

Do you have some biographical information on the leaders of Belize?

Article Number: 253 | Rating: 5/5 from 3 votes | Last Updated: Sun, Sep 18, 2011 8:05 AM

Milton Arana. Born in Belize, Milton Arana in his early days won several national competitions in poetry, essays and short stories. He received a Bachelor's degree from the University of the West Indies, and subsequently a Master's and a PhD in Education. In later years he migrated to Canada, and was employed as counselor for the Canadian government.

Publications.

“Belizean Breeze”

1993: “Cry Wolf: the Story of Hurricane Hattie”

Hon. Dean Barrow. Prime Minister of Belize, February 2008.

Dean Oliver Barrow was born in Belize City, Belize, on March 2, 1951. *Education:* University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados (LL.B. 1973); Norman Manley Law School, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica (Certificate of Legal Education, 1975; University of Miami School of Law (L.M., 1981); University of Miami (M.A. International Relations). Admitted to the Belize Bar in 1975.

Political career: In December 1983 Barrow, as a member of the United Democratic Party (UDP), entered electoral politics as a candidate for the Belize City Council elections, in which he was successful. In December 1984 he participated in general elections as a candidate for the Queen's Square division, when he defeated Ralph Fonseca and was appointed to Cabinet as Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the 1989 general elections, although his party did not gain a majority, he again won his seat in the Queen's Square division. Winning general elections in 1993 for a second time since independence in 1981, the UDP returned Barrow to the Cabinet in the posts he held in the 1984-1989 administration, plus Minister of National Security. After the UDP lost the elections in 1998 Barrow, who served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security and Foreign Affairs during 1993-1998, became the Party Leader and Leader of the Opposition, replacing Manuel Esquivel.

Following the UDP victory in general elections on February 7, 2008, Dean Barrow was sworn in as Prime Minister of Belize, also assuming the portfolio of Minister of Finance.

Raymond Barrow (1920-2006). Born in Belize on May 1, 1920, after an illustrious career as an attorney and poet, Raymond Barrow died on October 14, 2006. His early education was at Wesley Primary School, and St. John's College. He graduated from the University of Cambridge, England, Middle Temple Inn, and was admitted to the Belize Bar in 1977. After serving in the public service for many years in the Education, Customs and Treasury departments, Barrow also filled the position of Crown Counsel. His poems have been published in anthologies at home and abroad, one of his most famous being *Dawn is a Fisherman*.

Clifford Betson (1897-1974). A strong and militant unionist, Clifford Betson was born in Belize and received his education in a Methodist school up to the primary level. In 1916 he volunteered with other British Hondurans (later Belizeans) to serve in Mesopotamia, where he was placed in labor battalions for the British troops. Returning to British Honduras in 1919, he was part of the contingent which on July 22 started a riot in Belize City in protest of the shabby treatment experienced at the hands of the Colonial authorities. Betson's agitation surfaced again in 1934 when he joined Antonio Soberanis' Laborers and Unemployed Association to demand better wages. He himself led a group called the Progressive Party which campaigned for the increased representation of poor Belizeans. As a member of the British Honduras Tradesmen and Workers Union in 1939, Betson went on to serve as President of his own General Workers Union (GWU) from 1944-1950. Through the GWU, Betson was able to achieve wage increases for its branches such as Stann Creek Fruit Workers, Corozal Sugar Workers, the Belize Waterfront Workers, and the Punta Gorda Dock Workers. In February 1947, after Betson organized a strike of 300 Belize Estate and Produce Company workers, the company capitulated and the sawmill workers won an increase in wages. Betson's legacy has strengthened the resolve of unionists in today's Belize, as he was instrumental in giving workshops on unionism.

Leo Bradley, Senior, M.B.E., J.P. (1926-2001). Born in Caye Caulker, Belize, on March 25, 1926, Leo Bradley received his early education at Holy Redeemer Primary School, and St. John's College. He was employed by the Government of Belize, serving in the Post Office, Labor and Public Works departments. Transferred to the Public Library in 1950 Bradley earned the degree of Associate of the Library Association in 1954, and completed further library studies at the University of Sheffield in 1972 and at the College of Librarianship, Wales, in 1975. His appointment as Belize's first Chief Librarian in 1954 cemented his career, as he made a tremendous contribution to the development of the public library service. He was instrumental in convincing government in the 1960s to establish the National Archives, for which he was recognized in 1965 by being appointed Honorary Archivist. In literary circles, Bradley excelled as a poet and short story writer, and after conducting much research he became one of the most knowledgeable scholars of Belizean history. In his honor, the headquarters of the Belize Library Service

was named the Leo Bradley Library. He possessed the qualities of a true Belizean who worked most nobly without fanfare, and without courting publicity or favors.

Publications.

“Looking at Our Literature”, “Among my Souvenirs”, “Glimpses of our History”, “Baron Bliss and his Bounty to Belize”, “Belizean Flavor”.

Awards.

In recognition of his contributions to the development of Belize and its literature, was decorated as a Member of the British Empire in 1965.

In 1983 appointed a Justice of the Peace,

Commendation from the Guild of Graduates in 1980.

Tribute by the Belize Historical Society in 1997.

