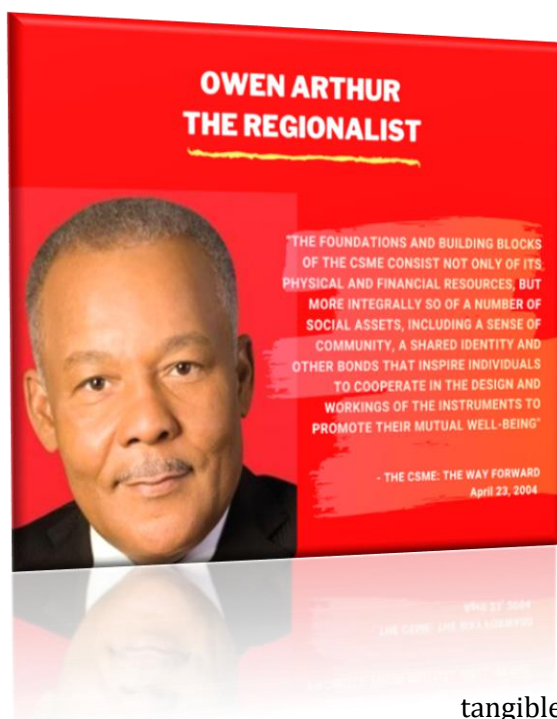




TO P.M. ARTHUR, *WITH LOVE FROM THE SRC!*

| Reflections on P.M. Arthur's Contributions to Regional Integration & International Trade

Affectionally called P.M. by the staff of the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services (SRC), former Prime Minister of Barbados the Right Hon. Owen Arthur was no stranger to the international trade scene, both from academic and practical perspectives. In his recent role as Professor of Practice, he often frequented the SRC's Office just downstairs his own in the CARICOM Building of the Cave Hill Campus, where he would engage with both staff and students on a variety of trade issues. From such discussions, one could easily discern the priorities that embodied P.M.'s trade agenda both during his tenure as Prime Minister of Barbados and even more recently in his newer capacities as Professor, Lecturer and Advisor on a range of domestic and regional matters. In fact, trade topics such as the promotion of regional integration, support for the development of small island developing states and the protection of national sovereignty were guaranteed discussion points in any conversation between P.M. Arthur and his SRC family. Today we remember him as:



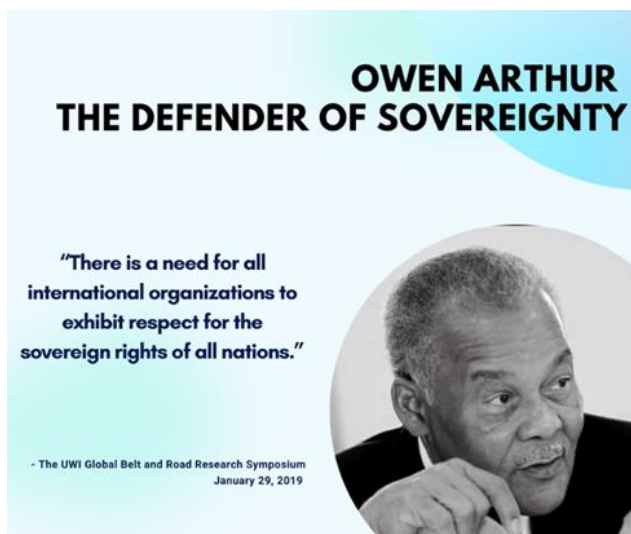
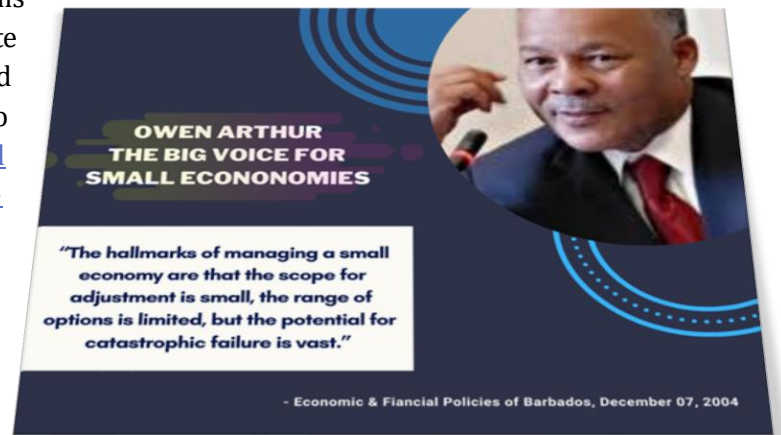
- ***P.M. ARTHUR THE REGIONALIST***

