mind at ease, saying that I had nothing to do but be myself and give the young musicians access to my energy, my experience and everything I had learned in double the number of years that any of them had yet lived. I accepted his offer, in no way aware that that very moment would become the next major turning point in my career.

Leading the National Youth Orchestra of France blew my mind, in the sense that every preconception I yet held about the path my career would take was called into question. I had never thought that I would enjoy mentoring young musicians, nor did I know that I had any particular abilities in that field. And yet, I seemed to take to it as the proverbial duck to water; relaxed, confident, light of spirit, and having more fun than in most any a professional gig I had done to date. At the end of my two-year tenure at the head of that orchestra, my work was recognized by the then Minister of Culture, Frédéric Mitterrand, with the country's second highest award in the field of Arts and Letters. I had verily been bitten by the bug.

As I left the Salle Pleyel after the ceremony, walking along the streets of Paris, I remember thinking, “If I've been able to do this well for the musical youth of France, what benefit might I be able to bring to the musical youth of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean?” I didn't have the answer right then, but the thought percolated over the summer of 2011.

In 2012, my last year at the head of the National Orchestra of Bordeaux Aquitaine, after long discussions with my friend, Philip Julien, who had founded The Heroes Foundation, I decided to do a proof of concept for a new music mentorship programme inspired by my dual Youth Orchestra experience.

The idea was that I would select from my orchestra in Bordeaux, the Stuttgart Opera, and the National Youth Orchestra of France, a contingent of professional or near-professional string players to come to Trinidad to rehearse and perform a concert in side-by-side configuration with the best young violinists, violists, and double bassists studying at the time at UTT's Academy for the Performing Arts (APA). The project culminated in a highly successful benefit concert “Tango In Trinidad” at The Hyatt Hotel, and everybody involved was aware that here was the seed of something that could potentially endure.

On my way back to Europe, I sketched out a broader plan, in which the music mentorship programme would be permanently hosted at the Academy for the Performing Arts, and would run twice a year under the title “Take It from the Top”. The driving force behind Take It from the Top was my memory of the desperate, frustrated musical child that I had been in the early 80s, who would have given nigh-on anything to have the opportunity to interface with international peers in his chosen field, musicians of his age, following the same dream, from whom to learn, and against whom to measure progress. I thought about the multitudes of gifted children of music who might not have access to the means my parents had to send me abroad to pursue my dream, and imagined that a programme like Take It from the Top would offer them at their very doorstep, opportunities for which I had had to cross the Atlantic.

From the date of conception to its launch, Take It from the Top was three years in the making, during which period I became so committed to the idea of establishing the kind of pedagogical infrastructure for young Caribbean artists that I as a boy would have loved to have profited from, that I moved the centre of my professional activities to Trinidad, and



joined the faculty of the Academy for the Performing Arts.

The Take It from the Top concept was inaugurated in September 2015 under the name CONNECTT, with an orchestra comprising students from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Peru, Colombia, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, rehearsing and performing in side-by-side configuration with multiple instructors from the Academy for the Performing Arts. They performed the music of Europe, South America and the Indian subcontinent, and bonded in the course of two weeks to become friends for life. They took their music to children's homes, hospices and orphanages in the spirit of community service, learning as they did so that the privilege of any talent demands that it be generously shared to improve the lives of those whom it touches.

Recognized internationally for its altruistic yet firmly grounded philosophy, the Take It from the Top concept was quick to gain the support of partner institutions such as the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, the Youth Orchestra of the Americas, The New York Youth Symphony, the National Youth Orchestra of France and the Music Conservatory in Freiburg, Germany, some of which have received young Trinidadian musicians for study courses and short residencies, and have, on the basis of those initial experiences, committed to do so again in the future. I have had the pleasure of watching young Trinidadian artists walk in my footsteps, observed the birth of profound self-belief, and witnessed the acceleration in progress that ensued as a result.

What was Take It from the Top is today called the Youth Music Exchange or YMX.

In 2017, it hosted its third international residency, PULSE 2017. The percussion studio of the Academy for the Performing Arts has been joined by artists aged 16 to 23 from the United States, the United Kingdom and Colombia, and the YMX network has now extended beyond youth orchestras and music colleges to include multiple universities.

Today, I direct YMX from my position as Professor and Director of the Academy for the Performing Arts at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, and work every day with many of the wonderful instructors who helped give birth to the concept.

The 2017 Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence in Arts and Letters is an enormous encouragement, and will, I hope, serve to help YMX garner the kind of awareness and support that will allow it to continue its work for many years to come.

A portrait of Shadel Nyack Compton, a woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow top and a flower in her hair. The background is a mosaic of various colored polygons. The text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

Shadel Nyack Compton

Entrepreneurship Laureate, 2017,
Grenada

I had never thought of myself as an entrepreneur. Should someone ask what was my profession my usual response would be “attorney-at-law”, for this was what I received my education in. Or sometimes it was “farmer”, as this I preferred over the nomenclature “managing director of an agribusiness enterprise”.

In 2013, I was bestowed the award Business Woman of the Year by the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Initially, the significance of such an award was more about the promotion and recognition that it would bring to the company, rather than an acceptance of this personal designation and honour. Winning the award gave me a deeper appreciation of the professional that I had become. I also reflected on how the business evolved from a simple farm, to a multi-faceted business that positively impacted people, environment and country – a business that had earned me a new appellation: “entrepreneur”.

Being conferred the prestigious Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence, 2017, for Entrepreneurship has forced me to take an introspective look at my journey to entrepreneurship, and deeper still to examine the merit of this award. It is a journey fraught with trials and triumphs, shaped by strong morals and values instilled by my mother and grandmother, salient childhood experiences, influential personalities, a deep, abiding faith in God and a burning desire to make a positive difference. I embarked upon this journey with constantly moving targets and an almost elusive destination, and one that has been both challenging and exciting.

Every story has a beginning, and mine started in foggy London. My parents both migrated from the Caribbean in the 60s for education and broader horizons. There, in the city of hope for West Indian migrants, my Grenadian mother, Leah Nyack and my St. Lucian father, Augustus Compton met, fell in love, and got married. My brother Travis was born a year after I was.



Unfortunately, the marriage was short-lived and like an eagle, Mum scooped up her two eaglets and landed them gently back in her best nest, Belmont Estate, in Grenada.

My very early memories of Grenada were of Papa and Mama – Norbert and Lyris Nyack, my great aunt and uncle, who raised my mum, and also undertook to assist to raise Travis and me. Papa was a man ahead of his times, a strategic leader who excelled in business. I had no clue of the magnitude of his accomplishment while he was alive. I just knew that he loved me, took me gallivanting with him a lot, and promised me a green desk in his office, so that we could work together. Mama was a devoted wife, who supported him tirelessly through all the acquisitions and expansions, and focused on their philanthropic, social and community responsibilities. Unfortunately, I never received that desk, as he succumbed to illness at a relatively early age.

Belmont Estate was the second of six estates that Mama and Papa purchased. It became their home and the base of their operations. Simple people, descendants of Indian indentured workers, they defied societal norms of the time, by venturing into the business and social realms of European plantocracy, much to the chagrin of the remnants of the colonial society. Though only armed with an elementary school education, their innovation, enterprise and strong

Indo-Grenadian values of frugality, hard work, commitment and sacrifice yielded astronomical results. Starting their business with only a corner shop in the village of Hermitage, they took advantage of the closed UK import markets during the Second World War, bought nutmegs from the farmers who had no outlet to sell, and made huge profits when the war ended and trade resumed. This provided the revenue to purchase Belmont Estate. Their other business ventures included trading in cocoa and nutmeg, supermarket produce, lumberyard and hardware merchandise, real estate investments and even a horse race track. Sadly though, Papa died in his early 60s, intestate and without any succession plan. This precipitated a very lengthy and arduous estate administration process that resulted in the properties distributed to his numerous siblings, and Belmont Estate to Mama.

Our Mum and Mama jointly raised my brother Travis and me. Our childhood was a very stable and happy time, where we enjoyed the attention and affection of our conjoint mums. Though Mum helped to manage the family business, her first responsibility was always to her children, and she was always a very present part of our lives for love, support, direction and discipline, upon demand. Mum was a very dedicated mother, and raised us to be well-behaved, balanced and disciplined.

When I was 14, our mum remarried; my step-dad was Baxter Fanwar, a quiet well-spoken Christian gentleman from north-east India. He was a father of six, and two of his children, Shan and Balin, joined us at home. This began a new chapter of our lives. My first reaction was that he'd take my mummy away from me, but soon I realized that I had gained a father, and accepted the new family that his presence forged. We were, in fact, excited about our step-siblings as it meant more company and excitement at home. Uncle Baxter first won our hearts with his phenomenal storytelling. He could tell stories for hours on end, from Tarzan to westerns, Bible stories to his childhood tales. Travis and I were in awe with these incredible legends. Uncle Baxter could make characters come to life, and his orations were more like movies than spoken words. He was a Professor of English and a Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, but most importantly, he embraced his position as head of our home. Love for God and for our fellow men, and strong Christian values were ingrained in us. Our parents had daily family worship. The kids gathered in our parents' bedroom every morning at 6 a.m. for family time and worship. It was an important time for us to connect as a family and also to build our relationship with God.

Travis and I both attended the St Andrews Methodist primary school and later the Mac Donald College for high school. By then Shan and Balin had joined us. We all performed well, as studying was the number one activity at home. There was no compromise. Our dad was the principal and had a first-hand knowledge of our performance at home and school.

One of my loves was public speaking, and it was providential that I had the advantage of Uncle Baxter's expertise in English and public speaking to instruct me. I got involved in both our school's, and the national student councils, and enjoyed public speaking opportunities. My most notable was speaking at Queen's Park at a national students' rally during the revolutionary days. It was exhilarating to speak before our beloved Prime Minister, Maurice Bishop and his team, and I was on top of the world when the

Minister of Education congratulated me on a job well done. I was a child of the Grenada Revolution! These were exciting and formative times for me. The themes of national pride and loyalty, people empowerment, agrarian reform, promoting literacy and adult education; fostering child and youth development were widely promulgated and were a critical catalyst in the formulation of my stances on patriotism, duty to serve, self-sacrifice and other commendable nationalistic virtues.

My brothers, too, had interest in the revolution but from a more military perspective. They made attempts to join the militia, but these were effectively annihilated by our parents. The boys weren't too perturbed as they had more freedom. They could traverse the farm, bike-ride, drive the car, and "hang out" with friends. One of our Sunday pastimes was to visit nearby Pearls Airport to view airplanes land and take off. It was as a result of this that my brother Travis developed an interest in airplanes and decided early in his life to become a pilot. I certainly had no such epiphany about my future career. I had no early interest in either law or business. And, there was no orchestrated coercion from Mama or my parents to get involved in the business. I was simply encouraged to study hard and pursue my own dreams. Yet, I was surrounded by and exposed daily to our business, either through conversations or observations, and they strongly impacted upon me. I now know that if Papa had survived that I would have been immersed in the business from childhood. But that was not to be, so I lavished the love and protection of my parents and Mama and resigned myself to being a *bona fide* home and book bug!

While for me life in Grenada was strict, shielded and routine, on the contrary, my St Lucia summer jaunts were exciting, adventurous and altogether fun. Needless to say, I looked forward to my visits to my dad, and the large Compton family, who made it their priority to ensure that my 12 siblings and I had a blast when visiting St Lucia. Yes, aside from my brother Travis and I, my dad had 11 other wonderful children spanning several European and Caribbean nationalities, and we enjoyed



the cross-cultural exchanges that our family offered.

My dad was a regional diplomat and Caribbean integrationist. I remember spending a lot of time at his offices, where he served as Executive Secretary of West Indies Associated States (WIAS). There he was largely responsible for the drafting of the treaty to set up the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), where he later served as Deputy Director. I emulated him, as he was painstakingly detailed in everything that he did, disciplined, methodical and



serious, and extremely dedicated to his work. However, I held most closely to the common attributes that both he and my mum shared: quiet-natured, honest, simple and humble, with huge hearts that cared more about others than themselves.

On weekends, his home was a bustling hub for entertaining family friends and his diplomatic and political colleagues. His cousin, Sir John Compton, former Prime Minister of St Lucia, was more like a brother, as both were raised by granddad, Mailings Compton. Uncle John was a

regular at the house, as were several other politicians. Later, after my dad's death, Uncle John and my uncle Patrick took on the role of surrogate dads, and I also developed a close relationship with another prominent cousin from the Compton clan, Sir James Mitchell, former Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, from whom I still receive much appreciated coaching in leadership, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The intellectual environment in the home was very rich, as books, newspapers and vibrant intellectual and political debates

permeated most social interactions, and I revelled in it. These positive early exposures among these learned intellectuals, helped to shape my decision for law school and leadership more than I realized at the time.

Upon graduation from high school, I was very eager to travel to the US to study. I remain grateful to my mum for ensuring that I achieved my desire. I first attended Andrews University, a Seventh Day Adventist College, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. After the US invasion of Grenada, my parents migrated to

The decision to return to the Caribbean was one that engendered much deliberation and internal turmoil. Eventually, my love and values won over career aspirations in the Land of Opportunity, so I re-adjusted my plans to incorporate my new priorities back home.

Washington DC, so I moved there to live with them. I completed my undergraduate studies, with a major in Psychology and Minor in Political Science. Later, while at Howard University, I made the decision to go to law school. I found my Political Science curriculum very stimulating. The intrigue of Washington politics, influences of some admirable political science professors, inspirations of my past, and my realization of the value of a law degree, all steered me away from my first calling as a psychologist. My decision was confirmed when I did an internship at a group home for troubled teens while in college. Experiencing the complex issues of abuses, and a myriad of personality disorders, all resulting in pain and dysfunction, were too troubling for me. I internalized the problems and couldn't let go of them after leaving the kids. This sealed my decision to abandon psychology and to pursue a discipline less emotionally exhausting.

Preparing myself for law school was a disciplined exercise. The entrance exam, the LSAT, was a beastly one, though it paled in comparison to the extensive studies in preparing for the bar exam later. I scored well on the LSAT, and I was accepted to all the law schools that I applied to. It was a tough choice, but eventually I chose Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC. The nation's capital is a perfect place to study law — the seat of the executive, legislature and judiciary. The law campus was walking distance from the Supreme Court and the Capitol, and we had the benefit of high-profile experts as law professors.

Transitioning to law school was a steep learning curve, and a very intimidating process. The course work was gruelling, and required tremendous discipline. Law school classes are designed to teach students the law and how to think like lawyers. The Socratic method of teaching — that most powerful teaching methodology for fostering critical thinking — scared me. I recognized the deficiency in my primary and secondary education at that time, in not cultivating critical thinking. The workload was very heavy, with several hours of required reading every day. Preparing for exams usually

involved study groups that met for days and nights, alienated from everything else. Generally, the students were very intelligent, ambitious and competitive, yet also supportive and social. My law student life of classes, reading assignments, papers, clinics and exams had to be balanced with my family life, work and other responsibilities. It was the rigours of law school that taught me how to efficiently manage various demanding responsibilities at the same time, work under pressure and meet deadlines. At law school, I formed a close network of friends, mostly of Jamaican young women. I was deeply inspired by these strong and patriotic Jamaican friends who exhibited the highest degree of loyalty and love to their friends, and who fiercely and unapologetically exhibited their nationalistic pride. Law school was altogether a very positive experience for me, shaping me to think like and become a lawyer, sharpening my endurance to manage diverse portfolios, while building great friendships.

It is said that in life you do not always get the path chosen, and so it was with me. After attending Howard and Georgetown Universities in Washington DC, my mind was more keenly focused on a legal and political career in the United States. Working on Capitol Hill for Congressman Benjamin Cardin during my first year of law school further stimulated my political interest, and the nation's capital seemed the perfect place to realize those dreams. After graduating law school, I returned to Georgetown University for another year to complete a Masters in International and Comparative Law. However, in my latter years at Georgetown, I was continually preoccupied with thoughts of my aging grandmother and my need to give back to her during her twilight times. Because of the beautiful relationship that we shared and my strong Indo-Caribbean values that oblige children to care for their parents, these urges were strong. The decision to return to the Caribbean was one that engendered much deliberation and internal turmoil. Eventually, my love and values won over career aspirations in the land of opportunity, so I re-adjusted my plans to incorporate my new priorities back home.



After law school, I sat and passed my bar exams and got admitted to the bar at Maryland, Washington DC and New York. Having studied Law in the United States, I had to complete a six-month Certificate of Legal Education programme at the University of the West Indies, to be eligible to practice law in Grenada. I completed the programme at the St Augustine campus, and found Trinidad to be an altogether enlightening experience. I wanted to experience Trinidad life and culture to the fullest, so I positioned myself to participate in this eclectic life, without losing sight of my primary purpose — my education. I secured a job as a law clerk and gained practical experience, with J D Sellier & Co, a prestigious law firm in Port of Spain. Of course, I couldn't miss this singular opportunity to enjoy the epitome of Trini culture — Carnival, so from panyard to tent, J'ouvert to Parade of the Bands, I experienced it all! Through all of this, I maintained maximum participation and performance at school,

as I became initiated into the Caribbean judicial system, and forged relationships with young lawyers from throughout the region. Little did I know at that time that I would marry one of my Hugh Wooding colleagues, Jerry Seales, in a fairy-tale wedding on the idyllic island of Canouan, in the Grenadines, the venue aptly chosen by two uncles, Sir James and Sir John, in honour of our Canouan roots!

Returning to Belmont Estate was a very different reality from the vibrant, productive estate of yesteryear. Affected by revolution, invasion, labour unrest, lack of succession or a strategic plan after Norbert Nyack's death, the business steadily spiralled downwards. In addition, the estate, like others, was affected by the removal of market protection privileges in the European market. Though my first priority was caring for my grandmother, I started a law practice, and busied myself with planning to resuscitate Belmont Estate.

My motivation was to preserve my grandparents' legacy, contribute to the socio-economic development of my rural community and island, provide employment, and reinstate the business to success and profit. I recognized that operating the traditional farm was no longer viable, and so I examined varying business possibilities.

Agriculture is the mainstay of most developing economies, and Grenada is no exception. Tourism, though, has become a very significant contributor to the GDP of Grenada, and has surpassed agriculture as the number one contributor to the national economy. Both are critical tools for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable rural development. Agri-tourism incorporates a rural working farm with a commercial tourism element and as a concept was initiated and developed in Europe and North America, then spread to other regions in recent years. In the last two decades, the Caribbean has seen an emergence of such enterprises.

Agri-tourism initiatives regionally and internationally piqued my attention, as a possible model for Belmont Estate. The beautiful clean, pristine, natural environment that God blessed us with provided the perfect backdrop for this business concept — an authentic plantation experience linked to local foods, culture and heritage, promoting environmental and community stewardship, delivered with high-quality service standards.

Though a sound business concept, agri-tourism had not yet achieved the total confidence of funders, so we self-funded a rather downscaled version of our plans. It was, indeed, by the confluence of divine intervention, a fortuitous visit by our then Prime Minister, Dr the Rt Hon Keith Mitchell, and my dogged determination, that we opened our doors to our first guests in April 2002. Our first product offerings were estate tours, a heritage museum and a crudely made coconut-palm-covered restaurant that seated only 25, but served the best of local foods, compliments my dear mother. Mum started the restaurant at Belmont Estate. Her compendium of recipes,



developed over the years, suddenly catapulted to treatise status for restaurant reference. She perfected a line of ice creams using local produce, started a value-added line of products for the business, and trained staff.

