Contents

TRIBUTES

COMRADE

1 From Beginning to End – A New World Man

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

8 Tribute to Professor Norman Girvan
10 Caribbean Intellectual and Patriot
14 For Norman

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

20 Institute of International Relations & Faculty of Social Sciences Tribute
22 Tribute to Norman Girvan
24 To Prof, with Gratitude
26 One Sentence at a Time
28 IIR Library Display

REGIONAL

29 University of Havana
32 La Deuda es Impagable (The Debt is Unpayable)
37 Resolution of Mourning
38 Condolences

FAMILY

42 This is A Caribbean Man
47 Pictures from Prof. Girvan’s Memorial held at The UWI St. Augustine Campus
ISSUE 17: JUNE 2014

EDITOR – Ms. Lynelle Clarke

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mr. David Abdullah
Sir Shridath Ramphal
Professor Clement Sankat
Professor Brian Meeks
Institute of International Relations & Faculty of Social Sciences
Dr. Annita Montoute
Ms. Kai-Ann Skeete
Ms. Gwendolene Roberts
University of Havana
Dr. Alissa Trotz
Association of Caribbean States
Mr. Alexander Girvan

PHOTOGRAPHY
The Girvan Family
Marketing & Communications at The UWI

ON THE COVER
The IIR Today remembers Prof. Norman Girvan - A Quintessential Caribbean Man.
I begin this tribute to Norman Girvan, a friend and a comrade, with the words of a great Jamaican literary figure, Dennis Scott. It’s his poem “Hatch: Or, The Revolution Viewed as an Exploding Library”

This is a stone.
These are the men climbing it.
They eat their way up its face
spitting out bits of earth and blood. When they are tired
the stumps of their arms wedge
into cracks, they hang patiently till the next leg of the journey can begin.
Nothing stops them. They come
like messages, poems, songs
about hunger.
Those words cannot run, or rub off.
Sometimes the rock shifts, scattering one into the air. He falls
silently, over and over, too tired to shout.

They know what to do when they arrive.
The holes have been prepared
by time, pecked open
into honeycombs: a library of dreams.

They will place themselves, like documents.
Fused.
They will wait for the fist, and the fire.
That stone will open,
like a seed.¹

Norman Girvan was one of those men who climbed the stone. These were the men who emerged in the early 1960’s as The New World Group: a group of radical lecturers and students in the social sciences and arts, who saw the future of the societies into which they were born as being predicated on two critical factors – the need for Independent Thought and the emergence of a federated or integrated West Indies.

From the youth of 18 as a student at The University of the West Indies, Mona in 1959 to the youthful Professor Emeritus whom we lost way too soon, from beginning to end of his adult life, Norman Girvan was a New World Man!

As with all human endeavours, not all “hang patiently till the next leg of the journey can begin”. Some eschewed their earlier positions and opted instead for the orthodoxy. But not Norman. In his comments at the Closing Session of the First Conference of Caribbean Economists at Mona in July, 1987, a Conference which Norman was a central figure in organizing as the First president of ACE, Professor Rex Nettleford had this to say:

“Happily, in papers dealing with the social implications of the development crisis and the theoretical constraints as well as policy institutions rooted in Caribbean reality, the primary need to look at ourselves through our own eyes has been in large measure met. The work cannot stop here. There is much more to be done. This is just a beginning. For the global reality looms large in the consciousness, dominates the vocabulary of the most resistant among us and continues to blur the vision of our own leaders who want to be Ronnie Reagans and Maggie Thatchers before they are themselves”.

In the almost three decades since, the reality of neo-liberal globalization which then had started to loom large has indeed become dominant, but Norman held fast and challenged the orthodoxy to the end.

And yes, “the rock has shifted” and some who started the climb with Norman “have been scattered into the air” – Walter Rodney, way, way too soon; George Beckford too soon and Lloyd Best more recently. And now Norman.

We have been blessed with some of the most remarkable men and women who were New World in thought, word and deed and who are no longer with us today. At the risk of doing a disservice to many, let me share just a few names whom I knew and who were also friends and colleagues – kindred spirits really – of Norman: Dennis Pantin, Angela and John Cropper, Pat Bishop, Rex Nettleford, John La Rose and, above all CLR James. There must be quite a ruckus going on somewhere as these co-conspirators gather to discuss the issues of the day!

What then, we may ask, kept Norman Girvan going? A friend of mine, Trinidadian born US based, Professor Acklyn Lynch remarked many years ago that the Caribbean sadly lacked, at the level of our leadership, a sense of ethics and aesthetics. Norman possessed both the ethic and the aesthetic and he held fast to the old adage – “to thine own self be true” – so much so that he maintained a deep ethical conviction to be intellectually honest.

Norman himself gives us a real appreciation of what underpinned his sense of ethics and aesthetics. There was, firstly, the context in which he started his student life which propelled him into the pursuit of Independent Thought and which shaped his

2 Rex Nettleford,
conviction that Caribbean integration was central to our development. And there was the influence of CLR James. But let Norman tell it in his own words:

“I was a student on the Mona campus of the University (then University College) of the West Indies…I remember it as a time of great excitement, tremendous ferment and heated debates. Imagine what it was like to be in a Caribbean populated by the likes of Norman Manley, Eric Williams, Cheddi Jagan, Grantley Adams and CLR James; Frank Worrell and Garfield Sobers; Arthur Lewis; Vida Naipaul and Roger Mais; Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and the ghost of Marcus Garvey; moreover in a world populated by the likes of Nehru, Nasser, Nkrumah and Nyerere, Tito, Sukharno and Mao Zedong.

A debate was raging over what form the West Indies Federation should take and what economic policies it should follow…The burning issues of debate were West Indian integration and identity, imperialism, decolonization, racism, socialism, democracy, mass party and economic development. There was a widespread sense that the emerging postcolonial order was in crisis. The question was — what course should national independence take?”

I wish to suggest that Norman consistently interrogated this question for his entire adult life for the postcolonial order is still in crisis. I shall return to this later. But let us continue with his narrative:

“One residence at Taylor Hall I was surrounded by Trinbagonians, Guyanese, Bajans, Antiguans and students from the other islands. The air was vibrating to the sound of Pan and enriched with the smell of Roti — sounds and smells that were to me new, unfamiliar, even exotic.

Looking back, I can see that I was in the process of being transformed from a Jamaican nationalist into a Caribbean regionalist…

This was the ambience in which CLR James came to deliver one in a series of Open Lectures.”

“I was a first year student, an impressionable youth, and the experience was unforgettable…‘The great artist’, James said, ‘is universal because he is national’ – rooted in his or her society and reflecting and relating to the social forces of their time and place…Years later, as a graduate student in London, I was part of CLR James study group that met every week at his house in London to sit at his feet — intellectually and even literally…Individuals from the James Study Group were to develop ideas, scholarship and activism that influenced the course of

3 Norman Girvan, “New World and its Critics” in “The Thought of New World: The Quest for Decolonisation” Ed by Brian Meeks and Norman Girvan, (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2”10)
development in the English speaking Caribbean in the early post-colonial years.”

(Inserted comment - Some of the members of that study group are here today: Richard Small and Joan French)

To this I wish to add his relationship in London with John La Rose and other Caribbean literary and artistic figures, which relationship helped to connect him with the work of people like Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Stanley French and the Caribbean Artists Movement in London.

So emerged a young intellectual named Norman Girvan: an intellectual in the sense that George Lamming has so often defined and reminded us, that is, one who is in the service of elucidating our own reality in order to transform it in the interest of the ordinary men and women of the Caribbean.

I think that we can now situate Norman’s contribution as one of the finest sons of Jamaica and the Caribbean. It explains his work in academia and in politics, both formal and informal. I will not describe his enormous body of works and how his life progressed – in his own words how “One Thing Led to Another – influences on my choices of subject and approach” but simply to connect what I believe were his consistent sense of ethics and aesthetics to these works.

Norman’s commitment to Independent Thought naturally led him to being part of the New World Group and Chair of its Jamaica branch. It led him to study and write about the exploitation of mineral resources in Jamaica, Chile and Trinidad and Tobago; and to identify the role of transnational capital in this process of exploitation.

It situated him within the ‘plantation school’ of economists who so excited my generation of students of economics: the school who seemed, like our great West Indian bowling attacks – Ramadhin and Valentine, Hall and Griffith, Roberts and Holding, Walsh and Ambrose – to hunt in pairs. I refer to (Havelock) Brewster and (CY) Thomas; (Alistair) McIntyre and Watson; (Norman) Girvan and (Owen) Jefferson; and of course (Lloyd) Best and (Kari) Levitt. (George) Beckford, perhaps like Malcolm Marshall, was always partnered with the other greats but not always consistently paired with one.

