

Degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
Sir Ronald Sanders

Chancellor, when Calypsonian Black Stalin sung "Caribbean Unity", popularly known as "Caribbean Man", he probably was not thinking of Sir Ronald Sanders. But Sir Ronald would certainly qualify as being among the strongest candidates for the title of Champion of the Caribbean People. And with a career that encompasses broadcast and print journalism, development and commercial banking, diplomacy and international negotiations in both public and private sectors, he might well be deserving of the title "Renaissance Man" as well.

Born in 1948 in Guyana, Sir Ronald entered the working world as a broadcaster specializing in news and current affairs at the age of 21. He appreciated that broadcasting was a vital tool for educating and informing the Caribbean people about the importance to their lives of the fledgling Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) established in 1965. As a broadcaster and soon thereafter a Programme Director and General Manager of the Guyana Broadcasting Service at the ripe old age of 27 (!), he developed a rigorous approach to researching economic, political, legal and social issues.

He has twice served as High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda to the UK, as Ambassador to the EU, Ambassador to the WTO as well as Deputy Permanent representative to the UN for Antigua and Barbuda.

In the private sector, he has served on the Board of Directors of Financial Institutions, Telecom Companies. Media companies and a sustainable forestry company in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Barbados, Guyana and the US Virgin Islands.

Sir Ronald has been widely recognized for his contributions including by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, first as a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George and later as a Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George.

Further honours include: Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of the Nation by Antigua and Barbuda, Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques and the Order of Australia by the Government of Australia for services to the Commonwealth and in advancing the interests of small states.

His grasp of the complexities of world politics and his insights of the Caribbean place in the puzzle puts his work in high demand on the international lecture circuit. In addressing that need, he has launched his own website where his lectures, interviews and commentaries can be accessed. His work covers subjects as varied as "The Moral Case for Reparations for Slavery" to the need for solidarity in protecting our rum industry to the opportunities and challenges for tourism in wooing the blossoming Chinese middle class. His catalogue of study covers the length and breadth of contemporary issues facing the Caribbean region and the greater Commonwealth in particular.

Two roles played by Sir Ronald stand out in a long and distinguished body of work. First is the role he played in leading efforts to block the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from unilaterally imposing rules governing "tax competition" that would have served to handicap the Caribbean financial services sector. Although that battle was won, the war was ultimately lost. The second was leading the case for Antigua and Barbuda against the United States at the WTO in the overreaching of the US government in its determination to impose its extra-territorial laws in defiance of its international obligations.

Whether as journalist, journalistic director, diplomat, International Consultant or Research Fellow, Sir Ronald has consistently sought to advance the cause of Caribbean integration while working tirelessly for the independence of the Caribbean from external forces. By personal example, he urges us to be not just hard working, not just to excel in our chosen fields but to be courageous and forthright, "bold" even, in asserting our rights as citizens of the world, every bit as capable as a people as any other.

Chancellor, I present Sir Ronald Sanders, and ask that by the authority vested in you by the Senate and Council of The University of The West Indies, you confer on him the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.