The tourism product at Belmont Estate was from inception extremely well received. Initially, we invited tour operators and their staff and families to experience Belmont Estate, and they were immediately sold. We marketed also to hotels, taxi drivers and all service providers within the industry. Another critical market was our local guests, so special emphasis was given to creating special tours, activities and occasions for locals.

Fourteen years later, the estate employs about 100 persons full- and part-time, and offers a range of products and services, organic and fair-trade-certified produce, several tours, a restaurant seating 250 persons, a goat dairy, producing goat's cheese, a plant nursery and a museum. The main agricultural products now are cocoa, nutmegs and soursop, with smaller production of a variety of spices, fruits, vegetables and herbs. The value-added production activity of the business is growing, as a considerable amount of the agricultural produce is processed into jams, jellies, condiments, pickles

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Being a raw product producer for over 200 years, we ventured into value-added manufacturing, and opened our own chocolate factory in 2017.

and sauces. Total guests have grown through the years from 1,248 in 2002, to 27,919 in 2015. In addition, we have received numerous local and regional awards for environment and community stewardship, and best practices in tourism and agriculture.

Belmont Estate has become known for producing top quality cocoa for many decades. Being a raw product producer for over 200 years, we ventured into value-added manufacturing, and opened our own chocolate factory in 2017. Our unique selling point is that we are producing high quality, single-sourced, organic and fair-trade-certified chocolate at Belmont Estate, where the entire tree-to-bar production occurs. In addition, Belmont Estate and the Cocoa Research Centre (CRC) of the University of the West Indies signed a Memorandum of Understanding to access the University's expertise in propagation, agronomy, processing and manufacturing. This initiative will offer a more scientific approach, and will improve the quality of services and products offered by the estate. The CRC is an excellent partner for Belmont Estate as it provides the science and technology for every step of the process from plant propagation to chocolate making. We intend to extend Belmont Estate's services to train farmers and processors, offer a resource centre for research and to be a model to foster entrepreneurship.

The evolution of this plantation from obscurity and near closure, to worldwide recognition and sustained growth has not been without severe challenges. Two years after opening, in 2004, our entire operation — farm and tourism — was devastated by the passage of Hurricane Ivan. Most buildings were totally

destroyed. The damage in the fields was severe — loss or damage of about 80% of nutmeg and cocoa trees. Not only did I have to deal with my own personal and business losses but also with the challenges of displaced employees. I was keenly aware of my responsibility as employer and community leader. It meant making deep personal sacrifices to provide security; staying strong and holding on to my faith in the face of adversity; and providing the leadership necessary to overcome the challenges and forge ahead. To further aggravate our losses, the next year, hurricane Emily repeated the disaster. After protracted construction, we re-opened in 2007. The challenges brought on by the hurricane influenced me into taking more of a strategic approach to food security and to the development of the business. I pursued a Masters in Agri-business at Kansas State University that increased my knowledge in agri-business management and development.

Other personal tragedies proved challenging both to me personally and professionally. On Christmas Eve 2009, my brother was flying his Piper Aztec home for the holidays when the plane plummeted into the ocean off The Bahamas. Neither he, nor the plane, was ever found, but the remains of our cousin, Bancroft Nyack, his co-pilot, were found one month later. It was devastating to me, our family, and particularly to my mum. Through it all, I had to be strong, still leading the company, co-ordinating search efforts, caring for my children, and offering strength and support to my parents and family and friends. Tragedy again struck in June 2013 when Mott Green, the visionary founder of the

Grenada Chocolate Company, our strategic partner, suffered an accidental death. These personal disasters were very traumatic. I relied firmly on God for the wisdom to understand, the serenity to accept, and comfort to heal. I further came to accept that believers are not exempt from hardship and disaster, but through Christ comes healing, and the strength and power to emerge victorious. I also challenged myself to find the positive even in these unfortunate occurrences: the opportunity to share this experience to help others similarly situated, to strengthen my faith and relationship with my God, and prepare myself for greater challenges ahead.

I am grateful that my business has also given me the opportunity to be a civic and charitable contributor. I enjoy the opportunities to speak locally, regionally and internationally on behalf of our organizations, writing, or making other contributions, helping to shape public policy or inspire other entrepreneurs in organic farming and agri-tourism. Service to my country, on public and private sector boards in tourism, agriculture and heritage has been very gratifying and educational for me, the most significant being my time of service as Chair of the Grenada Board of Tourism, during its transition to the Grenada Tourism Authority. Through Belmont Estate's charity arm, the Belmont Estate Foundation, several programmes have been developed: summer school and school assistance for children, financial and in-kind donations to children, hot meals to the elderly, Christmas food hampers, home repairs, food and medication donations, and disaster relief. In addition, environmental

education programmes, building awareness about environmental responsibility, community beach and river clean-ups have been executed singularly or in collaboration with the St Patrick Environmental Community Tourism Organization (SPECTO). Internship opportunities for both local and international students are also an important component of the career development services that we offer. I am also grateful that the business has grown my family to extend to my staff. Through the years, I have developed close and lasting relationships with an extraordinary team of people who work at Belmont Estate. I have seen them develop, take ownership, support and protect the business and I have experienced a great sense of loyalty, devotion and commitment from my staff. It is extremely gratifying to be able to “give back”, help and inspire others, teach and make a difference, simply because we care and seek to enrich the lives of others.

Achieving this award is now a significant part of my journey. Through all the preparations, it has given me an opportunity to reflect on my life, but more importantly, to focus on the future and my national contributions, legacy creation, business growth, and succession planning. It has also made me introspect about the value of relationships, friends and family, and equally investing in people for whom we care.

Businesses in the Caribbean are constantly fraught with the macro and micro economic challenges to survival. Caribbean countries as Small Island Developing States suffer peculiar disadvantages related to small size, insularity, remoteness and proneness to natural disasters, and Grenada is no exception. As a result, our economies are very vulnerable to forces outside of our control. On a micro level, business challenges of surviving in the competitive and fragile marketplace, brand recognition, strategic product development, pricing, are all issues that affect our ability to grow, reach profitability targets and remain relevant. There are, however, several opportunities to ensure our economic balance and sustainability. In Grenada, an agrarian

economy, and to an extent in most of the Caribbean, entrepreneurship in sustainable agri-tourism is key to our economic development, as it engenders growth and facilitates innovation and change.

Rural development is driven by entrepreneurship. For entrepreneurship in sustainable agri-tourism to flourish, there must be an enabling environment. Public policy, and clear strategy for the industry that identifies our products, target markets, and addresses issues of personnel, funding, education and skills development are important. A clear and defined policy and strategy create an enabling environment to drive private sector and public/private initiatives. I see Belmont Estate’s role as pivotal in this industry, not only as a best practices model, but as resource of other aspiring “agropreneurs” aspiring to innovate in rural development. My goal is to help shape public policy to embrace organic farming as a healthy, sustainable and high-value option for Grenada’s agriculture and to encourage agri-business and agri-tourism as viable business models for private sector development. My dream above all is that one day, Grenada can become a truly sustainable economy, incorporating sustainable agriculture and tourism, and achieving the ultimate realization of green and blue economic success.

In addition, I aspire to venture more strategically into social entrepreneurship — using my business experience, resources and contacts to assist budding entrepreneurs. The intent is to bring together a group of business consultants committed to rural development to create a resource hub for agri-tourism or agri-business entrepreneurs, offering business development consultations and financing opportunities for rural development. In addition, it is my plan to access the resources of the Cocoa Research Centre to offer support to cocoa farmers. We would be able to define accessible paths that entrepreneurs can share, create and be inspired. Belmont Estate can serve as a best practices model and can be a practical learning environment for the said entrepreneurs. Further, Belmont Estate can truly

My dream above all is that one day, Grenada can become a truly sustainable economy, incorporating sustainable agriculture and tourism, and achieving the ultimate realization of green and blue economic success.

A stronger feminine presence in leadership positions is needed to orchestrate the reduction in economic and social gaps between women and men throughout the value chain in agriculture.

effectuate our mission: “To be a model of sustainable agriculture and tourism practices by producing organic products, creating extraordinary experiences and preserving our heritage and environment, so as to enrich the lives of others.”

I would also want to encourage women to pursue entrepreneurship and agribusiness. Women make up a significant proportion of the workforce in agriculture, but account for small numbers in management or ownership of agribusiness enterprises. A stronger female presence in leadership positions is needed to orchestrate the reduction in economic and social gaps between women and men throughout the value chain in agriculture, address food security and gender parity and other key areas like access to agricultural inputs, technologies and finance. Women also can increase companies’ bottom lines — while helping improve the lives of people in rural areas. In my quest for female entrepreneurial inspiration, I was surprised to discover that the virtuous woman described in Proverbs: Chapter 31, doesn’t just describe a faithful wife and devoted mother, but largely addresses the character and professional traits of a woman entrepreneur and encourages planning, organization, industry, investment, diligence, hard work, honesty and loyalty. My best business advice to entrepreneurs is to read this chapter with your entrepreneurial vision, and be inspired.

Proverbs 31: 13-26

She worketh willingly with her hands.

She bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night.

She considereth a field and buyeth it.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor and needy

Her clothing is silk and purple

Strength and honour are her clothing.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom and kindness.

I am grateful to God for both the opportunities and the challenges that life has offered me, for the lessons learnt, and allowing me to use His resources to make a difference in peoples’ lives. I am also grateful that I live in one of the most magnificent places on earth and can enjoy the beauty and providences of nature. I am so thankful for the special people in my life. To my parents, children, Anna and Benno, relatives, friends and my staff family, thank you for the love, support and incredible encouragement that you give to me every day. I trust that by my example my children will both grow into God-fearing, honest, compassionate individuals that are committed to a life of passion, service, sacrifice and excellence. I wish to thank my nominator, Dr Beverley Steele, for her belief and confidence in me. To the ANSA McAL Foundation, I am deeply grateful, humbled and indebted, as this award drives me to reach for greater heights of excellence, and to encourage a culture of excellence for our Caribbean people. Thank you for bestowing on me this continuing obligation to improve, contribute and to make a difference. I wish to congratulate my co-awardees and challenge us all to be the best role models for our region and the world, to encourage others to excel.



Arif Bulkan

Public & Civic Contributions Laureate,
2017, Guyana

Recently, and presumably because of the publicity generated around the constitutional litigation in Guyana initiated by the group in which I am involved, a Trinidadian acquaintance (let's call him "Will") asked me: "Are there so many trans people in Guyana?"

The case that provoked this question involves a constitutional challenge we initiated against a 19th-century law which prohibits "cross-dressing" in public, but the blunt inquiry gave me some pause. What Will was really questioning was the necessity for investing so much time and resources in a court challenge (at best an arduous and protracted undertaking) for an issue that might have very little national relevance — whether because of the size or invisibility or plain powerlessness of the community it affected. In truth, there is probably a much larger trans community in Guyana than realized, precisely because of their complete marginalization which forces its members underground. But even accounting for some under-representation, one cannot deny that the trans community is still relatively small. So why did my colleagues and I feel so strongly about the constitutionality of the law and its enforcement against the trans community? I probably didn't give Will an adequate explanation, but at the risk of sounding clichéd, the reason for my involvement lies squarely in how I have always felt about injustice. You see why I paused when Will asked his question — because who replies in such terms?

It was over a weekend in February 2009 that at separate times the police arrested a number of trans women in Georgetown. Various allegations were levelled against them — that they were soliciting for prostitution, that they were involved in a public disturbance, that they had damaged property — and they were deposited in the Brickdam lockups, where they were detained until their arraignment two days later. For those unfamiliar with this holding cell, it has been described as a "hellhole", which the Chairman of the Bar Council of England and Wales had recommended closing down entirely since 2002. Not that we in Guyana need guidance from the English on standards of humanity and decency — our own local journalists have repeatedly

exposed the brutish and degrading conditions of police lockups. Extremely overcrowded, those crammed inside are left to swelter in the heat and stench, fed from buckets also used to clean the cell and with no place to relieve themselves. In these debased surroundings, those detained are at the mercy of each other with little or no supervision, and it is not unknown for families of victims to pay to have inmates beaten by others. All this in a holding cell, containing persons simply accused of crime.

Predictably, despite the severity of allegations against the trans women which included damage to property and robbery, no charge of any moment was filed and instead the police — ingeniously, I am tempted to add — resurrected this obscure, 19th-century offence of "being a man in any public place or way, for an improper purpose [who] appears in female attire." Unrepresented, they did what most poor persons do — they pleaded guilty and got out of the courtroom quickly, but not after an agonizing weekend of incarceration in horrific, appalling conditions. It was the patent injustice of these events that we found intolerable. That the state would so casually trample on the rights of its citizens, locking them up, humiliating them, subjecting them to inhumane conditions for two days — simply for how they were dressed? Obviously, this would never happen to the middle-class person who likes to experiment with clothing choices, but who enjoys the insulation of money and privilege. In other words, what happened to these trans women had a lot to do with social and economic status and their complete lack of privilege, as opposed to them contravening some legal or moral code.

The courts at two levels have so far said the same thing, namely that cross-dressing *per se* is not criminal, and that it is the act of doing so in public for an improper purpose which constitutes an offence. For sure, this feels like an important clarification, but in real terms it is practically meaningless. The ambiguity of the expression "improper purpose", which no one has been able to define with any clarity, confers enormous discretion on state officials.

The mere existence of the law facilitates discrimination against persons whom society simply dislikes.

Historically, the law in question is the epitome of 19th-century vagrancy law, part of a package introduced after emancipation in order to police the bodies of freed slaves and indentured workers. Today it continues to have the same effect. It has enabled magistrates to refuse to hear trans women in court, even when they are the victims. It emboldens policemen on the beat to arrest and detain trans women for offences that never materialize. It reinforces an already hostile climate in which mistreatment by private citizens of trans persons, in areas related to employment, housing, and the provision of goods and services, can occur with impunity. In other words, the mere existence of the law facilitates discrimination against persons whom society simply dislikes. Even if a trans person is eventually acquitted of this “crime” of cross-dressing, until then he or she would have to endure all the suffering and indignity of arrest, detention and public humiliation. All this not in some ISIS controlled territory, but right here in a post-colonial state where fundamental rights are entrenched in a constitution. It was these realities that so bothered my colleagues and me; and it was the hope of stimulating some change to the prevailing indifference which has sustained us over these long years while pursuing the constitutional challenge we initiated. The case is about trans rights to be sure, but crucially, it is also about the treatment of the poor and powerless.

Working on this case and other projects with my colleagues Tracy Robinson, Westmin James, Janeille Matthews and more recently Jewel Amoah — all law lecturers at the University of the West Indies and members of our group, the University of the West Indies Rights Advocacy Project (U-RAP) — has been profoundly important for me, although it amounts to a demanding second job, not always manageable because I have so many academic and administrative responsibilities in my day job as a lecturer. But U-RAP’s work is important, not simply because it provides a way of remaining connected to the practice of what I teach, but more especially because it gives me a sense of usefulness and involvement with community. Such engagements have

always been important to me, for as long as I can remember.

In this, I think, I have had strong role models very close to home. My mother, who assumed the primary role of raising me after my dad died when I was only six years old, has always lived an exemplary life of service to others. I grew up in a house which was like an in-transit stopover for numerous relatives and others passing through, and in my mother’s relationships with and treatment of others I have seen first-hand lived values of kindness, purposefulness, and selflessness. Unsurprisingly, I guess, my siblings have strong ethical sensibilities, and have consistently taken principled positions on issues of national importance, even amidst a climate of repression and during successively authoritarian regimes. My sister, Janette, is well-known as a relentless activist for the protection of our forest patrimony, and when she speaks out against rapacious and corrupt multinationals in Guyana, it is not because she is hoping for greater profits in her own timber or gold mining concession (she has none), but purely because of a deep-seated concern for Guyana’s natural resources and the sustenance it provides for local communities. Long before this, Janette courageously challenged the Desmond Hoyte regime over its “Mass Games” and its misplaced prioritizing of senseless spectacle over education. She was one of the original speakers at GUARD rallies, the civic movement in the early 1990s that galvanized an apathetic population and helped achieve free and fair elections in 1992.

In short, for as long as I have known her, she has always been fearless and outspoken in her defence of what is right, irrespective of the government in power, and with absolutely no agenda of personal gain. In fact, her realities have been quite the opposite — because of her outspoken advocacy, Janette has been victimized where it counts, the last government even writing to the World Bank to have her removed from a panel on which she was serving. Another minister in that government even threatened to write Yale University to tell them not to award her the doctorate she was then researching

for — a letter, if written, that must have been immediately tossed in the garbage by her supervisors.

Janette is not unique in my family. My brothers, even as businessmen with much to lose, repeatedly and publicly criticized the irrational national policy of exporting logs and sub-leasing forestry concessions, even though this exposed them to relentless victimization. One particularly grotesque instance of this in my memory was when my eldest brother, Howard, in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, donated a container of sawn and dressed lumber to assist in their re-building efforts. However, because he was blacklisted as an advocate of good governance in the forest sector, before he eventually succeeded in sending the shipment, his efforts were stalled, obstructed, and frustrated by the authorities. Howard might not even remember this, as he'll tell you it pales next to the microscopic scrutiny under which he carried out his businesses — scrutiny that was clearly politically motivated when one has regard to the known, public and very visible acts of money laundering that flourish in Guyana with impunity. For a long time in Guyana our reality has been that dissent is actively and vigorously discouraged, on pain of financial and economic censure, but even in the face of such repression, silence never seemed to be an option for my siblings.

All around me, then, were these inspiring models of integrity, courage, and principle — values which were lived and practiced at a high cost. This may sound like I always wanted a career in law, but in truth that happened by accident. For as long as I remember what I really wanted to do was write fiction, but that's a tremendously difficult undertaking. I'm still not sure how one goes about being a writer, and back then not only did I make no efforts in that direction, I had no plans for doing anything after A-Levels. I spent my time immediately after exams loafing about with no visible purpose. It was Janette who I guess was really concerned about my apparent lack of ambition, and three weeks into the new school year she learnt of a single vacancy at UG's first-year law programme and persuaded me to apply

Growing up in the late 70s and 80s, I witnessed the debilitating effects on our society of economic mismanagement, corruption, and political repression.

for it. I did and was accepted, but even that would have gone nowhere had I not managed to win the prize for the best performance at the end of my first year, which enabled me to obtain a scholarship to continue the rest of the degree at the Cave Hill campus of UWI in Barbados. This meant that when I was finished I was contractually bound to work with the Government, and I chose to serve my time as a prosecutor. So, as it turned out I was fortunate to get an education and ended up pursuing the most conventional of careers, but none of that was the result of foresight or careful planning. Mostly, it was me simply going with the flow, prodded by others, and being the beneficiary of some luck along the way.

Returning to Guyana in 1990, however, the political climate seemed unchanged. Despite the obvious economic and civic reforms initiated by Desmond Hoyte, the stain of rigged elections remained, and this became the chief target of a united opposition. Even though I was employed by then with the state, and subject to certain restrictions as a public servant, I involved myself with this as far as I could, volunteering with the Electoral Assistance Bureau from 1990 until 1992. That involved a variety of activities, one of which I recall meant me going house-to-house on foot in Georgetown, which I did with my brother Ronald, on more than one afternoon, checking whether residents were registered and on the voters' list. And then for a full six weeks before the polls on October 5, 1992, I took all of my accrued six weeks of leave and spent the entire time volunteering at EAB's main office opposite Bishops' High School. All this was entirely outside of my job as a prosecutor, but which I felt compelled to do because of the link I saw between political participation and social justice and equality in the country.