At the heart of his trade agenda was that of regional integration. Lauded as the chief architect of the CARICOM Single Market Economy (CSME), P.M. Arthur saw the CSME as ["the first realistic initiative that allows Barbados the prospect of escaping from the constraints imposed on us by small land, market and population size and limited resources."](#) From the onset, he recognized the importance of one Caribbean and the role of intra-regional trade in reducing the region's external dependency. In his words, ["the foundations and building blocks of the CSME consist not only of its physical and financial resources, but more integrally so of a number of social assets, including a sense of community, a shared identity and other bonds that inspire individuals to cooperate in the design and workings of the instruments to promote their mutual well-being."](#) Even at times, when others were quick to deem the regional integration process a failure, P.M. Arthur was equally quick to cite

tangible successes like the Caribbean Court of Justice, the University of the West Indies, and other regional institutions. P.M. Arthur died committed to the cause of regional integration with his last efforts were fervently geared towards keeping LIAT, the region's airline, alive, where in his final days he served as the airline's chairman. Therefore, it is not surprising that P.M. Arthur is today remembered by many as a *Caribbean son*, an *ardent regionalist* and a *titan of regional integration*.

- **P.M. ARTHUR THE ADVOCATE FOR SMALL ECONOMIES**

His profound knowledge of economics coupled with his lived experience in a small island developing state moulded Arthur to be a resounding voice for small and vulnerable economies in the global arena. According to P.M. Arthur, [“the hallmarks of managing a small economy are that the scope for adjustment is small, the range of options is limited, but the potential for catastrophic failure is vast.”](#) Recognizing this, during his tenure as Prime Minister he crafted some of the most successful economic and financial policies, placing Barbados on a path of strong economic and fiscal stability. In fact, under his leadership Barbados was considered [“one of the best, black managed political economies in the world.”](#) More recently, P.M. Arthur served as the chairman for The Barbados-sponsored Global Commission on Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Trade Development Options 2020 where his intention was to bring greater visibility and support for SIDS. His train of thought followed that SIDS should always have a seat at the table and be represented in each international organisation, especially those claiming to contribute towards their development. While being a fervent supporter of trade liberalization, P.M. Arthur was always quick to highlight the need for capacity building provisions to allow small and vulnerable economies to take advantage of such opportunities. At the SRC Public Lecture, “BREXIT and the New Caribbean Trade Agenda”, he emphasized the need for [“the region to build a genuine export culture to be able to function successfully in a globalized economy where trade liberalization has become the dominant practice.”](#) Undoubtedly, even in an increasingly globalised world where power is dictated by economic size, P.M. Arthur reminded us that our voice is big and must be heard in every global arena and at each international forum.



- **P.M. ARTHUR THE DEFENDER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY**

Notable still has been P.M. Arthur’s commitment to the preservation of national sovereignty. In a time where globalisation has led to an intrusion by supranational powers, external pressure is increasingly placed on states to conform to global agendas and initiatives. For P.M. Arthur, the line is drawn when external forces attempt to make national decisions for other states. To see an example of this, recall his famous opposition to the OECD’s blacklisting regime, where he stated, [“Barbados will not subscribe to the OECD harmful tax competition initiative, it is a matter on which we will not yield.”](#) More recently in 2019, P.M. Arthur again commented on the

issue of the OECD and EU's blacklisting regimes, noting that "[the OECD nor the EU has any jurisdiction and is a mistake to sign letters of commitment to an entity that you are not a member of in respect of something as fundamental as taxation.](#)" For P.M. Arthur sovereignty was a fundamental right and one that should not be challenged by external forces, in his words, "[there is a need for all international organizations to exhibit respect for the sovereign rights of all nations.](#)"

Today we say goodbye to an *ardent regionalist*, a *strong voice for the small and vulnerable economies*, a *fearless defender of national sovereignty*, a *bold leader*, an *inspirational mentor*, a *professor of practice* and most of all *our friend*. We at the SRC are grateful for the contributions of P.M. Arthur to the promotion of regional integration and international trade, and we hope to continue to follow in his great work.

