

Edward Phillip George Seaga was elected to the House of Representatives on April 10, 1962, Independence year. Today, after 25 years of unbroken service, he is the only surviving, sitting Member of Parliament from that group

Edward Seaga was born on May 28, 1930 in the Evangeline Boothe Memorial Salvation Army Hospital in Boston, U.S.A., of Jamaican parents who were travelling at the time. Seven months later, after his parents returned home, he was christened at the Kingston Parish Church on December 3, 1930.

His early education was in Montego Bay and Kingston where he attended Wolmers Boys School for seven years, leaving there for the prestigious Harvard University where he completed his Bachelors of Arts degree.

He never took a course in Government, History or Political Science and had no political interests or ambitions in his youth. But that soon changed. After graduation from Harvard, he left his friends and family to spend three and a half years living in Buxton Town, St. Catherine, Salt Lane, West Kingston, and touring Jamaica, studying the folkways of rural poor and urban ghetto communities.

It was in rural and urban Jamaica that he learned what no University can teach: how humble people live. He learned it by living their life. This filled out his education and awakened an interest in political affairs which was to introduce him to political life.

Sir Alexander Bustamante spotted his talent from the frequent contributions he made to the Press in strong statements about a wide range of public affairs. Sir Alexander encouraged him and nominated him to the Legislative Council (later the Senate) where at 29 years he was the youngest member in its history.

His rise to national stature and recognition was immediate. In two years he became one of the front-line Parliamentary Spokesmen and Campaigners for the JLP, winning the political "Man of the Year" selection in his first full active year in Parliament when he created a sensation with his well researched "Haves and Have Nots" speech.

Along the way, he made a momentous decision in his life. He was both a Jamaican citizen by virtue of his father's birth in Jamaica, and an American citizen by his birth in Boston. But he wanted to be a citizen of Jamaica only, so, when many were seeking U.S. citizenship, he formally gave up his birthright.

When the time came for him to enter elected politics, he chose one of the toughest seats of all, West Kingston, where no representative had ever succeeded in being elected twice. But it was a seat that moulded political giants – Sir Alexander Bustamante, Ken Hill, Hugh Shearer, and although many of his colleagues thought he should have selected a nice, quiet rural seat, he selected the roughest, the toughest, and won on West Kingston in his first contest on 1962. Since then he has won the seat five more times and in the last contested election in 1980.

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