This pursuit of Independent Thought also took him outside of the region: it opened him to the realities of Latin America and to its Open Veins. It also

---

5 Norman Girvan, “Existential Threats in the Caribbean: Democratising politics, Regionalising Governance” (Unpublished Lecture delivered as the Annual CLR James Memorial Lecture organized by the Oilfields Workers’ Trade Union, Trinidad and Tobago, 2011)


7 Norman Girvan, “One Thing Led to Another – influences on my choices of subject and approach” (http://www.normangirvan.info)
took him to Africa where he worked with Samir Amin at the UN’s African Institute for Development and Planning, located in Dakar, Senegal. It also led him to doing considerable research with Guyanese political economist Maurice Odle on technology transfer and MNC’s – first in a regional study and later at the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations.

Norman walked the talk of commitment to Caribbean integration. His entire teaching life was at The University of the West Indies. And it didn’t matter which campus – he started and ended at St. Augustine so, my Jamaican friends, Mona was but an interlude!

He founded, together with GBeck, and led the seminal work of the Association of Caribbean Economists (ACE), which organization Judith Wedderburn nurtured so carefully.

Then, in 2000 he moved to the position of Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States. This was at a critical moment in Latin American politics (Hugo Chávez had only just been elected President of Venezuela and Lula started his Presidency in 2003, and these ushered in an era of the left taking office in Latin America).

The work at the ACS was consistent with Norman’s vision of the Grand Caribbean as was his role as Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations in the Venezuela – Guyana border dispute.

Latterly, he produced a formidable work on a roadmap for, and the imperative of implementing, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

The requirement of our radical intellectuals to walk the talk was evident throughout Norman’s life: from his work with the New World Group and Abeng in the 60’s and early 70’s to a sense of duty to contribute to the albeit fleeting opportunity of shifting the development agenda provided by the Michael Manley government be it through the Jamaican People’s Plan (with Mikey Whitter and GBeck) or as Head of the National Planning Agency.

Freed of the need to be in a formal institution, the last decade of Norman’s life was perhaps the period of greatest activism. He was a founding member and Chair of the Cropper Foundation; and a Board member of the South Centre working with colleagues on sustainable development.

He led campaigns in solidarity with Haiti – to provide support in the aftermath of the earthquake and in the movement for self-determination: against imperial intervention in the form of both MINUSTAH and so-called post earthquake reconstruction driven by forces outside of Haiti. And, in the months just before his accident, Norman led the regional movement against the
abomination of the Dominican Republic’s decision to make tens of thousands of Haitian descendents in the DR stateless. It was his way of saying, in the words of the calypso bard, David Rudder, “Haiti, we’re sorry”.

This activism was seen at its brilliant best in his campaign to initiate debate and educate Caribbean citizens, mobilize civil society and influence governments on the so-called Economic Partnership Agreement between Cariforum and the European Union. He suffered many a dogmatic attack against him for pursuing this campaign, but he pursued what he knew to be right and intellectually honest, consistent with his ethical position of Caribbean integration and sovereignty based on Independent Thought. He will, I am sure be vindicated by time.

This commitment to challenge the orthodoxy was naturally expressed in his solidarity with the revolutionary processes in Cuba and Venezuela. And as with all revolutionary solidarity, it was mutual and repaid by both Venezuela and Cuba in the last month of Norman’s life when he was in a moment of need.

The influence of CLR was also evident in Norman’s unbelievable discipline (he always produced completed papers and lectures; issued and then replied immediately to emails, while chastising those like me who didn’t) and in the commitment to propagating ideas through a newspaper: in the early days it was literally paper – New World Quarterly and Abeng; and then, quite remarkably for one of his generation, through the internet: a magnificent website –normangirvan.info; regular blogs; thousands of email exchanges; and the weekly e-newsletter “1804 CaribVoices”.

He saw the importance of nurturing a new generation and not just worked with graduate students, but assisted in developing them into activists by lecturing and speaking all over the region whenever invited, traveling tirelessly and producing numerous addresses and papers. It was indeed, the “library of dreams” of which the poet spoke.

In all of Norman’s work in the past decade he has, with all his tremendous intellectual capacity, critiqued the present neo-liberal capitalist paradigm and its deleterious effects on Caribbean sovereignty and the welfare of the ordinary men and women of the region. This is why I say that he was New World till the very end. But he makes the point best:

“My point is that the New World mission of intellectual decolonization is more relevant than ever because intellectual colonization is alive and well in Mona and St. Augustine and Kingston and Port of Spain. The methods of intellectual colonization are the conditionalities of the international lending agencies and donor countries, their financial
surveillance, their technical reports on our educational system and our health care system and our agricultural policy and our public sector reform. The methods are the daily bombardment from the global media, it is scholarships and fellowships and travel grants that do us the favour of assimilating their worldview and it is consultancies given to scholars where they define the terms and we do the work...

Are we setting the agenda? Are we questioning the concepts that are handed to us and adapting them to fit our history and culture and cosmologies and inventing others when none of them fit? ...So the fact that the world has changed since the 1960’s does not mean that it has not also remained the same. We have a different world from the world of New World but it is in many respects the old world that New World opposed”.

Thank you, Norman Girvan, one of the most fertile minds of our academy, friend of the region’s working people and poor, comrade of our social movements, fighter and believer in social justice, one who knew that another world is not only necessary but possible, mentor to a new generation of activists. And, above all, like all true revolutionaries concerned about humanity, Norman was simply a wonderful, wonderful human being!

Thank you Jasmine, Alexander, Alatashe and Ramon for sharing him with us.

Norman, you have, in the poet’s words “pecked open the honeycombs: a library of dreams”. You have ‘opened that stone, like a seed” and the next generation is, I assure you, “waiting for the fist, and the fire”.

I end with the words of another legendary Caribbean poet, Martin Carter:

“Dear Comrade
If it must be
you speak no more with me
nor smile no more with me
nor march no more with me
then let me take
a patience and a calm
for even now the greener leaf explodes
sun brightens stone
and all the rivers burn
now from the mourning vanguard moving on
dear comrade I salute you and say
death must not find us thinking that we die”

Walk Good, my friend!

---


9 Martin Carter
As a West Indian, as a regionalist, as a son of one Caribbean, I have to say today as Nehru did on Gandhi’s passing:

The light has gone out of the world; and there is darkness everywhere.

That was exactly the emptiness I felt - and I know you did too - when we heard from the family the news we were dreading: that Norman had indeed passed over.

In recent years, Norman Girvan had become the unrelenting keeper of the flame of West Indian unity; a flame he fanned from embers, inspiring a new generation to believe that it might yet endure and burn brightly.

To his passion for unity he brought his economic scholarship, so that from a foot soldier of economic integration he became its intellectual guru, and as such he dwelt always not in an ivory tower but on the front lines of the struggle of ideas, and the hopes that that struggle sustained.

He was my friend and my comrade; but he was more; he was a tonic to the flagging spirits of a generation of West Indians who suffer the mental and physical pangs of regional debility; and he had the energy to demonstrate by his own efforts that it is still possible to keep the light of regionalism burning. On the eve of our leaders declaring a ‘pause’ in the integration process, Norman had led a team of West Indian economists whose Report, Re-energising CARICOM Integration, called with clarity and intellectual power for...
precisely the opposite to the inertia the regional leadership sanctified with the mantle of policy. *Re-energizing Integration* is a product of this region; it must not, like *The Economics of Nationhood* – a product of this nation - be another valid prescription un-fulfilled. But Norman did not give up the struggle. The website which he established and managed in the cause of regional integration became the rallying ground of Caribbean patriots - economists and others - from which the integration banner flew high – and can ever fly. The generation Norman has inspired must maintain and cultivate that website in his name. That is the kind of living memorial he would have wished. Our region needs a vibrant social media to come to the aid of a faltering political process.

That in this month, we are saying farewell to both the Statesman who devised the Declaration of Grand Anse in the cause of ‘preparing the people of the West Indies for the 21st century’, and to Norman Girvan who strove all his professional life to have the Declaration fulfilled, is testimony to the reality – and the urgency - of that need. The Caribbean cannot afford to lose Norman Girvan. We must not lose his legacy.

In what were to be his last years, Norman Girvan served this region in assisting the UN Secretary General in his good offices role in putting an end to the trouble that has mired Guyana-Venezuela relations. Norman knew well the sordid story of Venezuelan cabals that have made this their cause for dishonorable reasons; but he knew too that there were others in the true Bolivarian tradition who placed higher the need for harmony in the wider Caribbean; and so he gave his energies to that cause. All will miss his calming influence; as this week that wider Caribbean has mourned, and is mourning today with us.

Norman’s bond with me was close. The ACS – the Association of Caribbean States - was a product of the West Indian Commission which I Chaired, and for 3 years Norman was its Secretary-General. His stewardship is remembered with respect far beyond English-speaking shores – striving to bring unity to an archipelago whose natural state is fragmentation; striving to overcome the separatism of a dividing sea. He knew it was possible; he had lived it in his life. It is symbolic of that personal victory that he passed over in Cuba which was also his home.

The light has indeed gone out in our wider region; but Norman Girvan will not want the darkness to prevail. We must re-kindle in his memory the light he was, and we must follow the way he lighted for us.

