

BIN Ingram Kenneth

TRIBUTE TO
MR. KENNETH EVERARD NEVIN INGRAM
By Professor Rex Nettleford

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That Kenneth Ingram has been outstanding for the legacy of his work as a librarian bibliographer, lecturer, historian and poet, is impatient of debate. And this series of Memorial Lectures is the least this University which he served so long and so faithfully could do in gratitude and out of enduring respect.

Born in St. Ann, Jamaica in 1921, Kenneth Ingram began to excel very early in life and was awarded the Jamaica Scholarship for his performance in the University of Cambridge Higher School Certificate.

His path toward becoming the first Jamaican to qualify as a professional librarian began in 1941 at the Institute of Jamaica. During his career he made major contributions to the profession of librarianship in the two institutions in which he worked throughout his career – the iconic West Indian Reference Library from 1941-1950 and the socio-cultural transforming Caribbean entity, the University of the West Indies from 1950 – 1981. In this sense Kenneth Ingram became a pioneer tiller in the landscape of Caribbean intellectual growth and development. His career at the University of the West Indies included developing collections of rare materials, as well as the West Indies Collection and several Special Collections.

He combined his skills as a librarian with those of a bibliographer and produced his first major publication in 1975 – Manuscripts relating to Commonwealth Caribbean countries in United States and Canadian repositories. This was to be the first in a series of publications which reflected his continuous quest to identify, discover, record and obtain copies of primary source materials of significance to Jamaica and the Caribbean.

The several guides which he produced during his career, are indispensable tools for researchers and others interested in the history of the Caribbean. His final work Manuscript Sources for the History of the West Indies: with special reference to Jamaica in the National Library of Jamaica and supplementary

sources in the West Indies, North America, the United Kingdom and elsewhere was awarded the prize for the Best Academic Book for 2001, by the Book Industry Association of Jamaica. This work makes public a substantial body of over 2,000 sources for the study of West Indian history, and includes transcripts of selected relevant works.

Kenneth Ingram was a founding member of the Jamaica Library Association (JLA) – now the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA) and made major contributions, serving as President in 1956 and 1972, and as President of ACURIL (the Association of Caribbean, University Research and Institutional Libraries) in 1976. He collaborated via the JLA in the plans for the establishment of the Dept of Library and Information Studies, and after his retirement he taught bibliography and reference courses in the Department for several years.

He was recognized in many quarters for his work and received awards including:-

- Dunn and Wilson Award of the University College, London for work of distinction in a research degree in Librarianship in 1970;
- The Gold Musgrave Medal for his distinguished work in the field of Librarianship and Historical Scholarship. In 1986;
- Officer of the Order of Distinction by the Government of Jamaica;
- Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, by the University of the West Indies in 2002.

There is no doubt that Kenneth Ingram made a major contribution to the University of the West Indies, to the several profession to which he was related. We are fortunate that he documented so much of his work providing directions for aspiring professionals, and avenues for Caribbean researchers. He is indeed a founding father of our future. We are in his debt!