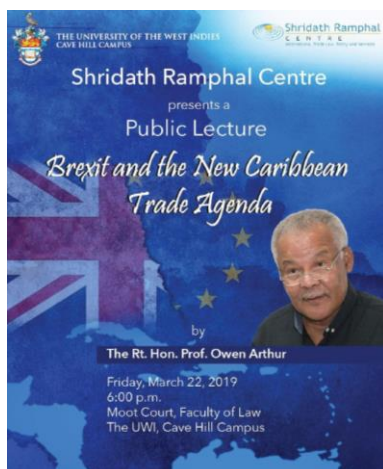
Rest in peace P.M. Arthur and know that your legacy lives on.

| Personal Tributes by SRC Staff:

We will Miss you Owen!

Although we have accepted his passing, somehow, we still expect to see him coming through the front of the CARICOM Building on Campus, greeting everyone, in his impish and all-inclusive way. It does take some doing to accept in your being, that someone such as he has gone. You almost thought that he was invincible, that he would always be there. We have indeed lost a dear friend and supporter of the Shridath Ramphal Centre, which he considered the premier trade policy centre in the Caribbean.

He gave us at the SRC the benefit of his intellect, all of us. He was no stranger to our respective offices, as on his way to his on the second floor, he would often stop by to speak on something he was working on and generally to keep in touch, and engage in conversations on Trade and economic matters, politics or simply about family. His sense of humour and quick wit are two things that really stood out, besides his intelligence and love for engaging students and other young people.



As Professor of Practice, Owen delivered a couple of public lectures under the auspices of the Shridath Ramphal Centre of UWI, Cave Hill, viz., ***BREXIT and the New Caribbean Trade Agenda***.

As Chairman of the UNCTAD XV, originally scheduled for Barbados in October 2020 now postponed to April 2021 on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, Owen had requested the assistance of the SRC in the preparation of papers for the UNCTAD XV Conference.

Most recently, about a week before he fell ill, he was lamenting the possible demise of LIAT and the fact that it was so much needed in the region. I think he felt more could have been done by the respective governments some of which did not contribute to the failing regional airline but were involved in paying airlift for extra regional airlines such as Jet Blue, American airlines to name a few.

Clearly as Chairman of LIAT and as an integrationist and one who championed the regional approach, he was obviously distressed by the imminent demise of LIAT.

Written By: Neil Paul, Director of the SRC & Alicia Nicholls, Trade Researcher at the SRC

To Sir - You will always be P.M.!

As I pen these words and reflect on our countless interactions, I realized that through the laughter, the smirks, the teachable moments, sharp words and the grins, I never said thank you for your positive influence on my life and becoming the professional and parent that I am today.

The Man in the Photo

It all began, when I was a little girl in 1995, I remember visiting my grandparents and being greeted by 2 framed official photos of a men in suits as well as my granny's first framed US\$100 bill. It was only in 1996, when I entered Secondary School that I came across the same framed photo, this time within the School's Office. I then pieced it all together, that the man in one photo was Barbados' 2nd Prime Minister "Tom" Adams and the other framed photo was of the current PM, Owen Seymour Arthur. Clearly, you were admired by my grandparents...after all, your framed photo was one of the biggest in their house.