As we tell ourselves of him (in his own words) – *THE DEBT IS UNPAYABLE;* he will remind us still: *LA LUTA CONTINUA.*
We have come together today to celebrate the life of Professor Emeritus Norman Girvan, one of our very own distinctive UWI graduates and faculty members. I say "our own" graduate, because in 1962, Professor Girvan graduated with a BSc in Economics from the University College of the West Indies; the precursor to the regional University of the West Indies! And I say, "our own" faculty member, because up until his passing, he was Professor Emeritus and Professorial Research Fellow at our Institute of International Relations. I am sure you can therefore appreciate that this memorial service in honour of Professor Girvan has a special place at the heart of The UWI!

And so, on behalf of The UWI St. Augustine Campus, I wish to express sincere thanks to Jasmine, his wife, and his children for allowing our Campus in collaboration with the Cropper Foundation, The Lloyd Best Institute of the West Indies, and the OWTU, to pay tribute to Professor Girvan, a man of rare distinction, through this memorial service. We are extremely honoured to recognize and celebrate one of the most exceptional minds of our region; one of the leading thinkers of Caribbean and Latin America regionalism and a strong advocate for its development; Jamaican by birth, but, a true Caribbean man!

Before I continue, however, allow me to convey, on behalf of the Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies, Professor E. Nigel Harris a brief message, and I quote, “Our Region has lost one of its great sons who made a significant contribution to regional development theory and policy. A brilliant scholar, a dear friend and colleague, a committed regionalist, and a caring and dedicated teacher to many generations of students. Norman played an influential role in Caribbean development, transcending language and geographical borders. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, Jasmine, Ramon, Alexander and Alatashe, and mourn with them, the loss of a true son of the Caribbean”.

The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar has also apologized for her absence today, and sends her sincere sympathies to the family of Professor Norman Girvan.

When remembering an academic luminary like Professor Norman Girvan, I am sure you will agree with me when I
say that there is no shortage of topics to discuss. For the scope of his academic pursuits and personal musings were indeed wide-ranging. Let me say however, that his service to The University of the West Indies was without a doubt exceptional, having served as Senior Lecturer and Lecturer in Economics; Director of the Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences; University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis School of Social and Economic Studies; and since 2004, Professorial Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations.

But Professor Girvan’s light shone not only in The University of the West Indies, but throughout the wider Caribbean region and internationally, evident in his many regional assignments and international appointments including his term in office at the helm of the ACS; his election as Vice Chairman of the Board of the South Centre, an intergovernmental Think Tank; and his appointment as the United Nations Secretary General’s Personal Representative for assistance in the resolution of the Guyana-Venezuela border controversy among many others.

Professor Girvan was also an advocate for ensuring that academic research impacts the lives of the people we serve - the people of the wider Caribbean region. To use the words of one of many tributes, Girvan, "throughout his life, insisted that the role of the academic was not to be restricted to the cloistered arenas of academia, or even to government institutions. He insisted from an early adult age that academic knowledge crucial to economic and social development policy, should be widely advocated to the general West Indian public; and in turn, that the concerns of the public should become concerns of academics, whose interventions, where possible were critical."

Professor Girvan, understood this perfectly, and in fact, led by example. While Professor Girvan’s widespread engagements are too numerous to mention here, let me say that most recently, his active involvement in the cause of the Haitian descendants born in the Dominican Republic and denied citizenship by the country of their birth, is testament to his belief that his intellect should be used in the interest of the ordinary man.

Dr. Alissa Trotz puts it quite nicely in her tribute entitled, “The Debt is Unpayable: For Norman Girvan”, and I quote, “For him, public intellectual work was a loving obligation and form of giving back, a process that involved not just putting what one learned at the service of a wider community, but crucially of being enriched by the conversations, this act of sharing initiated”.

Professor Girvan therefore never neglected an opportunity to use his
intellect to uplift people in our communities and societies, particularly in the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as those from the global south!

While reflecting on the remarkable contributions made by Professor Girvan, I also could not help but think about the way in which he influenced the formation of many scholars and thinkers on Caribbean development, including my own! And I can think of no better example, than his vision for an integrated approach for the management and exploitation of our natural resources, in particular, the rationalization of our regional bauxite industry which could generate forward and backward linkage activities regionally.10

His groundbreaking research and work in this area could be found in some of his early publications such as, “The Caribbean Bauxite Industry” (1967); “Bauxite: Why We Need to Nationalize, and How to do it” (1971); and “Making the Rules of the Game: Company-Country Agreements in the Bauxite Industry” (1971). His advocacy for a regional bauxite industry is unparalleled and his influence on my own work in this area is evident in one of my publications, “Aluminum Smelting: Health, Environmental and Engineering Perspectives” published in 2008. Girvan urged Caribbean governments to participate in the value added, from bauxite – to alumina, to aluminum and to manufactured products.

In 1967, he spoke of depletion rates of this natural resource of Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana and the impact that technological progress was making on product development from the use of bauxite to produce products of aluminum in particular. He argued for a Caribbean industry that will “combine material - bauxite, power (energy), technology and capital to change basically the forms under which the Caribbean participates in this world industry”.

Today however, nearly a half century later after his seminal contributions, his vision on regional resource use and its management, and the significant benefits this could bring to the people of our region is still not a reality, much to the region’s loss. And let me say that while in 1967 his focus was on Jamaica, Guyana and Suriname, today in 2014, Trinidad and Tobago with its energy, capital, heavy industry knowledge and skills, and its location should take the leadership role, so as to ensure Girvan’s vision, which many of us subscribe to, becomes a reality. Our Caribbean destiny is now in our own hands, as opposed to 1960s, and therefore there can be no excuses for underdevelopment and integration!

10 See Norman Girvan revised version of paper presented at a Seminar on “Production Integration in the CSME” held at UWI, Mona, January 26-27, 2006; as published in Dennis Benn and Kenneth Hall (eds.) Production Integration in CARICOM: From Theory to Action. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2006; Ch. 2, pp. 8-29
We at The University of the West Indies were fortunate to have someone like Professor Norman Girvan as part of our university community. A man of considerable thought and vision! His legacy is undeniably a record of exceptional scholarship and advocacy that has, and will continue to impact the lives of the people in our region and beyond. A role model for many scholars putting “Research into Action” and unafraid to cross this divide.

It is therefore my hope that this memorial service will remind us all of his hard work, sacrifice and commitment to the development of the people of the wider Caribbean, and of the global south. It is also my hope that his achievements, and especially his ability to engage our stakeholders in a frank, but honest manner that was backed by his scholarship, will encourage and motivate many other individuals, particularly our young academic staff and research students to also engage in an independent, but constructive manner and lead a life of service that benefits the people of our region.

Yes, it is true that the passing of our friend, colleague and mentor has left us with a profound sense of loss (as is the recent loss of another distinguished UWI alumni, Ms. Dana Seetahal, S.C.), but we must keep his work, his dream, and his vision of a unified region alive, through our individual and collective commitment to Caribbean regionalism and solidarity! Let us ensure that his work lives on for generations to come, through us! Let us ensure that we honour his contributions by building on his great legacy!
For Norman
By Professor Brian Meeks

The power of philosophy, floats through my head
Light like a feather…
Heavy as lead

I used the Marley lyrics six years ago in a tribute I read for the Ninth annual SALISES conference held at Mona and dedicated to Norman’s work. After it was delivered, we met in the audience and he thanked me profoundly, and declared in typically demurring manner, that he didn’t recognise the person I was speaking about as Norman Girvan, but rather it seemed to be some long gone, highly accomplished hero.

It was only then that the full tragedy and pathos of the moment dawned on me as it became clear that he would not be waiting in this gathering to give his usual comments on what I might say. Norman Girvan was born in 1941 in Kingston Jamaica. The last child of Thom and Rita Girvan, he readily acknowledged that his father, who was the leading figure in the community redevelopment movement ‘Jamaica Welfare’ was a major influence on his future career.

Equally significant was his time at Calabar High School - the Baptist-run institution on Red Hills Road. Taught by an outstanding cadre of teachers, among them notably, the novelists Neville Dawes and John Hearne, he would later argue in his autobiographical essay ‘One thing led to another’ that it was the inspirational faculty and small class size at Calabar that stirred in him and other students a tradition of critical thinking.
Winning a scholarship to the University College of the West Indies in 1959, he arrived there, in his own words, at a time of great excitement. W. Arthur Lewis had been appointed Principal and the West Indies Federation had just been established. The best and the brightest from the English-speaking Caribbean had gathered at Mona and debates on decolonisation and the possibility of a Caribbean nation were rife.

Among his peers were students like H. Orlando Patterson and Walter Rodney and among the faculty, Roy Augier, M.G. Smith, Lloyd Best, Lloyd Braithwaite and Elsa Goveia. But perhaps the greatest influence on the young Girvan occurred when Trinidadian *homme de lettres* Cyril Lionel Robert James visited to give a famous series of lectures. James’s unique synthesis of West Indian nationalism, heretical Marxism and interdisciplinary cultural studies, the latter practiced decades ahead of the invention of the term, would have a lasting imprint on the young scholar.

This trend continued when he proceeded to the London School of Economics to read for his doctorate and where, beyond the boundaries of the library, he was a member of James’s storied study circle that included, among others, Orlando Patterson, Walter Rodney and Richard Small.

