

B/N - SHERLOCK, PHILIP (SIR)

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B/N SHERLOCK
FEBRUARY 25, 1902 — DECEMBER 4, 2000

An icon's passing

Sir Philip Sherlock

THE HUMILITY of Jamaican historian, Caribbean public servant and academic Sir Philip Sherlock was highlighted yesterday as one of his outstanding and most endearing qualities, by dean of the UWI's Faculty of Social Sciences Professor Barry Chevannes.

"This was a man who had achieved one of the highest achievements — to head the University of the West Indies (yet) from that exaltedness — he was humble," he recalled yesterday.

Sir Philip, the UWI's first Vice Chancellor, died at midnight December 4. He was 98 yet he had never lost the sharpness of mind that led to his success over the years in the arts, poetry, analysis and commentary on national issues and his contribution just three years ago to the book "The Story of the Jamaican People".

Others paying tribute to Sir Philip include Prime Minister P.J. Patterson; Bruce Golding, president of the National Democratic Movement (NDM); UWI Chancellor Sir Shridath Ramphal; and UWI Vice Chancellor, Professor Rex Nettleford.

Both the Prime Minister and Mr. Golding described Sir Philip as a model of intellectual integrity, social responsibility and enlightened patriotism whose outstanding contribution to scholarship and cultural development will sustain his memory for generations to come.

His colleagues at UWI remembered him as "a man of his time and ahead of his time and (one whom) time never overtook" who "inspired a generation of West Indians to the compulsions of being true to themselves and to their West Indian heritage," said Sir Shridath.

Professor Nettleford remembered Sir Philip as being among the "chosen few we were lucky to have had at the helm of our social revolution — the chosen few who believed that the intractable problems of underdevelopment and the attendant immiseration of the mass had to be met by the empowerment of our people through the exercise of their intellect and their creative imagination."

The life and times of a giant

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FEBRUARY 25, 1902 — DECEMBER 4, 2000

The legacy of an icon

— *Sir Philip Sherlock*

One of the father figures of the nation, Sir Philip Sherlock, who died yesterday, was a Jamaican icon. A distinguished scholar and educator, a gifted poet and author, he was an acknowledged leader of the nation's literary and intellectual community, in which he commanded both respect and admiration.

While he served his country in many areas of scholastic and other activities, he will perhaps be best remembered for his contribution to the University of the West Indies, which he helped to establish and which he served in many capacities, leading to the final distinction of Vice-Chancellor.

Philip Manderson Sherlock, K.B.E., O.M., B.A. (Hon.), D.Litt. (Hon.), educator par excellence, folklorist, historian and author, was born at Machioneal, in Portland, eastern Jamaica, on February 25, 1902. He was a son of the Rev. Terence Sherlock, a Methodist minister.

Educated at Calabar High School, he began his teaching career there as a junior master, at the age of 17. In 1927, by private study, he gained the degree of

Bachelor of Arts from London University, in England. That was his first achievement in a long and distinguished career in his chosen profession.

After his stint at his alma mater, Calabar, he continued to work in the field of education, first at Manchester High School, where he taught for two years, and then at Wolmer's Boys School in Kingston, as headmaster — that appointment, in 1932, making him, at 30, the youngest headmaster in the island.

Philip Sherlock worked for 20 years in the schoolroom before

leaving the teaching profession to enter directly into the cultural mainstream of Jamaica. He took up an appointment as Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica, the national centre of the promotion of Literature and the Arts.

Contribution

With his natural flair for scholarship, he made a notable contribution to widening the influence of the Institute in the society and in helping to create a greater appreciation of artistic activity among the general public.

When Jamaica Welfare, a phil-

anthropic organisation was formed, with another great Jamaican, Norman Manley, at the helm, Philip Sherlock gave of his time and his talent to this social development agency. He joined the movement in 1945 as Education Officer and rendered valuable service in this pioneering social effort.

Philip Sherlock was later to establish his credentials as an academician of front rank. The move to establish a West Indian

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Philip
Sherlock

did not rest on his laurels. Shortly after his retirement as Vice-Chancellor in 1969, he spearheaded the creation of the Caribbean Universities and Research Institute, an organisation embracing tertiary institutions in the Caribbean and

university was then gaining momentum, and he became actively involved in the preparatory work as a member of the Irvine Commission. He was among those who saw to the creation in 1950 of the University College of the West Indies, the forerunner of the UWI.