A Man of Action

As I got older and more conscious of politics, I read and studied the works of your predecessor Sir Lloyd Sandiford. I recall my first reading in 2003 of Blackman's *The Barbados Model* (1998) was when I became interested in your works, policies and plans and what they had done for all Barbadians. It was around this time, that I also became acutely aware that you were a man of action. A man with a vision and a plan. A man who knew and stuck by his decisions to equip young Barbadians with a University education. It was during the 2nd year of my undergraduate journey that I witnessed, firsthand, the destruction of Category 5 Hurricane Ivan as it left a trail of devastation across Jamaica. As PM, your ears were always 'on the ground'. You were instructive when you sent a chartered flight for all Barbadian students following Ivan's passage. It was then, that I firmly understood the transformational power of politics because the Barbados Government cared about the wellbeing of even its young students across the world.

Crossing of Paths: Barbados Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

I spent the summer of 2005 as an intern to the Chief Research Officer within your Office in Government Headquarters'. The Research Department in PMO was the engine room where thoughts were conceptualised and fleshed out, the nexus between philosophy and decisions was probed and where the path for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) was charted. That summer opened my eyes, built my confidence levels, secured my

interest in Caribbean regionalism, and even gave me, my first research topic of Contingent Rights which would eventually go on to being my area of specialization within my thesis.

The following summer upon completing my BSc, I returned as an intern and I was between minds of attending Cave Hill Campus or St Augustine Campus to complete my MSc. You made one remark and that sealed the deal. I was off to live in Trinidad on August 31st 2006 to complete my MSc at the UWI St. Augustine Institute of International Relations under the supervision of your former lecturer and fellow CSME architect, Professor Norman Girvan. During my time at St. Augustine, I closely followed, studied or documented your every move as it related to the CSME, and I recognized the importance of your decisions as it related to the ICC CWC 2007 and what it meant for regional integration, regional governance and regional institutions. By this time, I was committed to continuing this regional project and solving several of the practical problems.

Crossing of Paths: UWI Cave Hill CARICOM Research Building

Nearly a decade later, our paths would cross again when you became a Professor of Practice at UWI Cave Hill Campus and joined the offices in the CARICOM Research Building. Upon joining the staff in the Building, you have knitted us together and brought out the good neighbourly characteristics between all of us. I am cognizant that upon entering the Building, you never walked straight. You were known to stop in the Foyer and chat up a storm with your popular smirk. Or you engaged all, whether Academic, Administrative, Service or Technical staff, you always stopped, chatted and sometimes argued.

Within the SRC, your catch phrase was “Have you seen or read...?” Then you held a corner or pulled up a chair to take the keen listener along an enthralling pathway intertwined with your experience, philosophy, empirical evidence, sound critiques and oftentimes a story or a personal historical, interaction that could not be repeated.

Your adventures into the SRC also brought gifts of plants, tips on gardening, recommendations about recipes and numerous enlightening conversations. You also brought numerous visitors, no matter how prestigious, you insisted that they had to come and meet the staff at the SRC, from Prime Minister Mottley to UNCTAD XV Committee, you brought them all.

Our Conversations

Inside my office, you were my coffee partner, a never-ending source of laughter and a listening ear for anyone who was willing to learn, especially my students and even my interns. I want to personally thank you for always having that listening ear. I recall my initial invitation for you to guest lecture my CARICOM and CSME class. You were careful to ensure that your schedule was clear and you called me at 6am to discuss what you will be presenting to the students. In the classroom, you were on fire. You simplified the Single Market into layman terms and your after-class banter was epic! I will always remember our drive back up to the Building, when you openly stated your desire to teach and tutor students, not to be stuck in an office. I sat in awe, that you a former Prime Minister and an esteemed Professor wants to remain in the classroom, where intellectual pursuits are underlined with a passion, minds are shaped and molded and philosophy entrenched.



Our longest and more recent conversations included the Guyana elections, intra-regional air transport especially LIAT and your work on crafting Barbados' Industrial Policy. Every conversation forced me to recall what I have read, and I always made notes to follow up on this or that reading. Looking back, I have a slight tinge of regret, not bringing up your memoirs as we discussed contemporary politics. I remember your face lit up with excitement when you spoke about your 2 week trip across Jamaica to capture your 'Jamaica Years' for your memoirs. We spoke extensively about our respective years on Mona campus, because after all, I was an Irvinite and you, a Chancellorite.



