



Trinbago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOTS *AWARDS & GALA*

CARA HOTELS TRINIDAD

OCTOBER 18, 2025

RESEARCH, RECOGNIZE, ENGAGE



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs

Greetings by Ms. Kiva P. Clarke, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs (Delivered on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers MP, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs)
for the Official Launch of TT Homecoming 2025
Monday 29th September at NALIS Port of Spain
From 1pm to 2.30p.m

Dr. Andre Phillips, Founder and Chair TDON;

Ms. Rayan Ramoutar, Head, TDON Homecoming Secretariat;

Ms. Desery Whiskey, Officer-in- Charge, International Organization for Migration;

Apostle Christopher Pere, National Overseer Keys to the Kingdom Ministries;

Mr. Keith Belgrove, CEO Belgroves Group of Companies;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Distinguished Members of our Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora, *Welcome home...*

It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings to you on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and Senator the Honourable Dr. Kennedy Swaratsingh, the Acting Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs.

We regard you as an integral part of our national family and it is for this reason, we are happy to be at the launch of the three day event which underscores the importance we attach to your voices and your role in shaping our nation's presence on the global stage. We also wish to offer our congratulations to the 12 awardees

Today's and your upcoming events are powerful reminders that the diaspora is not peripheral, but central to our vision of national development and international cooperation.

The diaspora holds a special place in the life and future of Trinidad and Tobago. You are more than citizens abroad; you are cultural ambassadors, economic partners, and bridges between nations. Your successes in business, education, science, culture, and sport reflect not only your individual determination but also the enduring values and heritage of Trinidad and Tobago.



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs

The Government remains firmly committed to fostering stronger connections with you, our nationals abroad. We recognize that your knowledge, networks, and resources can play a critical role in advancing Trinidad and Tobago's economic diversification, strengthening trade and investment, and supporting innovation. Equally, your advocacy, whether in matters of climate change, sustainable development, or cultural preservation, contributes to raising the profile of Trinidad and Tobago worldwide.

The roots of our diaspora are deep and complex, shaped by centuries of movement, migration, and resilience. From indentureship and enslavement to voluntary migration in more recent decades, the people of Trinidad and Tobago have always carried with them a spirit of adaptability and enterprise. Our diaspora is a living testimony of this journey—holding fast to traditions while also carving new paths in diverse societies. This heritage strengthens us, for it reflects not only where we come from, but also where we are capable of going together.

In this spirit, the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs reaffirms its dedication to enhancing diaspora engagement policies and programmes. We see this not as an act of outreach alone, but as a dialogue and partnership, in which your ideas, initiatives, and experiences enrich our common future. We want to ensure that every Trinbagonian abroad feels that they remain connected, valued, and supported by their homeland.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we gather here today, let us reflect on the power of the diaspora to transform societies, to build bridges between cultures, and to inspire new generations. May this event serve as a reminder that the people of Trinidad and Tobago—wherever you may be—remain united by shared history, identity, and purpose. Together, we will continue to strengthen the bonds that tie us and chart a future that reflects the true spirit of us, the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Thank you.



Dr. Andre Phillips
Founder, Trinbago Diaspora Outreach Network (TDON)

Dr. Andre Phillips is the founder of the Trinbago Diaspora Outreach Network (TDON), an organization dedicated to building bridges between Trinidad and Tobago and its global diaspora.

With a passion for mobilizing diaspora expertise and fostering community improvements, Dr. Phillips has led initiatives that recognizes the patriotic contributions of overseas nationals, connect hometown associations, and apply global best practices to national development.

Under his leadership, TDON champion projects such as diaspora mapping, agile crowdfunding, an annual recognition event honoring outstanding Trinbago contributors, and the Trinbago Trailblazers Travel Challenge - an immersive program for the children and descendants of migrants. Through his vision and dedication, Dr. Phillips is helping to transform the Trinbagonian diaspora into a powerful force for sustainable growth and cultural preservation.



TDON BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr Andre Phillips

Founder - T&T



Rayan Ramoutar

Vice Chairman - T&T



Claire E. Kirk

Director - Canada



Trinbago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK



Stephen Isaac

Director - USA



Gail Ewing

Director - T&T



Robert Cumberbatch

Director - USA



Angela Cooper

Director - USA

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

ALANA GRANT

CATEGORY: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Tobago-born Alana Grant left her home in 1989 to pursue personal and professional opportunities in the United States. A resilient and service-driven professional, she balanced her education, family life, and demanding work schedules, including night shifts in hotel auditing and daytime nursing, demonstrating her unwavering determination to build a better life for herself and her family.