Indeed, while advocacy for good governance may not seem to have any bearing on human rights, for me the connections were as plain as day. Growing up in the late 70s and 80s, I witnessed the debilitating effects on our society of economic mismanagement, corruption, and political repression. This was a menacing period, where amid ever-

increasing economic hardship, free speech was stifled, political rallies routinely broken up by paid thugs, and opponents of the government — many of them being the courageous women and men of Rodney’s WPA — were harassed, bullied, and pursued with the full force of the law. Although still in high school, these events had a profound impact on me, encouraged as I was by one aunt who used to take me with her to Rodney’s meetings. In 1978, I accompanied her to pickets chanting “Kill the Bill”, not really aware then (at age 11) of the sinister implications of the referendum we were protesting (namely that by replacing our Republican Constitution with a strongly authoritarian one it would enable decades of future corruption by successively unaccountable governments). By the time of early adulthood, and while still in university, I began volunteering with the Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA). Although the various projects I worked on probably do not account for much, it was a relationship that I cherished, for it exposed me to the type of work that by then I had already realized I was really interested in.

All this is why, by a decade-and-a-half into the reign of the government that eventually replaced Hoyte’s, many had become so dejected at how the struggles for good governance and a corruption-free future had been betrayed. It seemed that we had replaced one set of dysfunction with another, with the only difference being the racial hue of those in power. By 2007, the scale of corruption in Guyana had become so widespread, so vulgar, so unchecked and normalized, that we had plummeted below every other CARICOM country to the bottom of every credible international indicator of freedom, transparency and good governance.

It was beginning around this time, in the late 2000s after I had completed a PhD and began lecturing at the UWI, that I began to write publicly against this widespread corruption and abuse in government. In a space provided by Alissa Trotz, a school friend who edited a column in the *Stabroek News* of contributions from Guyanese living in the diaspora, I occasionally provided public commentary

on a range of issues. Over the course of seven years those topics spanned accountability in government, corruption, nepotism, ministerial ethics, free speech, democracy and constitutionalism. I found myself ghostwriting other pieces as well, when we thought that an issue at hand might be taken over by personality. The value that Alissa saw in this was translating sometimes esoteric or arcane legal issues for popular consumption, with the aim not just of educating but also for readers to expand their understanding of citizenship and participation.

I saw first-hand how some of these columns galvanized popular opinion. One that stands out for me is a column I wrote on the sale of private property by a former president and the benefits of his office which included a magnificent, uncapped pension, while ordinary citizens were mired in poverty. It was reminiscent of what Dr Jagan himself had described as a “Cadillac lifestyle on the back of a donkey-cart economy”. After that column, the issue of the presidential pension catapulted in the spotlight, becoming a major talking point in the 2015 election — an election which, for the first time in two decades, the People’s Progressive Party failed to win a majority in Parliament. But I felt another responsibility as well, one that popular columnist Freddy Kissoon also alluded to separately. And that was the duty as a Guyanese of East Indian descent to speak out against abuses by an Indo-dominated government. In a country where politics is dominated by racial animus and accountability is often sacrificed on the ground of partisan loyalties, subverting the expected stereotypes seemed to me to be an ethical imperative. It was important to signal that not every Indo-Guyanese should be associated with the corruption and abuse by the government, and to demonstrate that certain bedrock principles and values transcended petty loyalties.

Alongside this, which Alissa describes as public intellectual work, shortly after joining the Faculty of Law I was involved in the setting-up of U-RAP with Tracy Robinson and Douglas Mendes SC, then a lecturer at the St Augustine campus. U-RAP was conceived of as a pilot project of the

In a country where politics is dominated by racial animus and accountability is often sacrificed on the ground of partisan loyalties, subverting the expected stereotypes seemed to me to be an ethical imperative.

U-RAP has entered into a partnership with Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC), a non-governmental organization working on behalf of Caribbean populations especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in particular, men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV, migrant populations, persons in prison and ex-prisoners, and youth in especially difficult circumstances.

Faculty of Law with a strong focus on public interest litigation in the area of Caribbean human rights. Broadly, the project seeks to promote human rights, equality and social justice in the Caribbean through pivotal human rights litigation, research, advocacy, capacity building, teaching and public education. It was formalized in 2010, and as part of this mandate U-RAP has so far initiated two ground-breaking cases in the Caribbean: the action in Guyana challenging the constitutionality of the law prohibiting cross-dressing in public, and another in Belize challenging the constitutionality of the provisions of the Criminal Code that criminalize the “unnatural offence”. Although the litigants in both cases are sexual minorities, we viewed the core concerns — respect for human dignity and a right to choose a life of one’s own — as having fundamental symbolic and substantive value to post-colonial Caribbean people who have faced oppression directed, among other things, at who we were, our psyche, our worth and our entitlement to make basic choices about our sexual and reproductive lives.

In pursuing these activities U-RAP has forged close ties with the communities and activists we serve, which we view as critical to ensuring accountability. Additionally, an integral component of our work is

providing our students with opportunities to volunteer, which is valuable not just for the practical experience it offers and the opportunities to build and develop skills, but more importantly for the values of service to others and social responsibility it hopefully inculcates in them. Most recently, U-RAP has entered into a partnership with Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC), a non-governmental organization working on behalf of Caribbean populations especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in particular, men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs, orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV, migrant populations, persons in prison and ex-prisoners, and youth in especially difficult circumstances. This will involve a series of activities over the next few years aimed at strengthening the capacity of regional lawyers to provide *pro bono* services for some of those communities in seven Caribbean countries, through continuing legal education and strategizing on issues with constitutional or human rights implications of regional or national significance. Our impetus for this collaboration was our belief that interventions on behalf of and for these populations are necessitated by the extent of their marginalization and the very high levels of stigma and discrimination to which they are subject.

Thus, from very modest beginnings with only a specific goal, U-RAP has grown steadily in the number of our undertakings, the extent of our collaborations, and, I hope, our reputation for competent and ethical work. The incredibly generous Sabga Award will sustain this work in two very crucial ways. The first is its splendid financial component, which has fortuitously come when our existing funding is about to end. The other, and arguably even more enduring benefit, is the recognition of our public and civic contributions. I have tremendous discomfort with any label that singles me out, being fully conscious of my inadequacies and limitations, and so I’d like to think of this award as recognizing the collaborative efforts of me and my colleagues in U-RAP. In particular, the driving force behind U-RAP is my colleague Tracy Robinson, and thus this award for Public and Civic Contributions is one that I hope can be thought of as shared by both of us. Ultimately, I am fully conscious of how much I have benefited from the work and support of others — Tracy in the present but many, many others in the past — and more than anything else, this award reinforces how much more I have to do to live up to such a generous, public acknowledgement.

A portrait of Kei Miller, a Black man with a beard, wearing a blue flat cap, a blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a grey patterned bow tie. He is speaking into a microphone. The background is a vibrant, abstract mosaic of orange, red, and blue geometric shapes.

Kei Miller

Arts & Letters Laureate, 2018,
Jamaica

Here is a truth — I've written 11 books so far in my 40 years on this earth. Nine have already been published. The other two are making their ways through the machine of publication and will arrive soon enough. They represent a range of genres, these books — from collections of poems and stories to novels and essays, some academic, others more creative and lyrical. The one genre I don't imagine I will ever write is an autobiography. This present essay feels, in a strange way, more difficult than anything I've written before.

It is simply this — that I do not know how to construct from my life a narrative that could explain what I do right now, how I have come to author these books of West Indian literature, how I have come to be so fascinated and preoccupied with our language and our stories. Or perhaps it would be more honest to say that while I could construct such a narrative, it would not be one that convinces me.

In a library at the University of the West Indies I find amongst the stored papers of the late Jamaican writer, Vic Reid, a letter written for my father. It recommends him to Howard University. But my father never went to Howard. The letter is a memento of some ambition that was ultimately not pursued, and also of the relationship between my father and Vic Reid, and Vic Reid and my grandfather. Reid was one of my grandfather's closest friends and my father's godfather. You see, my grandfather was also a writer though he never published a book. Like Seepersad Naipaul in Trinidad, my grandfather spent his working life as a journalist. He was friends with Roger Mais and Reid, men who wrote the disposable everyday stories of their island but who all had the ambition to write something more lasting. I am tempted often to start my biography here — with my grandfather, Percy Miller, and this literary heritage, except it wasn't much of a thing in our family. It wasn't spoken about nor did it shape us. My father tells me how he and his siblings were forced to memorize whole passages of Shakespeare as children, but he did not do the same to his own children. Much of what I know now about my grandfather as a writer I learned after he died and after I had already embarked on my own path as a writer via some unknown road.

Or else, I might think about the house in which I grew up — the house where my family still lives. It is in Hope Pastures, a very quiet middle-class community in Jamaica. To think about that place now is to think about the unremarkable, an uneventful place where whatever tensions would have animated the lives of its residents, were tensions that played out behind closed doors, so we did not hear or witness anything. A neighbour who lived directly across from us is a man whose name I have never learnt in 40 years. I see him in the morning open the gate, he reverses the car, comes out and shuts the gate and then drives off, presumably to work. The process happens in reverse each evening. There was once a wife who did the same but I have not seen her in five years so I assume she has died. I do not know. There really was nothing in the lawns and fences and gates of Hope Pastures that ignited a spark in me. It was so absent of the grit and the sounds that I now write about.

I could go through this futile process with the schools I attended — Vaz Prep, and then Wolmer's Boys — trying to find some event, some inspirational teacher, something, anything that could explain me and the shape that my life would take. There was a dead body once. This is true. It was just outside the gate of my prep school. I was already inside, but I remember standing away from the gate and daring myself to go out and look at it. The teachers and students just coming in were screaming and holding their hands over their mouths. I only remember this now, searching for some seed from which the tree of my life would have blossomed. I never saw the dead body. I was not brave to go out and look. I am searching for something now that I cannot find it. Look — this is the truth: I was always a better than average student, but never extraordinary. If I really pushed myself, I would come third or fourth in my classes, but usually I did not push myself. I never won a major scholarship. No teacher singled me out as particularly gifted or a student with real potential. And yet I was never in doubt of this, which is probably just the arrogance of youth — the way we are so utterly convinced, when young, of some splendid future that is in front of us, some magnificent world that would be ours when we grew up. From quite early I was convinced that I



would be a writer, but I do not know why I was convinced of it, or what planted that ambition inside me.

When book #10 comes out later this year, this will be the biography on one of the front pages: Kei Miller was born in Jamaica in 1978 and has written several books across a range of genres. His 2014 collection, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*, won the Forward Prize for Best Collection while his 2017 Novel, *Augustown*, won the Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the Prix Les Afriques, and the Prix Carbet de la Caraïbe et du Tout-Monde. He is also an award-winning essayist. In 2010, the Institute of Jamaica awarded him the Silver Musgrave medal for his contributions to Literature and in 2018 he was awarded the Anthony N Sabga Award for Excellence for Arts & Letters. Kei has an MA in Creative Writing from Manchester Metropolitan University and a PhD in English Literature from the University of Glasgow. He has taught at the Universities of Glasgow, Royal Holloway and Exeter. He is the 2019 Ida Beam Distinguished

Visiting Professor to the University of Iowa and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

The generous thing to say about such biographies is that they are carefully curated things — cherry picking, as they do, our most significant successes. The less generous thing to say is that they are lies — not because the things listed are untruthful, but because they are such careful documents of omission. This biography does not list my failures. It makes mention of an MA and PhD but carefully says nothing of the BA in English Literature that I dropped out from, or the BSc in Sociology that I also dropped out of. It does not list the jobs I lost or my struggles with ADHD, or any number of things that would be more honest to the complicated people that we all are. And I would list them all right now, except even in these I do not know the narrative that explains me.

Perhaps all I can tell you is the unspectacular truth of it all. I was born in 1978. My parents were Keith

Miller and Vivette Miller. They came from different worlds — my father from the city and my mother from the rural side of the island. Maybe I learnt from my mother how elastic language could be as she could easily move from a rural dialect to the most precise English. Maybe I learnt from my father the joys of thinking. It was an unspectacular childhood, and I was an unspectacular child. I grew up in an unspectacular neighbourhood. Maybe the ho-hum of it all taught me, from very early on, how to retreat to myself and how to use my imagination. My mother loved scrabble. Sometimes I got home from school and the scrabble board was already set up. Maybe there was something in that that sparked a fascination with words — even simple words, because it is the simple words that will make you win in scrabble. But all of this is guess work. I knew that I wanted to write. I was certain of it. And I have been lucky. It really is as simple as that. I wanted to write and I have been lucky.

A portrait of Andrew Boyle, a man with a goatee, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and light-colored tie. He is speaking into a microphone. The background is a mosaic of warm, geometric shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

Andrew Boyle

Entrepreneurship Laureate, 2018,
Guyana

I was brought up in the humble and underprivileged village of Haraculi, Berbice River. This beautiful and practically untouched indigenous settlement is situated some 79 miles from New Amsterdam, the nearest town.

There I lived a very peaceful and simple life with a large family, an extremely closely-knit unit with amazing parental and grandparental support. My nine troublesome siblings were totally loving for the most part. During my childhood, electricity, treated running water and regular telephone services were totally non-existent. Despite these deficiencies, our parents insisted on giving us the type of education that was lacking in their lives. It also meant that in order to attend the only school in relative proximity, we had to paddle in our canoes: one hour paddling, whether rain or sunshine to get to the Kimbia Reformation Primary school, then another hour to get back home. This was obviously done after we would have performed our routine chores of milking the cows and other odds and ends. Even though this life can be described as being underprivileged, we never felt that way. It was an enjoyable, sort of carefree existence that was dominated by extreme fun and childhood frolic.

My life took another turn after successfully finishing primary school. It meant living with relatives, far away from my home village. It was certainly not a walk in the park. Being ridiculed and laughed at was not an uncommon phenomenon. I remember my first trip to the movies as if it were just yesterday. In one of the scenes, James Bond came out of the water in a diver's suit and aimed his pistol at the screen, towards me. Peals of laughter and pandemonium broke loose when I dropped to the floor while exclaiming, "Oh God, help me!" After that bizarre incident I was taunted and called names; "bush boy" was the most popular of the many false names. It was not a smooth transition, but I persevered and pressed on. With the strong support and guidance of my two bigger brothers, I persisted. We were determined to finish what we had started and to make our parents, forefathers and village proud. Yes, there were lovely, unforgettable moments and there were hardly ever any prolonged, dull ones. There were also instances when we wanted to return to the luxury

of our simple and uncomplicated village lives. Eventually, against all odds, we prevailed and did exceedingly well. The first hurdle was crossed! Somewhere during my first few years of high school, I was introduced to a wonderful book: *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale, which was surely was one of the major contributing factors that influenced my *modus operandi* later in my life.

My life's trail led to Cuba and again, one of my brothers and I made that trip almost at the same time. Both of us were very fortunate to have secured government scholarships. There were simply no means by which my parents could have afforded the opportunity for us to study abroad. This was a mixed bag of bitter and super-sweet experiences. Living and studying in this lovely Spanish island was quite different and totally remote from any of my previous experiences. Nevertheless, we were there to study, and we did exactly that while enjoying the strange and different island life to some extent. There I capitalized on the various opportunities and managed to learn Spanish and French, in addition to becoming an expert in microbiology. It is a fairytale chapter, one that is filled with numerous exciting stories. My years of study flew by so quickly. This usually happens when you are having a whale of a time. During this period, I prepared my mind mentally for the world of work. I always fantasized of having my own medical laboratory. In retrospect, it was indeed a far-fetched vision, one that seemed impossible and not doable at the time.

On my victorious return to my dear homeland, I was raring to go, to put into practice what I had learnt over those years in Cienfuegos. I had wanted to make an impact, a difference to my society and a name for myself. Almost immediately I was made the supervisor in the Tropical Diseases Laboratory of the Georgetown Hospital. I was beginning to live my dream. I subsequently discovered that one of my hidden passions would be lecturing at the University of Guyana. It was fascinating sharing my learnt knowledge and skills with the young and vibrant students. Even though I was passionate about my job as a clinical scientific officer and part-time lecturer, at the back of my mind, I fantasized setting up my laboratory.

With the proceeds from the sale of my seven cows, donations/loans from generous relatives, a much-needed infusion was injected into the Eureka project. I remember writing to my parents saying that I received my first client and that I can see the light in the tunnel.

I had an old, second-hand microscope that I had acquired in Cuba. This antiquated instrument would now fetch a good price in an antique shop and probably earn its rightful place in a museum. This was the first equipment on which my dream rested.

It was towards the end of my contractual obligations that the move was made. On March 5, 1995, my family and I opened the doors of my lifelong vision — Eureka Medical Laboratory was born. The location was not of the best, but the first of many steps was made. When Eureka was launched, some people scoffed and laughed at me and said that it was a silly idea. “How in the world could you compete with those existing giants?” some of my critics said.

During the planning and execution phases of the Eureka project, we brought forth three amazing children into the world; my life has never been the same. Mark, Andrew Jr. and Keziah gave me reasons to work even harder and to strive for excellence. I yearned to be a better person and they motivated me to be exemplary in all my endeavours. My love for them is boundless.

In the quest to improve and to add life into my new venture, I sought assistance from a few of the local banks. The thought process was that perhaps one might agree to fund this very promising endeavour. The unanimous rejection was heart-breaking and enormously disappointing. Those bankers who were approached thought that it was a waste of time to even consider my well-researched proposal. “Where is your collateral? I’m sorry, a loan cannot be secured and it’s too risky,” they all said. I remember trying to assure them that I was a hard worker and that I would personally guarantee payments on the loan. “I’m sorry, Sir; this is a policy of the bank; good luck with your future endeavours,” was not uncommon to hear.

After my unsuccessful experiences with these banks, I made a resolution to prove them wrong. I only wanted to borrow a measly sum of US\$25,000. I have observed that our local banks can be a huge deterrent for initiating business ventures. Quite understandably,

some businesses do fail, and financiers encounter difficulties to recoup their losses.

I pressed on and persevered. With the proceeds from the sale of my seven cows, donations/loans from generous relatives, a much-needed infusion was injected into the Eureka project. I remember writing to my parents saying that I received my first client and that I could see the light in the tunnel.

My dream team gave and continues to give incredible and unwavering support and Eureka has become a household name. After 24 years of unbroken service, Eureka was able to spread its caring wings in most of the regions of Guyana. We even ventured to provide similar laboratory services to the people of St Vincent. The services of EML were such that they captured the hearts of its clients and exceeded expectations. Every year has been better than the previous one and improvements have been made in all sectors. New and innovative services have been added. During the last three years, new and cutting-edge technological services were also added.

With the support of and collaboration with my HR manager, Mr Renato Gonzales of the Philippines, we began offering psycho-diagnostic services. Other new services came:

- Fast Track: A system to cutdown on waiting time of busy executives was launched;
- State-of-the-art PCR for sexually transmitted infections, including HPV testing;
- Home and office visits became a regular feature.
- Strategic collaborative ventures with overseas medical laboratories offering various exotic testing, for example DNA paternity, forensics, ancestry testing, etc.

The unstable and erratic power supply in Georgetown forced me to venture into installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on the main office. It was an expensive but extremely cost-saving project. Overwhelming requests from friends and family for smaller solar PV systems influenced me to

form Caribbean Wind and Sun Inc, a solar company with a difference. This entity proved to be quite successful and it is expected that within the not-too-distant future, it will become a very powerful company.

