



## *The Eric Williams Memorial Collection*

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### **Eric Williams Memorial Collection Sponsors 2023-2024 Regional 'School Bags' Essay Competition**

**Port of Spain, TRINIDAD and TOBAGO (May 16, 2023).** The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum (EWMC) at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Trinidad and Tobago, announces this year's "Eric Williams 'School Bags' Essay Competition." Judges are: Dr. Rita Pemberton, retired Chair, UWI Department of History; Dr. Trevor Burnard, Director, Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull; Dr. Sasha Turner, Johns Hopkins University. The contest was inaugurated in 2007, with its then champion going on to become the Bennet Boskey Fellow in Atlantic Studies at Oxford University.

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As social media becomes the global playground for our kids, amidst its implications for the disintegration of relationships, it has become a clear and present danger to democracy, utilizing disinformation and misinformation to "educate" its adherents to a particular way of thinking that often bears no relation either to truth or facts. And yet, we have seen it successfully used to promote freedom from tyranny, and to raise awareness of society's injustices.

This year's topic, then, asks students to determine if it is a help or a hindrance, and what impact it has on civil society or politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Throughout his life, Dr. Eric Williams, noted scholar/historian and the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, gave special emphasis to learning. "To educate is to emancipate." On August 30, 1962, the eve of his country's Independence from Britain, he exhorted:

*"You, the children, yours is the great responsibility to educate your parents, teach them to live together in harmony...To your tender and loving hands, the future of*

*the Nation is entrusted. In your innocent hearts, the pride of the Nation is enshrined. On your scholastic development, the salvation of the Nation is dependent...you carry the future of [the Nation] in your school bags.”*

The contest has been offered to all Lower and Upper Sixth Form (CAPE or equivalent) students in: Anguilla, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos – some 177 schools. It is being held through June 30, 2023. First, second and third awards will be announced on September 15, 2023.

The first prize consists of a four-day trip for two to Trinidad and Tobago with airfare, hotel accommodations and per diem allowance; a tour of The Eric Williams Memorial Collection and University of the West Indies campus; a US \$1000 educational voucher; courtesy calls on the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and the Speaker of the House of Representatives; a tour of Parliament; a set of Eric Williams’ books; an interview on University of the West Indies (UWI) TV; radio and TV interviews in various Caribbean countries; and a framed certificate. In the event of a Trinidad and Tobago winner, a trip to another Caribbean territory will be substituted, as well as appropriate tours. The successful school secures a set of Eric Williams’ books, and the loan of a large presentation trophy plaque, listing prior schools.

The essay will also be published in: Miami, Florida’s *Caribbean Today* newspaper; CARICOM’s newsletter; The Trinidad Express newspaper; and UWI Today’s magazine. A link to the essay will be publicized in Caribbean Airlines’ inflight magazine, *Caribbean Beat*, and a photograph and blurb of the winner will appear in the *Journal of African American History*.

Patrons of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection’s ‘School Bags’ Essay Competition are: Banwari Experience; Caribbean Airlines; *Caribbean Beat Inflight Magazine*; Caribbean Development Bank; *Caribbean Today*; CARICOM; Courtyard by Marriott, Trinidad; Hyatt Regency, Trinidad; *Journal of African American History*; One Caribbean Media, Ltd.; Trinidad and Tobago’s Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament and Speaker of the House of Representatives; UNESCO, Trinidad; University of the West Indies; UWI TV.

The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum was inaugurated by former **US Secretary of State Colin Powell** in 1998, and named to UNESCO’s prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999. For more information, please contact Erica Williams Connell, The Eric Williams Memorial Collection P.O. Box 561631, Miami, FL 33256-1631, USA. Fax: (305) 271-4160; Website: [www.ericwilliamsmemorialcollection.org](http://www.ericwilliamsmemorialcollection.org).