Sir Henry Edney Conrad Cain (1924-2008). An outstanding career public servant who served the people and government of Belize for some 51 years, Sir Edney Cain lived during a generation that measured men by their honesty and their courage. He received his early education at Ebenezer Primary School, St. George's College and St. Michael's College in Belize City. Beginning his career in the public service in 1940 as a messenger at the Wireless Station, Cain rose through the ranks and became Accountant General in 1963. His professional training was done in the United Kingdom where, during 1953-1954 he successfully studied for and sat the Association of Certified and Corporation Accountant's Intermediate Examination. In 1976 he was appointed the first Managing Director of the Belize Monetary Authority, followed by his becoming the first Governor of the Central Bank in 1982. In 1987 Sir Edney joined the Ministry of Finance as Financial Secretary at a time when Belize was experiencing severe liquidity and balance of payments problems. Within two years he had turned the public finances around, cleared all the payment arrears, and rebuilt the foreign reserves. He again served as Governor of the Central Bank briefly during 1991, after which he formally retired from the public service.

Publication.

A collection of poems in 1948 entitled “When the Angel Says: Write”.

Commissions.

1984 appointed Belize's first resident ambassador to the United States of America, and non-resident High Commissioner to Canada.

From 1987 to 1990 served as Belize's resident High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Ambassador to France, Germany, Belgium and the Vatican.

Awards.

Knighthood by the Queen in 1986.

Received Order of Distinguished Service on the 25th anniversary of Belize's independence in 2006.

Delvin "Pen" Cayetano. Born in 1954 in Dangriga, Stann Creek District, Belize, Pen Cayetano is an artist and musician. Exemplifying his favorite medium of oil on canvas with genres of modern art and contemporary realism, Cayetano studied with fellow artist Benjamin Nicholas, while his musical influence came from master drummer Isabel Flores. Building on a foundation of songs in Garifuna, he created the Turtle Shell Band in 1979 which included stars like Mohobub Flores and Peter "Poots" Flores. In 1981 Pen Cayetano created the Punta Rock, which is a combination of cultural Garifuna music with elements of the modern Rock music. He and his band have performed all over Belize, and in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and the USA. His paintings have been exhibited in the USA, Great Britain, Italy, Taiwan and the Caribbean. Living with his family in Germany since 1990, Pen Cayetano maintains a studio of international art exhibitions, workshops and performances with his family band.

Awards.

1986: Citation from the National Garifuna Council of Belize for outstanding contribution in the field of culture and music.

1996: Citation from Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology for outstanding contribution in the development of Belize.

2000: DaYabra Entertainment Los Angeles for outstanding leadership in creativity, music and art.

2001: Nomination by the University of the West Indies for Scholars and Artists in Residence in St. Vincent.

2003: National Institute of Culture and History for achievements in recorded music.

Zelma Edgell. Known to many as “Zee” Edgell, Zelma is a Black Creole author who was born in Belize City, Belize, on October 21, 1940. In 1965 she received her diploma in Journalism from the school of modern language at the Polytechnic of Central London, after which she continued her education at the University of the West Indies. She became employed as a trainee journalist from 1959-1962 in Kingston, Jamaica, for the Daily Gleaner. Returning to Belize, Edgell, in 1966 became the editor of a weekly newspaper the Reporter. As a teacher she taught at St. Catherine Academy, a high school in Belize City, from 1980-1981, and lectured at the University of Belize. Although teaching and writing were to be her centers of interest, Edgell became associated with women’s issues in Belize, serving as the Director of the Department of Women’s Affairs. While residing in Africa during the mid-1980s she was the vice-president of the YWCA in Enugui, Nigeria. She also served as an UNICEF Consultant to the Somali Women’s Democratic Organization. In 1993 Edgell served as a visiting-writer-in-residence at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Shortly after, she was hired as an Assistant Professor for the Department of English at Kent State University in Ohio, where she is currently employed.

Publications.

Considered Belize’s principal contemporary writer, Zee Edgell’s novels are set throughout various time periods in Belize. They deal with historical events, universal themes, struggles specific to the Belizean society, and strong women protagonists.

1982: “Beka Lamb”, which won the Fawcett Society Book Prize in 1983.

1991: “In Times Like These”.

1997: “Festival of San Joaquin”.

2007: “Time and the River”.

Awards.

Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 2007 Queen’s Birthday Honors List.

Rev. James Alexander Christopher Elliott (1877-1961). Born in Belize City, Belize, on October 30, 1877, James Elliott received his early education at Wesley Primary School and Wesley High School. After teaching for a short while, in 1918 he became ordained into the Methodist ministry. This was a period in Belize’s history when many religious pioneers were succumbing to disease, revealing the need for trained native ministers. After being posted in the Republic of Honduras, in Puerto Cortes, the same year, he was transferred to the Corozal District in Belize in 1919. Rev. Elliott spent seven years in

Corozal where, apart from extolling the virtues of spirituality, he taught in the school and conducted night classes. In 1925 he was appointed to head the Wesley High School where he remained until 1927 when he was transferred to the Methodist mission at La Ceiba in Honduras. For the next 30 years Rev. Elliott spent the greatest and final part of his ministry there, experiencing many trials and tribulations brought about by changes in church administration and policy. Beset by legal battles and deteriorating health he returned to Belize in 1961, where he died on May 28.

