

B/N Nettleford, Ralston M. "Rex" (Prof.)

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Ralston Milton 'Rex' Nettleford, OM, FIJ, OCC,

In light of the passing of Professor Rex Nettleford, who passed away last Tuesday, hours shy of his 77th birthday, TEENage seeks to honor the legacy Ralston Milton 'Rex' Nettleford has left behind. He is one of the few men who could bring the quote "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon" alive.

The Trelawny-born old boy of Cornwall College was always fascinated with the way of life of human beings. This was further encouraged when he attended the University of the West Indies to pursue a degree in History, which he gained with honours.

His creative spirit soared in the art of dance from his early school days which was marked by his first choreography in 'Boonguzu' in 1953 at Cornwall College, his alma mater. This love affair with the creative expression trapped in movement lead him to become the founder, artistic director and principal choreographer of the internationally acclaimed National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC).

Rex Nettleford was not short of talent and he used his other gift of singing and went on to become the co-founder of the University Singers of the University of the West Indies and along with Noel Dexter gave birth to chorale theatre.

Rex Nettleford wrote *Mirror, Mirror, Race, Identity and Protest in Jamaica* (1970), when he formulated his own ideas pertaining to the impact of races (African, English, etc) on how Jamaican people viewed their own identities. His spoken word translated on to paper when he became a co-author (with MG Smith and Roy Augier) of what was claimed a "groundbreaking" study of the Rastafari movement in 1961.

He also authored *The African Connexion, In Our Heritage*, and his latest published book was *Caribbean Cultural Identity, The Case of Jamaica*. It is said that it is through his collection of Norman Manley's speeches and writings named *Manley and the New Jamaica* in 1971. In 1957, Nettleford received the Rhodes Scholarship to Oreil College, Oxford where he received a post graduate degree in Politics. He received the Order of Merit which is the highest non-political national honour in 1975.

In 2003, in honour of the centenary of Rhodes Scholarship in the Caribbean, The Rhodes Trust established the Rex Nettleford Fellowship in Cultural Studies.

He became Vice-chancellor in 1996 and held the position for eight years — he was the first graduate of the University to head the region's premier tertiary level institution.

— Jomarie Malcolm and Shelley McIntyre