Girvan’s return to the Caribbean took him first to a position at St Augustine and as David Abdulah said wryly in his tribute at Mona, St Augustine can with some truth boast that he started and ended his work here and that Mona was but an interlude.

But what an interlude! In the detritus of the Federal experiment, hope for a Caribbean project had rekindled at Mona in the form of the New World Movement. At its apogee in the late sixties, New World was pan-Caribbean in its scope with a fortnightly in Guyana, a Quarterly out of Jamaica, many branches throughout the Anglophone Caribbean, in Puerto Rico and the Diaspora and with intellectual influence way beyond its organisational size.
The trends in New World were eclectic, but generally radical and transformative in nature, addressing questions such as the failure of post-independence economic policies, Black Power and alternative, post-federation options for Caribbean integration. Girvan served as chairman of the New World Mona group from 1966-1969, a period in which he staked his claim as a foremost regional economist, addressing frontally in his book *Foreign Capital and Economic Underdevelopment in Jamaica* questions of the unequal relations in the Caribbean bauxite industry and the possibilities for more genuine development through policies of nationalisation, regional integration and international South-South cooperation.

In the nineteen seventies, Girvan served at the UN’s African Institute for Development and Planning in Senegal before returning to coordinate a UWI/University of Guyana technology transfer project. This led him back to Jamaica, where in 1977 he joined the democratic socialist administration of Michael Manley as head of the national Planning Agency.

The early months of 1977 were crucial as, in the face of bankruptcy and a threatening IMF programme, Girvan along with his colleagues George Beckford, Louis Lindsay and Michael Witter, sought to consult, through a series of meetings and solicitations, the views of the Jamaican people on their preferred pathway for national economic development.

The eventual proposal, lacking in financial detail, was never approved and the Government entered into troubling relations with the IMF which, with brief interregna, continue today. Yet, the methodology of engaging with the people to determine both short and medium term economic policy remains a template still to be apprised and utilised by the governments of the region.

Much of the rest is well known to this audience. After the Manley regime was defeated in the 1980 elections, Girvan worked with the UN, only to return to teach in and later lead the Consortium Graduate School of the Social Sciences at Mona - an innovative, interdisciplinary programme, which has made its mark not only in its outstanding alumni, but in being one of the progenitors of my own Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) of which Norman was the founding Director.

In between and beyond, he helped form and initially led the Association of Caribbean Economists, served as Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States and concluded his academic career as Professor at the Institute of International Relations here at St Augustine until his retirement in 2010.
At this juncture, I wish to return to my earlier quotation from Bob Marley’s ‘Misty Morning’, a not untypical foray of his into philosophy, to suggest that the binary ‘light as a feather; heavy as lead’ might provide us with an entry into Norman’s own philosophy and its intimate connections with his personality, which made him the leading activist, Caribbean political economist of his generation and a beacon on the mountain to those that follow in his wake.

Norman was light as a feather in his intellectual nimbleness and avoidance of either paralysing disciplinary categories or stultifying dogma. Go to his website 1804CaribVoices and look at the range of concerns that he sought to promote. From popular culture, to technological change; from the minutiae of trade agreements to the abstraction of Caribbean thought, from Latin American politics to greater Caribbean Integration, they are all there, belying the notion that the economist’s work ends at the boundaries of demand and supply curves.

But equally, he was light as a feather in his recognition that the world was changing and new times demanded new tactics. Thus, unlike the unrelenting caricature painted of him by a columnist in the Trinidad Express, suggesting that he was stuck in some outmoded nineteen sixties notion of dependency theory, Norman was far lighter on his feet, seeking to understand the dynamics of globalisation; the way in which it had dissolved some boundaries in communications and trade but paradoxically, reinforced them in labour and migration; but always searching for openings and strategies that would ultimately benefit the people of the South.

Yet, he could also be heavy as lead in the consistency of his advocacy for the poor and the powerless. There is a mantra running through his work, both written and praxis and is to be found in his advocacy of a better deal for Caribbean minerals and an integrated Caribbean bauxite industry; for the full involvement of the Jamaican people in the formulation of the national economic plan; for the genuine transference of technology from the North to the South so that we might become makers of our future instead of just consumers of consumables made elsewhere; against the sixty-odd year, cruel, Cuban embargo; against the egregious exclusion of Dominican-born Haitian descendants from legal status, making them stateless; for a better deal from the Europeans than offered in the EPA, in order for us to compete on a slightly more level playing field, without hands tied behind our backs; and for a greater recognition of the tenuous position of small states in the contemporary world with the real possibility of existential crises.

Girvan’s mantra through all these is that there must be an ethic that undergirds
human relations, whether at the national or international levels and at its essence, must be the notion of Justice: Justice for the poor; justice for the weak; justice for weak nations and states; this was Norman’s constant theme, despite changes in tactics from the Seventies until the present.

Yet, Norman was light as a feather, in his love for his family, for Jasmine, Ramon, Alexander and Alatashe and his nurturing presence in their lives, made even more remarkable when placed alongside his peripatetic involvement in the social and political turbulence of the contemporary Caribbean.

I shall never forget the poignant letter he shared, written to Alex who was grappling with difficult exam topics, outlining the context and contours of his life and making history real and meaningful in a brilliant, unprecedented way. And light as a feather in his willingness to listen, speak and work with a new generation of Caribbean activist scholars, both at home and abroad.

And, through it all, he was as heavy as lead in his unwavering commitment to Caribbean regionalism and his refusal to abide within the confines of narrow, insular parochialism. And here I submit two instances from the treasure-chest of my many interactions with him.

I recall, perhaps some seven years ago, inviting Norman to a conference on Black Power that the Centre for Caribbean Thought was hosting at Mona. Unforgivably, we had scheduled it for early in the year and it clashed directly with ‘Trinbago’ Carnival. Norman wrote me a dry letter, which unfortunately, seems to be lost on a corrupted hard drive and which said in effect, “Brian, how on earth could you schedule a conference that clashes head-on with the foremost popular celebration in the Caribbean? Quite evidently I cannot attend!”

The second instance, I am able to quote verbatim. When SALISES was planning the Fifty-fifty conference to celebrate Fifty years of independence in both Jamaica and Trinidad, I had drafted a project proposal which sought to look at both Jamaica and Trinidad, but argued inter alia, that located in Jamaica and with SALISES Mona taking the lead, it would invariably lean heavily on Jamaican experiences.

Norman read the draft and was immediately and critically alert. He wrote to me and I quote: “I have gone
through the documents and it is indeed regional in the questions it asks, but the answers will be based on a study of the Jamaican experience and ends by stating that a study of the Jamaican experience will be the basis of formulating the direction of the future of the Caribbean.

This of course will not be acceptable to others, as the Jamaican experience is in many respects unique; and there is too much of a history of Caribbean social sciences of “generalising from the Jamaican experience”...you are walking a tightrope between the insular and the regional but in the end you have taken the insular option...This may appear to be a harsh judgement. I hope I am mistaken. You know I call it as I see it.”

To which I responded: “Thanks Norman. I take your sharp, pointed comments delivered in the best combative spirit as a call to action. I will work on this.” And to which he concluded. “Brian...this is what I call collegiality...Norman”.

I treasure these few lines, not only because they amply illustrate my point, that Norman was uncompromising in his Caribbeanness and advocacy of a regional project, but because it also reveals his doggedness, absence of guile, collegiality and indeed, his humanity.

Light as a feather; heavy as lead! I end appropriately with Norman’s words, this time from the 2009 volume we co-edited in honour of the New World Movement, which recalls his singular voice and captures that binary of flexibility and consistency, lightness and heaviness, far better than anything I’ve said.

In critically tracing the history of New World, he concluded:

“Economic Globalisation does not have to mean a globalisation of the mind that detaches one from the specificity of local history and time and place and experience. It does not change the fact that Columbus lied when he said that he had discovered the West Indies, because, as the calypsonian Shadow pointed out, he had only discovered some Indians who had discovered him. Columbus was the purveyor of his own truth; we have to discover and purvey ours. It does not mean that Bob Marley was not right in his call to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery, for only we ourselves can free our minds. Bob was singing a ‘Song of freedom’. New World was a song of freedom and long may we continue to sing it.”

And Norman Girvan’s life was a song of freedom. Long may we continue to listen and sing from his repertoire!
The Institute of International Relations (IIR) was honoured when Professor Norman Girvan joined the IIR academic staff as Professorial Research Fellow in 2004. His reputation as one of the Caribbean’s top development economists would bode well for the Faculty of Social Sciences at the St. Augustine campus as well as for the IIR.

Having spent years in London doing his Ph.D at the London School of Economics (LSE) Norman was one of the West Indian intellectuals studying abroad who decided to return to their homeland to help shepherd Caribbean peoples through the period of struggle for independence from their colonial masters.