Publication.

Rev. Elliott's encounter with the many people from all walks of life during his extensive career and travels in Belize and Honduras, led him to gather his poetic writings and publish internationally in the 1930s a book of poems entitled "Lo, I Am With You Always".

Zoila Ellis-Browne. Born in Dangriga, Belize, on May 13, 1957, Zoila Ellis from the age of eight years began writing poems and short stories. She studied law at the University of the West Indies from 1974 – 1980, and after returning to Belize she worked as a Magistrate, a Crown Counsel, and was the first Director of the Belize Legal Aid Center. She went into private practice in 1984. She holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. Zoila Ellis resides in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and is the Honorary Consul for that country.

Publication.

A collection of short stories: "On Heroes, Lizards and Passion".

Right Honourable Dr. Manuel Esquivel. Born on May 2, 1940 in Belize City, Belize, Manuel Esquivel earned a Bachelor of Science in physics at Loyola University in New Orleans. He subsequently pursued post-graduate studies in physics at Bristol University, England. He taught science and mathematics at St. John's Junior College in Belize City before becoming involved in politics. Becoming one of the founders of the United Democratic Party (UDP) in 1973, Esquivel was appointed to the Senate in 1979, and chosen as party leader in 1982. He led the UDP to victory in general elections in 1984, and became Belize's second Prime Minister since independence in 1981. After the UDP lost the elections in 1989, Esquivel became the official leader of the opposition. In 1993, on the UDP winning the general elections, he again became Prime Minister until his party was defeated in 1998, after which he resigned as party leader. For the next ten years, while the People's United Party was in power, Esquivel managed his office furniture and equipment business, Price & Company. When the UDP was returned to power in the 2008 general elections, he was appointed by Prime Minister Dean Barrow as senior advisor to government with ministerial rank.

Awards.

Appointed to Her Majesty's Privy Council by Queen Elizabeth II, a life-time appointment which conferred the title "Right Honourable".

Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Loyola University.

George Seymour Gabb, M.B.E., 1928-2007. Born in Belize City, Belize, on February 28, 1928, George Gabb received only a primary school education, but evolved as Belize's foremost sculptor as well as excelling as a painter, playwright and poet. At the early age of 13 he began to take an interest in the arts, and during the 1950s he burst upon the Belizean scene with his signature woodwork in zericote hardwood turned on a lathe. With time he progressed to poetry and drama, but always with an inner eye and his master's touch which allowed him to excel at whatever he did. His many talents extended to designing, the culinary arts, acting and boat-building. He taught his art both locally and in the United States, an experience which led to his being acclaimed as an internationally respected artist. Many of his sculptures and carvings have become prized possessions in private collections. Among his achievements, he became the first living Belizean artist to have his art featured on a set of stamps in November 1987. Gabb's famous sculpture in wood, "The Sleeping Giant", is the watermark image on Belize's \$100 currency note; and the "Freedom of Thought" sculpture is mounted at the entrance to the capital city of Belmopan.

Publications.

"Yellowtail", a play first performed in the 1960s.

"The Naked Eye", a collection of poems and proverbs.

Awards.

In 1974 he was decorated as a Member of the British Empire.

In 1998, the Belize Arts Council presented George Gabb with the Outstanding Artist Award.

In 2000, the poem "The Sculptured Sculpture" won second place in the International Society of Poets Competition.

In September 2002 received the Meritorious Service Award from the Government of Belize.

Alice Gibson. Born on September 3, 1923, in Belize City, Belize, Alice Gibson spans a broad and varied

career in the public service. With firm family roots in the Anglican Church, her early education was had at St. John's Primary School. In addition to her chosen career as a librarian, Gibson earlier participated in social work intended to help the poorer class of Belizeans, gathering information concerning poverty levels, teenage pregnancy and unemployment in south side Belize City. Becoming involved with library development in Belize, she worked at the Jubilee Public Library. As Assistant Librarian in 1955, Alice Gibson became actively involved in establishing a reader's group for girls; planning training courses for library personnel countrywide; contributing to rural library development; and assisting organizations in setting up libraries. She became a qualified librarian in 1961, and was conferred with the degree of Associate of the Library Association by the British Library Association. Acting as Chief Librarian on several occasions, she herself was officially appointed to that position in 1976, until her retirement in 1978. Alice Gibson, in subsequent years, became the librarian at Pallotti High School in Belize City, where she also taught Music Theory. As a prominent woman in Belizean society, she feels that more mothers should ensure that their children's needs are met at home, at school and through the Church.

Aston Gill. Within the annuals of Cross Country Cycling in Belize, the name of Aston Gill is prominent as one of the pioneers and peacemakers of this event. Born in Belize City, Belize, on July 25, 1915, Aston Gill's early education was at St. Mary's and Baptist primary schools. Following in his father's footsteps, he went into apprenticeship as a carpenter at the age of 14. He constructed many wooden houses in Belize City, but as a man for sports he participated in soccer, track and field, cricket, and gained his worth in cycling both on the road and in the circular races. Aston Gill participated as a junior rider for the first time in 1929, after which he developed his immeasurable ability as a future cross country cyclist. Although the first Cross Country Cycling race in Belize took place in 1928, Aston Gill did not shine until the mid-1940s. He ruled the Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycling Classic from 1945 to 1947 by placing first three consecutive years, being the only Belizean to hold this record. He placed second in 1949, and retained the championship again in 1950. Residing in the United States with his family, Aston Gill, as an inductee into Belize's Hall of Fame, remains a truly tetra-champion.

