

Austin, Alinda

“Linda” Hyacinth

(1902–1980)

GLENN O. PHILLIPS

Glenn O. Phillips, Ph.D. (Howard University, Washington, D.C.), although retired, is actively writing, researching, lecturing, and publishing. He was a professor at Morgan State University, Howard University, and the University of the Southern Caribbean. He has authored and published numerous articles, book reviews, and books, including “The African Diaspora Experience,” “Singing in a Strange Land: The History of the Hanson Place Church,” “African American Leaders of Maryland,” and “The Caribbean Basin Initiative.”

Linda Austin was a pioneering educator and administrator who was one of the founding members of the East Caribbean Training School (now the University of Southern Caribbean) that established the school on August 27, 1927, in Maracas Valley, in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.¹

Alinda “Linda” Hyacinth Austin was born near Princess Town, Trinidad, on March 3, 1902, to David and Leanora Austin.² While her birth certificate names her Alinda, she was known as Linda in most subsequent records and to all who knew her. When she was 10 years old, her parents migrated to the Panama Canal Zone to find work and left her and her two sisters in Trinidad.³ Three years later, the girls followed their parents to the Canal Zone and enrolled in the Spanish-speaking convent school there. She excelled in learning her second language and transferred to a Catholic boarding school. She continued studying to be a teacher and qualified, receiving a certificate to teach Spanish in 1918. However, she wished to further her education, and she was introduced to Professor Clarence J. Boyd, who was principal of the newly organized East Caribbean Training School located on a beautiful campus in the Canal Zone.

Ms. Austin graduated in the class of 1926,⁴ which was the last class for Professor Boyd, and was baptized into the Adventist faith just before her graduation. On her graduation, Ms. Austin was immediately invited by



Linda Austin

From Glenn Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College 1927-1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977).

Professor Boyd to be one of the founding members of the faculty for the new Adventist school he was establishing in the land of her birth, Trinidad, which opened on August 27, 1927, in the Maracas Valley on an abandoned cocoa plantation.⁵ In the early years, she held numerous positions, simultaneously serving as the mediator between students and the various administrations.

Her work as matron, dean of women, business and language teacher, department chairperson, and college treasurer continued unbroken for 40 years, from 1927 to 1967. As the only Caribbean founder of the institution, she was mentor, advisor, counselor, and disciplinarian to hundreds of the early students and faculty members.

In the summer of 1957, she was invited by the Caribbean Training College Alumni Association of New York City (now the University of the Southern Caribbean Alumni Association) to attend the General Conference Session in Cleveland, Ohio, United States of America (U.S.A.) and a banquet in her honor held in New York City.

For her outstanding services and dedication to the institution, the main women's dormitory on the campus was named after her. She concluded her work at the institution in June 1967. She then became the director of the Voice of Prophecy Correspondence Course Program sponsored by the South Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Trinidad for another 10 years.⁶ Over the years, Ms. Austin received numerous awards for her decades of service to tertiary Seventh-day Adventist education in the eastern Caribbean and for inspiring two generations of students, both male and female, whom she shepherded through the halls of their alma mater.

Ms. Austin, positive inspiration to hundreds, passed away on July 2, 1980.⁷ She was memorialized by University of Southern Caribbean alumni and church leaders in Trinidad and Tobago and in New York and Maryland, U.S.A., for her many pioneering contributions in establishing what is now the University of the Southern Caribbean and her commitment to Adventist education for 40 years.

Source

Austin, Linda. *My Life*. Maracas Valley, Trinidad: Caribbean Union College, 1964.

Austin, Linda. "Twenty Years of Service." *College Tidings*, September 1949.

Boyd, Clarence J. *School Memories, Seventh-day Adventist Schools as I Saw Them* Loma Linda, Calif.: 1965.

Murray, Eric John. *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1981*. [Port-of-Spain], Trinidad: College Press, 1982.

Phillips, Glenn O. *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College, 1927–1977*. Maracas Valley: Trinidad, College Press, 1977.

Parochial Registry of Baptisms in the Parish of St. Thomas, Princess Town, 1903. No. 485. Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

"West Caribbean Training School," *Inter-American Messenger* 3, no. 10 (September 1926).

NOTES

1. Glenn O. Phillips. *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College, 1927–1977* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: College Press, 1977).
2. Parochial Registry of Baptisms in the Parish of St. Thomas, Princess Town, 1903, no. 485, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.
3. Linda Austin, *My Life* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: Caribbean Union College, 1964), 1–5; Linda Austin's Diploma of Graduation from the West Caribbean Training School issued on August 22, 1926, at Las Cascades, Canal Zone.
4. Linda Austin, "Twenty Years of Service," *College Tidings*, September 1949, 1–2.
5. Clarence J. Boyd. "School Memories, Seventh-day Adventist Schools as I Saw Them". (Loma Linda, Calif.: 1965), 97–121.
6. Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1981* ([Port-of-Spain], Trinidad: College Press, 1982), 90–93.
7. Ibid.

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