

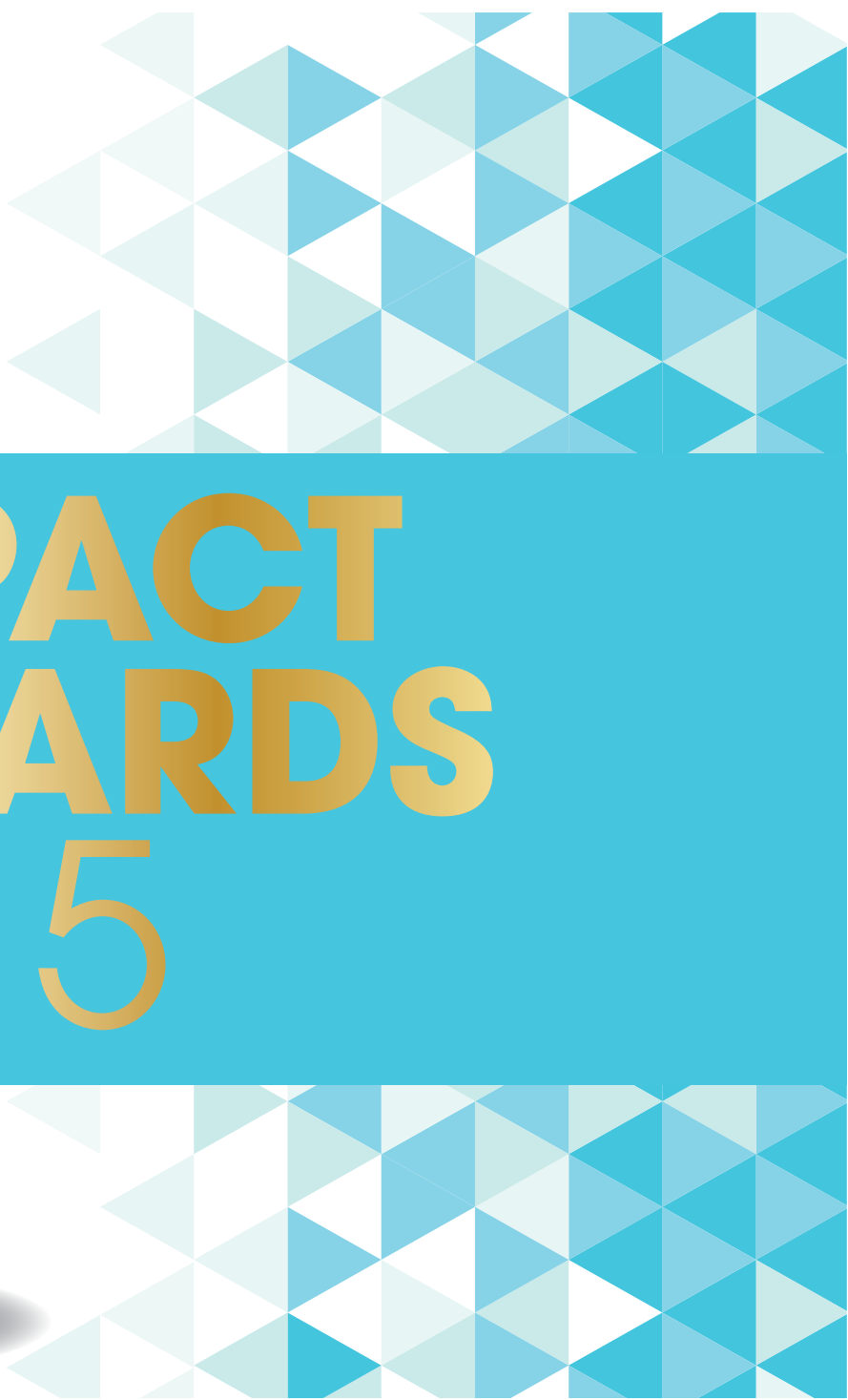
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# Celebrating those who make an impact

**S**elflessness, determination, and passion — three attributes embodied by those living with a purpose of serving others. Touching the lives of all they come across with stories of triumph over adversity and a willingness to be a community's support system, Caribbean Life is pleased to celebrate those of Caribbean American heritage impacting the lives of many.

Whether through business or the arts, the formation of organizations, or various community boards, the 32 individuals lauded in these pages are pillars of the communities they serve.

Ranging in age, experience, and representing a myriad of Caribbean countries, our 2015 Impact Awardees are all linked by their distinguished work to be anchors of change.

Their stories, told here, are inspirational. You will read about:

- A Jamaican American who left Wall Street to pursue her passion for design, and has now been named as a Top 20 African-American Interior Designer for four consecutive years.

- A motivational speaker who, as a youngster in Bermuda, got kicked

out of school 37 times. Today he does volunteer speaking engagements for troubled youth.

- The 20 year old chief executive officer of a hair and body products company who started a foundation in Haiti that provides 200 children with an education and three meals a day.

- And many more stories like these.

In addition to this publication, our honorees' achievements will be commemorated at the Impact Awards Gala on the evening of Thursday, November 19th at Paradise Catering in Brooklyn. This newspaper takes great pride in further recognizing these leaders at the gala event amongst their friends, families, and other supporters.

We wish to thank you, our readers, for your involvement in the nomination process for the Caribbean Life Impact Awards. You brought many of these awardees to our attention, and without you many of these heroes would remain unsung.

Now sit back and take in the inspiring stories of the 2015 Impact Award winners. We hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did bringing them to you.

- Caribbean Life

## Gala MC: Claudette Powell

**O**ur 2015 Impact Awards Master of Ceremonies is a Caribbean American who has had a major impact here and in the Caribbean.

Claudette Powell has earned the respect of her peers for her extraordinary career in healthcare and for her volunteerism in the United States and abroad, a journey that has tapped extensively into hospitals and community-based programs.

"It's an honor to host this year's award ceremony as I share such a special moment with each honoree," said Powell. "There are so many leaders in the Caribbean American community and it's great that Caribbean Life newspaper has chosen to recognize their accomplishments."

Currently employed at Health and Hospitals Corporation Home Health Care Regulatory Affairs, Powell has worked in the healthcare industry for more than 35 years. She is the past president of the Caribbean American Nurses Association, co-chairwoman for Jamaican Diaspora Health Sector's northeastern chapter, member of the Union of Jamaican Alumni Associations, and vice president of St. Hugh's Alumni Association's New York Chapter. She is the recent past-president and current vice-president of the Jamaican



ca Nurses Group of New York. She also serves on the CARICOM Consular Corps health committee in New York.

Powell has earned numerous recognitions, including CANA's Excellence in Nursing Award; the Women Celebrating Women award from the Honorable Dr. Una Clarke; the Humanitarian Award from the Sickle Cell Trust; the Outstanding Service Award from the New York Black Nurses Association; the Distinguished Health Professional Award from Assemblyman Nick Perry; Caribbean Life's Caribbean American Healthcare Award; and the Governor General's Achievement Award for Excellence, Diaspora USA. The latter plaudit is notable because only two Americans receive this award bi-annually, making it an unparalleled honor.

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# Alton Aimable

## Keeps Caribbean culture alive in the Diaspora

Alton Aimable is the Founder and President of Tropicalfete Inc., a cultural arts organization. Alton was born in St. Lucia but feels more a son of the Caribbean, connected to all the islands when it comes to culture.

His academic training in accounting, along with other studies in music and web programming provided the foundation for his online Tropicalfete.com. He calls this website “the official home of Caribbean culture.”

Aimable established Tropicalfete as an on-line publication and cultural resource center in 1999. In 2011, Tropicalfete became a not-for-profit organization.

“Whether it is carnival, dance, music, drama, or anything else to do with Caribbean culture, I am inspired to promote it though Tropicalfete.com. My dream is to take Caribbean culture to the international level where it will be accepted without discrimination or biases,” he says.

With a mission to develop arts and social services within the community, he also focuses on educating the global community on Caribbean culture. An example he gives is the establishment of a reading program with Barnes and Noble for June’s Caribbean Heritage Month.

**“My dream is to take Caribbean culture to the international level where it will be accepted without discrimination or biases.”**

For the past six years, Tropicalfete has been part of the West Indian American Day Carnival Parade creat-

ing marvelous masquerade presentations.

Furthering his goals he says, “We look at the development of artists from a holistic view, assisting artists with their social needs, for example, we help them with workshops in contracts and how to safeguard their assets.”

The organization sponsors free music workshops covering topics such as copyright and royalties, marketing, mixing and music lessons. They also offer mentorship opportunities.

Tropicalfete hosts classes in Brooklyn for children in dance, stilt walking and masquerade, and is expanding its program with funding from NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.

Next year’s calendar, already includes performances, dance, readings, a steel drum program, and carnival costume making.

Continuing its mission in culture preservation and transmission, Tropicalfete has also worked with VH1 Save the Music Foundation to highlight the steel pan instrument, cultural institu-



tions such as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and has produced cultural performances at colleges.

Alton sums it up, “We are committed to the cultivation and advancement of emerging artists working in all genres including visual arts, fashion, music, dance, theater, film and new media. Tropicalfete seeks to utilize the power of the artist and arts as it strives to bring social changes to whomever and wherever needed.”

# Joan Alexander-Bakiriddin

## An advocate for the voiceless

A resident of the 45th District-East Flatbush, Brooklyn for 30 years, born in Guyana, Joan Alexander-Bakiriddin’s passion is advocacy for her community. Her recent years of tireless involvement reflect this.

“I am a survivor of domestic violence,” she says, “I know how it feels to be voiceless.”

A system and process training manager by trade, approximately 12 years ago, she began partnering to make a difference in the lives of underserved New Yorkers with New York Cares, Junior Achievement and Fresh Air Fund through her company’s volunteer program.

More recently — the past seven years — it has been her own extended East Flatbush neighborhood, where she concentrates most of her energies. Since 2008, she has been the secretary for her block association.