A true public intellectual, Norman was able to combine his theoretical reflection in the area of development economics with concrete praxis and social activism. As former head of the National Planning Agency in Jamaica, Norman became a key adviser to Michael Manley in the 1970s and helped to search for an alternative to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Norman used his critical academic thinking to make significant contributions to debates in Jamaica over the control of bauxite and other commodities and to the discussions around integration of his beloved Caribbean. He understood that the shackles of colonialism, slavery and indentureship would not be easily broken.

He coined the term “in-dependence” to remind leaders of the newly minted independent Caribbean countries that the state of dependency on the colonial metropole would continue unabated unless a conscious effort was made to liberate the peoples of the region from “mental slavery” and gain control over their resources, their culture and their way of life.

From 1966 to 1973 he was a lecturer in Economics at The University of the West Indies. Then for the next two years he went off to Dakar, Senegal to be Senior Research Fellow of the United Nations African Institute for Development and Planning (IDEP). In 1975, Norman was back in the Caribbean to take on the role of Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean Technology Policy Studies Project at The University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana.

In 1977, the Government of Jamaica appointed him as Chief Technical Director of the National Planning Agency in that country—a tenure that lasted for three years. By 1981, Norman was off to New York where he became

Then he was appointed Director of the Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences at The University of the West Indies and remained in that position until 1999. From 1999 to 2000, Professor Girvan was Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis School of Social and Economic Studies at The University of the West Indies.

So this intellectual giant among the elite thinkers of the modern Caribbean came to the IIR and to the Faculty of the Social Sciences at the St. Augustine campus after already making significant contributions to the general direction in which the independent Caribbean nations would go. His appointment at the IIR followed his prominent appointment as Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

We salute and pay tribute to Professor Norman Girvan for the unselfish way in which he mentored our students and for his uncanny ability to translate complex academic concepts into a language that could be understood by the common person. Norman Girvan has been taken from this life, but he will forever remain in our hearts and minds.
Tribute to Norman Girvan
By Dr. Annita Montoute

I first met Professor Girvan in 2004 at the start of my MPhil programme at the Institute of International Relations.

I remember approaching Professor Girvan for guidance on my very grand MPhil/PhD project on trade agreements and sustainable development. Like many PhD students, I wanted to conduct a ground breaking piece of research, one that would make a remarkable impact on society; but my grand plan proved to be too broad and unmanageable.

After reading my work, I remember Professor Girvan saying, “why don’t you look at just one aspect of sustainable development?” After he said that, a light bulb came on in my head and it all began to make sense. The very faint dream of getting a PhD from that moment became possible. I revised my proposal, taking Professor Girvan’s advice into consideration; and the rest is history – five years later, I obtained a PhD and we became colleagues. I occupied an office only two doors from his office.

I remember many things about Professor Girvan during my PhD journey. He was meticulous and thorough. He went through my work line by line and always had detailed comments.

Time was very valuable to him; I remember him being very strict with his time. He respected people’s time and he expected others to respect his. I learnt this very early!

When I became Professor Girvan’s Research Assistant, I understood why he was a Professor. It was the hardest I had worked in my life up to this point, but it was rewarding. I learnt so much, including, the hard work that is required to achieve the highest level that Professor Girvan had attained. I remember remarking to my friends, “now I understand how people become professors; they work very hard.”

I could tell Professor Girvan was willing to mentor graduate students and young faculty colleagues– especially those who had a passion for the things he had a passion for; issues of justice and equity - at all levels; alternatives to hegemonic projects in the Caribbean and Latin America; indigenous regional integration processes; South – South cooperation among others.

Professor Girvan used many ways to inspire others around his vision and to share his passion. I recall one incident, at a conference in Cuba, when he organized a meeting for a group of us to meet with a Cuban academic over lunch to share with
us, her experiences as a 12 year old in the Cuban Revolution. She recalled how she and other young people went to the rural areas to teach farmers to read and write. I saw the look of pride on Professor Girvan’s face as we were hearing first-hand, the commitment and resilience of the Cuban people.

I admired the way Professor Girvan never backed down on his convictions and how fearless he was about articulating his views in various fora.

New paradigms of development came but he never lost sight of the realities of Caribbean (and other developing countries) development.

At a time when the majority had lost hope in the Caribbean regional integration project, Professor Girvan kept on fighting, he never gave up. He identified the challenges of regional integration, but he also offered workable solutions. He fought to the last, believing that Caribbean regional (economic) integration could work if we dispensed with the borrowed model upon which it is based, and adopt indigenous approaches – approaches that are devised by us and suited to our peculiar needs.

Professor Girvan was brilliant, creative and profound in his writings and presentations. His two last presentations I witnessed were the keynote speech at the SALISES Regional Integration Conference in October 2013 and a tribute to Chávez in Cuba in December 2012.

The SALISES presentation titled, “Constructing the Caribbean” was the most comprehensive and profound account of the formation of the Caribbean I had heard. Girvan deconstructed the complexities of the Caribbean identity and by extension the intricacies of the regional integration project, drawing from historical, sociological, political and particularly, cultural considerations in his analysis.

He brought together pieces of historical events and developments to illustrate, in a powerful way, how we have come to where we are.

In his tribute to Chávez, in Cuba, again he brought together many stories to explain what Chávez represented. He said, “(i)n his own ancestry Hugo Chávez represented; and in his politics he fused; three traditions of resistance in our continent: the native American, the African and the Criollo”.

He concluded his presentation on Chávez with this statement: “The test is, did he leave the world a better place, a more just place, than the world that he found”.

Professor Girvan, you too certainly left the world, the Caribbean and Latin America a better place by your work, your love and commitment to your family, your students, your colleagues and the countries and peoples of this region. Professor Girvan, let your legacy live on! ■
As your student, you have ceded to me the ability to be intellectually inspired, impelled to be an agent of regional change, proud to be a representative of the people, a critical thinker, an academic researcher and teacher. Professor Girvan, it’s to you, I must give credit and express my gratitude. You stood out as a beacon, a guiding and unwavering light for me to emulate. No matter was too simple, small or meaningless to deserve your full attention.

As I reflect, I look back and smile at how far I’ve come since I first met you in 2006 as an MSc student. You took the time to discover my interests in an effort to create an appropriate and relevant proposal for my research paper. We realised our common interests in, the CSME and its implementation, the rights of CARICOM citizens, Venezuela’s foreign policy and its role in regional development and most surprisingly, West Indies cricket especially since this was during the ICC CWC 2007.

Your easy smile comforted those nervous thoughts, your buoyant laugh placed me at ease, your genuine interest in my random research questions and your ability to instill hope and confidence are but a few of my memories of you as my supervisor.

Throughout my journey at the IIR, Prof has become my motivator and mentor. At most regional conferences, Professor Girvan could be seen sitting upfront in the audience.

He always gave me sage advice, in London it was, ‘not to preach, allow them to come to their conclusions from the evidence’, most recently in Cuba in December, he recommended that I fully maximize my opportunity to explore the expanse of the PetroCaribe initiative and employ additional statistical analysis to do greater justice to the research topic.

Even though he was a professor, he always gave this air of being ready and willing to learn from me, a mere student. I will never forget being in his office in 2006, at which time he was completing the CARICOM Single Development Vision and he read the mission statement to me and asked my opinion on whether it was suitable. To this day, whenever I am present and hear the mention of the vision, I reflect on this experience.
To me, this regional vision reflects the core of who Professor Girvan was, what he stood for, what he represented but more importantly, what he wished for us, the future of the region.

In the classroom, I find myself becoming more like Prof. always having an open door policy and a listening ear to the queries of my students; gently encouraging them to see the bigger picture; willingly offering comprehensive and constructive feedback; probing deeper to discover what is hidden in the statistics; having an unassuming presence in the midst of the multitude and a courageous voice for the inhabitants of this Caribbean Community.

Professor, I have witnessed firsthand, your plans to develop our regional integration movement, as you vehemently challenged the standing order for Euro-Caribbean trade, and immediately galvanized support for the rights of the voiceless regional citizens. You have left your footprints, which are too big for me to occupy but just right for me to know that in following your path, I’m headed in the right direction. Your indomitable legacy serves as a constant reminder that I must not give up the cause of an integrated Caribbean to ensure that your relentless dedication was not in vain.

As a millennial, I know that I may not have witness or seen firsthand the work of Gairy, Bradshaw, Manley, Adams or Williams of this region, but I’ve sat at your feet. I’ve stood beside you. You’ve placed me on your shoulders and carried me to where I am, as a supporter of a united regional body, and for that I will remain eternally grateful to know that I will always be a student of Professor Norman Girvan.

Walk good Professor. ■
Professor Norman Girvan was my academic father. I met Prof. G. during 2010 as a student in the Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations programme of the Institute of International Relations at The University of the West Indies. He was not my lecturer then, but I recall two things that spoke to the kind of influencer he was:

1. I would see people whisper when he had passed by - "that's Professor Girvan!" "You don't know who he is? He is like the father of regional integration!!!"

2. Whenever he visited the library, students would stop what they were doing and covertly stare at him as he selected and discarded books.

I remember laughing on seeing two students walk to a book he had returned and borrow it immediately. Clearly if he felt it important to read, it must be!

