Reach Society

Building Connections

Patrons: **Sir Kenneth Olisa, John Budu-Aggrey, Marva Rollins OBE & Dr N. Frater GP**

The 2026 Recognition Awards Celebration

On Saturday, 24 October, at the Park Plaza Victoria hotel in Westminster another capacity audience, of roughly 140 guests, attended the Recognition Awards dinner in the final month of Reach Society's sixteenth year; and in a year described as the **Sir Geoff Palmer Era Year One**, we also saw the launching of the Sir Geoff Palmer Society, the SGPS, in June during the Windrush Day Thanksgiving Gathering.

On this occasion the Society was again honoured to have with us the Vice Consul from the Jamaican High Commission, Kathy-Anne Weller; plus some of the short listed nominees for the Sir Geoff Palmer Award.

As is the Society's norm, proceedings started with everyone singing the Windrush Nation anthem which was led by Angela Clarke, RAFFA CEO. This rendition was followed by the co-directors on the leadership team - Ritchie Neil, Daniel Yamoah and Giles Speid – giving the Society's 3-Toasts to our monarch, the corporates and the role models & volunteers.

Everyone was delighted to support the event which has become part of the Society's tradition for marking the anniversary of the UK's Windrush Nation; and to thank the corporates and professionals for supporting this year's inspirational events. Once again this annual event attracted guests from across the UK especially where the Society had hosted inspirational events namely Birmingham, Greater London, Luton and Manchester.

Guests also heard a recital of a brand new poem, written by the poet Amanda Inniss, entitled "A Tribute to Professor Sir Geoff Palmer" which was very well received.

Our patron, Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, spoke about the ground breaking work of **Dr Elaine Arnold OBE**, who researched the impact of separation on families from the Windrush generation, and the founder of the Supporting Relationships and Families, SRF group.

Sir Kenneth also presented Dr Arnold with the 2026 Sir Geoff Palmer Award for her extraordinary contribution to the British Black community. Guests were also shown a short video of the Society's role models discussing the importance of Sir Geoff's life and legacy.

This special moment was followed by a very happy moment for **Dr Enyinna Ohuonu** (known to his colleagues as the Doc), and a top executive in Alpha BSE Training (founded by our patron John Budu-Aggrey). Alpha's General Manager, Ingrid Dick, had the honour of presenting the long service trophy to Dr Ohuonu for his 25 years of service. This was a special moment for the Doc that was celebrated with his family and colleagues from Alpha BSE Training.

The cohort of guest speakers – **Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE**, Restoration Partners, Chairman; **Dr Nelda Frater**, President of the Independent Medical Faculty; **Angela Clarke BEM**, RAFFA, CEO; **Johnoi Josephs**, Black Men Teach, Co-Founder; and **General Karl Harris**, British Army – gave inspirational addresses that were evocative and welcome.

Nine employers or corporates – Alpha BSE Training, British Army, Alzheimer Society, British Army, Chartered Trading Standards Institute, Deloitte LLP, London Black Education Network (LBEN), RAFFA Int'l Dev. Agency, Royal Air Force (RAF) and Independent Medical Faculty (IMF) - were presented with the **Corporate Champion of Reach Society Awards** for their contributions and for being outstanding collaboration partners.

Seven volunteer role models – Lukman Agboola, Nathan Stanley, Olayemi Adeyemi, Prof. Winston Morgan, Margaret Sackey, Leon Neil and Prof. Frank Chineqwundoh - were presented with the **Champion Supporter of Reach Society Awards** for their steadfast support which spanned a number of years.

This report would not be complete without an expression of thanks to the five donors of the fantastic raffle prizes – the British Army; the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI); Margin Art & Media, Park Plaza Victoria Hotel; and Reach Society.

Our thanks also to the raffle team led by Paula Neil and Sonia Palmer; and to the Co-MCs Prof. Donald Palmer (Reach Society Co-founder) and Merisha Stevenson (BBC Presenter) who was a first time MC of the Society's Awards evening. The Society is also grateful to the musicians and DJ - the Ralph Lewars Jazz Trio and the DJ Ray Morris-and-the-FASS crew - for keeping everyone in the right mood. In closing, the Society is also grateful to Merisha Stevenson for her effort to attract post Awards coverage of the Society's special evening.

Dr Dwain A. Neil OBE
Chairman, Reach Society (Oct'26)