Philip Sherlock had the distinction of being the first Director of Extra-Mural Studies, Vice-Principal and later Acting Principal of the University College at the Mona campus in Jamaica. He was the founding principal of the campus of St. Augustine, in Trinidad, which was set up as the new Faculty of Engineering, incorporating the former Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture.

His crowning achievement came in 1964 when he was appointed to succeed Sir Arthur Lewis as Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, having previously served as Pro Vice-Chancellor. It was then that his talent as an educational administrator came to full flower. Under his brilliant leadership, the UWI grew in importance and prestige, and stands today as his lasting monument.

When the time came for him to pass on the baton at the UWI, Sir Philip (as he had then become)

Central America, including the University of Guyana.

This broadening of his academic horizon led to his being awarded the highly-prized and rarely-bestowed Jamaican national honour of the Order of Merit. This award, made in the 1989 National Honours List, was given to him for "eminent international distinction in Education and Learning."

Pelican Award

There followed, shortly afterwards, in 1991, another academic honour: the prestigious Pelican Award, given to him by the Jamaican branch of the Guild of Graduates of the University of the West Indies, for dedicated service to the university.

That tribute, and another paid to him, also in 1991, on the occasion of his 90th birthday, represented deserved recognition for one who gave so much of his energy and ability to the university. The UWI undoubtedly owes a great deal of its success as an institution of higher learning to the vision and foresight of Philip Sherlock who, along with others, saw the need, many years ago, for tertiary education in Jamaica and who worked tirelessly and

with dedication to achieve this desirable goal.

Other honours came to this outstanding son of Jamaica. He was given the honour of Commander of the British Empire (C.B.E.) in 1956 and was conferred with knighthood in the same British order ten years later, in 1966.

In 1971, he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Miami, in the United States. In 1978, the Government of Venezuela honoured him by awarding him the Band of Honour of the Order of Andres Bello, in recognition of the success of the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institution (UNICA), of which he was Secretary-General.

By precept as well as example, Sir Philip was indeed a leader of the Jamaican society. Erudite, urbane, graceful in speech and manner, he brought to all the positions in which he served his country a quality of excellence that stood him apart from the crowd.

Quiet dignity

This distinction was given signal recognition in 1992 when he was selected as the recipient of the Norman Washington Manley Award for Excellence in respect of his work in the field of Education and Culture.

Blessed with a quiet dignity and easy charm, with gentle honour and pleasant wit, Phillip Sherlock also had the gifts of oratory and poetry, at both of which he excelled. Internationally recognised as a leading Caribbean scholar, lecturer and author, his interest in history, literature and folklore of the region led to many publications by him.

These included "West Indian Story", "Land and People of the West Indies", "West Indian Folk Tales". In 1976, he produced "Shout for Freedom", a poetic tribute to Sam Sharpe, the slave leader who became a National Hero of Jamaica. More recently, he became a regular contributor of articles of historical and cultural value which were published in *The Gleaner* and elsewhere.

Sir Philip completed a life of scholarship with the writing of the monumental work "The Story Of The Jamaican People" which he did in collaboration with Dr. Hazel Bennett. It is undoubtedly his greatest literary achievement.

His contribution to national service through the Institute of Jamaica and Jamaica Welfare was not confined to those two organisations, however. He was a Member of the Legislative Council during 1952-59, and also served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of St. Andrew High School, of Calabar High School (his alma mater), and of the National Council on Education.

Lady Sherlock, the former Grace Verity, his wife of over 50 years whom he married in 1942, survives him. So do their three children — John, Christopher and Hilary.



- File
1989: Sir Philip receiving the insignia of National Honour, the Order of Merit, from the Most Hon. Sir Florizel Glasspole, then Governor-General, at Kings House. ■



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1998: *Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Edwin Carrington, greets Sir Philip Sherlock at his home in Kingston. The Order of CARICOM, conferred on Sir Philip at the CARICOM Summit in St. Lucia, was formally presented to him. ■*