



The Golden Age Heroes

Awards

25TH FEBRUARY 2009

**THE BEST WESTERN BILTMORE PLAZA
BELIZE CITY, BELIZE**



Who is a Golden Age Hero?

The term "Golden Age Hero" is used to define older persons who have dedicated their lives to the service of others without compensation or recognition. The National Council on Ageing has decided to honor these older persons for the service rendered to the country and community. The Nominees for the Golden Age Heroes Award are:

★ Mr. Antonio Lorenzo Vega Sr. & Mrs. Lidia Barbara Vega

★ Mrs. Eustell Sally Staine

★ Marta Diluina Habet

★ Mrs. Gweneth Josephine Gillett

★ Sister Marilyn Panton

★ Mrs. Barbara Harris

★ Mr. Julio Cesar Alvarado

★ Mr. Godsman Ellis

★ Mary Annie Groutsche

★ Alyndie Wilhemina Campbell

★ Mr. Justo Castillo

★ Mrs. Gwendoline Zetina

★ Mrs. Arcadia Carillo

★ Mrs. Anfelma Yam

★ Mrs. Elfrida Miguel

★ Mrs. Martha Hill

★ Mr. Ralton Brown

★ Mrs. Carmela Bonnel

★ Rev. Dr. Sadie Vernon



Programme

- 9:00 Assembling – Light refreshment and Music
- 9:30 Opening of the Award Ceremony
Greeting – Ix-Chel Poot, Programme Officer NCA
National Anthem – Musical Presentation- Mr. Julio Alvarado
Opening Prayer – Mr. Justo Castillo
Official Welcome – Ms. Lindy Jeffery,
Executive Director, National Council on Ageing.
Welcoming Remarks - Hon. Eden Martinez,
Minister of Human Development & Social Transformation
- 10:00 Presentation of Awards
Posthumous Award: Str. Marilyn Panton
Orange Walk Golden Age Hero Award - **Mrs. Arcadia Carillo**
Benque Viejo Golden Age Hero Award – **Mr. Julio Alvarado**
Dangriga Golden Age Hero Award – **Mrs. Martha Hill**
- 10:30 Benque Viejo Social Dance Group
- 10:45 Presentation of Certificates to Belize City Nominees (5)
Belize City Golden Age Hero Award – **Mr. Lorenzo & Mrs. Lidia Vega**
Presentation of Nominees from Punta Gorda (1)
Punta Gorda's Golden Age Hero – **Mrs. Camilla Bonell**
- 11:10 Musical Presentation Ms. Myrna Manzanarez
- 11:20 Presentation of Nominees Belmopan (3)
Belmopan Golden Age Hero Award – **Mr. Justo Castillo**
Presentation Nominees Corozal (1)
Corozal Golden Age Hero Award – **Mrs. Elfrida Miguel**
- 11:40 Benque Viejo Social Dance Group
- 11:50 Posthumous Award Ms. Sadie Vernon
Presentation of San Ignacio Nominee (1)
San Ignacio Golden Age Hero—**Mr. Godsman Ellis**
Special Golden Age Hero Award
- 12:05 Special Item – Sir. Colville Young, Governor General of Belize
- 12:15 Closing Remarks – Mrs. Gwen Gillett

Serving of Lunch

12:15 – 2:00

All our guests are invited to stay and enjoy the music and dancing during and after lunch.





Posthumous Award

Sr. Marilyn Virginia Panton RSM

(June 10, 1943 - January 27, 2009)

Nominated by: Mrs. Pat Robinson



Sr. Marilyn was born into the Panton family, the fifth child in a family of eight on June 10, 1943. While growing up, she was aware of the conditions of those around her who had less than she and her family enjoyed. Having a more stable family environment than some of her neighbors began to engender in her the idea of working to make life better for others—a vocation of service she decided to

embark on by joining the order of the Sisters of Mercy.

In spite of her not being able to be with the Panton family as much as before, after entering the convent, she was still very close to all her siblings and their families. She travelled daily to and from Ladyville to be with her ailing mother and she even took her mother, her “Mamsie,” to Muffles for some time so that she could better care for her.

