



## Eur Ing Aldwyn Lambert Lequay (1927-2018): A Memorial

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**Eur Ing Aldwyn Lambert Lequay** was one of the most distinguished engineers in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean who will be remembered by the people he touched and many others. He was the loving husband of Dora, deceased, and is survived by his son Bernard.

Aldwyn was born in Blanchisseuse, Trinidad in 1927 and came to the city of Port of Spain to go to secondary school. He attended Queen's Royal College and left in 1948 to study in England, at Bournemouth Technical College. Later he graduated with a BSc in Mechanical Engineering from London University in 1955 and spent two years as an Engineering Graduate, training with the Central Electricity Generating Board, UK.

In Britain, he trained in manufacturing at the Falcon Works of Brush Engineering (Hawker Siddley), Loughborough, England, consisting of exposure to steam turbine manufacture and testing, motor design and construction, transformer erection and testing, oil circuit breaker assembly and testing and assembly of alternators. He was also trained in power station operations and maintenance at Poole, Marchwood, Earley, Portsmouth and the 132,000-volt national grid.

On his return from his studies and engineering training in Britain he started in 1958 in the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) as a Shift Charge Engineer, Port-of-Spain Power Station, was Resident Engineer and Superintendent in the Penal Power Station and was Assistant Resident Engineer with Preece, Cardew & Rider (Consulting Engineers of the UK) on the construction of the Port-of-Spain "B" Power

Station, responsible for the supervision of suppliers, contractors and erectors of electrical and mechanical plant and equipment. He was also responsible for the training of operating staff for the new power station. He was the Superintendent of the Port-of-Spain Power Station, responsible for all aspects of operations, maintenance and training, in 1970 when he left to form his own company, Inspection Services Company Limited, which he led up to his death.

He had the designation of European Engineer (Eur Ing) and was a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (now the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the largest such international learned societies in the world. He was one of few engineers in the world who had attained the grade of Fellow in both the IMechE and the IEE (as it was then).

Aldwyn was a Registered Engineer in Trinidad and Tobago, Founding Member, Past President and a Fellow of the Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT). He served the Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT) and the Board of Engineering of Trinidad and Tobago on several committees and panels over the years and always gave of his time and advice when called upon.

He was the most qualified and experienced quality inspector/failure analyst in mechanical and electrical systems in Trinidad and Tobago and the region. He

qualified as a Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) Inspector at the School of Non-Destructive Testing in Cambridge, UK, in Dye Penetrant, Magnetic Particle, Ultrasonic and Radiographic (Gamma Ray) Flaw Detection and was a pioneer in NDT in Trinidad and Tobago and other parts of the Caribbean. He had also done specialised courses and was qualified in Fracture Mechanics, Pressure Vessels, Piping, Rotating Machinery, Electrical Cable Technology and Power Supply.

He was a Government appointed "Competent Person" for the testing of Flammable Gases, testing for H<sub>2</sub>S and oxygen levels, issuing of "Gas-Free" Certificates for Hot Work and other relevant certificates, and certifying relevant personnel. He was an advisor on issuance of Permits to Work in electrical systems and other systems with respect to isolation and safety. He was also a Government appointed "Competent Person" for the inspection of: Boilers, Unfired Pressure Vessels, Cryogenic Storage Tanks, Hoists, Cranes, Elevators and Escalators.

Aldwyn's experience and skill in inspection was typified by an encounter that took place around 1990, as recalled by his good friend, Dr. Julian "Jules" Ferdinand. At the time Jules was Manager of East Caribbean Feeds Limited, a subsidiary of East Caribbean Group of Companies, owned by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (20%), Maple Leaf Mills of Canada (40%), and private investors (40%). A Canadian engineer had visited the feed mill to assess the physical assets. While investigating the equipment in the mill he recommended that provision be made for replacing the boiler in the next year's budget. This was a very expensive piece of equipment costing upwards of one million East Caribbean dollars, at that time. Jules invited Aldwyn to visit the mill in order to get a second opinion. After inspecting the boiler Aldwyn recommended that it merely needed to have the good tubes cleaned, some worn tubes replaced and the fire eye replaced also. He then commented to Jules, "This boiler will outlive you and me, my friend. There is no need to replace it." Almost three decades have passed and the boiler is still operational. It has outlived Aldwyn and Jules has no reason to believe that it will not outlive him as well.

Aldwyn took his job very seriously and never shirked what he considered his responsibility to point out any shoddy, unsafe or lackadaisical practice he encountered. He did so with such sincerity, encouragement and sound recommendations that he was never rebuffed. He was well known for this and even after he left the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, where he worked for twelve years, workers there had to be on their Ps and Qs whenever he came by. He valued industriousness in people no matter their circumstances. This was exemplified by his admiration (in a missive he sent to his friend Jules) for a blind man in Blanchisseuse, whom he knew when he (Aldwyn) was a young boy. The man owned and ran a "Sweetie Shop" by himself. Sandy's Shop, as it was called, was perched above the sea's rocky

coast. Blind Sandy was able to climb down the precipice to the rock where he would cast his fishing line - all by himself. He did his own washing, laundry, and cooking and attended to his shop. In the same communication Aldwyn also recorded his admiration for the blind person who constructed a 14-inch model sailing ship, fitted with all the rigs, which he saw in the office of his good friend and colleague Donald Baldeosingh, whom, in 1993, Aldwyn joined to found the ENMAN Group where he motivated and mentored the staff for 25 years and was a strong proponent for the energy integration of Trinidad and Tobago gas generated power with hydroelectric power in Guyana, a project under development for 17 years.