“To bring the change I wanted to see,” she explains, is her motivation to become active in Community Board

(CB) 17’s Youth Committee, the 67th Precinct Community Council and its Christmas Party Team, and in 2010, the East Flatbush Village Inc. Not In My Hood Anti-Violence Initiative.

She recently graduated from the Citizens Police Academy and now she is a member of the East Flatbush COP-Civilian Observation Patrol.

In 2011, she joined the board at East Flatbush Village, Inc., a youth development organization that combats violence within the community by providing children with recreational activities and educational tools. She was made chairperson in 2012 and executive director in January 2015.

Her community involvement does not end there.

In Councilman Jumaane D. Wil-

liams’ District 45, she joined the Participatory Budgeting (PBNYC) Initiative in Cycle 1 (2011-2012), serving for Cycle’s 2 & 3 as co-chair.

She says, “PBNYC’s core value tuned into how partnerships with our elected officials and government agencies can empower every member of our community including immigrant, indigent and formerly incarcerated neighbors to spend tax dollars on what matters to them.”

Alexander-Bakiriddin also serves on the PBNYC Citywide Steering Committee.

“I understand the value of networking and partnerships,” she says, “which has guided me to be one of the founding members of Political Power Through Organizing (P2O), an organization founded on the premise that once a community is organized it will become a catalyst for positive change.”

The advocate continues her other volunteer work including mentoring with iMentor. She has partnered with



a mentee since 2014.

Summing it up she says, “I am working on making sure that I am a good example for my children and that my community is made better because I am a part of it.”



# Leanna Archer

## Motivational speaker and entrepreneur

Leanna Archer is the 20-year-old CEO of Leanna's Inc., a hair and body care products company that carries 14 different items. She was the youngest person – age 13 – to ring the NASDAQ opening bell.

Archer started her company at age nine. The company now grosses almost \$500,000 annually while operating from the basement of the family's Central Islip home, but in the future will be relocating and expanding.

In Haiti, Archer's great grandmother Lea Lebon made a natural hair dressing using the country's native plants — hibiscus, avocado, almond and rosemary oils, shipping vats to the family in the U.S. Later, while staying with the family, her great grandmother shared the formula with Leanna.

A seven-year-old Archer gave some of the hair dressing to friends, portions handed out in baby food jars.

"Checks started coming in the mail. People would stop by asking for \$20 worth," says Archer, who was getting

orders before her parents knew. The first \$100 went to get a business license. In 2005 when she was eight, her dad set up a basic website so people could buy the product on-line.

**"I met kids [in Haiti] who had never been to school, who had to take care of their family, while I was playing with Barbie dolls."**

Dad Gregory — now, chief operating officer — quit his job to help her run the company. CEO Archer makes the product, packages and fulfills orders. The whole family helps with production.

In 2008, at age 13, Archer travelled to Haiti for the first time. She was named Child Ambassador of Haiti by then-President Rene Preval.

She says, "I met kids who had never been to school, who had to take care of their family, while I was playing with Barbie dolls." That year, Archer founded in Haiti the Leanna Archer Education Foundation that provides three meals daily and an education to nearly 200 children. LAEF also focuses on developing each child's vocational talents and skills.

Challenged after the earthquake, it took a year and a half to find the same quality and quantity of essential oils, but Archer is committed to doing business in Haiti.


Archer began public speaking at age 11. She has been a speaker at the Black Enterprises Teenpreneur conference and was a panelist at the "What Makes a Young Champion" forum in Singapore. Today she is a motivational speaker.

Two to three times-a-month, she speaks to tweens, teens, and college



students on leadership and entrepreneurship, or on business panels or classes about mark-up, profit, revenue, and time and business management.

Meanwhile, Archer is a sophomore at Stony Brook University studying Political Science.



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# Kwayera Archer-Cunningham

## Leads the way in social transformation



Kwayera Archer-Cunningham is a social venture and non-profit administrator coach, specializing in social transformation and organizational development, philanthropy, and social entrepreneurship. She has 35 years of experience in the arts.

When Archer-Cunningham, a trained dancer, returned to Flatbush, she was struck by the dearth of high-quality arts opportunities for residents. "I was convinced that for the community's young people to succeed in life, they need to develop a strong sense of their own identity," she says.

Both of those goals intersected in the community arts organization that she founded, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy.

The name of the academy, now over 25 years old, comes from the Yoruba word "ifetayo," which means: love is enough for joy. Two years ago, the White House honored the Ifetayo Youth Ensemble with a 2013 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program award.

Archer-Cunningham led this organization for more than 25 years. Since 1989, under her leadership as CEO, she was able to increase capacity from one teacher with a minute budget to 10 full-time staff members, 33 part-time faculty members and organized a 19-member Board of Directors. More than 20,000 youth have been served through Ifetayo's programming.

She personally witnessed the power of her programming. Through Ifetayo's programs and with staff and the Ifetayo community, one young severely traumatized girl was able to heal and now, as a college graduate, has gone on to help other girls who have experienced similar trauma.

In 2014, Archer-Cunningham decid-

ed to bring her skills home to Jamaica and the broader Caribbean region, leaving her past organization equipped with an annual multimillion dollar budget and a steadily growing cash reserve, as well as nationally recognized programs, management and evaluation systems.

She has raised more than \$40 million in support of local programs, capacity building efforts, and general operations. She has designed and led organizational development workshops including the U.S. Department of State – Office of International Visitors for the Bureau of Education for organizations from 25 countries.

Archer-Cunningham designs programs, conferences and training for non-profit leaders and communities. Some of the results are heightened self-awareness and confidence for youth and adults, improved health, increased financial literacy, and academic success benefiting themselves and their communities.

Most notably, she has created an internationally recognized Rites of Pas-

sage Program for adolescents and families. A component of the program is dedicated to economic development in under resourced communities and is being formally evaluated for broader replication.

# Thomas Bailey

## As president of WIADCA, he helps promote Caribbean culture



After some years as an Education Officer with the Ministry of Education Culture in Trinidad & Tobago, Thomas Bailey migrated to the United States and found employment with the brokerage firm Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith for a career that lasted 27 years. There he rose to a managerial position, retiring in 1999.

As part of long-time involvement with the Caribbean community in the U.S., Thomas became a member and then Secretary of the West Indian American Day Carnival Association (WIADCA). Since 2011, Thomas Bailey has been President of the organization that he proudly says, "is one of the principal promoters of our Caribbean culture here in North America."

WIADCA overseas the major events related to the five-day Labor Day festivities, drawing over a million spectator and culminating on Labor Day with thousands of imaginatively costumed revelers dancing down Eastern

Parkway.

"2017 will be our 50th year!" Thomas says. "We are working feverishly to ensure that 2017, will be all that we want it to be."

Soon after his 1972 arrival in the U.S., Thomas became an active member of the then Afro Caribbean Soccer League, one of the first amateur soccer leagues to be formed in the New York Metropolitan Area. The aim of the organization was to provide the New York Caribbean community with organized competition, especially during the summer months.

More than 20 years later, by the end

of the 1993 program, the Afro Caribbean Soccer League became only a memory but a more vibrant organization, the Five Boro Soccer League Inc., was formed. Thomas was elected Secretary; five years later he became President.

During his tenure as the chief executive, Thomas successfully led the organization's transition from an adult competitive program to its current youth soccer program.

Thomas Bailey says that strong family guidance from day one has added to his connection with community groups and associations and has inspired him to relate with the "people."

"It encouraged me to do what was necessary to make people happy," he says. Over the years, he's devoted energies to the Boy Scouts, Parent Teachers Associations, and various art and cultural organizations.

Additionally, he led the Tenants' Association of the apartment complex where he resides and also actively served on The Winthrop Beacon Advi-

sory Board.

Thomas has been married to his wife Shirley for the past 43 years and has two children— Michelle and Michael, and three grandchildren.



# Gordon Berment

## Shipper dedicated to helping multi-ethnic communities

Gordon Berment was born in Trinidad, one among seven. He describes himself as the son of Indo / Afro French Creole parents, "I grew up in the midst of varied races, culture and religions."

After graduating high school he worked as a custom clerk and then in the insurance industry as an account executive.

He first moved to Canada where he attended college and also completed numerous professional development programs.

After 11 years in the insurance industry, Berment began working in the shipping business serving the Caribbean community in Canada, the Caribbean and the United States, gaining increasing levels of expertise in marketing, setting up and expanding operations.

From Canada, he moved to New York, then Florida.

In 2010, Gordon joined Econocaribe Shipping as director for development of business in the Caribbean community in the U.S. He works with many smaller

shipping agents by providing them with a platform for growing their business while serving the community.

Berment's greatest inspiration is his mother and her undying love, care and sacrificial commitment to family. "She

**Berment's greatest inspiration is his mother and her undying love, care and sacrificial commitment to family. "She gave of the little she had and that was plenty for me."**

gave of the little she had and that was plenty for me. We were poor but her shack and a morsel of food she gave was a refuge for many who stopped by with a need," he said.

During his 23 years serving the Caribbean community, Berment has been

involved in several activities giving back to the Caribbean community including, alumni associations, food for the poor, sporting and community events, education scholarships, churches and cultural events.

"We've provided free shipping for Haiti, Jamaica, and Guyana relief," Berment says. "And, most recently, support has gone to Dominica relief with warehouse space, free loading and shipping."

Beaming, he says, "For 13 years, we have supported The Trevor Wilkins



for students of Caribbean heritage who excelled in their field of study and gave back to the community."

"We are now expanding Econocaribe's business opportunities by appointing agents countrywide where there is a Caribbean community including the Dominican Republic. We provide a platform for them to develop a shipping business to the Caribbean under the Econocaribe umbrella and empower them to earn at no franchise cost."

Berment is married and has three college and high school age children.

## 'Good frien' betta dan packet money'

Jamaican Proverb



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# Geneive Brown Metzger

## Advocates for the Diaspora and investments in the Caribbean

Dr. Geneive Brown Metzger is an investment / trade and economic development analyst, the “go to” resource for industry leaders and prospective investors in the Caribbean.

She has brought investments in mining, housing, waste management and education to the region.

She was consul general for Jamaica in New York between 2008 and 2012. She also served on the USAID / Migration Policy Institute Think Tank on diaspora leading to the inaugural U.S. State Department Global Diaspora Forum in Washington (2011) spearheaded by then Secretary of State Clinton.

When asked who has most inspired her, she acknowledges former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. “Henry Kissinger redefined the role of Secretary of State,” she says, “and gave it the significance it enjoys today as playing a key role in U.S. foreign relations. Kissinger went on to be a major player in U.S. China relations on the investment

and trade side. His leadership inspired me in my work as the Jamaican Consul General in New York, and he continues to inspire me in my role as an analyst.”

She writes frequently on diaspora

**“Henry Kissinger redefined the role of Secretary of State... His leadership inspired me in my work as the Jamaican Consul General in New York, and he continues to inspire me in my role as an analyst.”**

and technology in development, including for the U.S. State Department website and the Science & Diplomacy

Journal. She contributed to the book “Diasporas: New Partners in Global Diaspora Strategy,” published by the Migration Policy Institute.

Brown Metzger’s public relations agency was acquired by the worldwide agency, Ruder Finn, in 1991 where she established and headed the Emerging Markets division. Her clients included Rhodes University in South Africa and the University of the West Indies—setting up the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies.

She is proud to be a founding member of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), commenting, “Under the leadership of Dr. Roy Hastick, CACCI has gone on to become a national organization and an important resource in the community for entrepreneurs.”

She is the international chair of the Caribbean Maritime Institute based in Jamaica and president of the American Caribbean Maritime Foundation based in New York. She also created the Caribbean online information hub,



DiasporaDashboard.com, and hosted the popular Caribbean public interest talk show on WVIP, “Diplomatically Speaking.”

Brown Metzger is also proud of her work as director in charge of the Caribbean at Monroe College helping students from the Caribbean get scholarships. “I get to help change the lives of many students each year,” she says.

She is married to economist, Stephen Metzger, PhD., and they have two grown daughters.

# Ricardo Bryan

## Caribbean role model and community leader

Jamaican-born, raised and educated, Ricardo Bryan is an international business executive with GraceKennedy Ltd., the Caribbean’s leading distributor of food and non-food consumer products. He is senior vice president, GraceKennedy, Foods USA.

Bryan started with GraceKennedy in 1995 as product manager and was promoted in 1998 to market manager for the Northern Caribbean and Latin America — 22 countries — where he tripled sales within two years.

He became international marketing manager for the Northern USA Region in 2000 and business in the region grew significantly.

“I’m particularly proud in helping build the Company’s distribution beyond the cultural borders of the Caribbean to embrace the Latino Hispanic and mainstream USA markets,” says this bi-lingual executive who speaks a fluent Spanish in addition to English. “The network has expanded from a small footprint in ethnic stores to a

credible respected national brand.”

For seven years, as regional business manager for GraceKennedy USA, he developed a track record of consistently opening and developing international markets.

In 2012, he received The UWI Vice Chancellor’s Award for “Outstanding Community Leader and Rising Star,” an award for Caribbean heritage persons recognized as being on the cutting edge of their profession. Bryan received this award for being on “the forefront of his company’s success in growing the USA.”

Ricardo relocated to Canada in 2013 and as vice president sales and marketing for GraceKennedy, Ontario Inc, he led the restructuring of the sales

organization during his two-year tenure.

“My mother, a single mom after my father died, was my greatest inspiration,” he says. “She demonstrated the importance of hard work and being authentic.”

An active member in the Church of God of Prophecy, Bryan is heavily involved in their community outreach programs. He is the church’s music director and a leader of the Men’s Ministries for the Brooklyn District, N.Y.

Also, as a mentor for teenagers and young adults, he remembers the men — his pastor and the principal of his high school — who took an interest in him growing up.

“Children in the Diaspora need positive role models from people of Caribbean descent to help confirm their identity,” he says. “Seeing people in leadership roles from their background can inspire them.”

Consistent with his passion for making an impact through media, Bryan is the creator, producer and host of the



weekly four-hour radio show — Caribbean Gospel Flavours (Flavors) aired on 1190 WLIB throughout the tri-state area. “I am the only Caribbean host on WLIB,” he says.



# Andrea Bullens

## Creates union between business, philanthropy

It is no easy task to marry business and philanthropy but Andrea Bullens is successful in creating this union.

Her passion for promotion started early. As a teen, this British-born Jamaican-raised newcomer to the U.S. started with a partner her first business — a promotion company.

Her ardor for marketing and promotion grew and she studied business at Baruch and events and marketing at NYU.

After several years working with advertising powerhouses, she left corporate America in 2003, to open her own marketing events and promotion company — BullZii Marketing, LLC. This firm creates and executes marketing, publicity, advertising, media and promotion campaigns particularly for a long-list of Caribbean-based companies, wishing to promote their products and services in North America.

BullZii is now certified by New York

City and New York State as a Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) and is eligible to bid on city and state contracts.

Bullens has been an integral part of several major cultural initiatives. Since 2011, she has been a co-producer and marketing executive for the Queens “Groovin’ In The Park,” an annual reg-

**“My mom was a woman of strength, determination, passion and dignity,” she says of one of her main inspirations. “She was my first role model.”**

gae, pop, and r&b concert, the largest outdoor concert in Queens. In 2015, more than 22,000 were grooving.

“I also work with the Grace Foods’ sponsorship of the Penn Relays at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadel-

phia, the largest field event outside of the world championships,” she says. Grace Foods began to sponsor young Jamaican athletes’ travel, food and other expenses, so they could attend Penn Relays.

This year there were 600 competitors from the Caribbean, mostly Jamaicans. Grace Foods evolved to being a corporate sponsor, the only Caribbean company, of the event. “This is a great opportunity for the Caribbean young athletes,” says Andrea. “College scouts are on the look-out. Fans from

across the country hold up high the green, gold and black (Jamaican) flag.” The three-day weekend event attracts 120,000 track enthusiasts.

Andrea also co-founded and co-produced the one-hour Caribbean Life-



style TV, covering social and political issues, cultural, business and community events, on CIN + NYC TV cable channels in the New York area and also the U.S. Virgin Islands from 2007 and 2011.

On the non-profit side, she leverages her corporate connections to help gain sponsorship for non-profit initiatives. Friends of Mustard Seed Organization is especially dear to her heart.

“My mom was a woman of strength, determination, passion and dignity,” she says of one of her main inspirations. “She was my first role model.”

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**Terrence LaPierre**

*Member, KCHC Community Advisory Board*

**Pastor Gilford Monroe**

*Member, KCHC Behavioral Health Advisory Board*

# Anishka Clarke

## An award-winning designer creates efficiently beautiful spaces

Having worked a decade in finance, both in Jamaica and on Wall Street, Anishka Clarke left the financial industry in early 2006 to pursue her real passion, interior design. She has been listed as a Top 20 African-American Interior Designer for four consecutive years and has cemented her corner of the design market after eight years in the industry.

Clarke has honed a very nature-inspired aesthetic, which compliments an evolving yet eclectic sensibility. She's a Brooklyn resident, but Jamaican at heart, heavily influenced by a waste-not upbringing in Jamaica. Efficiency and creating "efficiently beautiful" spaces is an important part of her design for her residential and hospitality clients.

Along with her business partner Niya Bascom, Anishka has built Ishka Designs where she is the CEO and lead designer working across continents. She has been published in various

media, most recently listed as a "Next Big Name" by lifestyle and home decor *Lonny Magazine*.

In early 2014, Clarke completed the Goldman Sachs / Tory Burch Foundation 10,000 Small Business program. In 2013, she was recognized by the Caribbean publication, *Where Itz At* in their first BIG awards for entrepreneurial leadership in the area of design.

Clarke is an interior design honors graduate (Summa Cum Laude) of the Fashion Institute of Technology, holds an MBA from Stern Business School,

New York University, and graduated with honors from the University of the West Indies with a BSc. Degree in Accounting and Economics. A former modern dancer, she now happily practices yoga.

She cites many for inspiration. Journalist Malcolm Gladwell's books opened her eyes with his definition of success, allowing her to measure her own in a more holistic way.

Paolo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" strengthened her beliefs in her own long-term goals and doing what she was meant to do.

Clarke says that over the past few years, "I have surrounded myself with likeminded design entrepreneurs, now friends, that have given me the focus and motivation at times to not only deliver but to stretch far beyond my reach."

She is currently working on a luxury eco-conscious residential and hospitality project in Jamaica including a solar panel installation and rainwater catchment.



She says, "In the beautiful Caribbean, persons are becoming more conscious of their environmental impact. Ishka Designs is pleased to be a part of a project focused on the environment. Our overarching goal is to develop similarly stunning luxury eco-resorts throughout the Caribbean."

# Sabrina Clinton & Elijah Knight

## They help young women develop self confidence

Sabrina Clinton along with Elijah Knight founded Caribbean Gemz in September 2013, an organization which strives to bring new facets to Caribbean culture including fashion, health awareness and beauty care. The two are life and business partners, both of Barbadian heritage, and are referred to in the fashion world as the "power couple."

Sabrina comes from a modeling background, but it was Elijah's concept to start a beauty pageant for Caribbean women, an idea he had when they asked themselves: How can we get people more involved with their heritage?

"The Ms. Caribbean Gemz Pageant is designed for women of West Indian descent, living in the United States, and gives them a chance to represent their culture and be introduced to other opportunities," says Clinton. "For women, we introduce fashion and beauty care. Some

women do it for confidence building. It's also a way to be introduced to the fashion world."

Their queens — last year's from Barbados, this year's of Puerto Rican heritage — rode on the lead float in the Caribbean Day Parade.

"This year's queen, Katherin Jennings was chosen because the judges felt her confidence. "Her personality really stood out and she was the more articulate," said Clinton. She and the first runner up spoke at a Breast Cancer event. The queen

spoke at other charity events such as the Brooklyn Cinderella Program.

The eight competing young women, ages 21-35 came from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Kitts & Nevis, Puerto Rico, Guyana and Jamaica, this year. One aspect of the three-part competition is when they wear a cultural outfit they have made or put together to depict their island's culture or heritage. They write a description and give a heritage background.

The two agree that, "We want to help women get further in fashion, modeling and gain the experience needed to obtain their goals."

As for inspiration, "A few close friends that have companies of their own, making differences in their unique ways, inspire us," says Knight.

He adds, "We are proud of our Ms. Caribbean Gemz Beauty Pageant in which we inspire Caribbean women to reach for more than just the norm. We have



made an impact on these women in giving opportunities that they thought were just dreams."

Knight emphasizes that the winners have opportunities for interviews, fashion shows and socializing in elegant settings in addition to their attendance at charity and fundraiser events and hosting book readings for children.



# Richard David

## An advocate for community development

Richard David was born in a rural village in Guyana, the youngest of three brothers, and came to the United States at the age of 10. He is successful in his professional career while being deeply engaged with his immediate New York community as well as the Indo-Caribbean community.

David worked for eight years at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), most recently as a vice president. In this capacity, he managed billions of dollars that were invested in global and local institutions that directly improved the quality of life for residents across the five boroughs.

One example is the modernization of the buildings at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, an engine for community development in Central Brooklyn. His work at NYCEDC directly impacted New Yorkers from all walks of life, touching many neighborhoods. Its programs provide vital serv-

ices such as feeding the hungry, after-school programs and cultural access.

David also co-founded the Indo-Caribbean Alliance, an organization that provides direct services and advocacy. In its five years, it has become the largest Caribbean organization in Queens. The organization nurtures the community. It educates and mobilizes new voters. It helps students with after-school tutoring, mentoring, SAT exams prep and informs them about college access programs. It provides students with opportunities to develop leadership skills and become involved with community service.

"One of the Alliance's proudest

accomplishments is the creation of an Indo-Caribbean Special Collection of literature and media in partnership with Queens Library," he says. "Today, the collection has hundreds of materials that are enabling students, researchers and residents to develop a greater understanding of the history and identity of the Indo-Caribbean community."

At age 29, David is also one of the youngest members of Community Board 9 where he has served for more than seven years.

He is involved in several organizations and events across the city and regularly conducts workshops to organize people to get involved in their own communities.

On the professional side, he is proud of being able to help many nonprofit organizations build facilities — senior, health, and community centers and cultural spaces — so they can provide human services to their clients.

A Hunter College graduate, he has a Master's in Public Administration from



New York University.

For a current project he says, "I am working to launch a citywide benefits program to save employers and workers on the cost of public transportation."



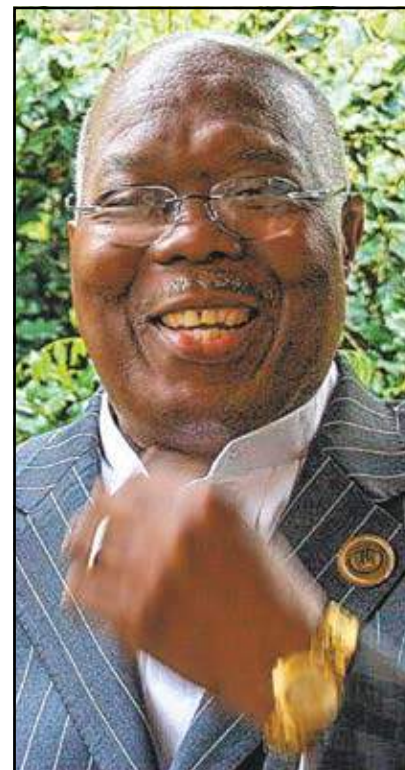
**The Grace Kennedy Group**  
*recognizes and congratulates our colleague*

**Ricardo Bryan**  
*on receiving the Caribbean Life  
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# Roy A. Hastick, Sr.

**Serves New York's business community**



Born in Grenada, West Indies, Dr. Roy A. Hastick, Sr. migrated to the United States in 1972 and worked for several years as an administrator, community advocate, entrepreneur and newspaper publisher.

As president and CEO of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CACCI), for 30 years, Hastick has helped put in place a structure that serves the small business community. CACCI assists people who want to start and grow their own businesses in a climate of unity among diverse cultures.

Decades back in Brooklyn, through his involvement with Community Board #9, Hastick recognized the need for the Caribbean community to unify its forces to improve the quality of life.

Later, he was introduced to other officials through his volunteering with his local Councilman Ted Silverman. Meeting those active in the community enriched the ground from which

CACCI would eventually grow.

Hastick started his own "West Indian Tribune" moving it to downtown Brooklyn. It became the newspaper of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the organization he formed to provide business networking and business development seminars.

After one year, in 1985, the organization became formalized with a structure and board of 10. CACCI — now with a membership of more than 1,700 — sponsors workshops, seminars and business breakfasts.

CACCI's training includes business planning, certification preparation, financing, procurement opportunities, financial literacy, job development, and export / import opportunities.

It has also always been Hastick's dream to develop a Caribbean American Trade and Culture Center to support these local Caribbean owned businesses and help facilitate commerce with the islands.

Last month, it was announced that the Flatbush Caton Market — managed by CACCI — that houses more than 40 micro-vendors will be transformed into a mixed-use project. Projected to open in three years, an expanded renovated market, a new space for the (CACCI), classrooms and a commercial kitchen will be at that site as well as 166 low income residential units.

"This development is a major accomplishment for the Caribbean-American community," says Hastick.

"In addition to affordable housing, there will be a place for micro-enterprises — those starting from scratch. It will be a place for emerging businesses that want to find a partner and link with businesses in the Caribbean, and it will be a Brooklyn facility where

Caribbeans can access resources from Caribbean governments and they won't have to travel to Manhattan," explains the CEO.

After decades of work, Hastick's vision is coming to fruition.

*CONGRATULATIONS*

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*Edgar Henry*

Executive Board Member of The Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. & Cultural Enabler

**FROM THE BOARD & MEMBERS OF  
THE GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW YORK, INC.**



# Dennis Hawthorne

## Committed to the communities his company serves

Dennis Hawthorne is a native of Jamaica, born in rural Grange Hill, Westmoreland. He migrated to Brooklyn in 1985; his first entrepreneurial and artistic endeavor was a successful photography business. However, he decided to focus his energies on the business of shipping.

In 1988, he started his home-based Dennis Shipping Company. Today, 27 years later, the company has transcended its simple beginnings emerging as one of the leaders among Caribbean-owned businesses in New York and Florida as well as Jamaica. The New York locations are on Utica Ave. in Brooklyn and White Plains Road in the Bronx.

And, guided by its "Committed to Excellence" motto, Dennis Shipping has earned a reputation in providing safe, reliable and quality shipping services to the Caribbean.

Furthermore, Hawthorne remains committed to the communities where

his company serves. "Success is not only the result of hard work, but the support from those communities," he says.

"It is this unwavering support that has preserved my business even in challenging economic times," said Hawthorne. Dennis Shipping is dedicated to giving back.

"I am dedicated to outreach programs that are local, national and international in scope," Dennis says. His company has supported programs such as the East Flatbush Friends Education, Caribbean American Outreach Association, Children Outreach of Jamaica, Kings Highway Development Project, many

local churches, senior, civic organizations, and schools.

His unwavering commitment to nation building is evidenced by many other various endeavors he supports that span the areas of education, health, sports, and the environment.

He has partnered with organizations such as the American Foundation of The University of the West Indies (A.F.U.W.I), Negril Education and Environmental Trust (N.E.E.ET) in providing scholarships and funding for their different initiatives.

In addition to Dennis Shipping's contribution to the growth and development of both the Caribbean Diaspora and the Caribbean region, the company has donated shipping services for natural disaster relief and medical and reconstruction equipment to Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua, Jamaica and Haiti.

Hawthorne is well known within his East Flatbush community. He firmly believes: It is not the amount of money or the level of education that makes



you successful, but rather the people that benefit, beyond your families and friends, as a result of your accomplishments.

Among the many awards recognizing Hawthorne's contributions to community, he has received 'The Consulate General of Jamaica Award for Outstanding Benevolent Services to Jamaica and Caribbean Communities' as well as 'The Congressional Record Award.'

# Congratulations

Geneive Brown Metzger, LLD Hon.

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# Lowell F. Hawthorne

## President and CEO follows in his father's footsteps



Lowell F. Hawthorne is a son of the Jamaican soil who emigrated in 1981 and went on to become president and chief executive officer of Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery & Grill, the nation's largest Caribbean franchise chain.

After Hawthorne and his family migrated to the United States, he graduated Bronx Community College and found employment as an accountant with the New York Police Department.

Eight years later, with the help of his wife, siblings and their spouses, he opened a bakery on East Gun Hill Road, in the Bronx. He was following in the footsteps of his father who owned a bakery in Jamaica.

The bakery grew rapidly and soon expanded to several other locations in the New York metropolitan area. Today Golden Krust franchises over 100 stores in nine states employing over 1500 persons. With nine varieties of Jamaican-style patties, it is the com-

pany's hope to add the Jamaican patty to the list of popular American ethnic fast foods along with pizza, bagels, and Chinese noodles.

Of the many prestigious awards Hawthorne has received for entrepreneurial prowess, his native home Jamaica conferred him with the highest national honor, the Order of Distinction in 2005, and for his service to commerce and community development, in 2014 he received The Order of Distinction, Commander Rank.

Medgar Evers College and the University of West Indies bestowed him with honorary doctorates. And, in 2010, the Jamaica Observer named him Business Leader of the Year for

his outstanding contribution to the community.

Under his leadership, Golden Krust organization ranks in the Black Enterprise top 100 and the Entrepreneur Magazine's top 500.

Currently, Hawthorne is a director of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) and chairman of the Partnership Board of the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies (AFUWI).

One of his proudest most recent achievements is the completion of his autobiography entitled "The Baker's Son," which chronicles his journey from Jamaica to the United States and the development of a small Jamaican business into a highly successful American business empire.

