The Anthony N Sabga Awards

2021 Edition

The LAUREATE


ANTHONY N. SABGA AWARDS
CARIBBEAN EXCELLENCE

“The Anthony N Sabga Awards are now looking towards the end of their second decade (in 2025) and we look back with some satisfaction at the college of outstanding laureates we have been privileged to bring to regional awareness.

Andrew N Sabga
Chairman, ANSA McAL Foundation

Dr Anthony N Sabga, ORTT

Founder of the Anthony N Sabga Awards

(1923–2017)

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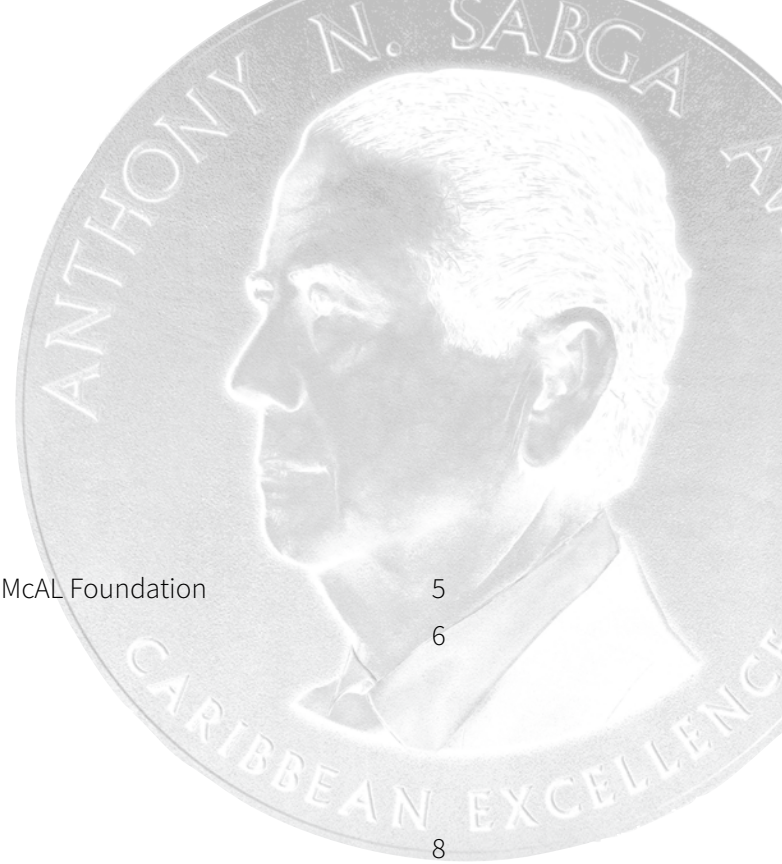
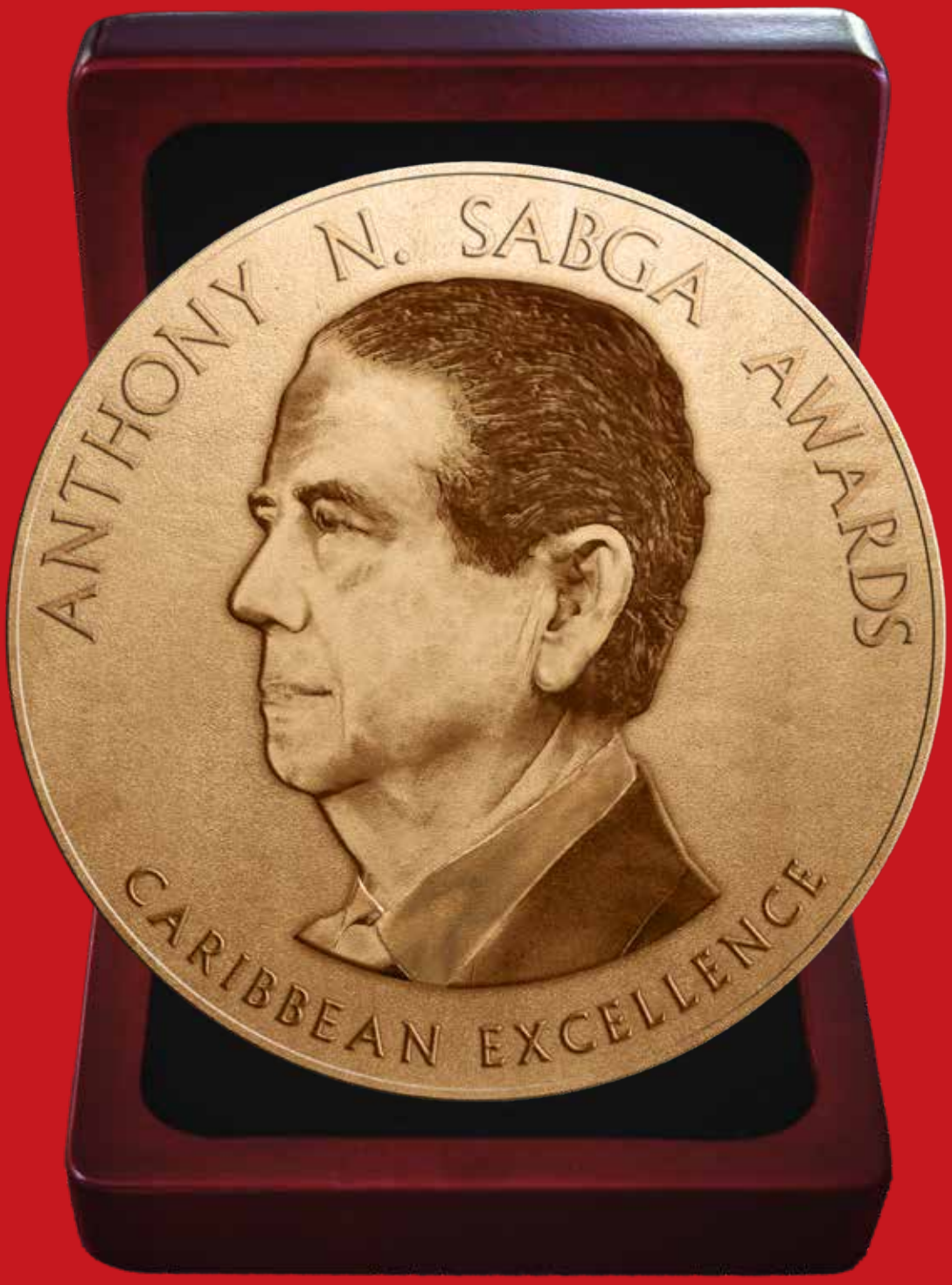


Editorial Consultant: Raymond Ramcharitar
Editor: Lennox Grant
Cover photo: Sculpture by Jallin Eudovic
Design and Layout: Paria Publishing Co. Ltd.
Printing: The Office Authority Limited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CARIBBEAN EXCELLENCE

Introduction

This is my first year as Chairman of the ANSA McAL Foundation, which funds the Anthony N Sabga Awards, and it has been a memorable one. This is not just in the appearance of a pandemic that has affected the entire planet. It is the opportunity which emerged out of the crisis, to show the necessity of these awards.

It is no coincidence that in this edition of The Laureate we feature two outstanding personalities involved in the provision of pharmaceuticals and medicines made locally, for the benefit of local populations. These are Dr Guna Muppuri, an entrepreneur from Jamaica who launched his ventures to provide inexpensive generics of branded pharmaceuticals for the Jamaican population; and Prof Rupika Delgoda, of the Natural Products Institute of UWI, Mona, who is creating medicines from indigenous plants for local and international consumption.

Their inclusion here is a result of the natural process of laureate selection. That is to say, we did not plan to award two laureates in the pharmaceutical/medical field, but our committees found these people because it is their job to find the best people, working to solve regional problems. You might call these two laureates a "proof of concept". Our other laureates strengthen this proof with their work in urban renewal, art, music, and environmentally conscious industry.

The Anthony N Sabga Awards are now looking towards the end of their second decade (in 2025) and we look back with some satisfaction at the college of outstanding laureates we have been privileged to bring to regional awareness.

To ensure the knowledge and hope our laureates bring are available to the region we are in the process of creating a new communications strategy which will ensure our message reaches throughout the region and beyond. This was the vision of my father, Dr Anthony N Sabga, the founder of these awards, and remains the vision of my brother, A Norman Sabga, who remains their patron.

I am humbled and grateful that I and my family can contribute in this way to the development and salvation of the Caribbean region.

Andrew N Sabga
Chairman, ANSA McAL Foundation

About the Anthony N Sabga Awards

The Anthony N Sabga Awards 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 civilisation 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.

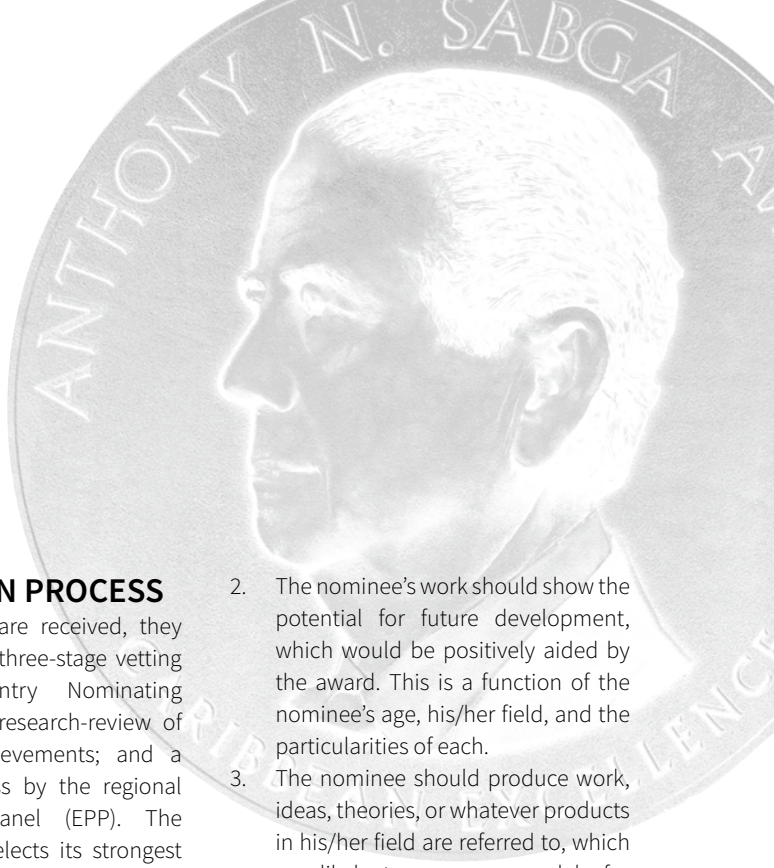
The Awards are fully funded by the ANSA McAL Foundation. The prizes consist of TT$500,000, a medal, and a citation which are presented at a ceremony early in the year. Eight of the eleven ceremonies so far have been held in Trinidad, while the 2017 ceremony was held in Georgetown, Guyana, the 2018 ceremony 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 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)
- 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 organisations 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), Dr Lennox Honychurch (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 (that is, 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.

Jallim Eudovic

Arts & Letters Laureate 2020
St. Lucia

I want to introduce you to a young, vulnerable, boy. Too shy to speak, and when he did, he stuttered uncontrollably, and with a heavy lisp. A young boy with an unbridled imagination, who saw too much in the clouds, woodgrains, puddles of water, shadows, chewing gum and peeling paint.

A young boy who today would be easily diagnosed with attention deficit disorder because he was seldom in the room. He drifted too easily into space, floating among the stars as if they were fireflies, only to be brought back to earth by the strident voice of some unfortunate school teacher. That teacher, already agitated by the graffiti on the walls, etchings on the desk, and scribbles in the exercise book margins…moved to demand that he stop day dreaming at once.

I guess by now you've figured out that I was that young boy. So please take this journey of self-actualisation with me.

I was born into a creative family on 6 December 1980 in a country that one year earlier had received its independence from Great Britain. Although I was not aware of it at the time, the society I was born into was a wide-eyed, optimistic, hopeful one, jaded by the angst of colonialism. This society projected all its hopes onto the first generation to be born into sovereign Saint Lucia.

My father, the venerable Joseph Eudovic, who had taken the art world by storm in the previous decade and was still in his prime, was no exception.

He drilled my five siblings and me, two girls and four boys, to stay our feet away from mediocrity because the world we were now a part of demanded excellence. And just as he had sculpted the roots and stumps of the Laurier Canelle wood, which he rescued from decomposition on the forest floors, he decided to rescue us by sculpting us into men and women. On his insistence, we had no television, but instead a set of a children's encyclopedia. He wanted our minds to flourish among their pages because education for his generation was a privilege granted to a select few.

When I was just five, he hoisted me onto one of the many high stools in his studio, alongside his many apprentices, and gave me my first chisel and block of wood. I was now a man, and had to prove my worth. Being the last of the Eudovic bunch, playing catch-up with my siblings was no joke. Added to that, my father seldom wore kid gloves.

The years that ensued were challenging and fiercely competitive. My father and mother struggled to sustain a business designed for tourism in an era when bananas were king. My siblings and I struggled for superiority on my father's workbench.

At school, my talent had become apparent and, as early as kindergarten, the commissions came flooding in. I was an artist for hire. I did everything from alphabet charts to carnival costume designs. I participated in lead roles in plays; dabbled in paint and poetry. Yet, under the veneer of it all, I struggled desperately with self-identity. I had a voice that was not mine, and my speech impairment was perhaps an act of rebellion by my tongue, which felt betrayed by my narrative.

My narrative parroted that of my father. I had to find my own voice and purpose. I was an ant under a canopy of giants. Sir Derek Walcott, Sir Dunstan St Omer, Leroy Clarke, and countless other national and regional icons converged from time to time at my fathers' studio. They were constant reminders that it was not OK to be good: you had to be great!

So upon graduating in 1999 from St Mary's College, the most prestigious school for boys in St Lucia and alma mater of Nobel Laureates Sir Arthur Lewis and Sir Derek Walcott, I seized the moment and decided to be a career artist who would take the world head on. My participation in the M&C Fine Arts Competition, (St Lucia's most eminent national arts festival at the time), won me a few accolades and put me on the national radar.

This positioned me as one of the most promising up-and-coming artists of my generation, and consequently made me a natural choice for inclusion in national delegations which represented St Lucia overseas. The first major opportunity was a trip to Ottawa, Canada as St Lucia's representative for visual arts during the 2001 Francophonie Games (a gathering of the francophone world in athletic competition and cultural exchange). This was my first international sojourn as a budding young artist, and what

it did for my self-esteem and general confidence was seismic! I was exposed to high-level art, and just my inclusion in an international exhibition validated me as a relevant voice of the diaspora.

It was there I discovered my true value when my sculpture was purchased by famous French Canadian lyricist and producer Luc Plamondon.

He had played a seminal role in Celine Dion's early career, and also has to his credit the globally famous musicals, Starmania and Notre-Dame de Paris among others. Mr Plamondon's simple act of patronage cemented in me a type of audacity that was unshakeable. I had suddenly attained the self-proclaimed status of artist to the stars, and nothing was out of my grasp.

In the ensuing years I exhibited extensively in Martinique; led two St Lucian delegations to Martinique in my early twenties; and exhibited in Paris as well. It was my sojourn in Niger, Africa in my mid-twenties, however, that changed my life forever. The Francophonie Games, which mirrored the Olympics in terms of hiatus, had come around again and francophone Niger was selected as the host country.

This experience had a profound impact on my spirituality. Not only did I re-connect with the motherland, but also it was there I came face to face with an undeniable truth which chased my lies, insecurities and excuses like light chases darkness. In the most impoverished country in Africa, I discovered that our true wealth lies in not money, resources

The Francophonie Games in Niger had a profound impact on my spirituality.

China came calling! I told them that I was totally competent in bronze, ordered on Amazon a book called "From Clay to Bronze," read it on the long flight to China and, when I landed…I was a self-proclaimed bronze sculptor!

or material acquisition, but in the value of the lives that we share with others. I learned that we are our brother's keeper, and that our greatest responsibility is to one other.

Such spirituality was the only thing that, in the face of destitution, kept millions going. Through spirituality, they had tapped into an infinite source of creativity and had dispelled the popular notion that poverty begets crime. It was then and there that I found my purpose. My narrative had instantly changed, I was going to use my art as a catalyst for introspection. I did not want to create just another sculpture any more but, rather, beacons that shone light into the depths of the soul and at the core of humanity.

When I returned home I started to develop a style of my own. I'd found my voice now; I needed a new language to express it in…and shortly one of my most seminal moments occurred. The year was 2008; China came calling.

The city of Changchun had, by some miraculous feat, discovered me and wanted me to propose for the world's largest sculpture park in China.

The only caveat was that I had to compete against thousands of Chinese and international sculptors in a process of rigorous scrutiny and adjudication. It wasn't a free lunch but, lo and behold, I won one of approximately 40 commissions. But there was a catch! The Chinese requested that the sculpture be made in bronze, a medium that I was totally unfamiliar with at the time.

Not one to give up easily on a great opportunity, I told them that I was totally competent in bronze, ordered on Amazon a book called "From Clay to Bronze," read it on the long flight to China and, when I landed…I was a self-proclaimed bronze sculptor! Luckily for me, I was amply aided by two American art professors who were there fulfilling commissions of their own. My education was brief and thorough, and manifested itself in my first bronze sculpture entitled " Nurture" which has since been relocated from the sculpture park to the city centre, where it daily interacts with millions of people, something that I've taken with great pride and humility.

In 2010, I met the incredible British-Jamaican Baroness Doreen Lawrence of the UK, whose fight for justice for her son, Stephen Lawrence, who had been murdered in a 1994 hate crime, had made her an unwitting public figure and ardent community leader. Baroness Lawrence, a mild-mannered employee of the University of Greenwich, sprang into action when her son's case had been perverted by a corrupt police force and judiciary. Her fight, a long and arduous one, caused laws pertaining to the treatment of black people in the UK to be changed. Baroness Lawrence subsequently established the famous Stephen Lawrence Trust in the UK, a centre which helps young people from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds to succeed, primarily in the field of architecture—her late son Stephen's dream profession—an ambition that he never got the chance to fulfill.

My connection with Baroness Lawrence was one of chance. She had come to St Lucia for the wedding of one of her beneficiaries, a mutual friend. As destiny would have it, she was seated right next to me. To make a long story short, I invited her to my studio and, upon seeing my work and understanding my vision, she invited

KOUDMEN, a French-creole term which means helping hands, is the traditional act of collective love.

me to have the first-ever exhibition at her iconic building in the UK. It is a building which was designed collaboratively by world famous architect and artist, David Adjaye and Chris Offili respectively. Given such a tall order, I decided to create an exhibition which resonated with her work and that of the centre, while keeping its fidelity to my creole Caribbean roots.

Out of this philosophy, KOUDMEN, an 11-piece collection emerged. KOUDMEN, a French-creole term which means helping hands, is the traditional act of collective love. It's the philosophy of all for one, which manifests itself when a villager is prepared to build their home, they would receive pro bono assistance from the entire community in that project. I saw a parallel between this aspect of my culture and Doreen's work. They were both selfless acts of love that involved architecture as a metaphor of sorts for the building of lives. The KOUDMEN exhibition also explored other traditional systems such as SOU-SOU—indigenous banking; TEWE—burial; LES PECHES—the fishers—and others. The KOUDMEN exhibition did exceedingly well, and was repeated in the UK, St Lucia and New York.

China came calling for a second time in 2010, for the Automotive Sculpture Park. That Park celebrates the full historical gamut of the automobile from past to present, and China's automotive manufacturing history as well. Two of my sculptures, "Steering" and "Play Car", were selected from a plethora of international proposals, and are now on permanent and prominent display in the world's largest sculpture park which celebrates the automobile.

In 2011 I was again commissioned by the Chinese city of Changchun to create a sculpture for their Hi-Tech sculpture Park, which celebrates China's technological advances and prowess. My sculpture, titled "Leap", was selected and converted into a three-metre bronze sculpture, that is now on permanent display in the city. Changchun, which has become my favourite port of call in China, once again sought my artistic input, this time for a river rehabilitation project which utilised public sculpture as a means of environmental awareness. My sculpture, "Mother River and Child", was selected as an apt portrayal of conservation for the benefit of the city's future. I've also created monumental sculptures for the Chinese cities of Fuzhou-"People of the Sea" (2015); and Zhengzhou—"Circle of Life" (2018). To date, I have created seven monumental bronze sculptures for three different Chinese cities.

In February 2019 and in 2020 for two consecutive events, as part of the Nobel Laureate month celebrations, I was called upon to give the Up/Rising Lecture at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (St Lucia).

One was a panel discussion dubbed "Art Revolution". The other was a monologue of my journey as an artist titled "Meet the Artist". I had the pleasure of being the keynote speaker at the 2019

Prime Minister's Independence Ball, St Lucia's most prominent annual gathering. I've also been frequently invited to speak to students at schools, and also by the various teachers' councils to speak with the art teachers on the island about the importance of the teaching of their craft. At my studio in St Lucia, I've trained many young people in sculpture. I was a speaker at the 2016 "Art of Black" panel discussion and show in Art Basel, Miami.

I have been featured in numerous international publications such as Ebony (April 2015), International Kreol Magazine (August 2015); Garage and ARC (August 2014); China Sculpture Magazine, and Upscale Magazine. Plus, I have made appearances on television programmes such as PBS "The Travel Writer", and NBC "The Voyager". I've also been very fortunate to have my work in some of the world's most important collections. Most notable are those of famed French gallerist and curator, Agnes Monplaisir Pellerin, and Sarah Weir (OBE), CEO of The Design Council, UK.

My works have been commissioned as 2012 wedding gifts for Prince William and Duchess Kate; Prince Charles; Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg; President of Mexico Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador; President of Chile Michelle Bachelet; head of the United Nations (UN) Antonio Guterres, among many other dignitaries and diplomats. My more recent works include a government-commissioned public monument for the Castries waterfront in St Lucia entitled "All In", to commemorate the island's independence, which was unveiled on 3 October 2019. Additionally, I have exhibited at the Afro Future Art Exhibition (Miami, 2019), the Zari Gallery (London, 2016), Carifesta (Suriname, 2013); 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel (New York, 2017), and in various collective shows in France and Martinique.

Based on my firm belief that well placed advocacy is the seed of meaningful change, I have seldom shied away from any opportunity that will ultimately effect policy change in my country, especially when such change redounds to the benefit of the arts. So when I was appointed by the Governor General of St Lucia to the board

My works have been commissioned for Princes, Prime Ministers and Presidents.

of the Cultural Development Foundation (CDF), I accepted the responsibility with pride and dedication. The CDF is the island's main cultural organisation which has the dual mandate of preserving and developing the island's art and cultural heritage. I have been recently re-appointed to the board for a second term. I'm also an executive member of St Lucia's Archeological and Historic Society (AHS). These roles have deepened my passion for St Lucia's burgeoning creative industries.

One tangible has been the launch of my company, PAPA BOIS, a venture which seeks to rescue from the brink of obsolescence the indigenous basket weavers and potters from St Lucia's craft Mecca, the rural district of Choiseul.

I plan to achieve this through a series of interventions which will seek to develop these indigenous products to fit current market standards; share contemporary knowledge and strategies with indigenous artisans; package and market and distribute these products in the regional and international space; give artisans access to training; and, ultimately, increase the value of their products in order to ensure sustainability.

In 2019, I was named the Arts & Letters Laureate in the 2020 Anthony N Sabga Awards. The Awards event is the English-speaking Caribbean's leading recognition programme in arts, sciences, and public and civic contributions, given in the four areas of Arts & Letters; Entrepreneurship; Public & Civic Contributions; and Science & Technology. The attainment of this significant award has validated my work thus far and, most importantly, fuelled my desire and resolve to work toward the highest echelon of achievement.

On a national level, I was appointment Goodwill Ambassador of St Lucia for Visual Arts on 27 January 2020. I also received the St Lucia Medal Of Merit (Gold). The objective of the Goodwill ambassadorship programme is to serve as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation, and the development of human capital in all sectors related to the development of the creative arts and the industries that they support. These are Music; Sports; Visual Arts; Gastronomy; Culinary Arts; Philanthropy; Academia, among others. This government initiative is particularly aimed at recognising outstanding citizens of St Lucia who have attained international acclaim in various fields of endeavour, and empower them so that they may leverage their profile/celebrity status to locate and access opportunities for growth and development of St Lucia in their respective sectors. My fellow ambassadors include Darren Sammy (Sports); Sir Leslie Ferdinand (Sports); Gordon "Commissioner" Williams (Music); Jermain Defoe (Sports); Joseph Marcel (Theatre & Film); Ronald "Boo" Hinkson (Music); Taj Weekes (Music); Levern Donaline Spencer (Sports); David R Williams (Psychology & Social Sciences); and Kenny Chitolie (Philanthropy).

As I continue to look inward, outward and onward, having assumed a mantle of leadership in my regional and local communities, I am ever so guided and fortified by the words given to me by the universe. Words which flowed from my pen and have ever since become my mantra: "The world needs beacons; beacons of hope, homage and love. Beacons that beam light into the dark depths of our beleaguered souls, battered and bruised by the angst of modern living. Beacons that allow and stimulate new ideas and insightful thinking." ■

Andrew Mendes

Entrepreneurship Laureate 2020
Guyana

I was born in Georgetown, Guyana in 1968, and attended school in Guyana (St Margaret's Primary, and St Stanislaus Secondary) up to 1980. I then went to the Fernden School in Surrey, UK, then the Leighton Park School in Reading, Berkshire, and then Leeds University (1987-1990).

From a toddler I was always taken into the interior of Guyana by my parents and grew to love the outdoors. From an early age this experience helped make me independent, flexible, adaptable and self-reliant, given that there is little external support in the interior of Guyana and a constantly changing, unpredictable environment. Many times we would get stuck on a trail and have to figure our own way out by coming up with innovative solutions or be faced with changing or unexpected situations at every turn, like a bridge disappearing.