Fast forward to the Masters programme and I found out that Prof. Girvan had selected my thesis to supervise! I had intentionally not courted his notice because I thought my work would be considered laughable. I was not trodding the familiar path of CARICOM, CARIFTA, Federation, CSME. My focus was on a topic for which there were as yet no books in the IIR library. I am proud to say that my research, “The use and impact of social media in advancing regional integration” led to the purchase of several on the topic.

Anonymity was no more though. I recall our first meeting I barely looked up; I tried not to be noticed though it was him and I alone in his tiny office. He asked me to explain what I wanted to research. Not what I had written in my proposal, but from my heart. And I did, and by the end, I felt embarrassed again. Because I think I had begun to preach, so wrapped up I had become in what I was saying. His response, “Well, I think you know what you’re about. Go do it, and make sure you send me updates as you go along.”

Honestly I don't think I have worked harder at an academic project than I did with my thesis, knowing he had to read it. We are warned against holding people up as idols, and I do not do this with Prof. G. But I will admit freely that every interaction with him reinforced my deepening respect for him. Honest, direct, friendly, and above all, normal!!
Those are words I would use to describe him! Demanding, exacting, interrogator extraordinaire are also words I would use. I say all this to say, that this #GIANT left awe in his wake along with lifelong admirers.

I distinctly recall emailing him the draft of my thesis and holding my breath when it was sent! I had been told he awarded A’s in a very, very, selective manner. Miserly even... An ‘A’ from him seemed highly unlikely now and I was sour about it for the rest of the semester. Seeing that 80% grade from Prof. G. on my transcript, was, I think, the best academic moment in my life; and I had received grades much higher before, so it wasn't that. It was the fact that Prof. G. felt I deserved it! That blew my mind.

When I called him to confirm that the grade I received indeed belonged to me, he laughed for several moments on the other end. When he could speak again he said, “Gwen, look here, you see this confidence thing you have regarding your work, you have to cut it out, eh!” or words to that effect.

I was then given a stern admonition: if I didn’t see this body of work through to a PhD I would be robbing the Caribbean of information vital to its survival in the 21st Century, and he would be very, very disappointed in me.

In 2012, I formed part of the committee that created 1804CaribVoices. The joy I felt in being part of such an important group is matched only by knowing that it was born of a conversation Prof G and I had privately. My research had spurred the genesis of something wonderful and extremely important for our region. And as the website has developed, bringing together many civil society groups across the region, it is validating my thesis and my current trajectory. Thanks Prof!!

I have had stops and starts with my research, but through it all Prof. G. reminded me, “There is no deadline Gwen. Sometimes things have to germinate inside you quietly. If you try to force it to come, that’s when it is hardest to find. Just focus on the little things, ignore the big picture, until you have to think of it. If one sentence occurs to you, write that one sentence down!”

And so I write, one sentence at a time!
Norman left us too soon. The idea of not having him walking the streets of Havana again talking about Cuba and its place in the Caribbean or fighting for making the possibility of regional integration an everyday reality still make us mournful, and always will.

But remembering Norman with sadness is not what he would want us to do. This is why we prefer to remember his legacy by pushing his dreams forward, by studying his inspiring work, by building Caribbean unity, by making our region a place for solidarity, for prosperity, for respect and for peace.

Norman’s presence in the Chair of Caribbean Studies events at the University of Havana will be profoundly missed. He was part of our faculty; we felt it that way and believe he felt it too. On December 3, 2008, he received the Honoris Causa Doctorate by the University of Havana, one of the many distinctions he obtained during his outstanding career. His speech back then was memorable and today, what can be better than remembering Norman through his own memories, just as he shared them with us that day.

On that special occasion, Norman recalled how he came to know about Cuba and its Revolution. He remembered how, as a teenager, he and his friends used to tune in to radio stations in Miami to hear the latest
musical hits of rock and roll. Sometimes they accidentally tuned in to Radio Rebelde, broadcasting from the Sierra Maestra. And it was Radio Rebelde that introduced him to the Cuban Revolution.

Back then he followed the events of 1959: the trials of the criminals of the Batista dictatorship, the Urban Reform, the Agrarian Reform and the Literacy Campaign. Thanks to one classmate he obtained a recorded copy of the First Declaration of Havana during his first year at university in Jamaica.

The passionate denunciations of US imperialism made by Fidel and the image of millions of Cubans gathered in a public square, calling themselves the National General Assembly of the People of Cuba, while expressing their approval of the economic and social measures taken by the Revolution and declaring their independence from foreign domination, was a profound experience for the 18-year-old young man. Norman’s long-lasting relationship with Cuba started in those years and never stopped.

The day was also filled with many anecdotes of Norman’s special relationship with Cuba. He remembered when Carlos Rafael Rodriguez warned the first Jamaica delegation that visited the USSR about accepting convertible rubles as payment for Jamaican exports, because with them nothing could be bought. Norman recalled then Carlos Rafael’s peculiar answer when he asked him why the Soviets called these rubles “convertibles.” With a big smile, Carlos Rafael replied: “That’s what we’ve been trying to find out for a long time now.”

Norman also talked about his work with many Cuban academic centres, and thanked the Cuban Economists Association for an excursion through our island with his family in 1999. Upon returning to Jamaica, Norman remembered hearing his 10-year-old daughter telling a friend: “In Cuba, all persons are equal.” He also told us about a framed photo of Fidel, Che and Camilo that hung on the wall of his house, that one day, mysteriously disappeared. Long after, his 19-year-old son told him that he had taken it when he went to study outside of Jamaica. His son was 12 when he visited the Che Memorial in Santa Clara.

That day we remembered happy and sad events together, we shared bittersweet memories of our common history as Caribbean people. Norman thanked Cuba’s fight against apartheid regime and the support to the Guyana Revolution, he condemned the terrorist bombing of a Cuban air flight flying from Barbados in 1976, and he celebrated the Cuban survival to the USSR collapse. He dedicated the end of his emotive speech to recognizing Cuba’s internationalist vocation. He commended Cuban solidarity towards the Caribbean. And that day Norman acknowledged, with touching
modesty and sincere humility, that the Caribbean debt to Cuba was unpayable, just like Fidel defined the Latin America and the Third World foreign debt in the ‘80s.

Today we, his fellow partners from the Chair of Caribbean Studies of the University of Havana, his colleagues of the Cuban academic community, his Cuban brothers and sisters who fought until the end to try to save him from an unfair, premature death, his “compañeros de lucha, de batallas y de victorias” want to tell him, want to tell you, that our debt to Norman is also unpayable. We will honour his memory and his incommensurable treasure of ideas, inspiration and example with our actions in favour of a united, strong and independent Caribbean. That is our best gift to Norman, who will live forever in our memories and our hearts.

Chair of Caribbean Studies
University of Havana
“La Deuda es Impagable” (The Debt is Unpayable)

Dr. Alissa Trotz
*Editor, ‘In the Diaspora,’ Stabroek News*

“La Deuda es Impagable” was how Norman Girvan paid tribute to the living example of the Cuban Revolution when he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Havana in December 2008. “La Deuda es Impagable” is how Norman’s colleagues and friends in Cuba, that country that he loved so much and where he spent his last days, have paid tribute to his own contributions for a united and independent Caribbean.

As we struggle to come to terms with the fact that Norman is no longer physically with us, we know too that he left us with an extraordinary gift, a template of connection, solidarity and love for this region, these spaces we call home, these neighbours across sea and river and border and language. And we will keep Norman close, never far from thought and heart, by drawing from, enriching and extending the wellspring of his outstanding contributions.

There are so many places to start, like Norman’s revisiting of the dependency theory debates and his caution that while the Caribbean faces new and different challenges, we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Two years ago, and before a capacity audience gathered for the 50th Anniversary of Jamaican Independence (which Norman pointedly described as In-Dependence), he compellingly argued that what we are facing in the region was policy recolonisation, providing us with the incredible example of how this played itself out in the IMF requirements that the Jamaican Government provide daily reports “on 13 items, weekly reports on 6 items; monthly reports on 22 items, and quarterly reports on 10 items.”

In his discussion of existential threats facing the Caribbean, Norman has given us a language beyond the failed state discourse that he so disliked, challenging us to think of what he described as “connections among seemingly unrelated phenomena.” One example would be his recognition of the significance of climate change to the viability of the region, and his participation in a workshop with the Climate Change Centre in Belmopan, Belize a few years ago to discuss an integrated approach to and the importance of economic modelling for discussions of environmental sustainability.
Norman played a leading role mobilizing critical discussion of the Cariforum (CARICOM plus the Dominican Republic) negotiations with the European Union (EU) that led to the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) over five years ago.

He set up and managed a list-serv that kept us informed of the issues: the meaninglessness of trade reciprocity when the playing field is so uneven; the divide and rule logic framing the EU’s decision to pursue separate EPAs with Africa-Caribbean-Pacific members; the fuzzy chain of command, particularly with regard to the CARICOM Secretariat and the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery; the dangerous precedent the EPA sets for future trade negotiations with Canada and the US.