My father, before his sad demise, was a very hard-working man. He was a farmer but not an ordinary one. Sadly, when he died, some 18 years ago, the farm died with him. Some of my siblings decided to try to resuscitate the farm but to concentrate only on egg production. Thus, Amazonia Farms Inc was born. After a few months into operation, they opted to remove themselves from this new company because of several reasons, the major one being that they lived overseas and didn't have direct access to its operational issues. I decided to take over its operations and did some major expansions with farms also on the Linden Soesdyke highway. Today, Amazonia eggs can now be found in all the major supermarkets in the city.

These additional operations did not deter me from pursuing a master's degree in business administration. These learnt skills would have greatly assisted in me being more scientific and strategic in the efficient running of my enterprises.

My three companies have grown and continue to grow exponentially, and were ably supported by very proactive team players. Eureka became internationally accredited, being the first medical laboratory in Guyana to achieve this monumental status. This extraordinary feat was not simply because of luck, but rather was due to tireless dedication and hard work by the committed team members. It was no surprise to my friends, family and clients when I was chosen as the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence Laureate for Entrepreneurship in 2018.

Oh, what a tremendous honour that was! It caused a spike in my businesses, and people wanted to do interviews with me. I was featured in magazines, newspapers, and social media and made me into a local icon. I gave several motivational talks to young people, especially through the Rotary family.

With some of the proceeds garnered from this prestigious award, I was able to commence the construction of a computer laboratory at my *alma mater*, Kimbia Primary School. It is envisaged that this fully solar-powered and free Internet-ready centre — the first of its kind in this hinterland region — will allow the youths to become computer literate and to be able to connect to the outside world. That hopefully, their dreams could be realized.

Some 49 years ago, Guyana became a Republic and to commemorate, we have one week of massive celebrations called Mashramani (an Amerindian word which means "celebrating after a job well done"). On the eve of the flag-raising ceremony, the President speaks to the nation and outlines his vision for the future. During his speech, an announcement is made of persons chosen as national awardees. It was such a distinct honour in 2018 when the name, William Andrew Boyle, Microbiologist and Entrepreneur was called as a recipient of the Golden Arrow of Achievement. *Oh, what an honour!* Two major awards in one year. I must be doing something right. But then again had it not been for the overwhelming support and guidance from the Almighty God, my super and ever-present family members, my proactive team, kind friends and stakeholders, I would be absolutely nothing. May I, through this medium, express my sincere gratitude to all those who assisted in making me into what I am today. To the Anthony N Sabga team, thank you for giving me this golden opportunity to be a role model for my young people.

As a postscript, please allow me to say that I usually relax on Saturdays and recharge my batteries. It was one of those early Saturday mornings when I received the fantastic news. William Andrew Boyle, the Government of Guyana wishes to confer you with the Golden Arrow of achievement, would you accept this accolade? My answer was clearly in the affirmative, but do people really refuse those awards? The feelings were not dissimilar to when I received that call from Maria, several months ago. Oh, what an amazing feeling that was!

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Chevaughn and Noel Joseph

Public & Civic Contributions Laureates,
2018, Trinidad and Tobago

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declared the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

After several years of trying, I became a mother at the age of 32 to a beautiful baby girl RaVen J’Nay Camille Joseph. Having had a very difficult pregnancy and delivery, it was our decision not to have any more children. She was perfect and exactly what I had prayed for. Motherhood was great! I loved being a parent and believed I was excellent at it.

When RaVen was four years old, we got pregnant with our second child. Our beautiful baby boy Jabez “JB” Joseph joined our little family. Feeling like a pro and loving every minute of it, it was our decision to have a third child when JB turned four.

However, in early 2005, six months before his fourth birthday, JB was diagnosed with *alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma*, a rare form of childhood cancer. This not only devastated us as parents but our faith as individuals was also challenged and tested. Our dreams and hopes for ourselves and our children were replaced with fear and apprehension.

Instead of continuing to plan for our third child, we focused on caring for JB and doing whatever was humanly possible to make him better. While at the children’s hospital at Mount Hope, where he received the majority of his chemotherapy treatment, JB was very brave and was generally concerned more about the other patients than himself. He would ask Noel to bring his favourite toys, not for him to play with, but to distribute to the children on the ward. If he heard a child crying, he would instruct us to go to see what was happening, just in case he or she did not have a parent to comfort them.

Because of the acute nature of JB’s illness, we were advised to go to the Royal Victoria Institute (RVI) in Newcastle, UK. In 2006, we bundled our family together and we gratefully took up the opportunity to go to England for his major surgery. We were lucky enough to experience and learn about many medical and support services for children with cancer and their families. At the time, we had no clue that this was all part of God’s plan to prepare us for something huge, and we

are grateful to family and friends in the UK who assisted us.

JB’s procedure involved major reconstructive surgery and entailed the removal of almost half of his tongue — on the right side — and rebuilding it with stomach muscle. The surgery was a success and he was able to eat and talk. He was fitted with a gastronomy (feeding) tube and it was time for us to return to Trinidad. JB was livid. He had been very happy at the RVI for several reasons. It was a place he described as “hospital heaven”. The RVI had a ward exclusively for children with cancer and therefore it was not necessary for him to be in isolation. It was a place of fun and games and had lots of activities for the patients to do while warded, and they even catered to the needs of RaVen, as his sibling. We were also given free short-term accommodation while JB was in ICU.

The space was brightly painted, and everyone—doctors, nurses, security guards and cleaners—displayed an attitude that reflected the cheerfulness of the physical surroundings. This impacted him so positively, he firmly believed that the orange-coloured chemotherapy he was being administered was Lucozade because it did not make him feel ill. The truth is, this was one of the very same drugs he received back home. So, sitting in the lobby of the RVI with a taxi meter running, we had to promise JB that we would fix our hospital here in Trinidad and make it just like the RVI. We were determined to create our own “hospital heaven”.

Unfortunately, JB’s illness became progressively worse. He was still amazing though, never complaining. We celebrated his fifth birthday when we got back home, and he was happy. He learned to feed himself through his peg (G-tube) and he was also able to clean it, so he became self-sufficient and embraced his new life. We knew he was in pain, but he did not like the way the morphine made him feel so he would refuse it and simply say, “I could handle the pain.” The cancer was aggressive and had spread to his skull, hips, spine, shoulder, ankle and lungs. It was difficult for him to walk and holding him would cause him much pain. So, in January of 2007 I had to get him a wheelchair. I sat in my car for 45 minutes with his wheelchair in the trunk, not wanting to go upstairs. My intelligent, funny,

“Wow Mom! This is so cool; I want to do this for the rest of my life. But next time, give them soup with vegetables in it.”

computer-literate little boy, who was always running and playing, with dreams of becoming a footballer, would now be confined to a wheelchair. I eventually got it inside and wheeled it into his room and he said: “Wow Mom! This is so cool — I always wanted a wheelchair!” We helped him on and rearranged the furniture to make space and he was on the move again, happily embracing his situation and making the best of it.

One day in early March 2007, we went to feed the homeless at Woodford Square, Port of Spain. JB’s body was then riddled with cancer and he had to lie at the back of the car while Noel and RaVen shared sandwiches and juices. He was thrilled to hear the stampede of feet and the many “thank yous” from those who received a simple meal that day. Just as they were finished sharing, he held on to the back of the car seat, sat up and exclaimed, “Wow, Mom! This is so cool; I want to do this for the rest of my life. But next time, give them soup with vegetables in it.”

JB died three weeks later on March 24, 2007. He was just five-and-a-half years old.

Inspired by his life, and certainly encouraged by his spirit and his words, in June 2007 we set out to honour JB’s request and launched phase one of the newly-incorporated NGO, The Just Because Foundation. We sought and received permission to set up a tent at Woodford Square for the distribution of soup (with vegetables), other types of food and clothing to the less fortunate. With the help of friends, we did this for a few months before taking things to a different level. It was time for phase two — a focus on childhood cancer support services.

On August 2, 2007, which would have been JB’s sixth birthday, we celebrated by opening the doors of the JBF Home Away From Home (HAFH). This unique facility involved the rental of a four-bedroom house that was nicely outfitted with all amenities and which we used to provide short-term accommodation for families of children with cancer who had to travel here from remote areas of Trinidad, Tobago, or from around the Caribbean in

order to seek treatment for their children at the children’s hospital at Mount Hope. This, and all the JBF services were made available free of charge to the families of childhood cancer patients. Over the past 11-and-a-half years, we have been honoured to host local and regional families including those from Tobago, Guyana, St Lucia, St Kitts, Grenada, Antigua, and St Vincent & The Grenadines.

To complement this service, we added a patient-transport component to take them from the HAFH to hospital or treatment centres for radiotherapy. It was such a hectic time for Noel and me, as our two vehicles had to become shuttles. That was until his car conked out from exhaustion. The service continued and included the hiring of taxis and enlisting the help of volunteers, when necessary. Thankfully, a few years later, we were tremendously blessed to have been given a donation of a 15-seater Toyota Hiace commuter bus through the generosity of the Rotary Club of Port of Spain West, and other chapters of Rotary International. This meant bigger things were on the way.

Our next major project saw the launch of the JBF Siblings Only Club in 2008. This initiative was the result of a heart-to-heart chat with RaVen, who was between the ages of seven and nine years old while JB was being treated. RaVen recalled “many instances over the two years of his illness when I felt that I was being neglected by family and family friends because JB was in the spotlight.” She further described the emotion of feeling like a “sack of potatoes”. This was such an eye-opener for us as we believed that we were good parents. As we researched the topic, we discovered that siblings often suffer silently due to feelings of fear, anger, abandonment and a host of other negative emotions because their parents’ emotional and physical resources are focused directly toward the sick child.

Siblings Club outings take place at different locations and include hikes, fishing, horseback riding, as well as talks on nutrition, exercise, craft, drama, fun and games. An essential component of each of these meetings is a child-friendly group therapy session and exercises that allow the siblings to share their

experience, thoughts and emotions either in writing, through discussion or via some other creative medium.

In the same year, we launched The JBF Kiddi K Children's Walk Against Childhood Cancer. This is our flagship event that attracts large numbers of participants annually. It takes the form of a Health and Fitness Family Fun Fair with the overall theme "Creating Awareness. Promoting Wellness in Children". Each year, sub-themes are added as we recognize the courage and resilience of our young patients who endure so much in their fight against cancer.

The year 2008 turned out to be phenomenal for us. There was such passion and momentum that it was only natural for us to tackle another project. This is the biggest one to date — keeping our promise to JB with the creation of our version of "hospital heaven". This involved the conversion of an unused ward at the children's hospital into what is now known as the JBF Paediatric Specialty Unit (JBFSU). The first of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean, the JBFSU is a family-centred, multi-disciplinary ward that looks after the health care needs of childhood cancer patients and children with other chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCDs) such as sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia and other inherited blood disorders, as well as heart and kidney disease. Children from across the region are treated at the JBFSU.

We were certainly out of our depth in getting this done so we must acknowledge the trust placed in us and the support given to us by the board of directors, management and staff of the North Central Regional Health Authority (NCRHA) and the Ministry of Health. We are also grateful to the members of the public, other NGOs and Corporate citizens who responded to our call for assistance — providing significant funding, materials and mind-boggling levels of volunteerism. We were awestruck by the "sea of red", as literally hundreds of volunteers representing the Unit Trust Corporation and Digicel Trinidad and Tobago swarmed the corridors of the unit on different occasions to ensure that we

got it ready to be launched on November 14, 2008. To date, the JBFSU has served over 3,000 children.

And what about the fun dimension? The JBF Specialty Unit is known as the "party ward" where everything is celebrated — birthdays, national and religious holidays and special occasions such as Mother's Day and Father's Day. The ward is nicely decorated to mark each occasion. With the help of a group of amazing women affectionally known as "Lovin' Lunches", we are able to provide tangible support for the parents and caregivers in the form of tasty meals. We've also introduced "Breakfast is Served" and, as the name suggests, this initiative seeks to ensure that parents or guardians can enjoy a hearty breakfast after a sometimes challenging night at hospital. Wifi, puppet shows, presents, magic shows, computers, toys, art and craft sessions as well as occasional visits by celebrities makes us feel confident that JB would have given this project "two thumbs up".

When the need arises, or upon receiving a verified request from the doctors, the JBF has provided assistance with the purchase of chemotherapy, medical equipment and other critical support such as contributions toward surgical procedures, diagnostic blood and urine tests, and the distribution of food hampers, clothing and toiletries to families in need.

Depending on available resources, support for some of our regional guests includes assistance with airfare to return to their respective territories at the end of the child's treatment.

Even with all of this going on, it was important for us to develop other areas of service via family support groups. No matter how busy we get or how much the Just Because Foundation has evolved, we will never lose touch with our own journey, constantly referencing our own situation, our own crisis. This helps us to stay grounded and focused. We may not be able to predict the outcome for these patients and their families, but we are determined to keep doing whatever we can to make this journey a little easier for

To date, the JBFSU has served over 3,000 children.

them.

This sentiment has led to the establishment of JBF Embrace. We know only too well that the need for emotional and practical support does not come to an end with the loss of a child. In fact, for some family members, it's now more important than ever, as they are forced to come to terms with emotions they may have suppressed along the way in addition to the crushing reality of the death of their child. Embrace is based on the model of a peer counselling group where families at different stages of loss can share their thoughts and emotions and provide advice and encouragement for one another. We will also have a structured programme to further assist parents to cope.

Noel spearheaded the introduction of "OncoDads", which is one of the newest JBF initiatives that focuses exclusively on the fathers of paediatric oncology patients, because we recognize the need to provide a peer support opportunity for the men who are facing their own challenges. Dads are perceived as being "always strong" and because of the overwhelming demands placed on their shoulders during this period of turmoil, there is hardly an outlet or an avenue for them to just let their guard down to talk, to share, to express their faith. After a pilot project — which was a pond-fishing outing — the dads continued to interact on a personal level and, much to the delight of their families, some of them even perform on stage at the JBF Hope Concert.

As we move forward, we will remain consistent with our mission of creating awareness of childhood cancer. I have been given the priceless opportunity to write a column in the Health Plus section of the *Trinidad Guardian* and I'm using that forum to feature our little fighters and their families, as well as their caregivers. This is an amazing avenue to promote early detection and to present information on some of the potential signs and symptoms of various childhood cancers.

We revisited Newcastle in 2017 — over a decade later. We retraced our steps visiting some of the sites that JB loved including



Blue Reef Aquarium and the Life Science Centre. But this trip was different. The RVI was changed, transformed into a much larger, more modern hospital. It caused us to dream about the possibilities back home in T&T. We missed JB tremendously and took photos of Mr Waffles — one of JB's favourite stuffed animals — who accompanied us on the trip. It was very emotional, but it provided a measure of closure for us.

But there was even more purpose to this trip. RaVen is now 21, and has received an open scholarship and is studying medicine at Cardiff University in Wales, UK. She's still exactly what I prayed for. She is following her dream with all the studying and sacrifices that her work demands. This dream was sparked all those years ago when we were in England for JB's major surgery. As an eight-year-old girl, she told us that she wanted to go back to the UK to study medicine and she has worked diligently towards it. We're so proud of her.

I (Chevaughn) was 54 years old in May 2019 and I have to admit that in just over half-a-century of living, when I think of Jabez, I have to conclude that I have never met a more remarkable person. As parents or guardians, we are supposed to

be the primary teachers of our children, but I am happy to say that I have learned more from our son JB than I have learned from anyone else in my life.

He taught me unconditional love, compassion, patience, kindness, courage, faith, selflessness and the ability to smile through the pain, all in the two years of his illness. I learned to attend to him, to be brave like him, and to embrace all of him. JB is my guardian angel and though I know he is in a better place, I long for the day that I can feel his hug, listen to him giggling in a nearby room, hear him call my name or hold his hand as we walk through the mall. I still wish for the moment when I can hear him running down the corridor calling "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy," and feel him throw himself at my legs.

As for the third child we never had, God has given us the opportunity to care for and be of support to so many children and their families. It is such a privilege and an honour. I thank God every day for the assignment He has handed us though our son Jabez and for the legacy that would touch the lives of so many! Out of our loss and JB's beautiful soul was born the Just Because Foundation — the JB Foundation, just because he cared.

A portrait of Adesh Ramsubhag, a man with glasses, wearing a dark suit, a red shirt, and a red tie. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of red, orange, and yellow.

Adesh Ramsubhag

Science & Technology Laureate, 2018,
Trinidad and Tobago

As a child growing up in the 1970s, it would have been unimaginable to conceive the idea of a life outside farming for Dr Adesh Ramsubhag, who was born and grew up in the rural community of Rochard Road, Penal. He was the last of nine children born to Bridglal and Rajdaye Ramsubhag.

At that time, the mainstay of the village was agriculture, and almost everyone was destined for and eventually became involved with farming. His family were primarily sugarcane farmers but also did vegetable gardening, rice cultivation and animal husbandry. Like most in his community and family, this also appeared to be his destiny, but the universe had other plans, and he was propelled into the unlikely world of academia. His was not a typical journey, and he attributes the values instilled by his family and community, and the rich experiences of his rural upbringing as largely responsible for his achievements in academia.

Dr Ramsubhag's parents only received limited primary school education, but like many rural families at that time, they sought to give their children the opportunity they didn't have: a sound education to escape a life of the hardship perceived for those in agriculture. While his father was busy looking after the sugarcane fields, his mother was the one who focused her efforts on ensuring all nine children received a secondary school education. The five older children attended private secondary schools while the four younger siblings went to public secondary schools. This was almost a Herculean task given the seasonal income from sugarcane farming and unstable earnings from vegetable gardening. Against the odds, Mrs Ramsubhag would let nothing come on the way of achieving her goal. She worked sun-up to sun-down to ensure funds were available for the basic necessities like school fees, uniforms, books and taxi fares. In addition to being a housewife, she worked tirelessly on the vegetable and rice fields and supplemented the family's income by utilizing her skills as a seamstress, sewing the most elaborate and fashionable dresses for villagers. She also had a number of cows which were milked for home use and to make butter for sale.

The resolve, hard work, determination and selflessness of his mother made a strong impact on Dr Ramsubhag's life. The influence of his father has also been tremendous. Mr Ramsubhag was a visionary who was completely focused on improving the welfare of the family. He set the standard for hard work, planned for the long-term and was always willing to take high risks in making investments to expand his farming operations. He was highly creative and innovative and always developed novel approaches to solving problems, which Dr Ramsubhag was able to emulate later on in his laboratory.

However, the greatest lesson learned from Mr Ramsubhag was resilience and the ability to maintain a positive attitude, irrespective of the circumstances. Crop failures that were due to adverse weather conditions or pests and diseases were frequent occurrences in the life of the family, sometimes happening several years in a stretch. Mr Ramsubhag senior was never daunted nor was he down, not even for a single day. He was always able to re-energize himself and work even harder, with the firm belief that there would be a bumper harvest the next season.

Being the last in the family has its advantages and Dr Ramsubhag had eight older siblings who always had his interests at heart and helped take care of him. Some were disciplinarians who were even more strict than their parents and ensured he took the straight path. He attributes much of his growth and development to his siblings. His passion for sports, music and culture only developed because of the influences of his brothers and sisters. He is most grateful to them for planting the seeds of curiosity in his mind and developing the thirst for knowledge. Different siblings had different interests; some were into the arts, some into sciences and others into humanities. There were constant intellectual discussions and debates at home, and as a young boy this atmosphere provided ample intellectual nourishment for a developing mind.

