

The Life and Achievements of

Dr. the Hon. Phyllis McPherson Russell, O.J.



Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute

Phyllis McPherson was born on November 18, 1923 in the parish of Kingston. As the last of 3 siblings, Phyllis was a very self-reliant person who developed an early passion for academia. She attended the prestigious Wolmers High School for girls and later became a teacher



*A relaxing moment on Campus
University of London (1945 - 1948)*

of Mathematics and Latin at her alma mater. Her passion for academics and commitment to national development drove her to pursue further qualifications from several international universities. In 1945 she matriculated into the University of London where she read for her B.A. in Mathematics and acquired a teacher's diploma.

After six years of academic pursuit she returned to her homeland and reassumed her post as educator at Wolmers High School. However, despite her heightened awareness in academics she decided to further hone her skills at the Columbia University. Here she gained both her Masters and Doctoral degrees between 1954 and 1961. Her accreditation at this threshold had now equipped her with the sensibility to facilitate change by empowering students and workers within the Jamaican society.

In 1964 she again returned to Jamaica with the skills and professionalism necessary to facilitate progress among the Jamaican people. She was appointed Senior Research Fellow, in the Institute of Education at the University of the West Indies. She spent eleven years in the position focusing mainly on the research and training of teachers in mathematics. In 1975 she was appointed Chair for the Jamaica Minimum Wage Commission, a position she held for 3 years.

She was later appointed Staff Tutor for the Human Resources Development Unit at the University of the West Indies, occupying the post for 2 years before

moving to the Ministry of Education. As a consultant to the Ministry of Education she spearheaded the introduction of various mathematics programmes throughout the island. Cognisant of the needs of rural educators, she developed a cassette programme to proliferate their efficiency and productiveness. She also inaugurated a Masters of Science summer program in Mathematics Education. In 1978 she was appointed Minister of Education, where she made a fundamental contribution to mathematics education in Jamaica.

Realizing her real passion she returned to the University of the West Indies in 1981, where she spent the rest of her career pioneering training in Applied Behavioural Science, Health Development Planning, Human Resource Development and Human Relations and Planning. Dr Macpherson-Russell's contribution to the aforementioned fields has played a crucial role in the development of policies and programmes nationally and regionally.

Her reputation as an educator has extended national boundaries and has been solicited by various regional and international organizations. She has provided consultancy services for the Pan American Health Organization (P.A.H.O), CARICOM Secretariat, Organization of



*Receiving honorary Doctor of Science
Degree from*

American States and United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization U.N.E.S.CO. In the local arena Dr. McPherson-Russell has made outstanding contribu-

tions to the development of workers education, Ministerial policy and the Public Service.

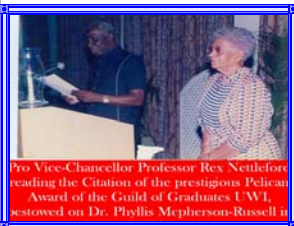
Her extensive involvement in academics and public service through the application of Behavioural Sciences has provided her with little opportunity to venture into the publishing arena. However, the paucity of her publications is by no means a reflection of her academic

achievement or most importantly, her laudable accomplishments in social policy and the public sector. She has produced over 10 substantive publications focusing mainly on education and health care in Jamaica or the wider Caribbean. She was also involved in various activities for governmental and non-governmental organizations focusing on human relations, health development and team-building.

Throughout her life she was the beneficiary of various prestigious awards granted by various institutions within Jamaica and the United States. In 1945 she was the recipient of the ISSA Scholarship in Jamaica and later the Grace Dodge Fellowship at the Columbia University. She was also awarded by the National Science Foundation in the United States and was a recipient of USAID Training Grant. In 1991 she received the National Honour of the Order of Distinction (Commander Class) for her contribution to education in Jamaica, followed by the Order of Jamaica in 2002.



At the Pelican Awards in 1993 Vice Chancellor Emeritus Rex Nettleford describes Dr. Phyllis McPherson Russell in his citation



as belonging to a generation of West Indian thoroughbreds of the ilk of Elsa Goveia, Winnifred Hewitt, Sybil Francis, Louise Bennett, Lucille Mathurin-Mair and Eugenia Charles. He further comments that she epitomizes the dedication and passionate public servant of academia, as well as a sustained application given to goodness, humility service and a genuine concern for others.

The legacy of Dr. Macpherson-Russell will resonate in the hearts and minds of those who have worked closely with her



throughout her academic and professional sojourn. Her accomplishments throughout her lifetime have left an indelible mark on the development of social policy within the region. Head at the HLSTUEI Ms.

Marva Phillips describes Dr. Phyllis MacPherson Russell as a lady who has a passion for public service and academic advancement. There is no doubt that the memory of Dr. Russell will live on with us as we embark upon our respective journeys in our particular areas of specialization.

PUBLICATIONS

Macpherson, Phyllis. "Teacher Education – A Regional Approach Regional Nursing Body. Report of a Meeting of the Commonwealth Caribbean Nurses. The Canadian Nurses' Association, 1970. Pp. 39-42

. "Determining Qualitative Changes in Education," Jamaica Journal, Vol.8, Nos. 2 & 3, Jamaica: Institute of Jamaica, 1974. Pp 76-79

"New Concepts about Human Relationships," Conference Report: Woman and her Human Rights – A programme for Progress. Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 1975

Macpherson, Phyllis, and Phyllis Cargill (editors). Basic Programme in Mathematics, Level 1: Operations on Whole Numbers. Jamaica: Ministry of Education, 1974. 218 pp.

. Basic Programme in Mathematics, Level 2: Operations of Fractional Numbers. Jamaica: Ministry of Education, 1977, 133 pp.

Macpherson-Russell, Phyllis and Una Clarke (editors). Proposals for Action. Health Development Planning Management Project, Barbados, UWI Department of Extra-Mural Studies, Cave Hill, 1984. 21 pp.

Macpherson-Russell, Phyllis, and Una Clarke. Towards Effective Management of an Integrated Health Service: Report on Phase I. Health Development Planning and Management Project, Barbados, UWI Department of Extra-Mural Studies, Cave Hill, 1984. 108 pp.

Macpherson-Russell, Phyllis, and James St. Catherine (editors). Norms, Standards, and Procedures in Selected Health Services. Health Development Planning and Management Project, St. Lucia. UWI Department of Extra-Mural Studies, St. Lucia, 1985. 56 pp.

Macpherson-Russell, Phyllis, and James St. Catherine. Towards the Development of Primary Health Care in St. Lucia. Health Development Planning and Management Project, St. Lucia. UWI Department of Extra-Mural Studies, St. Lucia, 1985. 168 pp.

Macpherson-Russell, Phyllis. Towards Effective Management of the Hospitals in the Spanish Town Region. Health Development Planning and Management Project, Jamaica, UWI Department of Extra-Mural Studies, Jamaica, 1986. 42 pp.

Notices and Events

-Graduation for Certificate in Labour Studies 1st and 2nd group is slated for September 25th, 2008.

-Registration for Certificate in Labour Studies is open for academic year 2008-2009