This led to an enduring love of the interior of Guyana that eventually brought me back rather than foreswearing the land of my birth and emigrating like so many others. Growing up with many friends on our ranch located 93 miles up the Berbice river, always gave me the need to give back as much as I could to the people of the interior – they gave freely of whatever they had (not much) and engendered in me a desire to give back whatever I could in my later years.

To have been able to help provide many of them with meaningful jobs in several of our companies, support them in building their capacity to earn a living and help them provide for their families is something for which I am grateful.

Living outside of Guyana gave me a real appreciation for the beauty and freedom in the "bush" and a true appreciation for Guyana's natural beauty – I saw in my travels outside of Guyana, what it was like to not have this. This has led to my lifelong efforts to minimize my environmental impact in whatever work we carried out there, and preserve and protect the environment where possible – while I do hunt, myself and my brother made the decision in 1987 to preclude hunting on the 24 square miles of the ranch, a goal we have physically protected. It was gratifying that the film crew who came to shoot my biographical video for these awards were able to see deer in the fields during the day, a sight uncommon in elsewhere in Guyana due to hunting pressure. The generally-held perspective has always been that profit and the environment are two mutually exclusive goals. My experience has been that they are actually complementary; two examples of this in my experience are:

1. When our log skidder makes an unplanned movement and causes damage in the forest, that is an unproductive movement that increases the cost of operation. Our focus at McVantage on proper planning (planning costs are less than 2% of the logging cost) is what has allowed this logging operation to be 50 times more productive than the national average which obviously has led to a major reduction in our carbon footprint relative to the norm. The practice of reduced impact logging, as research at Iwokrama shows, brought an increase in biodiversity in the logged forest. In this way we seek to raise the value derived from the standing forest thereby hopefully reducing the risk of it being converted to other more environmentally damaging uses
2. Our office building at Q1 utilises one-third of the electricity of similarly-sized buildings in Georgetown through a focus on insulation, building and electrical design and high SEER value VRF air conditioning. Since we moved in five years ago we have saved over US$600,000 in electricity while having only spent less than $60,000 in additional costs during construction.

My personality was further shaped by my being sent to boarding school in England at a young age (11), outside my normal environment and comfort zone which only enhanced the initial impulses to independence and adaptability. I majored in geography at university, which, while not a business degree, showed me the need to look at everything in business as an overall system. It introduced the concept of the process or value chain in developing all our businesses. The idea is that that we can make incremental improvements in that chain to improve its overall effectiveness, such that the overall results of those changes are greater than the sum of all the parts.

I returned to Guyana from Leeds University in 1990 and worked with Neal and Massy Group, first

as a management trainee in, then sales manager of, their newly acquired Nissan dealership. Within a year we moved the brand to the number one position in the market. I then joined the Farfan Mendes group (FML) in January 1992 as Sales Manager.

In 1991 the companies' turnover had been US$250,000. I led our entry into the mining sector with the establishment of Mines Services Ltd which we developed into a major supplier for Omai Gold Mines Ltd, such that at one point we had 100% of their tire contracts (US$6 million/year). The reputation we built as a supplier to them allowed us to follow their move into Suriname and set up Mines Services Suriname that operates till today.

I went back to do my MBA in 1997, at Webster University at Regents Park Campus, London and Irvine, California, after working in Guyana for six years. Doing the MBA never changed my views on how business should be run effectively, it just gave me tools to analyze situations and find solutions in a more structured manner. After completing in 1998 I had to restructure and reorganize Mines Services Ltd (MSL) within a year, such that it was more profitable than FML itself on half the revenues.

After completing the MBA in 1998, I had to restructure and reorganise Mines Services Ltd (MSL) within a year. The result was that it became more profitable than FML itself, on half the revenues.

The knowledge from the MBA also gave me the confidence to challenge the status quo and in particular, local perceptions of how business should be conducted. Whatever business we have generated has always been based on hard work, professionalism and integrity, a mantra drummed into myself and my brothers by my parents.

It is this focus on building and maintaining our reputation for professionalism and integrity that has opened many doors for us and made us efficient in conducting any business. People are willing to accept us on our word rather than a longer process of hashing out formal agreements, for instance, and we maintain very good relationships based on trust with our financiers, suppliers, partners, staff and clients.

From the very beginnings in business my curiosity always drove me to understand my markets, customers and how equipment was being used and why we had a market.

This curiosity drove me to understand, for instance, the chainsaw ripping business in Guyana, where people use chainsaws like a sawmill to produce boards in the forest. They were producing and selling lumber at half the cost of traditional sawmills which led to complaints by traditional millers that they were able to do so because they were operating illegally.

When I did a cost study of the sector we realized that the legality of the operation only altered the costs by 10%, so clearly there were other factors no one was looking at. The chainsaw operators, by producing in the forest had no cost to transporting 60% waste and used much cheaper dual-use equipment. Significantly, based on our research, we were able to advocate for the government to support the industry rather than ban it. This led to future developments to improve the practices in the industry to improve quality and efficiency, such that 60% of the state's revenue from forests came from 25% of the allocated state forests in the hands of small producers. This led to us developing the concept of portable sawmilling in the country and the development of mills and blades to handle our hard species of wood working in cooperation with the manufacturers.

With the on-the-ground experience gained through multiple customer visits and over 400 formal training sessions (the vast majority conducted free of charge) over the length and breadth of Guyana, multiple visits to the US hardwood industry and personal research, I was recognized as a subject matter expert on chainsaw milling, portable sawmilling and wood processing by many local and international organisations. Below are listed just some of the results of that recognition –

1. Developed business plan for Iwokrama timber in 2001.
2. Worked with the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) to conduct research on chainsaw milling 2006.
3. Worked with the British International Institute for International Development on a paper – "Raising Forest Revenues and Employment – Unlocking The Potential of Small and Medium Forest Enterprises in Guyana" – 2006
4. Wrote the Code of Practice for Wood Processing for Guyana on behalf of the Guyana Forestry Commission and the International Tropical Timber Organisation – 2011. Now implemented in Guyana and (based on web searches) a first worldwide.

5. Served on the European Union/ Tropenbos multi stakeholder project to understand and improve practices in chainsaw milling in Guyana.

6. Wrote a handbook on best practices approaches to chainsaw milling with Nick Pascieznik for the Tropenbos Program of Utrecht University, Netherlands – From Cutting to Order to Cutting for Value – a Handbook for Chainsaw Millers, 2016.

7. Worked with our partners in McVantage in its setup with the result that within two years of operation it became the largest exporter and by far the most efficient logging and sawmilling operation in the country. This entailed the first use of CTL logging in Guyana, first effective use of 6x6 grapple skidders and many other country firsts. It was also the first company to gain and maintain FSC Certification and then expand it out to other concessions in the country.

8. The fact-based approach to engagement with the government on budget measures for the forestry sector that we brought to the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association in 2017 saw the unprecedented response (for the private sector) by the government in its 2017 budget to remove VAT on logs and lumber and the raising of tariffs on imported pine lumber to protect the local industry.

Given our hands-on approach and close contacts with customers on the ground and the manufacturers of chainsaws and sawmills, it allowed us to make changes in the products that better suited our conditions and gave us majority market shares in these segments. Some examples are –

1. Developed the Woodmizer Turbo 7 blade profile to cut our hard species. It is now Woodmizer's second most popular blade profile that they produce, representing millions of feet in blade sales per annum.

2. Developed the Stihl .404 ripping chain and the .404 reduced impact felling chain in partnership with Stihl's R&D facility in Stuttgart.

3. Tested prototypes of the MS661, MS 651 and MS780 chainsaws given the recognition of our application for these units being the most difficult worldwide, and their manufacturer's recognition of our technical competence to effectively test and report on their products performance.

4. We had multiple improvements made by Stihl for popular chainsaws in our market based on our representation and ground truthing.

In spite of there not being a demand for standards and even quality in our market previous to the emergence of the oil and gas sector we were always driven to meet and exceed standards of quality and service relative to the operating environment. When we set up our rigging shop we only bought wire rope with mill test certificates and had traceability for all our slings back to the individual reel even though it was not a requirement for the market then. This prepared us for the first oil exploration phase in 2011 and then again after 2015.

This focus on standards and personal integrity regardless of cost also saw us walking away from many jobs/ situations that we felt were not technically feasible, would give us a bad name or were clearly unsafe.

We walked away from a US$3 million bid recently because even though the specifications were defined by the client, we knew it was not technically sustainable. By engendering this culture of quality, standards and integrity throughout our organization, it put us in a prime position to engage with the oil and gas sector and more importantly with potential partners to help us grow that business.

As a result, with this previous focus on quality and integrity and people, and with the help of our partners, we were recognized as the first Guyanese company on the new Liza Destiny platform, with Panthera Solutions having been selected and awarded contracts for two scopes of work. This was based on being considered as both competent and competitive with international companies.

I can say that the group is a family company for far more than just the immediate family; it includes staff and community.

From the early days of the company in the challenging times of the 1970s and 1980s in Guyana, my parents were always proud that they never laid off any staff. This gave me a strong commitment to our staff today, to ensure that in my stewardship of the company, their jobs and livelihoods are always considered. In addition, my mother served as head of the company for 37 years earning an enviable reputation for hard work, integrity and professionalism in what could only be described as a male- dominated business community. This appreciation for women and their contributions continues today with 50% of our managers being women, and their presence in many non-traditional roles in FML Group.

I can say that the group is a family company for far more than just the immediate family – it includes staff and community. This commitment to them and their return of that commitment, more than anything else has been the main pillar of my and our successes. Some of the initiatives we supported in the community were –

1. FML has sponsored the Rose Hall Youth Sports Club U-15 cricket team since 1992 that has been the incubator for several West Indies players.

2. We funded the Caiman House Research project in partnership with Stihl Ag – based in Yupukari it is a community-based research project on the endangered Black Caiman.

3. We sponsor local hockey and squash tournaments.
4. We helped set up the Society for Sustainable Operational Strategies (SSOS) to manage seven cottage industries in Region 9, Guyana that produced peanut butter snacks for 3,500 school children in the region over a period of 7 years. This saw up to US$300,000 per annum being injected into the region to farmers, communities and the cottage industries, creating a sustainable source of income and employment for mostly village women.
5. Sponsoring of the RHYSTC Suicide Prevention initiative in Berbice by Panthera Solutions.
6. Free maintenance training for interior communities on solar systems and equipment that we supply.
7. We supported the Forestry Training Centre in cash and kind to build their capacity to support the forestry sector, and supported them free of charge in their training outreaches to communities all over the country.

In 2000, based on my father's vision, FML Group moved into the then nascent renewable energy sector. Within 1 year of entry we moved to the No 1 position in the market and have maintained that position despite new local and international entrants into the market. We started with off grid solar where our knowledge of the interior and logistics there was an asset and moved into the grid connected and then hybrid/storage solar market. Our facility at Q1 was the first private grid connected solar system in the country an became our test bed to be able to prove the value of the system for our customers. This system has been enlarged and storage added to create a hybrid grid connected solar system, again to explore the economics of it for our customers.

Even though as a businessman I may have been seen to have excelled, I was always mindful that I knew just enough to know what I didn't know.

This has made me open-minded enough to seek help, outside reference or partnerships to give our companies the capacity to grow in a sustainable manner, meet new market and customer demands, or give us the competence to grow our businesses in a more professional way. Our openness and transparency has been actually attractive to better managed international companies that seek to partner or do business with us, and has to some degree facilitated the banking sector's appetite for risk with our company. Being an open book mitigates risk for everyone, builds trust, and is a signal departure from the local business culture. That same openness and willingness to share with others brought many dividends and knowledge back from the very people we worked with and enhanced our ability to grow.

The Group, as a consequence, has grown over 70 times in value since I joined, with the workforce growing from 15 people to 130 today (this is just for FML Group itself and does not include partnerships and JV companies).

In conclusion, I can say that my success in business has been a result of a curious and independent mind, honesty, open-mindedness, willingness to learn, the desire to challenge the status quo, a focus on establishing the facts behind any decision and constantly searching for solutions. I have always been attracted to change to the extent that the status quo actually frustrates me. Telling me that we do things a certain way because we have always done it that way, or that this is how it's done in Guyana, are like waving a red rag to a bull. From the beginning I have always been solutions-oriented and actually see problems as opportunities to grow and learn from.

Telling me that we do things a certain way because we have always done it that way, or that this is how it's done in Guyana, are like waving a red flag to a bull.

I thank my parents most of all for bringing me up with a strong sense of right and wrong and giving me the education to realise my potential – their focus on my education has driven me in my constant search for knowledge. It is this resilience, perseverance and commitment on their part, and the unswerving support of my wife, Nicky, and my daughter, Savannah, that inspired me in my own successes. ■

Olivene Burke

Public & Civic Contributions Laureate 2020
Jamaica

I am the fourth of five sisters, all two years apart except for the youngest who is five years younger than me; there was a stillborn between us. Apart from her, we were all born in Stepney District, St Ann. In the late 1960s, we migrated to French Street in Kingston 13. Within an eight-year period we lived in tenement yards across West Kingston, settling in 1975 at Girling Street. There we lived until political warfare made the area untenable, causing a hurried move eastwards to Vineyard Town.

The tenement yards comprised a number of small concrete houses clustered in one big yard with many families, mostly children. We all shared a common cistern, outside bathrooms, kitchen and toilet. Surprisingly, as children, we often shared each other's dinner while watching the communal black and white television. We also played dandy-shandy with paper-made balls, and hopscotch etched in the dirt. There was always laughter amid the tears when any of us got injured during play. Our parents would sit together, chat, play dominoes, and watch us at play. By six p.m. we would race to be the first to bathe, then settle quietly in our separate houses. Life was bliss, my early socialisation was peaceful and happy.

My mother, Sucilda Berry, was a beautiful, devoted Christian housewife, who availed her home to everyone, and helped the less fortunate with whatever resources we had. I cannot recall a time when our home was not populated with people, quite a few, complete strangers, including one girl whose mother had abandoned her.

Dinner would vary: stewed or curried chicken, steamed callaloo, or cabbage with salt-fish with ground provision or rice and lemonade. Sunday was rice and peas, fried chicken and on rare occasions fish, tossed salad and freshly squeezed carrot or soursop juice. No meal was consumed at the dinette set without prayer. Somehow, no matter the sometimes small amounts on the plate, our bellies were always full after Mama prayed.

Mama is kind, gentle, loving with a tender heart. Her spanking of us was mainly hand-cupped slaps on our bottoms, which were painless. We squealed loudly, however, to avoid another slap. Mama's hugs and kisses outweighed the infrequent slaps. Mama's day seemed endless, if she wasn't praying on her knees at the bedside, she was washing, cooking, singing or humming gospel songs. One of her favourites was "The Lord will provide".

Mama was a dutiful, submissive wife who tended to her family. She was grounded in her Baptist spirituality which influenced us. Even now, no move is made without Mama's prayer. Yet, Mama was persistently ill and would ask God "to allow her see her children pass the worse". This we have all achieved.

My father, Caulter Berry, the breadwinner, confined Mama to the home to look after his girls. He was a jack of all trades and held jobs as bus conductor, tailor, baker, contractor-painter, and small business owner. Papa was firm, ruled with a heavy hand. Just one look made you cower, no belt necessary. He was hardworking and domesticated. He cooked well, and cleaning of the stove, pots and heavy household duties was his responsibility.

Being the more literate parent, he helped with schoolwork and took home every book his employer was discarding, thinking them useful because the boss' child had used it. Thus, without purchasing we had a constant flow of books at home. I remember the blue hard-cover West Indian History book which I read without really understanding it. One impressive memory I have of Papa was the wrapping of the school books. With surgical precision he neatly cut brown paper to the size of the book. We gathered around and watched as he folded the ends then taped then flashily wrote our names on the front and title page. We happily began reading the "new" books before school started in September.

At Christmas time, they would dress and take us grand-market shopping along Heywood Street. We returned with our favourite slim doll and dainty tea set. Growing into adulthood, I realised that the attributes of my parents were the perfect balance needed for survival in the communities in west Kingston. My sense of effective parenting, care for the less fortunate, good relations, and attitudes were early honed. I thank God for those early morals and values which seem absent today.

Sadly, Papa was diagnosed with prostate cancer which be battled for almost 10 years. But he loved life and having a good time. As diligent as he was with his medication after diagnosis, Papa

I was old enough for the experiences to leave an indelible mark on my life. Gunshots barked, and bottle bombs became fireworks under dark skies, before fearful eyes.

would cease all "meds" one week before Christmas, and resume after New Year. December 26 was my parents' anniversary and this meant continuous celebrations.

During the late 1970s, the social fabric of the communities where we once lived had begun to change into a volatile inner-city, and we were faced with some tough experiences. Papa juggled odd jobs to eke out an existence. Suffice it to say, as a rule, we could not borrow or beg, and we upheld those principles.

At one point, my parents began selling plucked and live fowls on Bond Street, and I happily accompanied them. I loved the cacophony of sounds from the higglers, squawking chickens, followed by the jingling of the scale in the weighing process. They also sold cooked food in Sabina Park at the George Headley Stand. These were early life lessons in entrepreneurship, financial management and empowerment which I applied during my journey. Selling my own natural seasoning in the crowded Coronation market, and assisting to purchase my books and uniform, especially when Mama became sick, came naturally.

Between 1976 and 1980, west Kingston was rife with political violence. I was old enough for the experiences to leave an indelible mark on my life. Gunshots barked, and bottle bombs became fireworks under dark skies, before fearful eyes.

Poverty, crime prevailed, and verbal and physical abuse was meted out to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Hungry and angry parents mistreated their children, and constant domestic violence was all around.

One Friday night, following screams as persons ran from a burning house, my father, in hushed nervous tones, suggested to Mama that we should move back to the country. But that never happened. The house they left in the country was sold and they didn't know. They hugged each other and cried. When my parents cried, we cried. Soon my early childhood utopian memory fast faded, as the harsh reality of the socio-economic environment became clearer by the time I was 14 years old. I yearned for an improved standard of life.

The construction industry on which my father depended took a nosedive and Papa juggled odd jobs once again. However, our circumstances had changed, and we were living at a better home with our own gate and space. Everything was under one roof including kitchen and bathroom—"the uptown in the inner-city". The walls were constructed of block and steel, and were higher than others on the street, vastly different from the rusty zinc fences of French Street.

There were cherry trees in the yard and Mama grew her flowers freely. In pots, she planted bushes for all forms of sickness: colon-mint, fever grass, cerrase, tuna and leaf-of-life. Here too, began Mama's yard of pets—the cats and the dogs. We realised her love for animals as our home grew with all kinds, even a talking parrot.

We had inherited a piano and lessons were taught us by a blind gentleman from church. Attendance at Sunday school, service, and the annual Convention at Pentecostal City Mission Church on Blount Street were compulsory.

By 1980, my parents had secured what furniture we could, and one Saturday evening moved on a "for Hire and Removal" truck to Vineyard Town to "start" life anew. This way, many other people were escaping the ravaging of the communities. At 15 years old, I had seen and felt enough to envision the future I wanted for myself and others. The transition to Vineyard Town revealed a new reality which became a turning point, having escaped the harsh inner-city.

Through the help of a family friend, I secured a holiday job covering miler

pens and roll-on deodorant at Gillette in Papine following Hurricane Allen.

I met Maxine, my first adult friend. We had several things in common: attended secondary school, humble beginnings and a go-getter attitude.

We were adventurous and even took our first and only train ride to Reggae Sunsplash in Montego Bay in 1982, unknown to our parents.

From my early school days at Chetolah Park Primary, I wanted to be a teacher. This influence came from Emeline Poyser-Davis in Grade 4. I admired her sophistication and poise. She was a tall, black woman, well dressed in her high heels, with hair stylishly coiffed. She cared about students' well-being and took a few of us to her beautiful home in Havendale. I wanted to be just like her.

Despite her excellent teaching, I was unsuccessful in the Common Entrance examinations. She was shocked and fumed, "Dis ya likkle pickney a bright, bright pickney. I'm going to the Ministry." I supposed she did because, on the following day, still vividly upset she said: "Olivene Berry, yuh going to di school dem put yuh and wi gwine show dem. Dat not right." She was very comfortable communicating in her local vernacular mainly after school.

I was saddened when my friends moved to high school, and private school was unaffordable to me. I settled at Kingston Secondary on the yellow shift. While there I held responsibilities including Form Monitor, Prefect, Student Councillor, Deputy House Captain and Cheerleader. These positions were also held by my older siblings Mavis and Alice, who also attended Kingston Secondary. They also represented the school in sports. At times I was the only fan amid the silence in a match, cheering unabashed as they expertly played netball as goalkeeper and centre, respectively.

My history teacher, Mrs Anderson, was my favourite. Her warm, smiley face, reminded me of Mama. However, I hated history which she taught. Ironically, it was the only one of four subjects I passed at my first CSEC Examination sitting in 1982. The principal, Mr Ramsay, had advised us

to fall in love with the subject we disliked and try harder at it. I took him literally and tried so hard, leaving little time for the other subjects. Divine intervention afforded me a scholarship to repeat Fifth Form at Ardenne High School.

Ardenne was a very interesting school that strengthened my resolve and ambition. I learnt how to study purposefully but had an unfortunate experience that further encouraged me. A teacher, disappointed with the inability of the class to answer a question, hurled: "I am sure I am going to see most of you at Hellshire selling fish." I was determined not to count as such a statistic.

Following graduation I proceeded to Shortwood Teachers' College where I pursued double English for the next three years. Again, fate intervened. I was placed at an inner-city school in West Kingston for teaching practice (TP). I had a class of 40 boys 17 years old, and I matured with them. Being barely older than most made us comfortable with one another. Having no brother, I listened carefully to them and learned how to understand them. We bonded well and developed a good relationship. Most importantly, my boys learned and that was reflected in my TP scores. I had applied alternate ways to teach literature—utilising drama, music, street talk and their experiences. My sister, Alice, and I had further used the arts; she dance teacher and I drama director, to impact youths through the Mel Nathan Cultural Group in Hannah Town.

I was the first in the family to have attended a tertiary institution. Graduation in 1987 attracted glistening-eyed, yet smiling family members to the grounds of the College. Following graduation, my friends accessed jobs in high and private schools and, much to their disappointment, I chose Papine Secondary School. My choice was deliberate, as there was a burning desire to use myself as a model for inner-city youth. The students at Papine possessed diverse abilities, with the majority barely literate. In my effort to educate them, I injected my hidden curriculum to impart much-needed life skills and pro-social behaviour, and worked on their attitude and mindset.

Most were from single-parent homes, knew no father, and simply needed attention. I began sharing my personal stories at appropriate junctures. At the end of my first year, their reading levels had improved and they could all write their names. For the few who were preparing for CSec examination, I conducted free lessons with the ultimate goal of having them pass at their first sitting. Many passed, but I value more

To date, the work of MSS has transformed the lives and livelihoods of more than 40,000 residents directly and indirectly in Kingston, St Andrew and Montego Bay.

my success during my seven-plus years at Papine in changing lives and providing hope of a fulfilling future, especially to the less fortunate.

Following Papine Secondary, I secured an administrative position in a regulatory executive agency. My passion for reaching others, however, was burning and I continued, unbeknown, freely to tutor staff at the organisation, leading them to sit, for the first time, CXC Examination. They were all over 30 years old. I felt inclined to uplift them to become properly qualified, empowered and competitive.

Working in this organisation unearthed my leadership, project management and negotiation skills, which I used to my advantage for my job as an administrative research officer at The UWI in November 2001. After a few years in administration, I realised that I missed direct involvement with students and the communities.

I sought teaching opportunities, and began lecturing in transformational leadership and human resources, while I volunteered on The UWI Township Project headed by the late Professor Emeritus Alston Barry Chevannes, OD. My association with "Prof" has impacted me for a lifetime. He and his wife, Pauletta, were the readers of my thesis. I still work closely with their children, Amba and Abena Chevannes. Importantly, my lecturing and community activism merged seamlessly.

Following Prof's untimely passing in November 2010, I was given his huge shoes to fit. Scared I was indeed, but doubly motivated to carry on his legacy. Along with one staff member, I embraced the challenge which implemented the Mona Social Services (MSS), a not-for-profit company, registered in 2008 and operationalised by me three years later.

Utilising a six-pillar model of social intervention, MSS established over 14 programmes in 16 communities. The pillars comprised education and skills training; sports and culture; health entrepreneurship; crime and violence reduction; and community development. Following a staff review in 2014, a peace pillar replaced community development. To date, the work of MSS has transformed the lives and livelihoods of more than 40,000 residents directly and indirectly in Kingston, St Andrew and Montego Bay. In 2016, MSS received the AMCHAM Civil Leadership Award.

I spent a lot of time on the education pillar, for I see it as the centre of any transformation and development and the machinery out of poverty. I also believed that early educational stimulation produces a more promising future, and I wanted to provide the environment afforded to my children. This yearning led to the School Renovation Project which resulted in 11 Basic and two Primary Schools being refurbished, benefiting a combined population of 2,000 children and 60 teachers. The project also achieved annual beautification of play areas and painting of schools. Assistance of over 350 volunteers and partners, including University of Costa Rica and Florida State University, Lions Club of Mona, Kiwanis, and Rotary Clubs, UWI STAT, and Halls of residence, made the initiatives possible.

The provision of food is a major issue for low-income earners. A kitchen garden programme was established as a food security and nutrition-building measure with partner, Lions Club of Mona. Additional funding of J$5 million through Environmental Foundation of Jamaica/ Special Climate Change Adaptation Fund, provided for the installation of a Waste Water Management System (WWMS) to encourage sustainability with plans to expand the gardens throughout similar schools in Jamaica.

The huge population of at-risk youth in the communities was a cause for concern. Thus, through the education and skills training pillar, 84 youths, first-time university students in their families, gained full scholarships. Of the 34 graduates to date, five received first class honours degrees, and 24 second class. Six subsequently pursued or are pursuing

Masters'. One past scholar is a PhD candidate at University of Denver. The graduates are performing successfully in the financial, education, medical, legal, engineering and media sectors.