Dr Ramsubhag also learned the spirit of unity, camaraderie, cooperation and responsibility from the home environment. The elder children helped

One of the key elements of Dr Ramsubhag's success was the influence of his community. Most in the village were poor, but his earliest exposure was to a positive environment of contentment and hope, and also with higher aspirations through hard work and dedication.

to take care of the younger ones, and members of the family were engaged with helping with the daily tasks in the home and farm. Work often started early in morning and ended late in the afternoon. While there was room for expression of individuality, the siblings functioned as a single unit, and one could be assured of full support from the others whenever the need arose: financial, moral or emotional. There were never quarrels or fights, even though they lived in a small 8m x 8m, two-room single-storey house until Dr Ramsubhag was 12 years old. They even had a cousin living with them who the siblings considered a brother. Once, when his school teacher asked if he lived in the "little house" on the hill he became upset since he never thought his house was little.

One of the key elements of Dr Ramsubhag's success was the influence of his community. Most in the village were poor, but his earliest exposure was to a positive environment of contentment and hope, and also with higher aspirations through hard work and dedication. It was no surprise that economic progress was rapid. The thatched-roof houses quickly gave way to more stable structures, and over time, many were transformed to mansions. Children going to school with bare feet was a common sight and he experienced this for a while.

However, things in the village gradually improved and by the time he completed primary school most children at least wore slippers, if not shoes. Music, culture and sports were central to the village, and provided much of the entertainment for villagers. Inspired by his older siblings'

interests and involvement, he also got involved in these activities that became core to his existence. He considers these social interactions as most important in providing a broader perspective of the world and for instilling discipline and self-confidence, even in the ability to influence major changes on how things work.

Inspired by the older boys in the village cricket team, including his brother who was a star bowler, young Adesh and other young boys in their early teens organized themselves into a youth sports club, of which he was a core member. The youths quickly became a highly disciplined unit with strict codes for conduct. With no playing field available in their immediate vicinity, they organized fundraising activities and constructed a concrete strip with nets to practice. He even learned to weld and helped with the fabrication of the structure. Within a few years they successfully undertook a major project to develop a piece of swampland into a cricket playing field; this was while they were still teenagers.

This experience taught Dr Ramsubhag the lesson that, with the teamwork and appropriate systems and structures, seemingly insurmountable barriers can be overcome. Additionally, it showed him that it was better to take charge and take the "bull by the horns" to effect change than to wait on others to make things happen. Having always served in senior administrative positions, his experience with the club also reinforced his conviction of the importance of principled and transparent leadership, and the need to develop mutual trust and respect to foster harmony so that a shared vision could be achieved.

Religious and cultural activities were important parts of life in the community, and music and song were inherent parts of these traditions. Influenced by elder siblings who were in the habit of acquiring and learning different musical instruments, Dr Ramsubhag taught himself to play several instruments at a young age, including the keyboard, mandolin and guitar. Soon, he and two other siblings joined a village religious group that frequently performed devotional songs and gave discourses from the *Ramayana*, one of the Hindu religious texts.

He started to play the mandolin with the group, and this provided the platform for him to advance his skills. At a high school event, members of the Dil-Ki-Awaaz orchestra heard him performing a solo item on the mandolin and invited him to join the band, and he graciously obliged. For the first time he became exposed to professionally trained musicians, and realized the vast difference between his amateur skills and those of the experts. He was fortunate to be taken under the wings by musical director and arranger, Mr Kalicharan Dookie, and other members who were instrumental in his evolution as a musician, albeit still at an amateur level. In this environment he learned what it takes to function at the higher levels, with the absolute need for complete discipline, dedication, commitment and focus.

The community was also one of fellowship and harmony, where there was acceptance of everyone, irrespective of religious persuasion. Although Dr Ramsubhag is a Hindu, some of his closest friends were Christians and Muslims and he attended church and also learned Islamic prayers. He learned Hindi from a Muslim teacher but also participated in the Urdu and Arabic classes. Similarly, all his friends also participated in the Hindu festivals and functions.

This exposure led him to the firm belief that, at the core, all religions promote similar universal values of peace and love. He believes that once one can plough through the layers of symbolism and decode the cultural forms of expression, it becomes clear that the goals of all religions are the same, to take one's focus

Dr Ramsubhag's path to academia was almost accidental. Losing confidence and with the stigma of placing last in class, he lost interest and became withdrawn from studies, and started making every possible excuse possible to not attend school.

away from the external materialistic world to the realm of inner peace. As a young man, Dr Ramsubhag became profoundly influenced by *Advaita Vedanta*, the Indian school of philosophy emphasizing the oneness of the universe, and the path to attaining the ultimate goal of realizing our true nature by removing desires and attachments to the external world. He strives to live by the guiding principles of not focusing too much on the self, and performing his duties to the best of his ability without too much expectations or emphasis on the rewards.

Dr Ramsubhag's path to academia was almost accidental. As a young boy, he came to hate school. At first he had loved school, but at around his second year, he was transferred to a new class and he wasn't able to catch up with the new work. Losing confidence and with the stigma of placing last in class, he lost interest and became withdrawn from studies, and started making every possible excuse possible to not attend school. He was lucky to have kind and understanding teachers at the Clarke Rochard Government Primary School who did their best to inspire him, and his performance did improve substantially over time. However, the psychological effect remained and his dislike for school never subsided, even in high school.

If he'd had the option, Dr Ramsubhag would certainly have quit school, but being faithful and respectful to his family, this question never arose. Although he did not like school, especially the nature of rote learning in our system, he always had a great desire for knowledge. He thinks this thirst was developed from infancy by listening to discussions of his older siblings. He looked forward to their deliberations on academic matters related to their school work and on general topics of interest, and absorbed everything like a sponge. That spark led to a deep curiosity in him, and he was constantly daydreaming and thinking about a wide array of subject matters and trying to figure out how things worked. He became an active learner: observing, reflecting, contemplating and even experimenting. He never accepted anything that didn't have a logical and rational basis.

After primary school, Dr Ramsubhag attended the Palo Seco Secondary School for his O' Levels. The distance of almost 35 km from his home and an unreliable bus service meant sometimes having to take three taxis to reach to school. This was an additional financial burden and he would stay away from school at any opportunity to save the family the expense of commuting so far. When it was time to select subjects for O' Levels, he couldn't decide on any specific area because of his broad interests, and he ended up doing a combination of science and modern studies subjects. His performance in the end was adequate and he passed all the subjects. His biology class did not have a teacher for significant periods over the final two years because of the difficulties in filling teacher vacancies in the remote school.

Dr Ramsubhag was the only student to pass this subject in his class, which was probably foretelling his future interest in the biological sciences.

Not sure of which subjects to pursue at A-Levels, he eventually signed up for Modern Studies at the Barrackpore Senior Comprehensive School, not too far from his home. This was the only programme offered by the school that year, so the choice was, in a way, made for him, since he no longer wanted to commute to any school far away from his home. He enjoyed being in the school, especially for the range of cultural activities he was able to participate in, but he was never inspired by the formal academic classes. Not surprisingly his performance was mediocre.

After a few unsuccessful applications for positions in the public sector, Dr Ramsubhag decided to work full time in this family's farming operations. He had already spent a lot of time developing the technical skills by helping on the farm on weekends, holiday periods and on days he stayed home from school. By that time, his family's focus was shifting to poultry production, but being a vegetarian who didn't subscribe to killing animals, his interest was on crops and he worked towards revitalizing and expanding his family's sugarcane operations. He not only assisted with managing activities, he also worked alongside the labourers

when he was not driving the tractor. He insisted on performing whatever task was at hand, including manual harvesting of sugar cane, which his parents always tried to shield the children from because of the perceived difficulty. This is a period that Dr Ramsubhag cherishes, not only for the accomplishments, but also for the interactions and relationships built with workers and other farmers. He learned and gained tremendous technical knowledge and life skills from them. He insists that the brilliance he observed among the simple workers was no less than what he observed within the university environment.

Dr Ramsubhag worked for two years in the farm before he went to pursue the BSc degree in Agriculture at the University of the West Indies. Since he did not complete A-Levels in the sciences, he completed a one-year preliminary science programme before gaining entry to the degree programme. His entry into university was with much sacrifice and support from his entire family. He was interested in completing the degree not only for gaining employment for himself, but also to contribute to the growth and development of his family's farm. The programme gave him exposure to the sciences, particularly in pure and applied biology and chemistry, which provided much fascination, excitement and satisfaction. He enjoyed learning in the enabling environment of intellectual exploration and quest for deeper knowledge in the university environment.

With encouragement and support of a small group of friends, he gradually transformed into a more conscientious and focused student. After graduating with his Bachelor's degree, he registered for the MPhil research degree for which he was awarded a UWI Open Postgraduate Scholarship. He was intrigued with molecular genetics, and chose a research project on microbial genetics and biotechnology. His supervisors, Prof Pathmanathan Umaharan and the late Dr Alfred Donowa, served as mentors and were instrumental in his intellectual development. He was keenly interested in applying the latest cutting-edge technology in his research and received full support from his supervisors to pursue

His entry into university was with much sacrifice and support from his entire family. He was interested in completing the degree not only for gaining employment for himself, but also to contribute to the growth and development of his family's farm.



this strategy. Dr Ramsubhag subsequently upgraded to PhD in Microbiology which he completed in 1997.

After completing the doctoral degree, Dr Ramsubhag took up a position as Microbiologist and Deputy Laboratory Manager at the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARDI). This was an environment that provided further opportunities to learn and to grow, and the experience was extremely satisfying and rewarding. He was involved in laboratory testing and consultancies related to food and water, public health, the environment and industrial microbiology. Being a “problem solver” by nature, he thoroughly enjoyed working with clients to analyse problems and develop solutions. However, he was missing research in hardcore biotechnology, and when the opportunity presented itself in 2001, he moved to the Department of Life Sciences, UWI, St Augustine as a Lecturer in Microbiology and Plant Pathology.

Since joining the UWI, Dr Ramsubhag has lectured to thousands of students in a relatively large number of

postgraduate and undergraduate courses in microbiology, biotechnology and plant pathology. He believes the current education system encourages rote learning and is doing a major disservice to our young people and the country. He uses strategies to promote active learning and for students to develop deeper interests and a love for knowledge. He is also a very active researcher and has completed a number of pure and applied research projects. He emphasizes keeping up with current technology in order for his work and teaching to remain relevant to local needs, e.g., for diagnosing and managing diseases of plants, animals and humans, and detecting and managing pollution in the environment and drug discovery from microorganisms.

Dr Ramsubhag enjoys working with students and has supervised 35 MSc, MPhil and PhD student projects. He also depends on teamwork for accomplishing research and has collaborations with many researchers in all the science faculties at UWI, as well as many from foreign universities. Thus far, Dr Ramsubhag has published over 50

research articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as dozens of abstracts, short communications and conference proceedings. He also has a patent application pending for a novel class of adjuvant compounds that break resistance in disease-causing microorganisms. He attributes his success to the influences of his family, community and teachers, as well as from the support of friends and colleagues at the UWI.

A portrait of Danielle Dieffenthaler, a woman with dark hair and blue-rimmed glasses, smiling. The background is a colorful mosaic of geometric shapes in shades of blue, green, orange, and purple. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Danielle Dieffenthaler

Arts & Letters Laureate, 2019,
Trinidad and Tobago

I've often asked myself how I got here, sometimes in despair, sometimes in wonder, and I've come to believe that it's in my DNA. I come from a long line of resilient, tenacious, determined, creative and sometimes impulsive women. All these traits were passed on to me in abundance, some more than others. My parents were creative, each in their own right: my mother is a fine artist and my late father — though an accountant by profession — was a storyteller of great repute.

It seemed inevitable that despite the many protestations and insistence from some family members that I study law, on account of my argumentative nature, that I chose to go into the field of television. There has always been a fascination with television for me from as early as six years old, when I would recruit the neighbourhood kids and recreate Auntie Hazel or whatever was on television at the time, framed with a cardboard box as the television screen.

When I was 13, my family went to live in Kenya as a result of my stepfather's job as a diplomat. Kenya was a turning point in my life; it was where I came to appreciate the beauty of nature, but it was also where I learned to appreciate my own culture as I had to define myself as a person from the Caribbean, from Trinidad. They had never seen someone looking like me, although there was another girl in my school from Trinidad who would say she was from Italy — which incensed me — so I was on a mission to educate the people around me about my country and region from then.

It was an August holiday when I was 15, when I returned home to visit, when I saw an after-school TV special, and for the first time saw people who were my age and looked and sounded like me on TV. That had a huge impact on me. I felt then that that was what I wanted to do. I graduated from high school at 17 and upon returning to Trinidad, went directly to Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT) for a job. They laughed me out of the building and said to come back when I turned 18.

So, after a year in Paris, I returned to TTT and began my journey into television. I was assigned to news, but my heart was with the drama department which was run by Horace James. He

had piles of scripts on his desk that I would run away and read, and when a spot opened up in the second season of *No Boundaries*, I pleaded my way onto the crew. I was the whole production department — assistant director, script supervisor, continuity, craft services, production assistant, make-up sometimes and even an actress, by default. It was definitely where I cut my teeth, and this certainly prepared me for what was to come.

I left TTT to study at Ryerson Polytechnical University in Toronto, to round off my education in television. I would return every "summer" to work with Horace or in the news room. After university, on a whim decided I wasn't ready to come back home so went to England to see what could happen. As fate would have it, I was introduced to Darcus Howe through a mutual friend. Darcus was producing a current affairs programme focusing on Africa, South Pacific and Caribbean affairs. I was interviewed and told he would get back to me. After two months in London I returned to Trinidad and after a week at home I got a call from Darcus Howe saying: "Come. You start on Monday!"

So, I scrambled to get a flight to London, said my goodbyes, and headed over. Thankfully, a childhood friend of mine was accommodating, and I actually had a comfortable place to stay. I presented myself to *The Bandung Files* offices in Kentish Town (learning the Tube as I went along) bright and early Monday morning, to be told that I was headed to Zimbabwe that Saturday. Thus began my adventure with Darcus Howe and *The Bandung Files*, most of which always involved some impromptu travel, like camping out outside of prisons on my birthday. It was all an amazing experience and certainly a whole other education.

But living in London also focused my need to tell our stories. Seeing statues and artefacts in museums and mansions built by the blood, sweat and tears of my ancestors, or as a result of the rape and pillage of my region, irked me and I figured after two years it was time to come home. That said, I was not completely sold on the idea of coming home. I was enjoying the travel my job afforded me and the learning about different cultures. I loved London as a city and my friends there but still there was a nagging.

Upon returning home for Christmas, two people influenced my decision to come home —Richard Tang Yuk, who had for years been saying I had to come home and give back (he's now living in New Jersey working at Princeton), and Alfred Aguiton, who ran the ad agency called AMPLE. He claimed that I would be able to travel still while here and to prove it, offered me a job to go on assignment in Guyana with Georgia Popplewell and Walt Lovelace who were working for Banyan Productions. On our Guyana adventure we all hit it off and there on the banks of the Essequibo River, hatched the idea of starting our own production company.

After working with Banyan as a production house on a couple other assignments I was eventually offered a job there and started work on the series *Body Beat*. On July 27 of that year there was an attempted coup in Trinidad. Walt and I had been filming around the city that day, ending up on North Post Road. I was also working on another assignment at TTT and after our shoot was heading there to edit the assignment. On a whim I decided to turn around and head home to shower before I went, and there I turned on the television to see the events unfolding.

After a day at home with my phone ringing off the hook for information, as if I were actually at TTT, I called Walt and said: "Let's go cover this." He thought I was crazy but came anyway. After being caught in the curfew at a press conference at the then Holiday Inn (now The Radisson) we were "discovered" by Bernard Pantin, who was running communications out of Camp Ogden. He started out saying it was too dangerous for me to be out there, but after I pointed out that I was there already and going nowhere, he co-opted us to come film what was happening.

Camp Ogden felt like propaganda, so we didn't stay too long, but long enough to know what army food is and to get a curfew pass, which allowed us to move a little more freely. We got wind that a deal had been struck and that the hostages were being released. We made our way downtown, parked a distance away and went the rest of the way on foot, befriending a *New York Times* journalist on the way who had secured a

spot in the Clico building opposite the Red House.

He acted like we were his crew and were able to film the release of the parliamentarians. We scrambled to get back to Maraval Road where we heard the TTT hostages were being released. I bailed Walt out on Picton Street and went to find a parking spot. At this point it was raining, as I made my way onto the Savannah where I heard the cocking of a gun and voice shouting out to me with an American accent: "Ma'am you are not allowed to be here." Before I could answer, journalist Denis McComie appeared from a nearby building and said: "She's with me, we're press," and they let us go. We were on time to see the tail end of the TTT hostages being released and the Muslimeen emerge. I was half expecting Abu Bakr to go down in a blaze of glory like the Mujahideen I had spent months at TTT covering. But no, he came out like a Trini "saga boy". I knew at that moment that our country had changed forever. I contemplated leaving then but the pull to tell our stories was still strong.

A year later, Earth TV was born. We started with an environmental series called *Ecowatch*. It was a learning experience in a number of ways — we learned about our environment and the threats to it first-hand. We learnt every corner of this country and grew an appreciation for it and its people, and it was also the beginning of a lesson in business the hard way. We decided to invest in the latest state-of-the-art camera. It would be the only one in the region. First, we had to find a bank willing to lend the money to some twenty-something-year-olds with a kind of business plan. After many "No's", and with a loan from my mother as our down payment, we finally found an equally young banker willing to listen, and thus we got what was the equivalent of a mortgage on a house in Trincity for our first camera.

We thought with the critical success of *Ecowatch* that it would be easy sailing but we suffered for a couple more years with the odd job up the islands (most notably we covered the Cayman Islands elections, worked on the Michael Gilkes' film version of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in Dominica, a documentary for the

We started with an environmental series called *Ecowatch*. It was a learning experience in a number of ways — we learned about our environment and the threats to it first-hand.

A great number of hurdles to overcome besides the actual fact of filming on location in Trinidad with all the dogs, garbage trucks and parrots to contend with, I found myself dealing with personnel problems including two nervous breakdowns by actors and the general attitude of crew members who weren't in the habit of taking instructions from a "girl".

Caribbean Development Bank which took us throughout the Caribbean, and a documentary on a Habitat for Humanity conference in Istanbul, Turkey.

We were still struggling and decided to get into the music video business. At first many were reluctant to pay a whole TT\$6,000 for a video when they could get it done for \$2,000 elsewhere. We started doing videos for alternative groups like Odd Fellows Local and Zoom Salloum, and eventually got into the soca arena with David Rudder ("Mad Man's Rant", "Feeding Frenzy"), 3 Canal ("Blue", "Revolution") Colin Lucas ("Wham Bam Thank you Ma'am"), Iwer, Shadow, Chris Garcia ("Chutney Bacchanal"), Machel Montano ("Big Truck") Alison Hinds ("Aye, Aye, Aye", "Iron Bazodee") Krosfyah ("Wet Me") and many others. We started getting our videos on BET and this was incentive for many others to come to us.

After returning home from touring with the Immortelle Theatre company for three weeks in Barbados performing for an international conference, I became restless and, while at dinner with Bernard Hazel and Deborah Maillard who were also on the tour, I came up with the idea to do a soap opera to rival *The Young and the Restless*, an American soap opera which was the top-rated show in Trinidad at the time. We went through several rewrites and eventually came up with *Westwood Park*. We decided to shoot a pilot to be able to shop it. We begged our friends to act, our families were extras, as we asked friends and businesses to lend us their houses and premises as locations. We asked designers to borrow clothes and almost everyone worked for free.

