

Kum, Lucy Mae (Williams; 1911–2009)

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."

Lucy Mae Kum was a pioneering Guyanese student, college instructor, and Department of Business chairperson at Caribbean Union College (now the University of the Southern Caribbean) in Trinidad for 30 years.

Lucy Mae Williams was the only daughter of George and Letitia Williams and was born on April 27, 1911, in Georgetown, Guyana. Her father was a manager of a sugar plantation located off the Essequibo River, while her mother resided in Georgetown with her children in order to have her children attend the best schools in the British colony.¹ After Lucy had attended a number of preparatory schools and the Christ Church Government School, her mother was encouraged by a recruiter who visited her home to send Lucy and her brother George to the recently opened Caribbean Training School (now the University of the Southern Caribbean) in Trinidad. Within a few weeks, in August of 1928² Lucy and her brother were enrolled at the recently established school, where they attended for five months. She became very impressed with the Seventh-day Adventist teachings and was baptized before leaving to accompany her parents to Portuguese East Africa, where she remained for 10 years.³ During this time in Africa, she worked as a secretary for Sena Sugar Estates, which employed her father. When the family returned to the Caribbean in 1938, she once again studied at Caribbean Training College in Maracas Valley, Trinidad, graduating in the class of 1943.



Lucy Williams Kum

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

During her student years, Lucy's academic performance so impressed her teachers that she was immediately offered a teaching position in the Business and Secretarial Department after her graduation. However, eager to continue her formal education, she enrolled at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California. She completed the required four-year course in three years, graduating in August 1951, and was among the first Caribbean students to do so.⁴ Lucy immediately returned to the Caribbean Training College and was appointed the chairperson of the Department of Business and Secretarial Science. She remained in this position for almost 30 years.

In 1953 Lucy became one of the founding teachers of the newly established Barbados Seventh-day Adventist Secondary School, near Bridgetown, providing leadership and valuable guidance that became an integral element in the establishment of this secondary school.⁵

Lucy married Charles Augustus Kum in 1953, and to this union came one daughter, Lois Kum. Charles was also from Guyana and of Chinese descent. He was a nephew of one of the leading pioneer Adventist Guyanese ministers, Benjamin Yip, whose administrative assignments required that he worked in Trinidad. Charles lived with his family and in 1936 began attending Caribbean Training College. He graduated in 1941, majoring in business and accounting. After serving as a cashier for the South Caribbean Conference, he became the first Caribbean to be appointed to an administrative officers' position in 1949 when he was made the secretary-treasurer of the Leeward Islands Mission located in Barbados.⁶

In May 1955, the Kums were invited to return to their alma mater, where Lucy was appointed the dean of women and Charles worked as the college treasurer. They both spent the remainder of their professional careers working at Caribbean Training College (renamed Caribbean Union College in 1956), guiding numerous students to serve the church, the community, and the world. Mrs. Kum retired from her position as the chair of the Department of Business and Secretarial Science in 1982, having trained a cadre of students who recognized her influence in shaping their outstanding careers in various positions in the business world. Elder Kum retired in 1972 but continued to work as an auditor from time to time and passed to his rest on April 22, 1994. Mrs. Kum continued to be an outstanding inspiration to her family, friends, and students until her death on May 25, 2009.⁷

SOURCES

Edgecombe, Lois Kum. "Obituary Narrative of Charles Augustus Kum, 1905–1994." Presented at the funeral service held at Caribbean Union College, Maracas Valley, Trinidad and Tobago, May 1, 1994.

Edgecombe, Lois Kum. "Obituary narrative of Lucy Williams Kum, 1911–2009." Presented at the funeral service held at the University of the Southern Caribbean, Maracas Valley, Trinidad and Tobago, June 21, 2009.

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*. [Port-of-Spain], Trinidad: College Press, 1977.

Roberts, Laurie-Lee. "Lucy May Kum." *Centenary of Adventism in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1991*. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: South Caribbean Conference of SDA, 1991.

NOTES

1. Lois Kum Edgecombe, "Obituary Narrative of Lucy Williams Kum, 1911–2009" (presented at the funeral service held at the University of the Southern Caribbean, Maracas Valley, Trinidad and Tobago, June 21, 2009).
2. Ibid.
3. Lois Kum Edgecombe, "Obituary Narrative of Charles Augustus Kum, 1905–1994" (presented at the funeral service held at Caribbean Union College, Maracas Valley, Trinidad and Tobago, May 1, 1994).
4. Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1981* ([Port-of-Spain], Trinidad: College Press, 1982), 112.
5. Glenn O. Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College, Caribbean Union College, 1927–1977* ([Port-of-Spain], Trinidad: College Press, 1977).
6. Edgecombe, "Obituary Narrative of Charles Augustus Kum."
7. Laurie-Lee Roberts, "Lucy May Kum." *Centenary of Adventism in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1991* (Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: South Caribbean Conference of SDA, 1991), 18.

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