In the U.S., Alana expanded her professional impact across several fields. She became a licensed practical nurse and a medical missionary, focusing on holistic wellness, functional medicine, and natural healing to empower individuals to take control of their health. She also entered the real estate industry, becoming a licensed broker and founding her own real estate office to serve the needs of her community. A core part of her community work included founding three licensed group homes, where she dedicated over two decades to providing loving and comprehensive care for individuals with special needs.

Returning to Tobago, Alana fulfilled her lifelong dream of giving back to her community by establishing a full-service wellness facility in Goodwood. This multi-million dollar investment, which opened in 2022, is the first of its kind in Tobago and serves a diverse clientele, including families, public sector workers, and a growing business clientele. The modern, sprawling edifice offers a wide range of services aimed at improving overall well-being. In late 2024, she further extended her mission by adding a plant-based food hub at a leased location in Scarborough, significantly expanding the range of healthy food options available on the island.

Through her businesses, which now provide employment for seven individuals, Alana is strategically positioned to contribute to Tobago's emerging wellness tourism sector. The eleven-room Swift International Majuba Hill Lifestyle Center is a key part of this vision. Swift International Ltd. is also expanding the range of healthy food providers in Tobago, demonstrating her commitment to a healthier community. She continues to operate her main center at Goodwood while also conducting limited outreach services in western Tobago. Alana's overarching mission, "To assist individuals in achieving optimal physical, mental, and spiritual well-being," guides her continued service with compassion and purpose.



Trinidad Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

ALTHEA PARSONS

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY



Ms. Althea Parsons was born and raised in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, spending her formative years in Belmont. As a child, she loved school and excelled in academics. Her parents, who instilled in her a strong sense of community and the values of hard work and faith, encouraged her to “give back.” She attended Sacred Heart Girls Elementary School and Holy Name Convent before immigrating to Canada as a teenager. There she completed high school at Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute in Toronto. To pursue her lifelong dream of becoming an educator, she completed undergraduate studies at York University, Lakeshore Teachers College, and obtained her Masters in School Counselling (MSc) from Niagara University.

Following her education, she began a distinguished career as a teacher, guidance counselor, and later as a vice principal and principal in various schools within the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She recently retired after over 40 years of dedicated service to her community, making a lasting impact on countless students and staff. Coming from a humble home, Ms. Parsons was keenly aware of the important role education can play in changing a child’s life. Her own experiences of facing challenges to fund her post-secondary education ignited her interest in helping others. This became her impetus for a silent commitment to “give back” once she had the opportunity. To this end, she devoted herself to supporting young people from the Caribbean and the broader community in their dreams of obtaining a post-secondary education.

In 2000, she spearheaded the creation of a Scholarship and Bursary Program to celebrate the Millenium and the 25th Anniversary of Our Lady of Good Counsel Caribbean Catholic Church and Centre (OLGC) in Toronto. Her vision was to create a sustainable program that would alleviate the financial burden of attending a post-secondary institution. Her dedication and perseverance resulted in an initial sponsorship from the Bank of Montreal, which was matched by the Black History Month Committee with the OLGC. The Sister Kathleen Jackman Memorial Scholarship Awards Program was born, becoming a model for other charitable organizations in the Black community. It also became a beacon of hope for many students who may not have otherwise pursued higher education. Today, many people whose lives she has touched have pursued diverse and successful careers, including doctors, lawyers, and engineers.

Throughout her career and volunteer work, Ms. Parsons has continuously lived by the powerful words of Nelson Mandela: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived, it is what difference we have made in the lives of others.” She continues to impact many lives in her community through hard work, consistent effort, and humility. Living by the motto of Trinidad, “Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve,” she represents the true spirit of her family upbringing. Her own motto, “I will walk with you, talk with you, and encourage you,” is a promise she fulfills daily with every act of kindness, inspiring everyone around her.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

DR. ANDY ANSOLA

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY

Dr. Andy Ansola is a Trinidad and Tobago-born thought leader, author, international speaker, and pioneering grief and recovery expert whose remarkable journey bridges law enforcement, counseling, cultural advocacy, and ministry.

A former detective in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Dr. Ansola served in deep undercover operations with the elite Strike Force from 1981 to 1984. Inspired by the late Prime Minister Dr. Eric Williams' call to reverse the Caribbean "brain drain," he left policing to pursue higher education and a life of service dedicated to healing and transformation.

Today, Dr. Ansola is the Founder, President, and CEO of HeartsFlow Inc., a U.S.-based nonprofit that provides grief recovery, trauma counseling, addiction support, homelessness outreach, and emotional and spiritual restoration. He holds a PhD in Christian Substance Abuse Counseling and is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, Certified Grief, Loss, and Healing Counselor, Scotland Yard Certified, and a C.S. Lewis Scholar. His professional journey spans more than 25 years of clinical expertise, HR consulting, and curriculum development in mental health programs across diverse settings.