It would be two years after the filming of the pilot that any TV station would give us the time of day. We faced many naysayers, most of whom didn't think we could compete with *Y&R* or anything foreign because we didn't have the budget. Then after a CBU meeting during which regional TV stations were chastised for not investing in enough local content, we got a barrage of requests from the two stations in the country asking if I was still doing that "thing" I'd come to them with years ago. They both wanted to own the series outright and have me just produce it for them, but one thing I learned from listening to Oprah was to never release your copyright, just license it. So, I did just that, I licensed the content for a specific length of time, long enough, supposedly, for the licensee to retrieve its investment.

I went with TTT initially as they were willing to spend closest to what we required to get the show done — not nearly enough, but enough to see us through. The first season of *Westwood Park* was a baptism of fire. At this time Walt Lovelace would have left Earth TV because *Westwood Park* wasn't his cup of tea. He wanted to do films of his father's work. I didn't think we were ready. *Westwood Park* was, for me, the vehicle to get ready for bigger ventures.

So, I had to forge ahead with a new DP (director of photography) new crew, new everything. It was the first time, other than the films I had worked on, that I had a crew of more than five people. There were many moving parts to coordinate. A great number of hurdles to overcome besides the actual fact of filming on location in Trinidad with all the dogs, garbage trucks and parrots to contend with, I found myself dealing with

A Bajan man working for Paramount pictures took pity on us and explained the ropes. He said we should have made an appointment months in advance to see people.

personnel problems including two nervous breakdowns by actors and the general attitude of crew members who weren't in the habit of taking instructions from a "girl".

We were also working with people who were accustomed to theatre work. Television is not theatre and many of the techniques had to change, and habits broken, and for many it was being directed by someone of whom they had no knowledge. We worked for sometimes 18 hours per day, but mostly 12 hours. There were times I would spend the night editing and the crew would meet me in the same clothes the next day to start shooting again.

Several times Antoinette Hagley, the then production manager/co-writer/best friend, would be on set with me doing a scene, and writing new scenes with me because we would realize that an episode was too short. I had a lot of skepticism from some of the more seasoned actors who wondered who the hell was I to be telling them what to do. I think I cried every day for months and at one point thought I was having a stroke. Until one day Deborah Maillard (my then assistant director) pulled me aside and gave me some words of advice (concerning the language and attitude which would capture the attention of the crew). That advice has become my armour from then on. With it I was ready to face the next five seasons of battle. I went through several crew members until the end of season three, when I think we hit our stride and Jamaican DP Richard Lannaman and writer Melvyn de Goeas came on board, and I settled with the crew that would see me through the next three seasons.

I ended up doing that many seasons because after the first season, armed with my VHS tape with a homemade sleeve and homemade brochure, I decided to go to the television market call NATPE held in New Orleans, to sell my show to the world. My attempt was laughable as the big guns came out blazing. *Baywatch*, the number one show at the time, came with a whole beach display, replete with sand, lifeguard chairs, and women in swimsuits. Hundreds of thousands of dollars and in the case of the King brothers who were selling *Inside Edition*, *Hollywood Squares*, *Oprah* (at the time), millions of dollars were spent to peddle their shows. They even hired Elton John for a private concert for their clients.

A Bajan man working for Paramount pictures took pity on us and explained the ropes. He said we should have made an appointment months in advance to see people. We barely scraped in the door having decided last minute to come. Furthermore, he said, nobody would be interested in a single season of anything. They want bulk. He invited me to his London office "anytime I was in town." I took him up on his offer a year later. He sat and watched three episodes of *WP* with me. I was surprised. I didn't expect him to get past the opening credits. He then said go back and produce at least 100 episodes and then we could talk distribution. He noted it looked much better than he ever expected and was worthy of international distribution. I was buoyed and bummed by the meeting. I thought that while I was clearly on to something, how the hell was I going to find the money to do 100 episodes. I could barely get through 15, let alone 85 more.

Meanwhile back at home, TTT was taking its cool time to renew the series for another season. Despite a ratings success, the board was unhappy with some of the racier, more controversial aspects of the series. So, after waiting a year-and-a-half for approval, and one inappropriate conversation that would constitute a #MeToo conversation today, I hung up the phone with them and took the series to TV6. We would do the following five seasons with them. It wasn't smooth sailing all the way, every year despite leaving *Y&R* in the dust and becoming the second most-watched programme after the news, after only our second season, it often took more than a year to renew each season. By Season 6 I'd gotten married. By the time it went to air I had delivered my daughter who became what would have been Season 7.

I decided to devote my time and energy to her at least for another one-and-a-half years, when the bug bit me again and I decided to join CNMG to help them relaunch their station, supposedly with the focus on local content. While there I green-lit a number of programmes in their first year (*Young Explorers*, *Road to Germany*, *Get Real*) and produced a couple series of my own: *Iere Vibe*, *52 Nights*. I eventually left to produce *The Reef*, a 13-part series based in Tobago. Once again, not understanding that production money is for production and marketing money is for marketing, miracles were expected after only the expense of the production with minimal marketing behind the production. So, after another year of waiting for the second season to be approved, *The Reef* was buried with the arrival of my son. After a stress-filled

pregnancy, I could no longer keep up the fight.

I lay low for another year and a half when I was approached by an ad agency to do a drama series promoting government services. It was called *Matthews In The Middle*. A number of people invested in the show believing it be a “real” series, proving my mantra that people are desperate for images of themselves.

After *MIMS*, as the government series was called, I worked as a producer on several other short documentaries and short films but really devoted my time to bringing up my children. *Westwood Park* proved to be a good investment in the following years as stations around the world picked it up starting with a small OTB station in New York which eventually got a Nielsen rating because of *WP*. Though the programme initially aired throughout the Caribbean, the diaspora was slow to catch on, again because of a lack of marketing. We eventually were able to sell it to London and North America and we are distributed online (at least the first two seasons). We got fans in Malaysia, Sweden, Australia, and were even pirated in Nigeria. Not great for the pocket but for the viewership numbers. From the people who actually paid to air the programme we were able to begin to pay off some of the debt incurred during the production. To this day we continue to sell *Westwood Park* to new markets. I knew from the onset that it would take a while before we saw any returns and cautioned the people who thought that we would get rich instantly from the production from thinking so. But that didn’t stop many from thinking we were raking in the millions, which was absolutely not the case.

During this time my resolve to stay the course has often been tested. I often would be irritated by the accolades bestowed upon the people who left or were forced to leave in order to practice their craft, and of course excelled in other, more nurturing environments. It was to me like celebrating a neighbouring country’s discovery of oil on our land and exploiting it for their purposes does nothing for us.

I continue to discover my country, to try to understand it, to resist the temptation to leave to be in an environment that understands my craft. In 2014, after mulling around in my head the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago, and increasingly becoming frustrated with the reporting and treatment of such in the news and elsewhere, and after speaking with a friend who worked closely with the “hot spot” areas, we came up with an idea to do a series that would put faces to the bodies that keep piling up only to become statistics. The series *Plain Sight* was born and for the following two years we would go into the so-called hot spots in and around western Trinidad making ourselves familiar and recognizing how much of our country lives in individual bubbles.

It’s been a five-year-and-counting battle to get *Plain Sight* to the screen. For one, we recognize, as we always have, that our market is the world and as such have to keep our production values on par with the world standards, but on a Caribbean budget. Though considered still low for the rest of the world, here, people still balk at the cost per episode. The industry in the US and other places still consider us low-budget and are amazed that we could get anything done for our budget. That said, on pitching the concept of *Plain Sight* to an audience we immediately drew the attention of a Canadian distributor who was fascinated that Caribbean society was so complex.

The series remains to be funded but we continue to work on it in the hope that one day someone will wake up and see the value of investing in the region’s greatest resource — its people. While we’re aware that we are not rocket scientists or finding the cure for cancer, as an industry we can contribute to the development of the emerging society that we are in the



Caribbean. The previous generation grew up with images of themselves reflected on our screens. The current generation is, unfortunately, being fed a diet of YouTube noise, Netflix and Americana. This will not end well unless we start supplying Netflix and the other online, global platforms with attractive Caribbean content.

A portrait of Kimala Bennett, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink sleeveless top, a necklace, and a pearl earring. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a colorful, abstract geometric pattern of various shades including black, green, brown, and pink.

Kimala Bennett

Entrepreneurship Laureate, 2019,
Jamaica

Kimala Bennett was born on December 10, 1980, in Kingston, Jamaica to Michael Bennett, a music producer, and Judith Bennett, an entrepreneur. As a child she attended the Holy Childhood Preparatory School, after which she moved on to the Holy Childhood High School for girls. As the eldest of six siblings Bennett grew up with a strong sense of responsibility.

Innately drawn to leadership, she quickly focused on becoming Head Girl of the school. As early as Third Form she began re-prioritizing her goals and activities, and even campaigning for the post years in advance. Her efforts paid off and she was named Head Girl in Sixth Form. This scenario is a demonstration of her extraordinary drive and vision. This very same goal-oriented mindset has continued to serve Kimala throughout her life.

Her parents played a core role in her development as both a person and a professional. Through her father she learned how to be a creative professional, and from her mother she learned entrepreneurship. Her parents also fostered in her a love for people and an ability to dream as big as possible. Kimala says her visionary trait comes from her knowledge that her parents supported her aspirations in her formative years. She was also raised with both her grandmothers Patricia Gray and Ivy Bennett, whom she credits with honing her drive and determination.

Upon completing her studies at Holy Childhood, Kimala took a gap year to gain some work experience. She worked with Air Jamaica as well as with Mrs Paulette Rhoden at local manufacturing company, Crimson Dawn. Kimala would later cite Rhoden's example as a female business owner as one of her early influences in becoming an entrepreneur. She was also influenced by Janet Davidson of Mad House Records, whose example showed her how to manage and structure creative talent.

It was during this time that Kimala began her philanthropic ventures, founding the Friends of The Musgrave Girls Home, an organization meant to empower girls who were wards of the state. Supported by her mother, and pulling on her own experience as Head Girl, she leveraged her network to get gifts from corporate sponsors, as well as ball dresses from her peers so that the girls

would be able to identify with their own beauty through a Miss Musgrave Pageant. It was through this experience that Kimala began to understand the impact of empowering those around her. Out of a desire to continue to help others, she decided to pursue psychology, and applied to several universities.

She received a scholarship to attend the prestigious all-female Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, USA, where she majored in psychology and minored in film production and African-American history. At Mount Holyoke her star shone even brighter, serving as Hall President, Student Advisor and as Co-Chair of the Association of Pan-African Unity. For her tireless efforts, Kimala was honoured by the school with an award for leadership.

It was also during her time at Mount Holyoke that Kimala encountered Dr Patricia Romney who served as her advisor, and was a catalyst for the turning point in her trajectory. As she began to learn from her mentor their rapport became friendly. Kimala would often jokingly pose scenarios in which she would get her mentor to be a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Dr Romney, seeing Kimala's passion and creativity on the subject, encouraged her to explore film and advertising as her career path instead of psychology. Always eager to explore her opportunities, Kimala enrolled in a filmmaking class, and found her calling in storytelling.

She threw herself wholeheartedly into filmmaking. Using her younger brother, recording artist Nicky B as her guinea pig, she began producing her first music video, "Are You Ready," and managing his career as a performer. After testing her limits, she shifted her focus to increasing her skill level. Again pulling on her passion for setting high goals, she attended a USC summer course where she was immersed in film production for six weeks, and started a film project on Afro/Black Hair which later evolved into her passion project today, *Combing Through The Roots Of Black Hair: The Politics Of Hair*.

While spending her school breaks in Jamaica, Kimala continued to pursue film projects. Once more seeking to create her own opportunities, she caught wind of a Beenie Man

video being directed by international music video maker Little X in collaboration with local director, Kassa. Thinking there might be experience or opportunity to be gained, she showed up on set uninvited and offered her voluntary services as a production assistant. Her enterprising spirit so impressed Little X that through their connection she was able to receive an internship at HSI, a renowned music video production house in Los Angeles California.

Kimala again leaned on her family in her aunt and uncle (Janel and Howard) who supported during her tenure at HSI. She worked on a number of prominent music videos, and gained singular exposure while working with the legendary Hype Williams on projects including the Kanye West “Diamonds are Forever” video shoot in Prague. Not only did she hone her filmmaking skills, she also learned the inner workings of a production company — knowledge which later helped create the foundation for her current enterprise.

Having seen the possibilities of filmmaking, Kimala crafted a new vision for her path, setting out to change the face of filmmaking in her own region. During her early years she was (and continues to be) mentored by Maxine Walters, working on her sets as a production assistant for projects featuring the likes of Lauryn Hill and Donell Jones. Having seen that she could make a career for herself in her local creative industry, in 2007 she banded together with Melissa Llewellyn to create The Production Lab (now The LAB). The duo started the company with a Mac laptop in a room at her father’s Grafton recording studios and J\$20,000.

As millennials, the duo employed new technology to produce high quality films in record time, and disrupted industry standards. It was during this period that Delano Forbes of Phase 3 Productions, seeing talent in Kimala’s group, encouraged her to pursue an opportunity with Digicel Jamaica. The project was a hit and The Production LAB quickly built a reputation as the go-to film crew for “Wow” work. The company became a fast favourite of advertising agencies, and over time segued into client services.

As The Production LAB grew, Kimala began to restructure her business and in doing so, found that local paperwork and processes were a challenge. Instead of being deterred, she turned her challenge into an opportunity. Inspired by the handbook she had received as a student at Mount Holyoke, she decided to write a manual to ease the way for others who also wanted to go into business. In 2010 she wrote her first book *Starting A Business In Jamaica*, a manual for entrepreneurs which has become a business standard. Intent upon sharing her knowledge of business, she was instrumental in developing two programmes for high school students which included an entrepreneur camp at the Moorlands camp grounds, and a nationwide innovation competition “i3”. Recognizing that her skills did not yet match her passion for supporting the dreams of young people, she went on to join the Network For Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) and became a certified trainer. She then went on to write her second book *The Young Entrepreneur’s Handbook*, which was made recommended reading for national training programmes.

With the nation’s highest-net-worth clients now seeking her out, Kimala quickly expanded her team and her range of services in order to provide the most cutting-edge and creative content for brands like Digicel, Grace Kennedy, JPS, Heart, NCB, Wendy’s and Domino’s, to name a few. Over time The LAB became known for its international standard of work. The business, however, began to be spread thin, and Kimala came to realize that as a leader she would have to make some tough decisions. With the knowledge that her leadership skills would need to be expanded to meet her vision, she began to step back from the camera and creative roles and study the back end of the business.

Though her creative spirit remained, she took to her administrative role like a duck to water. She enlisted in the Action Coach programme to better help her learn how to plan and execute her vision. She sought the help of mentors Andrea Coy and Douglas Orane. She read the book *Winning* by Jack Welch and later enrolled in an EMBA programme at the Jack Welch

In 2010 she wrote her first book *Starting A Business In Jamaica*, a manual for entrepreneurs which has become a business standard.

Management Institute. All steps taken were with the purpose of widening her knowledge base in order to further enrich the value of her business.

Her presence and input in the business community have earned her the respect of several business leaders. Don Wehby, CEO of the Grace Kennedy Group, invited Kimala to sit on his innovation council, comprising a group of young progressive entrepreneurs and thinkers whose diverse points of view he uses for guidance.

The LAB has grown from a two-person creative project to a multi-million dollar end-to-end creative agency with expertise in design and production. It also does creative concepts, marketing strategy, audio recording and engineering, film production, equipment rental, digital content, graphic design, public relations, and media buying, among other services. Always with her finger on the pulse of trends, Kimala also invested in sister company Blue Dot Data Intelligence, a technology-based market research firm with no equal within the Caribbean. She has recently also launched Scope Caribbean, an online location and talent scout platform which allows film crews to remotely view and book local talent and venues. With her “sky is the limit” attitude she is also near completion of construction of the Cr8space enterprise, which is a rented workspace model tailored for creative professionals, with filmmakers in mind.

Kimala’s work has been widely recognized. She is held in such high esteem by her mentor that Mr Orane asked her to be one of the first people to review his book and to be the keynote speaker at his book launch. She was named one of Jamaica’s “50 under 50”, and her ADDY Award-winning firm was selected as the local production company for Nick Cannon’s feature film *King of the Dancehall*, and has worked on music videos for the likes of Drake, Rihanna and Busta Rhymes.

Her corporate clients trust her to produce their most complex projects, including reality series *Capital Quest* for NCB, and her firm manages all of Digicel’s Jamaican productions. In 2015, based on



her work with young people, Kimala was selected to attend a town hall meeting with US President Barack Obama where he launched his Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative. The event inspired Kimala to continue her efforts with full force. Recognizing the power of such inspiration, she began to be more vocal about empowering those around her.

In 2018, many of Kimala’s long-time goals came to fruition. An avid believer in vision she often says that Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama have been icons in her life. In 2018 Kimala met Mrs Obama at the reading of her book *Becoming*, an event moderated by Oprah herself. In that same year Kimala also purchased a permanent office space for The LAB, and she continues to invest in the growth of her company.

She has also modelled her career on that of African-American Millennial Entrepreneur, Tina Wells. In 2018, Kimala brought Ms Wells to Jamaica as keynote speaker of The LAB’s inaugural Think Tank Conference. The conference was a carefully curated event where brands from across the island engaged with new market research done by Blue Dot Data Intelligence which gave insights on Caribbean millennials. The conference is

slated to be an annual event in which local businesses and creative professionals will have a chance to interact with The LAB’s international network.

With all this, Kimala was also able to find love with her fiancé Adrian, and the couple has a young child, Liam, who is now the love of her life. She is a devoted mother and continues to list her son’s first birthday party among the greatest productions she’s headed. In winning the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Kimala Bennett will be using the platform to increase collaboration within the region and to invest in opportunities throughout the region, expanding the footprint and impact of The LAB, and building the reputation of Caribbean filmmaking as a collective force.

“Someone, somewhere,
has got to do something,
somehow, to make
the world somewhat a
better place; can it be
you?” – Corey Lane, 2008

It may not have been in those same exact words at the time, but from the time I remember myself it felt like this mantra ran through my veins.

Born June 2, 1982 to conductress Annette Lane and bus driver Victor Bishop, I grew up in the community of Free Hill, Black Rock, St Michael in a happy, humble, old wooden house with the infamous pit toilet. My earliest memory is as a toddler, listening to music they now call “old dub” and playing with my friends in the community. Around three years old, I can clearly recall my mother dropping me off at St Stephen’s Reception Class. As one of my clearest early memories, I remember crying for dear life and my fear that my mom would not return for me. The memory is so vivid that I can see her clothing and the lady next to her as they disappeared around the corner. I figured that these adults thought this was a case of cry and stop, but needless to say, my mom was extremely surprised to discover when she returned that afternoon that I was still crying. I had cried and sulked the entire first day. I loved my mom so much, that I believe it was greater than separation anxiety.

settled into reception after a while and the next hurdle was Class 1. My teacher from Classes 1 to 3 was Ms Husbands. She named her strap after me and I got lashes most days, had an average of 40%, came last in class and took silly pride in being one of the most badly-behaved children at the school.

At seven years old I joined the Cub Scouts because my older brother Kevin had joined, and it was a great way to get out of school and go on trips. But my mom was glad as she thought I needed a father-figure and some more discipline. This is when I met Mr John King, my Scout Leader,

who would turn out to be one of the persons who had the greatest impact on the total sum of person I “add to be” today.

Midway in Class 3, my class teacher changed and so did my academic life. My new class teacher was now Mrs Beverley Holder. She cared for me, she was strict, firm but very caring and this “magic combination” worked. My new average was up to the 80s and my position was up to third in a class of 28 pupils.

