



# The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

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## Jamaican-born Princeton Professor Challenges a Diverse Caribbean

**MIAMI, Fla.** (September 20, 2006)—Eminent historian Colin A. Palmer, Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University, will deliver the 8th annual Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture at Florida International University, as part of the African-New World Studies Program’s Distinguished Africana Scholars Lecture Series.

“Dr. Palmer combines the analytical depth of a distinguished historian with the vast breadth of a public intellectual,” says Akin Ogundiran, the new Director of FIU’s African-New World Studies Program. His lecture on *Eric Williams and the Continuing Challenges of a Diverse Caribbean* promises to combine hitherto unrevealed research about Williams' role in its shaping with a vibrant discussion of the attendant exigencies of the day.

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The Lecture will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, October 6, at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center, University Park, 11200 Southwest Eighth Street, Miami, Florida. Admission is free and open to the public.

Born and reared in Jamaica, Palmer received his BA at the University College of the West Indies/London and his MA and Ph.D from the University of Wisconsin. He has taught at Oakland University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he served as Chair of the Department of History and held the rank of William Rand Kenan Professor. He also taught at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York and was named a Distinguished Professor. He has held several fellowships, among them at the National Humanities Center, The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and the Stanford Humanities Center.

Palmer is the author of numerous books and articles, including [Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570 – 1650](#); [Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America](#),

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1700 – 1739; and Passageways: An Interpretive History of Black America (2 vols). He is also the editor-in-chief of the Encyclopedia of African American Life and Culture (6 vols.). Palmer is also currently writing a book tentatively entitled “*The Politics of Power: Cheddi Jagan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Struggle for Guyana.*”

Palmer’s most recent book, Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean, is a scholarly biography of the noted Caribbean statesman in whose honor the Lecture was inaugurated in 1999. Williams was the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and head of government for a quarter of a century until his death in 1981. He led the country to Independence from Britain in 1962 and onto Republicanism in 1976. A consummate academic and historian himself, and author of several books, Dr. Williams is best known for his seminal work, the 62-year-old Capitalism and Slavery, which has been translated into eight languages, including Russian, Chinese, Japanese and this year for the first time, Korean. Few modern historical works have enjoyed its enduring intellectual impact and appeal, causing the 1997 *New York Times Book Review* to term “The Williams Thesis” as remaining on the “cutting edge of slave trade research in academic circles.”

Among prior Eric Williams Memorial Lecture speakers have been: John Hope Franklin, one of America’s premier African-American historians; Kenneth Kaunda, former President of the Republic of Zambia; Hon. Cynthia Pratt, Deputy Prime Minister of the Bahamas; Hon. Mia Mottley, Attorney General of Barbados; Beverly Anderson-Manley, former First Lady of Jamaica; the celebrated civil rights activist Angela Davis; and prize-winning young Haitian author Edwige Danticat.

The Lecture, which seeks to provide an intellectual forum for the examination of pertinent issues in Caribbean and African Diaspora history and politics, is co-sponsored in part by the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, BP (Trinidad and Tobago), FIU’s Latin American and Caribbean Center and the Department of History, and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection at the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago campus), which was launched by former **U.S. Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell** in 1998. It was named to UNESCO’s prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999.

Books by Eric Williams and Colin Palmer will be available for purchase and signing at the Lecture.

For more information, please contact 305-919-5521 or [africana@fiu.edu](mailto:africana@fiu.edu).

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