Small Business Development and skills training programmes were established in Housekeeping, Construction and Database Management to provide opportunities for youth ineligible for tertiary education.

A mentorship programme was also established, and networking facilitated to ensure scholars and other residents were exposed to different opportunities and resources. Toward creation of a safer community, ongoing capacity building, edu-lectures, empowerment, life skills, conflict resolution, leadership and governance, as well as restorative justice sessions were conducted. I facilitated many of the sessions, as I continued using my story to inspire.

Personal professional growth and development were entrenched in us. After my Master's, I pursued doctoral studies in education, presented at conferences, and completed publications. Much appreciation to my professional supervisor, Lady Rheima Hall, who encouraged the PhD work. Funding to collect data across the Caribbean was facilitated by Sir Kenneth Hall, Professors Gordon Shirley and Neville Ying. "Keep going" were the words of motivation from my academic supervisors, Professors Elsa Leo-Rhynie and Marlene Hamilton, at the end of each returned submission.

University brought new meaning to life. I always heard about the privileged few who attended The UWI and didn't believe I would be one. However, in 1989 after two years of working, and seven months after my first son, Kemoi, had been born, I pursued a Bachelor of Arts and General Studies degree. Thankfully, I had the support of family who assisted in caring for Kemoi, until his Dad, Harven, whom I had met while attending college, returned from overseas. That son was followed by Kamol in 1994, and our daughter, Kaedi, in 2007.

My children and husband were a part of every job I did. They marked papers, carried conference materials and hang banners. It was therefore not by chance that we graduated together at different times. Kaedi was born when I sat a final exam, Kemoi and I graduated one day apart, when I completed the PhD. Harven and his two sons created sensation and made newspaper headlines in 2017 when they graduated together with MBAs and the younger son pursuing his MBBS at UWI.

My father was not around to see me walk the platform of higher degree, but I know he was smiling from heaven. In the final days of his life, while writhing in pain, he smiled and said: "I heard you on the radio this evening. I'm proud of you. You sound like a government minister. What next?"

Papa succumbed to cancer on 30 October 2011, one week before my PhD graduation. I so wanted him to be there, but God knew best. Thankfully, my mother was at my graduation again, as she was for all of us. Under the watchful eyes of my beloved family members, as well as college friends, Ingrid and Jennifer, who knew the early struggles, I tearfully walked in my parents' honour. Today, my entire family, friends, staff and well-wishers are truly grateful and appreciative of this Anthony N Sabga Award, as I continue my life's journey. ■

Shirin Haque

Science & Technology Laureate 2020
Trinidad & Tobago

It started like any ordinary day. I had attended to my elderly mom, carefully crafted my time of leaving for work to avoid the traffic, and sat in my car ready to reverse out of the garage.

The phone rings. It's a number I don't recognise and, on a whim, took it up. Maria Neilson was on the other end, and she went on to say that I had been selected as the 2020 Science and Technology laureate. I felt time slow down and felt disembodied. "Is this about the Sabga award?" was all I could say.

With her confirmation, my awkward stunned silence felt all wrong. I should be screaming through the rooftops, yet the reality and a cocktail of emotions all pierced through me like shards, leaving me hopelessly speechless. It was the unexpected culmination of my career in an odd field like astronomy, against all advice, in the Caribbean. How did I get here?

I must have been five years old and lay on a wood-framed rope bunk bed under the open skies in a courtyard of a village in India. Clearly, with no light pollution, the sight of the glinting stars must have captured the eyes and heart of this unschooled little girl. I remember thinking that the sky was a giant bowl over us.

My family of four sisters and my parents were all born in India. Both my parents are from villages. My father did his PhD in plant virology, the first person in my family to do a PhD. Unable to find suitable employment, he sold his share of the parcel of land received from his father, and bought a ticket to London. He worked at any job he could get including in a cloth factory, toting bales of cloth. All the while, he was sending out hundreds of resumes all over the world. A response from a country in the Caribbean called Trinidad and Tobago appealed to him. It was to become his home with his family for the rest of his days. So I came to Trinidad around age seven.

I retained a connection with my father which was different from my sisters'. This lifelong bond remained to his dying breath as I held his hand watching him breathe his last in 2011. In a state of stupor from his illness over days, the last sentence he ever spoke, on planet earth, was: "I love you too, beta." (Beta is a term of endearment for either gender).

I was enrolled in primary school at age seven, never having been to school before and not speaking a word of English. I was put in the kindergarten class, awkwardly older than all the other children. I caught up quickly and was happy there, and did well, copping many book prizes. One was a Ladybird book called The Night Sky. I recall only this one for the impact it had on me, and the wheels of fortune had been set in motion.

I went on to attend one of the top girls' high schools in the country. In high school, I was insecure and anxious and quite unhappy and envied the bold girls. In Form Two, when asked what we wanted to be when we grew up, I made the error I have subsequently spent my life correcting: I said I wanted to study astrology! This was a most common misconception between astronomy and astrology.

Academically, I was consistently at the top of the class. Science was a natural passion for me, though it was literature I truly excelled at. I still wish literature were compulsory for all students. We think in a language; if our power of expression is improved, our power to think and express ourselves is too. Sadly, this ability to express is disintegrating at an alarming rate among our students. I worry about its consequences in the future of this digital age, when e-mail software completes our sentences, requiring us to think less and less. In what universe can this be of benefit to us?

For my 16th birthday, I begged my parents for a subscription to Astronomy magazine. At other birthdays, I wanted the gigantic astronomical calendars which I went through in utter awe, barely understanding much of it!

Books were my friends. They went to the dinner table with me and rode in cars. My first publication in the form of a poem, in school newsletter at age 11, was titled "Books", which I recited at the opening of a library. I hid books inside bookstores until I could save up to buy them. And then in the 1980s, the series, "Cosmos", with Carl Sagan aired on television. I was smitten! I watched and taped every single episode, holding onto every word. I wanted to grow up to be Carl Sagan!

Then came the A'Levels with mathematics, physics and chemistry. My grades were horrible to say the least. Based on popular convention,

I had applied to enter Engineering. Now, convinced I would never get into Engineering and, rather than getting turned away, and maybe having to return to school (which I was going to avoid at all costs), I changed my application to Natural Sciences.

In retrospect, for my career, this was the best/worst thing that ever happened. I graduated with first-class honours, with a major in physics. On the side, I dabbled in photography, and copped first, second and third prize in one category in the university's photography competition. The visual medium always excited me. The beauty of the world to be captured.

It was time to live life. At 22 I was financially struggling, and married. My first daughter graced the world with her presence a year later. I stayed home with her for a year. But the nagging desire to return to studies was there, so I signed up for a master's in Astronomy. I did so against the advice from well-meaning people, including my supervisor, Dr Dipak Basu, that I would never get a job with Master's in Astronomy.

I went ahead anyway, confident in my plan B which was to teach physics in school. From here on, it has always appeared that the universe conspired in my favour. I have been very lucky. A life of serendipity.

Just shy of the minimum time required, I completed the MPhil on a scholarship. At the time, The UWI had been endowed with massive IDB funding, and I was urged to apply for PhD study abroad, though I had no real intention of my own to do it. Prof Mauri Valtonen, who would turn out to be a lifelong collaborator, happened to be visiting the department then. He recommended my PhD with Prof William Saslaw, at University of Virginia (UVA), as a split-site degree. Serendipity.

I have always lacked confidence in myself academically. I learned years later it is called the "imposter syndrome", not uncommon in academia. Toward the end of my tenure at UVA, I hesitatingly asked Prof Saslaw if my work was up to standard. Without pause, he said: "I would not be associated with your work, if it was not up to standard." What a welcome relief! My work constituted several pages of Astronomy in a graduate-level text book authored by him, published by Cambridge University Press.

Back from UVA, I was lucky to be appointed in the vacancy created by the migration of my former supervisor. I had chosen to not attend my own BSc graduation (cost was a factor). Nor did I attend my MPhil graduation—why not go for the hat trick? I decided to not attend my PhD graduation.

Two days before the ceremony, the phone rings and the Pro Vice Chancellor for graduate studies says: "I am looking at the list of the graduating students, and I note you are not attending graduation."

"That's right," I said.

"But you have to," he said. "You have won the outstanding thesis award!"

Within one day, I managed to find myself at the ceremony, wearing an old pair of fancy shoes which was "dry rot", as we say, and which crumbled, as I was in queue to go on stage. A family friend traded her shoes with me to allow me

Nearing the completion of my PhD, I was due with my second daughter. It meant toting books to my office up four flights of stairs, when elevators were not working.

my moment on stage with Sir Shridath Ramphal. Who would have thought that, decades later, I would be recipient of a letter signed by him as a Sabga Award Laureate. As an aside, when I later got my MPhil in psychology, I once again absented myself from the graduation ceremony, preferring to curl up with a book.

Nearing the completion of my PhD, I was due with my second daughter. It meant toting books to my office up four flights of stairs, when elevators were not working. One day I collapsed at home. I don't remember much beyond that. Memories remain of the sound of ambulance and of doctors around me. I had full-blown eclampsia.

My daughter was taken out a preemie at seven months. I went into a coma. My family was prepared that it was unlikely I would come out of it. The nurses snuck my older daughter, who was nine at the time, into ICU as they believed her Mom was not going to make it. A week later, I came out of it, with loss of vision and full kidney failure. Two decades later, I write of this, emotions wash over me. I am not supposed to be here.

I learned a valuable lesson in life, of which I have never since lost sight. In your workplace, you can be replaced tomorrow—in a heartbeat, by even better—but to your family, you are irreplaceable.

So, I divert. A question I am now often asked: is being a woman in a male-dominated field different from being a man? Yes, they don't get eclampsia because men don't get pregnant. Women's bodies and hormones have them working alongside men with one hand tied behind their backs, often with a poker face pretending we are the same and not in pain. We are not the same, and often we are in pain.

By the time my elder daughter was 13 and the younger one was four, I was single-parenting them both. No, it was not easy. I have always told my girls: "I don't care if you are successful or not. There is just one thing I want you to be in life, and that is, tough. That will take you through any curve balls life throws your way." As she now completes her own PhD at Newcastle, my older daughter keeps that life lesson at the forefront.

Things were not right with my younger daughter. It was apparent by about age seven that her school refusal as one psychologist called it, was chronic and extremely severe. Prayers, psychologists, change to a private school—nothing seemed to help the situation. Finally, by age 11, she was diagnosed by a psychiatrist with severe debilitating anxiety disorder, perhaps a result of her birth conditions. She was given a prescription for Valium. I fought off medication for years. Somehow, she got through the SEA examination. Struggling to find an environment that she could thrive in, during her first month of high school, I changed three schools.

At my wits' end at lunch with a colleague, sharing my despair at this untenable situation, he simply said:

The 2018 CARICOM science award was a huge honour, especially for being the first woman recipient. The citation read: "For the introduction and promotion of Astronomy at a professional level in the region".

"Shirin, keep your daughter home". His words hit like a ton of bricks. It's what I needed to hear. I home-schooled her when doing so was unknown in Trinidad. Her condition only seemed to worsen with age; we couldn't have visitors at home; and she couldn't step out. I taught her myself the courses for CSEC and, one by one, she completed high school.

The generosity and kindness of Upper Level school can never be forgotten for the role they played in her sitting the exams privately there. They showed understanding in an environment where mental disorders still carried a stigma in our society.

But work must go on without pause or complaint or special favours. What my daughter's disorder did for me, was to enable my seeing in a heartbeat any university student who was dealing with any level of anxiety and depression. Because I knew it far too intimately in my personal life. Many distressing sleepless nights were often precursors to long days at work.

Hence, when I was called to serve as deputy dean for student matters for four years, it was one of the most immersive, fulfilling, demanding tasks perhaps I have ever done. I loved every one of those students, and truly wanted to see them do well. I had myself floundered academically for a time, and a little helping hand could do wonders. I could never turn away a single student in trouble, academic and otherwise.

I could see clearly that life does not always deal everyone a good or equal hand of cards, and how hard life was for many and its impacts on their education. In my thrust toward minimalism in my life, I have thrown out tons of clutter accumulated throughout the decades, even books! What I am unable to throw out are the many cards saying "Thank you". They spark joy. Each one is a life touched.

I actively sought to raise funds for students in need, at times helped with tuition fees, in desperate cases, from my own pocket. It was this that prompted me to establish the special prize for students who succeeded despite challenges. In memory of my late father who always told me, "Help humanity". I worked with students with disabilities, established the peer advisors, tutor-tutee systems. I helped out at a school for kids with disabilities as well.

I loved physics and astronomy to the core, and still feel the same thrill of sharing it with students and seeing the wonder in their eyes.

It is perhaps this passion, that led to, firstly, the Guardian Life Distinguished Teacher award, followed by the Association of Atlantic Universities international award, and Vice Chancellor's award for excellence. I can never forget giving the speech in a room full of 17 presidents of universities in Canada for the award ceremony. Then the research began to gain attention with the Rudranath Capildeo award, and a couple of other "Women in Science" awards followed. The 2018 CARICOM science award was a huge honour, especially for being the first woman recipient. The citation read: "For the introduction and promotion of Astronomy at a professional level in the region".

Regarding my research, I trained to be a theoretical astronomer. Working at my computer at home with my young daughters was truly my dream. The Universe had other plans for me. For years, there had been attempts to get observational astronomy started at St Augustine campus, but to no avail. Here I was, suddenly, making it happen in conjunction with University of Turku, Finland, being architect, contractor and technical advisor! So was born the first research-grade astronomy observatory SATU (St Augustine-TUorla). "Tuorla is a Finnish word meaning a tale too good to be true. Indeed it was.

Observational astronomy was hard. I was tremendously alone and felt terribly ill-equipped. This was not what I had signed up for. Going to the observatory at nights, with two young daughters, was not fun. Bless my parents for chipping in at these times. It was tough recruiting students, for the demands of it, but every now and then their volunteer efforts chugged it along. We never gave up.

I often questioned its merit: it was not yielding publications immediately, the litmus test of who we are as academics. This was the long gestation period. The fruits of our labour were eventually rewarded, as we began to contribute data to this international project on the monitoring of the binary black hole system, OJ 287, which turned out to be a monster and one of the largest known!

It began to grace international news. With our colleagues, it was our observatory SATU again that was able to contribute data on the comet 67P as it swung past the sun, for the historic Rosetta mission, a first for humanity of landing a probe on a comet! In the paper that came from this in the Philosophical

Transactions of the Royal Society, among world class observatories, on the map showing all observatories contributing data, there was SATU sitting near the equator. My pride and joy!

My colleagues visited the department from time to time. Apart from workshops and public lectures, joint projects took birth—a major one being in Astrobiology. There were many approaches to this budding new discipline and many of us were jumping on the bandwagon. You could try to unravel the mysteries of life in the universe by studying analog sites on earth with extreme environments not conducive to life. Thus identified were the mud volcanoes of Trinidad, which could be treated as an analog for Mars, and the Pitch Lake an analog for Titan—Saturn's largest moon. The Pitch Lake in Trinidad was the largest and only hydrocarbon lake in the world with easy access.

When I helped arrange world-renowned Paul Davies to come to Trinidad to give a talk, he was so fascinated by our astrobiology project at the Pitch Lake, that he brought it to the attention of his BBC connections. They did an interview on it with us which was heard worldwide. In 2014, some of the work at the Pitch Lake was published in the world's top journal Science with us as co-authors. This felt staggering.

The days of the lone researcher are long over. Today, all research is team work, which has pushed the field faster and further. I owe much to the amazing collaborations now decades-long with my international colleagues who, in some cases, feel like family. We offered to the world, this region's natural resources in astronomy—our location and our geophysical features. The world sat up and took notice. Even as I write this, a famous science channel on YouTube has featured our findings on the Pitch Lake in Astrobiology.

In 2001, a couple of us held the first ever Astro camp for children. It was dizzying, exciting, and exhausting! Out of that was born the idea of Caribbean Institute of Astronomy (CARINA) which three of us founded. I served as president and executive director at times but subsequently left it in the hands of

the others. Unknown to them, the demands of single parenting, night-time observatory work, and challenges with my younger daughter were taking their toll. Something had to give.

The famous star parties were well established, packed with 500 persons or so by the time I was ready to let go. My excitement of sharing astronomy and physics knew no age limits and bounds. I must have given more than 80 lectures to the public, to schools, kindergartens, movie theatres and institutions regionally. I ended up becoming a qualified cruise line speaker; a regular on TV morning shows; and, bouncing off my own life experience, did the TedX talk "The Importance of Being Irrelevant".

In 2002, with what felt like my personal life in tatters with a series of poor life decisions and newly single-parenting, I decided to take up an old passion of mine and sign up for a degree in psychology. It was a mental life saviour for me, an escape from the drudgery of the real world. Then I got appointed as head of department for four years in all, much to my despair. Sadly, I remain the only female head of Physics appointed to date at all The UWI campuses at the time of writing.

I did not enjoy the headship, as it increased meetings and reports exponentially—activities that dulled and ached my soul. I felt alive when I was either learning, teaching or discovering. It was around this time I realised there were not many local science documentaries. Starting in 2007, with no budget, no experience, and a director who helped bring to execution all my wild ideas, we did the first documentary – "Adventures in Discovery"—filmed across four islands, with a hefty budget, flying in helicopters over a volcano in Montserrat.

Adventures in a life of science indeed! I taught myself whatever I needed to learn about documentary production. Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC) aired the documentaries across the Caribbean and in part of North America. The local channels all aired them as well.

Then came "All is Number" to show the magic and role of mathematics, a field that more and more students found challenging. Then "Losing Paradise" on the environment made its way and, finally, "As Above, So Below" covered some of my own work in Astrobiology.

By now I was burnt out raising funds for these features. They were harder to do than any research paper, but academically did not carry the weight as such. For me, they were truly meaningful, and I felt I was able to reach more people with the science than ever this way with our Caribbean brand. At this point, I quit documentaries because the money, and the time investment were incredible. But my love for television never abated, and found an outlet when I had the opportunity to create and do the first ever 13-part series on astronomy in the Caribbean on IeTV, "Exploring our place in the Universe with Dr Shirin Haque". My Carl Sagan dream! I am excited to work on a second science series now, "Full S-T-E-A-M ahead!".

A high point of the documentaries for me was when I was invited by the Global Centre for Peace in Haverford College, in the United States to screen my documentary, "Adventures in Discovery". It began to be used for teaching cultural geography at a couple of universities in the USA. This meant more to me than impact factors and citations—which is the yardstick by which our worth is academically measured. I saw the Peace Pole for the first time at Haverford College, and was inspired to build our own astronomy-themed peace park at The UWI. How can you not love students? They are always game for my wacky ideas, and our astronomy themed Alcyone Peace park is now an iconic symbol on campus.

I sought an outlet for science outreach that could be more manageable, and that came in the form of magazine production. It started by being editor and producer of the faculty magazine, Eureka!, and so was born The Intellectual—Art, Science and Architecture. I was producer and editor of this magazine which started in 2015 and continues to this day.

Much to my surprise, the magazine enjoyed tremendous reception internationally as well, with world renowned scientists writing for us. But my focus was always local and regional perspective and content, within a global environment.

Empowering moments were like when I wrote to an astronaut who had done space walks, who had been diagnosed with cancer. He immediately responded happily and gave me permission to use his content and quote him.

On a personal note, life slowly took a turn for better. By 2012, with my life companion and best friend, I tied the knot. He provided the intellectual stimulation I craved, the laughter, and he put up with my mad schemes. He supported me unstintingly when the pressures at home felt unbearable. He has always been my cheering squad.

The pursuit of intellectual enterprise could never end for me. It culminated in the conversion of my husband's childhood home into an academy which I called "Misty Mountain"—the house of intellectual curiosity. In the fashion of the French salons in Enlightenment times, I mused! Here, science courses were run for the public with a library of books, and science movie nights held. I started a "tea and talk" segment for visiting scientists and for the public. I ran over a dozen short courses, starting in 2012, when five people signed up and three showed up for the first day of a course in astronomy. Tears stung my eyes at my abject failure in doing what I loved. Next day, there were five, then seven, until my course at the National Science Centre on "Extreme Science" had forty persons in it.

In 2009, the International School for Young Astronomers (ISYA) was held in Trinidad—first time in this region, with me as co-chair of the event and participants from 17 countries. We held the first ever regional astronomy conferences in 2017, and then in 2018. In a young region, with

a fledgling field like astronomy, there quickly become many firsts.

I got a sabbatical in 2010 as a reward for the punishment of serving as head of department. My life, however, is a story of serendipity. In that year, my father was diagnosed with cancer and the bulk of my sabbatical was spent in caring for him. I cancelled many academic engagements in that year. Thereafter, care for my aging mother took precedence and, by 2018, I cancelled many academic engagements once again to take care of my mother to this day. Our lives are an amalgam of our professional and personal experiences, both intertwined and affecting each other.

In 2011, I received an e-mail from a gentleman in Grand Cayman who was building his own telescope. He invited me to run a workshop in astronomy for teachers there. Thus, from 2012 until his passing in 2018, a deep friendship and collaboration were forged between Dr William Hrudey and myself, including the birth of the STEMCarib conferences in Grand Cayman—a brainchild of us both. Dr Hrudey asked me do school visits after the workshop, and we toured the schools in Grand Cayman, giving talks in astronomy. At the local schools, we were treated by the children like celebrities and our autographs sought—much to our delight and amusement!

Driving back, however, a deep pain took hold as we realised what had happened. These children had not met scientists and had no exposure to things like astronomy. Six months later, the first STEMCarib conference was held and subsequently annually with support from me and The UWI. By 2018, Turks and Caicos had heard of the work we were doing in STEM and invited me to run a workshop for their teachers there.

Another random day, I received an e-mail from the National Science Foundation in the USA. This was no spam. This engagement led to the formation of the Caribbean hub for radio astronomy, UWI-NINE NRAO (National Radio Astronomy Observatory), and The UWI, with me as director. Even as I revise this, another e-mail has arrived from the International Astronomical Union (IAU) asking me to serve on its Scientific Organising Committee.

As Carl Sagan once said: "Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." What will life truly be like in one thousand years? These questions plague me and find an outlet in developing courses in areas like history of science and astrobiology.

We start our lives loving science, then learning science, then teaching and doing science. Now, it is time to make science happen.

In time, I became a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society; member of the American Astronomical Society; of the International Astronomical Union; and even a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists! In 2019, IAU (International Astronomical Union) was 100 years old and, as part of their celebrations, countries could enter to name an Exoworld (host star and its exoplanet), once they qualified. I was appointed the National Outreach Coordinator with IAU.

It was one of the most exciting aspects of my career to enable Trinidad and Tobago to name the Exoworld with host star HD 96063 and exoplanet HD 96063b. Dingolay, the star, and Ramajay, the exoplanet, forever in perpetuity, are named as a tribute to Trinidad and Tobago's culture.

After all I may have helped craft, or facilitated, few things give me joy as much as being part of the process to name an exoworld, and to place Trinidad and Tobago among the stars. In my heart, I almost feel that is my most important legacy for this region remaining long after I am gone. Even millions of years!

I still indulge in learning now on the online platforms of EdX and Coursera, having gained several certifications in my latest curiosity—neuroscience and genetics. In the end, it is nothing more than to try to understand, while we can, the human condition and the amazing world and universe we occupy. My only regret for being unable to live for a thousand years, is not being able to know all the discoveries made and questions answered, by humans in time, if we have not destroyed ourselves. As Carl Sagan once said: "Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." What will life truly be like in one thousand years? These questions plague me and I find an outlet in developing courses in areas like history of science and astrobiology.

I could have looked for employment in North America and Europe but I knew there were many others, far better than me, contributing to those regions. Or I could come home and do whatever possible in the Caribbean with its challenges as a lone astronomer. This is where I could make a difference, and I have never once regretted that decision to serve in my academic capacity in the Caribbean. This is the home that nurtured me. My playground. It's here that I give back. This is where we make our stand.

And then the phone rang on that day as I was about to reverse out of my garage, and changed life indelibly with the bestowal of the huge honour of the Anthony N Sabga award. It is very humbling. The award has led to the formation of the W.I.S.H. (Women In Science for Hope) Foundation working to promote science in children's homes in Trinidad and Tobago and Studio 42 for sharing science to the world.

My work remains cut out for me. It reminds one of the quote by Marie Curie: "One never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done". The next phase of the adventure in science has just begun, boosted by the resources from this award. Time for this starry-eyed girl to buckle up and reach for Dingolay and Ramajay! ■

Maria Nunes

Arts & Letters, Joint Laureate 2021
Trinidad & Tobago

Why did someone who grew up with a cuatro in one hand and a golf club in the other end up with a camera on either hip running after Moko Jumbies in the midst of Carnival? Perhaps the answer is to be found in something my father would tell me: that life writes straight with crooked lines.

One of those lines is that while I came into this world in Trinidad, my Caribbean self was birthed in Nevis. To explain this, I must start in Grenada where my mother, Margot, was from. I went there with her a few times in my childhood and these trips left a great impression on me. One of the few tangible connections to the Grenadian part of my ancestry came through a small 1920s photograph of my grandparents, Eric and Daisy. I never knew them. They both died within months of each other in 1945 when my mother was only 10 years old.

Neither did I know my Trinidad rum shop-owning Madeiran grandparents, Ferdinando and Elisa Nunes. A beautiful photograph of them always hung on the wall at home. I grew up hearing my dad, Joe, relate how he went to school in Port of Spain by train from the Croisée in San Juan, where he lived down the street from their Riverview Bar. He faithfully took me to visit Madeiran relatives and friends in Trinidad, so this part of my heritage felt close. My very name cemented this.