Another early memory is at age nine, organizing a set of children in my community, including my older family members in a raffle, Raven Community Raffle, clearly something that I had picked up on television where you had a drop box and you could deposit ideas and win prizes. I also remember at nine years old, thinking about money and how it just didn’t make sense but made enemies. How it caused division in families, including my own. I remember thinking of how the love of money was strange, as an average job calculated by week, by wage, by month, by year, by 40 years, didn’t make you rich without even so much as a deduction included. I decided on a path of rebellion against money and was proud to say I am probably one of the few humans who hates money. Of course, life and experience have caused some adjustment to this. But I still value time, humanity, health and love over this necessary asset.

These ideas of giving and selflessness seemed to have been born within and developed in large part by being a Cub Scout and following the Cub Scout’s pledge: “A Cub Scout always does his best, thinks of others before himself and does a good turn every day.”

Primary school was a very interesting time. School was up and down, home time was time spent with Gran, my grandmother, Mrs Olga Lane, and her favourite grandson, my cousin Reneldo, and my other cousins. Mom was away at work most days and nights; she was a workaholic, she taught me to work hard, was a strong disciplinarian, taught me that tasks started must be tasks completed, or else! She taught me dedication, “stick-ability” and determination. Mr King reinforced the four Ds: determination, dedication, discipline and desire. My grandmother



Corey Lane

Public & Civic Contributions Laureate,
2019, Barbados

taught me many proverbs, sayings for life that help me with decision making to this very day.

Like most good things, primary school had to come to an end. Just before the end of school, it was time to learn which secondary school we passed for. At full assembly one day the headteacher stood at the podium and called name after name and school after school, then she said: “Corey Lane — The Lodge School”. Joy and pride filled my soul as I had just learned that I passed for the school of my choice, the school with the long bus ride, the school for which my older brother Kevin had passed. A little concern accompanied the joy as we all had heard rumours of death in the canefields by the school and the tradition of putting first formers in a coffin and rolling them around the school.

Soon it was time for junior school to come to an end. I remember the significance of the last school bell and the mixture of feelings. Excited to be moving on, anxiety about my new “big boy” school, happy to be all packed up for Cub Scout camp and extremely sad to be leaving my friends of over seven years; it was a very emotional time. In that summer of 1993, because of Cub Scout camp, I had to miss Ellerslie Summer Camp, the preferred camp in my district, to attend the St Stephen Anglican Camp. Here I met my Sunday School teacher Jason Carmichael. He remains my chief advisor to this day on all things, least of them, religious matters. That summer was no different from the four summers before it. Go to camp, return home, play *Star Trek* in Gran’s plum tree, break a limb, spend some time in the hospital — the average summer.

Soon summer was over, and it was time for my first day at the Lodge School. It was a very uneventful first day. Most of my friends had attended orientation with their parents and some of them even had their parents escort them on their first day. But I did not attend orientation and my first day was day three of the school term. Six students from my junior school passed for the Lodge School and all except me got a transfer so I was the only person I knew going to the school and, for me, this was a positive, as I saw it

as an opportunity for a fresh start. However, in short order I had developed a reputation as a comedian and a joker. Before the end of week one, some of the more popular and stronger seniors in the school vowed to protect me as they enjoyed my comedy. Also, by the end of the first week I was in major trouble as one of these seniors was receiving a prize at full assembly on that Friday and I wanted a good vantage point. As I was trying to make my way to the front, I was stopped by a prefect who asked me where I was going, and I said: “To heaven one day, I hope.” I was reported to the principal who sentenced me to four of the best with a bamboo stick. After the third lash I could take no more and that was the beginning of a very rocky secondary school career.

From first to third form I competed with one of my good friends, Damien Hall, for second-to-last place. Damien is now a special branch police officer. I remember the same senior, nicknamed “Gargamel”, who is now a youth commissioner, returned to the school and said he wished he had paid attention and that the world out there was so difficult. I told myself if Gargamel, one of the “baddest” men in the school could return to the school, something was wrong. I started to think about my future and the fact that I wanted to leave secondary school with CXC certificates and not have to go through the turmoil that he was describing. By now, I had developed a reputation of being late every day, playing pranks—hiding the canteen van keys and switching the school song cassette to a more entertaining version—and many other pranks which I debated my way out of.

I remember an early desire for leadership, maybe a prefect or form captain badge, a sixer or second badge in Cubs. Well, a game-changer occurred at the age of 13, when most of the youth leaders of my Boy Scout group were suspended on the same day. This gave me the opportunity to become an Assistant Patrol Leader, which led almost inevitably to Patrol Leader and Senior Patrol Leader. I embraced my role wholeheartedly and did things differently, so differently that it led to what is known as the infamous Camp Sandy debacle of

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On the front of the vest that I made I had “Tribute to Mom” in her favourite colour: purple, and the back had a lightning bolt and the legend “Catch me if you can”. I won all the races in my age category — the 100m, 200m, 400m and the 800m.

1997. My Scout Leader was overseas and I took my patrol to a national camp that my district was not participating in. At the same age of 14 my ideas of thinking of others before oneself were challenged by one of my mentors at a PE session. Mr MacDonalld Fingall explained if you were in an accident and you were injured you needed to take care of yourself first, so you wouldn't bleed out and then you would be no help to anyone. I understand that in critical times we must take care of ourselves, we must take care of our family, so I must bring balance to the public and civic life but in the main, I believe that we are here to help each other to have a better life.

I also had a strange encounter that year. I did catering with my stepfather's stepbrother from 11 years old until 18. His mom had Alzheimer's and when we were prepping or cleaning up, she would wake, not recognize us and start to say, “Stop coming here, stop playing in here, in here int' no ranch, in here int' no ranch!”, firmly planting this image of a ranch in my mind as a happy-go-lucky fun place to horse around. One day, I was on a punishment my mom gave me. I had to hold up two encyclopaedias in each hand, stand in the front patio and face the wall. While doing this a voice, God's voice, whispered in my ear, I felt the breath on my ear, and it said: “You will build a ranch”. I paid it no mind at that point.

I think age 15 and the year 1998 were the most significant in creating the Corey Lane known by many today. The combination of all that went before and all that was about to happen would lay the foundation for the trajectory of my

life. It all changed on that very normal day in typing class, when my aunt showed up at school and told my brother and me that we needed to go to the hospital with her. What would happen next would be the launch pad and facilitating force of a new level of work.

It all started when my mom got married in 1997 and got pregnant with twins shortly after. She was extremely excited and by this time I would have welcomed three siblings after I had a 10-year run as the baby in the family. We had welcomed two boys and one girl and now twin girls were on the way. My mom was so excited, planning to brush their hair and put in matching bubbles and ribbons. This pregnancy was different, it felt bigger and longer. This time she went into the hospital early and she spent a couple of days. She had been in the hospital before and she came home every single time.

When Aunt Kathy was taking us to see her, she said we need to come be with her as she was getting “low”. The truth is that by the time we got there she was gone. Gone to Australia maybe, because that is something that she threatened us with regularly: “One day I'll pick up and go to Australia and never come back”. Ten long years I convinced myself, maybe she's in Australia. On hearing the news, I remember walking from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to Collymore Rock, maybe some three miles away, and cleaning some dusty abandoned instruments in the Barbados Boys Scout Headquarters. That led to the restarting of the defunct Scout Band the following week. That band had been defunct for over a decade prior, and is still going to this day.

Though I was the youngest of the first set of children. I was asked to read the eulogy. I wrote the story of the life of my mom in the happiest way. During the eulogy I enjoyed the laughs until the wailing of my aunts, who ran out the church one by one. But I remained happy and proud to be able to talk about the woman who made me who I am today. She brought me into this world and gave me the tenacity and strength that I stand tall with today. She gave me the confidence and love of self, helped me over many, many, many hurdles that I believe I would have found difficult to get over without the self-esteem and strength of character.

I went on to do my CXC's two months later, as a D student. I read my text books cover to cover and after dedicating them to mom who woke us up with the song “Little Black Boy” by Trinidadian calypsonian Gypsy, I was able to gain seven out of eight subjects. Even running home with the results, I thought they had to have mixed them up with someone else's results. I went on to Sixth Form when I decided to run for the first time in school sports in my final year. On the front of the vest that I made I had “Tribute to Mom” in her favourite colour: purple, and the back had a lightning bolt and the legend “Catch me if you can”. I won all the races in my age category — the 100m, 200m, 400m and the 800m.

Shortly after this, I reconnected with my Sunday school teacher who invited me to the Youth Parliament; I got involved in boxing and I joined as many things as possible. This was because one night I remember seeing an image of my mom lying next to me and I never wanted that feeling again so I stayed up all night

writing project proposals and researching encyclopaedias until I was fast asleep.

On returning to school, there were so many stares, glassy puppy-eyes; the pity of teachers and students invaded the atmosphere. Everyone treated me so nicely, so differently. I had to hide in the library everyday with librarian Ms Jackman. While there, I made use of the time and feelings. I needed to do something about my peers, as many of my them had started to drop out of school and they wanted to join the blocks, gangs, fight fowls and fight dogs. I tried to get them into Scouting but, to be honest, the programme was boring and the uniform was expensive. I needed to start something that could deliver the type of innovative, exciting, adventurous, challenging and fun activities that any and all teenagers would enjoy. I got together with four of my friends from Scouts and we started the outdoor organization CoCoCabana, inspired by my mom's nickname for me, Coco.

I got \$300, a sympathy gift from one of my mom's friends, and I had a decision to make: buy a pair of Timberlands — the shoe of the day — or a broken-down horse nicknamed "Move Out Starve Out"? I bought the horse and when I say the rest is history, the rest is history. The horse brought excitement to the community and from five to 15 to 75 people were passing through to check it out. My grandmother allowed us to use a small quarter-acre plot behind her house, and she also gave us 20 rabbits. We grew lettuce and we competed to see who could grow the best lettuce, the fastest, the biggest and the tastiest. We sold these in the community, and it helped us to buy our school clothes, but it also helped us to build the organization.

On June 1, 1998, we built a hut nicknamed the "Mombore Shack", and sat and thought of a new and proper name. We agreed that we were committed to outdoors hence "Nature". We committed to deliver the activities promised that we never got in Scouting, the kayaking, karting, etc, hence "Fun". And the word "Ranch" — after all, we had a horse and the significance of the whisper all made sense at that moment. We created the

At 18 years old, I met up with Jason Carmichael and he invited me to join the Barbados Youth Parliament. I loved it. I signed up, and shortly after was appointed the shadow Minister for Youth and Community.

label, stuck it to my CEO chair and the Nature Fun Ranch was born.

I continued to work very hard at building my Scout group's programme. I was awarded the highest Boy Scout Award, the Chief Scout Award, at 16 years old. It was the first in the history of my Scout group. I then went on to be named first Queen's Scout in Barbados, and opened the door for many troops and scouters to work on both of these awards. The Queen's Scout/Eagle Scout Award is the highest Scouting award globally.

The Scouting pioneering didn't stop there. For the first time in many years, I represented Barbados at the International Camp Staff Programme in the United States, in 2005 and 2006. It was an eye-opening experience and brought my vision from the encyclopaedias and television to life. This experience helped to shape the physical and organizational set up of the Ranch.

At 18 years old, I met up with Jason Carmichael and he invited me to join the Barbados Youth Parliament. I loved it. I signed up, and shortly after was appointed the Shadow Minister for Youth and Community. Within a year, I was elected Youth Prime Minister and it was at this time that I saw the value of the debating practice from my Scout Leader Wednesday after Wednesday, come sharply into play. As Prime Minister, I wanted to do things differently. At that time, the main thing was "mock" debates. To my mind, there were too many real issues to be tackled. We improved the format to include real debates and creation of policy papers for submission to Parliament. We started to expand this across the Caribbean. We went further and brought in the parliamentarians from the Scottish Parliament on a foreign exchange. I am extremely proud that my youth government was able to assist with national policy and particularly, as it related to HIV programmes and community policy.

The next award was the Minister of Youth Phoenix Award, received in 2007, followed by many awards for voluntary service at the community and national level. As Vice President of the Barbados Youth Development Council

and PM of the Youth Parliament, I was appointed as a youth representative to many boards and committees including the Rights of the Child, UN HIV theme group, National Committee on Aging, and others. The National Committee on Aging had a strong interest in Alzheimer's and dementia, and I was able to help my own grandmother when I attended a Canadian conference on reversing the symptoms of Alzheimer's.

When I was appointed to the Barbados National HIV Commission in 2001, three ladies started to play a significant role in supporting me in many ways and are a large part of my development to this day. Dr Carol Jacobs (Lady Carol Haynes) then chairman, Ms Alies Jordan, then director, and Diana Edghill, then commissioner, affectionately referred to by me as the "Power-puff Girls". After being appointed Youth Rep on the Commission, I needed to get young people involved and we needed to do projects, so I spearheaded the development of the National HIV AIDS Youth Committee. We started awareness projects in the school, started the HIV Awareness Song Competition (HASCo) as a signature project, working with DJs and many direct intervention projects.

Encouraged to go to university by the Power-puff Girls and my former Sunday School teacher, who was now my Attorney General in Youth Parliament, I enrolled at the University of West Indies, Cave Hill. I graduated with honours without slowing down my pace. I did sociology with some focus on social work and political science and then a diploma in project management. My previous work helped me through UWI and I enjoyed being quoted in lectures, particularly for my work with Youth, HIV and the Green Paper on Aging that I worked on as Assistant Secretary General for Youth, Elderly and the Disabled in the Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (BANGO).

In 2008, I took myself on a lone-wolf mission to England, the birthplace of Scouting, for the 100th anniversary Jamboree. I had an adventurous and exciting experience. I flew to England without a plan, and pitched my tent in the woods near to the Jamboree campsite because I was not an official participant.

I broke down uncontrollably in tears to the point where everyone including myself was wondering what was happening. That night I cried and cried and cried and I admitted to myself for the first time 10 years, three months later that my mom was gone, and I missed her so much.

Before I knew it, an old man with a dog came beating my tent with a cane and told me I had half-an-hour to get off his land. I was nervous but didn't panic. I found a nearby campsite for rent and set up, but it was too cold, and I went on the Internet to see if I could find another place. Instead, I saw a friend of mine online, a girl, Patricia from England. I had met her and helped when she was stranded at the airport in Barbados.

discovered she lived less than two miles away from where I was. She was eight months pregnant, but she came for me, took me to her apartment, gave me her BMW convertible and went to stay with her mom. I went from homeless to having my transportation and accommodation taken care of. What was significant in England for me was after returning to the family home late one night, Patricia's mom scolded me like my mom would and for the first time I came face-to-face with my reality. I broke down uncontrollably in tears to the point where everyone including myself was wondering what was happening. That night I cried and cried and cried and I admitted to myself for the first time 10 years, three months later that my mom was gone, and I missed her so much.

It was a transformational time in my life. That year, 2008, was also the year that the Nature Fun Ranch went nationwide. We had spent two years in my grandmother's yard and after the numbers grew, we had to move out. At that time, I remember telling myself that my grandmother was just old and miserable but on reflection, with a more mature mind, I don't believe many people would appreciate 75 young people going through their backyard to get to some land. We moved about a half-mile up the avenue where my great aunt controlled about five acres of land. After being there for about two years, her children convinced her to kick us off the land because of some of the rights they thought we would be entitled to. Thereafter, we moved a half-mile up and squatted in an area known as The Mount, right behind my old primary school. It was small, about an acre, and we had about six horses, but it was okay. On Sundays, in particular, we would entertain about 22 young people from a red-light district known as Nelson Street.

Today, as a leader, I reflect on all that I've been through over the last 21 years in building an organization, and I understand how that “stick-ability” and dedication taught to me by my mom, has brought me great success.

The wife of a deceased owner of some of the brothels, Mrs Price, would query where the 22 guys on this truck were going every Sunday? When she learnt they were going to horse church where Pastor Mark Hill and his wife would bring a pot of food, have service, ride the horses and eat, she offered us the opportunity to use “her” 39-acre plantation, just with the agreement that we keep her lawn clean with a drive mower.

The only problem was that her lawn was really a pasture and the drive mower was so useless, it would have been easier to cut the grass with scissors. With the 39 acres of land, we were able to expand and to help young people, not only from Free Hill and Black Rock, but across the island in schools, communities and through agencies. After being there for two years, the real owners of the plantation land saw us on their land, liked what we were doing and allowed us to stay.

We discovered that Mrs Price owned the plantation house but not the plantation land. They explained to us that they had bought the land to subdivide but because it was Zone 1, they couldn't. The following year it was changed to Zone 2 and hence we started looking for land all over again. By this time, we had attracted the attention of the new Prime Minister, the late David Thompson, who worked diligently with his Minister of Agriculture to get us some land to lease affordably from Government. After about two more moves we were able to settle into our present location at Bruce Vale, St Andrew. Over the last seven years we have been able to build an organization of which we can all be proud. One that helps young people reach their apex, one that

facilitates attachment so they can feel beloved and have a sense of belonging, where they can gain a passion and purpose of life, be empowered, exchange a negative lifestyle for a positive one and share what they learn with others who were once like them.

In 2007, I was approached at the World AIDS Day church service by Lady Oneata Forde to do a session at the prison. The session was intense; it was emotional and many of the inmates cried that day. I was invited to do a repeat the following day and the next thing I knew, I was there Monday to Friday with a contract from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Internally, the prison used me in the Prisoner Education Programme, to build a Youth Reform project and start a Radio Max, where we would be using speakers and a microphone to create a radio station-like vibe to transmit rehabilitation programmes to the solitary cells of these maximum security inmates.

Today, as a leader, I reflect on all that I've been through over the last 21 years in building an organization, and I understand how that “stick-ability” and dedication taught to me by my mom, has brought me great success. I understand how the proverbs of wisdom drilled in my head by my grandmother help me every day as I make decisions and, even more so, I understand how my Scout Leader taught me leadership, leading from the front, setting the example and problem solving. I remember being at so many events where things were going wrong or disorganized, and he would say “Come, Lane”, and just start to organize things in a way to just start to solve problems: “Put this over there; let's go,” motivating others to join the problem-

solving. I believe that is a large part of why I am solution-oriented to this day. The exposure he gave me to current affairs, has helped me extremely well today as I moderate Barbados's most popular call-in programmes: *Down to Brass Tacks* and *Brass Tacks Sunday*. My thirst for knowledge and love for current affairs locally, regionally and internationally is an attribute that has made me a good moderator and I pay tribute to him for that.

I must admit that 2016 was an extremely interesting year. In October 2015, I learnt that it was possible that for the 50th anniversary of Independence for Barbados that Prince Henry of Wales, better known as Prince Harry, would be visiting Barbados. He would be here for November 30th, our Independence Day, but he wanted to interact with some young people the following day, World AIDS Day. After checking out many options, his team chose NFR, as the place he would do his rap session.

Preparation was gruelling, coordinating the media from across North America and Britain and getting much of the paperwork and logistics in place required a meticulous approach. The real excitement came for me as we interacted with Prince Harry: he was so real that it was like a child's dream of meeting a Prince and the excitement for the young people was phenomenal. We held a sleepover the night before and none of them could get to sleep and during the night, some of the younger ones would awake and ask if he was here yet. It reminds me very much of our 2018 Christmas trip to Canada as a youth group and the excitement many of these young people felt as they got their ID cards, birth

certificate, passport, as they entered the departure lounge, as it became real and they got on the tarmac, as they saw the plane, as they sat on a plane. During the safety briefing, one 16-year-old turned from the seat in front of me and asked if the flight attendant was saying that we were supposed to wear life jackets when the plane got over the ocean. The excitement, the brightness and all the novelty of the big world outside of Barbados, the skyscrapers, the big buildings, the trams, the trains, the malls, the subway, the sites, the zoo, the hotel and, we cannot forget, the snow.

