

**Citation – George Beckford Award: Professor for Clive Yolande "CY"  
Thomas**

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Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

When I arrived at the London School of Economics in the early 1960s to commence graduate studies, one of the first things that I read was a just completed Ph.D thesis on Monetary and Financial Arrangements in a Dependent Monetary Economy by a young Guyanese economist by the name of Clive Y Thomas. That thesis was one of the early sources of inspiration for my own doctoral work, and reading and discussing it with CY marked the beginning of an on-going intellectual relationship over the ensuing decades, a relationship that I can honestly say has been probably than three tenths collaboration between us and seven tenths learning on my part.

CY went on to make a reputation for himself in the field of monetary and financial economics in dependent developing economies, but this is only one of the fields in which he has distinguished himself over the past 40 years. In the popular mind and among several generations of graduate students in the region, he is probably best known for his pathbreaking work *The Dynamics of West Indian Economic Integration* co-authored with his colleague Guyanese economist Havelock Brewster.

That work was rapidly to become a classic in its genre and is still widely referred to over 30 years after its initial appearance. Among other things it helped to inform the establishment of Caribbean Free Trade Association and CARIFTA and the Caribbean Community CARICOM, although it must be said that the form of integration adopted by the governments fell well short from what was proposed in the study by Brewster and Thomas. This study by the way was one of the works which resulted from one of the most successful examples of intellectual teamwork in the region, the so-called integration studies carried out by a team which included George Beckford and Lloyd Best as well as your humble servant, whose contribution dealt with the bauxite industry.

It also nearly landed me in hot water. I well remember arriving in Guyana in 1967 for the Conference establishing CARIFTA with a freshly minted copy of the study, whose abbreviated name was simply "Dynamics". I was on the receiving end of some highly unwanted attention by an over-zealous Customs Officer who seemed convinced that he had stumbled on a juicy piece of subversive literature. This was 1967, remember. When I told CY about the incident he laughed and told me that that the officer probably thought that the "Dynamics" was a manual for the manufacture of dynamite!

In fact, CY Thomas's sterling contributions to Caribbean development economics over the years have embraced not only money and finance and integration, but also a wide

range of issues related to growth, international trade, agriculture and especially the sugar industry, institutional development, globalisation, and problems of small and microeconomies. The titles of some of his INSERT books and monographs bear ample testimony to this range: *Dependency and Transformation: the Economics of Transition to Socialism* , completed during a sabbatical year in Tanzania in the early 1970s; *Sugar: The Threat and the Promise* done as part of a series of studies on Caribbean technology in the early 1980s; and *The Poor and the Powerless* another classic on Caribbean economic history over the past 500 years, also published in the 1980s.

In the past 10-15 years CY has also turned his attention to several issues of Social Sector Economics, especially social policy, poverty analysis and eradication measures, labour, nongovernmental organisations and civil society, health and education, with an equally impressive list of reports and publications which includes being the principal author of Guyana's first national Human Development Report.

This citation would hardly be complete were it not to make especial mention of CY's role as a social and political activist. CY has never ceased to see himself as rooted in the working people, in Guyana and indeed in the entire Caribbean, Africa and the Third World. He has been a leading spokesperson and activist in defence of human rights, including civil and political rights and economic rights, of the working people and the indigenous people especially in his native Guyana and has been a consistent advocate of multi-racial and non-racial politics through a variety of organisations especially the Working People's Alliance, of which he is a leading member. Needless to say this has carried over into his professional work as shown in another book, *The rise of the Authoritarian State in Peripheral Societies*, written at the height of the Burnham dictatorship in Guyana.

CY has had numerous opportunities to work permanently abroad, as shown by a string of visiting professorships at overseas Universities including the UWI, Dar-es-Salaam, Carleton, and Colgate University; but his choice to continue living and working in Guyana as his permanent base is a deliberate decision springing from deep political commitment to his homeland and to his people.

Friends, we commend the work and example of CY Thomas, distinguished political economist of Guyana, the Caribbean and the Third World; passionate defender of human right; worthy recipient of the George Beckford Award of the Association of Caribbean Economists for 2001.

Norman Girvan  
Port of Spain, Trinidad  
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