Early in my childhood, at age six or seven, I spent time in a small house at the six-mile post in Mayaro along the southeast coast of Trinidad — a house that sloped more and more towards the sea with each year we spent three weeks of the July/August school holidays there. I can never forget this leaning house. To walk around inside it was to walk uphill, downhill, sidehill. It was there that the photograph as story entered my life. The taking of pictures was part of each family holiday, and these were dutifully committed to an album afterwards — our own little documentary. The photographer was someone who I called "Grandad", Father Pedro Valdez. A Catholic priest and not actually my grandfather, he was so close to my mother and father that from my birth he was a third parent. I can look back and see that it was very unusual to call a Catholic priest "Grandad", but it felt most normal and natural for me. He was the chronicler of our family. I was always fascinated by his fully manual, leather-cased camera. It was a big day in my life years later when I was an 18-year-old university student, able to buy my first camera, a Pentax K-1000. I was beginning to follow in his footsteps. The photographer in me comes from him.

"How do we figure ourselves out against the backdrop of history?" - Dionne Brand

Still, photography wouldn't take centre stage in my life for many more years. For a long time, competitive golf, a love of history and playing music were my defining passions. I was always tall for my age, and by four I could already swing a golf club. My dad would take me with him to the golf course nearly every Saturday. I would spend hours chipping and putting on the practice green while he played his round. There were hardly any other children around. This is when the father of Trinidad golf, "Uncle Roy" Rudder, took me under his wing. He was a beautiful, Black, gentle man who was arguably the best teacher of the game Trinidad has ever known. I owe my success to him, and to my dad, who was always there to take me to every tournament across Trinidad and Tobago, to quietly stay as late into the darkness as I needed to practise. Neither of my parents ever travelled with me to competitions outside of Trinidad, so they were not there in July 1979 in San Diego, California, USA to see me win the Optimist Junior World Championships in my 11-12 age group. This catapulted me to national attention. That it was UNICEF's International Year of the Child threw an additional spotlight on the achievement. Over the next three years, through the Trinidad and Tobago Golf Association, I travelled every school vacation to play in tournaments in the United States. It was a remarkable period of my childhood.

In 1982, my dad died suddenly from a heart attack. I was 15. He was the centre of my world, and his death changed my life in an instant.

His passing complicated my relationship with golf. I continued to play, but I would go through

repeating cycles of stops and restarts for the next three decades, with the stops getting longer and the restarts getting harder. In between I certainly enjoyed playing and had my fair share of success. It took me out into the wider world at such a young age. I am full of gratitude for the many opportunities I benefitted from because of this part of my journey. It opened doors for me and led me to cross paths with many wonderful people whose positive impact has been lasting. The golf industry was also where I worked for nearly 10 years. Yet, as inside of golf as I was, as time passed, I increasingly felt myself an outsider. I became at odds inside myself with the structures I was part of. Eventually, in 2010, I made the decision to walk away from this world. This was when I summed up the mad courage to brave my chances in photography. Translating my passion into a profession was filled with uncertainty. I didn't know where my feet would land in this new domain.

Thankfully, this leap of faith would lead me back to terra firma. Prior to working in golf I had been a history teacher. It was a profession which I loved, a direct consequence of the impact my history and geography teachers had on me when I was a student. Their influence opened my mind to thinking about history and the world around me in critical, complex ways. This propelled me to get my bachelor's degree in history. Teaching was the natural next step. When I left the classroom in 2000 after 10 rewarding years, I could not have imagined the time would come when I would return once more to engaging questions of history in the Caribbean, but this time through my camera in the classroom of Carnival.

This brings me to the powerful role of music in my life and how eventually it would show up in my photography. One of my earliest memories is sitting on the floor with a blue plastic piano and a small toy drum. Over time, I graduated to my first real instrument, a cuatro. My fingers could barely wrap around the fretboard to form the first chords I learnt. I was so attached to my cuatro at that age I took it with me to Grenada as my companion on one of my visits there. In a treasured photograph which memorialises this, it's clear that I was not much bigger than the instrument at the time.

The big music moment of my childhood came when my parents gave me a guitar for Christmas. I was 11 and had just spent my first term in secondary school at St. Joseph's Convent in Port of Spain. I was over the moon and probably spent more time learning to play it than doing my homework. The school environment gave me avenues to play, and music was also on the curriculum. To further underscore just how central the guitar was to me at that stage of my life, the night before my dad's funeral I took it with me when I went to spend a few hours by a friend. I never actually played it that night. But I needed its reassuring presence. It had become a real extension of myself.

The other instrument that I was introduced to during my secondary school years was the steelpan. Looking back on it now, I see that it was unknowingly one of the ways I healed from the loss of my dad. After leaving school and completing university, I got the opportunity to play with Invaders Steel Orchestra. It was 1989 and Ray Holman had returned to the band for the first time in many years — this time as arranger of his own composition, "Life's Too Short".

Playing in Panorama that year was one of my dreams come true. The feeling of being in the heart of a steelband on the drag (the track that leads to the stage in the Savannah), of playing while being pushed along in the thick of supporters, was one of the most electrifying experiences I've ever had.

The crowd is all in between the pans, right there pressed next to you as a player. There is something magical about pan racks moving amidst the energy of all the people around.

When I began to take photography seriously, capturing the work of musicians emerged as a major direction, though I did not set out with this as a clear mission in mind. It spontaneously unfolded after photographing Shadow, David Rudder and Vaughnette Bigford under stage lights at a concert in 2010. I knew in those moments that this kind of performance photography fired my spirit. I discovered something I wanted to

become very good at. From then to now, photography of music in all its forms has been at the heart of my work. Alongside my photographs of steelpan culture, this forms my largest body of work outside of my documentation of traditional Carnival.

Another dream came true for me at the same time that I was discovering my love for music performance photography. I joined a parang band. "Paramininos" welcomed me into their living room practice sessions, and in 2009 I went all over Trinidad with them performing in the annual national parang competition. An unexpected consequence of my immersion in the parang community was that the following year I was hired by the National Parang Association to document the entire parang season. It was one of my first major projects as a photographer and one that I relished. At the very beginning of the season, I sought feedback from experienced photographer Abigail Hadeed. Her reply to the few images I sent her was perhaps the single most important piece of guidance she ever gave me. She told me I was improving in the technical aspects of my photography, then said to me, "But Nunes, where is the story?" It was a transformational question. I had not consciously thought of myself as a storyteller. From then on, I began to understand photography differently.

It was this love of music that played a significant part in drawing me deeply into photography of traditional Carnival. I couldn't resist the bound-to-move rhythm of Blue Devil biscuit tins, the warm sound of Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra going down George Street in a slow-chip tempo, the booming musical crack of the Original Whipmaster's Jab Jab whip. The joy and challenge for me quickly became about making photographs in which I could hear the music and see the movement in the stillness of the frame.

Out in the streets of Port of Spain with Black Indians and Dame Lorraines, Fancy Sailors and Midnight Robbers, I began to realise that Carnival was living history. I will never forget the first time a Jab Molassie looked me in the eye with loads of mischief, or when a Moko Jumbie first towered majestically over me. My instinct was to research the origins of these traditions. Before long I

"But Nunes, where is the story?"
- Abigail Hadeed
It was a transformational question.

came to the realisation that the history of Carnival was a lens through which I would gain many insights — not only into our history in Trinidad and Tobago, but also that of the wider Caribbean. It became clear to me that to study the history of Carnival is to study the history of slavery and its present-day consequences on our societies. Carnival traditions swiftly became a window through which I began to see and understand the past and its impact on our contemporary lives with new eyes. So many of our traditions in Trinidad have been influenced by other islands, especially Grenada. The more I researched and photographed Carnival heritage, the more I came to understand my Caribbeanness.

My photography of Carnival naturally extended into photography of contemporary dance. This gave me avenues to further develop techniques for translating the vibrancy of movement into the stillness of an image. It also led to the fulfilment of a long-held dream: going to Haiti. The opportunity to go to Port-au-Prince and Jacmel with Makeda Thomas' New Waves Dance and Performance Institute in 2014 marked the beginning of seeing the work I wanted to do as not just limited to Trinidad and Tobago. It sparked in me the desire to explore our connectedness across the region through photography of the work of artists.

It wasn't long before I was able to do just that through working with Etienne

Charles. I first got to know him because I bought two of his CDs, Folklore and Culture Shock. As soon as I heard the first notes, I knew that this was my kind of music. It struck me forcefully that here was a musician in his then-20s who was so deeply grounded in our music roots. When he reached out to me in 2015 to document his research and composition process for a new work called San Jose Suite, I didn't hesitate to say yes. It meant doing research on the First Peoples of Trinidad, as well as going with him to Costa Rica and California. It was intense work having to do both video and photography, but the challenge of it pushed me to develop my abilities. During the project he said to me, "I'm writing music that speaks to history". This shared understanding of the centrality of history in our respective work cemented both our friendship and our working relationship.

The commitment to work that is rooted in history went even further two years later when we collaborated again, this time on Etienne's Guggenheim Fellowship project, Carnival: The Sound of a People. I welcomed the opportunity to be part of bringing Carnival history to life through music and making short films. Most recently, working together meant getting my passport ready again in 2019 – this time to go to Ghana, Togo and Benin, followed by Cuba, Colombia, Belize and Mexico. This monumental project of his is a work in progress interrupted by the pandemic, but already it's been immeasurably life-changing. It's an exceptional mind-expanding opportunity to explore the ways in which our trans-Atlantic lives are connected through music, masquerade traditions, history and geography.

A few years before I went to West Africa I started documenting African heritage in Trinidad via Ifa/Orisha and Rada traditions. This segued naturally from my research into the origins of the masquerade traditions which expressed themselves in Carnival, not just in Trinidad, but in the wider Caribbean. I had first been introduced to Orisha songs through the beautiful voicing of this tradition by Ella Andall. The more I understood about the extent of African influence on Carnival, both through music and masquerade, the more I wanted to learn about African cultural practices in our contemporary space. People I'd come to know through Carnival invited me to experience the Obatala festival and Egungun masquerade. I also went to a Rada vodunu for the first time and began to know the Antoine family, the only remaining keepers of Rada traditions in Trinidad. I understood the importance of documenting the present-day expressions of their Ewe-Fon heritage, which can be traced from Trinidad to the Kingdom of Dahomey — present day Benin.

In between, I began to think about publishing a book of my Carnival photography. I wanted to pay tribute to the Carnival artists who have transformed how I see and understand the world. Trinidad-based Robert and Christopher Publishers took the idea in hand. We worked closely together and made In a World of Their Own: Carnival Dreamers and Makers a reality in 2018.

The project also provided an opportunity to collaborate with a writer I admire, Shivanee Ramlochan. It was all an extraordinary odyssey. Working on the book created a much-needed opportunity to stand back and reflect on the photography I had been doing, and to consider the directions I wanted to develop in the future.

One of those directions, long important to me, was documentation of the First Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2015 I attended a discussion at which journalist Sunity Maharaj was one of the presenters. She spoke about Banwari, the oldest human remains found to date in the entire Caribbean. Although Banwari was unearthed in 1969 in San Francique, south Trinidad, the existence of this oldest ancestor of ours remains largely unknown. Sunity called herself a child of Banwari. This powerfully resonated with me. I understood in that moment this was also who I was. Instead of 500 years of history, I had over 5,000. It was an important shift to feel that I was born into two worlds: an ancient one, rich in indigenous heritage, and the so-called "new" post-1492 one. Through photography, I wanted to explore ways of seeing these two worlds of our Caribbean history in our present, ways of reaching through and across time and space to engage the often very difficult questions that emerge.

This takes me back to where I started: Nevis, by way of Grenada. For most of my life I knew relatively little about my Grenadian ancestors; my notions of them were vague. However, through research done by some of my relatives in recent years, a clearer picture started to emerge, centred around an ancestor named James Smith. I assumed he was white given my own appearance, as well as that of my mother, her parents, and other Grenadian relatives. I dug in public records online to see what I could find out about him. I came across the University College of London's Legacies of British Slave-ownership database. Late one night, I searched and searched its archive. It took a lot of cross-referencing because James Smith was such a common name at the time, but eventually I found the records: James was slave-owning. I sank deep into an emotional and moral quagmire.

In the 1996 film Listening For Something, American poet Adrienne Rich speaks to Trinidad-born writer Dionne Brand about the illusion of "wanting to be blameless, wanting to be innocent, wanting to feel that these things were perpetrated by other white people". Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes in *Silencing The Past* that "we are never as steeped in history as when we pretend not to be, but if we stop pretending we may gain in understanding what we lose in false innocence."

My illusion of innocence was indeed shattered. A whole new journey was beginning, and I wasn't sure where it would lead me. So much about James remained unknown. An unexpected breakthrough came during the depths of the pandemic last year when I pursued some clues gleaned from posts in a Grenada genealogy group on Facebook. These led to the discovery of James' origins which had remained elusive until then. There it was in sepia ink on aged parchment via my computer screen: original documents which revealed that James was a "mulatto", born into slavery circa 1771 in Nevis where his mother, Rose, was enslaved. He was manumitted when he was four or five years old by his

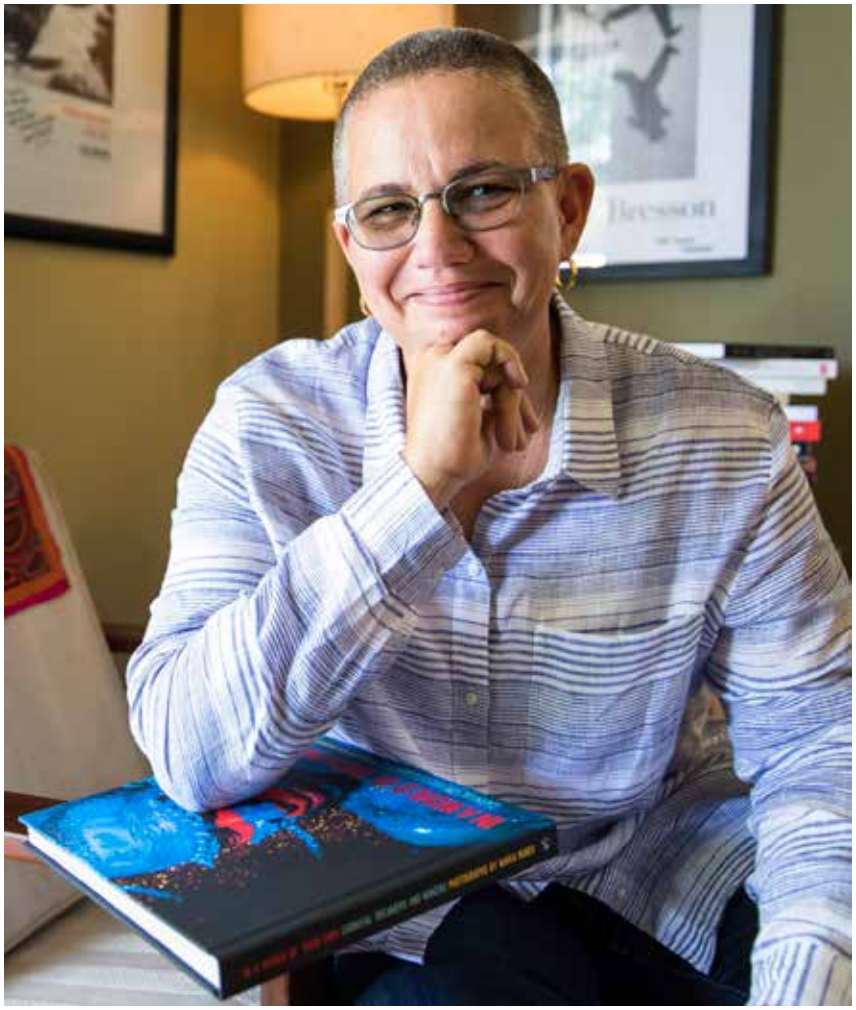
English grandfather who owned sugar plantations and enslaved Africans — Rose being one of them. Years later, after being sent as a boy to Scotland to learn the trade of carpentry, James ended up in Grenada. I've been able to determine with certainty that James Smith, the enslaved mulatto boy who was manumitted in Nevis in 1775, is the same slave-owning James Smith who lived in Grenada in the early to mid-1800s — and from whom I am directly descended.

To be Caribbean is to have strong currents of painful history passing through our veins.

To face the reality of my family past is to face the absolute horror of slavery and its legacy in the Caribbean in a profoundly personal way. My ancestors enslaved my ancestors. I am a daughter of James. I am a daughter of Rose. I belong to them both. I navigate between conflicting emotions of feeling relieved to find Rose and at the same time recoiling from James. I sit with both sides of awful truths. During my life, I've repeatedly found myself caught in predicaments which arise from the duality of feeling both an insider and an outsider in the same breath. But I have come to see that feeling outside is an illusion. There is no outside in the Caribbean. There is only inside. Inside the veins under my white skin there is the blood of Rose, James, Eric, Daisy, Ferdinando, Elisa, Joe, Margot. All my ancestors, known and unknown, are there. History walks in me, in all of us. Thinking deeply about my roots, confronting the many questions that arise, is helping me to be more alert to the complexities, the contradictions that make us who we are here in the Caribbean. My photography practice is my instrument of exploration, investigation. It is how I ask questions and work out answers, not in isolation, but in community with so many artists who impact me through what they write, sound, dance, make. All of this comes together in the deconstruction and reconstruction of myself, my view of the world, and how I live out my part in it.

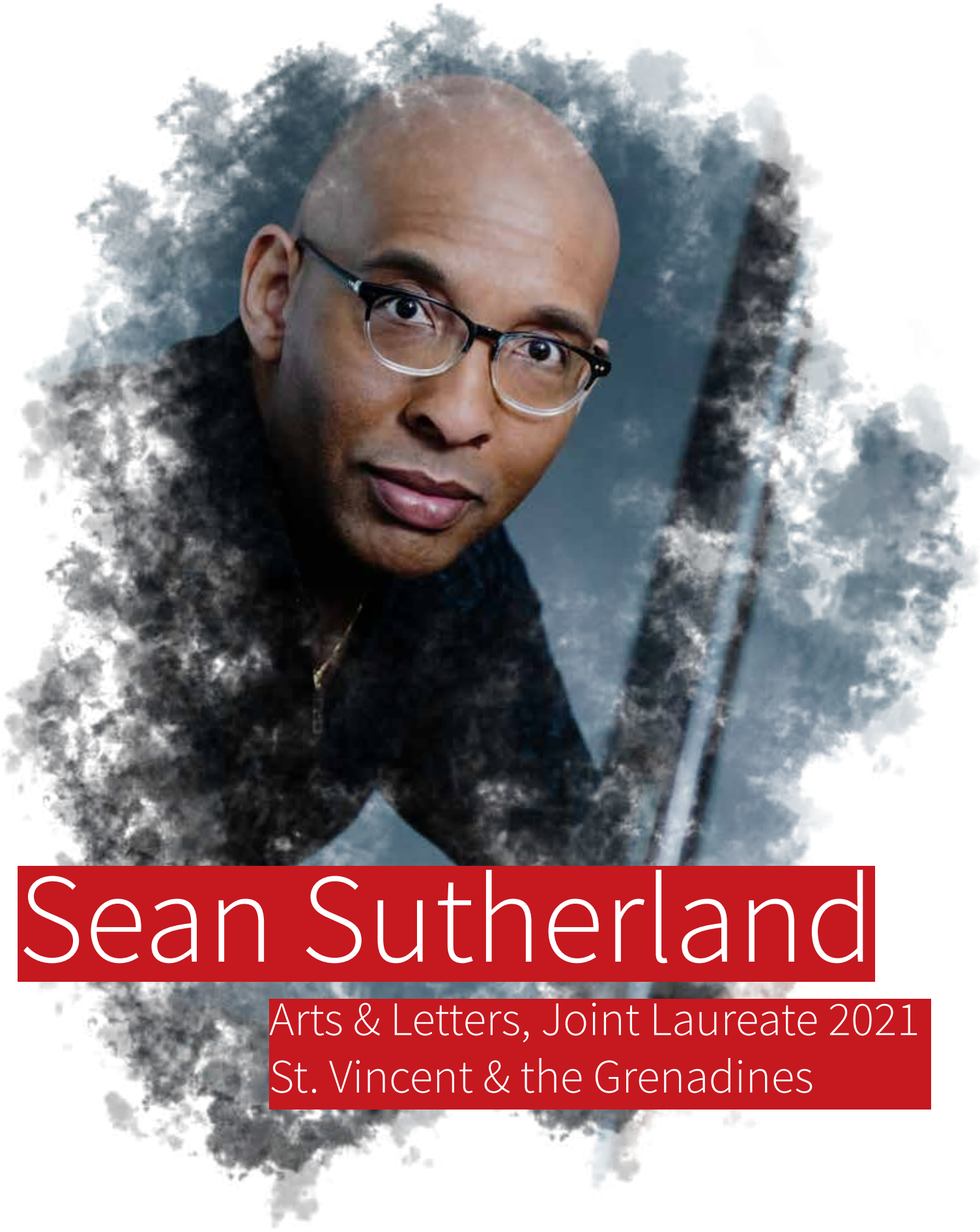
Connected to this is that I see my photography as memory work. Questions of memory, individual and collective, are always with me. In photographing traditions in Carnival and other festivals, or in documenting the rhythms of life all around us, what I see are the powerfully embodied ways we have developed of recording and guarding memory in the Caribbean. Our bodies are living libraries, living archives. This is the root and navel string of my work: the action of the photograph enters into conversation with lived memory, listening for what is being said to us today in the hands of a drummer, in the feet of a dancer, in the voice of a chantwèl, in seemingly ordinary moments of daily living. Through my camera I become both observer and participant, witness as well as active agent. What emerges in the images is often multi-layered and can take time to reveal itself.

"It all at last liberates us and ties us to everything…. The horizon makes images, no door shall be closed."
- Patrick Chamoiseau



When I left the world of salaried work to find my way through photography, I took a leap of faith that I would somehow find my feet. My father was right. Life writes straight with crooked lines. Here I am "reading" history with my camera, writing it too. In Listening For Something, Dionne Brand says: "History is a very present and real thing in my life. History is not some all controlling thing either. We are making it every day….We change history every day by the way that we act."

Hidden in plain sight at every turn, stitched into the fabric of our contemporary selves, my eyes see history here, history now, history future. ■



Sean Sutherland

Arts & Letters, Joint Laureate 2021
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Earlier this year (2021), I read House of Music: Raising the Kanneh-Masons, written by Kadiatu (Kadie) Kanneh-Mason, mother of Britain's most notable Black family of classical musicians.

Kadie, a former Birmingham University English lecturer, chose to start the story with what she considered the most defining moment for her family—Sheku winning the 2016 BBC Young Musician of the Year—and not, what most people think, Sheku playing for the royal wedding. The brilliance of her writing coupled with a most candid and intimate account of how this family evolved elicited strong emotions because some of her children are living my childhood dream: to pursue a career as a concert pianist.

Little did I know, at that time, that I would be jointly bestowed the Anthony N Sabga Award in Arts & Letters, and that I would be asked to submit an autobiography. By 14, I was thrusted into the limelight in St. Vincent and the Grenadines for both my academic and musical accomplishments. However, these accomplishments, like many musical performances, do not tell the story of agonizing work in the face of resistance and limited resources implicit in honing one's craft. As I proceed to tell you whom I believe Sean Sutherland is and how he came to be, I hope to honour those individuals who have moulded me and profoundly enriched my life. Please do not take umbrage if you were not mentioned. Your contribution meant the world but I, unlike Kadie, have a word limit to respect.

My earliest memory of music is listening, at 3 years old, to Bob Marley's "Redemption Song" one Saturday evening in the kitchen of our home in Level Garden, while my Mom, Merlene, baked her weekly batch of wholewheat bread. "Redemption Song" was extremely popular at the time and was frequently played on the radio. Its minimalistic arrangement, featuring just voice and guitar, made it easy for my 3-year-old brain to process. That evening, I had an epiphany: I was able to follow the harmonic contour of the song. After that experience, any music within earshot commanded my attention. My parents were not musicians, but my father, Perry, loved music, and had even dabbled in pan, so there was music at home. Grainy baby pictures of me showed me playing happily among my father's LPs. Furthermore, our downstairs neighbour, Ken Beache, was a guitarist whom I undoubtedly heard as he played.

At age 5, I entered the Kingstown Preparatory School where I was exposed to choral singing. Our music teacher, Jean Johnney-Findlay would gather our class into a small open area adjoining the tuck shop appointed with an old upright piano, and teach us simple songs, which we would sing with her accompanying on the piano. One of the songs I enjoyed was "Thank You" because of its catchy piano introduction.

In short order, Ms Johnney started preparing us for our school's Christmas Concert. We prepared for weeks and I was looking forward to singing. On the day of the performance, however, I somehow wore the wrong uniform and, consequently, was not allowed to sing with the choir. I was inconsolable. To cheer me up, the teachers put me to sit at the very front of the makeshift hall, giving me the best vantage point. The piano, moved from its tuck shop annexe, was positioned at the side of the stage for Ms Johnney to accompany the choirs. Amid the choral performances, the piano was wheeled to the centre of the stage where it stood majestically. Vaughn Lewis, an older student, took the stage to perform solo. I was captivated by both the performance and the sound emanating from the piano. In that moment, I discovered the power of music to express emotions that words fail to codify and instinctively knew that the piano would become my medium.

When my Mom came to collect me from school, I immediately asked her to send me to piano lessons. She said no! I would go to the church and Sunday school at the Kingstown Methodist Church, and would be fixated on the organ and piano as they were played. I would come home and plead, yet again, to no avail. My mother's noes were characteristically firm and non-negotiable. "Why?" was met with "because I said so"! At one point, she told me that the piano teacher required that I read and write before I started taking lessons. This, of course, made no sense to me, as I had been doing so since age four.

One thing I came to appreciate in reading Kadie's book is the tremendous strain that parents are under to provide for their children and some of

the heart-wrenching decisions that they make, whether these involve sacrifices or having to say no because a sacrifice is not feasible. By this time, my parents had parted ways and my mom and I moved to Edinboro to join my step-father Dan and step-sister Taska. Having my baby brother Kharim recently join the household and my baby sister Dana on the way, I am sure there were severe constraints on the family's resources that precluded piano lessons for me at that time, especially given that one of my mom's favourite credos is to live within one's means.