Phillip Stanley Wilberforce Goldson (1923-2001). Born of humble parentage on July 25, 1923, in Belize City, Belize, Phillip Goldson started life as a person of modest means and was able within his 78 years to soar above the various diverse circumstances that would govern his illustrious life. His early education was at St. Mary's Primary School in Belize City, and he went on to study at night to successfully obtain the Cambridge University Overseas Junior Certificate in 1939, and the Senior School Certificate in 1941.

Political career: After working briefly as a civil servant for six years, Goldson became enticed by the beginnings of the Nationalist Movement in Belize of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The route into politics at that time was by way of the labor movement, and in 1949 he became the National Organizer of the General Workers Union, and later General Secretary. Together with early activists like John Smith

and George Price, he founded the People's United Party (PUP) in 1950 and served as Assistant Secretary. Convicted of seditious intention in 1951, Goldson was sentenced to one year in prison. Differences in opinion caused Goldson to break with the PUP in 1956, becoming Party Secretary of the newly formed National Independence Party (NIP) in 1957, and Party Leader from 1961-1974. He served as Deputy Party Leader from 1979-1982 of the United Democratic Party (UDP), formed out of the NIP and two other parties in 1973. He resigned from the UDP in 1991 in opposition to the passage of the Maritime Areas Act, and formed and led his last political party: the National Alliance for Belizean Rights. Late in his career, at the age of 51 in 1974, he began to study Law, subsequently called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, London, and to the Belize bar the following year. Although blinded by glaucoma in 1978 Goldson remained active in politics and as a member of the House of Representatives up to 1998. Always an unpretentious and humble man, as a politician and statesman, his achievements included:

- * The longest continuous serving member of Belize's House of Representatives, 1954-1957, 1961-1998.
- * First Leader of the Opposition in 1969, as the Leader of the National Independence Party.
- * Re-elected to the Albert Division of Belize City from 1965 to 1993.
- * As Member for Social Services, coordinating the rebuilding of Corozal Town after hurricane Janet in 1955.
- * Minister of Local Government, Social Services and Community Development 1984-1989.
- * Minister of Immigration, Youth Development and Human Resources 1993-1998.
- * Elected to the Belize City Council in 1974, 1977 and 1983.
- * The first Belizean statesman to speak before the General Assembly of the United Nations, when he addressed that body in 1967 on the Guatemalan question.

Awards.

1989: The Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport named after him.

2001: Conferred with the Order of Belize for his patriotism and political work.

2008: Conferred with the Order of the National Hero (posthumously).

Dame Elmira Minita Gordon, GCMG, GCVO. Born on December 30, 1930, in Belize City Dame Minita Gordon has the distinction of being Belize's first Governor-General from its independence to 1993, being the first woman in a Commonwealth realm to assume that position. She was educated in Belize City at St. John's Girl's School and St. Mary's Primary School, before attending the Government Teacher's Training College. Her teaching career began as an Anglican school teacher including missionary work throughout Belize, extending from 1946-1958. During the years 1959-1969 Dame Minita lectured at the Belize Teacher's Training College, after which she became an Education Officer. She furthered her academic achievements by correspondence course from the College of Preceptors, Oxford, England. Dame Minita then went on to attend the Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham in England, the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, then pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Psychology followed by a Ph.D course in Applied Psychology at the University of Toronto, Canada. She became Belize's first Psychologist in 1980. She has been a member of the Girl Guides since 1946, becoming District Commissioner for the Belize district in 1970.

Awards.

In 1981 became the first Belizean to receive a Certificate of Inclusion in the International Who's Who of Intellectuals.

Justice of the Peace in 1974.

In 1975 awarded the Certificate of Honour and Life Membership of the British Red Cross.

Conferred with an honorary degree from the University of Victoria, Canada, in 1984.

Appointments.

Member of the National Library Service Board until 1976.

Member of St. Hilda's College Board of Governors.

Deputy Chairperson of the Domestic Wages Council.

Member of the Y.W.C.A.

Member of the Educational Psychology Programme Planning Committee, University of Toronto 1977-1978.

Member Leather Craft Club, Toronto 1978-1980.

Samuel Alfred Haynes (1899-1971). Born in Belize, Samuel Haynes was a Black Belizean soldier. He was a leader of the 1919 riot by returning soldiers who had fought in World War I and refused to accept racial discrimination at home in Belize. Prominent in the Marcus Garvey movement, Haynes was at one time the President of the Pittsburgh Division, editor/writer for the *Negro World*, and briefly the Official American Representative for the Universal Negro Improvement Association 1929 under Marcus Garvey. He wrote the lyrics of the song “Land of the Gods” in 1963, which name was changed to “Land of the Free” and adopted as the national anthem at Belize’s independence in 1981.

Felicia Hernandez. Born in Dangriga, Belize, Felicia Hernandez migrated to California after a period of teaching in Belize. Continuing her teaching career in the United States she returned to Belize in 1997 after over thirty years during which she put her experiences into words. Getting her inspiration from other writers, Hernandez has written and published four books, each one being a glimpse into the world of human characters. She focuses at times on the empowerment of the Belizean woman and the need to provide children with a good education. She is retired in Dangriga.

Publications.

1978: “I Don’t Know You but I Love You”.

1988: “Those Ridiculous Years – a Collection of Short Stories”.

1993: “Narenga”.

2000: “Reflections and other Family Stories”.

Evan X Hyde. Evan Anthony Hyde was born on April 30, 1947, in Belize City, Belize. He obtained his primary school education at Holy Redeemer School, before moving on to St. John’s College High School in Belize City. Hyde was among the first students to attend St. John’s College Junior College from 1964-1965, after which he was granted a scholarship to study at Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire from where he graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in English in 1968. Particularly excelling at creative writing he initially settled on a writing career, but as events unfolded in his life this was somewhat altered. While undertaking a teaching position at the Belize Technical College, Hyde’s exposure to the teachings of the Black Power movement in the United States caused him to link up with other young intellectuals to try to influence the course of Belize’s development. Forming the United Black Association for Development (UBAD) in 1969 which became a political party, he was a candidate in coalition with the National Independence Party in 1971 City Council elections. Having lost that bid, he

was also not successful when he contested general elections in the Collet Division in 1974, and again in City Council elections in 1977 with the People's United Party. He also taught for a while at Wesley College, a high school in Belize City. After UBAD's dissolution in 1974, Hyde turned to journalism full-time, devoting his efforts to the Amandala, a weekly newspaper that he founded in August 1969. Growing with media technology, in 1989 he and his family created KREM Radio and later KREM Television. Today Hyde is chair of the UBAD Educational Foundation, owner of the Library of African and Indian Studies, and majority shareholder in the Kremandala media empire.

Publications.

1969: "Knocking Our Own Ting"

1971; "North Amerikkkan Blues"

1972: "The Crown Called UBAD"

1975: "Feelings"

1981: "Poems of Passion, Patriotism and Protest" (with
Roland Parks and Richard Bradley).

1994: "X-Communication".

2008: "Sports, Sin and Subversion".

Simon Lamb. This most patriotic of Belizeans spanned the 19th and 20th centuries, and was instrumental in keeping alive the 10th of September celebrations. Simon Lamb organized and celebrated the Centenary of the Battle of St. George's Caye on the 10th of September in 1898, which as a public holiday celebration continued for about ten years, after which interest began to fade. It was then that his love for his country stirred up in the soul of this humble person. He took it upon himself to gather people together, and to march and celebrate on the 10th of September not for emotion, but to honor those first Belizeans known as the Baymen, and to inspire his countrymen to love Belize. Because of his determination and his efforts, the celebration of the Battle of St. George's Caye grew big in the 1920s, and up to the present day it is still celebrated. This is enough evidence that Simon Lamb portrayed for us love, patriotism and dedication to the development of Belize.

James Sullivan Martinez (fl. 1914-1926). A self-educated man who never went to high school, James

Sullivan Martinez served in the British Honduras Territorial Force in World War I. Occupying a special place in Belizean poetry, he is best known as an experimenter and innovator deftly using the Creole language as a medium of communication that captured and reflected the local atmosphere. The power of Martinez' poetry lies in its natural simplicity, and his prolific talent is shown in his collection of poetry "Caribbean Jingles" published in Belize in the 1920s. This book holds the honor of being recognized as one of the first serious collections of poems published by a national. His expression was also directed into another arena, because as he followed his father to the timber camps he learned how to work the mahogany wood, which he portrayed in the superior quality craftsmanship exemplified by his work in St. John's Cathedral in Belize City.

Isaiah Emmanuel Morter (c.1866-1923). Born in Belize, British Honduras, of African parents who had settled in the Freetown area, Isaiah Morter is said to have been very attentive to his relatives. In his youth he acquired, through a generous godfather, much land which he successfully farmed at Northern River. He eventually shipped thousands of bunches of banana; and as his riches grew, he obtained more lands to expand his cultivation. Diversifying his interests, Morter acquired Caye Chapel, an island located north-east of Belize, where he planted coconut trees, the fruit of which brought him great profits. Pleased with the progress his godson had made, before he died his benefactor bequeathed Morter a fortune in cash. In later years he turned his attention to investing in real estate, and even today in Belize there are several properties which formed part of the Morter Estate. Under the influence of Marcus Garvey, Morter became attached to the United Negro Improvement Association, which caused much dissatisfaction among his relatives when he wanted to leave that body in his Will. After his death in 1923, Isaiah Morter's vast estate went through several litigations, and up to the 1970s was still not settled.

Dr. Corinth Morter-Lewis. Exhibiting a lifelong career in education, Corinth Morter-Lewis was born in Belize City, Belize. Receiving her primary education at Ebenezer School, she went into the service of the Government of Belize as a clerical assistant, after which she became a teacher and moved up to Department Head and Vice-Principal of the Belize Technical College. Her higher education was received at the University of New Brunswick and the University of Alberta in Canada, and Bali State University in the U.S.A. She holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology as a Chartered Psychologist. She has served variously as a lecturer at the Belize College of Arts, Science and Technology, the University of Belize, the Belize Teachers' College and the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies. In her further service to education in Belize, Dr. Morter-Lewis has been a consultant to the Ministry of Education in developing the Primary and Secondary School Curricula. Additionally she has been instrumental in working with the National Primary School examinations, the Teacher Development Unit, and the Pre-School Unit. After serving one year as interim president of the University of Belize in 2003, she was appointed as the President of that institution as from January 2004 to 2007.

