

X/N - Senior, Olive

DRAFT of possible citation for O. Senior

Born in Jamaica and educated in Jamaica and Canada, Olive^{Senior} has spent her life in the world of words. She started when she was still a student at Montego Bay High School, working with the Gleaner during her vacations. At Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada, she took a degree in Print Journalism. After her return to Jamaica, she once more worked with the Gleaner until, as a Thomson Scholar, she went on to the United Kingdom for further studies in communication.

Olive Senior's writing career has been an unusual combination of the practical and the creative. On the practical side, apart from her years in journalism, she has been Publications Editor of the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies, and has herself written two non-fiction, factual books: The Message is Change, in 1972, and the widely popular A - Z of Jamaican Heritage, in 1983. For the past six years, she has been Managing Director of Institute of Jamaica Publications and ~~the~~ Editor of Jamaica Journal, a magazine which has consistently maintained an extremely high standard while presenting the history and culture of Jamaica to its people and the world at large. This dual role demands an extensive knowledge of the realities of publishing magazines and books in Jamaica today, together with an awareness of and a sensitivity to the needs and sensibilities of writers.

At the same time, Olive Senior has quietly and persistently nurtured and expanded her own creative abilities. Steadily, her short stories and poems have gained increasing recognition. Her work is alive with powerful and resonant memories of the past, what it was like to grow up in rural Jamaica, and with sharply re-created characters of the people around her.

Her collection of poetry, Talking of Trees, published in 1985, explores an inner life, searches for origins and follows threads into a more distant history. And in 1987, her anthology of short stories, Summer Lightning, was published by Longmans. This collection included prize-winning stories from Festival Literary Competitions.

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In 1979, she was awarded the Institute of Jamaica Centenary Medal for Creative Writing; then, last year she won international, world-wide recognition when she carried off the Commonwealth Prize for Literature with Summer Lightning.

Olive Senior has ~~carried forward~~ ^{maintained and advanced} the best literary traditions of Jamaica to an outstanding degree. The wide area of her activities means that there are few ~~aspects of writing in Jamaica which will not, ultimately, be touched by what~~ aspects of literary endeavour in Jamaica which will not, ultimately, be touched by what she has done.

8. July 1988
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