Prior to her decision to enter the convent as a Sister of Mercy, Sr. Marilyn had started her life of service as a school teacher next door at Holy Redeemer Primary School. In 1965, she was off to Rhode Island to enter the convent and her life as a Sister of Mercy began. In between her period of training, she returned to Belize for a year. During this time, she taught History at St. Catherine Academy, a subject she was passionate about.

Upon her return to Belize, she was appointed principal of St. Catherine Elementary School, a post she held until 1985. Thereafter, she moved to the Cayo District where she worked at Sacred Heart College, followed by a stint at Belmopan Comprehensive School. She was then asked to work as Director at the Department of Women’s Affairs, a post she gladly accepted as it would allow her to have a more direct impact in positively empowering our Belizean women. Sister also served for a while as Executive Director of the Girl Guide Association. Afterwards, she moved on to work at La Democracia Government School. She then worked briefly at Biscayne Government School before settling at Muffles College as counselor for the last decade of her life. In between these different places and positions that she held, she also did some part-time work at Excelsior High and other primary schools in the Belize and Cayo Districts, as well as at Muffles Junior College. She also served on numerous school and NGO Boards during her life.

Wherever she was, she was always a champion of the poor and the downtrodden. She was responsible for assisting numerous young people complete a high school education that they would otherwise have not been able to afford. She was a very resourceful woman. Wherever she was, she was able to identify those persons who had the means to help others and she would enlist them in her ministry. Throughout her life, she was able to enlist numerous Good Samaritans and benefactors in assisting her with her work of helping those less privileged individuals in society.

Sr. Marilyn thoroughly enjoyed her work with youths, for whom she had a close affinity and would participate with them in all their activities. She especially enjoyed her work with young girls as a Girl Guide leader, enjoying their companionship and helping them to grow and develop skills that would serve them in later years.





Golden Age Hero Orange Walk

Mrs. Arcadia Carillo

January 6, 1934

Nominated by: VOICE Orange Walk

Arcadia Carillo was born in Belize City and has taught for 54 ½ years, however she recently

has had to slow down due to illness in June 2008.

Her teaching career began at Holy Redeemer school for boys in 1949. In 1958 she relocated to Chan Pine Ridge and during this time she also taught in the August Pine Ridge and Indian Church Villages. She has been a field supervisor for the Belize Teachers College in the Belize and Orange Walk Districts. She has tutored many students and has impacted many lives positively.

Although she was a full time teacher and mother of five, Mrs. Arcadia still found time to dedicate herself to improving the lives of others. She worked to help alleviate child abuse serving in many local and national organizations, and worked with the Drug Abuse Control Council in her district and community. She has also been a very active member of HelpAge in Orange Walk for many years.

She was involved in the Women's Affairs department and helped lobby for legislation dealing with the protection of women against harassment and violence.

Over the last few months she has had to limit her activities due to illness but she is content to still be able to educate in her small pre-school. She has found the many roles she has been playing most satisfactory and is proud of the successes of her many students including : Dr. Jair Osorio, Efrain Martin (Manager of the Belize Bank), Hon. Manuel Esquivel and Mr. Evan Hyde, just to name a few.

Mrs. Arcadia remains active working with Peace Core volunteers and with the Orange Walk VOICE group.

“To teach is to touch lives forever”





Golden Age Hero Benque Viejo

Mr. Julio Cesar Alvarado

March 29th 1922

Nominated By: Mrs. Linda Moran

Julio Alvarado was born, March 29th, 1922 in El Salvador but migrated to Belize with his family in October 1954. Although Mr. Alvarado was not born in Belize, he has contributed to our community, our economy and progress of our country directly and indirectly.

The Julio is a very gifted man and a writer of poems and stories. His poems have been published in many Belizean and international newspapers.

In 1957 he became a founding member of the Benque Viejo Credit Union, under Father Soti's leadership and guidance, and taught our community about the value of savings.

