

THE SUNSHINE AWARDS

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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

2017 SUNSHINE Awards

Dedicated To Dr. Hollis “Chalkdust” Liverpool

Diplomats, Professors, Calypsonians and friends join the Tribute

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**New Jersey, August 30, 2017.** The SUNSHINE Awards Organization today announced in New Jersey that the 2017 SUNSHINE Awards Program celebration scheduled for Saturday October 14, in New York City is dedicated to Dr. Hollis Liverpool, known to the calypso world as the Mighty Chalkdust, for his 52 years of contribution to education, the performing arts and humanity. The Program is hosted by the Caribbean’s funniest comedians, Errol Fabien and Nikki Crosby.

Dr. Liverpool, a native of Trinidad and Tobago and currently a Professor at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, often described as an historian, researcher and teacher earned his Doctorate from the University of Michigan. His dissertation, titled “Rituals of Power and Rebellion,” focused on The Carnival Tradition in Trinidad and Tobago from 1763 to 1962. He has written approximately a dozen books spanning the history of societies, culture, anthropology, African history, carnival and the art forms of calypso and steelband music. He has traveled extensively delivering lectures and speeches to a variety of audiences.

Dr. Liverpool entered the calypso world in 1967 and has been a force with his social and political commentaries, winning the Trinidad and Tobago Calypso Monarch on nine (9) occasions. Many academic institutions often describe his calypsoes as term papers or theses because they are not only educating but also because they reflect his unique ability to research and report his findings in song so that all levels of society can be inspired and better informed.

**Dr. Harold Robertson**, a Diplomat, Historian and former Consul General for Trinidad and Tobago stated, *“Since his entry into the calypso arena over 50 years ago Professor Hollis Liverpool more popularly known as the Mighty Chalkdust has established himself as one of the foremost exponents of the art of traditional calypso. His trenchant lyrics, biting satire and political commentaries have won him nine calypso monarch titles in the Mecca of calypso, Trinidad and Tobago. Moreover, belying the image of the calypsonian as an itinerant rum-drinking troubadour Chalkdust has also contributed as an author, intellectual, historian and chronicler of calypso steelband and carnival. This tribute to an icon of the arts and academia is therefore both timely and well deserved.”*

As a calypsonian, Dr. Liverpool’s style and commitment to the traditional form of calypso music is unique and underscores the history and definition of calypso. **The Calypso King of the World, Dr. Slinger Francisco** better known as the Mighty Sparrow said, *“This tribute for my brother Chalkie is long overdue. His ability to compose and frame his topic with his lyrics qualifies him to be described as a teacher and journalist. When I listen to his calypsoes I feel as though I am in a classroom and Chalkie is the teacher. When you read his books, you will conclude that his unselfish character is a gift to all of us. He is very talented and I have an abundance of respect for him.”*

Dr. Liverpool was a trained and academically qualified primary school teacher when he launched his calypso career in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The Government’s Ministry of Education at that time fired him from his teaching job. This decision and action was taken because society believed it was in poor taste for a teacher to be a calypsonian. To be a calypsonian was not the most respectable pursuit. The grass roots rejected this branding and today many of his students are performing the art of calypso. **Keet Styla**, formerly known as Designer said, *“I am very excited to join the SUNSHINE Awards Organization to pay tribute to Chalkie, a national hero. I regard him as a father, a teacher and a mentor. I can also recall that he gave his blessings when he was informed (by my father) of my ambition to enter the calypso arena. I am really looking forward to performing one of his early classics of 1968 titled “Devaluation” in his honor.*

**Sylvan Murrell**, a friend of Chalkdust from childhood and former teacher, contacted in New York said, *“Today so many calypsonians have changed their style of calypso composition and singing to keep up with the demands of the market. In so doing, their compositions suffer in lyrical content. Chalkdust has stuck to the tradition of calypso and is one of the greatest lyricists of all time. He has dedicated 52 years of his life to the art form and is the master of satire, commentary and philosophy. He is very deserving of this tribute.”*

Dr Liverpool’s contribution to education has as much an impact in the United States as in the Caribbean. Many students perusing graduate degrees study his research findings to support their perception and understanding of African history. **Dr. Elise Bourne-Busby**, a former school Principal and Chairperson of the More Than Friends Organization in the United States said, *“We join the SUNSHINE Awards Organization to honor Dr. Liverpool for his significant contributions to performing arts, research, history and education. I regard his high academic standard and cultural wealth as gifts to add value to our past and educate the present. He brings to mind the words of Crista McAuliffe, “I touch the future, I teach.” I wish Dr. Liverpool continued good health so that he may continue to add more vital contributions to our national and global treasury.”*

**Dr Patricia Belcon**, Professor at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York said, *“Dr Liverpool has successfully bridged the gap between academia, the creative and the performing arts with mastery.”*

**The Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards, Gil Figaro, Sr.** said, I can recall when my uncle, Calypsonian Young Killer introduced me to Chalkie at the Naparima Bowl in San Fernando, Trinidad in 1967. He described him as his “favorite” that year. Today *it’s a privilege and honor to lead this initiative to pay tribute to Chalkie. For over 50 years he has been sharing his blessings and wisdom through his writings and music with the world to ensure that we are better informed and well prepared for tomorrow. His contribution to the performing arts and education compels you to conclude that he is a reservoir of knowledge and artistry.”*

The SUNSHINE Awards was founded 29 years ago to recognize excellence in the performing arts, education, humanity, science, and sports of the various Caribbean countries. Over the years, the program has expanded in depth and breadth with a global view including countries from Africa, South America, Central America, Europe and India.

The 29th Annual SUNSHINE Awards Program is sponsored in part by **United Airlines, “the preferred airline of the SUNSHINE Awards Program,” Alizé, National Staffing Associates, Trini Breakfast Shed of Brooklyn, New York, All Star Motors and Essex County Towing, Re-upholstery and Restoration and Limin’s Café Carib of New Jersey.** Tickets can be obtained on the SUNSHINE Awards website at [www.sunshineawards.com](http://www.sunshineawards.com) or by calling **201-836-0799.**

