

# ***THE SUNSHINE AWARDS***

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## *News Release*

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## *For Immediate Release*

# ***SUNSHINE Awards Says Farewell To "The Mighty Duke"***

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**New Jersey, USA, January 15, 2009** ----- Today, the SUNSHINE Awards organization released the following statement.

The news of Kelvin Pope's (The Mighty Duke) passing is indeed cause for great sorrow. The SUNSHINE Awards organization joins his family, the people and Government of Trinidad and Tobago in mourning the loss of this talented stalwart of the calypso world.

With the death of The Mighty Duke the world has lost a true exponent of the art form. With a career spanning decades, he has performed and entertained generations with his unique style of showmanship and diction. He was a performing artist who recognized the importance of maintaining the integrity of calypso and the power of the Black Diaspora.

The Mighty Duke has sustained a remarkable career and was indeed a Calypso Ambassador. In 1989, he was the recipient of the SUNSHINE Award for Best Social

Commentary with his song titled "How Many More Must Die." He was also inducted into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame in 2006.

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Gil Figaro, Sr, Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards said, *"I was extremely saddened to hear of the passing of this very talented man. I have known him personally for many years and it is my hope that his works will someday be considered "National Treasures" of the people of Trinidad and Tobago and beyond its confines. He was an astute and skillful craftsman who executed the art form of calypso with dignity and pride. He will undoubtedly be missed. On behalf of the SUNSHINE Awards organization and on my own behalf, I extend sincere condolences to his family and the people of Caribbean."*

The Mighty Duke joined the calypso world in the early 1960s when singers from south Trinidad rivaled their northern counterparts in calypso composition. His experience with the best in south Trinidad provided him with the tools to become one of the super stars on the calypso stage.

Dr. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool, Co-founder of the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame who inducted Duke into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame in 2006 said, when contacted by telephone, *"I was at his bedside when he departed this world. Duke rode the calypso world like a colossus. He was a giant in every genre of the art form. I have lost a brother and a friend. He will be missed."*

Duke won the Trinidad and Tobago Calypso Monarch Competition for four consecutive years from 1968 to 1971. He was the only calypsonian to achieve such an accomplishment. Dr. Harold Robertson, Consul General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in New York City and who participated in the induction of Duke into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame in 2006 said, *"My staff and I are saddened by the passing of The Mighty Duke. He was one of the true greats of the art form and we are all the poorer for his loss."*

*Duke is also known for his wit and his ability to create beautiful harmonies. He was also skillful in composing calypsoes of every genre. Where most calypsonians specialize in one or two types of calypsoes, Duke was master of all. The Calypso King of the World, the Mighty Sparrow, visibly saddened by the news said, "He is one of the true stalwarts of calypso. We have lost a giant of the art form."* Dr. Hans Geiser, a retired United Nations Diplomat who has been affiliated with the SUNSHINE Awards since 1989 said, *"I am a lover of calypso*

*and having followed Duke over the years, his passing is a very sad event since one more icon of the art form has left us."*

The SUNSHINE Awards organization mourns the passing of Kelvin Pope better known as The Mighty Duke.