His business acumen has also segued into philanthropy. Hawthorne's Mavis & Ephraim Hawthorne Golden Krust Foundation, named in honor of his late parents, has in the past 10 years awarded more than 300 scholar-

ships to students both in the United States and Jamaica.

Hawthorne's mantra is: A mind is a terrible thing to waste and a positive community is everybody's business.

He is married to Lorna and has four children.

# Edgar Henry

## Entrepreneur and master musician



Guyanese American entrepreneur Edgar Henry has lived in New York for more than 40 years. He had a 12-year association with a Greek shipping company Hellenic Lines Ltd., which served the Red Sea, Middle East, East Africa and Pakistan.

His business interests are varied. He operates successfully as a licensed real estate broker in New York and has also ventured into the optical industry, serving the Caribbean community at ENG Caribbean Vision Center on Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn.

Additionally, Henry is very aware of the importance of communication systems to the cultural Caribbean-American community. He established Sterling Communications Network in 1993, broadcasting "Calling the Caribbean" on WJNR Radio, 1430 AM.

For five years he was a part owner of the former Caribbean Diaspora newspaper, "Caribbean Impact."

Additionally, Henry is involved in

community and philanthropic activities both in the United States and Guyana.

His involvement with the greater business community is long-standing as the past president of the Flatbush Avenue Business Improvement District

**"I'm establishing a music, performing arts and dance school, launching at the end of this month."**

(BID), a position he held for 25 years. The Flatbush BID was involved with many enhancements to the Flatbush

business community including adding security to help back the police, sponsoring a Thanksgiving dinner for those in need, having a float in the Caribbean Day parade, and helping support the Bedford Boys and Girls Center. "We ran training courses for business and sponsored a street fair," he adds of the rounded and wide expanse of activities in which the Flatbush BID is involved.

Edgar also has deep roots in the arts. In addition to his being an actor, he has written screenplays and is also assistant treasurer on the executive board of the Guyana Cultural Association (GCA) of N.Y. "We're about to celebrate our 15th year," he says of the organization that sponsors summer workshops, a "Literary Hang" where new writers present books, a symposium, a family fun day, and a "Kwe Kwe" — a traditional Guyanese celebratory event, the evening before getting married.

He is also the editor of the New York Guyana Folk Festival magazine on-line

that has a monthly print edition.

That's not all. Henry is also a music master — piano and organ — who teaches music at the annual summer GCA workshop series.

He proudly announces, "I'm establishing a music, performing arts and dance school, launching at the end of this month." It will be at St. Stephens Church auditorium space, in Brooklyn.



# Annette M. Hurd-Runcie

## An entrepreneur who feeds the hungry

Annette M. Hurd-Runcie was born in Kingston, Jamaica in a large family of seven, emigrating with her family at the age of 11.

She had an early successful career as a computer system analyst and later plant IT manager at Procter & Gamble, earned an MBA, has a family with two sons but it was not enough.

Hurd-Runcie felt the need and the urgency to fulfill her lifelong dream of becoming an entrepreneur. After research, she decided to become a part of the Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery and Grill franchise.

With the full support of her husband, in February 2005, she left Procter & Gamble to open her Golden Krust franchise in Queens Village, incorporating her business skills with her drive and her motivation for success.

Then, along with her husband, she opened Pa-Nash Restaurant & Lounge in November 2013, an upscale restaurant serving a unique fusion cuisine.

It was no easy task to open, taking three years due to various building department bureaucratic obstacles. Finally, Annette brought to Southeast Queens the style of Manhattan serving a mouth watering Mediterranean

**"I still plan to get a PhD in business, so I can become a business professor and use my skills towards the betterment of my people and community."**

and Moroccan cuisine with Caribbean and soul food influences that she calls "EuroSoul."

Her inspiration to open a restaurant dates way back, "Ever since I was a child it's been discussed at our dinner table about one day having a family restaurant," she said.

The restaurant has received many awards, including a "1st Place" for commercial design from the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

"My dad passed away last November but I am happy that I was able to fulfill the family legacy before his passing," she says, adding, "fulfilling this legacy while keeping my family unit together. It's tough balancing business, being a wife, and a mom."

Additionally, Hurd-Runcie reaches



the same primary school which she attended in Jamaica.

Also, Hurd-Runcie founded the Alexander Youth Etiquette Success (Y.E.S.) community organization, which will provide etiquette education and resources for youths in the community.

"I still plan to get a PhD in business, so I can become a business professor and use my skills toward the betterment of my people and community," she says.



**COUNCIL MEMBER JUMAANE WILLIAMS**  
*congratulates*  
**PASTOR GILFORD MONROSE**  
*on receiving the*  
***Caribbean Life Impact Award 2015***

**Pastor Gilford Monrose is a dedicated and hard working individual.**

**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!**

# Karisma Jay

## A passion for teaching the arts



Karisma Jay is the Artistic Director and Founder of the AbunDance Academy located in the heart of Brooklyn. For their first End of Year Dance Production, this past June, AbunDance Academy presented The Wiz – this version written, directed, and narrated by Karisma who added exciting new flavors to the classic.

“A Broadway worthy performance, it was our first big production!” she proudly proclaims. “We showcased 100 students, 20 senior citizen members and 20-30 of our AbunDance staff. We attracted an audience of 400, and 50 volunteers from the Brooklyn community.”

Karisma Jay’s life is in dance and she has been dancing and performing since the age of two.

She studied at the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Junior Division of Ailey School, High School of the Performing Arts and also studied Performing Arts and Pre-Med at NYU.

In addition to performing with a number of prestigious dance companies such as Brooklyn Ballet and Ronald K. Brown’s Evidence, Karisma performed with the national touring company of STOMP, the longest-running Off Broadway musical, during the 2013-2015 seasons.

Professionally, Karisma has also worked in television and has done voice overs for commercials.

Meanwhile, Karisma honed her skills working with children to develop the confidence of even the shyest and youngest of students. She has taught dance since the age of 11.

At AbunDance, students of all ethnicities, from ages three through adults, study many dance forms including ballet, African, tap and jazz, theatre arts, specialty performing arts and fitness.

“Our performance of The Wiz turned into a testimony to the power of AbunDance, experiencing the ‘Dance’ in abundance,” she said.

“Coming up are winter and spring dance company performances, acting workshops, our annual winter gala fundraiser and of our annual June dance concert,” she says.

Karisma is also competing in the 6th Annual Stars of New York Dance competition, partnering with Rev. David Brawley of St. Paul Community Church. “We’ll be raising scholarship funds for select AbunDance students,” she adds.

Karisma’s inspiration is her mom. “Everything that I am is because she invested in me and continues to do so. She supports my passion for the arts. She never allows me to limit myself

creatively, academically, or personally. She implanted in me all the life tools I need to draw upon in her stead.”

Karisma was born in the U.S. Her mom and family are from Panama with lineage from Barbados, Jamaica and England.

**The Jewish Community Relations Council of NY and its Center for Community Leadership applauds Reverend Gifford Monroe, a leader who exemplifies caring and vision, on his receiving the Caribbean Life Impact Award 2015.**



Ronald G. Weiner, President, JCRC-NY  
Rabbi Michael Miller Executive Vice President and CEO, JCRC-NY  
Rabbi Bob Kaplan, Director Center for Community Leadership at JCRC-NY



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Noreen Hurd congratulates

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of Panash Restaurant

**ON RECEIVING THE  
CARIBBEAN LIFE IMPACT AWARD 2015**

**You are an inspiration.  
Well done!**



# Terrence Theophilus LaPierre

## Dedicated to community service

Terrence Theophilus LaPierre is a son of Trinidad and Tobago. He came to the United States in 1969, leaving the Trinidad and Tobago Police Force.

He is a licensed insurance broker, a public accountant (Brooklyn College and College of Insurance, degree in accounting), a New York notary and is the owner of Patriot Agency on Avenue D.

"My friend and ex-policeman Selby encouraged me to pursue the insurance business," he says. "But I wanted to do more, so I became a tax preparer / consultant. Then I became a 'one stop shop.' I wanted to offer everything to my community."

LaPierre's multi-service business services the New York, Florida and the Connecticut areas and offers Western Union, money orders and bill payments. His office prepares personal and business taxes, immigration services, and all types of insurances — commercial, homeowner, workers compensation and disability.

He takes particular satisfaction in his work. "I am proud of helping my community in their daily lives. I have had a successful business for the past 30 years where one and all can come in to get information and service on many needs

ness strip.

He is also second vice-president of Community Board 17. He says, "As Chair for CB17 Committee for Sanitation and DEP I am working on quality of life issues — particularly for a cleaner community such as garbage collection and snow removal."

Concerned about violence in the neighborhood, LaPierre is a member of the 67th Precinct Committee, attend-

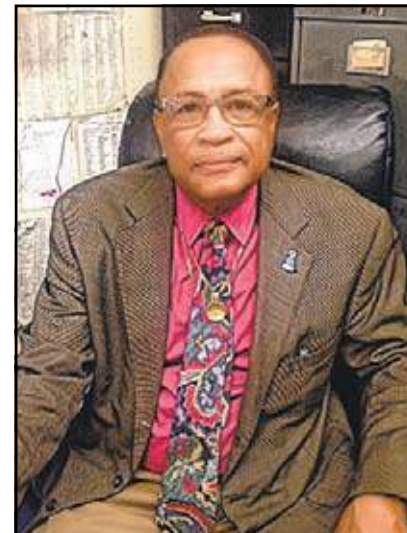
**"I am proud of helping my community in their daily lives. I have had a successful business for the past 30 years where one and all can come in to get information and service on many needs and concerns."**

and concerns."

Additionally, LaPierre is very involved with his community. He is the president of the Avenue D Merchants Association. With the help of other business owners, the association illuminates Avenue D and Utica Avenue with Christmas lights creating a very festive Avenue D busi-

ness strip. ing meetings with the precinct, the borough president and district elected officials about the use of guns.

He explains, "The commissioner of police instituted a new program called 67 Precinct NCO. We meet with officers assigned to different community sectors bringing in residents and youth in order



to have a better relationship between the community and the police."

He has also been appointed to the Brooklyn District Attorney's Advisory and Research Committee, the Selective Service System Board of the U.S. and he has been on the Community Advisory Board to Kings County Hospital for three years.

The recipient of several community service awards, LaPierre also has received two awards from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in appreciation for distinguished service to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

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# James Lovell

## Garifuna cultural ambassador and educator



James Lovell is a cultural ambassador who preserves traditional Garifuna music, dance and language, sharing it with audiences around the world. He is a passionate educator, activist, a storyteller and a multi-instrumentalist — including percussion, guitars, voice, clarinet, sax and euphonium.

He grew up in Dangriga, Belize, deeply rooted in his Garifuna heritage.

The Garifuna are an indigenous group born of the mixing of Africans — who were never enslaved — with the native Carib and Arawak peoples of the Caribbean on the island of St. Vincent.

In 1795, they were condemned to perish on the island of Roatán, Honduras but rather than perish, they settled along the coastline of Central America — Honduras, then Belize, later Guatemala and Nicaragua. Their thriving culture is under threat as young Garifuna migrate primarily to major U.S. cities.

Inspired by Garifuna artist, “Pen” Cayetano, Lovell decided to pursue a music career, immigrating to the United

States where he earned a bachelor’s degree in African Studies with a minor in music. In 1994, he co-founded the performing arts company Illagulei (Roots), created to preserve and promote Garifuna culture. Since 1995, he has released four albums and experimented with combining African and Garifuna music resulting in a genre he coined as Afri-Garifuna Rhythms, which forms the foundation of his Afri-Garifuna Jazz Ensemble.

Lovell has also developed a method of teaching the Garifuna language, history, dance, and customs through songs. The program, which includes, history, drumming and music theory, was implemented under UNESCO and the

National Garifuna Council. In 2005 and 2008, he facilitated dance and music workshops in his hometown Dangriga.

Using his teaching methods in New York, Lovell directed the Afrigarifuna Youth Ensemble for children ages six-14.

In 2013, he was a featured artist at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Lovell reintroduced the Garifuna culture back to its roots in St. Vincent and the Grenadines leading children and young adults in a cultural and retrieval program called Yugacure. He also teaches an annual Garifuna nursery rhyme workshop in Belize.

As part of his endeavors to highlight language preservation of endangered cultures worldwide, he is currently collaborating with the Breton people of France.

And most recently, this culture activist has worked on projects with the D.C.-based organization Sustainable Development and Climate Change (SUDECC) using his artistic skills and pedagogical endeavors to safeguard Garifuna music,

dance and language.

Lovell is employed by the New York Board of Education, where he works with severely emotionally challenged elementary and high school students.

# Pastor Gilford T. Monroe

## Committed to serving our youth

Gilford T. Monroe is a native of the U.S. Virgin Islands. He moved to New York to study theology and marry the “love of his life” Dianne Thomas.

It always had been a lifelong dream of his to serve the church, especially the youth. In part, he began by developing programs for young people as youth director, for the now historic Mt. Zion Church of God (Seventh Day) on E. 37th St. He is still there and calls it “a small church with a big heart.”

Pastor Monroe understands youth struggles and works tirelessly with youths to enhance their spiritual maturity. In 2005, he was ordained.

The four walls of a church do not contain Pastor Monroe’s extensive involvement. Serving locally and beyond, he creates and partners with many organizations.

In 2002, he established the Catch The Vision (CTV) Youth Conferences, which empowers young people, leaders, and marriages and attracts

youth and adults alike from around the world. At Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, he initiated the Unity Gospel Fest to bring together spiritual and physical wellness. Pastor Monroe helped develop and serves as Team

**“We are a group of pastors responding to gangs and working to reduce crime and gun violence in Central Brooklyn, the heart of the Caribbean community.”**

Leader for the East Flatbush Ready When the Time Comes Disaster Team, a disaster-relief American Red Cross training to volunteer teams from local community groups.

Beyond a physical church, he is a chaplain for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, serves as director of the Faith Based and Clergy Initiative

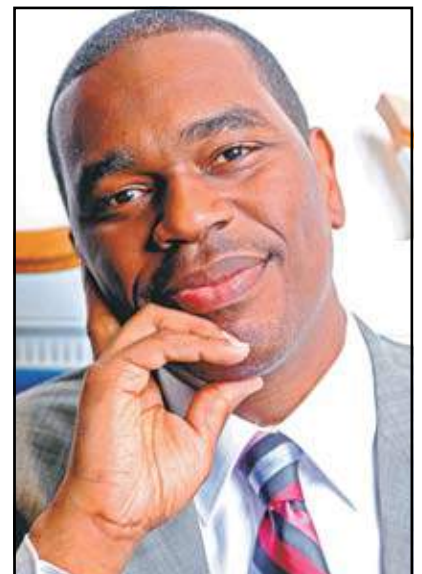
at the Brooklyn Borough President’s Office, serves as a board member for the Flatbush YMCA, and he is on the Advisory Board for Boys Town.

He chairs the Community Leadership Council of the Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center.

In the social justice and community world, he is an alumni chair for We Are All Brooklyn, which brings diverse leaders together to solve quality of life

issue. He has served on many CB #17 Advisory Boards.

As inspiration, Pastor Monroe says, “Rabbi Bob Kaplan, he is a mentor the greatest sense. He has shown me how to partner and collaborate with diverse groups, using our compassion and love for community renewal to move our community forward.”



Pastor Monroe’s most current project is the GodSquad. He is the founding president of the 67th Precinct Clergy Council—liaisons between police and the community. He elaborates, “We are a group of pastors responding to gangs and working to reduce crime and gun violence in Central Brooklyn, the heart of the Caribbean community.”

His Facebook/Twitter handle is @pastormonrose. He also has an immigration helpline.



# Judy D. Newton

## Community advocate and mentor

Judy D. Newton was born in an obscure village called Coach Hill, in Barbados, the fifth of eight children.

Her parents separated and as a single parent, her mother built a solid foundation by clothing and educating her eight children.

From an early age, Newton learned the importance of a good education, which continues to be a driving value. She excelled in school, was the valedictorian and the family moved to the U.S. so she could advance her education.

Newton's instinct to protect her community led to her joining the police force in 1984, where she found her core. She advanced through the ranks — patrol, special assignment, and finally detective with NYPD.

At John Jay she earned an Associate Degree in Political Science, a B.S. in Business Administration and a Masters Degree in Public Administration. She also earned a Masters Degree in Philosophy from Cardiff University in Wales and is pursuing a PhD in Lead-

ership and Supervision in Education at the American International College, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Newton serves as a mentor and instructor by assisting school age children with English, mathematics, global studies, life skills, and helps pro-

**Newton serves as a mentor and instructor by assisting school age children with English, mathematics, global studies, life skills, and helps provide educational field experiences at a weekly program**

vide educational field experiences at a weekly program operated by The Barbadian Ex-Police Association in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y.

In Barbados, she assists in coordinating a school mentoring, breakfast, summer and after-school program at St. Ambrose Anglican Church School.

Newton is also very involved with

Cape Town, South Africa. There, she is a big sister to and mentors three children providing for their tuition and future education as well as mentoring and financially assisting youth leaders from Monument Park High School. She also performed community service at a YMCA and Pollsmoor Prison.

For decades, she has volunteered at a Brooklyn soup kitchen and is the volunteer coordinator for annual local

holiday dinner and toy distribution events.

Newton is a member of Community Board 18, is active at the 63rd Precinct Community Council meetings, and is the recipient of several awards.

She retired from the NYPD in 2012 and continues to work in the community.



With her husband, Richard Baxt, retired assistant commissioner with the New York City Department of Probation, she has established The Newton Foundation to expand their charitable work.

Newton has also embarked on a research proposal for a PhD in Educational Leadership and Supervision. Her developmental criminology study will examine elementary age children who have precursors to felonious behavior.

She hopes that the study will be incorporated into educational curriculum systems.

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Dr. Roy Hastick and the other  
Honorees of the 2015 Impact Awards**



# Juan Reyes

## Strong work ethic inspired by parents

At a young age, Juan Reyes, migrated from the Dominican Republic and like most immigrant families, his parents left their homeland for a better future for their three offspring.

It is his parents, who worked so hard who serve as an inspiration for Reyes to do the same.

"Today as a father of four," he says, "I am passionate about my work and the communities I work with. I hope to show my children, that hard work and determination is the key to success."

Reyes started as a merchandiser in the beer and beverage industry at the age of 20. Very shortly after, he was promoted to sales representative, and soon after he became a supervisor for five years.

Now, and for the past 10 years he has been the sales director for Riviera Imports, working with many products — beer, wine and spirits from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Reyes explains that when Red Stripe moved its export business from Jamaica to the U.S., Riviera Imports went in to help create a beverage product for export, which became DG White Over-

**"The Caribbean community is so hardworking. We come here with a goal and a dream to provide for our families."**

proof Rum. This product is distributed in key Caribbean markets across the U.S.

"In this way we are contributing to the Jamaican economy and saved a number of jobs," he says. Riviera Imports also distributes Jamaican

export Dragon Stout.

For 10 years, Riviera Imports has been greatly involved in carnival in New York. Reyes says, "I am proud to be in a position to help sponsor festivities, which are so integral in the Caribbean tradition."

"It takes a lot of money to run the Caribbean Day parade. We help with product and help support some mas camps," he adds. "We also helped the Caribbean Association in Dade County, Florida, this year."

Next year Rivera Imports plans to help Caribbean Associations for their carnivals in Houston, Connecticut, Boston and Miami and Juan looks forward to making stronger linkages and sponsoring carnivals nationwide.

Support goes also to other community activities like events with Una Clark. Last August, Riviera Imports helped sponsor Charlie Records — the largest Calypso producer — at the Fulton Street Festival.

"The Caribbean community is so hardworking," Reyes says. "We come



here with a goal and a dream to provide for our families. Riviera Imports wants to help support other grassroots, social and civic activities. In all our endeavors, we want to help the residents of the community."

# Nicole Robinson-Etienne

## Loves connecting children to nature

"I was born and raised in Brooklyn but my family is from St. Vincent, W.I.," says Nicole Robinson-Etienne whose work is pleasantly unusual, particularly for someone with a B.A. in Political Science and Urban Studies and a law degree.

Robinson-Etienne is the assistant director of Government and Community Affairs at the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) New York Aquarium and Prospect Park Zoo in Brooklyn. She liaises with state and city elected officials, government agencies, community boards, the amusement industry, and community stakeholders.

She also has been actively engaged with the newly formed Alliance for Coney Island and the ConeyRecovers campaign that mobilized efforts to assist local residents in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.

Previously, Robinson-Etienne was an immigration attorney in a small law practice working on asylum and family unification cases.

She later went on to work as special counsel to Assemblywoman Rhoda S. Jacobs, for more than eight years helping constituents expedite and resolve problems relating to the delivery of social services. She assisted clients with immigration related concerns, developed a summer resource guide for parents and managed special events including health fairs, job fairs, educational workshops, and an annual luncheon for senior citizens.

These skills came in handy when she transitioned to work in Coney Island where she engaged residents and stakeholders in dialogue around the issue of the Strategic Plan for Coney Island.

About her current work she says,

"I am proud of my efforts to connect children to nature by providing access to the New York Aquarium through our community access and education outreach programs."

"Growing up in the Caribbean, you are surrounded by water," she says, "and have a seamless connection to the natural world around you. New York City is a city of islands and also surrounded by water but our children don't have that same connection."

With delight she describes the first exhibit at the NY Aquarium: a replication of Glovers Reef, a coral reef system located in Belize, home to marine creatures — eels, Atlantic rays, French angels and Cuban hogfish.

She says, "It's that first moment of awe that you see in a child's eye when they visit the aquarium that inspires me to want children of all ages, but especially urban children of Caribbean descent to have that same experience."



Nicole also spends her free time mentoring young women and volunteers as a leader and coordinator of six Girl Scout troops at PS 276 in Canarsie, Brooklyn.



# Dave Rodney

## Major music promoter and writer

Multi-lingual, media-marketing consultant, TV host, author and freelance writer, Dave Rodney is co-president of Images LLC, a media marketing company based in New York.

Hailing from Jamaica, Rodney graduated from University of West Indies, with training at the Sorbonne and Caribbean Institute of Mass Communications; he regularly orchestrates network television promotional opportunities for Jamaica and the Caribbean.

Rodney has created brand awareness and increased sales for several high profile companies including Grace Foods, Western Union, Jamaica Tourist Board, Breezes Bahamas, Rhum Barbancourt in Haiti and NYC's summer concert Groovin' In The Park.

Additionally, his company has created publicity campaigns for an array of popular musicians and related entertainment companies.

Rodney has anchored many high-profile international media driven

events in Jamaica including The Motown Soul By The Sea, MTV Spring Break and the HBO Sinbad Soul Music Festival, one of the most profitable events of its kind ever held in Jamaica.

**"I create opportunities by seeing and synergizing the possibilities, and having the persistence to act upon them."**

In less than a week millions of dollars in foreign exchange were earned for Jamaica.

He created a one-hour French reggae program in Quebec that became syndicated in 11 markets. He is partly responsible for the development of key

radio links from New York to elsewhere in the Jamaican / Caribbean Diaspora.

His expertise in integrating multiple media platforms and the travel trade in high yielding target markets maximizes earnings for the Caribbean region. And, locally and internationally, he continues to be a major promotional engine for a wide range of media-driven events.

Among his other achievements, Rodney pioneered the first dancehall signing to a U.S. major labels through Atlantic Records as far back as 1988.

Author of a book on pop sensation Usher, Rodney has also pushed relentlessly for the promotion of overseas-based Jamaican authors. He has also written much of the JTB's promotional brochures on aspects of Jamaican culture and writes periodically for several publications. He has served on the board of the National Gallery of Art in Jamaica.

Rodney also has a passion for exploring South American rivers, jungles and



rain forests. He feels that his jungle survival skills course in Brazil helps him to execute guerilla-style / grass roots marketing campaigns.

Of his operational philosophy, he says, "I create opportunities by seeing and synergizing the possibilities, and having the persistence to act upon them. I map out plans, visualize overcoming obstacles and retain the ability to adapt to changing conditions in an ever-changing world."

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*Zoran Vaz congratulates  
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Mr. Edgar Henry and the other honorees  
of the 2015 Impact Awards**

# Nina Rodriguez

## Realtor with a dedication to charity

Ninoshka Rodriguez is one of Rapid Realty's brightest stars. She is a top performing franchisee, who has worked with the company since 2007.

Nina, as she prefers to be called, was still attending college — she obtained a business and finance degree — had a full-time job with Amerigroup, when she was enticed to explore real estate. She took a course at night. Once licensed, she began working part-time for Rapid Realty and began to focus on high-end rentals and commercial spaces.

Amerigroup was looking to open additional offices throughout New York City and Rapid Realty had commercial spaces everywhere. Rodriguez found a way to have both companies work in harmony with each other. She brokered several commercial deals that set commission records at the time. Once out of school, she put more time into real estate.

After gaining expertise in the industry, she helped open the Bedford office.

Soon after, she jumped at an opportunity to open up a Rapid Realty franchise in North Park Slope.

Rodriguez's ability to manage people and her competitive attitude make her a great asset to Rapid Realty. She inspires her agents as they look for an example of what hard work and dedication can lead to.

**"My team.. They're young and ambitious. Their hard work makes me want to work harder so that I can help them reach their goals."**

tion can lead to.

She is now a multi-unit franchisee, an advisory council member and one of Rapid's first area developers.

Nina has aspirations to bring the brand to markets outside of New York City. Nina volunteers to assist other franchisees.

In the "giving back realm," she coordinates charity events such as those for the American Cancer Society and Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Involved with relief for those affected by Hurricane Sandy, she and her team helped people clean up and gather their belongings. "We placed many of them in new homes without charge," she says.

"Also, my team and I often help provide clothing, electronics and school supplies for the children in shelters," she said.

Who inspired her? "My team," she says. "They're young and ambitious. Their hard work makes me want to work harder so that I can help them reach their goals."

With Thanksgiving coming, she and her team are collecting turkeys and canned good to deliver to people in need, mostly from the Caribbean and



Hispanic communities. They're also looking forward to a toy drive for Christmas.

Nina Rodriguez was born in New York and raised in Puerto Rico.

# Carl Stuart

## Serving communities here and abroad

One of eight siblings, Carl Stuart II grew up in Guyana. His parents instilled in him discipline, love for God and respect for all men.

Stuart began working in the aviation industry as a teenager — he was 15, working as an accountant. He went on to a career, spanning more than 25 years in airport operations and administration.

He has worked for three major Caribbean-based airlines in leadership roles — briefly for GAC, 15 years with BWIA, before transitioning to Caribbean Airlines. With Caribbean Airlines, he has worked as manager in Guyana, then interim general manager for St. Maarten and Jamaica. He returned to Guyana in 2010 to be airport manager for South America.

In the tri-state area since December, Stuart is now sales executive for Caribbean Airlines in New York and the North East USA.

During this brief time, he has aided

Caribbean Airline's transitional positioning as a strong brand across the Caribbean Diaspora and leisure segments of the market.

"I love serving communities," Stuart says of his work both in aviation and outside his profession. "When Caribbean Airlines has an opportunity to give back we do," he says of its tri-state outreach.

He elaborates, "We transported to Jamaica at no cost medical supplies and portable equipment for clinics." Caribbean Airlines also donates tickets for a myriad of Caribbean Diaspora fundraising events.

This airline executive looks to his mother as having a great influence on his life. "She reached out to persons disadvantaged," he says. "As a young boy, I got involved in commu-

nity work."

He is also an ordained minister, an elder, in the African Methodist Episcopal Church with a passion for working with those at risk and disadvantaged.

"I oversee a men's counseling program in New Jersey serving youth and adults," he says. "We deal with issues of gang violence, young men being

**"I love serving communities. When Caribbean Airlines has an opportunity to give back we do."**

bullied, and access to opportunities not easily obtained." He adds, "I mentor young men to move from hopelessness to hope, to look to a better tomorrow and that the past does not determine the future."

In Guyana for the last 10 years, he has also done community outreach work including a twice-weekly feeding program for youth at risk, a language



arts and book program for kids, and support for girl dropouts that includes working with the families.

In November 2014, the government of Guyana recognized Stuart for his outstanding work for more than two decades in aviation in Guyana.



# Vaughan Toney

## An advocate for children

Vaughan Toney has been a life long advocate for children. Born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, he spent his formative years there.

He is president and chief executive officer of The Friends of Crown Heights Educational Centers, Inc., (FOCH), a community-based organization in the New York City. Since 2001, he has presided over the largest expansion of early childhood education services in the history of the 40-year-old organization.

There is now a network of 19 full-service centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Staten Island, one of the City's largest providers of childcare and early education, including universal pre-K and after-school programs.

In a relationship that spans 30 years, he has served in various capacities as a member and former chairman of the Board of Directors.

Toney has also enjoyed a robust career in public service including a combined 14 years in policy in the

state legislatures in Albany. He was particularly inspired by State Senator Leonard Stavisky with whom he worked as special assistant.

He says, "In addition to his 34 years of service as a state legislator, Stavisky was a former professor of history and

**Stavisky... instilled in me at the earliest stages of my career a lifelong commitment to public service and advocacy.**

government who brought that unique perspective and expertise to his position as chairman of the Senate Education Committee. And it was he who instilled in me at the earliest stages of my career a lifelong commitment to public service and advocacy."

Reflecting on life he continues, "It was he who taught me that public service is a sacred calling and the noblest of pursuits."

Toney left Albany to serve as chief-of-staff for Council Member Una Clarke and then 45th Council District Member Dr. Lloyd Henry.

