

LOUISE BENNETT-COVERLEY, MISS LOU

BY MARIE GREGORY
C.T. JAMAICA WRITER

Louise Bennett-Coverley, Miss Lou, is the first recipient of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association's Best of Kingston Award.

The award will be inaugurated at the annual Independence Charity Ball of the Kingston chapter of the JHTA, to be held at the Wyndham Hotel on September 6.

Gloria Moodie, who chairs the ball planning committee, said Miss Lou epitomizes the theme of the 1997 ball: the best of Kingston. The ball is the JHTA Kingston

chapter's main fund-raising event and is used to assist local children's charities.

"Miss Lou has been chosen for her pioneering efforts in Jamaican poetry and theater and in particular her contributions to the increased acceptance of Jamaican dialect from which has sprung both literary and musical forms now admired and imitated internationally," said Mrs. Moodie.

"Kingston especially claims her as our own, as one of the main treasures that make Kingston Jamaica's cultural capital," she said. Miss Lou, a former resident of Kingston who made her home in Gordon Town, now lives in Toronto.

Elena Girvan, who chairs the JHTA's Kingston chapter, praised Miss Lou's immense talent.

"She is the epitome of all that is good and wholesome in capital city Kingston and we are proud to call her our own," Mrs. Girvan said.

She said that the award would be presented each year because "Kingston is immensely proud of the large number of famous and not-so-famous Kingstonians that have helped to give the city its special appeal."

For Miss Lou, this is the latest in a long list of awards

Best of Kingston Award to Miss Lou



Miss Lou

which she has received. Recently, she was the first recipient of the "We Are One Theater Productions" Award of Excellence in recognition of her outstanding contribution to culture.

This award was bestowed at a special ceremony in

Toronto, Canada, under the patronage of Jamaica's consul general to Toronto, Margarietta St. Juste. More than 800 well-wishers attended the event. Miss Lou's husband Eric and local friends were there to give support.

Among those attending

the ceremony were Jamaican-born Alvin Curling, a member of the Provincial Parliament, and Jamaican-born Pamela Appelt, the first black female judge of the Canadian Citizenship Court.

The consul general described Miss Lou as a poet, dramatist, story-teller and special commentator, saying that through her "creative expression in various forms and using a variety of media, she has succeeded in reaching the lives of many and characterized the positive qualities of the Jamaican spirit."

In her reply, Miss Lou reminded the gathering that she last year quietly celebrated another milestone — 60 years in the theater. She was gracious in her thanks for the tributes paid to her.

Miss Lou's other awards include the Order of Jamaica (OJ); Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE); Silver and Gold Musgrave Medals from the Institute of Jamaica; the Norman Manley Award of Excellence; an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature from the University of the West Indies; an African-Canadian Achievement Award and the Gabriella Mistral Commemorative Award from the government of Chile. ✱

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA