

# ANNE MITCHELL-GIFT AUDITORIUM



Mrs Anne Caroline Mitchell-Gift is the eldest of three daughters born to the late Lionel Mitchell and his wife, Victoria, on the 12th October 1941, in Scarborough, Tobago. After spending three years at the Scarborough R.C. School, she transferred to the Patience Hill R.C. School where she won a College Exhibition scholarship to St Joseph's Convent in Port of Spain, at the age of ten years. She returned to Tobago one year later, to complete her secondary education at the Bishop's High School.

She then joined the staff of the Tobago Library Service in 1959. By 1966 she had fulfilled all the examination and other requirements necessary for the award of Associateship by the Library Association of Great Britain (ALA). Having attained this qualification, she was appointed Librarian in charge of

the Tobago Library Services; the first Tobagonian to be appointed in this position.

During her tenure of duty in the role of Regional Librarian / Librarian in charge, Tobago, she was responsible for the preparation of briefs and co-ordination of activities relative to the constructing and equipping of a new Regional Library at Scarborough, and Branches at Roxborough and Charlotteville.

In 1976, she attended the International Graduate Summer School of Librarianship and Information Science in Wales, and in 1986, proceeded to the Simmons College in Boston, United States of America where she received a Master of Science Degree, majoring in Library and Information Science, and also attained the "outstanding academic achievement" of membership in Beta Phi Mu, the International Library and Information Science Honor Society.

Mrs Mitchell-Gift has been a long standing member of the Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago, and a regular participant at regional and international library conferences, particularly those hosted by the Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL).

She has presented several papers and

addresses on a variety of topics. Included among her international presentations were the International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) pre-session papers entitled: *Establishing outreach programmes: the promotion and marketing of services* (1985) and *Mobile Library services in Trinidad and Tobago: A chequered history* (1994). Besides articles in professional journals, Mrs Mitchell-Gift has also published a monograph entitled *Lionel P. Mitchell: A Biography* (1996).

Another notable achievement was the establishment, in 1980, of the "Friends of the Tobago Library Committee", which was responsible for organizing annual ceremonies to honour outstanding Tobagonians, over a period of fifteen (15) years (1993 - 2007), proceedings of which were recorded in a document entitled *Reflections* (2007), edited by Mrs Mitchell-Gift.

With her father and his brother being credited with the introduction of scouting to Tobago, it is not surprising that she grew up in the Girl Guide movement, moving from Brownie to Ranger Captain. She was also selected to represent the country at the Centenary World Camp of that movement, held at Windsor Park, London in 1957.

She was an active participant in many of the National Music and Arts Festivals held during the 1950's and 1960's; and a member of the winning National Public Speaking team in the 1959 Arts Festival.

Mrs Gift proceeded on early retirement in 1999 and by 2001 became the first woman to be appointed to the prestigious position of Presiding Officer, Tobago House of Assembly, a position which she held continuously up to 2012. In this capacity she has lead delegations on visits to Wales, Canada and Rodrigues; and to several Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences held locally, regionally and internationally.

Her writing skills have extended to the preparation and distribution of several brochures and information booklets, mainly on aspects of parliamentary procedures and practices.

Moreover, she supervised the restoration of the 1825 - Legislature Building of the Tobago House of Assembly, during the period 2009 - 2012, and ensured that the upgraded facilities included accommodation for a Library and Information Centre, essentially for members of the Tobago House of Assembly.

Mrs Mitchell-Gift is married to Mr Welley Gift and the proud mother of one son and grand-mother of two.

In recognition of the considerable development of library services in Tobago under her stewardship, the Auditorium is being named after Mrs. Anne Mitchell-Gift.

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