Nevertheless, and somehow "miraculously", my interest in music was known to everyone around me without my telling them. My Dad, who had by then migrated to New York, sent me a small three-octave Casio keyboard. This was a source of joy as I would pick out tunes and even tried my hand at composing. My cousin Rossie, who would come to the house to do my mom's hair, and who played piano, lent me her John Schaum Pre-A book. I immediately started making my way through it. My Uncle Nimrod gave me a small record player as a gift. On Saturdays after I completed my chores and on Sundays after church, I would spend hours in my room listening to records of popular music, including Natalie Cole, Skeeter Davis, Sam Cooke, and other LPs that my Mom was willing to let me play. I would ask my Dad to order records that I saw advertised on TV, such as the "World's Most Popular Classical Melodies" and children's music from the Muppets and Sesame Street.

After two years of pleading, I began formal piano lessons with Lois Williams, one of St. Vincent's top piano teachers. Mrs Williams was a no-nonsense type of woman and a teacher with a heart of gold. She fed my interest and ensured that my fundamentals were solid. I had half-hour lessons on Tuesday and Thursdays. I would typically arrive early for my lessons and would sit at the big table in her studio doing music theory exercises while I awaited my lesson. This set-up allowed me to learn vicariously through other students having their lessons, and to be exposed to music beyond my level. I noted the books from which they played, and later scouted the bookshops in search of them. From my accumulated snack allowance, I purchased them and any others that were at, or a little beyond, my level.

One downside of being in Brooklyn was that I did not have access to piano. In fact, the only piano available to me was at my Tanty Deanna's home in Long Island. Nevertheless, my cousin Kervin, a photographer and artist, ensured that I was exposed to art and architecture by taking me to several museums and exhibitions around the city.

Mrs Williams was very instrumental in developing my passion for music. Seeing that I would quickly conquer assigned pieces, she loaned me books that I could play through at home, and often used our lesson to have me sight-read other music from her library. This enabled me to spend countless hours on my five-octave keyboard, also furnished by my Dad, playing through music that was often above my grade level. In those pre-Google/YouTube/Spotify days, Mrs Williams would lend me classical LPs, which I would then record onto cassettes. Three memorable recordings were Chopin's Preludes and Impromptus, Prokofiev's Piano Sonatas Numbers Six and Eight, and Mozart and Beethoven's C minor concertos. She also introduced me to ordering books from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) through its local representative, Mrs Elsa Scott, at Reliance Stationery. Soon, my keyboard at home was not adequate for the music that I was playing, and I began seeking opportunities to practise on upright pianos at school and at church, and on the small baby grand at the Cecil Cyrus Squash Complex.

From age nine, I began spending my summer vacations in New York with my Dad. At the time, my Dad delivered electrical supplies and would take me on the road with him. Music on the radio was a constant throughout the day. I would immerse myself in the latest pop and R&B music. On the days that I did not accompany my Dad, I would visit

bookshops and CD shops in Brooklyn and Manhattan, again spending a great portion of whatever money I had on scores and recordings.

One downside of being in Brooklyn was that I did not have access to piano. In fact, the only piano available to me was at my Tanty Deanna's home in Long Island when I visited. Nevertheless, my cousin Kervin, a photographer and artist, ensured that I was exposed to art and architecture by taking me to several museums and exhibitions around the city. At the end of the summer, I would return to St. Vincent laden with summer spoils, much to the delight of ticketing agents who gladly collected overweight fees for Liat Airlines, as I transited through Barbados.

By the time I completed primary school, I had earned distinctions in the ABRSM Grade 5 Theory and Grade 4 Piano Practical exams. I had performed creditably at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Music Association's biannual Music Festival having entered several categories. It was placing first in the island-wide Common Entrance Examination, however, that put me on the front page of local newspapers.

Throughout primary school, I was always in the top three positions in my grade. Still, placing first in Common Entrance was a great achievement for me because I had worked hard and achieved a goal I set for myself. In my first term test at the St. Vincent Boys' Grammar School, I placed second, a performance with which I was dissatisfied. Determined to excel academically, I never fell below first place for the remainder of my secondary education.

My teenage years were marked by an expansion of my musical involvement. With Mrs Williams' encouragement, I started to study the violin as a second instrument. I took lessons with Mrs Annie Browne through the National Youth Band. For about two years, I also had the opportunity to play with the band under the guidance of Mr Joffre Venner, and interact with several young musicians, particularly wind players. While I enjoyed learning violin, doing so frustrated me because I could read the single-staff score much faster than I could play. Recognizing the level of effort needed to improve, I chose to focus on my piano playing rather than dividing my time.

Around this time, Mr Patrick Prescod, St. Vincent's premier musician, began taking an interest in my development. He was the principal organist at my church and got me involved in its musical life. Before the end of First Form, I was playing for the Sunday evening services. In Second Form, he asked me to train and accompany the New Life Singers, a group he founded. Though he provided guidance, he remained relatively hands-off and allowed us to practice at his studio across from the church. I would go to the studio early to catch him practising movements from Beethoven sonatas. He also introduced me to Lancelot Belgraves, a young pannist who also lived at Edinboro, and with whom I later performed in church, and across the island and, in 1992, even toured North America with the New Kingstown Chorale, St. Vincent's premier choir. The net impact of all these experiences was to solidify my musicianship.

While I was known in musical circles, it was not until after my first public piano recital at age 14 at the Squash Complex in Kingstown in December 1991, that I was thrust into the national spotlight as a musician.

This two and a half-hour affair, ambitious by any standard, featured repertoire from all four periods of classical music and cemented my place as a musical force in St. Vincent. It was after that performance that my parents and Uncle Monty put together to purchase a Baldwin upright piano, just in time for Christmas. Having a piano at home allowed me to practise more but also demanded greater forbearance from my already supportive siblings and parents, for I could no longer simply turn down the volume while they watched TV, as I had done on the electronic keyboard.

After the recital, I turned my attention to preparing for the Grade 8 Piano Practical exam, the final in a series of graded exams. I had completed my Grade 8 Theory exams a year prior, and the practical was the last milestone. I worked assiduously with Mrs Williams to ensure that pieces and scales were flawlessly memorized and musically played. In April 1993, I passed with the highest distinction I had ever received—139/150— an achievement that in 1993 earned me a scholarship offered by Royal Schools to study piano at one of their four schools in the UK, a rare accomplishment at any age in the Caribbean. I was overjoyed.

My excitement was short-lived, however. Having neither completed high school nor taken my O-Level examinations, my parents did not allow me to accept the scholarship, a decision that crushed my dream of becoming a world-renowned classical pianist. Despite its good intention, my parents' decision set me back pianistically, as there was no one who could teach me beyond that level.

Constantly in search of musical avenues, I had become more involved with the steelpan. While my Mom, stepfather, and siblings went to New York that summer, I remained in St. Vincent and taught music theory at a steelpan summer camp organized by the Youlou Pan Movement. Once school resumed, I became more involved in reviving the steelband at Grammar School, helping with the arrangements, particularly of classical music, for the Easter Pan Festival. During this time, I organized lunch-time musical performances at school to fund the purchase of new instruments. Though the performances met mixed success, they served as a space to experiment with different musical ideas that I had, and to work with other musicians at my school across genres.

What gained traction was my idea to put together an a capella group to perform at my Fifth Form graduation ceremony. I had envisioned a quartet and approached a few very good singers at school. Word got out and more approached me expressing interest; the group swelled to 10. After settling on the name Suede over the facetious Sugar Tones, the group gave its debut performance of Boyz II Men's It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday. On the day of the graduation, the Kingstown Methodist Church was filled with families of the graduands and girls from the neighbouring Girls' High School who crowded the balconies. From the first note

of a small interlude we used for the group to walk to the front of the church, screams pierced the church and punctuated every phrase. Suede was a hit.

For the next two years, I poured my energy into Suede for which I was the manager, musician, vocal arranger, and director. We performed all over the island and gave two sold-out concerts of our own. A few of our members sang with the New Kingstown Chorale on tour in England in 1995. Besides being popular, Suede was seen as a model of excellence among teenage boys in St. Vincent. We inspired other young people to form vocal groups. None, however, matched the quality and popularity of Suede. Suede regrettably disbanded when I left for university; some former members, however, continued to write and produce music. Two of the group's notable lead singers were Addison Stoddard, who has gone on to perform at Carnegie Hall and is currently the CTO of Digicel in Turks and Caicos, and Kevin Lyttle, whose mega hit Turn Me On made him an international superstar.

By the time I left Sixth Form, the duality between music and other academic/professional pursuits that marked the rest of my life was firmly entrenched. I have described my musical achievements, but have neglected to tell you that, simultaneously, I was Head Boy (head prefect) in Fifth Form. In 1994, I got the second best CXC O'Level results across the entire Caribbean. I also got the best GCE A-levels in St. Vincent in 1996, earning me an island scholarship. Nor did I mention that, during those years, I successfully competed in local and regional Science Fair competitions, and that I was chosen as a Caricom Youth Ambassador.

For the next phase of my life, I wanted to combine music and engineering. Hence, US universities made the most sense. During my New York visits, my cousin Jamelle had ensured that I got acquainted with top US universities. I applied to several schools, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), my top choice.

Receiving news of my acceptance to MIT by cable on Pi Day in 1996 was surreal. Words cannot express how honoured I felt to have been admitted. Perusing the admissions materials, I noted that scholarships were available for private piano studies at MIT, contingent upon an audition at the beginning of the Fall semester. I immediately chose repertoire and started practising again. That fall, I was granted a scholarship and studied with Heng-Jin Park. Those years were particularly challenging. While I was confident about my musicianship skills, I felt myself behind pianistically. Having rediscovered my love for classical piano, I kept striving. I was in an environment surrounded by other highly skilled musicians. Heng-Jin invited me to all her performances off campus and encouraged me to explore the vibrant classical music scene in Boston. There, I had the privilege of seeing many of the legendary pianists, such as Pollini and Kissin, whose recordings I owned, play live.

On campus, I was much involved in the musical life. During my first semester, I sang with the MIT Gospel Choir and played harpsichord with the MIT's symphony orchestra's performance of the Bach Double Violin Concerto. I remember the first time I heard an orchestra live at our first rehearsal. The sound was out of this world. Throughout my time at MIT, I gave solo performances in student recitals, played chamber music, and accompanied the vocal repertoire class taught by Ms Pamela Wood.

I also led performances given by the

MIT Caribbean Club, a group of which I became president in my senior year. I even performed with Trinidadian jazz musician Chantal Esdelle, who was at the time studying at Berkeley College of Music "across the river". I was selected as an Arts Scholar during my junior and senior years and, at graduation in 2000, was awarded the Weisner Prize, an institute-wide award that recognized excellence in and contribution to the arts at MIT.

Academically, MIT was challenging. Going from an environment in which I competed only against myself, to one in which everyone had been their high school's valedictorian meant that standards were infinitely higher. Double majoring in engineering and music, two disparate disciplines, was tough to navigate. What made it harder was that I was not doing Chemical or Aeronautic Engineering, my top choices. My family forced me to choose before I left for MIT and my rational choice was Electrical Engineering/Computer Science (EECS) because that would allow me to work at either the electricity company or the phone service provider, if I were to return to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Choosing Chemical Engineering would have meant that I could only teach, as SVG had no large industrial plants.

Also factored into my decision to pursue EECS was the fact that my Dad had also passed away the year before I started MIT. At the time, I thought my option to immigrate to the US had vanished. I reacted to his death by trying to be more "balanced" and less "gung-ho" about academic achievement. It was obvious to me I did not share my classmates' fervour for EECS. I was not bold enough, however, to change majors, given my international student status and my belief in "finishing what I started". Nevertheless, I graduated in 2001 with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in EECS and a Bachelor's in Music in five years.

The duality continued post-graduation: I worked briefly as a technology specialist at a patent law firm in Boston and took piano lessons with Patricia Zander, a piano professor at the New England Conservatory. Ms Zander, who had studied with the famous French pianist and pedagogue, Vlado Perlemuter, was pivotal in transforming my playing and helping to shape my voice as a pianist. I left Boston in August 2003 for Montreal, where I remained for a few months before returning to St. Vincent in April 2004. Shortly thereafter, the mother of all ironies happened: I started teaching IT at the Community College. What I had tried my best to avoid became my reality.

While Rhythmix occupied a lot of my time, I taught many young pianists in St Vincent. I was also flying to St Lucia to take piano lessons with Jean-Fabien Schneider, a French pianist who was teaching at the St Lucia School of Music.

Musically, I was heavily involved in two projects: working with the St. Vincent Music Association to host the National Music Festival, which had gone dormant for several years, and working with the Rhythmix Steel Orchestra to produce an all-classical recital. My collaboration with Rhythmix started with a performance of the second movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No 21, affectionately known as "Elvira Madigan", with me on piano accompanied by steelpan. This performance was part of a concert featuring local musicians that I organized at the request of the then Governor General, Sir Frederick Ballantyne, to celebrate St. Vincent and the Grenadines' twenty-fifth anniversary of Independence in October 2004. Following the success of the performance, Rhythmix accepted my proposal to work toward a full-length concert aptly titled Ivory and Steel.

This was a challenging engagement as I stepped into a role of mentor and arranger for a band of young adults for whom classical music was not their preferred genre, and who were not used to polishing pieces over a relatively long period for public performance. We persevered and had many short-term wins which served to keep members motivated. Rhythmix's performance of the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony also captured the Best Overall Performance at the National Music Festival in March 2005. In the summer, Rhythmix placed third in the annual Panorama competition, playing a piece collaboratively arranged by Jomoro Francis, Kevin Browne, and me. Ivory and Steel in October 2005 represented for me the achievement of a dream conceived while working with the Boys' Grammar School Steelband back in 1992. The concert was well-received among both the pan fraternity and local music enthusiasts.

While Rhythmix occupied a lot of my time, I taught many young pianists in St. Vincent. I was also flying to St. Lucia to take piano lessons with Jean-Fabien Schneider, a French pianist who was teaching at the St. Lucia School of Music. I collaborated with many artists in St. Vincent and accompanied the New Kingstown Chorale. I gave solo performances in St. Vincent and in Antigua, and worked with Dominican soprano Marie-Claire Giraud, performing in St. Vincent and Dominica and with Tanya Charles, Canadian violinist of Vincentian parentage, for her recital in St. Vincent.

In late 2005, I accepted a position as Assistant Lecturer at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. This role allowed me to combine my passions for engineering and music. I was specifically recruited by then Professor Brian Copeland (now Pro Vice Chancellor) to set up a Music Technology programme within the department, with the specific aim of grooming students to work in the Steelpan Research Lab, birthplace of the G-pan. Building on the existing Steelpan Technology course, I created courses, some of which I taught,

On weekends to St. Vincent and St. Lucia to teach and to take lessons, respectively. I judged Junior and Senior Panorama and Soca Monarch competitions in St. Vincent.

in music science and acoustics. I also advised ten undergraduate researchers completing their final year undergraduate projects involving acoustical treatments at lecture halls on campus and neighbouring pan yards. One of those researchers, Randall Ali, was awarded the Most Innovative Final Project Award in 2008. From 2006 to 2008, I simultaneously managed the Trinidad office of Medullan, a US-based healthcare IT software company, outsourcing its software development to Trinidad. Medullan was co-founded by Geoff Lee Seyon, an MIT colleague of mine.

Outside of work, I continued to travel regularly on weekends to St. Vincent and St. Lucia to teach and to take lessons, respectively. I judged Junior and Senior Panorama and Soca Monarch competitions in St. Vincent. In Trinidad, I worked as accompanist for performances of June Nathaniel's studio and the Eastern Youth Chorale in 2008. I accompanied choirs and other musicians participating in the National Music Festival. I also continued to give solo and collaborative recitals across the region.

At the height of the financial crisis in September 2008, I left Trinidad for Canada, having received Canadian residency. The job market was rather bleak, but I was able to find part-time tutoring engagements teaching Math, English as a Second Language and standardized tests. Later that year, and again in 2009, I was engaged by the National Sinfonia Orchestra of Trinidad and Tobago to play the Grieg piano concerto under the baton of Jessel Murray. In August 2009, I started a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) at McGill. Within just four days, I left for Cuba to be part of the Embassy of SVG in Cuba's cultural performances celebrating the 30th anniversary of SVG's Independence. There, I performed Vincentian music and jazz, and popular standards, alongside Vincentian pannists Reajhaun Baptiste and Rodney Small, and members of the Cuban jazz band Calle Major.

After completing the MBA focused on Finance, interning at Google in California, and doing a semester abroad at New York University's Stern School of Business, I launched my own niche tutorial standardized test prep service, specializing in preparing students for ACT, SAT, GRE, GMAT, and SSAT exams. In 2011, I was invited to perform Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the National Steel (Steelpan) Symphony Orchestra (NSSO) of Trinidad and Tobago.

In need of a second pianist to rehearse the concerto, I came across an ad posted by Andrey Manulik offering accompanying services. Andrey and I met to rehearse and he offered to coach me for the performance. Ever since, Andrey became my regular teacher. My performance of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the NSSO was met with critical acclaim. So, too, was my 2014 performance with them of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue".

Over the past ten years, I have given solo performances across the region: Bonaire, Trinidad, St. Vincent, Barbados, Turks and Caicos, Cayman Islands, and

Our goal is to promote Black pianism, as well as classical music written by or heavily influenced by Blacks. In our debut performance, I played Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, and Eldred the Fourth Concerto.

Jamaica. Though based in Canada, I continued actively to collaborate with musicians in the region, particularly in St. Vincent. I am the "official" accompanist of the New Kingstown Chorale, returning home to accompany them for all their major concerts and tours. In 2013, I collaborated with Addison Stoddard, Pennola Ross, Bomani Charles, Kamara Foster, and Marvo O'Brien to produce a show called "Glam and Glitz", which featured 1980s music. I was the official accompanist (from 2013 to 2015) of the 100 Voice Project, a mass choir of singers from all over the Caribbean who meet in Barbados each summer to give recitals. In 2015, I shared a recital with and accompanied Trinidadian soprano Jeannine DeBique, as part of the festival.

In search of opportunities to perform internationally, I decided to enter the Van Cliburn Amateur Piano Competition in Fort Worth, Texas. I had resisted the label "amateur" for years but acquiesced in 2016, only to discover a community of high-calibre pianists who, like me, have careers outside of music but still practice seriously. The Van Cliburn is the premier competition for professional and amateur pianists, attracting top pianists from around the world. I advanced to the semi-final round which featured the top 12 of the 68 competitors from around the world invited to Fort Worth, Texas, to compete. Based on my performance, I was invited to give a solo recital at Gasteig, the premier concert hall in Munich, Germany in 2017, and received several engagements in the United States.

Shortly after the Cliburn competition, I relocated temporarily to California to pursue a Master's in Education at Stanford University in hopes of learning how to best pivot my business online. I was awarded Dean's Scholarship to pursue the Learning Design and Technology concentration and a scholarship from the Friends of Music at Stanford Society for piano lessons with Thomas Schultz. During my time at Stanford, I competed in the Boston Amateur Piano Competition, advancing to the final round. Toward the end of my time in California, I started working with Diane Hidy, who took a keen interest in me, having heard me play at the Cliburn. I was also invited in the summer of 2017 to perform Mozart's Piano Concerto No 21 with the Mountain View Los Altos Adult School Orchestra. Since moving back to Canada that fall to work as a technology product manager in Toronto, I have been re-engaged every year by the orchestra.

Over the past four years pre-Covid, I had continued to perform and compete internationally. In 2018, I competed in the Chopin Amateur Piano Competition in Warsaw, making it to the semi-final round, and being awarded the prize for the Best Waltz. In 2019, I was a finalist in the Piano Bridges Piano Competition in St. Petersburg, Russia, and placed second in the 40 to 50 category of the Piano Lovers Over 40 Competition in Milan, Italy. In January 2020, I participated in the California Concerto Festival for amateur pianists, at which I played the third movement of Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto with the festival orchestra.

Shortly following that performance, I made a debut performance with Ébène, a group I co-founded with two dear friends—African American pianist Dr Eldred Marshall and Montreal-based Haitian pianist and composer David Bontemps. Our goal is to promote Black pianism, as well as classical music written by or heavily influenced by Blacks. In our debut performance, I played Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, and Eldred the Fourth Concerto. Both concertos were accompanied by the Odin String Quartet, of which Tanya Charles is a member. David performed one of his piano sonatas. We gave three performances in Toronto in February as part of Black History Month, just prior to the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a commonly held view in the classical piano world that, in order to be a successful pianist, one has to develop a solid technique by one's mid- to late teens. With my progress cut short, I have always felt left behind. However, Andrey challenged me a few years ago to keep honing my technique and to adopt a growth mindset, believing that I can actually improve. Having done so, I am reaping the benefits, as I am now playing repertoire that, 20 years ago, I never thought I would be able to play. I have always been drawn to projects, both "professional" and musical, that have impact. While I may not have exactly achieved my childhood dream, I have been able to share my love of music performing regionally and internationally. Furthermore, the multiplicity of my gifts has allowed me to make very unique contributions to the region, and I am indeed honoured to be recognized regionally. My track record speaks for itself, and I remain committed to continuing to improve my playing and sharing the joy of music. I look forward to returning to the stage, post-Covid. ■

Guna Muppuri

Entrepreneurship Laureate 2021
Jamaica

When one has vision driven by passion, wealth creation and generation become byproducts, for the society and, by extension, for the nation and the world.

I always believed in certain key components of the society that can bring balance by incorporating social welfare into capitalism to create "social capitalism". I consider myself a Social Capitalist. The desire to change communities led to my transforming myself from physician to successful entrepreneur, driven by intuition and innovation to create something par excellence.

In the southern Indian town, Chittoor, of Andhra Pradesh state, I was born on 30 July 1969, and was brought up in India, a country of 1.3 billion today. I was raised by a sugar cane-and paddy-cultivating family, with urban-conscious parents, and have always been a soul in search of knowledge. This led to an entrepreneurial crusade with no time to waste.

In 1986, then 17, the prayers of my beloved parents, Mom (Amma) Mrs Prabhavati Muppuri and Dad (Nanna) Mr Raghunath Naidu Muppuri, and God's richest blessings, permitted me to experience the very first taste of what knowledge and intellectual property can do to and for us. Making the most of an unprecedented academic opportunity for my family, I was able to gain merit-based entry to medical school at the very first attempt. I had triumphed in a contest against some 55,000 candidates competing for fewer than 1,200 medical school places, in India: the Sri Venkateswara Medical College of SV University, Tirupati-India.

I graduated with a MBBS and, fresh out of medical school, at 22, I came to an internship at the University Hospital of the West Indies in 1992. I was helped by a pair of gifted hands, those of my senior colleague at the medical school, Dr Ramesh Peramsetty. I was fortunate to fly across the Atlantic Ocean from India with just one hop and landed in Jamaica, now my adopted motherland. I have worked as a family physician in the public and private sectors for over 20 years, much of that time in the parishes of Hanover and St James.

At the age of 25, in 1994, my childhood best friend, Vishnu Vandana, became my wife and made Jamaica her home along with me. Without her, my parents and Dr Ramesh, I would not be who I am today. Additionally, a long list of unsung heroes, including my extended family, helped me in several ways to reach this stage in my life. Without them, I would not be where I am today.

Like many other Indian nationals, especially medical doctors, I came here to pursue my academic and career goals with an agenda: "Jamaica is the springboard to the United States." Nevertheless, the spirit of Jamaica was so strong, and made me bond so closely with this lovely country, that 29 years passed at the wink of the eye. The culture was new but I embraced it with the same spirit of joy and love and enjoyed every day of my life in Jamaica.

As a young medical practitioner, I observed the difficulties affecting the average Jamaican's ability to afford prescription medications. Stroke disorder was registered as the leading cause of deaths in Jamaica since 1999, and the key driving factor for the transition was the cost of the prophylactic medication (Clopidogrel). My determination to reduce the cost of prescription medications turned me into an entrepreneur in 2005, venturing into the generic pharmaceutical business. After 13 years of practice, at the age of 35, along with my wife, I became principal founder and CEO of Indies Pharma Jamaica Limited.

The outcome of my first initiative was to make the monthly cost of the prophylactic medication for the stroke disorder come down to J$1,500, when the branded drug was sold at J$8,250 for a month's supply. The same drug was made available under the National Health Fund benefits for J$125 per month's supply, down from J$1,500 per month for the branded formulation. To date, our Clopidogrel is being supplied to the National Health Fund, benefiting every needy citizen of our nation.

We undertook another important initiative in 2007 when I embarked on a campaign against patent rights of the multinational drug companies, by fighting the global pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer, in Jamaica. This was for for Amlodipine, used for controlling severe hypertension, especially among the Afro-Jamaican population. I made a pledge: when the drug was liberated from the unjustified patent standoff, it would be supplied by me through the National Health Fund, at a

To this end, I repurposed several "white elephant" assets of the country and ventured into the BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) a method of subcontracting various business-related operations to third-party vendors, and ICT (International Computers and Tabulators) industry, establishing Bioprist Knowledge Parks with its motto, "Empowering the Economies."

price less than that of table salt, to every Jamaican that needed it.

In early 2009, this initiative brought immense awareness among public, judicial and health care fraternities about the patent laws in Jamaica. It has enabled Indies Pharma to earn great respect from the medical and pharmaceutical fraternity. It has enabled every Jamaican citizen to access the generic Amlodipine at a low cost.

The initiative has, up to today, saved the nation directly and indirectly as much as J$200 million a year. My company continues to keep its promise, providing an uninterrupted supply to Jamaicans through the National Health Fund. The same drug is now being supplied to senior citizens through the Jamaica Drugs for Elderly programme at J$40 for a one-month supply.

