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For Immediate Release

## SUNSHINE Awards® Pay Tribute To Ras Shorty I

Teaneck, New Jersey, USA ..... The SUNSHINE Awards™ organization today released the following statement on the occasion of the death of Ras Shorty I (Garfield Blackman).

The SUNSHINE Awards™ joins the people and Government of Trinidad and Tobago in mourning the passing of one of our most distinguished performing artistes and musicians, Ras Shorty I (Garfield Blackman). A wonderful singer and songwriter, his career was marked with excellence and great creative achievement. The world of music has truly lost a remarkable talent.

While he leaves behind a rich musical legacy, one filled with inspired and meaningful lyrics and excellent music, Shorty will probably be best remembered as the "Father of Soca". It was due to his inspired musical genius that Soca was born. His commitment and belief in his musical vision, which saw the possibilities of blending two diverse musical sounds, resulted in the explosion on the music scene of the new and dynamic beat of Soca. His creation of this new sound brought about a positive change to calypso and helped to revitalize and internationalize the music. Today Soca is enjoyed by music lovers throughout the world.

Shorty will be remembered for having lived his life firmly committed to his spiritual beliefs. His music, over the years, evolved and reflected this new dimension to his life. We shall miss his inspiring and soulful lyrics, as well as the sound of his rich and beautiful voice. I shall personally miss a performing artiste whom I also considered a friend, one whose musical craftsmanship was, for me, a source of inspiration. He was a kind and generous man, who served as a mentor to many aspiring musicians. An excellent performer, Shorty enjoyed great popularity and was a recipient of a SUNSHINE Award, as well as a special award from the 1st Indo-Caribbean Music Awards. He has secured for himself a permanent place of honour in Caribbean musical history.

It is, therefore, with much sadness that, on behalf of the SUNSHINE Awards™, I offer sincere condolences to the family and friends of Ras Shorty I and to the people and Government of Trinidad & Tobago, as we mourn the loss of this unique and remarkable man. To this I add my own personal expression of sympathy at this time of mourning.

*Gilman T. Figaro, Sr.*  
*Founder/Chairman of the*  
*SUNSHINE Awards™*