



Tribute to George Lamming

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ARTICLE



ABSTRACT

Tribute to George Lamming by the Center for Global Black Studies and Hemispheric Caribbean Studies.

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Caribbean Literary Studies and the Caribbean Writers Summer Institute (CSWI) were launched in the Department of English at the University of Miami. Both came about out of the vision of Sandra Pouchet Paquet, and it was because of the deep and abiding respect for George Lamming's contributions to the world of Caribbean arts and letters, as well as their long-standing friendship that Lamming committed himself to the tutelage of young scholars and writers for weeks at a time at the Coral Gables Campus between 1991 and 1996. Born and raised in Barbados, after emigrating to England where he became a broadcaster with the BBC's Colonial Service, he went on to hold several academic positions in the United States, Denmark, Jamaica and Australia. No matter the social or geographical terrain he was always a voice of the Caribbean region. His voice remains at the apex of social and political thought about colonialism in the Caribbean region and beyond; the author of six novels, none more poignant than his first, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), three collections of essays and countless speeches and reflections on politics and the arts in the Black diaspora.

But he was also a teacher at his core, one who was generous with his thoughts and ideas, and challenging, always. Many of us who had the good fortune to attend the CWSI were reminded constantly that he was there to hear from us, to talk with us, he was keen to know what we were reading and what we gleaned from these readings. Lamming took us and our questions seriously, young students though we were. He took us seriously and so we learned to take ourselves, our ideas, and our thoughts as seriously as he did, and we will always remember him for that. Each year, when Sandra Paquet sent out the clarion call, George Lamming like the host of other writers and thinkers who are no longer with us, (Michael Dash, Félix Morisseau-Leroy, Derek Walcott, Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Kamau Brathwaite – to name a few) came to the University of Miami with a generosity of thought, ideas, and spirit, and poured himself into the tutelage of the next generation of creative writers and scholars gathered here. In so doing, he helped to make the English Department at the University of Miami the epicenter of Caribbean arts and letters in the United States for many years. The alumnae of the Caribbean Summer Writers Institute at the University of Miami are far too many to list here, but we all owe him a great debt of gratitude. Each of us will continue to work diligently to pay it forward to the next generation of creative writers and scholars. We will miss George Lamming, but his legacy will continue to be a lasting one the world over.

On behalf of the Center for Global Black Studies and Hemispheric Caribbean Studies we would like to extend our condolences to George Lamming's family, and to the nation of Barbados who has lost a national treasure. May his journey be well guided, his greeting and reception among the ancestors a fitting feast of welcome, and may his soul enjoy peaceful rest.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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