My quest to make medicines available and affordable is being constantly pursued through Indies Pharma. This company prides itself in playing a substantial role in providing solutions for 27 disease segments by offering its generic therapeutic agents at subsidised prices through the National Health Fund. Indies Pharma has become a force to reckon with in the field of branded generic pharmaceuticals, brand equity development, and distribution in Jamaica. It is currently listed on the Junior Market of the Jamaica Stock Exchange. Our fully-owned family enterprise, Bioprist Group, now owns almost 80 per cent of Indies Pharma Jamaica Ltd, and 100 per cent of the several subsidiaries under the Bioprist Group.

But this was not the end of my entrepreneurial activities. In 2015, I saw an opportunity in so-called "white elephant" infrastructure—the resources such as land, plant and equipment, abandoned after previous attempts at industrial and other economic activity. When the country was transitioning from the "free zone" era to the latest SEZ (Special Economic Zone) concept, I got the idea to convert depressed properties into modern economic power houses, creating a viable platform for large-scale employment. The core value of my entrepreneurial vision is a commitment to community development and to integrating the lodging residents into the workforce.

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The Bioprist Knowledge Parks project is being pursued in several phases:

- The first in Freeport, St James, on 75,000 square feet. Developed with the funding provided by the Development Bank of Jamaica, it became operational in July 2018 and has almost 500 persons working on that site;
- The second in Sandy Bay, Hanover, on a ten-acre ocean front property (which is now taken over by Collective Solutions Inc) creating a platform for 1,000 jobs;
- The third, on 21.5 acres, also in Hanover — some eight miles away from the Kenilworth Heart Academy. The upcoming Lucea Knowledge Park is now christened Wind Surf —a Live, Work, Shop & Play themed development—with 60,000 square feet of commercial retail space, as well as the construction of a 125-home gated community to provide affordable housing solutions for its workforce;
- The fourth is a 21,000 square foot repurposing project of a distressed asset, on the Ironshore Highway, Montego Bay. It is destined to become a business incubator park, themed Bioprist Knowledge Parks;
- The fifth is the former Rooms-To-Go building, a 50,000 square foot renovation and new build-out, repurposing project at a seed capital cost of US$17 million, along the Ironshore Highway in Montego Bay, on the Elegant Corridor. This asset is now becoming the home of "Nearshore Healthcare Academic Institution" BIMS (Bioprist Institute of Medical Sciences) School of Medicine and Health Professions, providing US, UK and Caribbean accredited technical and professional education. BIMS is the prelude to the grand scheme of new pipeline healthcare segment

investments in Medical and Health Tourism;

- The sixth is another repurposing project, a projected capital development in excess of US$315 million, Grand Ridge Med City, a proposed SEZ development on 65 acres of distressed but prime lands in Montego Bay within the four-mile range from the Sangster International Airport. The campus will accommodate the anchor BIMS, and will be complemented by a United States Joint Commission-certified, 300-bed teaching and research hospital. It will provide healthcare services and medical tourism services along with assisted living, residential and commercial clusters. It is slated to be developed as the institutional city while catering to the global medical education and medical tourism markets that will become an integral part of the Jamaica and the wider Caribbean's medical community offering, and it will work co-operatively with local and regional health professional bodies.

  In total, investment into the Knowledge Parks infrastructure is indirectly responsible for creating 1,400 jobs in the BPO industry. It is no exaggeration to say that 3,500 jobs will be created within the next five years. Bioprist's foray into the development of new infrastructure and into repurposing existing, unproductive and depressed real estate is proof of Jamaica's nearshore advantage, which positions the country as a serious player in the near US$1 trillion global market for outsourced services, and $3 trillion global medical tourism market.

But our core belief in developing communities is more than providing employment. We also believe in philanthropy as an imperative for business interests; and we have tried to contribute in other ways to the wider community. Some of the initiatives we have undertaken (in 2020) include:

- the pledge of two acres of land at Grand Ridge Med City in Montego Bay to build a School for Physically Challenged Children, Home for Orphaned Children; and an Autism Clinic;
- helping in the ongoing fight against Covid-19 in Jamaica; and
- initiating the drive and donating toward building a 30-bed spinal care centre at "Sir John Golding Rehabilitation Centre" in Mona, Kingston.

Our ongoing activities include donations of asthma inhalers to the public; money to the National Health Fund; 18 scholarships for medical and pharmacy students; and donations to the Hope Clinic-Good Shepherd Foundation.

Child welfare I consider, however, to comprise our most important initiatives. In 2015, we developed a summer exchange programme for Jamaican children and the United States medical universities. The programme is destined to educate and expose Jamaican children to global developments in health care education, thereby motivating them to become the world-class citizens in the modern health care industry. In the following year, we initiated a Summer Science Knowledge Donation Camp in Jamaica in collaboration with the CORD (Community Out-Reach Development)—University of Alabama at Birmingham Center, in the United States. About 170 children participated in this initiative which will be carried on in perpetuity. Under this theme, children were transported from the rural schools and inner-city communities in Jamaica to the CORD Camp while tbeing exposed to the First World knowledge-based camp.

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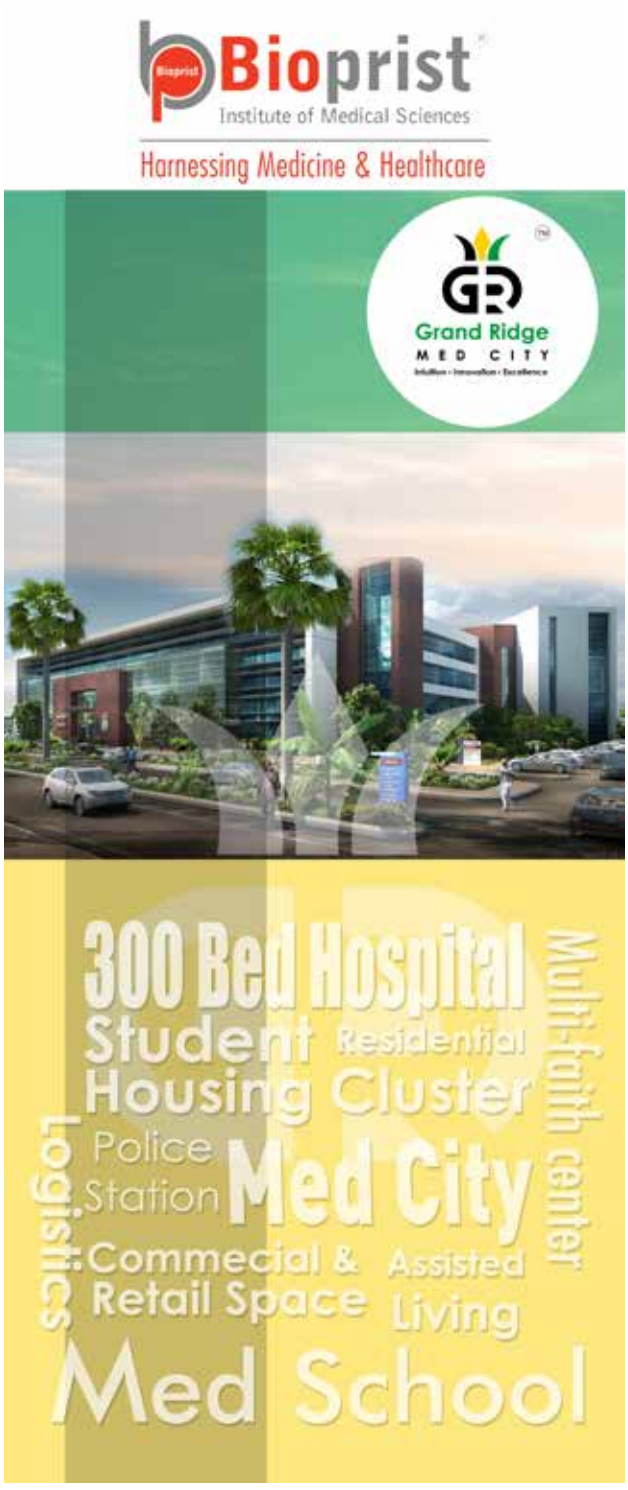
As a former president and current member of the Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica, I am aware of how businesses can transform entire communities. When I left India, I had never been exposed to Western culture, and my newfound mother, Jamaica, whom I dearly love, made me feel at home. I thank her from the bottom of my heart for embracing me as her son. I have received many honours from Jamaica and from abroad. The ambitions and trajectory of Bioprist Group have caused me to be christened "The Repurposing Specialist". Some of the other accolades, for which I am grateful, include:

- 2021 recipient of Order of Distinction (OD), Officer Class, for service in the fields of Medicine, Pharmaceuticals and Community Service from the Government of Jamaica;
- 2019 Recipient of the most prestigious Presidential Honour, Indian Diaspora Award—Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, from the Government of India;
- 2019 Award for New Investment, Business Development and Expansion from the Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce & Industry;
- 2019 American Chamber of Commerce Business & Civic Leadership Award;
- 2018 Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility by the American Chamber of Commerce in Jamaica;
- 2012 listed in the top four in the list of young entrepreneurs in "The Entrepreneurial Challenge Contest 2012" hosted by Scotia Bank and Nationwide;

Bioprist recently signed a MOU with The UWI, which strengthens the mother and son bond in my life. I feel proud today to open the doors to create a new history between The UWI and my family company.



- 2011 National Quality Award for Excellence in Business by the Bureau of Standards, Jamaica;
- 2009 Nation Builder Award by the NCB Foundation—Jamaica for Innovation in Business;
- 2009 Century International Quality ERA Award in Geneva, Switzerland by the Business Initiative Directions from Madrid, Spain in recognition of Total Quality Management;
- 2008 National Quality Award for Excellence in Business received from the Prime Minister of Jamaica/Bureau of Standards and Ministry of Industry & Commerce, Jamaica;
- 2008 First Good Physician of the Year Award by the Medical Association of Jamaica.

This Anthony N Sabga Award in Entrepreneurship (2021) is a wonderful addition to these accolades. It gives me the opportunity to reciprocate the love and recognition Jamaica has given to me and my family, to her sister nations in the wider Caribbean region.

Bioprist recently signed a MOU with The UWI, which strengthens the mother and son bond in my life. I feel proud today to open the doors to create a new history between The UWI and my family company. It signifies my personal and professional journey in Jamaica that started at the University Hospital of the West Indies, and is now at the cusp of transformation into an economic growth initiative for the region, and a private and public partnership to empower and create additional regional knowledge capital base.

Following our roadmap, Bioprist Group is now on the cutting edge of innovation and development in transforming Jamaica's thriving BPO industry spectrum into an emerging KPO—Knowledge Process Outsourcing— industry, and from there toward a technology-driven future in the fields of medicine and healthcare.

From the whole world's recent experience, the ongoing novel corona virus pandemic has wrought an irreparable and devastating effect on human resources, and has underlined the need for healthcare professionals, and for the functional infrastructure of healthcare all over the world. It has generated an unforeseen demand for disruptive and innovative medical and healthcare infrastructure in every nation, to safeguard future generations and mankind against further unforeseen healthcare calamities.

Given the nature of the continental US—a rapidly increasing and aging population, acute and chronic illnesses—the nearshore situation of Jamaica commands a comprehensive stock of world-class medical and health services to be commissioned in the immediate short-term.

I am particularly excited about the prospects in Montego Bay. That Bioprist Group is creating the value that can very soon become the gateway for medical tourism in the Caribbean. With the support and endorsement of JAMPRO, JSEZA (Jamaica Special Economic Zone), industry counterparts and corporate Jamaica, Bioprist is charting its own course of disruptive innovation while remaining true to its core values of community development and nation building.

The company's core philosophy, "Social Entrepreneurship", seamlessly echoes our slogan "Empowering Economies." Its commitment to "Building a Healthy World" is the nexus of our business and community relationships. For through civic and corporate partnerships, they form part of the new wave of industrial entrepreneurship, leading Jamaica into realising the country's 2030 Vision, which has the bipartisan support of the country's two leading political parties.

For my ability to be part of these grand visions, I must thank my immediate family, parents, parents-in-laws, my wife and two children Meghana and Arnav. They make me feel every day that I am a fully accomplished man. Without them, my world wouldn't be a complete one. Thanks, in addition, to my several well-wishers, mentors and friends who have made me truly fortunate in my life's journey. ■

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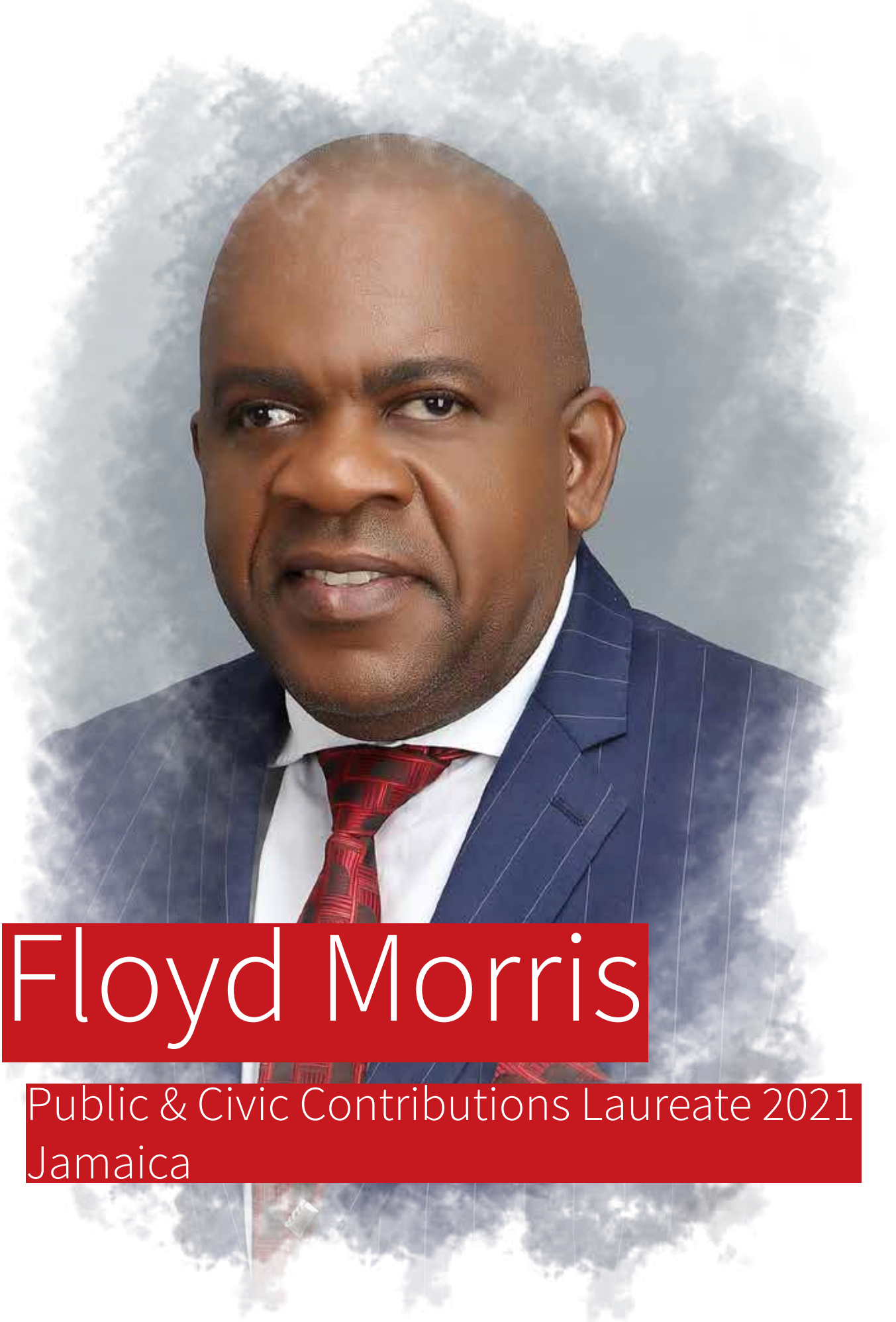

Floyd Morris

Public & Civic Contributions Laureate 2021
Jamaica

It is said in the Bible that the righteous shall live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:17). I lay no claim to righteousness, as that is for God to determine. As a devout Christian, however, I am committed to abiding by and living according to the principles espoused in the Bible. Micah 6: 8 comes readily to mind: "He hath shewed thee, oh man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

In this sojourn on earth, no one knows what lies ahead. One therefore has to live and walk in the admonition of God. This is the approach that I have adopted all my life and this, I believe, has been the quintessence of my successes.

Born in humble circumstances in the quiet, rustic and rural community of Bailey's Vale in St Mary, Jamaica, I am the last of eight children of my mother, Jemita Pryce, who was a dressmaker. My father, Lloyd Morris, was a fireman who migrated to Canada in 1978. My mother, therefore, I treat with and regard as both mother and father of this God-fearing, focused, purpose-driven, and visionary individual.

From my earliest stage of life, my mother taught me about the fear and love of God. Furthermore, she consistently instilled in my head that, as individuals who hail from humble circumstances, education is the key to success. With these two foundational teachings indelibly etched in my mind, I did my utmost to live a decent life.

Joyce Eccleston Basic School was my first port of call on the educational journey. There, early values and good social skills were developed. I spent two years at this memorable community institution, and then went to the Port Maria Infant School where I spent one year.

My third academic port of call was the Port Maria Primary. Here, I spent five glorious years and stamped my position as a serious academic contender. In Grade Two, for example, I recall writing an essay that captured the imagination of my teacher, and she sent me to read it to all the Grade Three students. Obviously, I was performing above my grade, and this resulted in my skipping Grade Three, and heading straight to Grade Four.

My passion and constant search for quality education resulted in consistent good performances at Grades Four and Five. Consequently, I was placed in the coveted Grade Six class of Miss Daisy Morgan, the most successful teacher at Port Maria. This was the class with the teacher that annually received all the government scholarships and highest number of passes at the Common Entrance Examination on in those days.

I cherished the memories of Miss Morgan because she made learning exhilarating. She also instilled a level of academic competitiveness in the students so we had to be the best that we could be.

In 1981, I sat and passed the Common Entrance Examination and got the opportunity to attend St Mary High School, one of the leading high schools on the northern side of the island, famed for both academic achievement and sports. Of course, this is the former school of eminent track athletes such as Jacqueline Pusey and Leleith Hodges. It is also the alma mater of distinguished global scholar, Professor Verene Shepherd and media mogul, Gary Allen.

At St Mary High School, I was placed in one of the top Grade 7 classes. Obviously, my performance at the primary level had laid the foundation for this continued academic trajectory. I did well in my first and second years at high school. By the time I reached Grade 9, however, I started to develop problems with my eyes. Suddenly, I noticed that I could not see the blackboard from my traditional seat at the back of the classroom. Moving to the front never helped either and it was then I realised that something was going wrong with my sight.

At the school clinic, the nurse gave me a letter to take to the school's optometrist in Kingston. Upon examining my eyes, the optometrist revealed to my mother and me that there was a small hole in the eyes and he was going to refer me to the eye clinic at the University Hospital of the West Indies.

Some six months after the visit to the optometrist, I got my eyes examined by an ophthalmologist at the University Hospital. It was here, much to the chagrin of my family, that it was revealed that I had the dreaded eye disease, glaucoma. Glaucoma is an eye disease that builds

The ophthalmologists at the University Hospital did all they could to preserve the eyes. But this never yielded the desired result, as eventually I would go blind.

up pressure in the eyes and causes severe damages to the optic nerves. If the optic pressure is not controlled in the eyes, eventually, one will go blind. At the time, it was also revealed that I was the first child, at age 14 in Jamaica, to have been detected with the disease.

The ophthalmologists at the University Hospital did all they could to preserve the eyes. But this never yielded the desired result, as eventually I would go blind.

Notwithstanding the challenges that I was experiencing with my sight, efforts to get a first-class education continued. My grades had deteriorated significantly in the first term of Grade 9; so bad were they that the school sent for my mother. By the second term, however, I mustered all the courage and rallied with a spectacular performance which allowed me to be assigned to my class of choice in Grade 10—the business stream. The business and science streams were the top classes at St Mary at the time. I was extremely delighted. However, the sight continued to deteriorate and, by the time I reached Grade 11, the sight had depreciated to almost nothing.

I will never forget the debilitating experience when I was doing my Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams in 1986. I was recommended to do five such subjects and when I got the examination paper, I could not see to read what was on it. Tears came cascading down my eyes: the reality of blindness was now staring me in my eyes.

I left St Mary High School without passing a single academic subject in 1986. As I departed the institution, I can recall desperately trying to see the mountains of St Catherine for their kaleidoscopic beauty. This was the majestic beauty that greeted me in 1981 when I had entered the hallowed walls of that institution. But now, the scenes of my exit were quite inconceivable. Even in broad daylight with beautiful sunshine, cloudiness encircled me. Is this what the future beckons for my life? I wondered.

The next three years of my life were confined to sheer torment and trepidation. As a young man, I could no longer play cricket or football. I could not go out and date a young lady, as my male friends were doing. My life was confined to home at Bailey's Vale, waiting for the dreaded moment to come.

The moment of my blindness came in 1989 at the youthful age of twenty. This was three years after leaving high school, and six years of treatment and surgery on the eyes; all of which failed, resulting in blindness.

It was never a situation where I got up one morning and could not see anything. Sight just progressively deteriorated and, by 1989, I could not see anything. All I can see is cloudiness; not darkness as some individuals think.

"Lord, why me?" This was the constant refrain of my life at the time. It was a hellish experience. A young man, born with sight now had to face the horrors of blindness. The only prospect of seeing again was through a miracle from God.

Well, this miracle never came in the expected form. However, the transformation and subsequent achievements of my life can only be described as a miracle from God.

The miraculous sojourn began when I decided to take my life into my own hands and allow God to lead and direct my path. I had faced serious discrimination among some youngsters in my community, who placed all manner of obstacles in my pathway to test if I was blind. I had constant fights with siblings and other relatives during the period of going blind. My mother was getting older and, in light of the experiences I had while going blind, I asked myself: if she was not around, who would take care of me?

Constant prayers were going up for healing and restoration of my sight. One lady from the local Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church visited me and said something that came home forcibly to me and started a spiritual renaissance. "Floyd," she said, "I want you to know that, despite your blindness, God still loves you." For me, this was very reassuring and totally different from the condemnatory attitude adopted by people from other churches who came to visit and pray for me. It is deeply entrenched in society that, to develop a disability, an individual must have committed a terrible sin. But Jesus Christ in the Bible rejected this argument when he said: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:3).

From a spiritual context, I can now postulate that the works of God have manifested in my life since I became blind. From the moment in 1991 that I surrendered my life to Christ, two years after I became totally blind, the results have been phenomenal. Here is a snapshot of these miraculous results.

In 1991, I came to Kingston to be rehabilitated at the Jamaica Society for the Blind (JSB). This was after hearing about the organisation from former popular radio broadcaster at Radio Jamaica Rediffusion (RJR), Dorraine Samuels. For me to transform my life I had to adjust to this new way of living, and the JSB was the organisation that equipped me with the skill sets to navigate independently as a person who is blind.

I learnt mobility skills at the organisation, and also learned to read and write braille. In five weeks, I mastered reading and writing braille. For learning this means of communication, this was a record at the organisation. Simultaneously, I did a refresher course in typewriting so that I would be able to prepare my assignments for my teachers in my renewed educational pursuits.

In October 1991, while undergoing the rehabilitation process at the JSB,

I restarted my education at the Mico Evening College. My first attempt was to get into the evening programme at Campion College, one of the most prominent high schools in Jamaica. I was, however, denied access by the then co-ordinator of the programme on the ground that, being blind, I would not be able to keep pace with those students who were reputed to be extremely bright. How dare he, I thought.

Mico Evening College, whilst restricting how many subjects I could do, accepted me in their programme. In my first term, I did three academic subjects and passed all, including a distinction in Accounts. This was exceptional at the time because doing Accounts was not usual for a person who is blind.

In my second year at Mico, I did four academic subjects, including two General Certificate of Education (GCE) at the advanced level. I passed all four, with distinctions in History and Commerce.

As I realised these stunning results at Mico, my appetite expanded for greater education. Visions of going to university were now in my mind. But, how could this happen when I never had any money? I attended Mico through the generosity of friends and some relatives who had assisted me with my expenses. My SDA church sister, Jacqueline Smith (now Douce), and her family, along with Gary Allen and Patrick Harley of RJR were some of those who supported me while at Mico. Venturing into university required significant financial resources. But there was that still small voice saying to me: "Floyd, I have brought you this far and I will take you to the end."

I applied for The University of the West Indies (UWI) in 1993 to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication. At the time, to get into the much-in-demand Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (CARIMAC), an entrance examination had to be taken. I sat that entrance exam and passed with flying colours. Out of more than 250 students who sat, I was among the 58 who were successful.

The doors of The UWI were now opened, but there was one factor that remained as a deterrent: financial resources to pay for this investment. Again, I heard that still small voice saying, "I have brought you this far and will never leave nor forsake you." I applied for student's loan and got through. But equally, I got a cheque of $20,000 from the Shirley family to assist me with my living expenses at Taylor Hall where I was going to reside. Other friends and family members, excited by my entrance into university, decided to give support. My cousin, Carol Biersay from New York, and aunt, Faye Gaynor from Toronto, readily come to mind.

I entered the hallowed walls of The UWI, strengthened with the resolve that I was going to give of my utmost, so that I could justify those who had invested in me. This I did. During my first year, I won two scholarships: the Workers' Bank Scholarship for a student with disability who excelled academically, and the Circle K International Scholarship.

Miraculous success continued as I sojourned at The UWI. In my first year, I was elected Deputy Hall Chairman, a position generally reserved for senior students. The support network was phenomenal. Students rallied and gave me support through reading, writing, and guiding me to classes. I enjoyed every moment of my life at Taylor Hall, as it constituted a resumption of my development and the reclamation of lost ground that I had encountered going blind during my teenage years. Indeed, I can say that being at UWI, and residing at Taylor Hall, constitute the best years of my life.

This is where I met some of my most supportive friends and lecturers. Individuals such as: Professor Gordon Shirley, former Principal of The UWI Mona; Professor Marlene Hamilton, former Deputy Principal, and head of the Department of Economics; Dr Christine Cummings, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Government; Fae Ellington, Senior Lecturer at CARIMAC; Alma Mockyen, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Radio Education Unit; Professor Hopeton Dunn, former Director of CARIMAC; Professor Rupert Lewis, former Head of the Department of Government; Peter O'Sullivan, former Student Service Manager of Taylor Hall; Dr K'adamawe K'nife, Lecturer at the Mona School of Business; Dr Paula Dawson; Dr Erica Gordon; Arnaldo Brown; Dr Julian Devonish; Professor Denzil Williams; Professor Donna Hope; Basil Waite and Roma Tomlinson.

At The UWI, I distinguished myself as a student leader and was awarded Outstanding Student Leader for 1994. I was also given the Award for Excellence in Student Service in 1994.

Academically, my performance was on par with other students without disability. I graduated with an upper second class honours in Media and Communication in 1996, missing first-class honours by just a single point. For outstanding academic performance, I was granted The UWI Post-Graduate Scholarship to pursue a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Government.

I commenced my MPhil. in Government in 1996 under the supervision of prominent Caribbean scholar, Professor Rupert Lewis. Simultaneously, I was tutoring in the Department of Government, and was appointed a Resident Adviser for Taylor Hall. The prospects of a brilliant future were taking shape.

This prospect was significantly enhanced in 1998 when I was appointed by then Prime Minister PJ Patterson, to the Senate of Jamaica; becoming the first person who is blind to be elevated to that seminal political institution. My political socialisation and orientation were shaped by my mother Jemita Pryce, who had become a member of the People's National Party (PNP) in 1944. I got the opportunity to see her skilful political machinations in the community of Bailey's Vale. She took her work seriously, and treated citizens with respect. This won the support for her political party of many community members. This craft I learned and perfected when I went to the UWI.

I became a member of the People's National Party Youth Organisation (PNPYO) in 1996, and by 1997 I formed a group called Vision 2000 at The UWI. Vision 2000 was a group of brilliant students who were studying at The UWI and had fraternal interest in the PNP.

In 1997, I was actively involved in the national election, where I was the pre-eminent youth speaker for the PNP

across the island. Prime Minister PJ Patterson had taken an active interest in my capabilities after an encounter with me at The UWI in 1995. He had visited the campus for an interface with students, and I challenged him on his administration's policy on education. Obviously, he was impressed by my advocacy at that meeting, and spoke about the encounter with my political godfather, Horace Clarke, a member of his Cabinet at the time.

- Assisted with the development of the NI Gold Health Plan under the National Insurance Scheme (NIS); and
- Assisted with the establishment of the National Health Fund (NHF).

For approximately seven years, I served as Minister of State, and demitted office in 2007 because of the election defeat of the PNP that year by the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). The defeat of the PNP was to trigger another chapter of my life. This chapter saw me going through some turbulent waters, as I was unemployed for two years. The savings that I had accumulated went into a house that I had built in Kingston. At least, I never had to worry about the payment of rent.

After the 2007 defeat, I decided to venture into my own business and this is where I expanded the small poultry business that I had started just after becoming blind in 1989. While I was away in Kingston, my mother had continued the operation. I decided, however, that I was going to expand the business and target the hotel industry. The first attempt at this was very successful as I landed a contract with the Superclubs Group through my friend, Muna Issa, to supply all their hotels in St Ann and Trelawney with poultry meat. The poultry farm, located in Sandside, St Mary, was the home of 15,000 chickens and employed 20 workers. It was the largest poultry operation in St Mary at the time.

But the success that I was enjoying with the poultry farm never lasted for long. Theft, negligence on the part of workers, and covetousness, contributed to the demise of the business. All of these factors cumulatively contributed to problems with the business, which eventually led to my having to close down the farm in 2009.

The closure of the poultry farm placed me in a precarious financial position. All my loans and bills were in arrears, and I was going through another hellish moment. I said to myself, however, that if I went through blindness, I could go through this financial storm that was blowing my way. All it required was for me to anchor my faith in the God who had worked so many miracles and contributed to the varied success that I had enjoyed as someone who is blind.

I decided that I would venture back into academia, and I brought a proposal to then Principal of The UWI Mona, Professor Gordon Shirley, to establish a research centre for persons with disabilities. The idea was compelling and he asked me to prepare a strategic plan for its development. This I did under the supervision of then Deputy Principal, Joseph Pereira and it gave birth to The UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) in 2009. I was appointed as the Co-ordinator in August 2009 and charged with the responsibility for driving research, training, public education and advocacy for persons with disabilities.

It is my firm belief that education is the key to social and economic empowerment, and completing a PhD was indispensable.

The appointment to the Senate of Jamaica opened another miraculous chapter of my life. Who would have thought that this blind boy from Bailey's Vale St Mary could have reached the corridors of the highest decision-making institution of the land? This could only have happened with the guiding hands of God and it heralded the commencement of more great things. By 2001, I had completed my MPhil in Government, and in that same year, Prime Minister Patterson promoted me to the position of Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

During my tenure as Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, I was responsible for the following:

- Driving the implementation of the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education in 2002, this being the Government of Jamaica's largest social safety net programme;
- Negotiating, signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, causing Jamaica to become the first country in the world to have signed and ratified this global treaty;
- Initiated the Disabilities Act of Jamaica in 2004;
- Established the Margaret Moodie Scholarship for Students with Disabilities in 2004;
- Negotiated for persons who are deaf to drive on Jamaican roads;

While I was making efforts to generate new means of income, I decided to register for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Government. It is my firm belief that education is the key to social and economic empowerment, and completing a PhD was indispensable. Further, I had determined that based on the experience that I was encountering in my post-political career, I would never be caught in such a situation again. Anchoring myself in academia was paramount to this vision.

The UWICDS was up and running and I was doing work on my PhD. The income that I was earning from the UWI was not sufficient to deal with my daily expenses, and at the same time comfortably work on a PhD. By 2011, I had to take a leave of absence from the programme.

Every successful man or woman needs a life-long partner and lover. God once again blessed me with one of the most beautiful and vivacious young ladies that I have come across in my lifetime. I met

Shelley-Ann Gayle in 2009 and we started dating. Love rapidly grew, and by 2010 I proposed marriage. On July 3, 2011, I sealed the deal and married her. When you find a great woman, do not allow her to slip out of your "eyesight".

Virtuous women are hard to find, but God has blessed me with this effervescent Christian woman who understands me, and whom I comprehend as well.

In the meantime, the political temperature in Jamaica was rapidly changing. The Bruce Golding-led JLP administration was encountering inestimable political and economic problems, precipitated by the Christopher "Dudus" Coke extradition saga. Ultimately, this led to the resignation of then Prime Minister Golding in 2011, and the appointment of new Prime Minister and Leader of the JLP, Andrew Holness.

As public pressure escalated for a new governmental mandate, Prime Minister Holness signalled his intention to have early elections. Elections were held in December 2011 and the PNP was returned to office with the Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller as the Prime Minister.

I was reappointed as a Senator in the Parliament of Jamaica by the new Prime Minister, but I was not placed in the executive branch of government. I was very happy and comfortable with this. It allowed me to continue with my burgeoning love for academia, and to drive the research agenda for persons with disabilities at The UWI.

But it seems success has no intention to leave me alone. By 2013, the then President of the Senate, Rev Stanley Redwood resigned. There was the need for a new President, and the Prime Minister signalled that I was her choice for the top position in the Senate. I accepted because it would not require me to leave my job at UWI. I was elected by the members of the Senate in May 2013, thus becoming the first and only person with a disability to occupy the fourth highest decision-making position in the land. What a journey. What a miracle this has been. From the humbly constructed board rooms at Bailey's Vale, I rose to one of the most senior positions in Jamaica.

I never fathomed these achievements in my life. The culture of society does not allow such an outcome. The attitude and behaviours toward persons with disabilities do not anticipate it.

I served as President of the Senate for three-and-a-half years. During my tenure I

- Signed over 100 pieces of legislation and regulations;
- Approved the Disabilities Act 2014;
- Undertook a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders of the Senate and
- Introduced sign language to the Parliament of Jamaica.

I demitted office in 2016 due to a change in government. The political pendulum had once again swung in the favour of the JLP. The Hon Andrew Holness again became Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Unlike 2007, I was reappointed to the Senate; this time as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. My work at the UWI continued. I thank God I was never moved to leave my job for politics. By 2017, some 31 years after I graduated from high school without a single academic subject, I completed my PhD at The UWI. I became the second person with a disability to complete a seminal degree at this illustrious institution. This was another miraculous achievement because no one can comprehend how a person with a disability could complete a PhD while carrying such important national responsibilities. For my thesis, I had to read more than 50 books and more than 150 journal articles, as reflected in the references. Such accomplishments can only be explained by ultimate faith in God.

The miraculous success in my life has continued, but space and time would not allow me to elaborate. I am yet to write about my promotion to the Director of the UWICDS and being granted indefinite tenure at The UWI. I am yet to write about being awarded the Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Public Service 2020. Neither have I written about my election to the powerful United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), where I am the first individual from the Caribbean to have been elected to this body of experts who monitor the implementation of the CRPD. But all of this miraculous journey has been chronicled in my autobiography, By Faith, Not By Sight. All of this contributed to my being awarded one of the most prestigious prizes in the Caribbean, the Anthony N Sabga Award in Public & Civic Contributions 2020.

When I got blind in 1989, I never fathomed these achievements in my life. The culture of society does not allow such an outcome. The attitude and behaviours toward persons with disabilities do not anticipate it. The infrastructure of society does not prepare for it; and the institutions of society do not promote it.

Indeed, it must be a higher power at work, and this is why I have attributed all my successes to God. He assures when you put your faith and trust in Him, He will cause you to rise upon the high places of the earth. From the humble board house in Bailey's Vale to the elegantly designed walls of the United Nations in New York and in Geneva, this son of a humble dressmaker has tapped his way, with his white cane by faith, not by sight. ■

Ayanna Carla Natasha Phillips Savage

Science & Technology, Joint Laureate 2021
Trinidad & Tobago

It was July 1984 and my mother had taken me to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, USA, for my sixth birthday. As part of the trip, we also visited friends in Houston, Texas where, while shopping at a flea market, a booth clerk tossed three free stickers into our shopping bag. On one of those stickers was a sketch of a dog and cat.

Printed in big, bold, block letters were the words PETS NEED VETS. That sticker would stay prominently displayed on my bedroom closet door for the next 25 years. At six years of age, more than a decade before I would even make the decision to pursue Veterinary Medicine, that sticker was one of the first things I saw each morning as I opened my eyes, and one of the last things my eyes and mind registered before I fell asleep each night… "Pets Need Vets"—a daily, subtle suggestion that may have been the beginning of my path to becoming an aquatic veterinarian.

Born in Trinidad and Tobago in the late 1970s, I was my father's sixth child, but my mother's one and only. Growing up as an only child with my mother, I watched her work 12-hour day and night shifts as a Customs and Excise Officer, doing all within her power to ensure that every one of her daughter's needs was met.

From early, I was keenly aware of the many sacrifices she was making, often having to leave me in the care of a neighbour, relative or hired sitter as she worked. Depending on where she was stationed, I would sometimes remain in a relative's care during the week, seeing my Mum only on the weekend. The periodic separation was unsettling as Mum was my security blanket.

I was, and still am, Mummy's girl. Being a timid and sheltered child, I was never particularly adventurous, outgoing or outspoken. There were three facets to life: home, school and church. My focus had always been centred on doing well at school and in church-related activities. Looking back, I realise now that the events which would ultimately shape my life's path all began at age six. I had taken the decision to accept and follow Christ; I began playing the piano; I began ballet and modern dance; and a visit to Texas would sensitise me to the fact that "Pets Need Vets".

Five years later, in December 1989, my mother again took me to Disney World as a present for having excelled in the Common Entrance Examination earlier that year. I had passed for my first choice, St Joseph's Convent, St Joseph. On this occasion, we also visited Sea World, Orlando, where we attended the Orca Show at Shamu Stadium. I remember being in complete awe and thinking that these were just the most beautiful, charismatic animals I had ever seen.

Then and there, at 11 years old, I decided I wanted to be a killer whale trainer; one of those amazing figures in the orca-patterned wetsuits, who were somehow able to swim, dive and "play" with such majestic creatures. Surely, that could be me one day.... I returned to Trinidad after that Christmas vacation, resolute in my belief that I was destined to train killer whales.

Throughout my high-school years, my consistent answer to anyone who would ask was that I wanted to be a killer whale trainer when I grew up. This response was typically met with looks best described as a hybrid of perplexity and astonishment, followed by either a pseudo-compliment for what some saw as lofty, unrealistic, or pointless ambitions, or a lightly dismissive response, such as "interesting". Few genuinely questioned me further on the topic, and I generally offered no additional explanation.

My mother, on the other hand, never once told me that a whale trainer career was not possible or doable. Instead, her approach was to encourage whatever I took an interest in.

To anyone who offered unsolicited advice about my proposed career path, she said she believed I should pursue whatever I genuinely liked. If God was going before me, she added, then nothing and no one could be against me. I took my mother's encouragement to heart and never truly internalised the words of, perhaps well-meaning, naysayers.

By the end of secondary school, with no clear avenues to work with orcas in Trinidad and Tobago, I debated pursuing Marine Biology or Veterinary Medicine. Marine Biology was the only occupation I knew of in which people worked with aquatic animals. This seemed to be the obvious path I should follow. Nevertheless, Veterinary

Medicine bore a certain je ne sais quoi, which I found appealing, and to which I gravitated.

Perhaps this was the first overt manifestation of the effect of receiving the subliminal message from that sticker that was still displayed on my closet door.

Ultimately I accepted an offer to The University of the West Indies, School of Veterinary Medicine (UWI-SVM), St Augustine, not knowing at the time that

Aquatic Animal Medicine even existed and could ever be a potential area of veterinary specialisation. As a young child and as a teenager, I always had dogs as pets. I also found horses to be beautiful animals, and during the times when my mother would be able to personally drive me to primary or secondary school on mornings, depending on the route taken, I would always beg her to slow down or stop, if only for a moment, so I could see if the horses had been let out at a small ranch that we would sometimes pass by. Whenever I was fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of them, I would always excitedly exclaim that the horses were out, and it would be the absolute highlight of my day.

So when I entered Vet School after high school, given that working with whales and dolphins was seemingly out of the question, it was my belief that I was now destined for a career working with dogs and horses. Interestingly, I would soon learn that the little ranch that mesmerised me throughout my childhood and adolescence was actually owned by a prominent local veterinarian of that era. I reckoned this had to be destiny, but I was mistaken...

In the second semester of my first year at Vet School, my favourite horse at the school, Sharman, had to be euthanised. I didn't expect it. I simply found his stall empty one day when I went to assist in grooming the animals. When I learned what had transpired, I was traumatised and devastated. I cried for days and lamented to my mother that Sharman had been put down. I quickly recognised that I would need to find a way to emotionally disconnect, at least in some measure, because there were going to be aspects of this profession that could be emotionally taxing, if left unchecked or unmanaged.

In my fourth year, a day or two following a surgical procedure on one of the horses, a classmate and I were walking the animal as part of the post-operative therapeutics, and the horse got away from us. While trying to re-capture the animal, our boots became stuck in a muddy area and we both ended up in a most unfortunate location; just behind the animal, narrowly escaping serious injury. After that near-miss incident, and the earlier experience of losing Sharman, my desire to work with horses waned.

Back-tracking to the first semester of my third year, in October 1999, an unfortunate but significant event occurred, when 26 short-finned pilot whales were mass stranded on Manzanilla beach on the east coast of Trinidad. Twelve animals died. In the absence, however, of a formal stranding response team or plan, local regulatory agencies worked together and were able to return 14 animals to sea.

In the days that followed, numerous local and regional agencies and conservation groups collaborated to perform necropsies on the deceased animals, despite there being no local personnel who were formally trained in marine mammal stranding response. A few veterinary students, myself included, visited the site to observe this unprecedented occurrence on T&T's shores.

This was the first time I had ever seen free-ranging whales, and here they were, in need of human assistance. These weren't my beloved orcas, but they were equally enthralling. That experience was my first inkling that veterinarians with expertise in Marine Mammal Medicine and now, Marine Mammal Stranding Response, could indeed be relevant in our region. But certainly this was no daily occurrence. So the question remained: even if there was a way to work with whales or other aquatic animals, could this really be a lucrative path in the veterinary profession, or was it nothing more than a romanticised childhood fantasy?

Later in that same academic year, we began selecting topics for our mandatory research project which was to be presented in our fifth (final) year. While doing an externship at a small animal clinic, the clinician, for no apparent reason, asked if I would be interested in doing a project on viral diseases of local wild-caught shrimp, since he saw it as being of potential economic relevance to the national fisheries sector. Neither he nor I had ever before looked at such species. Having not yet selected a project, I embraced the opportunity to work on something out of the ordinary. While it

didn't involve studying whales, it still entailed aquatic species.

This was the first ever aquatic animal-based student project to be conducted and presented at the UWI-SVM and, even more importantly, it yielded significant and globally relevant findings. At the end of my presentation, when the floor was opened for questions, there came two comments that have remained with me to this day. One senior faculty member retorted: "Have you ever seen a shrimp going to the vet?". Another commented: "Who could ask you any questions? You're the only one who knows what you're talking about".

I had just given my best effort, and now I stood there feeling conflicted about the value of my work. After all, these were my teachers, senior veterinarians, mentors, who were seemingly dismissive of my efforts and the work I had presented. Others, though mostly struggling to find reasonable questions to ask, found the project interesting and pioneering and genuinely applauded the effort. It went on to earn the highest score for research projects that year.

Even so, some faculty members continued to question the overall value of the project to the field of veterinary medicine, as aquatic animal medicine was not yet recognised as a bona fide veterinary specialty in Trinidad and Tobago or throughout much of the Caribbean region.

Even so, some faculty members continued to question the overall value of the project to the field of veterinary medicine, as aquatic animal medicine was not yet recognised as a bona fide veterinary specialty in Trinidad and Tobago or throughout much of the Caribbean region. Aquatic animal medicine was largely unknown, and there were no opportunities locally to pursue anything in this realm. Nevertheless, by the time I was completing Vet School, I had won bursaries based on academic merit and performance for three consecutive years (1999-2001), and I went on to graduate in 2002 with the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree with Honours.

In April 2002, shortly before completing the DVM programme, one of my lecturers offered me a position, commencing upon graduation, to work on evenings at his Small Animal clinic. Approximately two weeks after completion of my DVM final examinations, I was also offered a position as a Teaching Assistant in the Large Animal Unit at The UWI-SVM. I accepted both offers, and was immediately thrust into mixed practice: working as a large animal clinician during the day; and in small animal medicine and surgery on evenings and on weekends.

As the Large Animal Teaching Assistant I taught Large Animal Medicine, Large Animal Surgery, Theriogenology, and Clinical Skills. As part of my duties, I also served as the attending veterinarian for resident Large and Small Ruminants at the UWI-SVM, the Large Animal Walk-In Clinic and at the University Field Station. I was also part of the veterinary clinical team for food-producing animals at the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Aripo and Mon Jaloux Livestock Stations. I also started pursing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree in Large Animal Medicine, anticipating that this would become and remain my primary area of expertise. But destiny was about to step in....

In May 2004, an approximately 40-foot, 10-tonne Bryde's Whale stranded in La Brea, Trinidad. The UWI-SVM received a call for assistance. As the Large Animal teaching assistant, I was asked to be a part of the three-person team responding to the call. I was incredibly excited, but somewhat terrified. Suddenly, the reality of it all hit me, in the context of what I was being called upon to do.

This was finally my first opportunity to be part of an intervention involving a real, living whale! But this was no captive animal that had been meticulously trained to obey commands. Nor was I heading out into a relatively controlled environment to learn how to "train Killer Whales". This was a wild animal, belonging to a species I had never before seen or even heard of. It was a monstrous creature and, above all, I had no experience in assessing whale health or responding to such a stranding!

Then, a bit of perspective: no one else on the team had such training either. We were all just going out there to do our best with the knowledge we did have as it pertained to animal health and welfare. I bravely boarded the open-door Coast Guard helicopter along with Professor John Cooper and Dr John Watkins, and off we flew from the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex, where The UWI-SVM is based, to the stranding site. Despite multiple valiant rescue attempts by the inter-agency team, the animal washed ashore dead a day later. This time I wasn't

Aquatic Animal-based research projects are no longer oddities, but have now become part of the fabric of the DVM programme research agenda.

just an observer as with the pilot whale mass stranding five years earlier. Now I was called upon to be part of the necropsy team seeking to determine the cause of the animal's demise. This incredible experience would serve to influence the next step along my journey.

A few months later, my Head of Department encouraged me to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship. I was completing my MPhil and this would offer an opportunity to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in the United States. It seemed to be the natural progression to continue my education in Large Animal Medicine, so I tentatively decided to pursue Ruminant Theriogenology. In discussing my plan with then Acting Director of The UWI-SVM, Dr Winthrop Harewood, he referenced my final year student research project two years prior, as well as the prominent role I had recently played in the Bryde's whale stranding response. He asked if I had ever given further thought to exploring if possibilities existed to study the health and management of aquatic animals.

With his encouragement, and a renewed sense of hope in my childhood dreams, I submitted the scholarship application as a potential PhD student in the area of Marine Mammal Medicine.

The Fulbright programme happily supported my proposed course of study, and I was matched with the University of Florida (UF) to pursue a PhD in Aquatic Medicine in their Marine Mammal programme. I was ecstatic! I never even knew such a programme existed!

In August 2005 I enrolled at UF, and this was the place where my dreams truly started becoming a reality. At UF, several of my courses took me back to the venue where my love for marine mammals was first ignited—Sea World Orlando and Shamu Stadium. There I was, more than 15 years after I had first visited as a wide-eyed child sitting in the bleachers. Now I was behind the scenes, poolside, up close and personal with the very animals I had only imagined I would one day have a chance to interact with. I remember getting teary-eyed and having goosebumps as we stood alongside the enclosures during class sessions, chatting with the trainers and our professors, with the orcas mere metres away. I just couldn't believe it.

Nearby were the dolphins and the False Killer Whales (Pseudorcas), and the walruses and the penguins and the rehab manatees. It was simply astounding. A seemingly far-fetched dream for this unassuming Trini girl was now coming to pass. My PhD research was in the area of marine biotoxicology, investigating the impact of biotoxins occurring in marine environments, on human and marine mammal respiratory cellular health. As part of my programme, I received clinical training at some of the most renowned aquatic animal facilities including Sea World, the Florida Aquarium, the Georgia Aquarium, Marineland of Florida, the Whitney Lab for Marine Bioscience, Mote Marine Laboratory, Lowry Park Zoo, Disney's Living Seas and, among others, several labs under the purview of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. During each of my five years at UF, I earned Academic Excellence awards. When passion and opportunity collide, excellence can't help but follow. I was living my dream.

I completed my PhD in December 2009 and after an additional six months of post-doctoral academic training, I returned to Trinidad and Tobago in August 2010 as the country's first and only Aquatic Veterinarian, and re-joined The UWI-SVM as the School's first lecturer and clinician in Marine Mammal Medicine/ Aquatic Animal Health. The then Director of The UWI-SVM, Professor Abiodun Adesiyun, requested that I develop an Aquatic Medicine programme for the School. I therefore created the Aquatic

Animal Medicine components of the Veterinary Curriculum, and integrated this new aspect of Veterinary Medicine in all five years of the Veterinary Programme. I integrated Aquatic Medicine into nine courses in the DVM Programme, and I serve as the only facilitator for veterinary students seeking to gain experience in Aquatic Animal Practice.

I serve as course coordinator, First Examiner or University Examiner for several courses in the DVM programme and have served on the supervisory panel or as examiner for undergraduate and postgraduate (MSc, MPhil or PhD) projects. To date, I have supervised 10 Aquatic Animal Health-based undergraduate research projects, of which four have won either first, second or third place during the SVM's annual Research Day student presentations.

The findings of these projects on zoonotic and other aquatic animal diseases have informed public health, fish and wildlife conservation guidelines implemented by state regulatory bodies and NGOs such as the Institute of Marine Affairs and the Grande Riviere Nature Tour Guides Association, among others. Aquatic Animal-based research projects

are no longer oddities, but have now become part of the fabric of the DVM programme research agenda.

In addition to my teaching roles, upon my return in 2010, I was also tasked with revamping the small aquaculture production demonstration area in the SVM to transform it into both an Aquatic Medicine Instructional Unit for students of The UWI-SVM and a Business Unit for the SVM, geared toward providing clinical aquatic veterinary services for the wider public. I took on the challenge and over the next three years went on to design, establish and ultimately coordinate the Aquatic Animal Health Unit and the Aquatic Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory, where I continue to serve as the attending Aquatic Animal clinician and the diagnostician for the Laboratory. The Unit consists of a resident display collection of tropical food fish and ornamental fish species used for teaching and research. It serves the needs of private clients, regulatory agencies and conservationists seeking veterinary care and laboratory diagnostics for pet fish, food fish and ornamental fish in aquaculture production facilities, as well as injured sea turtles.

I also assist clients, including state regulatory agencies, in investigating the cause of fish, sea turtle and marine mammal mortality events. I have also been appointed to a number of departmental, school, faculty and campus administrative committees including the SVM's Curriculum Committee which I have chaired since 2016; the Finance and Management Committee; the Quality Assurance Committee; the Accreditation Steering Committee; the Faculty of Medical Sciences Curriculum Committee; and the Faculty's Subcommittee on Examinations, among many others. I served as Chair of the SVM's Mentorship Programme for five years and as the academic mentor to more than 30 veterinary students, to date.

