

# Tributes to Hazel Brown

Roberta Clarke

There is so much to be said about Hazel. She is one of those, a kind of person who lived to make change. (like sister Judy and Andaiye). She arose everyday, it seemed to me, determined to use her voice and all her energies for dismantling structures of power that oppressed. She was the embodiment of resistance.

And she understood the interconnectedness of things. So she advocated for consumer rights (the cost of utilities), yes, yes, always the solar cooker! And she made common cause on gender-based violence activism. She was one who believed in women's representation in parliament. We all believed but for her it seemed a holy grail. We talked about that a lot.

What do numbers matter if they come and make no change, and worse become of the corrupted system?

She refused to be disillusioned.

Between Hazel and Andaiye, they organized what I think of as a caravan of care. Getting women from Guyana cancer treatment in Trinidad. How deeply practical and caring was their politics.

Hazel could be so fierce and unrelenting which was maddening at times. But really Hazel was not someone you could really be vex with. Her heart was way too large not to be recognized in all weathers and at any distance.

I last saw her at Emancipation Village in July. In full beautiful African dress, very frail, but eyes firm and focused. To be honest, I always had a sense that she was telegraphing to me that I should be doing more. I may be projecting because I remained in awe at how she organized her life to be fully engaged in the politics of her society, everyday.

There were many sisters who sustained Hazel as well. Who were there for her with care and love. I think of Asha, always so gentle and discerning, of Jacqui who took over at the NGO Network, of Gabrielle with whom she shared a generous and reciprocal supportive activism.

I will remember her in my mind's eye, confronting the politicians, refusing to give an inch even when they had given what they considered was a mile. Hers was not to give applause because she considered that their responsibilities were not completed until the whole work was done. Fierce.

Rest well Hazel. You will continue to occupy that space in our minds which tells us, "wake up, there is work to do".

Roberta