Everlasting Gratitude

I must express thanks for inspiring me and countless other, young Barbadians who serve across the country, the region and the world within an understanding of PM Arthur's principle that it is our duty to serve and to fix the problems at hand. Thanks for paving the way, and taking Barbados to the world where we have always stood our ground and gained the respect of all.

Thanks for showing that in 2020, we can still have principled positions. Thanks for being fiercely protective of me and those you supported, to the point of the harshest words in defense of another's character. Sometimes, I think it was misunderstood, but I saw it for what it clearly was, loyalty and a belief in a bigger cause. Our last, casual face to face conversation on Monday July 13 2020 was outside the SRC in the Lobby of the building and we were talking about the preparation for UNCTAD XV and we indicated that we continue our discussion via follow up email or WhatsApp message. PM, none of us knows the time or the plans of God. But I trust that, like me, hundreds and thousands of persons may reflect and express gratitude for your commitment to a better life for all within Barbados and especially the region.

I'll conclude with the words of Guyanese poet Martin Carter, in his poem 'Death of A Comrade'

*"Dear Comrade
If it must be
You speak no more with me
Nor smile no more with me*

*Now from the mourning vanguard moving on
Dear Comrade I salute you and I say
Death will not find us thinking that we die."*

Walk good PM.

Signed Kai-Ann D. Skeete, a proud student of P.M. Arthur & Research Fellow at the SRC

A Tribute to P.M.

I met PM Arthur in the dusk of his years, when thoughts of his legacy and whether he would be accepted into the pantheon of the greats in Barbadian and Caribbean history, loomed large.



Much has already been said about the singular ability of PM to make everyone – especially young people – feel like they were seen; and that despite his rarefied status, he was still that boy from St. Peter who had not lost his common, human touch. He took great pride in that fact. Although he could be prickly at times, that is not how he will be remembered by us at the SRC. He was a ray of sunshine to us, always sparing the time to confidently charge into our offices to share a thought, a story, a joke, a perspective which broke the monotony of the morning, inspired raucous laughter or discussion, from which you invariably learnt an important lesson. With a boyish chuckle and bemused look, he challenged our accepted wisdom of things, always probing our thinking. On any topic he wanted to hear our opinions and argue them to death with us.

He always had a word of advice about leadership, taking every opportunity to remind that he had led a Cabinet of Ministers, and had therefore seen it all before. There was no situation I could present to him that he had not successfully overcome. In the end, he would say, a good leader must be strong, unflappable, and unconcerned about popularity in the moment because people will follow not who they like but who they respect.

He was a fiercely independent thinker, and some might even say that he was arrogant about his superior intellect. He was not one to suffer fools gladly in matters of logic and reasoning. Like a scythe, he would cut you down for a poorly framed argument but just as easily celebrate you – and break into a spontaneous smile – at a stroke of genius or success in swinging an argument against him in your favor. I can hardly think of another – whether young or old – who placed so much store in his own ability to reason, write and execute a piece of academic writing. On assumption of a task to present at any Event or lecture, PM would jolt into action, painstakingly researching every facet and angle, asking for any research we had on an issue, and then retire to his “hole in the wall” upstairs to search among the archives he had carefully stored and amassed from his time as Prime Minister. On many an occasion, he would cajole someone up to his room to survey and admire the many volumes in his collection, an invitation I am pleased I finally took up before he took his leave of us. Whether it was a presentation to Ambassadors or to students in a class lecture, he would not present unless he was fully prepared, and everything was just the way he wanted it. There was no room for complacency or mediocrity for this man. He applied himself fully and exhaustingly to a task – he knew no other way.

I will remember you PM – always - for the way you made me feel. I think it was Maya Angelou who said, “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” I am not Barbadian, but you certainly made me feel that you had just as much regard and respect for me as if I were one of yours. For years to come, that will be your legacy. Rest Well, PM, Rest Well.

Written by: Dr. Jan Yves Remy, Deputy Director of the SRC

-Rest in Peace P.M. Arthur, We Will Miss You-

