

CITATION
Award of the National Medal for Science and Technology

PROFESSOR THE HON. GERALD C. LALOR

O.J., C.D., B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D., F.S.S.T.

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Professor Gerald Lalor may be small in stature, but he is monumental in creativity and vision. His accumulation of honours includes the Order of Jamaica, the Sir Philip Sherlock Award for Excellence, Commander of the Order of Distinction, the Centenary Medal of the Institute of Jamaica, the Gleaner Annual Award for his work in the development of the University of the West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment (UWIDITE), the Fellowship of the Jamaica Society of Scientists and Technologists, Fellow of the Third World Academy of Sciences, Fellow of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences the Norman Manley Award for Excellence and the Musgrave Gold Medal for his contribution to the development of Science and Technology in Jamaica.

Having graduated from the University College of the West Indies in 1953, he worked for seven years at the West Indies Chemical Works in Spanish Town where his research in the logwood industry gained him the Leverhulme Colonial Research Scholarship at the University of Cambridge.

On his return to Jamaica in 1960, he joined the Chemistry Department of what was then the University College of the West Indies at Mona and over the years advanced to the rank of Professor. During this time he maintained a prodigious output of publications and earned a reputation as an outstanding scientist.

He was subsequently appointed Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies, where his interest and commitment to science and technology enabled him to significantly advance the cause of these disciplines at the University. One of these initiatives was the establishment of a Caribbean Distance teaching network known as UWIDITE.

Professor Lalor, on retiring from the post of Principal of the Mona campus, pioneered the formation of a new institution on the Mona campus known as the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS), which was accorded the status as a centre of excellence by the Third World Academy of Sciences. As Director-General there, his creative insights inspired developments of great significance to Jamaica. One such initiative was acquiring and using the Slowpoke Nuclear Reactor for research. Professor Lalor led a research team in the identification and the preparation of a geochemical map of the elements in Jamaican soils. The map identifies some of the major and micro elements in Jamaican soils and not only uncovered elements not known to be there before, but also charted the course for utilizing information generated in organisation and planning.

Geochemical mapping represents the application of the specifics of science and technology and augurs great benefits for the Jamaican society with significant applications to sectors such as agriculture, health and mineralogy.

One such noteworthy application of this technology was the discovery of very high levels of lead in the blood of children at a basic school in Kintyre, attributed to the high levels of residual lead in the schoolyard. Corrective measures resulted in the reduction in the lead levels in blood in the children. This represents a practical application of scientific principles in a social setting. In this as in all his other endeavours, Professor Lalor has demonstrated a high degree of creativity and commitment.

The Government of Jamaica is pleased to recognise the pioneering work and splendid achievements of Professor the Honourable Gerald Lalor and to award him **THE NATIONAL MEDAL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

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