

OBITUARY



Barrington Anthony Wint
(1948–2006)

Dr Barrington Anthony Wint, Chief Medical Officer, Jamaica, was a public health giant who worked selflessly in the service of improving the health of all Jamaicans. His sudden and unexpected death is a profound loss, not only for his immediate family, but also for Jamaica and the Caribbean. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Yvonne, daughters Suzanne and Kathryn, and to his family and friends. He was a devoted family man, a good husband and father.

Dr Barry Wint was born on July 29, 1948 in St Catherine, Jamaica. He was the eldest of five boys born to Mr Edwin Wint, chief executive officer of the Ariguanabo textile mill and Mrs Delores Wint, a school teacher. He attended St Jago High school where he excelled academically. He organized his own school for his younger brothers and their neighbours to ensure that they took their school lessons seriously. He attended medical school at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, graduating in 1972.

Barry did his medical internship in Montego Bay at St James Hospital and clinical rotations at the newly opened Cornwall Regional Hospital. He was convinced of the need to do Public Health after performing surgery on a child with a painful, swollen abdomen that turned out to be a massive worm infestation.

After completing his Public Health training at UWI in 1977, he returned to St James as a Medical Officer (Health). In 1980, due to his diligent work, he was appointed Senior Medical Officer (Health) for the five parishes that made up the Cornwall region. Hard work was never a problem for him. If something needed to be done, he would do it. For instance, in December 1979, Barry managed a typhoid out-

break of over 500 suspected cases in Niagra, St James. Although this required round the clock work through the Christmas holiday, Barry did not complain – all medical specialties have their emergencies and this was his.

In 1984, Barry was transferred to the Ministry of Health in Kingston and promoted to Principal Medical Officer, Secondary/Tertiary Care. Barry approached his new duties with zest. He recognized that the hospitals needed to be modernized. Between 1986 and 1989 he coordinated an international team of consultants to prepare a feasibility study and a project proposal that led to an International Development Bank (IDB) project that supported the improvement of several hospitals during the 1990s.

In 1989, Barry was appointed Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and he served in this position until his untimely death. At the age of 40 years, he was the youngest person and the first UWI graduate to be appointed to the post. During 1998–2002, he was seconded to the CARICOM Secretariat as Health Advisor. In that role, he made an important contribution to Caribbean health including chairing the Task Force that facilitated the establishment of the Pan-Caribbean Partnership on AIDS (PANCAP). He was one of the pioneers in the field when the many initiatives to strengthen primary healthcare were taken during the 1970s. He had an excellent institutional memory and he was always able to provide wise, practical advice in working through a problem.

As CMO, Barry chaired numerous committees and boards. He represented Jamaica at many international meetings including the PAHO Directing Council and Executive Committee and the WHO Executive Board. He also did a number of consultancies overseas on a range of public health subjects. He was very highly thought of internationally, and in 1998, he was made a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians, United Kingdom.

He had a long association with UWI being appointed an Honorary Associate Lecturer, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine in 1978. He was responsible for organizing the Community Health programme for medical students while he was in Western Jamaica and he served as an external examiner. He was also on the Editorial Board of the West Indian Medical Journal. As CMO, he was an *ex-officio* member of the Board of the University Hospital of the West Indies.

It is fitting that the Government awarded him the Order of Distinction – in the rank of Commander – in 2006 in recognition of his many years of work, contribution and achievements as an outstanding public health professional.

He leaves us a tremendous legacy.

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