Norman was at the forefront of a campaign that was carried in the regional media calling for a full and public review of the EPA. He supplied memorable terms to describe the three-card trick that we were played: *sweetification*, the dangling carrot that came in the form of hollow promises of development funds; *treatyfication*, binding legal documents that arguably contravene elements of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy itself; and *technification*, the dense language over hundreds of pages of the Agreement that mystified the entire process.

On this last point Norman was deeply reflective of the way in which the anti-EPA campaign—with the exception of Haiti where there was popular mobilization—remained largely at the level of an intra-elite disagreement, removing from plain view the devastating effects the agreement could potentially have on people’s everyday lives. The lessons to be drawn are many, as we were reminded just two weeks ago when at a meeting in Guyana, the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) noted that the EPA “has not allowed us full access [to the European market] that we have envisioned.”

At the time of signing, provisions were put in place to evaluate implementation after an initial five years—meaning that a full and frank public accounting was due to the people of the region in 2013. CAIC’s comments suggest that little to nothing has been done by CARICOM or the CRNM, or the Heads of Government, to ensure that we were collecting systematic information to enable meaningful discussion of what the EPA has (not) delivered to the region.

Addressing this shameful lapse head-on is part of the work to be done, while also engaging Norman’s efforts (rooted in his idea of a Caribbean beyond the narrow insularities of the Anglophone countries) to think about different kinds of integration possibilities outside of neoliberal free trade arrangement logics, represented for example by the...
Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) and PetroCaribe.

Most recently and at the time of his tragic accident, Norman was actively involved in a campaign that brought together colleagues from the Caribbean, North America and Europe, outraged by the discriminatory and racist Ruling 168-13 of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Dominican Republic (DR) that effectively stripped citizenship from potentially hundreds of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent. The position that CARICOM eventually took (condemning the ruling and suspending consideration of the DR’s request for membership of CARICOM) cannot be understood outside of this activism that pressured the region’s governments to take a stand.

Norman’s online blog kept us abreast of ongoing developments, taking care to feature oppositional voices from the Dominican Republic to remind us to always take our cue from those most affected by and mobilizing against the ruling.

In late November, in what was perhaps his last public appearance to be captured online, he participated on a panel hosted by the Institute of International Relations (IIR) on Ruling 168-13, opening the event with a clear and passionate outlining of the facts of the case and why it was politically, ethically and morally imperative to oppose it.

The following day he was a member of a small delegation appearing before the CARICOM Bureau in Port of Spain and presenting them with the petitions from Jouvay Ayiti and Concerned Caribbean Citizens.

And just two weeks later, Norman would attend the annual Conference organized by the Caribbean Chair of the University of Havana in December, where he spoke of the importance of Cuba and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) speaking out against the ruling.

He understood that it is only continued pressure that can keep this in the public eye and that can deliver justice for the women, men and children of the DR facing civil death.

We must extend Norman’s work, in the face of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearings last month where Juliana Dequis Pierre (whose application for a Dominican identification card is the act that triggered the court case and the ruling) was prevented from leaving the DR to appear before the Commissioners; in the face of the fact that the Dominican Republic has astonishingly been allowed to assume the Chair of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States; and in the face of the fact that Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, who led the call for
CARICOM to take clear and definitive position, is now CARICOM Chair.

Norman has bequeathed to us all the blog he started some seven years ago (www.normangirvan.info) and that now stands as an incredible archive, a living trace of these and other tireless examples—at one talk in Jamaica, he returned to his seat to a standing ovation and even before he was approached for copies of his paper he had already uploaded it to his blog!

Given Norman’s facility with social media, we asked him once how he operated in the days of New World when computers were not around. His response—he quipped that they would do things like stuff their suitcases full of copies of New World Quarterly when they were moving between islands, or ask people who were travelling to take pamphlets for them—underlined how for Norman, connectivity was a way to practice and deepen connections born out of decades-old commitment to the region.

For him public intellectual work was a loving obligation and form of giving back, a process that involved not just putting what one learned at the service of a wider community, but crucially of being enriched by the conversations this act of sharing initiated.

The Stabroek News diaspora column, which I began in 2008, is indebted to Norman’s mentorship and encouragement. He has contributed several pieces and ideas over the years, and we have jointly published articles in the blog and column as a way of reaching a wider audience. And just over a year ago a small group of faculty and students (headed by Norman and social activist Alex Gittens) launched 1804caribvoices.org, a web forum intended to connect groups and individual across the linguistic divides of the Pan-Caribbean. Even after his accident, Norman requested that we send publishable material to editor@1804caribnews.org.

A fitting tribute is to nurture this regional initiative he was part of, and in so doing to honour the inter-generational collaboration that was such a significant part of his life. Aleah Ranjitsingh, one of his doctoral students, puts its best when she says simply that he will always be her teacher and that she is (not was) his student.

Cuban economist and lecturer at the University of Havana, Laneydi Martinez Alfonso spoke of being afraid to meet Norman at first because of his international reputation, and of being overwhelmed when she finally did by “his infinite curiosity, his humbleness, his fearlessness and also carefulness, his endless spirit for collaboration and help, his extremely beautiful and genuine humanity.”
In his keynote speech at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies to mark the 50th anniversary of Jamaican Independence in 2012 Norman concluded on a personal note:

“My son, Alexander, is also presenting at this Conference. You, and your generation, stand on the cusp of your own life’s journey as Jamaica faces the challenge of its second independence; as I and my generation did on the cusp of Jamaica’s first, half a century ago. It is like the handing over of the baton. But I want to remind you all that the runner who passes the baton, doesn’t stop running; he keeps on for a while longer, and cheers on his successors!”

It was moving and public affirmation of how he was shaped by his commitment to his family, of the ways in which the familial, the national and the regional were deeply interwoven in his life’s journey.

We thank Norman’s partner and wife Jasmine, and his children Ramon, Alexander and Alatashe, for sharing him with us, and whose grace and positive spiritual energy over the last four months have been an example, comfort and inspiration. May you all now find support in the outpouring of love and respect.

And we know, amidst our unspeakable sorrow, that Norman Girvan continues to cheer us on with his unceasing optimism and excitement for the incredible promise and joy that is the Greater Caribbean a promise only to be made real through our collective labour and commitment.
Sixth Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of The States, Countries and Territories of The Association of Caribbean States

Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico
April 30, 2014

RESOLUTION OF MOURNING
on the passing of
Former Secretary General of the ACS,
Professor Norman Girvan on April 9, 2014

The Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States:

Expressing their great sadness at the passing of Professor Norman Girvan on Wednesday 9th April, 2014;

Recalling with pride that Dr. Girvan was the Second Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, ACS, and that his stewardship fostered concerted action in the areas of vital interest to the Greater Caribbean, thus making invaluable contributions to the process of integration in the Caribbean;

Endorsing that he was an outstanding dignitary, whose human qualities made him an exemplar of excellence and dedication both in the academic and professional fields;

Celebrate the memory of Dr. Girvan and express their:
Condolences and solidarity with his family members; and
Commitment to continue his legacy, and to reinforce its efforts towards the strengthening of the Association of Caribbean States.

Mr. Julio Orozco Pérez – Chargé d’Affaires a.i. presents Mrs. Girvan the Resolution of Mourning.
CONDOLENCES

The following is a snapshot of the numerous condolences received by the bereaved:

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
Cnr. of High Street and Chisel Street
P.O. Box CPS004
Castries Saint Lucia, West Indies

Telephone: (1) 758-459-0466
Fax: (1) 758-451-6507
Email: leaderoftheoppositionslu@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION EXTENDS CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY OF
PROFESSOR NORMAN GIRVAN

CASTRIES, Saint Lucia - Friday, 11 April 2014 - Professor Norman Girvan stood tall among a
generation of scholars who distinguished themselves as independent, critical thinkers. Professor
Girvan had an illustrious career in academia. His contributions have been indelibly imprinted on
the intellectual landscape of the region and beyond. His forthrightness and insightfulness on matters
relating to the particularities of Caribbean development set his work apart. There are few in the
region who have the breadth and depth of the peculiar geo-political position of the Caribbean in
the global political economy.

He was a true Caribbeanist and indeed a Latin Americanist. A regionalist at heart. He was a diplomat
extraordinaire, marked by the eminence of his Office as Secretary General of the Association of
Caribbean States (ACS). He also served as the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon’s
Personal Representative on the Border Controversy between Guyana and Venezuela. His
preeminence is also stamped on the many development reports undertaken collaboratively with
various regional and international agencies.

Professor Girvan's work over the past few decades reflected his sharp intellect keeping apace with
epistemic debates, and the use of technology in the new pedagogy. He was a remarkable man who
gave generously of his time and talent to students and academic colleagues who sought his counsel.
He will be sorely missed by those who had the privilege of engaging with him.
The UWI fraternity has lost an intellectual giant.

The Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Gale T.C. Rigobert extends her sincerest condolences to Professor
Girvan’s wife and family.

May he rest in peace.
LATEST STATEMENTS

New York, 10 April 2014 - Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the death of Norman Girvan

The Secretary-General is deeply saddened by the death of Mr. Norman Girvan of Jamaica, who had been his Personal Representative on the Border Controversy Between Guyana and Venezuela since April 2010. He extends his heartfelt condolences to his family and to the governments and people of the Caribbean region.