A true innovator, Dr. Ansola created the trademarked Vowel Therapy for Grief, Loss, and Healing, blending cultural sensitivity and faith-based approaches to support the bereaved. He is also a funeral care consultant in Florida, offering grief groups, memorial support, and one-on-one counseling to families navigating loss.

Beyond counseling, Dr. Ansola has emerged as a powerful motivational speaker, addressing audiences in the U.S. and Nigeria on resilience, spiritual purpose, and cultural identity. His writing has appeared in *The Orlando Sentinel*, *Blavity*, *San Diego Veterans Magazine*, and *Homeland Magazine*. He is the author of *Spiritual Addiction Blogs* and the forthcoming *HeartsFlow of Emotions*. His poetry has been featured in *Driftwood*, the literary magazine of St. Thomas University (STU).

Dr. Ansola also brings a strong media background—editing the STU newspaper, interning with CNN Miami, and hosting his own talk show, *Live at 2:30*—always using platforms to educate and empower.

Deeply committed to Caribbean unity, he played a pivotal role in merging the Broward Caribbean Carnival and Miami Carnival into "One Carnival," a unified celebration of heritage for South Florida and the diaspora. He continues to preserve this legacy through cultural archiving and advocacy.

Currently, Dr. Ansola is spearheading a groundbreaking faith-based research study on Complicated Grief and its links to substance use, mental health, and homelessness, aiming to produce peer-reviewed publications and international conferences.

A devoted chaplain with the Broward Sheriff's Office, ordained minister, husband of 32 years, father of seven, and grandfather of eight, Dr. Andy Ansola embodies a life of service. Through counseling, writing, public speaking, and cultural leadership, he continues to heal, inspire, and proudly represent Trinidad and Tobago on the world stage.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

DR. DANIEL L. BECKLES

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY



Dr. Daniel L. Beckles was born in Pleasantville, San Fernando, Trinidad. He began his education at St. Paul's Anglican School before attending St. Benedict's College and Pleasantville Senior Comprehensive School. At the age of 17, he migrated to Long Island, New York. He earned both his BSc and MSc degrees in biochemistry and chemistry from Stony Brook University. He then completed his MD at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, where he also earned a Ph.D. in Cardiovascular Molecular Biology and completed his surgery residency. His academic distinctions include induction into the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) medical honor society and numerous teaching awards. He eventually achieved the title of Clinical Professor at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Beckles completed his fellowship in cardiothoracic surgery at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. He then pursued a fellowship in Minimally Invasive Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, affiliated with Harvard Medical School in Boston. Currently, he is affiliated with Ochsner Health and Christus Health, two hospital systems that cater to international patients. Previously, he served as the Surgical Director of Heart Transplantation at Baylor Scott & White Health in Central Texas. Dr. Beckles specializes in a wide range of cardiac surgeries, advanced heart and lung diseases, atrial fibrillation, and chest and lung cancers using robotic and minimally invasive techniques. He is an esteemed academic surgeon known for his clinical excellence, teaching, innovation, and community service.

He is a Diplomate of both the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Thoracic Surgery. Additionally, he holds fellowships in the American College of Surgeons (FACS), the American College of Cardiology (FACC), and the American College of Chest Physicians (FCCP). His academic contributions include over 40 peer-reviewed publications, four textbook chapters, and two U.S. patents.

Dr. Beckles has dedicated himself to community service, particularly in his native Trinidad and Tobago. After completing his surgical training in 2008, he obtained his Trinidad medical license and volunteered his services in 2010 for one week with the POSGH and West Shore Cardiac Surgery Teams. In 2012, he took a month away from his academic position to volunteer in Trinidad and collaborate with the Ministry of Health to develop a sustainable national cardiovascular program. This program was designed to train the next generation of surgeons in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) and COSTAATT, championing clinical excellence with the goal of creating a world-class cardiovascular program attractive for medical tourism.

He continued his mission work in 2018 with the Trinbago Progressive Association (TPA), where he was honored at a gala and donated scholarships. His next mission trip was in 2023, where he accompanied the grassroots APC organization to Guyana. In 2024, he led one of the largest mission trips to Trinidad and Tobago, a collaboration with the APC team that impacted over 3,000 lives in just 10 days. With a goal to impact millions, his efforts continue, with his next mission trip in July 2026 scheduled to include charitable heart surgeries in Trinidad and Tobago.



Trinbago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

GEORGE MAHARAJ

CATEGORY: CULTURAL PROMOTION

Born in Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago, and educated in San Fernando, George Maharaj built a professional career in Canada as a computer analyst—but his true legacy is as one of the world's most important guardians of calypso and soca.

George possesses one of the largest and most complete private archives of Caribbean music in existence. His collection—spanning more than 7,000 vinyl records, CDs, photographs, videos, printed materials, and rare cassettes—includes the works of virtually every calypsonian worldwide. From Trinidad and Tobago to Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Panama, Central America, North America, and Europe, his holdings trace the evolution of the artform back to the earliest calypso recordings of the 1900s. This extraordinary catalog, unmatched in its scope and authenticity, is a living museum of Caribbean identity.

In recognition of his preservation work, the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago in Ottawa honored George in 2012 as one of 250 nationals whose contributions enriched both Canada and the diaspora during the nation's 50th Independence anniversary.

George's dedication to community and culture has been equally remarkable. In Toronto, he founded cricket clubs for youth and women, with players later representing Canada on the world stage. He led music bands for Caribana, created the Calypso Breakfast Lime, co-founded Trinifest, and organized festivals like Kaisofest and Kaiseo @ High Noon in Trinidad, each designed to celebrate and promote the music he has so carefully preserved.

As an author, George published two landmark volumes of *The Roots of Calypso*, adopted by schools and libraries in Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Cayman Islands. He also founded the Calypso College in Toronto, a hub of academics, artists, and aficionados dedicated to honoring and advancing the artform. His symposiums, workshops, and Calypso History Month celebrations have brought knowledge and inspiration to audiences across the globe.

The accolades have been many: community development recognition from Toronto's SickKids Hospital (2002), the Rotary Club of Trinidad and Tobago for extensive calypso research (2005), the Ontario Calypso Performing Artistes (2021), and the Calypso Association of Canada (2023). His musical groups, including Los Ketchos Parranderos and Crab and Callaloo, continue to keep parang and vintage calypso alive in the Canadian diaspora.

A frequent judge of soca and chutney competitions and a presenter of international workshops under the theme *Calypso: An Artform Worth Preserving*, George continues to champion the music he loves. His lifelong vision is the creation of a Calypso Museum and Research Centre in Trinidad and Tobago, where his unparalleled archive will serve generations to come.

George Maharaj's life and legacy embody the preservation of memory, the promotion of culture, and the enduring rhythms of calypso and soca for the world.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

GILMAN FIGARO, SR.

CATEGORY: CULTURAL PROMOTION



Gilman “Gil” Figaro, Sr. was born and raised in San Fernando, Trinidad. His earliest musical influences came from his uncle, Daniel Emmanuel Jardine Gilchrist, a calypsonian known as Uncle Fats, who introduced him to the art form at age eight. Uncle Fats often took him to calypso tents where he performed alongside legends like the Mighty Sparrow and Lord Kitchener, and later taught him the art of songwriting and creating melodies.

At the time, calypso and steelband music had little place in Trinidad’s predominantly Catholic society, and calypsonians were often considered outcasts. Fascinated by their talent and craftsmanship, Gil developed a lifelong goal of removing this negative perception and elevating the art form. As a student at St. Benedict’s College, he joined the military band, sang in the choir, and was president of the Student Government, demonstrating an early commitment to leadership and the arts.

Two years after graduating, Gil migrated to the United States. While working various jobs, including cab driving in New York City, he earned a business degree and an MBA. His determination to enhance Caribbean art forms never waned. In 1985, he founded the nonprofit Calypso for Africa Inc. and co-authored the hit track “Now is the Time,” which featured 72 calypsonians. Proceeds were donated to Ethiopia through UNICEF, showcasing his passion for using music for humanitarian purposes.

In 1989, Gil founded and produced the SUNSHINE Awards to pay tribute to the creators, performers, and promoters of Caribbean art, dance, music, and poetry. A special feature of the program is the perpetuation of the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame, which was also established that year. The program quickly gained recognition, receiving the endorsement of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS)—the organization responsible for the Grammy Awards—in 1991. It was hailed as “the cultural bridge from the Caribbean to the rest of the world for the 21st century” by the New York Carib News in 1996 and received a formal endorsement from the United Nations in 1998. Gil has always been confident that there will be a Grammy category for calypso and steelband music in the near future, and he sees the SUNSHINE Awards as a conduit to achieving that goal. Over the years, the program has expanded its global view to include Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America, South America, and the United States.

Placing a great emphasis on education, Gil established the SUNSHINE Awards Student Recognition Program in 1998 to annually recognize and applaud the scholastic achievements of the top male and female students from a selected Caribbean island. The students are brought to New York to be presenters for the “Best Recording for Children” category and are taken on educational and cultural tours during their weeklong stay. In 1994, the UN selected the SUNSHINE Awards theme song, “Sunshine,” as the commemorative theme for the ‘Caribbean Festival’ in Torino, Italy.

Gil has also made significant contributions to humanitarian causes. His compassion for the less fortunate led him to head a musical project for the people of Montserrat following a series of volcanic eruptions. He co-authored “Song for Montserrat,” which brought together an ensemble of 119 top artists from across the Caribbean. Introduced at a UN conference, the song was praised as one of “hope and faith.” Through his high-quality productions and unwavering dedication, Gil has earned a respected place in the music community and created a legacy of promoting Caribbean art forms on a global scale.



Trinidad Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

MERVYN O'NEIL

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY

When Mervyn O'Neil, a native of Tobago, arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1971, he quickly became a pivotal figure in the city's burgeoning Caribbean community. He joined fellow Caribbean immigrants in establishing *Carivibes*, a dynamic radio program that served as a cultural hub, and was instrumental in introducing the Boston Carnival, an event that has since become an iconic annual tradition.

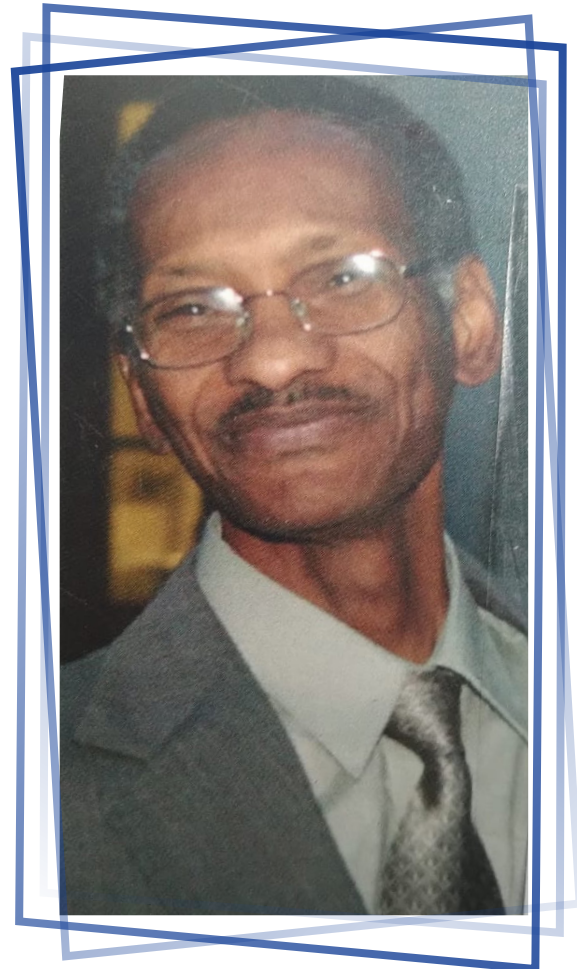
O'Neil's dedication to community-building continued after he relocated to Los Angeles, California, in 1978. There, he was a founding member of the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Relief Committee Inc. (TTMRC Inc.), a federal and state exempt 501(c) non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a singular mission: to serve as a USA-based entity that could access critical resources for Caribbean countries. The organization placed a special emphasis on medical and hurricane relief, leveraging its U.S. registration to secure support that might otherwise be unavailable.

By 1986, TTMRC Inc. began conducting annual medical relief missions to Tobago. These were not mere visits; they were comprehensive efforts that included conducting free medical clinics from village to village. Beyond providing direct care, the missions also undertook crucial research on the incidence of breast cancer among women and prostate cancer among men on the island. This research revealed a concerning 26% incidence rate, a finding that TTMRC promptly shared with the Tobago Regional Health Authority. In response to this data, the organization established a dedicated female clinic at Belle Garden, Tobago, specifically aimed at addressing this public health challenge.

Driven by a passion for cultural connectivity, O'Neil and TTMRC launched *The Crossover*, a Los Angeles-based magazine, in 1989. The publication's aim was to give identity to Caribbean people within the vast metropolis, fostering a sense of community while acknowledging the unique cultural adjustments inherent in the immigrant experience.

Recognizing a significant logistical challenge for the West Coast diaspora—the absence of a Trinidad and Tobago consular representative “West of the Mississippi”—O'Neil took action. TTMRC Inc. arranged for the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate in New York to spend a week in Los Angeles on an annual basis. This innovative arrangement, facilitated with assistance from the Grenadian Consular Office in Los Angeles, saved residents the costly and time-consuming matter of traveling for passport issuance and renewals.

Beyond his direct community work, O'Neil is a prolific author and editor. He has written two books, *An Analytical History of Tobago* and *Party Politics and Democracy in Trinidad and Tobago*, and has edited *The Tobago Voice*, a magazine with a focus on the Caribbean diaspora in the U.S.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT
2025

PRINCES LEE KEITH

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY



Princes Lee Keith is a distinguished community leader whose career and service have bridged both the United States and her homeland of Trinidad and Tobago. Migrating to the U.S. in 1970, she built an accomplished career spanning more than three decades in the insurance industry. She held senior positions such as Operations Manager at Marsh McLennan and Commercial Rating Supervisor at Chubb & Son–Federal Insurance Company, where she earned the rare distinction of receiving Power of Attorney for the Surety & Bonds Department.

Beyond her corporate achievements, Lee dedicated herself to public service and community advancement. She worked as an administrator for the late Councilwoman Juanita Watkins of District 31, the largest political district in New York State. Residing in Baldwin, Long Island, she served as Secretary of the Baldwin Civic Organization and, for nine years, as President of Friends of Trinidad & Tobago. Under her leadership, the organization focused on supporting nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, particularly in the area of health care for children diagnosed with congenital heart disease.

Her vision and commitment to peace were recognized in 2010 when she was appointed an Ambassador for Peace. Four years later, in 2014, she became President of the Women's Federation for World Peace Trinidad & Tobago, an organization holding consultative status with the United Nations.

Among her many noteworthy contributions are her role in establishing the Eric Williams Memorial Collection at the University of the West Indies and helping to create the Eric Williams Scholarship Fund, preserving the legacy of the late Prime Minister and historian. She also played a key role in advancing medical outreach programs for Trinidadian and Tobagonian children with congenital heart disease, connecting families to specialized care at Stony Brook Hospital in Long Island, New York.

These initiatives have transformed lives, producing remarkable success stories, including Carlton Alfonso III, now serving as an Army Officer, and Dr. Silina Mohammed, who went on to become a medical doctor.

Through her professional excellence, civic engagement, and humanitarian work, Princes Lee Keith has exemplified leadership, compassion, and dedication. Her contributions continue to inspire those committed to community building, cultural pride, and global peace.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

ROBERT MOHAMMED

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY

Robert Mohammed was actively involved in the scouting movement from an early age. The movement, a global youth initiative focused on character development, outdoor skills, and civic responsibility, instilled in him the core values of leadership, discipline, and community service, leaving a lasting impression on his character. Born in Aranguez, Trinidad, he remained deeply connected to the principles of scouting after migrating to Canada in the mid-1970s. Determined to give back to his new community, he began volunteering with the Boy Scouts of Canada (now called Scouts Canada) in the 1980s. Starting as a parent and later becoming a scout leader, he dedicated decades of service to the organization. For over 35 years, Robert positively impacted hundreds of children and youth from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in the Region of Peel, Brampton District of Ontario, serving as a dedicated mentor and role model.

A defining aspect of Robert's leadership was his unwavering commitment to providing scouts with opportunities for cultural exposure and global learning. He led major fundraising campaigns to support enriching travel experiences for youth in the Brampton District, especially Bramalea 13th and 2nd Brampton. One of his proudest achievements was organizing three major camps to Trinidad and Tobago, where the scouts were immersed in a dynamic curriculum. They explored historical sites like the forts, learned about the nation's geography, and experienced Trinidad and Tobago's vibrant multiculturalism. The overwhelming success of these visits inspired him to broaden the initiative to include other Caribbean islands, offering scouts the opportunity to visit Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, and the Dominican Republic. During these trips, youth were engaged with local scout groups and lived among families, providing a unique immersive cultural experience that helped them build lasting friendships and develop a deep appreciation for the Caribbean region and its unique way of life.

Equally impactful were the reciprocal visits Robert organized for Caribbean scout troops to Canada, further strengthening international ties. He arranged and sponsored group visits from Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada, including scouts from Port of Spain, San Fernando, and a combined troop from Grenada. These groups were given the opportunity to tour various provinces, experiencing Canada's rich regional diversity and multicultural society firsthand. They visited major cities and natural landmarks, gaining new perspectives on life in North America. Their participation in the Canadian Scout Jamboree in 1997 and 2001 also provided them with invaluable exposure to a global scouting network, fostering a sense of camaraderie that transcends borders.

Through his unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation, Robert built bridges between nations, ignited curiosity in young minds, and championed the values of inclusion, respect, and cultural pride. As a leader, he also participated in two World Jamborees, personally exposing the youth he mentored to the wider world of scouting and the global community. Robert's legacy is not only in the hundreds of lives he shaped but in the enduring international relationships he forged. He continues to assist and support youth, living by the profound words of Scout Commissioner, S.K. Ramsingh: "Knowledge is to be shared, not stored. If you don't share it, it's just wasted."



Trinidad and Tobago
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

SIEUNARINE “SAM” “LAL” GUALBANCE

SUNRISE: OCTOBER 27, 1949 ~ SUNSET: FEBRUARY 9, 2021

POSTHUMOUS PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT

CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY



An accomplished business owner with a generous heart, Mr. Sieunarine “Sam” Gualbance was the President of Chelsea, a leading Canadian company specializing in seafood. Born in Liberville, Rio Claro, in 1949, he often reflected fondly on his childhood, remembering “growing up amongst family in a safe environment, where everyone looked out for one another.” He attended Tagore Centenary College in Princes Town and St. John’s College in San Fernando before beginning his career at the Scarlet Ibis Hotel. He later worked at Joseph Charles Bottling Works and the Trinidad Express newspaper.

In 1970, Sam immigrated to Kingston, Ontario, where he joined the Holiday Inn as a receptionist and later advanced to reservations manager. A move into Toronto’s food service industry led him into retail sales with a major international food distribution company. Then, in 1997, Sam made what he described as his “calculated risk”: purchasing the Chelsea name and venturing into seafood distribution. Guided by his own belief that “hard work, taking calculated risks, and giving back to the community” were the keys to success, Sam built Chelsea into a thriving, nationwide company.

While business achievements marked his career, generosity defined his legacy. Sam never forgot his humble beginnings in Trinidad and Tobago, and he gave freely to both his homeland and his adopted country. When natural disasters struck the Caribbean, he personally organized shipments of food and supplies. He was passionate about education, ensuring that schools in disadvantaged communities received books and learning materials, often focusing on those in the neighborhood where he grew up.

In Canada, his kindness was equally evident. He extended warm welcomes to visiting Girl Guides and children with special needs, providing food and support to create lasting memories. Sam was also a steadfast supporter of Caribbean arts and culture. He was among the first donors to fundraising campaigns that financed the Canadian-Caribbean Diaspora Delegation to the Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA), a testament to his belief in strengthening cultural ties.

Sam’s life was one of vision, compassion, and devotion—not only to his work and community, but most importantly to his family.

*“We’ll always remember
That special smile,
That caring heart,
That warm embrace
You always gave us.
You being there
For Mom and us
Through good and bad times,
No matter what.
We’ll always remember you, Dad, because
There will never be another one
To replace you in our hearts,
And the love we will always
Have for you.”*

Sam is survived by his beloved wife, Cynthia, and his two sons, Jason and Justin.

The Canadian-Caribbean Arts Network (C-CAN) is proud to support the posthumous recognition of the late, great Sam Gualbance—not only as a successful Caribbean businessman, but as a true community builder in Canada and the Caribbean.



Trinidad Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ASSOCIATION OF OTTAWA CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY

Founded in 1983, the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Ottawa (TTAO) is a vibrant, community-based, non-profit organization serving the National Capital Region in Canada. Its mission is to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago while supporting the development and integration of nationals within the broader Canadian society.

The TTAO plays a vital role in fostering community spirit through a wide range of cultural, educational, and social initiatives. These include major celebrations such as Independence Day, Indian Arrival Day, Emancipation Day, and Trinbago Day, as well as smaller gatherings like comedy nights and parang events during the holiday season. These activities keep the community connected and ensure members feel supported. The association also champions local Caribbean businesses and authors, while frequently fundraising for organizations in Trinidad and Tobago.

A cornerstone of the TTAO's work is its scholarship program, which recognizes students of Caribbean descent who demonstrate academic excellence and community involvement. In 2024, the association awarded scholarships to five outstanding students pursuing studies in fields such as sociology, health, photography, and rehabilitation sciences. These awards not only celebrate achievement but also empower recipients to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

The TTAO maintains strong ties with other Caribbean organizations across Canada and collaborates closely with the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago in Ottawa. The association continues to stand as a beacon of cultural pride, inclusivity, and service.

For more information, visit www.ttao.ca.



Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

DIASPORA PATRIOT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ASSOCIATION UK CATEGORY: PHILANTHROPY

Trinidad and Tobago Association UK (TTAUK) was established on 31st August 1962 when a group of T&T nationals decided they wanted to “pave the way.” Their vision was to create an organisation which would “pave the way” for future generations, both in Trinidad and Tobago and in the UK, by making a difference and ensuring Trinidad and Tobago nationals and their descendants have a “home away from home.” TTAUK officially became a registered charity with the Charity Commission on 9th October 2009.

TTAUK aims to actively promote the culture and positive image of Trinidad & Tobago in the United Kingdom, and to develop programs for the advancement of the professional, cultural, educational, and socio-economic objectives of the citizens and Caribbean member organisations.

The charity is governed by a duly elected and co-opted Board of Trustees who are legally responsible for the day-to-day and executive running of the charity. TTAUK also uses a governance model that includes various ambassadors and leads with delegated responsibilities and accountability to the Board of Trustees.

The patron of the TTAUK is the postholder of the office of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commissioner to the UK.

TTAUK boasts of being the only Caribbean entity in the UK which has its own property, thereby negating the need to hire or rent other premises for events and activities. Over the past two years there has been a strategy of reaching out and communicating with groups and associations from the other Caribbean islands.

The charity fulfils its constitutional obligations by carrying out general charitable purposes such as running

a soup kitchen at its premises to provide a hot meal for anyone who requires it. The premises were used as an adult learning centre providing training in computer skills. The basement hall has been used as a place of worship for a local church community, and also as a space for an exercise class. The hall has been hired to facilitate the filming of a mental health programme aimed at Caribbean men.

