

Mrs Jagan was a very remarkable lady

Dear Editor,

Ever since I came to live in Guyana in the 1950s, I knew of Janet Jagan as a person of central importance in the political and public life of Guyana. She was one of the most forceful and charismatic personalities of her time. From afar, my strongest impression was of her passionate, never-ending concern to protect and advance the interests of the disadvantaged – children of the street, women, the neglected illiterate, the poor, the handicapped, the disenfranchised. She disdained the panoplies of power

I only got to know her personally when I became a member of the Castellani House management committee which she chaired in her later years.

She was an excellent,

knowledgeable and efficient chairperson whose organizational ability and powers of persuasion were considerable to say the least. She was always calm and always reliable in getting those things done which she perceived were necessary and which she said she would get done.

This was in her eighties. It is easy to imagine what a formidable force she must have been in politics and public life when she was younger and then in the full flow and energy of the prime of her life. Every place she was must have been a hive of activity and every day she spent a catalyst for affirmative action.

At a distance, which was most of our lives, I must have seemed to Mrs Jagan a type which she could only dislike and even despise – much-privileged, stiff-necked

31. 3-85
throw-back to an old colonial era, executive representing the many-tentacled Booker behemoth. When we met, and as we worked together on the Castellani House committee, she never showed me anything other than courtesy and respect which gradually became what I like to think was friendship. The capacity to see beneath a type and find

a person is a sign of civility and civilization. It is indeed the hope of the world.

I salute a very remarkable lady whom I grew to like and admire very much and I extend my and my wife's sincere condolences to Mrs Jagan's children and her family and colleagues.

Yours faithfully,
Ian McDonald