I have also been entrusted with serving on three occasions as the Acting Head of the Department of Clinical Veterinary Sciences. My training has enabled me to pioneer treatment, management and research in the field of Aquatic Animal Diseases in Trinidad and Tobago, providing a service that was previously unavailable. I now conduct research in the areas of fish, sea turtle, and marine mammal diseases, including aquatic diseases of public health significance in the Caribbean, thus addressing the paucity of veterinary scientific knowledge of aquatic species in the region. I have been thrilled to successfully lead and co-ordinate the medical management, rehabilitation and release of endangered sea turtles in Trinidad and Tobago. This includes the rehabilitation of the first stranded loggerhead sea turtle in the country in 2017, an event which received international attention and was viewed as having significant impact in the field of wildlife and endangered species conservation and management.

These efforts brought national and international attention to The UWI-SVM, highlighting the Aquatic Animal Health Unit as a competent authority and the only service provider for Aquatic Animal Medicine in Trinidad and Tobago. In 2011, I also assumed voluntary leadership of the Trinidad and Tobago Marine Mammal Stranding Network, helping to build the then fledgling network into a team now comprising more than 100 volunteers belonging to numerous governmental, educational, and non-profit organisations, as well as members of the general public across both islands. Through the network, I now co-ordinate on average six to ten stranding responses annually, and co-ordinate rehabilitation efforts for sick or debilitated sea turtles. This has entailed ultimately returning them to their natural habitat, whenever possible, so as to help support the conservation of Caribbean aquatic ecosystems, and highlight the importance and relevance of Aquatic Animal Medicine to Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean.

Today I often reflect on that thinly veiled, sarcastic comment made during my final year research presentation, "Have you ever seen a shrimp going to the vet?" I simply smile and think to myself: who would ever have thought...?

I also spearhead initiatives that aid in educating aquaculture industry stakeholders, colleagues in the veterinary fraternity, as well as the general public on "One Health" (the interconnection of human, animal and environmental

health) issues as they pertain to aquatic ecosystem health and management. In 2014, I organised the first Regional "One Health" Workshop to be held at The UWI. It was a two-day event entitled the "Caribbean One Health Workshop on Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems". I coordinated the Workshop and, along with two of my cherished US colleagues and mentors, Drs Ilze Berzins and Cindy Driscoll, we introduced the principles of Aquatic One Health to local and regional industry stakeholders. Workshop participants attended from Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the USA.

That same year I was invited to collaborate on a UNDP GEF-SGP (GlobalEnvironment Facility-Small Grants Programme) funded project led by the UWI-Department of Chemistry in the Heights of Guanapo, Trinidad. The project sought to advance green technologies through community participation and practical science education. Serving as the project's technical lead in aquaponics, I conducted workshop sessions on fish health management in aquaponics systems, designing, constructing and managing community and classroom aquaponics models in the Guanapo community and at the UWI After-School Care Centre. The project was selected as one of five UNDP-funded projects with significant social impact and was thus highlighted in the nationally released film A Better Place, which has been featured in local and international film festivals.

In 2017, I was awarded my own UNDP GEF-SGP grant to embark on a project entitled "Enhancing National Health Standards in Aquaculture Systems (ENHSAS): Increasing Aquaculture Productivity, Improving Industry Sustainability and Reducing Deleterious Aquatic Habitat Impacts."

The project sought to strengthen the local aquatic animal health capacity in Trinidad and Tobago by promoting and supporting the development of sustainable intensive and semi-intensive aquatic animal production systems; reducing the current dependence on marine fishery stocks; thus supporting population rebound. As part of the ENHSAS project, 20 local aquaculture producers and government extension service providers have been trained in aquaculture health best practices through a three-day workshop held at The UWI-SVM in November 2018. More than 20 students enrolled in the Crop Production and the Hospitality vocational programmes at the MIC Institute of Technology in Tobago were trained in principles of Aquatic One Health in June and November 2019.

Another significant project achievement has been the standardisation and introduction of definitive molecular testing for several key aquatic diseases of public health and economic importance.

This allowed confirmatory testing to be available to local and regional stakeholders via The UWI-SVM, rather than the traditional need to ship samples to the United States. Further, for the first time, the Aquatic Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory at The UWI-SVM began aquaculture farm surveillance testing and monitoring for diseases of economic and public health importance in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2015, I was appointed by the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF), to serve as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Focal Point for Aquatic Animal Diseases for Trinidad and Tobago. In November 2016, I became the first, and to date, the only CARICOM national to be awarded the Certified Aquatic Veterinarian (CertAqV) honorific by the World Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association (WAVMA) (Colorado, USA). In 2018, the MALF further appointed me a member of the Management Committee of the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute, where I chair the Curriculum Development and Management Sub-Committee.

In August 2020, I was appointed by the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Planning and Development a member of the National Sea Turtle Task Force. I am a member of several international Aquatic Veterinary Medical Associations. Since my return to T&T in 2010, I have served as the Fish Health Consultant for several state-run facilities. I was awarded tenure at The UWI in November 2018. Today I often reflect on that thinly veiled, sarcastic comment made during my final year research presentation, "Have you ever seen a shrimp going to the vet?" I simply

smile and think to myself: who would ever have thought?

Throughout my academic and professional pursuits, I have remained anchored in my commitment and service to Almighty God. I am a member of my church's Music Ministry, serving as the pianist/keyboardist since I was 16 years of age, only pausing briefly during my time spent studying overseas. I presently serve as the head of my church's Worship Team. I have also served in the Children's Ministry as Sunday School teacher to pre-teens and teens, and in the Youth Ministry as the Youth Group Leader to the young adults. I assist in coordinating and teaching during the annual Vacation Bible School (VBS), drawing more children and youths outside of the regular church membership. In these roles, I have sought to be a counsellor and motivator, seeking to demonstrate to youths of my immediate community and its environs that, in Christ, we have a positive vision, and to provide them with an example of a pragmatic approach to their social and spiritual growth.

I try to be an example, to demonstrate that success can be achieved through unwavering faith coupled with steadfast, purpose-driven focus and honest, hard work.

In 2005, while I was away at the University of Florida, an absolutely wonderful young man would enter my life. At the time, he was an associate pastor at the church I attended in Gainesville. We would remain nothing but friends for the next 13 years, before realising that our friendship had eventually blossomed into something deeper. In 2019, we married and now we continue to serve in Ministry together, with "God-first" as our motto.

Outside of the office, I am still a dancer, having transitioned from ballet and modern dance to Latin dance in 2011. I enjoy scuba diving whenever I do get the opportunity to be "under the sea". For someone who started off as a shy, introverted, non-adventurous child, life has taken me down an unusual and exciting path. I often work with some of the largest extant species only because I was brave enough and dared to venture beyond the existing norms within my profession, choosing to follow my heart's

I try to be an example, to demonstrate that success can be achieved through unwavering faith coupled with steadfast, purpose-driven focus and honest, hard work.

lead into what was unchartered territory locally. I have now been able to carve out a unique niche within the profession, not only locally but also regionally. This is what is possible when one chooses not to "follow the crowd", but instead to stay true to sound, well-grounded, personal convictions.

I think back now to that Shamu Stadium visit at age 11. I didn't become a Killer Whale Trainer. Instead, I became a Killer Whale Doctor (also for many other aquatic species). My wetsuits may not be orca-patterned, but my scrubs are. I may not swim, dive and "play" with orcas in a captive environment, but I swim, dive and "play" in the open ocean, having the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of all manner of aquatic invertebrates, vertebrates, and megavertebrates, in their natural habitat.

In 2018 I was a recipient of one of The UWI's 70th Anniversary Celebration—70+ Outstanding UWI Women Awards, where I was selected as one of "77 women who are graduates of the UWI between 1948 and 2017 who have made outstanding contributions in their respective disciplines, the community and/or the region in which they reside". Now, as a recipient of the Anthony N Sabga Award, I feel an immense sense of honour and pride, and I extend my deepest thanks to the Awards Committee for considering my continued efforts and finding them worthy of this auspicious title. It is indeed a blessing that I could have never imagined, and only serves to motivate me to continue to do my best to be a light in our region. To God be the glory; great things He has done. ■

Rupika Delgoda

Science & Technology, Joint Laureate 2021
Jamaica

I was born in Sri Lanka, the island formerly called Ceylon, and known to Arab traders 2,000 years ago as the land of "Serendib". Serendipity has been a persistent feature of my professional journey, as I traversed multiple oceans and diverse cultures, and benefited from inspiring mentors.

The most influential moulding, however, was cast very early in life, from the values instilled by my late parents. My father was the former Commissioner of Prisons in Sri Lanka, who pioneered programmes for the rehabilitation of offenders, and who taught me the unparalleled value of a human life. Through example, an indelible mark was set for optimizing opportunity, irrespective of its packaging, for the enhancement of others' lives.

Growing up in a leafy, residential avenue in Colombo 7, I attended a premier Catholic school for girls, St Bridget's Convent, where the drive for excellence in academics was etched in early. There, from Montessori to high school, competitive yet enquiring minds were encouraged, free of gender barriers. "Gently and Firmly" was the school's motto that took to heart the task of grooming young people toward holding firm conviction.

Throughout my childhood, I enjoyed many committed hours on the playing fields, representing St Bridget's in netball, basketball and athletics. The values of grit, fair play, and consistency were instilled early through internalization of a mantra, "I will, I must, I can", which was drilled into us by a phenomenal sports instructor. It was pure delight when team efforts led to success, such as whenever we became all-island champions, which we accomplished across multiple teen divisions. We were encouraged to balance sport, with artistic expression and thus training for over 10 years in a form of classical dance unique to Sri Lanka, Kandyan dance, planted firm roots of appreciation for this ancient land.

Navigated by professional opportunities, my family migrated to Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the South Pacific after I completed my GCE O'Levels, and an entirely new chapter began. I commenced my final two years of high school and, in that land of unexpected contradictions, I developed a love for chemistry even as I discovered the beauty of a distinctive culture which differed from my own. When I entered Port Moresby International High School, where instruction was in English, I was initially placed for a few months in the General Science class, and Math Two, the lowest ranking classes. You see, technical concepts up to O'Levels had been taught in my mother tongue, Sinhalese, a language spoken only in Sri Lanka. All subjects were now taught in English however, and while I understood the language to some extent, I had to quickly learn and master all the technical jargon of science in English. While language neurons fired for connections, I recall helping my friends in advanced chemistry class through formulae that required no translations, thereby realizing my love for the subject and the desire to pursue it at a degree level.

Despite the challenge of instruction in a new language, I eventually finished Grade 12 as valedictorian and matriculated at the University of Papua New Guinea. There, I benefited from instruction by a multi-ethnic group of lecturers, hailing from around the world.

Papua New Guinea is a socio-anthropologists' and evolutionary biologists' mecca for understanding the evolution of life, in particular, human life. Hence, for rapidly growing modernization programmes, this fascinating land attracted global multidisciplinary experts. Led by passionate academics, I enjoyed an array of subjects in pure and applied chemistry, biology, mathematics, statistics and computer programming, with opportunities to engage in several projects, that whetted my appetite for research. At the end of the programme, with a first class honours degree, and a full scholarship, I registered for a Master's degree in Analytical Chemistry in Illinois, USA.

It was during this year, during my first time away from home, that personal tragedy struck unexpectedly. My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her sudden demise at a relatively young age, left me reeling, searching for answers. She had been my greatest supporter, cheerleader and confidante. From her, I had learned the art of working hard with a smile, and how to work diligently regardless of reward; how to be selfless;

This was, perhaps, the DNA that my father had shaped: to see the opportunity for service, amid challenges; to diligently work with grit and determination toward a goal, without seeking reward, that my mother had inculcated in me.

how to be frugal; and to give with all my heart.

Her absence was devastating. I withdrew from my Master's programme, returned to Papua New Guinea to be with my father, and undertook introspection into our conditional human existence, while engaging in a computational chemistry research project. During this time, I gained a deeper comprehension of the inevitable flux of life through "Insight Meditation" practices based on Buddhist philosophy that had always guided my spiritual life. Encouraged by my father, and strengthened by stillness, I eventually decided to re-engage in graduate research.

I was fortunate to have been offered a space in Prof Edith Sim's lab at the Department of Pharmacology, University of Oxford. Serendipitously, she was on the search for a graduate student with a chemistry degree. The next chapter at Oxford, residing within the graduate-only Linacre College, was inspiring and enjoyable. With detailed supervision from Prof Sim, I developed a love for academic research in the interdisciplinary field of Pharmacology. I found the bridging of chemistry with biomedicine fascinating and fulfilling. Together with a network of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows working on other pieces of the same puzzle, we aimed to understand the role of a key drug-metabolizing enzyme, involved in many different cancers. I began to appreciate the vast role these enzymes played in multiple areas of medicine, as well as in daily life. At the end of my DPhil, the first structure of the drug-metabolizing enzyme, arylamine N-acetyltransferase was published in the globally impactful journal, Nature Structural & Molecular Biology, with work contributed from my thesis.

My DPhil was immediately followed by a post-doctoral fellowship with Prof Gordon Roberts, a pioneer in the field of Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy at the University of Leicester, UK. He, together with colleagues at the University of Dundee, led a collaborative team, funded by a consortium of global pharmaceutical companies, to gain molecular understandings of drug-drug interactions, through active site mappings of key metabolizing enzymes.

Life as an academic scientist in the UK could have well continued. But marriage to a Rhodes Scholar whom I met at Oxford, who was passionate to return to his home island, Jamaica, resulted in my foray into the Caribbean.

I was guided to join the embryonic Natural Products Institute (NPI) at the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies, the brain child of Prof Kenneth Hall (Principal, The UWI, Mona at the time), the late Prof Mansingh, and Prof Ronald Young (then Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences). I joined the NPI following its conceptualization, but before it had a home or even basic facilities. From a career point of view, this was extremely risky. The Principal, however, provided the assurance to forge ahead and build capacity for the needed research agenda. Recognizing the value of local capacity for biological activity testing, to complement the campus' excellent chemistry skills, I undertook to design and outfit the labs. Soon thereafter, refurbishments commenced, with painstaking details of laboratory design for functionality, balanced by a very modest budget.

I recall those early days of the NPI. Accustomed to easily accessible cutting-edge technology as well as fully funded, well-equipped and thriving lab cultures, adjusting to the new realities took time. In addition, the "red tape" involved in importing chemical consumables for scientific experiments slowed the pace of research, relative to what I was accustomed to. Indeed, the contrast could not have been more stark. Though conscious of the differences, I remained resolute in my commitment to building the labs and research culture. My efforts were driven by the firm conviction that the larger the community of dedicated researchers in a country, the higher its chances are of generating internal solutions to local problems.

I never stopped to second-guess myself. This was, perhaps, the DNA that my father had shaped: to see the opportunity for service, amid challenges; to diligently work with grit and determination toward a goal, without seeking reward, that my mother had inculcated in me. It made for the recognition that service to people, no matter where you are in the world, is worth spending a life on.

I set small, practical goals that I could fulfill, and these were consistent with a grander, more long-term, vision. I benefited from the generosity of Prof Roberts and Prof Sim, my former supervisors, in the form of a shipment of lab equipment sent from the UK to Jamaica. Along with modest grants from the International Foundation for Science, The UWI New Initiative, Forest Conservation Fund, the Environment Foundation of Jamaica, Superplus Foodstores, we were able to equip the laboratory one instrument at a time.

Eventually, the empty lab benches began to fill. In particular, I now had two key and indispensable instruments that I needed to commence investigations of potential drug-herb interactions, utilizing drug-metabolizing enzyme targets. With those, I engaged my first graduate student in 2004. Lab-based bioactivity investigations into Jamaican ethnomedicines then commenced at NPI, guided by the findings of several structured, questionnaire-based, community surveys that I had led, while awaiting the laboratory outfit.

Punctuated by serendipitous advice and generosity from renowned natural product experts such as Profs Geoffrey Cordell and David Gangemi, my research focus widened to include the screening of natural products for cytotoxic properties on cancer cells.

The reliance by patients on medicinal plants is highly prevalent in Jamaica. Medicinal plants underpin the hope for effective preventive and treatment options against cancer, the second largest killer in Jamaica. Development of the capacity to test for such properties locally holds the promise of keeping more of the eventual intellectual property in local hands and institutions. The laboratory to screen Caribbean plants, marine and microorganisms for efficacy against cancer continues to thrive at NPI, with the generous support from The UWI Development fund, the National Health Services, the Forest Conservation Fund, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the US National Cancer Institute and Seeding labs (notably enabling a large truck load of instruments to arrive at once).

NPI has commercial potential, most concretely evident in the form of the patents developed by Dr Trevor Yee, who preceded me as Director of NPI. By the time, however, I took over the leadership of the NPI in 2015, it was clear to me, as I think it was to others around, that the NPI's research agenda held extremely promising potential. My primary focus as the Director of the NPI has been the investment in research personnel. With support from former Principal of The UWI, Prof Archibald McDonald, the first permanent posts at NPI finally became a reality. This allowed for a cadre of young, passionate, scientists to begin to build their future in research. This investment in human capacity spawned a virtuous circle. New research staff have expanded the research agenda even more, adding to scientific knowledge and contributing to national policy.

Over the past six years, we have broadened the NPI's research reach and capacity. From my research experience in Oxford and Leicester I knew of the marvel that unfolds when willing colleagues work together. We set out to replicate that marvel at the NPI. We have therefore broadened our partnerships and significantly multiplied our active local and international collaborations. NPI researchers have joint projects with collaborators within the Faculty of Science and Technology, across Faculties at The UWI, and with colleagues at research institutions in the UK, US and South Africa. Over 12 world-leading research institutes have been engaged to date. Most recently, we originated a novel academia-private partnership with Field Trip Ventures, Canada, which has led to the opening of a new basic laboratory research facility at The UWI, Mona focused on psilocybin mushrooms.

The Caribbean resides within a biodiversity hotspot, containing a large variety of endemic species found nowhere else on the planet. Jamaica, similar to many other islands in the Caribbean, has a culture that relies on this biodiversity, particularly for solutions to human health issues. Our studies have shown for the first time that 73 per cent of Jamaicans self-medicate using medicinal plants. Harnessing the value resident in those practices entails incorporation of a chain of considerations that may include (but are not limited to) cultural and community sensitivities; preservation and documentation of knowledge; botanical, chemical, biochemical, pharmacological experimentation; clinical trials, followed by equitable intellectual property sharing; product development; standardization; agro-processes; national policies on natural health products; and, of course, economic and business issues. NPI has been focussed on undertaking research in many of these areas, toward facilitating the optimal utilization of the country's biodiversity. My own personal expertise in this chain link is with the biochemical, and pharmacological investigations.

Guided by community findings, work in my laboratory within the NPI has advanced on dual parallel tracks: assessing the bioactivity value of popularly used medicinal plants in the treatment and prevention of cancer; and improving understanding to avoid adverse drug-herb interactions. Our first pipeline utilizes human cancer and normal cells in culture, to sieve those with promising, selective cytotoxic bioactivity. Our second pipeline systematically explores standardized extracts and characterized secondary metabolites in vitro, on heterologously expressed drug-metabolizing and carcinogen-activating drug-metabolizing enzymes; to identify potency and kinetics of interactions. Together with collaborators, applications to animal models have provided physiological applicability of Jamaican natural products.

The second pipeline also permits monitoring of an important safety aspect associated with the use of medicinal plants. I have led numerous surveys that have identified a high prevalence (~80 per cent) of the use of medicinal plants concomitantly with prescription medicines in Jamaica, with low physician awareness (under 20 per cent). Such practices could lead to adverse drug reactions due to pharmacokinetic drug interactions. Our laboratory has

My book of life of multiple chapters continues to be written. I am grateful to have found a life partner and confidant, in Nigel Clarke, who relishes and supports the writing of every page of my book, as much as I do his. I am grateful for our two children, Nishani and Kishan, whose passion and excitement for life have inspired me to reach for higher goals.

I have been honoured to supervise 27 researchers thus far, from undergraduate to post-doctoral level. I have attempted to emulate the level of care to each and everyone, as Edith at Oxford had done for me, until each is ready to take off on his or her respective path, with a few opting to join the team at NPI.

screened (and continues to screen) the most popular medicinal plant preparations (teas, infusions, decoctions) to assess for such potential drug-herb interactions, with the aim of increasing pharmacovigilance practices in the country.

My book of life of multiple chapters continues to be written. I am grateful to have found a life partner and confidant, in Nigel Clarke, who relishes and supports the writing of every page of my book, as much as I do his. I am grateful for our two children, Nishani and Kishan, whose passion and excitement for life have inspired me to reach for higher goals. I consider it my highest privilege to be a mother: to help our daughter and son to grow in wisdom; to be kind and compassionate human beings, performing at their optimal. I am grateful for the ever-dependable support from my two sisters, Nilminie and Ruwinie. Sharing the journey in Jamaica, joys and setbacks alike, with prayer, has been my mother-in-law, Mary Clarke. A special hail to Claire, whose faithful vigour and vitality have helped the busy home front maintain balance. I have not been spared disappointments and misunderstandings along the way which, though painful, at the time, have made me grow, with support from my family.

In the Caribbean the scientific research path for me has required resilience, and a spirit of entrepreneurship that I would not have otherwise developed. While the challenges have at times seemed insurmountable, it has been an immensely rewarding journey. I have been honoured to supervise 27 researchers thus far, from undergraduate to post-doctoral level. I have attempted to emulate the level of care to each, as Edith at Oxford had done for me. I am proud of the fact that the full time academic research team at the NPI includes persons who pursued doctoral and/or post-doctoral research at the NPI. As such, I remain committed and excited about the new research areas being pursued by Dr. Sheena Francis, Dr. David Picking and Dr. William Irvine all of the NPI, among others. Recognition for my work has come by way of seven UWI Principal Research Awards over five consecutive years for best researcher, best publication, and for research projects attracting most funds, as well as awards at international conferences. It is with the greatest of pride that I accept the significant recognition from the Anthony N Sabga Awards as a 2021 Laureate.

As scientists, we are trained in the scientific method; to be objective, to scrutinize and to welcome scrutiny of our work and to observe things as they truly are. Scientists perform best when they develop the ability to remove the lens of personal conditioning, and to observe nature in its own, unadulterated, form. When achieved, this allows for the greatest of insights: for the functioning of the atom, the cell, the human body, the world and the universe. For me, this practice goes beyond the laboratory. The ability to remove my own lens of conditioning, to see it from the lens of another, and to remove the lenses altogether. Having experienced vast cultural variations, I cannot help but appreciate the commonality of humanity. In this human existence that is always in a state of flux, I merge my personal and professional goals to work tirelessly and urgently, to enhance the ability to probe with insight. Settled in my second island home, it is my desire to help, in as many ways possible to expand, strengthen and deepen the scientific culture in a way that realises the great promise of the Caribbean. ■

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 Awards programme.

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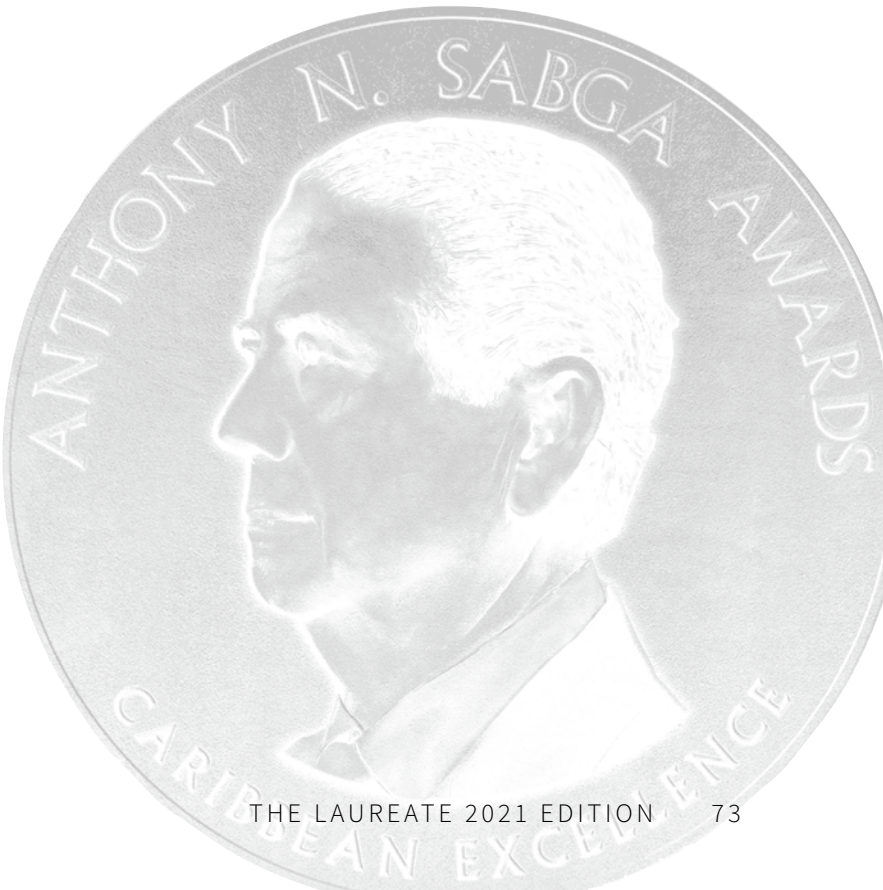

Profile of A Norman Sabga, LLD (Hon.) UWI; (h.c.) UTT

Mr A Norman Sabga is patron of the Anthony N Sabga Awards and 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 livelihoods and wellbeing of close to 6,000 employees throughout the region.

The companies which formed the McEnearney 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 unswerving 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 Anthony N Sabga Awards, 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 (as of 2021 the Anthony N Sabga Awards) launched in 2005.

The Awards has since named a college of 50 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 award 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 Solar Energy Pioneer, 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 & Nevis 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.

2019 Corey Lane, Social Activist from Barbados; Trinidadian Television and Film Producer Danielle Dieffenthaller; Jamaican Filmmaker, Entrepreneur, Strategist, Creative Thinker and Author Kimala Bennett; Jamaican Scientist, and Director of the Climate Studies Group at Mona, Professor Michael Taylor


ANTHONY N. SABGA
CARIBBEAN EXCELLENCE

The LAUREATE

2021 Edition

The Anthony N Sabga Awards 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.

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