He was always involved in training technicians and engineers and conducted short courses at various levels throughout the Caribbean on High Voltage Cable Splicing and Termination, Power Plant Operations, Operation and Maintenance of Switchgear, Transformers and Motors, Oil/Gas Platform Operations, Boiler Operations, Steam Injection Boilers in the Petroleum Industry, Diesel Engine Maintenance and Lubrication Technology, among others. He lectured in the course "Occupational Health and Safety" for MSc. Engineering students at The University of the West Indies. As the local ASME representative for many years he facilitated many ASME courses locally by leading experts in the world. He personally trained and mentored several engineers. He was very passionate about the training of craftsmen and technicians as the very important support structure upon which the engineering profession and industry are built, operated and maintained.

He gave yeoman service to the formation and functioning of technical institutions including technicians' associations where he found great support from his friends and colleagues Clyde Phillip and Allister Bowen.

Eur Ing Aldwyn Lequay served in several positions, most in the area of training, his passion. Among his many appointments were:

- 1) Chairman of the Cabinet appointed Committee on Craft and Technician Training.
- 2) Chairman of the Education and Training Committee of APETT.
- 3) Chairman of the National Training Board of Trinidad and Tobago.
- 4) Chairman of the Education and Training Committee of the Council of Caribbean Engineering Organisations.
- 5) Chairman of the National Internship Training Committee for Engineering Graduates.
- 6) Chairman of the Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of the Caribbean Association of Technical Vocational Education and Training (CATVET).
- 7) Chairman - Trinidad and Tobago Group of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

- 8) Chairman (the first) of Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP).
- 9) Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.
- 10) Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission.
- 11) Member of the Board of Directors of Meat Processors Limited - a Government owned company.
- 12) Member of the Government Appointed Committee for the Expansion of the Faculty of Engineering at The University of the West Indies.
- 13) Member of the National Committee on Non-Destructive Testing (NDT).
- 14) Member of the Standards Committee for Cranes.
- 15) Member of the Standards Committee for the Colour Coding Identification of Pipelines.

Allister Bowen has spoken glowingly of his relationship with him as his mentee for four decades and the validation and support of Aldwyn for his (Allister's) TVET innovations. He also had the good fortune to have served on four Boards under Lequay's chairmanship.

Aldwyn played a very significant role in my development as an engineer and later on throughout my career. As a young Materials Engineer at CARIRI. I was trained by him in NDT, inspection of hoists and lifts (particularly elevators) and failure analysis. This started in 1974 and later on we collaborated on failure analyses, particularly using my expertise in microscopy, including the Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM).

I had always assisted him with organising local ASME courses and at his request, I succeeded him as the ASME regional representative, but, much to his chagrin, I gave it up due to what I considered a conflict of interest because as the ASME rep I was expected to organise ASME training courses independent of any other training institution but I was in charge of the UWI Continuing Engineering Education Centre.

As a Fellow of the ASME he urged me to apply to be a Fellow at a special dinner he arranged when I was appointed a Professor, as he wanted me to be the next person in the region to be so appointed. He was a bit annoyed with me when I delayed for a few years and he literally forced me to apply and was absolutely elated when I was appointed a Fellow, which meant another special dinner.

I remember, several years ago, he was an external examiner for a PhD thesis from Cuba and asked me for my comments which formed the basis of his report. That and other times when he asked for my advice have been the greatest compliments I have ever received in my career - to be consulted by such a great engineer, a Guru to so many.

He loved gardening. As soon as he got home he would spend the majority of time in the garden either with soil preparation, planting or cleaning out the weeds

and watering. If he was not at work, he was at work, in the garden. He would enjoy planting tomatoes and ochros. He also planted flowers. He had a large collection of orchids at one time. He used to own land in Arima, up in the hills, and when his son Bernard was very young they would spend either the Saturday or the Sunday there collecting fruits.

He loved animals and always had either dogs or cats or both. No dogs ever bit his dad, Bernard recalled. There is the story of Aldwyn being warned to keep his distance from a bad dog he agreed to feed in the absence of the owners, his friends, who were away. To their amazement, on their return, Aldwyn and the dog were the best of friends.

Aldwyn often went for sea-baths at Maracas Bay with the family, including the dogs of course. He would swim out to sea and one of his dogs always tried to rescue him. The dog would swim past Dora and Bernard, and grab onto Aldwyn's arm gently and pull him back to shore.

He used to race pigeons back in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He was a member of the Trinidad Pigeon Club and held some administrative positions in the club. Knowing him I am sure he would have been asked to be president or some other senior position. He had two pigeon lofts with about a hundred birds and won several trophies in races from several places in Trinidad, Tobago, Guyana and further afield. He visited Belgium with the family to see how professional pigeon racing was done on a large scale. He gave away most of the pigeons when Bernard left to study in England as it was too much to do without the help of his loving son.

Bernard recalled that when he was younger the family would frequently visit the zoo and Aldwyn would always stick his finger in the Toucan cage and the Toucans would come and try to sit on his finger and play with him. Clearly he was very careful where he stuck his finger as he had all his fingers intact.

He was awarded the Humming Bird Medal Gold (HBM) for service to Engineering Education in 1991 and was conferred with an Honourary Doctorate in 2017 by The University of Trinidad and Tobago.

He was still active as an engineer at the advanced age of 91 before he fell ill. One only has to look at the certificate in elevators all over the country, even up to today, to see his name as the inspector. He was an outstanding engineer and even more outstanding as a human being. He will be missed by many.

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