

**Presentation by AFC Vice-Chairperson, Sheila Holder, MP  
On the Parliamentary Motion  
In observance of the Passing of  
Former President Janet Jagan  
Held on April 09, 2009**

We are told in the book of Genesis Chapter 3 v 19 that *“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”* This is a timely reminder that death awaits us all as we meet here to honour the memory of former President Janet Jagan.

The custom of honouring a person in death is oft times viewed with more than a bit of scepticism. Many who speak on occasions like these often opt to be charitable, holding the view that one ought not to speak badly of the dead! From the little I know of Janet Jagan and her propensity for being outspoken she didn't share this view and in fact revealed this when, on the occasion of President Hoyte's passing, she spoke her mind as she saw it about his association with the period of rigged elections even though he was credited with the return of free & fair elections in 1992. She therefore, would expect no less from the Members of this Assembly.

Without a doubt Janet Jagan was a dedicated wife and mother; an advocate for the working poor and a fierce defender of the political party she helped create with her husband and others in the early 1950s.

That she gave up her birth right as an American citizen to serve in the Legislature of this country, unlike many of her colleagues currently in this House, is testimony of her dedication to serving the Guyanese people. In recognition of this unstinting service, the people elected her, not only as the first woman to hold the high office of President of this country; but perhaps she could also stake claim of being the first female American President. Whatever has been said of her short stint as Guyana's Head of State, it must be noted that while she earned the right to serve at that level, in doing so, she also provided the Guyanese people the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to embrace her fully in their expression of appreciation for her unflinching service.

The elections she won in 1997 were vitiated and even though Justice Claudette Singh ruled that validation legislation should be brought to this Assembly for approval, to date this has not been done. For one who was known for being as meticulous as Janet Jagan was this hanging issue is one of disorder that must have been an enigma to her. The AFC urges the government to take appropriate steps to correct this outstanding matter in her honour. We stand ready to lend our support to such an effort.

Like her husband before her, former President Janet Jagan has now passed on. She joins in the hereafter other Presidents of Guyana - Arthur Chung, Forbes Burnham and Desmond Hoyte who all served as Guyana's Head of State. The reality is that they have all left behind a divided and politically unstable country that is yet to unlock its potential. Indeed, Guyana has earned the ignominious reputation of being the second to last poorest

country in this hemisphere. The burden, therefore, for completing the task of serving the Guyanese people now falls upon our collective shoulders. How we execute this mandate depends on our understanding of what is expected of us.

For those of us who are God fearing, the ideal upon which we should execute the mandate given to us by the people is based on universal Principles rooted in God's laws. For others, of whom Janet Jagan, we were led to believe was one such, the philosophy of dialectical materialism that originated with Karl Marx and Engels is considered ideal.

However, over 98% of Guyanese are believers who take heed of the warnings issued in the holy books of Hinduism, the holy Qur'an and the holy Bible. The Hindu book of Vishnu Purana in Cp. 4 v 24 prophesies the destructive path this world would take when the principles of God are not upheld: ***“Then property alone will confer rank; wealth will be the only source of devotion; passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification; Earth will be venerated but for its mineral treasures; the Brahmanical thread will constitute a Brahmin; external types will be the only distinction of the several orders of life; dishonesty will be the universal means of subsistence; weakness will be the cause of dependence; menace and presumption will be substitutes for learning...thus in the Kali age shall decay constantly proceed, until the human race approaches its annihilation.”***

In the holy Qur'an, Surat 39 is the last of the series of six suras that deals with some aspects of the spiritual world leading up to the hereafter. In section 8 of verses 71-74 it is prophesied that: ***The last of the Unbelievers will be led to hell in groups: Until when they arrive there, Its gates will be opened. And its keepers will say to them, “did not messengers come to you from among yourselves Rehearsing to you the signs of your Lord, and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours?” The answer will be “True: but the Decree of Chastisement Has been proved true Against the Unbelievers! (To them) will be said: “Enter ye the gates of hell to dwell therein: And evil is (this) abode of the arrogant!” And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in groups: Until behold, they arrive there; Its gates will be opened; And its Keepers will say: “Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter ye here, To dwell therein.” They will say: “Praise be To Allah, Who has Truly fulfilled His promise To us, and has given us (This) land in heritage: We can dwell in the Garden As we will: how excellent A reward for those Who work (righteousness)!”***

The holy Bible in Revelations Chp.20 v 12-15 prophesies that: “And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead in it. Death and the world of the dead also gave up the dead they held. And all were judged by what they had done. Then, Death and the world of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

It is my hope that before Janet Jagan passed away that she too would have heeded these warnings and would have escaped the lake of fire. As Shakespeare so eloquently phrased it in the words of Marc Anthony's soliloquy where he laments the death of Julius Caesar, *'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ear, I come to bury Caesar, not praise him. The evil that men do live on after them but the good is oft times interred with their bones.'*