In 1967 he served as vice-president for the "July Benque Fiesta", where the country congregates to celebrate peacefully and in harmony. This fair that has contributed to the Benque economy and community togetherness.

In 1980 he worked to establish the Benque Lion's Club and was responsible for two agricultural seminars and eye clinics, where patients were sent to Belize City for treatment free of cost. The club's membership fees and fundraising activities helped to organize the yearly Children's Christmas parties where every child received a gift. The Benque Lions won their first international gold medal, awarded by Chicago's international Lion's club, in recognition of their hard work and contribution to society.

In 1995 he became a founding member of HelpAge Benque and has served as secretary and is very active at programs that benefit the elderly.

Due to his talent as a poet and a harmonica player he is always invited to socials and community events to play the National Anthem and recite poems, and is also considered a historian.

He is also a humanitarian and when he saw the deplorable conditions in which the former mayoress of Benque, Ms. Carolina Segura, was living in he felt compelled to do something about it and through much interaction with Hon. George Price, Mrs. Carolina Segura was admitted to Octavia Waight Center free of cost and she spent her days there happily until she passed away 2 years ago (2006).

**"To do for the world more than the world does for you
—that is success"**





Golden Age Hero Dangriga

Mrs. Martha Hill

19th January 1940

Nominated By: Mr. Rudolph Serano

Martha Hill born in Belize migrated to the United States to make a better life for herself and her family. Presently, she is a retiree from New York. On her return to Belize she saw the need for additional assistance at the

Southern Regional Hospital and offered her services as a clerical assistant. Mrs. Hill works on Sundays registering clients for visiting medical teams, ensuring that everyone who comes in able to receive medical attention. Martha has been in this role since 1995.

In addition to the voluntary work at the hospital, Mrs. Hill also offers her services free of charge to the Town Council and although she has not been called upon recently by the present council she has been very active in aiding with office work at the council. Mrs. Hill also does voluntary work with the Lions club and the Cancer Society within her community.

She views her service as her way of showing love to her community and believes that it is not simply because she is retired that she must cease to provide help where help is needed.

**“The only ones among you who will be really happy
Are those who will have sought and found how to serve”**





Mrs. Gweneth Gillett
16 April 1932

Gweneth Gillett, better known as Ms. Gwen, is an active wife, mother and grandmother. She began her service to Belize as a teacher at St. Hilda's College (for girls), now Anglican Cathedral College where she thought for eight years.

Although she is now retired, Mrs. Gwen is still very active in her community. She is a lay Minister of St. Mary's Anglican Church and is always available when called upon. She coordinates the St Mary's School Feeding programme and can be found in the kitchen every Friday preparing meals for the children. For 22 years Mrs. Gwen has served voluntarily as the Organizing Secretary of the Anglican Diocese Mother's Union.

She is the secretary for the Belize Council of Churches, a member of the Sister Cecilia's Board, a member of the Women's Day of Prayer Planning committee and a member of the National Council on Ageing Board of Directors. Mrs. Gwen also co-hosts the twice monthly radio the Golden Years on Love FM.

**The Belize City
Nominees**

Barbara Harris has been a community worker all her life and has taken a particular and active interest in working with and serving young people. She has been heavily involved with the Girl Guides Association and even serving as President of the Association. Presently she is still heavily involved with the Girl Guides and is working to revive Guiding in the country.

For twenty years Mrs. Harris was employed with the Peace Core and during this time she was still actively involved in her community. She aided in the formation of the Youth Conservation Core, an organization that taught conservation ideas to out of school and unemployed youths. Many of these young people have since grown to become productive members of society. Mrs. Harris is a daily volunteer at the Y.W.C.A. where she continues to work and guide young women.



Mrs. Barbara Harris
23 March, 1930





Martha Habet has been a long time volunteer at the Mercy Kitchen, a branch of the Mercy Care Center.

Every Monday she attends the Centre to help the cook and her assistant. She assists in the preparation of food, washing the dishes, arranging flowers for the tables in the dining room, praying with guests and any other task that she can help with. Mrs. Martha and her family are benefactors of the Mercy Center.

Mrs. Marta Habet

4 July 1932



Monica Amelia Scott has been a volunteer at the Mercy Care Center over twenty years (Mercy Kitchen).

Every Tuesday she comes to the Center to cater to the spiritual needs of our guests. She prays, holds service and prepares the guests for mass.



Ms. Monica A. Scott

14 May 1937



Mrs. E. Sally Staine

May 5, 1945

Sally Staine, has been a volunteer of the Mercy Center for the past 15 years. She has played many roles at the Mercy Center assisting in any way that she can. She comes in twice a week on Mondays and Fridays to assist at the Mercy Center.

She sorts clothes for the bathroom guest and assists in giving baths to those who need assistance with bathing.

She gives the guest pedicures and haircuts. She has been known to help kitchen guests financially whenever she sees them in need.



Belize District Golden Age Heroes

Mr. Antonio Lorenzo Vega Sr

and

Mrs. Lidia Barbara Vega

Nominated by: Jessica Chee



Married since April 26, 1943, Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Vega Sr. share a long life of service to

Belize as an exemplary solid Belizean family unit. Having finished Primary School, both continued lifelong self-education. During their entire life they would be perfectly matched in telling truths – that it was more important for the whole community to get ahead and not

only themselves; that life itself is more important than money; and that the pen is mightier than the sword.

Belizean nation builders, Tony and Lidia secured two key economic sectors, fishing and tourism, in their community. First, by founding the Northern Fishermen's Cooperative Society Ltd and even serving as benefactors donating prime real estate to the Cooperative to boost morale after the devastation of Hurricane Hattie.

Later, they both put their pioneering energies into developing another economic alternative for Caye Caulker, the tourism industry. Once again, as benefactors they donated prime real estate to the airstrip. Trail blazers, Tony devised his own standards for the snorkeling and boating tours he conducted at sea. Lidia on land attended the Inn and produced homemade patchworks for the beds.

They continue as beacons of the old values - family, respect for self, people, land, sea, air and nature, integrity, health, hard work, honesty, education, religion, human rights, simple pleasures and self-reliance to solve any problem in any hardship challenge.

Today, the Honorable Antonio L. Vega Sr. Senior Justice of the Peace and Mrs. Lidia Vega still generously serve their community even by picking up tons of man made litter. They share time, expertise and the fruits of Caye Caulker. Her hibiscus hedges are world famous and she can usually be found amongst her plants dispensing sorosi, chaya, siempre viva and noni to villagers and providing samples for the New York Botanical Gardens and the Caye Caulker Plant Inventory Book. He probably will be loaded with containers of seagrapes, cocoplums and craboos to share with the young adults, many too busy working to take the time to go pick. He confers advice and history on any and all topics and she is still sought for history, parenting and home remedies. Today, amongst other things, Lidia produces at least one queen size homemade patchwork quilt every fourteen days and Tony meets with at least fourteen persons daily. As they have done for decades, both continue to positively influence a global audience with their very human touch. Tony and Lidia Vega are anchors in the bedrock of Caye Caulker and Belize – vibrant survivors living their legacy of love for each other, for their community and their homeland.





Mr. Ralton Brown
1 December, 1936

Punta Gorda Nominee

Ralton Brown is very community minded and tries to assist anyone in need. He is involved in a local neighborhood watch and was the representative for his neighborhood on the Toledo District Neighborhood watch committee.

He is connected to all churches and is an assistant Pastor at his local church.

In addition he has a good working relationship with the police. He also provides food for some elderly persons every year. He has served as a cook, driver and community helper.



Corozal Nominee

Anfelma Yam began working as a midwife when she was 18 years old. In 1958 she began working at the Corozal Hospital prenatal clinics she made her last visit to the clinic in 2005.

Due to failing eyesight she ceased to perform home deliveries in 2004 but she is still sought after by many expecting mother for natural remedies and treatments. She has delivered hundreds of healthy Belizean children.



Mrs. Anfelma Yam
21 April 1915



San Ignacio Nominee



Ms. Meredith Sanz
14 February 1930

Meredith Sanz was born and raised in San Ignacio, Cayo and she is a popular midwife in the community. She is the first child for her parents and as she grew up she became a major source of support for them. After completing primary school she was encouraged to be a teacher however, she did not feel a disposition towards the profession and took up sewing instead.

The opportunity to become trained as a mid wife did not present itself until Ms. Sanz was 29. As a nurse and midwife she has served many of the rural communities and continues to work through her home in San Ignacio. She is also a lay minister in her local church.



Golden Age Hero Punta Gorda

Mrs. Camilla Bonell

12 October, 1934

Nominated by: Mrs. Kamela Palma



Camilla Bonell was born on the 12 October 1934 in Forest Home Village in the Toledo District. She is married to Euphemio Bonell and they are looking forward to celebrating 51 years of wedded bliss. Together they have a total of 10 children.

Mrs. Bonell's name is synonymous with community development and craft development in the Toledo District. She has been working with women since 1963, first with the sisters of Mercy at Nazareth and then in the 70's she worked with Nurse Chun providing health services to women. During those days she had to hitch hike to the villages, something she did with joy. In 1983 she began working with Miss Dorla Bowman, followed by Cynthia and Lucia Ellis and Regina Martinez (deceased), she did outreach work in rural areas for the country. Her contribution to women mushroomed into support for women outside of Toledo when she became a member of the Belize Committee for Women & Development which later became Belize Organization for Women & Development (BOWAND).

In 1988 it became obvious that the needs of rural women were different from those of Urban women and the Belize Rural Women's Association (BRWA) was born, Mrs. Bonell served as the community contact for the south. She would go to communities to collect crafts and travel to Belize City to deliver them. She also negotiated through Social Development (presently Human Development) for training in quality control, pricing and designing for women. Her diligence and commitment to the quality and consistency of this program evolved into our present day National Craft Center.

Mrs. Bonell was an active member of 4H and was involved with the Forest Home Village Council and became a Justice of the Peace in 1981. On June 17, 2008 she became ill and has had to slow down. Presently, she lives in Forest Home surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The words her favorite song:

**“Each one ought to teach one
That's the way it should be
Like I teach you and you teach me
Cause you're never too old to learn
And that's the beauty about the old thing**



Golden Age Hero Corozal

Mrs. Elfrida Miguel

2 October, 1930

Nominated by: Mr. Israel Alpuche, VOICE Corozal



Elfrida Miguel, has served her community for over 53 years. She first began working as a community

volunteer after hurricane Janet. Her initial goal was to help residents within her community re-establish their lives after the hurricane, and even after the community was restored Mrs. Miguel continued working for her community.

She has been a Red Cross volunteer for more than 25 years and she is available whenever she is called upon to help in various activities. She has been a volunteer at the Methodist eye clinic for many years. She has also taken on a leadership role in her community serving as a Village Councilor and she is a Justice of the Peace

Although her nomination comes via the Corozal VOICE Group it is supported by the Corozal Red Cross, the Corozal Methodist Church and the Corozal HelpAge branch; as all these organizations recognize her selfless devotion and service.

**“Life’s challenges are not supposed to paralyze you;
They’re supposed to help you discover who you are.”**





Mary Annie Rosemay Groutsche was born in Nairobi Kenya and migrated to Belize with her husband Claude Groutsche in 1967. She then lived in Corozal.

Mrs. Rose joined the Saint John's Ambulance Brigade in 1969 where she learnt First Aid and was involved in community work. During that period she also volunteered in the Corozal Hospital. She joined the Girl Guides Association in 1975. In 1986 she moved to Belmopan and was invited by Mrs. Hazel Hutchinson to join the Belmopan Branch of the Belize Red Cross. In 1990 she worked voluntarily with Mrs. Marylee Ellis at the Red Cross Clinic where she became a qualified First Aid and CPR Instructor.

Mrs. Mary Annie Groutsche
29 July 1939

In 1995 she joined HelpAge Belmopan and worked along with Mrs. Hazel Hutchinson. She also worked for the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI) until she retired in 2005 but she was asked to stay on and remained there for four more years.

The Belmopan City Nominees

Alyndie Campbell was born in Sittee River in the Stann Creek District

In 1981 she started her community service work with the Ephesus SDA Dorcas Welfare Society. As leader of this organization she not only raised finance at home and abroad to start a soup kitchen and feeding program at the Ephesus SDA church, but also participated in the distribution of food baskets, helping the elderly with errands, food and cleaning their homes when the need arose.

In 1998 she moved to Belmopan already 66 years old and assisted the El Shaddai SDA Church to revive its community welfare service in Belmopan and the Women's Ministry Department. Along with Mrs. Janice Laing she also began a food program in Belmopan assisting the needy and a local primary school with a feeding program for the students. Although she is suffering from osteoporosis she still makes time to serve others.



Mrs. Alyndie Campbell
7th September 1932



Mrs. Gwendoline Zetina
10th October 1935

Gwendoline Zetina settled in Belmopan in 1981 with her family and became a very active member of the Belmopan community.

She has been a lay minister at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church for 15 years. In this capacity she visits the sick in the hospital and performs Communion service in the villages around Belmopan, but presently she only travels to Roaring Creek. Mrs. Zetina also performs baptismal ceremonies on sick babies when no priest is available.

She was an auxiliary member of the Lions Club and has been a full member for the past 3 years. She has been a member of HelpAge Belmopan for 8 years and also Belmopan Cancer Society. She enjoys contributing to all her voluntary organizations by being a member of the fundraising committees. When not volunteering, Ms. Gwen enjoys gardening and flower arranging.



Golden Age Hero Belmopan

Mr. Justo Castillo

11th April 1920



Nominated by:

Justo Castillo's life time of service to Belize began in the 1940's when he became a teacher at St. John's College. He is a founding member of the Belmopan Community and was among the first people who migrated to Belmopan in 1970 when

the government offices were relocated. He has served as a Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Health and Home Affairs and as the Secretary of the Development Finance Corporation. .

Mr. Castillo is also very involved in his community and his church where he serves as a lay minister of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church and is always ready to help in any way that he can. He is a founding member of the Lions club in Belmopan and still takes a very active role in events and fundraising. He serves as a member of HelpAge Belmopan where he holds the post of Treasurer, a job he takes very seriously and never fails to produce his account reports on time.

Mr. Justo is also a Justice of the Peace and a Commissioner of the Supreme Court. He is called upon regularly to swear in new citizens of Belize and also to perform a marriage or two.

Since its establishment in 2003 Mr. Justo has served as a member of the executive board of the National Council on Ageing. His advice is invaluable and he also serves on the Councils Finance sub-committee. Mr. Justo is never too busy to lend aid where it is needed. He is also a member of the VOICE Organization.

A father, grandfather and great-grandfather he is a pleasure to have around and leaves a lasting impression on everyone he comes into contact with. He is known to be a very honest and upstanding citizen willing to help anyone that comes to his door in whatever capacity he can.

**“Look for strengths in people, not weakness;
for good, not evil.**

Most of us find what we search for”



Golden Age Hero San Ignacio

Mr. Godsman Ellis

9th November 1930



Nominated by: Lucia Ellis

Godsman Ellis, as the son of Santiaga Miguel and Donald Ellis migrants from Honduras, learnt early that giving support and receiving support was critical for survival. In the early years of his life he was the older brother, 'Nati', or 'teacher' to his own siblings and members of the extended family and the community. This became the signature for Godsman Ellis for the rest of his life.

In his early years he was an apprentice teacher under the Catholic mission in the rural parts of Belize. Godsman Ellis's intelligence opened doors for him and he was offered a scholarship to attend St. John's Teacher's College in 1952. It was around that time that he chose to marry Ethel Sampson and begin a family and together they had seven children. The teaching career changed somewhat when he was offered a scholarship to study Agriculture in the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada 1958-1961.

He was always teaching or mentoring, protecting and supporting. His emphasis on education did not just include the academics but also the development of life skills, character, discipline, and a sense of service to community.

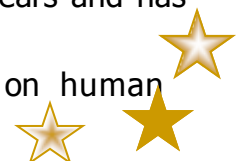
Godsman Ellis has been called a statesman, initiator, and visionary. As a statesman he led the way along with his Garinagu peers with the struggle against racism and oppression in Belize. He wrote the song "Their hate for slavery made them free", which was popular in Stann Creek at the early phase of the nationalist movement. His involvement in the formation of the National Garifuna Council is testament to the long range vision that he had for recognition and respect of the Garifuna Culture.

He has represented Belize as President of BTIA (Belize Tourism Industry Association). and asked to serve on various bodies in an advisory capacity: PACT, USAID, Public Service Commission and Education Advisory Council. He is consulted by the community, including various Ministers of Government especially in the area of Agricultural Development.

As an initiator he was the first organizer and coordinator of the National Agricultural Show, which was held on Broaster Field in San Ignacio and also when it moved to the present location. He was the first Principal of the Belize College of Agriculture (presently UB Natural Resource Management Campus) and was appointed by the Government of Belize as the first Manager to establish the Banana Industry.

As an advocate for environmental protection and preservation he was involved in advocacy and education initiatives through the organization Belize Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. His involvement with indigenous issues has also led him to lead the way in advocating for indigenous rights and human rights around these environmental issues. He has been the vice-president of the Human Rights Commission for over 10 years and has led delegations worldwide in regional and international forums.

His concern for community led to his involvement with the police as a trainer on human rights issues and he was involved with the San Ignacio Crime Stoppers.





Posthumous Award

Rev. Dr. Sadie Vernon

(20th March 1914 - 1 December 2008)

Nominated by: Ms. Flora Bennett



urse, community worker and educator, Reverend Dr. Sadie G. Vernon, passed away in Belize City at the age of 90 on 1st December 2008.

Rev. Dr. Sadie Vernon is perhaps best known for starting the school now named after her – Sadie Vernon Technical High. The High school had very humble beginnings in 1964 as the all-girls' Belize Continuation School, which was opened at the YWCA on St Thomas Street with only six girls. The Continuation School remained open for 36 years, although was forced to close its doors for a brief period. Undeterred Sadie Vernon had a vision of what she wanted the school to become and its doors were once again open on the corner of Morning Glory and Partridge Streets in the Lake Independence area of Belize City and in 2005 the school became a co-educational institution.

Sadie Vernon's objective was to ensure that every child received an education regardless of color, creed and culture. As an educator and humanitarian Sadie Vernon believed that every person deserved a chance and she never gave up on trying to help anyone. Her love for teaching saw her working with the children who had learning difficulties. Sadie Vernon lost her mother at an early age and although she never had any children of her own she was a mother to many.

Sadie Vernon was active in the church, as an ordained preacher, and also the community, shepherding hundreds of girls through Continuation School from its start at the YWCA on St. Thomas Street with only six girls. Her love for people was reflected in her selfless work in the community. An active member of the Belize Council of Churches, Rev. Dr. Sadie Vernon used her many talents and gifts to better the lives of others. She was a devote Quaker and could be found worshipping at the Presbyterian Church.

In 1961 after hurricane Hattie she distributed food and clothing to the victims of the hurricane and assisted in any way she could to alleviate the devastation caused by the hurricane.

Much of her work is concentrated here in Belize, however she has left her unforgettable mark on people in both Jamaica and the United States of America where she spent periods of her life. In 2000 Sadie Vernon published her biography entitled: *In Transit: The Story of a Journey* in which she chronicles the many happenings of her life.

Having battled with cancer for many years Sadie Vernon passed away on December 1, 2008 after falling ill with pneumonia. Her life has indeed made Belize a better place. Today her legacy lives on at the Sadie Vernon Technical High, where many Belizean young people continue to be educated.