Awards.

One of the 13 members of the Governing Board of UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESLAC).

Member of the MED Schools Certification Committee.

Publication.

1976: "Share My Song" – a collection of poems. (One of her poems has been officially designated as the "National Tribute to the Belizean Flag").

Said Wilbert Musa. Belize's third Prime Minister since independence in 1981, Said Musa was born in San Ignacio, Cayo District on March 19, 1944. His early education was had at St. Andrew's Primary School in San Ignacio, after which he attended high school at St. Michael's College in Belize City and later St. John's College Junior College. He went on to earn an Honours Degree in Law at Manchester University in 1966. On returning home in 1967 Musa served briefly as a Circuit Magistrate and as a Crown Counsel during 1968 and 1969. He went into private practice as an Attorney-at-Law in 1970, co-founding the law firm of Musa and Balderamos. As a social activist Musa became involved with the United Black Association for Development, joining other socially conscious Belizeans who emerged on the scene in the early 1970s. During this period, along with Assad Shoman, he formed the People's Action Committee and the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research.

Political career: Joining the People's United Party (PUP) in 1974, Musa contested his first general election in 1974 when he was defeated in the Fort George division by Dean Lindo. He was appointed as a Senator during the 1974-1979 term. Successful in the general election of 1979, he served on his party's Cabinet as Attorney General, Minister of Education and Sports, and Minister of Economic Development from 1979 to 1984. Contributing to the independence process, Musa served on the committee that wrote the Constitution of Belize. Losing his seat in the 1984 election, he was successful in 1989, and has won the Fort George constituency in every election since. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education from 1989 to 1993; becoming leader of the PUP in 1996 when George Price stepped down. Musa's PUP was out of office between 1993 to 1998, but won the election in 1998 when he presided as Prime Minister for the next decade. Leading the PUP into the election held on February 7, 2008, his party suffered defeat by the United Democratic Party. Although Musa was re-elected to the Fort George constituency, on February 13, 2008, he announced that he was resigning as Party Leader. He has since returned to his law firm.

Dr. Joseph O. Palacio. An anthropologist by profession, Dr. Joseph Palacio was born in the village of

Barranco in southern Belize. As a child, he lived in Maya, Creole and Garifuna villages with his father and brother who were both teachers. This was his first introduction to living among different sets of people, which later proved helpful as he delved deeper into anthropology. After completing junior college, Dr. Palacio worked in the government service in the Co-operative and Forestry departments. He received his academic training in Canada gaining a first degree in Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Toronto. He completed his Master's degree in Anthropology with specialization in Archaeology at the University of Manitoba. He returned to Belize and took up a position with the Department of Archaeology, before going to the University of California at Berkeley to do his doctorate in Social Anthropology. Returning to Belize once more, Dr. Palacio took up an appointment as Resident Tutor of the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies (UWISCS) in 1982. In this position he generated an active program of study in community development aimed at persons who normally would not enter a university. He also promoted research on refugees, migration, indigenous peoples and history, all the while maintaining a strong current of Garifuna studies. Becoming involved in the process of promoting and affirming the indigenous heritage of the Caribbean, Dr. Palacio participated in the formation of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (COIP) in the late 1980s. After many years at the UWISCS, Dr. Palacio retired, and went on to become involved in such research topics as the Maroons of Jamaica and their similarities with the Garifuna; and the use by the Garifuna of marine resources. Dr. Palacio has written and presented many papers, some of which are:

Reconstructing Garifuna Oral History – Techniques and Methods in the Story of a Caribbean People. 1999.

A Reconsideration of the Native American and African Roots of Garifuna Identity. 2000.

The Garifuna: A Nation Across Borders: Essays in Social Anthropology. 2007. (Edited by Dr. Palacio).

Vivien Andy Palacio (1960-2008). A serious music and cultural activist, Andy Palacio was born in the small southern coastal village of Barranco, Belize, on December 2, 1960. Described as the most popular musician in Belize, he was committed to preserving his unique Garifuna culture. After attending primary school in Barranco, he went to high school in the nearby town of Punta Gorda; and at age 18 he traveled to Belize City to take up a scholarship at the Teachers' Training College. On graduating, Andy Palacio returned to Barranco to teach at the Roman Catholic primary school. In 1980 he volunteered to work with a literacy project in Nicaragua, where he found that the Garifuna language and culture was steadily dying. Committed to delving deeper into the language and rhythms of the Garifuna, Andy Palacio used music as a medium to preserve the culture. Apart from composing and performing his own songs, in 1987 he was invited to work in England with Cultural Partnerships Limited. Back in Belize he founded an organization named Sunrise, which was dedicated to preserving, documenting and distributing Belizean music. Popularizing the punta rock musical style, he recorded several albums that helped earn

