

Sir Shridath Ramphal

Sir Shridath Surendranath “Sonny” Ramphal, a national of Guyana, and the quintessential Caribbean man is a distinguished jurist and international public servant. He is the recipient of prestigious awards and honours from several countries, international bodies and academic institutions. The Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George was conferred on Sir Shridath by Her Majesty the Queen of England in 1970.

After his early education in Guyana, Sir Shridath read for a degree in law in London. He graduated with an LL.B (Hons.) and gained a LL.M with distinction from King’s College, University of London. After being called to the Bar at Gray’s Inn, he spent a year at the Harvard Law School on a Guggenheim Fellowship.

The high esteem in which he is held internationally is evident by Sir Shridath’s membership of several important International Commissions. He has served as a Cabinet Minister in the Guyana Government and was unanimously elected Secretary-General of the Commonwealth in June 1975. Subsequently re-elected on two occasions Sir Shridath served as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth for 15 years. During the period of his stewardship, membership of the Commonwealth grew from 34 countries in mid-1975 to 49 in 1990. The Commonwealth then represented almost one-third of the international community of nations and a quarter of the world’s population.

Sir Shridath served as Assistant Attorney General during the period of the West Indies Federation and this marked the beginning of a distinctive record of service to the Caribbean. As Chairman of the West Indian Commission, he was the highly regarded draughtsman for the reconstruction and development of Caribbean society.

Sir Shridath Ramphal received the honour of membership of the Order of the Caribbean Community in the first conferment of 1992.

His high international standing and involvement in international affairs notwithstanding, Sir Shridath Surendranath “Sonny” Ramphal has remained loyal and dedicated to the development of his Caribbean homeland and provided yeoman service for many years as Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana.