

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

National Library of Jamaica

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# RIP REX

## Cultural icon Prof Nettleford dies in US

**P**ROFESSOR Rex Nettleford, one of Jamaica's brightest sons and cultural icon, died in the George Washington University Intensive Care Unit last night, six days after he collapsed in his hotel room in Washington and four hours before his 77th birthday.

Nettleford, who suffered a massive heart attack, was admitted to the

hospital's intensive care unit and placed on life support. He never regained consciousness and finally passed at 8:00 pm.

He was in the US capital to participate in a fund-raising gala for the University of the West Indies (UWI), where he was vice-chancellor emeritus.

Last night, a medical report signed by Dr Christopher Junker of George

Washington University said that the life support was terminated in keeping with Professor Nettleford's wishes.

"Mr Nettleford has been under our care at the George Washington University Intensive Care Unit for catastrophic brain injury following a cardiac arrest," Dr Junker said. "After extensive evaluation and discussion with

**Turn to NETTLEFORD on Page 4**

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

# PM, opposition leader pay tribute to Nettleford

**NETTLEFORD from Page 1**

his medical power of attorney, it has been determined that [in] the absence [of] any possibility of recovering meaningful cognitive function, Mr Nettleford's wishes would be to terminate any life support and we have followed his wishes. Life support was withdrawn on February 2, 2010 at 19:45. Time of death 20:00."

Last night, Prime Minister Bruce Golding, who is in China on an official visit, expressed deep regret at Nettleford's passing.

"I am deeply saddened at the news, just received, of the passing of Professor Rex Nettleford," Golding said. "Jamaica and the entire world have lost an intellectual and creative genius, a man whose contribution to shaping and projecting the cultural landscape of the entire Caribbean region is unquestionable."

Added the prime minister: "Rex Nettleford was an international icon, a quintessential Caribbean man, the professor, writer, dancer, manager, orator, critic, and mentor. He has left a void in our world that will be a challenge to fill."

Nettleford, he said, "stamped his indelible mark in every chosen field of endeavour and his rich and lasting legacy should be preserved for those who must carry on his life's work — the emancipation of the Caribbean colonial mind from mental slavery in its quest for identity".

Golding extended, on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, condolences to Nettleford's family, the UWI community, the members of the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC), which Nettleford founded and led for almost 50 years, his colleagues and friends.

Long-time friend and colleague Barbara Gloudon, speaking on a radio programme last night, described Nettleford as a true Caribbean man.

Former Prime Minister P J Patterson, himself a close friend of Nettleford for more than 50 years, said he was shocked at the news, given that only a fortnight ago he had seen Nettleford and he was "in fine fettle".

"The nation, the wider Caribbean and beyond mourn the loss of this great Caribbean icon," said Youth, Sports and Culture Minister Olivia 'Babsy' Grange.

Opposition Leader Portia Simpson

Miller said: "This is a national loss and one that I feel personally. Words are inadequate to capture the extent of the grief I feel."

She hailed Nettleford as a "son of rural Jamaica whose life's trajectory testifies to the success that is possible through grit, determination, resilience and 'smadification' within the Jamaican cultural environment of which he wrote so eloquently".

Simpson Miller extended her sympathies to the NDTC, the Caribbean academic community, in particular the UWI, and said that at another time she will attempt to commit more fulsomely to words her feelings of sorrow as well as add her voice to the celebration of a life that was well lived and filled with yeoman national service, deep respect for country and a genuine appreciation for all persons with whom Nettleford came in contact.

Ralston Milton 'Rex' Nettleford was born on February 3, 1933 in Falmouth, Trelawny.

He was a professor of Extra Mural Studies at the University of the West Indies and also headed the Trade Union Education Institution.

As a Rhodes Scholar, he studied at Oxford University and has authored a

number of books, among them *Mirror Mirror*, *Manley and the New Jamaica*, *The African Connexion*, *In Our Heritage*, and *Caribbean Cultural Identity: the case of Jamaica*.

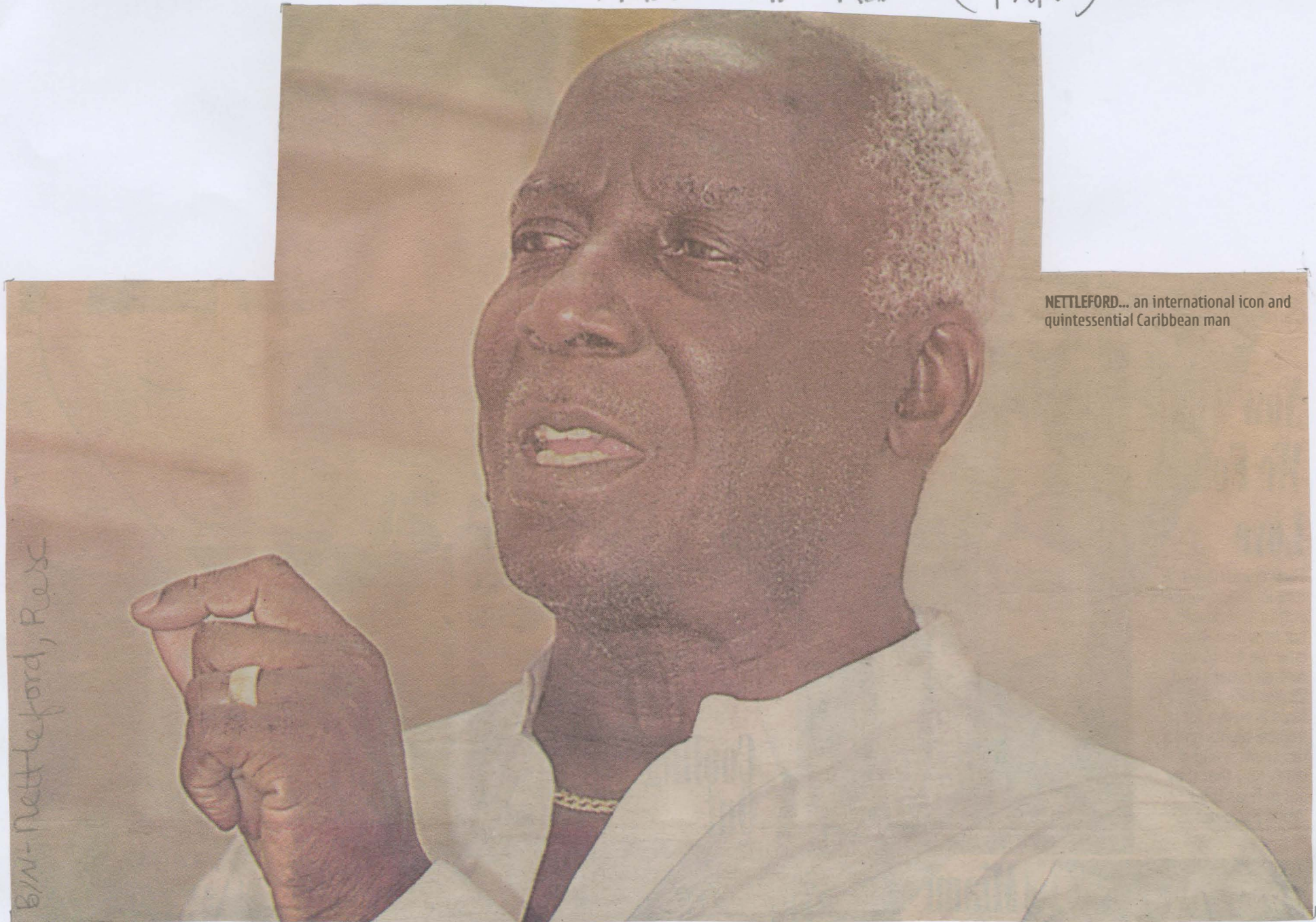
Nettleford was known as much for his involvement in the arts as his immeasurable contribution to academia.

For the entire life of the NDTC he was its driving force. Through his guidance and influence the group won international acclaim and is regarded as one of the best dance ensembles in the world.

He was cultural adviser to the prime minister, member of the Inter-American Committee on Culture, founding governor of the Canada-based International Development Research Centre, and had acted as expert/consultant to the government of Ghana, FESTAC, CARIFESTA and UNESCO.

He is the recipient of Jamaica's third highest honour, the Order of Merit, as well as the gold Musgrave Medal, the Pelican Award from the UWI Guild of Graduates, an honorary doctor of Humane letters from the University of Hartford and the Living Legend Award from the Atlantic Black Arts Festival.

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NETTLEFORD... an international icon and quintessential Caribbean man

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