him worldwide recognition. In 2000 he succeeded in his request that UNESCO should formally acknowledge the need to preserve the Garifuna language, music and dance. As Cultural Ambassador, and Director of Belize's National Institute of Culture and History in the mid-2000s, Andy Palacio was able to organize activities connected with Garifuna history, highlighted by the annual Garifuna Festival. Exploring the more soulful side of Garifuna music, Andy Palacio, along with his producer Ivan Duran, created an all-star, multi-generational ensemble of some of the best Garifuna musicians from Guatemala, Honduras and Belize naming themselves "The Garifuna Collective". They embarked on the production of "Watina", an album that would come to revive modern Garifuna music and become one of the most critically-acclaimed world music releases of 2007. After a brief illness, Andy Palacio passed away on January 19, 2008, at the age of 47.

Awards.

In November, 2007, Andy Palacio became the first Caribbean and Central American artist to be designated a UNESCO Artist for Peace.

Conferred the Order of Meritorious Service by the Government of Belize in September 2007.

He was co-awarded, with Ivan Duran, the WOMEX Award in October 2007.

Winner of the 2008 BBC Radio 3 Awards for World Music in the Americas.

Nicholas Anthony Ignatius Pollard, Senior, (1924-2003). A Belizean politician and trade union leader, Nicholas Pollard was born on March 22, 1924, in Bacalar, Quintana Roo, Mexico, to Belizean parents. In Belize City, he attended Holy Redeemer and St. Ignatius primary schools, and St. John's College high school. Involved in community activities in the 1940s and 1950s, Pollard was instrumental in co-founding the Holy Redeemer Credit Union, and the Loyal and Patriotic Order of the Baymen. As a young visionary during the time of British Colonialism, Pollard saw the plight of the worker and from 1948 became actively involved in trade unionism. His contributions in this direction were: Founder-President of the British Honduras Mercantile Clerks Union (1948-1950); General Secretary of the British Honduras General Workers Union (1950-1956); Founder/General Secretary of the Christian Democratic Union (1956-1958); Founder/organizer of the Southern Christian Union (1961); Founder/organizer of the Christian Workers Union (1962); Founder/organizer of the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions (1963); Founder/General Secretary of the Democratic Independent Union (1969). Pollard's involvement on the international front extended to becoming the organizer for Central America in the Inter-American Regional Organization of Labour (ORIT) in 1951, and serving as Assistant Secretary for the English-speaking Caribbean in the Latin American Confederation of Christian Unionists (CLASC) and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU), 1961-1969. On the political front,

Pollard was a founding member of the People's United Party (PUP); but in 1958 broke away and formed the Christian Democratic Party. As a literary person, he was a co-founder and editor of the PUP's Belize Times in 1956. Between 1970 and up to the time of his death in 2003 he was an avid writer and newspaper columnist. Several of his poems have been published in anthologies. In the 1970s also, Pollard left public life and worked in the private sector, becoming since 1980 a high school teacher at the Anglican Cathedral College and at St. John's College.

The Right Honourable George Cadle Price. The eldest of 10 children, George Price was born on January 15, 1919 in Belize City, Belize. Receiving his primary education at Holy Redeemer School, he attended St. John's College High School from 1931-1935, after which he spent the next 9 years at St. Augustine's Minor Seminary in Mississippi, U.S.A., and Mayor Seminario Conciliar in Guatemala City.

Political career: Returning home in 1944, Price worked for local businessman/millionaire Robert Turton; while contesting municipal elections in 1944 and being elected to the local Town Board in 1947. He served as Mayor from 1958 to 1962. At the national level he was elected to the Legislative Council in 1954. Upon the formation of the People's Committee in 1950, he was named Assistant Secretary, and after co-founding the People's United Party (PUP) on September 29, 1950, Price ascended through the party ranks until he became leader following a dispute in 1956. Becoming First Minister in 1961, which title was changed to Premier in 1964 after Belize achieved internal self-government, Price became the country's first Prime Minister at independence on September 21, 1981. Although his PUP suffered defeats in 1984 and again in 1993, Price led the PUP for fully four decades, until he resigned in November 1996 and was named Leader Emeritus.

Awards.

1982: Member of the Privy Council.

The Order of the Caribbean Community.

2000: The Order of National Hero, the first to receive this award in Belize.

Thomas Vincent Ramos, (1887-1955). Born in Puerto Cortez, Honduras, on September 17, 1887, T.V. Ramos was educated at Wesleyan Methodist Primary Schools in Stann Creek Town and Belize City. To further his education he took correspondence courses in business administration, public speaking, journalism and accountancy. He is credited with being involved in several industries, but is most well known for founding the Independent Manhood and Exodus Uplift Society, the Colonial Industrial Instruction Association, and Carib Settlement Day. Although T.V. Ramos migrated to Belize permanently in 1923, he did not become a naturalized British subject until one year before his death in

1955. As a contemporary of Marcus Garvey, he was involved in the Universal Negro Improvement Association, becoming a civil rights activist and an advocate for civil rights. His abiding vision was for the advancement of the Garifuna people worldwide which, by extension, included all Afro-Belizeans. T.V. Ramos fought discrimination and strongly advocated for the recognition of a special day for the Garifuna. Progressively he gained ground when on November 19, 1941 there was the first celebration of Garifuna Settlement Day (previously called Carib Disembarkation Day); then a public and bank holiday for Stann Creek (1943) and Toledo (1944); culminating in 1977 with Carib (Garifuna) Settlement Day being declared a national holiday. Thomas Vincent Ramos has certainly left very important and vital messages and constructive ideas on which to build in order to advance his people.

