



Yvonne Weekes



Nianna St. Claire

Yvonne Weekes: Poet of Purpose

By: Nianna St. Claire

Montserratian poet Yvonne Weekes has had quite an impressive career from being Montserrat's first Director of Culture, to travelling around the world to represent the island while also being an advocate for human rights and world peace.

Practice what you Preach

Weekes, who was born in London to Montserratian parents spent most of her early life between both countries.

After completing her Certificate in Education as well as a B.A majoring in both English and Drama, Weekes started her teaching career in 1980 as an English and Drama teacher in North London. It was here that her interest in poetry writing sparked: the education authority sent an adviser to observe the classes she was teaching and during her English class she was advised to write while the children were also writing.

She stated, "It was obvious to him that English teachers were the only teachers who asked their students to do an activity that they themselves cannot do." She continued, "I started writing poetry in my classroom with my students... at the time they were considered really good poems and I was able to present them at an activity called Rock against Racism".

The young teacher was further encouraged to write and send her poems to a book editor she met during the event, "She encouraged me to send (poems) to her in the post and then she sent

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In Columbia at the Municipality of El Carmen de Viboral. Teatro Tespys Luis Filipe Sarmiento (Portugal), Mónica Lucía Suárez (Colombia), Karel Leyva (Cuba), Yvonne Weekes (Montserrat) Lunch before the readings with translators.

Lee Bowyer on being appointed the Emerald Boys new Head Coach



story on page 7

Dr Weekes describes Columbia event as 'red carpet treatment experience'

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back notes. Her feedback was so instrumental, instructive and helpful."

Later in 1983, she continued her studies at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London completing an Advanced Certificate in Voice and Speech in Drama Education.

Weekes eventually returned to Montserrat in 1987 where she taught English and Literature at the secondary and tertiary level. While in Montserrat she became the first Director of Culture and also formed



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**ISLAND OF MONTSERRAT
A.D. 2023
[PROBATE DIVISION]
LEGAL NOTICE**

In the Estate of ELIZABETH ANN CLARISTA SKERRITT deceased

NOTICE is hereby given that after the expiration of 14 days from the date of this notice, an application will be filed at the Registry, High Court of Justice for an ORDER that Grant of Letters of Administration in the Estate of **ELIZABETH ANN CLARISTA SKERRITT** late of 42 Nevett Street, Preston, Lancashire who died on the 18th day of July 2020 be issued to **LINDA ROSEMARY SKERRITT** of 44 Dawson Walk, Preston, PR1 1NJ, daughter and personal representative of the deceased and one of the persons entitled to a share in the Estate.

ALL persons claiming to be beneficially interested in the Estate are requested to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned within 14 days from the date of this notice.

FURTHER any person objecting to the issuance of a Grant of Letters of Administration to the said applicant should notify the Registrar of the High Court of Justice whose address is: Office of the Registrar General, Brades, Montserrat not later than fourteen (14) days from the publication of this notice.

Dated the 15th day of September 2023

Watts & Associates Ltd
Attorneys at law for the Applicant

the Rainbow Theatre Company where she directed and produced plays.

In 1996, shortly after the volcanic eruption, she fled to Barbados. "I think I started writing seriously when the volcano erupted, that's when I started paying attention to the craft, the skill."

As it relates to the rest of her academic history, Dr Weekes also holds an MA in Educational Leadership from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. She also completed the Post-Graduate Diploma in Arts and Cultural Enterprise Management at the St. Augustine Campus in 2006 and later completed her PhD (Education) in 2016.

Let us Vote

On July 5th of this

year Weekes attended the 33rd annual Medellin International Poetry Festival in Columbia which she described as a "red carpet treatment experience". She presented work from her poetry collections "Nomad", published by the House of Nehesi as well as "Pandemic Moments" which she collaborated on with the late Sir Howard Fergus.

She shared her experience, "They were literally hundreds of people listening to me read poetry and wanting to know about Montserrat... it was a challenge for me to speak and understand what they were saying but my Spanish got better." She continued, "It was really like teaching, not just presenting with poems but teaching about

Montserrat. There was an excitement about the fact there was a place in Spain called Montserrat as well."

Nomad was the result of a very close-knit Montserrat community in Barbados fighting for the right to vote. Led by Weekes' former student at MSS who became a lawyer, they sued the government. "That kind of propelled me to start to examine my position here in Barbados, my sense of self as a Montserratian living in Barbados."

Pandemic Moments, as the name suggests, is a compilation of poems that focuses on the experiences of Weekes and Sir Howard Fergus during the covid-19 pandemic. They both wrote their own poems and placed them in the appropriate section of the book, "My section of poems speak to his section, in fact, it was like a conversation."

Impart Wisdom

Weekes visited the World Poetry Movement in Venezuela from the 16th - 21st of July and has since been asked by the movement to provide support for new and emerging poets in Montserrat. As the National Coordinator for Montserrat's World Poetry Movement, Weekes has been working with poets -Zelma White, Kimmora



In Columbia at EAFIT University. Building 38. Auditorium: Siphwe Nzima (Lesotho), Carolyn Forché (US), Shirani Rajapakse (Sri Lanka), Yvonne Weekes (Montserrat), Nigar Hasan Zadeh (Azerbaijan),

Ward and Ronel White.

She stated, "Because I'm not physically in Montserat I spoke to poets I knew, I didn't reach out to every poet and to people writing dialect poetry because it cannot be translated into Spanish easily."

The three poets did their first reading at easiLiving in St. Peter's earlier this year in March and are expected to participate in a virtual workshop scheduled for October. Two poets from Jamaica and St. Lucia will be facilitating the event, which will also be opened to the public.

Admirable Victories

Dr. Yvonne Weekes,

theatre Arts educator with over 40 years' experience, is also an actor, award winning and published writer of prose, poetry and drama, aspiring film maker and stage director.

A few of her most notable achievements:

- Developed the Associate Degree in Theatre at the Community College in Barbados
- Key figure in the development of the Caribbean Examination Council Theatre Arts Syllabus and instrumental in the training of teachers for this examination in St. Lucia, Trinidad and Barbados
- Successfully combined all of her skills

to offer unique workshops dealing with a number of social issues in order to empower, train and educate. Most notably she has run workshops for the University of the West Indies UWI/HARP project that deals with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She has also facilitated workshops dealing with domestic violence against women.

- Produced plays about domestic abuse and skin bleaching which can be viewed in the waiting room of the Accident and Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bridgetown.