

Good morning, Mr. President, esteemed members of the government, parliamentarians, friends, the Guyanese people and most importantly my extended Jagan family; and in particular the senior Jagan present this morning my Uncle Arjun. For those of you that might not know me, my name is Vrinda Jagan and I am the eldest granddaughter of the late Janet Jagan, and I currently pursuing a law degree.

I received an e-mail from my law professor yesterday morning all the way from California. My Professor, Aron Schwabach wanted to convey his deepest sympathy and I quote, "your grandmother's passing is a great loss for humanity, she was an inspiration to me and my family." I should not have been taken aback by his outpour of sadness since he expressed to me on prior meetings that my grandmother, Janet Jagan, was his political icon. Instead of answering my many questions about the law of real property, he wanted to hear about my grandmother and her many accomplishments. At first I was surprised, typically any inquiries into my family are about my grandfather, the late and honored Cheddi

Vrinda Jagan

Jagan. I enjoyed the chance to talk about my grandmother, who is personally, my inspiration and motivation.

My grandmother stood for everything I believe in, and was exceptional... she was a foreigner that came into an unfamiliar country and defied the odds. People are generally unreceptive to the unknown, however my grandmother never wavered. She stood up resolutely for all that she fought for, and for all that she believed in. She is the embodiment of bravery... growing up I've heard the myriad of stories about my grandparents and their remarkable lives. I'll always remember hearing about when my grandparents were thrown into jail, something I've always had a hard time envisioning. Since, to me, my grandparents have always been the quintessence of gentleness and righteousness. I cannot even begin to comprehend how innately strong, my grandmother was. Being a woman, and enduring 6 months in a foreign prison, is not only a sign of courageousness but an illustration of the type of woman that my grandmother would always be...an unmovable force who stood up for the rights of women, the underprivileged, children, and anyone without a voice.

My grandmother has influenced my life in several ways, as I am certain she has impacted the lives of my siblings, cousins, and countless others. The driving force behind everything I do and everything I hope to accomplish one day is my belief that I am in some minute way making my grandparents proud. They have set exceptionally high standards, and it is clearly a lot to live up too. But I would not be a Jagan if I settled, and I guess that is above all what I have learnt by watching and growing up hearing about the brilliance that was the Jagan pair. My grandmother has imparted upon me the necessity of persistence, and to never give up on my dreams. She has taught me that being a woman does not mean that you have to take an inferior position, as a lot of people would have you believe. I will eternally be grateful to my grandmother for being such a strong, remarkable woman; because it gives women in Guyana, it gives me, as a woman, the courage to go against the norm. In actuality that is what she did, she went against the reasonable male standard, and rose up for all the women of this country. She should be remembered for giving women across the nation hope. Along with my grandfather, an image was maintained

that man and woman could stand side by side and struggle for what is right. In a world that generally propagates subordinate female stereotypes, my grandparents relayed the message that there could be unison. We should appreciate my grandparents for always making sure that their beloved people were always aware that they fought and worked together, side by side always for Guyana.

It is especially hard to be here today, 12 years ago I sat here when I was 11 and watched my grandmother make a speech from this very spot for the passing of my grandfather. I remember how hard it was for her, to lose the true love of her life. I love to hear the story about how my grandparents met in Chicago those many, many years ago. I consider it a rare and magnificent love story. The story continued for the rest of their lives, and in all this sadness, I do find a bit of peace picturing them together again.

Last year I went to speak with my grandmother, I wanted to tell her that my brother and I had just joined the People's Progressive Party. She smiled, and as I stand before you all today, I find peace in

knowing that my grandmother knew that the Jagan name would
live on in Freedom House.

Good Night grandma Janet, may your soul rest in peace.