

City Hall hosts Caribbean American Heritage Month



L-R: Council Members Domenic Recchia, Darlene Mealy, Nelson King, and Council Member Kendall Stewart.

By Donna Lamb
 With the enormously funny comedian E. Wayne McDonald as emcee, joined by Council Member Dr. Kendall Stewart who plied his own brand of zany humor, Caribbean American Heritage Month was celebrated in style at the New York City Council last week. The evening was full of hearty laughter as it went

together, the awarding of proclamations to six deserving Caribbean American individuals, along with artistic performances representing the diverse cultures of the Caribbean. Interspersed with the entertainment were proclamations awarded six individuals: Nelson King, a native of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Alton Aimable,

who hails from Saint Lucia; Lorna Scott McBarrette; journalist Tony Best; Dominican Republic native Eduardo Sanchez; and Vilma Zuniga, a Carifuna descendant. King is a senior writer for Caribbean Life newspaper and a correspondent for the Barbados-based Caribbean Media Corporation. Aimable is the creator of Tropicalfete.com, a website celebrating Caribbean culture and featuring entertainment news, music reviews, polls, photo galleries, and event listings.



Dancer with Oshubba Performing Company.

Dr. McBarrette is the executive vice president of the International Division of American Biomedical Instruments, Inc. and board member of the Caribbean Women's Health Association. Best is senior editor and editorial page editor of New York Carib News, North American editor of the Nation newspapers in Barbados, and North American representative of the Star-Com Radio network in Barbados.

Sanchez, who volunteers with the Latino Commission on AIDS, serves as an advisor for Hostos' Genuine and Proud Club, and is a spokesperson for the National School of Hearing Impaired in Santiago. Vilma Zuniga, who is of Vincentian ancestry and a member of Community Board 8, has helped children with special needs for the last 20 years.

The theme of the evening was unity among the nations of the Caribbean and with their brothers and sisters of the United States. As McDonald pointed out, "We were all dropped off in different places, but we all come from the same source." Council Member Darlene Mealy - who, along with Stewart and Councilmember Leroy Comrie, was a main sponsor of the event, extended her personal welcome, stating, "No matter what percentage of Caribbean people I have in my district, all of us are one, and I deal with everyone the same way."

"No matter what we do, we each have to look out for one another because whatever affects you, it's also going to affect the person next door to you." Majority Whip Inez Dickens, "all the way from that Caribbean city of Harlem" as Dr. Stewart put

it, extended her felicitations and congratulations on the occasion, as did Council Members Helen Sears and Domenic Recchia who said they were proud to be there to show their respect for Caribbean-born New Yorkers.

Cyril Thomas, deputy St. Vincent and the Grenadines Consul General to New York, and Dr. Harold Robinson, consul general of Trinidad and Tobago, also participated in the festivities.

Robinson thanked Dr. Stewart and all the members of the City Council for the recognition they give the Caribbean people that evening. "And we deserve it," he stated, "because we have been partners with the United States virtually from the time before the U.S. became an independent country."

There was also top-notch entertainment. Wayne Brooks played ceremonial music from Trinidad and Tobago; Guyanese spoken word artist James Richmond read his poem "My Caribbean Anthem"; Fidel James played and sang Negro Spirituals; Guyanese drummer Aloyaw Rudder performed a solo and also accompanied singer Angela Cooper in her stirring "Lament"; and both the Precious Angels of St. Lucian Heritage and the Oshubba Performing Company offered up native folk dances. Singers Alvir Pierre and Hilton Samuel delivered outstanding performances as well.

The formal part of the evening concluded with Hilton Samuel leading the audience in a sing-along of the Bob Marley hit "One Love." Everyone then adjourned to the rotunda where they feasted on delicious Caribbean food.

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