The community services it has provided in the past six decades have catered for people of all ages and nationalities. Both nationals and the local community looked forward to the annual Christmas carol singing event which was always well attended and supported. There is now an annual Christmas party for the members with a focus on providing transport for the elderly members to ensure their safe attendance.

The basement hall is also used to host wakes for former members who have passed away, birthday parties, and other gatherings. It hosts regular All Fours card-playing sessions as a way of bringing nationals together, with, of course, traditional T&T dishes such as pelau, roti, and curry chicken.

The charity came to the aid of stranded nationals during the COVID pandemic by providing financial assistance for airfare back to T&T.

The charity's work continues to be reliant on income from its fundraising activities and the rental income from the two flats and the basement hall which are located at its premises at 380 Green Lanes, Finsbury Park, London.

The ground floor of the building has been converted into a coffee shop, not only as an income-generating venture, but also as a safe space for locals to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and our famous T&T coconut sweetbread and other snacks.





CARA HOTELS

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO - GUYANA

*The Management and Staff of Cara Hotels
extends heartfelt*

Congratulations!

*To the 12 recipients of the
Diaspora Patriots Awards 2025*

Cara Hotels

*The official Accommodation Provider for Diaspora
Homecoming Awards & Gala 2025*



*Shaping a new residential
community in Mt Irvine Tobago*

Congratulations

To

***The 12 recipients of Diaspora
Patriots Awards***

2025





Congratulations

Daniel Beckles, M.D.

Board Chair & Chief Medical Officer

Your Team Is Proud of You

Well Deserved Honor.



***Congratulations to all other honorees
and to Dr. Andre Phillips & TDON***

***Angela Cooper – President
Executive Board & Members***





A MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

Distinguished guests, esteemed award recipients, and fellow members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora Outreach Network, I'm honored to stand in this role to celebrate the remarkable charitable contributions of our diasporans to their homeland. Your selflessness, dedication, and compassion have made a profound impact on the lives of many in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad as well. *A Legacy of Giving Back* Your contributions have not gone unnoticed. You've touched hearts, transformed lives, and inspired others to follow in your footsteps. Whether it's through education, healthcare, or community development, your efforts have helped build a stronger, more resilient community.

Today, we recognize and celebrate the values that drive your philanthropy: Empathy- Your ability to understand and share the feelings of others has been a guiding force in your charitable work. Your willingness to give your time, resources, and expertise has made a tangible difference in the lives of many, Community spirit-Your commitment to giving back to your community has inspired others to do the same, creating a ripple effect of kindness and compassion. To our award recipients, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your tireless efforts to make a positive impact in Trinidad and Tobago. Your work is a testament to the power of diaspora communities to drive change and create a better future for all. As we celebrate your achievements, we also acknowledge the challenges that you have faced and overcome. Your perseverance and determination serve as an inspiration to us all.

As we move forward, we recognize that there is still much work to be done. We will continue to support and empower our diaspora community to make a meaningful difference in Trinidad and Tobago. To our award recipients, I offer these final words of appreciation: thank you for being beacons of hope and kindness. Thank you for showing us what it means to live with purpose and passion. Your contributions will forever be etched in the hearts of those you have touched. Please join me in congratulating our award recipients on this well-deserved recognition. May your legacy continue to inspire others to make a positive impact in their communities.

Claire Kirk

Claire E. Kirk

TDON-Canada

Congratulations

To

Mervyn O Neil

*Honouree of Diaspora Patriots
Awards 2025*

from

Professor Selwyn Cudjoe. ORTT





FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORIUM



Congratulations

To

***All Honorees of Diaspora
Patriots Awards***



***For 137 years, Belgroves
Funeral Home has stood as
Trinidad and Tobago's oldest
and most trusted funeral
home, serving with dignity,
compassion, and innovation.***

***As we look toward
Homecoming 2025, we remain
committed to bridging the
distance between our
homeland and the Diaspora,
ensuring that our roots,
traditions, and legacies
endure.***



Trinbago Diaspora
OUTREACH NETWORK

SALUTING T&T DIASPORA CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOME

The Trinbago Diaspora Outreach Network celebrates the brilliance of Trinbagonian culture worldwide. With a concierge style that embodies an inclusive and diverse wealth of talent, skills and knowledge across various industries.

Our Trinbagonian Diaspora return to celebrate with pride their heritage, paying homage to their homeland. Every success abroad strengthens the spirit and re-ignites our spark.

Scan the QR for our events



LEARN ABOUT US

WWW.TRINBAGODIASPORA.ORG

or call +1 (868) 682-1432

SCAN FOR A DIGITAL VERSION
OF THIS MAGAZINE

