

Reach Society

Building Connections

Patrons: Lord H. Ouseley, Prof. Sir Geoff Palmer, Prof. T. Williams, John Budu-Aggrey & Marva Rollins OBE

2022 Recognition Awards Report

On Saturday, 29 October, in Westminster, London a capacity audience of roughly 190 guests attended the 9th Recognition Awards dinner in Reach Society's twelfth year. Everyone was delighted to be there as it signaled a return to normalcy after a two year hiatus owing to the health risks presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Once again this annual event in the Black community attracted guests from across Greater London and places outside such as Birmingham, Luton in Bedfordshire, Essex and Scotland.

At last guests were able to celebrate the Society's 10th anniversary which was delayed for two years; and everyone received a copy of the Society's book that was written to commemorate the milestone. Entitled "**Our 10 Years, A Good Mind And A Good Heart Can Do Great Things,**" it is an account of the Society's origin and growth to becoming a fully sustainable social enterprise for inspiring young people; and it provides an overview of the many activities designed and rolled out for engaging young people, especially those in the modern Black community.

Guests also received a copy of the souvenir brochure which contained many images from the events rolled out in the year, plus an article entitled "**Our Milestones**" which was inspired by the national Windrush monument that was unveiled on Windrush Day (22 June 2022). The article contained more than 30 examples of milestones in the modern Black community between 1948 and the present day.

The front cover of the souvenir brochure carried two images of the national Windrush monument which the Society's chairman sees as a symbol of "**the enterprise and courage**" of the Windrush generation and of their descendants.

The Society's patron Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, the new chancellor of Heriot-Watt University and the 17th recipient of the prestigious Edinburgh Award 2022, gave a warm welcome address; and the three guest speakers - Dr Nelda Frater, founder of the Nelda Clinic, Harley Street; Richard Mair, former President of the CIPA, and Jonathan Crawford, executive director, Goldman Sachs - gave inspiring talks and toasted the Society for achieving its 10th and 12th anniversaries.

For this special event the Society chose to ask its leadership team to present the awards to the winners, which was a first for the Society. A cohort of professionals picked up the **Pandemic Champion Awards** for their tireless information service across the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic. They were: Professor Frank Chinegwundoh MBE surgeon; Dr Joan St John, a GP; Professor Winston Morgan, research scientist; Rudi Page, founder MCW & Fresh FM London; Professor Donald Palmer, immunologist, and Jennifer Pearson, head nurse.

And two professionals picked up the **Cultural Esteem Awards** for their service to the modern Black community over several decades. The honoured organisations were the Association of Jamaicans UK Trust and the Windrush Foundation.

This year three **Champion Supporter Awards** were presented to Mark Lomas, Ritchie Neil and Marlon Wilson for their extra-ordinary work in support of the many inspirational events rolled out across the year; and two employers – BT and Durham

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University – were presented with the **Corporate Champion of Reach Society Awards** for their contributions as outstanding collaboration partners.

On the night 17 professionals were honoured with **Supporter of Reach Society Awards** for their unselfish work to encourage, motivate and inspire hundreds young people, and their parents, at the 10th Careers Conference which was rolled out in Russell Square, London; and at the Employability Days rolled out in Manchester, Luton, the London Borough of Brent, and at Imperial's campus in Kensington. In addition, 4 outstanding professionals - Isaac Ackom-Mensah, Dr Sarah Kasasa, Demani Jules-Carbon and Marva Rollins OBE - picked up the **Fellow of Reach Society Awards**.

Corporate Supporter of Reach Society Awards were picked up by 8 employers: Amos Bursary; London Black Educators Network; PricewaterhouseCoopers; Imperial College London; Brunel University London; Deloitte LLP; Enfield Caribbean Association; and the Metropolitan Police.

In addition, 7 corporates picked up **Corporate Fellow of Reach Society Awards** for their exemplary commitment to the work the Society is doing to inspire young people, namely: Anglia Ruskin University; Arup UK; Bedfordshire Police; Luton Council; RAFFA; Royal Navy; and Lloyd's of London.

This report would not be complete without an expression of thanks to the corporate donors of prizes for the raffle; to the raffle team led by Paula Neil; and to the master of ceremony, Rob Neil OBE, for his skillful and provocative handling of the programme.

The Society is also grateful to the musicians and DJ - the Ralph Lewars Jazz Trio and the DJ Ray Morris and his FASS crew - for keeping everyone in the mood. This year's list of professionals who supported the events was almost twice as long as the previous one; the Society is enormously grateful to all of these volunteers, and we shall know them as the **Professional Class of 2022**.

Dr Dwain A. Neil OBE, Chairman, Reach Society