Antonio Soberanis Gomez (1897-1975). Born in the Village of San Antonio in Northern Belize on January 17th, 1897. A labour activist, Antonio Soberanis is regarded as the father of the Belizean labour movement. He came to prominence in early 1934 when he took part in a demonstration organized by the “Unemployed Brigade”. After this he began to hold regular public meetings in Belize City demanding work for the unemployed, while attacking the rich merchants and the colonial officials. In July 1934 he formed the “Labour and Unemployed Association” which conducted pickets and boycotts against business places, resulting in Soberanis being arrested and spending five weeks in jail. The colonial administration passed three new laws in 1935 giving the Governor extra powers and not allowing criticism of the government. After he was arrested again in 1935, the leadership of the movement split and weakened Soberanis influence. He continued to address the important social and economic problems of the day, and he is credited for taking the movement into the districts and got the entire country to think about the rights of all workers. In the latter part of his life Antonio Soberanis operated a barber shop.

John Alexander Watler. Born in Monkey River, Belize, in 1938 John Watler has for over four decades been involved in newspaper reporting, writing short stories, poetry, plays and folklore. As a Belizean novelist, he is also considered a folk hero and is highly honored in Belize for keeping Belizean Creole culture alive at a time when it was most unpopular to do so. John Watler was contracted by the Ministry of Education to visit schools nationwide to inspire, motivate and lecture on Belizean culture. He has performed at many events as a storyteller.

Publications.

2001: “Cry Among Rainclouds”

2002: “De Works”

2004: “Sea Lotto”

2007: “Boss of Dangriga”.

Dr. Sir Colville Norbert Young, GCMG, MBE. Serving as Belize’s Governor General since 1993, Sir Colville was born on November 20, 1932. His education went from St. Michael’s College in Belize City, 1945-1950, a First Class Teachers’ Certificate in 1955, to attendance at the University of the West Indies from 1958-1961 where he earned a Bachelor’s degree with honours in English. His highest academic award came when he completed his Doctorate of Philosophy in Linguistics from York University in 1971, his thesis being “Belize Creole, a study of the Creolized English spoken in Belize in its cultural and social setting”. He became the first Belizean to be awarded a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship in 1992. Sir Colville has always been creative, contributing largely to Belize’s culture as composer, arranger, conductor, author and performing artist. His musical repertoire extends to some forty songs which combine the classical with the Creole. He is credited with being a founding member of Belize’s first steel band, and his music continues to be an integral part of Christmas concerts. With a stated interest in promoting the development of Belizean music, Sir Colville has been active in facilitating instruments to create school bands.

Educational career:

Principal, St. Michael’s College, 1974-1976.

Lecturer in English and General Studies, Belize Technical College, 1976-1986.

First President of the University College of Belize, 1986-1990.

Lecturer, University College of Belize, 1990-1993.

Awards:

1985, Justice of the Peace.

1986, Member of the Order of the British Empire.

1987, Outstanding Teachers Award, Anglican Cathedral College.

1988, Prime Minister’s citation for contribution to Belizean culture.

1994, Knight of the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George.

Publications:

“Literature and Education in Belize”

“Creole Proverbs of Belize”

“From One Caribbean Corner”

“Caribbean Corner Calling”

“Pataki Full”

Horace Walwyn Young, CBE, QC. Born in Belize City on July 5, 1922, Horace Young, after completing his secondary education in 1937 at St. George’s College (now Wesley College), took up employment in the government service. Rising through the clerical ranks, in 1945 he was appointed to the post of Clerk to the Registrar General. He later held the post of First Class Clerk before being promoted to Commissioner of the Revision of Laws in 1951. Pursuing a course in Law in 1952 at the University of Southampton in England, he was called to the English Bar in 1957. Horace Young again took up appointments with the government of Belize, serving variously as Crown Counsel, Solicitor General, attachment to the Colonial Office, and the Governor’s nominee to the Washington Conference to discuss the Guatemalan claim to Belize. Having resigned from the government service in 1961, he spent thirty-two years managing his own law firm in Belize City. As a public spirited citizen, Horace Young served as a nominated Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1961 to 1965, as Chairman of the Belize Advisory Council, and as President of the World Jurist Association. From 1985 to 1987 he served as a Judge Advocate in the Belize Defense Force courts-martial, as a Supreme Court Judge in 1993, and promoted as a Justice of the Appeals Court until 1998. He received the honor of Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1979, and later appointed as a Queen’s Counsel. His community services included President of the Belize Library Association, Chairman of the Belize National Library Service Board, Vice-President of the Scouts Council, and President of the Football League. Completely retired from public and private office, Horace Young resides in Florida, U.S.A.

Posted : **Marty Casado** - Sun, Sep 18, 2011 8:03 AM. This article has been viewed 87994 times.

Online URL: <https://ambergriscaye.com/help/article.php?id=253>