The year 2018 also saw me taking part in the International Visitor Leadership Program. An extremely educational experience across five US States, nine cities, 12 planes in 22 days. The opportunity to interact with dozens of non-profits has helped increase my knowledge of several best practices. This has helped me to refine the work from a philosophical level and also from a more strategic level.

The years 2018/9 have been very rewarding as I've been able to witness for the first time the refurbishment and building of many buildings up to the standard that I had only dreamt of when I started on this journey. It was a year of awards: the Point of Light Award conferred upon me by Queen Elizabeth II, the Commonwealth Award and becoming the youngest person to be awarded the coveted and prestigious Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence (my first award providing with it developmental funds). Other recognitions include the Rotary Vocational Service Award and the Peace Ambassadors Award. The greatest reward is looking back at many of the young boys and girls coming across the gates of Nature Fun Ranch for the first time with letters that said they needed psychology, psychiatry, drug testing, anger management, and so on, realizing they needed love, attention, care, facilitation and opportunity. Looking now at these young leaders in our society excelling at many vocations, business and careers. Watching them travel the world and dominating the world stage in bodybuilding, horse racing, seeing them



as farmers and involved in many other fields, I look on as a proud mentor, as a proud Dad, as a proud human.

As I moved through life, from 14 in 1996 to 25 in 2007, serious relationships lasted about two years each because I believe that is how long it took for most of my girlfriends to realize that probably I was more married to my work than thinking about myself in a personal relationship. But it was in 2007 when I started to date LaToya, who is now my wife, I remember her telling me: "I love the work you do, I love to watch you work, in our relationship you can go and do you and I'll work so you can go and do your volunteer work." I knew I would marry her then. I was going through intense depression at that time; she was very patient with me and helped me through it. On May 26, 2012 we got married and in our first year of marriage as I tried to cut back on projects, and she said "You are trying to be happy but I recognize you were born to be great." It is this type of understanding that helped me make the easiest but best decision of my life, to

marry a partner who now works with me in an organization to build an institution specifically for the at-risk girls of Barbados.

I remember going on dates with LaToya in cars where one could see the road through the bottom of the car and going to birthday dinners and having to divert to go and help other people who had broken down. As they would say, she is my ride-and-die. She was with me in the old car in the days that we had to push-start or push to the gas station for gas. Our life together has been one of adventure, one of love, dignity and respect. Just four years ago she gave me my firstborn daughter Alexandria Cori-Ann Analese Lane and just two years ago she gave me my firstborn son Corey Alexander Lane II. I am a diligent husband, I am a loving father, I am a humanitarian, I am Corey Alexander Lane I.

Someone, somewhere, has got to do something, somehow, to make the world somewhat a better place; I will continue to play my part.

It is the values instilled and the example provided by both my mother, who was a school teacher, and my father, who is a minister of religion, and then later on by many others who came in and out of my life, that continue to underpin my actions and motivate any achievements I have made to date. From my first schoolboy days at Dunrobin Primary School, I wanted to be like my parents, who modelled what it meant to work hard and always give of your best. Undoubtedly, that ensured that I went to high school (Campion College) on a government scholarship.

In high school my mother's love of literature influenced my pursuit of both the sciences and the arts through to Sixth Form, from where I again graduated with a scholarship in hand (the Government Exhibition Scholarship) to pursue a Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of the West Indies, Mona. Looking back, it is easy to see now that many of the life skills that I now possess were shaped during those early years by the things my parents stood for and represented in their daily lives. These included selfless service, a prioritization of the human over the material, and a commitment to standards of integrity deeply rooted in the Christian faith.

Though university brought confusing moments about what courses to pursue and where I was headed in life, there was always a love for the sciences and a particular interest in physics. It was this that led to the pursuit of a degree majoring in General and Environmental Physics. On completion of the Bachelor's degree, I returned to my alma mater to teach physics, as, though still not entirely sure of my life's ultimate goal, I was convinced that this was the initial route by which I could start to pay back the investment that had already been made in me by others to that point.

Being a high school teacher, just like my mother, opened my eyes to a love for imparting knowledge, to the thrill of seeing when discovery and understanding took root in others, and ultimately instilled a passion for helping others succeed through their own self-actualization. I could now see why my mother remained in the classroom for her entire working life. It was during my teaching stint that I received a life-changing invitation

to return to the University to pursue a Master's degree in physics. I had already encountered Prof Anthony Chen in my undergraduate years when I took his climate physics course, and although I am still unsure what he saw in me, I am forever grateful for his invitation to be a part of his then fledgling research group in climate studies. My first-class honours degree, earned two years earlier, paved the way for yet another scholarship (the UWI Postgraduate Scholarship) and soon I was back at the UWI pursuing a MPhil degree in physics.

To say that Prof Chen was a visionary is really to underscore the insight he had to see, from the early 1990s, that climate represented a significant influence on the developmental path of the small island states of the Caribbean and therefore demanded to be studied. It was this insight that led him in 1992 to form the Climate Studies Group, Mona (CSGM) — to which he was now inviting me to be a part of as a graduate student — to examine the science behind Caribbean climate variability and change and the resulting impact on Caribbean way of life. My thesis work on “Validating a General Circulation Model”, for use in modelling Caribbean climate was under his supervision, and was the first of its kind. It anticipated a long-standing relationship with climate modelling that has subsequently characterized my research career. It was Prof Chen who suggested further studies in climate and who pointed me in the direction of both the Organization of American States (OAS) scholarship and the University of Maryland where I enrolled to pursue a PhD degree, even while completing my MPhil degree at the UWI. I drew upon the inspiration of my father who in my late high school years pursued a PhD in Theology at Leeds (UK) as the culmination of his formal educational journey which began in rural Jamaica and incredibly progressed through Oxford University. Within four years I had my own PhD and was headed back to the UWI to start my career as a lecturer in the Physics Department and a researcher with the CSGM. Along the way I picked up a National Aeronautical and Space Agency (NASA) Fellowship and a University of Maryland Fellowship. Importantly, I returned with not only new degrees, but with a deepened understanding of the important role of mentorship as embodied through Prof Chen.



Michael Taylor

Science & Technology Laureate, 2019,
Jamaica

Irrespective of where life would take me, the manner in which I should pursue my professional career had by then clearly been laid out by the significant influences in my life. (I add to those influences already mentioned to this point, my two older brothers, Mark and Jeremy, and a supportive church community). So it was clear to me that: I was to pursue my teaching and research with passion; I should not be afraid to push the envelope with respect to the next frontiers in Caribbean climate; I could not but encourage young scientists and provide scope for their advancement through resources I would be responsible for and opportunities I would be able to create; I was bound to always pursue excellence and achievement through dint of hard work; I should not readily compromise on integrity and moral principles; I should value and treat others as my equal in God's eyes. It is these principles, I think, which have seen me through to Senior Lecturer and Professor in Applied Physics (Climate Science), while also providing me with the opportunity to serve two terms as Head of the Physics Department, as Deputy Dean for the Faculty of Science and Technology, UWI, and now as Dean. It is those principles which helped me refashion the Physics Department giving primacy to quality and contextually relevant undergraduate programmes, student and staff engagement, loyalty and mobility, and promoting science for the national and regional good. It is striving to adhere to these principles that have, along the way, brought Principal's Research Awards (UWI) and a Silver Musgrave Medal (Jamaica) among other unsought recognitions for my scientific work, and have given me the opportunity to serve as a Coordinating Lead author for a special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Particularly important to me was the way my stewardship of the Climate Studies Group Mona (CSGM) formed by Prof Chen would evolve, once its directorship was entrusted to me in 2007. Though its work is by no means finished, I am particularly pleased that the group has played a leading role in enhancing our region's knowledge of how climate change has and will continue to manifest itself in the Caribbean, especially

at the small island scale, and demonstrating our region's ability to generate relevant, applicable and world-class climate science from within, notwithstanding significant limitations in resources. The CSGM continues to conduct seminal research which posits fundamental theories about how Caribbean climate varies on multiple time scales and the resulting impact on the Caribbean way of life, as well as provides critical data on which to premise decision making.

The CSGM continues to contribute to positioning the UWI as a centre for national and regional thought and expertise with respect to climate change science and as an entity for coordinating regional climate actions. The CSGM continues to serve as a training ground for the next generation of regional climate scientists now positioned throughout the region and beyond, while also continuing to attract visiting experts, international meetings and grant funding to the region. (Much kudos to Dr Tannecia Stephenson, a former graduate student who now co-directs the CSGM with me and is also the current Head of the Department of Physics at the UWI, Mona). The CSGM continues to serve as a hub for a multi-country coordinated climate science effort thereby keeping the region at the forefront of climate science and global climate negotiations. It is a source of pride that the vision of Prof Chen continues to live on in an expanded way and has the potential to do so for years to come.

Throughout the journey my faith in God has provided the underpinning for and the backdrop against which my endeavours were to be pursued. My involvement in a church community from an early age and through to the present has provided additional avenues for character shaping and other outlets for service to others. The church community is for me the "village that helped raise the child" and which has now, in turn, afforded me the opportunity to participate in raising the children of a new generation. For example, it is through a trusting church community, that I was able to test and implement an idea for a Summer Youth Employment Programme aimed at sourcing and providing employment, workforce training and

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mentorship opportunities to youth from all walks of life. The programme celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The church community is an outlet for me to indulge my musical passion — playing the organ, piano and in the steel band. And it is the church community that continues to give me the wider scope in which to offer service to others through the diversity of ways it meets needs. These range from an onsite credit union to a fully functioning healing centre with doctors, nurses, counselling services and pharmacy, to educational and community outreach through basic schools, clinics and feeding programmes. My faith ultimately underpins my decision-making, as it mandates my actions to be respectful of human character and dignity and to elevate the worth of every individual I encounter in whatever sphere of life.

Finally, I was fortunate to have met my wife, Yvette, who is my chief support and encourager. We together have three lovely children — Amanda, Melanie and William. I am motivated to do what I do for their sakes. You see, our world may not be heading in the direction we want it to, or be the kind of place we had envisioned it would be when we were young, but I am convinced we cannot give up in our quest to improve the space we find ourselves in, for their sakes. Rather, then, we must pursue whatever we choose to do with passion, convinced that even as one person in one moment in time we can make a difference that is enduring and impactful — that is the lesson of my mother which is embodied in the hundreds of physics majors I have been privileged to teach who have taken their place in society.

We must never feel that character does not matter and is mutually exclusive with fulfilment, success, and achievement — that is the lesson of my father and embodied in my recent appointment to the Climate Change Advisory Board for the Government of Jamaica. We must embrace the unknown as the gateway for learning more and relish the opportunities to provide mentorship and guidance to others — that is the lesson of Prof Chen embodied in the 15 graduate students I have graduated. We must contribute wholeheartedly in our various spheres of existence drawing on the skills, gifts and talents with which we have been endowed, and not be surprised when combined with the similar contribution of others who are like-minded, they transform lives; that's the lesson of my church community and embodied in the over 1,000 youth who have successfully passed through the Youth Summer Employment Programme. We must not take for granted the silent supportive contributors who through example, word, or deliberate action have made a difference to who we are and what we have become — that is the lesson of my brothers, their families, mother and sister-in-law, aunts, uncles, cousins, wife and children which is embodied in the gratitude I am expressing for the Anthony N Sabga Award.

Wherever we are in our life journey is ultimately an accumulation of the investment of others and the lessons learnt by experience. For me, the journey continues.

THE ANSA MCAL FOUNDATION

Since inception the Foundation has been committed to addressing a broad range of social needs. In recent times it has adopted a policy of concentrating on projects of national and regional significance. The Foundation was created by a merger of the ANSA Foundation, formed in 1986 to assist charitable causes, and the McAL Foundation, formed with similar aims in 1981. The merger was effected on November 17, 1993.

Notable achievements include:

- Building the ANSA McAL Psychological Research Centre at UWI, St Augustine.
- Vitas House Hospice, five-year endowment (2012-2016).
- Benefactor of the ANSA McAL wing of the Diagnostic, Research, Education and Therapeutic Centre for the Hearing Impaired (DRETCHI) for the Trinidad and Tobago Association for the Deaf.
- Significant support for The Princess Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children; SERVOL; the Jaya Lakshmi Children's Home; Junior Achievement of Trinidad and Tobago; The Living Water Community Food Assistance Relief (FAR) Project; the Blood Bank; and Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society, and the Lady Hochoy Vocational Centre.
- Founding member of the UWI Institute of Business.

From 1991 to 2003 the Foundation received 1 per cent of profit of the ANSA McAL Group. By investing this endowment, the Foundation is now self-financing, and able to undertake in perpetuity the significant commitment of the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence programme.

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PROFILE OF A NORMAN SABGA, LLD (HON) UWI

Mr A Norman Sabga is patron of the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence, Chairman of the ANSA McAL Foundation and the Executive Chairman of the ANSA McAL Group of Companies.

As Chairman of the ANSA McAL Group, Mr Sabga is responsible for overseeing the health and economic performance of over 75 companies throughout the Caribbean and the United States. The Group's portfolio includes construction, media, insurance and financial services, retail and distribution, chemicals, automotive, real estate, shipping, brewing, beverage and manufacturing. Mr Sabga is also responsible for the livelihood and wellbeing of close to 6,000 employees throughout the region.

The companies which formed the McEneaney Alstons (McAL) Group were established in 1881. McAL was acquired in 1986 by the ANSA group, founded by Dr Anthony N Sabga in 1948, and the entity ANSA McAL was born.

Mr A. Norman Sabga, the eldest son of Dr Anthony N Sabga, took control of the group as Managing Director in 1996, and was appointed Group Chairman when his father retired in 1999.

Mr Sabga was educated in Trinidad, the UK, and the United States. However, his business education was hands-on, working in the family business. He started from lower management in Standard Distributors, and worked his way through the Group, managing various business units and companies.

Mr Sabga is credited with transforming the ANSA McAL Group, delivering exceptional returns to investors. Under his unwavering leadership, the Group's share price has increased more than 400 percent.

For his contributions to business in the region, he was awarded the University of the West Indies Doctor of Laws Degree (Honoris Causa) in 2015.

Mr A Norman Sabga takes from his father the firm belief in the pre-eminence of family in shaping and maintaining a stable society. He and his wife, Alma, are the proud parents of five children, four of whom work in the ANSA McAL Group.



PROFILE OF DR ANTHONY N SABGA, ORTT



The Founder of the ANSA Caribbean Awards for Excellence, Dr Anthony N Sabga, ORTT, passed away on May 3, 2017, days before the Awards' first ceremony to be held outside of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr Sabga ended his life as one of the giants of Caribbean achievement and foresight. He was part of the last wave of immigrants to arrive who make up the mosaic that is 21st century Trinidad and Tobago.

His business life began at the tender age of 12 after his father took ill. From there, he founded his own agency business at the end of the First World War, and registered Standard Distributors Ltd, the cornerstone of his empire, in 1948.

Dr Sabga was involved in many businesses: printing, automotive distribution, household goods, food distribution, construction and manufacturing. In retrospect his journey might have seemed to some certain and inevitable. This was far from the case. He faced many more failures than he ever did successes, but when he succeeded, he did so extravagantly.

It was after his retirement in the early 2000s that he turned his attention to a problem many people spoke of, but few knew how to address — regional unity. He believed many stories of achievement and excellence existed in the region, but because of the nature of regional politics and society, they were not being told. His answer to this, after consulting with many friends and associates, was the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence, launched in 2005, and its first laureates named in 2006.

The Awards has since named a college of 39 laureates and provided a unique regional platform for cooperation, unity, and

fraternity. At the convocation in Guyana in 2017, Mr A Norman Sabga, Dr Sabga's eldest son and successor in his business, and the new patron of these awards, promised they would continue. This is as Dr Anthony N Sabga would have wanted.

Dr Sabga's Awards and Achievements include:

- Posthumous Lifetime Achievement from the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association Hall of Fame, 2018
- Chaguanas Chamber of Commerce Award for Outstanding Achievement in Business and Contribution towards the Growth and Development of Chaguanas, 2017
- Keys to the City of Port of Spain, 2015
- National Icon of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for outstanding contribution to Trinidad and Tobago in the field of Entrepreneurship, 2013
- Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2011
- The Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce Business Hall of Fame, 2008
- The American Foundation for the UWI for Outstanding Contribution to the Caribbean, 2004
- Prime Minister's Award for Innovation and Invention, Lifetime Achievement Award, Manufacturing Sector, 2004
- Trinidad & Tobago Icons of the Nation in the Category — "Thinkers, Movers and Shapers," 2002
- The Ernst & Young Master Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998
- The Chaconia Medal, Gold, 1998
- The UWI Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, 1998
- Prime Minister's Export Award, 1968

Laureates of Previous Years



2006 Trinidadian Filmmaker, Robert Yao Ramesar; Trinidadian/Jamaican Poverty Activist, Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon; Jamaican Scientist, Prof Terrence Forrester



2008 Guyanese Novelist/Critic, David Dabydeen; Guyanese Environmentalist, Annette Arjoon-Martins; Jamaican Child Rights Activist, Claudette Richardson Pious; Barbadian Energy Entrepreneur, James Husbands



2010 St Lucian Poet, Adrian Augier; Grenadian Medical Researcher, Prof Kathleen Coard; Guyanese First Peoples Activist, Sydney Allicock



2011 Trinidadian Medical Researcher, Prof Surujpal Teelucksingh; Trinidadian Historian and Filmmaker, Dr Kim Johnson; Dominican Historian Dr Lennox Honychurch



2012 Vincentian Geneticist, Prof Leonard O'Garro; Trinidadian Literacy Activist, Paula Lucie-Smith; Guyanese Archaeologist, George Simon



2013 St Kitts Novelist, Caryl Phillips; Trinidadian Poverty Activist, Rhonda Maingot; Barbadian Medical Researcher, Prof Anselm Hennis; Trinidadian Entomologist, Prof Dave Chadee (deceased)



2014 Guyanese Children and Women's Rights Activist, Karen de Souza; Vincentian Volcanologist, Dr Richard Robertson, Trinidadian Musician, Prof Liam Teague



2015 Trinidadian Computer Scientist, Prof Patrick Hosein; Vincentian Software Entrepreneur, Herbert Samuel; Guyanese Physicist, Prof Suresh Narine; Guyanese Poet and Playwright, Prof Paloma Mohamed Martin



2017 Grenadian Entrepreneur, Shadel Nyack Compton; Guyanese Sculptor, Winslow Craig; Guyanese Human Rights Lawyer, Dr Christopher Arif Bulkan; Trinidadian Conductor, Kwamé Ryan



2018 Andrew Boyle, Medical Entrepreneur from Guyana; Noel and Chevaughn Joseph, Founders of the Just Because Foundation in Trinidad and Tobago; Kei Miller, Novelist and Poet from Jamaica; Dr Adesh Ramsubhag, Microbiologist from Trinidad and Tobago.

The LAUREATE

2019 Edition

The Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence is the first programme of its kind in the Caribbean. Four prizes are awarded annually for achievements in Arts & Letters, Entrepreneurship, Public & Civic Contributions and Science & Technology. The philosophy behind the Awards is that in order for the Caribbean to develop, in the sense of a civilization rather than an industrial centre, excellence in key fields of endeavour must be sought out, rewarded, and promoted for the benefit of all citizens. In this regard, the Awards are similar in intention to the Nobel Prizes.

www.ansacaribbeanawards.com