



The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

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18th Annual FIU Eric Williams Lecture Delivers Dire Warnings About a Donald Trump Ascendancy

MIAMI, FL. (October 15, 2016)— To a crowd of about 140 that attended the 18th Annual Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture on September 30, 2016, the former President of Guyana, Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, delivered a scathing exposé of the likely negative impact to the Caribbean under a Donald Trump administration.

“The Caribbean and American Presidential Power: A Donald Trump Ascendancy”, co-sponsored by the African & African Diaspora Studies Program at FIU, generally focused on the danger of climate change to the Caribbean, and Trump’s promise to renege on the Paris Agreement, thus upending the entire debate - not to mention the special fund that has been established to assist developing countries in combating this particular global concern. Mr. Jagdeo concluded that while a Hillary Clinton presidency would ultimately keep the status quo with respect to Caribbean affairs, and he posited that this was wholly unsatisfactory, Donald Trump’s woeful unpreparedness to effectively function in the international arena would be anathema to the most basic of Caribbean interests. One opinion has it that Trump’s anti-immigrant policies, and his threat to deport some 11 million US undocumented “aliens”, will give a boost to Caribbean immigration to fill the job vacuum that such a scorched-earth policy would cause.

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The speech, though lengthy, was undoubtedly pertinent vis a vis the problems bedeviling current CARICOM members, and Jagdeo was forcefully struck by the fact that the very issues leading to the collapse of the West Indies Federation in 1962 are the same stumbling blocks of today that make some member states more than uncomfortable – the free flow of peoples within the union, how much power should devolve to a possible central government, and the assumed loss of sovereignty. The remedy for this continuing strife, he asserted, is for Caribbean leaders to make the necessary “structural adjustments” so that the region can finally speak, mightily, as one, instead of as disparate entities with little voice and even less power to affect international imperatives.

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Established in 1999, FIU's annual Eric Williams Lecture honors the distinguished Caribbean statesman, consummate academic, internationally renowned historian, and author of several other books. His 1944 groundbreaking study Capitalism and Slavery, popularly referred to as *The Williams Thesis*, arguably re-framed the historiography of the British trans-Atlantic slave trade (and its concomitant European incarnations) and established the contribution of Caribbean slavery to the development of both Britain and America. The book has been translated into eight languages, including Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish and soon-to-be, Korean. It continues to inform today's ongoing debate and remains "years ahead of its time...this profound critique is still the foundation for studies of imperialism and economic development," according to the *New York Times*. Eric E. 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 onto Republicanism 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, Deputy Prime Minister of the Bahamas; Mia Mottley, Attorney General of Barbados; Beverly Anderson-Manley, former First Lady of Jamaica; Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica; Hon. Kenny Anthony, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia; Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines; the celebrated civil rights activist Angela Davis and prize-winning Haitian author Edwige Danticat.

The Lecture, which seeks to provide an intellectual forum for the examination of Caribbean and African Diaspora history and politics, is co-sponsored in part by FIU's: Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, Departments of Global & Sociocultural Studies/Politics & International Relations, Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy, Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center, Ruth K. and Shepard Broad Distinguished Lecture Series, African Students Union, Black Students Union, Caribbean Students Association; Amera Corporation; Bilmor With Advertising Specialties, Inc.; Dr. Anthony Bryan; Earl Christian; Mr. & Mrs. Frank Collins; Carole Cumberbatch; Mr. & Mrs. Michael Edwards; Hometrust Mortgage Corporation; Huggins Bail Bonds; Jennifer Jagbir; Joy's Roti Shop; Dr. & Mrs. Leroy Lashley; Louis & Sandra Lezama; Miami Dade College; Neki Mohan; Mr. & Mrs. Nesbitt; Cleve Osborne; Mavis Perez; Peter Prospere; Lennox & Gemma Roach; Mervyn Solomon; Linda Spears Bunton; Yvonne St. Louis; Marilyn Taylor Duncan; Trinidad & Tobago Community at Christ the King Catholic Church; Trinidad & Tobago Consulate (Miami); and Welch, Morris & Associates.

The Lecture is also supported by The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives and Museum at the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago campus), which was inaugurated 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.