He is also active in local institutions, churches and political organizations including a member of the board of the Day Care Council of New York and Chair of Tabernacle Day Care Center.

Toney's latest project is very exciting. With his colleagues and staff, he is spearheading "Bridging the Gap," an initiative he explains, "that seeks to drastically reduce the word deficit that poor children suffer in the earliest stages of life, relative to more affluent kids."

The project makes an abundance of children's books readily accessible for loan or to keep for the parents and children attending the educational centers. Hands-on training for par-



ents to better simulate their children's interest is also part of the project. "We want to maximize their exposure to the wonder and beauty of words," Toney says.

# Dennis Rahiim Watson

## Motivational speaker who combats gun violence

As a youngster in Bermuda, Dennis Rahiim Watson got kicked out of school 37 times for being insubordinate and disruptive. Those attributes are now channeled positively. As a motivational speaker, he shares his message about 25 times a month to audiences worldwide.

In the early 80s, his good friend Denzel Washington encouraged Dennis, a performer / poet, to write a one-man show. Entitled "The First Black President," Dennis performed it 500 times from 1981-2008.

"All along, I was working with youth," Dennis says. During that time, he founded the National Black Youth Leadership Council to inspire young folks to be winners, achievers, and successful.

The organization changed, now called the Center for Black Student Achievement. "In three decades, we've reached three million children," he says.

Much of his speaking is on college campuses. "I concentrate on the hip-

hop generation. I want them to be problem solvers and have academic success."

**"All along, I was working with youth. In three decades, we've reached three million children."**

"You can change people's perceptions," he tells them. "You can't talk like a thug. You should have suits in your closet, polished shoes, and know how to tie a tie."

He emphasizes how he wants to create a generation of role models, innovators, and mentors—global leaders,

looking to Barack and Michele Obama as excellent global examples.

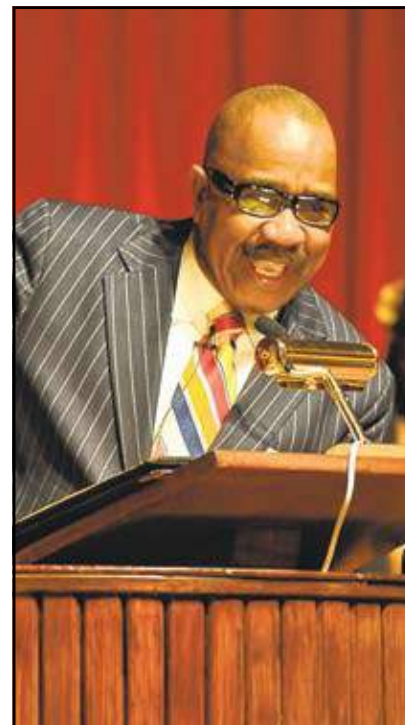
Watson wants Black men to love, honor and respect each other and particularly to end gun violence.

"Gun violence is a plague in the Black community. We have to find a solution," he says. He speaks to gangs about consequences—injury, death or incarceration, "It's your mother that carries the burden for the rest of your life; she will be inconsolable."

Dennis volunteers 25 percent of his presentations and has spoken at 100 prisons. His message, "You've one life, why mess it up? Do you want murder to be your legacy?"

One of his talks, "Life Lessons from Big Mama: What I Learned from My Mother" is lively and emotional. With call and response, his presentations get the audience involved. "I see students cry," he says.

In addition to his mother, he particularly thanks his mentors Pan Africanist Dr. Roosevelt Brown and Queen Mother Moore, Harlem Prep's Dr. Edward Car-



penter, and African history teacher Dr. Josef Ben Jochannon as adults that believed in him. Watson acknowledges his loving teachers in Bermuda and others who acted like big brothers and role models for him. "I count 500 'investors' in me and I don't want to let them down."

# Ruby Wood

## A business owner who receives her blessings by giving



Ruby Wood (nee Small) hails from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Forty years ago she migrated to the United States to join her husband, the late Egerton “Creech” Wood.

After several jobs, she says, “I accepted that my passion and profession was in the shipping business with my husband.”

Ruby and her late husband established Square Deal Shippers and Movers, Inc. then on Utica Ave. When they outgrew that location, they moved to their present home office and warehouse site on Church near Troy.

“There were numerous challenges,” she says. In addition to administrative tasks, she adds, “I maneuvered barrels, drove the pick-up and delivery trucks so shipments would depart and arrive to various destinations on their expected dates.”

With all of this, she also continued her education at college and had a family.

“My company has provided jobs for a number of persons,” Ruby Wood says, “giving them opportunities to be success-

ful professionals.”

Ruby’s life is also guided by the words of her mother: There are more blessings in giving than receiving.

To that end, she is involved in several Diaspora community activities. She and

less people.

She has acquired and distributed books, computers, medical equipment and supplies, and building materials for hospitals and churches.

Among the many, her most rewarding achievement she says, “I am most proud of shipping a refrigerated morgue to Union Island, a small island in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It impacted the lives of many by allowing the locals to keep the dead a little longer, thus allow-

**Wood is the recipient of numerous recognitions, citations and awards including a proclamation from City Council in 1999 and Woman of the Year Award in 2009 from Councilmember Dr. Kendall B. Stewart on behalf of the constituents of the 45th District.**

her company have donated charitable gifts and donations to many organizations including the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, schools for children with special needs, sports and educational youth programs, and feeding programs for school children and home-

ing relatives traveling from abroad to see their loved ones before burial.”

“Right now, I’m working in conjunction with St. Mathias Charities to get medical supplies and equipment to St. Vincent and the Grenadines,” she adds.

For her acts of kindness, Wood is

the recipient of numerous recognitions, citations and awards including a proclamation from City Council in 1999 and Woman of the Year Award in 2009 from Councilmember Dr. Kendall B. Stewart on behalf of the constituents of the 45th District.

For her social involvement in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, nurses, teachers, sports, and religious associations have also paid tribute to her.

She is the mother of two daughters and a son and the grandmother of four boys.

# Tiphannie Yanique

## A Caribbean woman of letters



Tiphannie Yanique is a daughter of the Caribbean — St. Thomas to be exact — a woman of letters and an assistant professor of writing.

She is the author of the novel, “Land of Love and Drowning,” which won the 2014 Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Award from the Center for Fiction, the Phillis Wheatley Award for Pan-African Literature, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rosenthal Family Foundation Award. The book was listed by NPR as one of the Best Books of 2014, was a finalist for the Orion Award in Environmental Literature, and is currently a finalist for the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award.

Among many recognitions, Yanique has received a Pushcart Prize and a Fulbright Scholarship. She was honored in 2010 with “5 Under 35” by the National Book Foundation and in 2014 mentioned as one of “14 women to watch out for” for her collection of stories “How to Escape from a Leper Colony.”

Yanique cites her grandmother Beulah Smith Harrigan as her greatest inspiration. “She was the children’s librarian on the island and an avid reader of books and teller of stories. Her father was a ship captain, a rather famous one, who went down with his ship when she was just three years old. Her mother passed a way soon after.

**My major artistic and activist project is to reveal to Virgin Islanders...that the Virgin Islands is a place where fully complex and intellectual and creative people live and thrive.**

Her older brother, sister and godmother raised her in rotation.”

But she managed to get her master’s degree in Library Science at a time when an educated Black woman, especially a poor one, was a rarity.

Yanique is a writing professor in the MFA program at the New School in New York City, where she is the 2015 recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award.

She says, “My major artistic and activist project is to reveal to Virgin Islanders, West Indians, and human beings at large, that though protectorates of the United States and Great Britain, though a tourist destination, though a cluster of very small islands, that the Virgin Islands is a place where fully complex and intellectual and cre-

ative people live and thrive, where there is a culture worth protecting, worth studying, worth experiencing and worth developing.”

Yanique helped form a cultural and artistic collective in the Virgin Islands

called Rock (the nickname for St. Thomas) Lounge. “Though I regretfully don’t live in St. Thomas full time anymore, Rock Lounge continues on without me,” she says.

Her collection of poems, “Wife,” will be published in November 2015.



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on receiving the  
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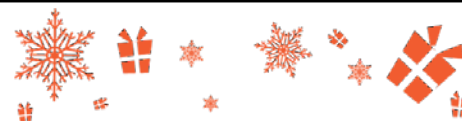
"Pastor Gilford is a humble leader who has  
united the community in times of crisis bringing  
together city officials, religious and community leaders."  
by Mohammad Razvi, CEO of COPO

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## Congratulations Judy Newton

on this prestigious and well deserved award.  
You are an example for all who know you. Your  
hard work and dedication is inspiring to us. Your  
integrity is something that we all aspire to... Best  
of luck to you in all of your future endeavors.

*Michael Friel & Kathy Cole*



Do you have everything  
for Thanksgiving?

## ABC Food Sale November 2015

**Skallops or Linketts or Little Links**

Reg. \$ 6.60 **SALE \$5.99/\$67.00 CS**

**Vegetable Skallops - Lg.**

Reg. \$14.10 **SALE \$12.00/\$144.00 CS**

**Kaffree Roma**

Reg. \$8.75 **SALE \$7.50/\$43.00 CS**

**Chicketts**

Reg. \$7.95 **SALE \$6.99/\$80.50 CS**

**BBQ Riblets**

Reg. \$5.28 **SALE \$4.50/\$53.50 CS**

**Dinner Roast**

Reg. \$15.85 **SALE \$14.00/\$81.00 CS**

**Chicken or Smoked Turkey Roll**

Reg. \$29.60 **SALE \$27.00/\$100.50 CS**

**TRY THESE FROM ABSOLUTE VEGETARIAN**

**Salmon Fillet**

\$8.25 **SALE \$6.25**

**Belt Fish, Vegan**

\$4.50 **SALE \$3.50**

Offer Expires 12/31/2015.

**Save 20% on all books  
November 11th to 30th.**

Restrictions: Sale does not include  
Sabbath School Bible study guides (quarterlies)

**Congratulations to all the Caribbean Life  
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