

The Guyana Tri-State Alliance, Inc

Remembrance of the Hon Janet Jagan OE Former President of the Republic of Guyana

**Read at the Remembrance York College, Queens, New York
by Patricia Jordon-Langford, President, Guyana Tri-State Alliance, Inc.
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We are all here because somebody marched for us. We are all here because
People sacrificed for us- and we stand on the shoulders of Giants.

I know that I stand on the shoulders of Giants- who sacrificed their time, passion and
their lives to gift to us our freedom. Freedom from the shackles of Colonialism, slavery,
indentureship, cruelty, and the many injustices in our land.

Our ancestors, Leaders and those unsung heroes who gave up so much so, that we can
have a homeland called Guyana- Land of our birth.

Those sacrifices should not be in vain. We are all brothers and sisters of this great land
The legacy bequeathed to us, is not only for ourselves but also for the future generations
so today let us honor the struggles, the sacrifices, the determination, and guidance of one
of the preeminent leaders of Guyana.

66 Years ago A young woman at the youthful age of 22 left the USA with her husband,
Doctor Cheddi Jagan and traveled to her now adopted country British Guiana, which at
that time was dominated by colonialism. That was 1943. Today, 2009 we celebrate her
life, The Guyana Tri-state Alliance, and all its members is proud to pay tribute on this
day of remembrance of The Hon Janet Jagan OE Former President of Guyana

The month of March is Women's History month, and Mrs. Jagan was a strong and fierce
advocate for women's rights.

In recognizing the injustices of colonialism, and a strong believer and activist for
women's rights, The Hon Janet Jagan was a staunch campaigner for the rights and role of
women in society, politics and government. She immediately begun work with the
country's legendary labor activist Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow in organizing domestics
and the women on the plantations, who were at that time were being severely abused,
especially by the colonials who at that time was the ruling body in Guyana. A great
believer in organization and unity she was instrumental in the formation of The Women's
Political and Economic Organization along with forward thinkers like Winifred Gaskin,
Patricia Benn, Thelma Reece and many others that were pioneers of the women's
struggle, and they made undeniably great contributions, This cause had a demonstrable
impact on the lives of countless of women in Guyana.

I remember meeting with the Hon Janet Jagan in New York (she was president at that
time) to discuss the plight of the children in Guyana. We ended up discussing not only
the homeless and abandoned children of Guyana, but abused women, and women's
rights, of which she was passionate and was trying to enlist me to take up the cause of

domestic violence, wherein she was a strong and passionate advocate. Our meeting, was during my lunch hour, and instead of lasting 20 minutes went on to be over one hour. At that time my passion was the predicament of the children, and therefore my focus was single minded. You see, it was only after many years had passed since our discussion and my continued fight for the betterment of children in Guyana, that I fully understood her insight, - and that abused, abandoned, and powerless women had a direct correlation with homeless children.

Over the years Mrs. Jagan continued her struggle and pushed the issue of women's rights and liberation to the top of the national agenda, and was a fighter for their independence. There was a time when Guyanese women were not allowed to do anything without their husband's consent-travel, getting a passport, making decisions about their own future, and also did not have the right to stand for elections etc. Women in Guyana now have a voice. Many distinguished leaders have emerged from her struggle for their right to have their voices heard, and those women have contributed greatly in shaping the direction of the country. Mrs. Jagan's fight and continued endeavor was not only in Guyana, but also on an International level. But the battle is far from over.

Her death represents a passing of an icon that will be an integral part of Guyana's history. Guyana's 43rd Independence is fast approaching. She was a principal, along with The Hon Dr. Cheddie Jagan, The Hon Forbes Sampson Burnham, Martin Luther Carter, Sydney King, Pandit Ramlall, Ashton Chase, and many others who suffered by being jailed, beaten and derided. But, Mrs. Jagan stood tall and equally strong beside her Counterparts in the struggle for Guyana's Independence, and the right for Guyanese to chart their own destiny. The will, strength of purpose, and determination of many made it possible for Guyana to attain its Independence, Thursday May 26th, 1966

We should never forget the sacrifices that were made for the freedom that we all now enjoy and never forget her presence and intellect in achieving every milestone of change. Janet Jagan's legacy is indelible.

I will close with - Let us pledged to honor The Hon Janet Jagan, Order of excellence, Former President of the Republic of Guyana, Author, Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Militant, Guardian of our history, Promoter of our art form, Trail blazer, and much more, who gave her life to the struggles of our homeland, honor her contribution and struggles by committing to walk together in peace, progress, prosperity and unity. Teach our children to tread this path, be aware of their heritage, the contributions and sacrifices of our elders, and by understanding our past, we will be in a better position to appreciate our present, and in doing so Guyana's star will continue to shine brightly.

The Guyana Tri-State Alliance sends their condolences to her children, her grandchildren her extended family, and The Peoples Progressive Party, of which she was a lifetime member.

Thank you and God bless you Comrade Janet. The Guyana Tri -State Alliance will continue to strive for Unity, Progress, Equality and the preservation of our Flag and country