



The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

P.O. Box 561631, Miami, FL 33256-1631, USA*Tel: 305-271-7246*Cell: 305-905-9999*Fax: 305-271-4160

23rd Eric Williams Memorial Lecture Abby Phillip “Journalism in Challenging Times”

MIAMI, FL. (March 11, 2025) - The 23rd Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture will take place at 7:15 p.m. (EST) on Friday, March 28, 2025 at the AT&T Conference Center, University of Texas, Austin (UT). The event, with a reception before at 6:15 p.m. is free and open to the public. Live-streaming will be available at: <https://virtualmeeting.la.utexas.edu/meet/eric-williams-memorial-lecture-march-28-2025>, and post-Lecture viewing accessible on the UT Warfield Center's [YouTube channel](#).

Media Contact:
Erica Williams Connell
305-905-9999
ewmc@ewmc.tt.org

After a record 19 consecutive years at Florida International University (FIU), in 2021 the Lecture found a new home at the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. [Celebrating Eric Williams](#) an online exhibition of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Museum at The University of the West Indies (UWI, Trinidad and Tobago) is also available for viewing.

This year, the Lecture hosts award-winning Abby Phillip, of Trinidad and Tobago parentage. Phillip anchors *NewsNight with Abby Phillip* airing weeknights on CNN. Taking a smart and sharp approach to the day’s biggest stories, driven by the facts and pursuit of the truth, Phillip brings unique context to the complexity of current affairs. With her background in dogged Washington reporting, she keeps the powerful honest in hard-hitting interviews and hosts interesting conversations with a variety of perspectives.

“As a renowned journalist, Abby Phillip was a natural choice to give the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture,” says Warfield Center Director Dr. Jennifer Wilks. “Williams’ remarkable legacy includes a series of popular public lectures in a park which he dubbed the ‘University’ of Woodford Square (in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad), and Phillip’s commitment to keeping audiences informed is a wonderful testament to that tradition of public engagement.”

Established in 1999 at FIU, the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture honors the legendary Caribbean statesman, eminent historian, and author of several books. His 1944 groundbreaking study *Capitalism and*

Slavery arguably re-framed the historiography of the British Transatlantic Slave Trade and established the contribution of Caribbean slavery to the development of both Britain and America. It has been translated into 9 languages: Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Turkish, Korean among them (with German and Dutch translations forthcoming). An 80-year-old still highly controversial and provocative text, popularly referred to as *The Williams Thesis*, the book argues, among other propositions, that slave trade revenue fueled the rise of the British Industrial Revolution; and that its declining profitability, not solely humanitarianism, gave the impetus to British abolition. Never out of print in the US, in March 2022 *Capitalism and Slavery* was listed at #5 on the UK Sunday Times Bestseller list.

Eric Williams was also 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 to Republican status in 1976.

Among prior Eric Williams Memorial Lecture speakers have been: the late John Hope Franklin, one of America's premier historians of the African-American experience; Kenneth Kaunda, former President of the Republic of Zambia; Cynthia Pratt, former Deputy Prime Minister of the Bahamas; Mia Mottley, now Prime Minister of Barbados; Beverly Anderson-Manley, former First Lady of Jamaica; Portia Simpson Miller, former Prime Minister of Jamaica; Hon. Kenny Anthony, former Prime Minister of Saint Lucia; Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines; prize-winning Haitian author Edwige Danticat; award-winning author, historian and educator, Dr. Carol Anderson of *White Rage* fame; and renowned activist Dr. Angela Davis in both 2003 and 2023.

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 UT's: Center for Global Change and Media, LLILAS Caribbean Studies Initiative, School of Journalism and Media; Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Lashley; Jerry Nagee.

The Lecture is also supported by The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies, which was inaugurated by former **US Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell** in 1998. It was named to UNESCO's prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999.

Books by and about Eric Williams will be available for purchase at the Lecture.