Mr. Girvan was one of the most distinguished Caribbean scholars of his time. He was particularly devoted to the promotion of regional integration in the Caribbean and Latin America. This commitment earned him the respect and admiration of the entire region.

The Secretary-General is grateful for Mr. Girvan’s contribution to the United Nations good offices process between Guyana and Venezuela. The progress achieved during his tenure was acknowledged by the Heads of State of Guyana and Venezuela and is part of his impressive legacy.
I am saddened to hear of Professor Girvan's passing. We all prayed for a different outcome following his accident. We, his IIR family hoped that the tremendous love and admiration which we all felt for him would somehow turn things around. Sincerest condolences to his family. May God give them the strength to cope at the difficult time. May our dear Norman rest in peace.

Debbie Mohammed, PhD
Lecturer, IIR
This really is tragic and devastating news. I spent years as a PhD student reading Norman’s work, and to be able to work with him for the past five years has been an amazing privilege. To say he was a hero of mine (and of Merisa, my partner, whose PhD he was supervising) would be a huge understatement. He was an intellectual giant; an enormous positive influence on me, both personally and professionally; and also one of the most genuine, humble people that you could ever to wish to meet. The region has lost one of its most brilliant sons today; someone whose influence had long reverberated around the world, and a man whose powers of critical analysis and originality of thought had only sharpened with age. He had so much left to offer; so much energy and fight. Words cannot express the sadness that I’m sure all of us are feeling right now. Let’s hope we can think of many different ways to honour him and pay tribute over the coming weeks and months.

Best Wishes,

Matthew Bishop, PhD,
Lecturer, IIR
They say obsession is a young man’s game. Well, in my father’s case this proved true. He was obsessed with one thing; his family, and his Caribbean family. He was obsessed with a dream of a life full of dignity for all. Today I will reflect on this obsession.

Norman Paul Girvan was the last child of four born to Rita Burrows and David Thom Girvan. I did not know my grandfather personally, but based on the book (Girvan) about his work edited and compiled by my father, he was a man full of love for his family and for helping communities.

As a boy, my father accompanied his parents to many Jamaica Welfare community meetings and he observed their approach of interacting with rural communities

“I think much of his passion must have rubbed off on me”. Well, I believe it was much more than his passion, for my father always reflected on the values instilled in him by his father and mother. These values were well reflected in our family life with hope, modesty, devotion, and duty as his core values.

**Hope**

My father always ended interactions on a positive note. While parenting and in study, my father’s reflections always ended looking to the future with hope. His work was that of a revolutionary, as he always hoped for a better future. In teaching it was the same, as any student here will attest. He never belittled or chided, never made the simplest questions feel silly, nor did he make the responses to complex questions
unavailable. This was a constant, from the level of the highest global civil servant, to me as an 11 year old asking, “Dad how does bauxite work?” for the 5th time. One thing was for sure, he aimed to empower those he interacted with by respecting them and their contribution -potential or realised- to a better reality. Every response was punctuated with hope.

Modesty
This hope was typically coupled with a monk like modesty. While my father’s works led to many prestigious positions, honorary doctorates, journal articles, books, editorials, national and international awards, he never changed his tone or word selection, no matter the audience. His approach was not that of a man with an immeasurable intellectual wealth, but that of a simple pilgrim accompanying others along a journey for a better tomorrow. This modesty was no more extreme than in our household. To quote my sister:

“While many know him in an intellectual capacity and are able to attest to his exceptional professional accomplishments, I know him from a different perspective, familiar, in the literal sense of the word. I remember one day asking my father, “Daddy what do you do?” and he told me “I’m an economist” and from then on I told everyone my daddy was an ECO-NO-mist. By that time it was well into the 90’s after he had already published several books and was the director of the Consortium graduate school of social sciences. However, as a child I was blissfully ignorant of those achievements, because my father never told me of them. Instead, he spent time with my brother and I climbing trees, celebrating birthdays, reading stories, watching movies-and when West Indies were playing, cricket- and filming my extravagant nutcracker productions, all set in our little cocoon of joy on Barbican road.”
The second he was in our presence there was no Professor, Secretary General or Director, just a man willing at the age of 72 to purchase a crock pot and learn new recipes to fulfil his share of the domestic obligations. Unfortunately, his enthusiasm in this case did not translate into tasty stew pork. I must point out here, that these obligations were not according to us, as my father exceeded all expectations as a contributor to family welfare.

I will never forget my sister returning home from a CAPE Caribbean studies class to incredulously declare: “Daddy you never told me you wrote books!” My father had neglected to mention he was on her reading list, and that he had wrote multiple books on the topics she had to study.

Devotion
As I said before, women and men present will speak to his work. But I will say this, he was devoted to living the Caribbean dream he worked for. This was illustrated in his waking me up at four am to watch West Indies tour Australia, which invariably involved a dancing competition between father and son every six, four or wicket. I will have you know even in my youthful exuberance I could not compete with my father’s two fists in the air -hips-shaking side to side- face to the heavens screaming of the word: BOWLEDDDDDD!!!.

He religiously attended the annual completion to determine Trinidad’s best pan band- Panorama- till the wee hours of the morning every Carnival. He would scream on the top of his lungs as Bolt passed a baton to Asafa, as if he himself were in a Beijing stadium. He was routinely in the road at 3am, covered in paint and mud, chipping beside a rhythm section in pure bliss, for the J’ouvert opening of Carnival. My father loved Caribbean culture. On a primal level it activated a part of him which was rarely seen. But, he also loved it on a much more complex level. I believe in every batsman’s stroke, every note of a tenor pan, every bite of Tastee patty, every twirl of a National Dance Theatre Company performance he saw a distillation of the complex history, which contributed to the Caribbean as we know it, and a potential tool for a strengthened Caribbean Homeland.

This devotion to his cause extended into his daily life. He lived what he preached; establishing rainwater catchment systems and solar water heaters wherever we resided; waking up every morning to clear our compost bins and toss in forkfuls of mulch; and hand washing wine bottles and beer bottles for return.
He always prioritized the Caribbean option for vacations, history lessons or gifts. When a Caribbean option was not available, Latin America and the global south were always next on the list.

And of course, his devotion to Jasmine as woman, wife, mother and artist. He never tired of expressing wonder when witnessing my mother create. He studied every piece and never held back with his compliments. He was typically to be found, hand on chin shaking his head mouthing the words “amazing”, in front of many a piece of art produced by mother. He never doubted her abilities and was supportive in ways that would take me much longer than the allotted 4 minutes to elaborate. Their relationship was beautiful to witness. Love, joy and devotion at its very best.

Duty
To quote my mother: “When we expressed gratitude to the Cubans who so lovingly cared for my husband, their response was: "no need to thank us it is our duty". DUTY: a moral obligation which is possible only because there is a self-consciousness committed to a common destiny, without considering self interest as we have come to experience it elsewhere.

Some do it for power, some for accolades, and others for resources. For my father he did his duty as he envisioned it: to contribute to the building of a stronger Caribbean and Global South for those who came after him.

And of course, his devotion to Jasmine as woman, wife, mother and artist. He never tired of expressing wonder when witnessing my mother create. He studied every piece and never held back with his compliments. He was typically to be found, hand on chin shaking his head mouthing the words “amazing”, in front of many a piece of art produced by mother. He never doubted her abilities and was supportive in ways that would take me much longer than the allotted 4 minutes to elaborate. Their relationship was beautiful to witness. Love, joy and devotion at its very best.

Duty
To quote my mother: “When we expressed gratitude to the Cubans who so lovingly cared for my husband, their response was: "no need to thank us it is our duty". DUTY: a moral obligation which is possible only because there is a self-consciousness committed to a common destiny, without considering self interest as we have come to experience it elsewhere.

Some do it for power, some for accolades, and others for resources. For my father he did his duty as he envisioned it: to contribute to the building of a stronger Caribbean and Global South for those who came after him.

I thank all the family and friends who were by our side throughout the difficult journey which was my father’s last months. To the Governments of Jamaica, Guyana, the Republic of Cuba, the Bolivarian republic of Venezuela, The University of the West Indies and all other institutions and individuals that supported this journey we thank you, from the depths of our hearts,
in life and death you are Norman’s family.

“His life was gentle; and the elements, / So mixed in him that Nature might stand up, / And say to all the world. This was a man!” (5.5.78-80)
- The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Shakespeare.

These were the words that my father chose for his father’s headstone. I wanted to title this tribute “This Was A Man”. However I prefer “This IS A Man”, for my father lives on, in my mother, my sister, my brother and myself. I could never have asked for a better example. But as he was a father to many persons and movements, I believe he lives on in a part of everyone here, for we are all a part of the struggle for a better south and Caribbean family.

I lied. I prefer this: “This IS A CARIBBEAN Man”

Thank you Dad.

Works Cited
Pictures from Prof. Girvan’s Memorial held at The UWI, St. Augustine Campus on Saturday May 10th, 2014
His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matthew 25:21