

Niles, Bradley

“Ben” Evanton

(1945–2005)

DION E. PHILLIPS

Dion E. Phillips, professor emeritus of sociology, University of the Virgin Islands, is fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist and Adventist church elder for more than 20 years.

Bradley Niles was a Barbadian educator and community activist who was instrumental in spotlighting Seventh-day Adventism and its belief system in multireligious Barbados and who had a penchant for serving youth.

Bradley “Ben” Everton Niles was the last of the seven children of Norman A. and Ina M. Niles, both stalwarts of the faith, at a time when Seventh-day Adventism was a fledgling and emerging religious denomination in the pre- and post-independence periods of Barbados.¹

He often remarked that during his formative education, which included the Boys’ Foundation School in Christ Church, “I always emerged as a leader.” This pattern included “head boy” of his class and president of the Inter-School Christian Fellowship, which reached out to the wider community under his watch.

In September 1964, following the example of his six siblings, he enrolled at Caribbean Union College (now the University of the Southern Caribbean) in Trinidad and Tobago as a theology major. At that Caribbean Union-administered institution, he was elected president of the Men’s Spartan Club. Ben, as he was affectionately called, completed his first degree in sociology and theology at Andrews University, Michigan, United States of America. He later received a master’s degree from Western Michigan University and a doctorate from Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan, in the sociology of education.



Bradley E. Niles

From *Sunday Advocate* (Barbados), March 15, 1998.

Now well equipped, he returned to Barbados in 1974, where he served for a short while in the Ministry of Education. Immediately after, he filled the position of deputy director, extramural tutor, at the School of Continuing Education (SCE) in the University of the West Indies (UWI), which he used as a pathway to serve disadvantaged youth.² He also did a stint as assistant registrar at that institution.

His ascension to the position of director, extramural tutor, at UWI was an acknowledgment of his name recognition and acumen as a service leader who, at the same time, highlighted his religious affiliation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as front and center. Armed with this God-centered persona, he served in this position for 25 years, from which he influenced hundreds of youth from various backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. According to Barbados's leading newspaper, the *Advocate*, this included his support of educational reform for prison inmates at the island's penitentiary, Glendairy.³ Among his major contributions are the broadening of the course offerings at the SCE, the initiating of the Prison Education Program, and the founding of the Barbados Adult Education Association.

As an alumnus, Bradley followed the fortunes of his classmates and the institutions he attended. This was borne out by his active membership in the Boys Foundation School Old Scholars Association and the Caribbean Union College Alumni Association.

His passion for intervention and the nurturing of at-risk and other youth is manifest in the creation of the Libra, Pinelands, Haynesville, and New Orleans Youth Development Councils, as well as his longstanding service as a patron of and mentor to the Barbados Youth Council. This pattern included his affiliation with the Men's Educational and Support Association.

Along with these sterling accomplishments, Dr. Niles remained an active elder of the King Street Seventh-day Adventist Church, the cradle of Adventism in this Eastern Caribbean country and for him personally.

After his passing⁴ and in honor of his contributions, the Youth Alliance was formed and housed in the Bradley Niles Building, Garrison, Saint Michael, Barbados, in 2006.⁵

SOURCES

"Credit Unions Told to Work for Youth." *Sunday Advocate*, March 15, 1998.

Hundreds Say Farewell to Niles," *Nation*, May 11, 2005.

Niles, Bradley Everton. *Autobiography of Bradley Everton Niles*. No publisher, 2004.

"Niles Supports Educational Reform for Prison Inmates." *Barbados Advocate*, March 20, 1990.

Wallace, Nigel. "Youth Alliance Launch." *Barbados Advocate*, January 6, 2006.

NOTES

1. Unless stated otherwise, information for this article is taken from Bradley Everton Niles, *Autobiography of Bradley Everton Niles* (no publisher, 2004), 1–77.
 2. "Credit Unions Told to Work for Youth," *Sunday Advocate*, March 15, 1998, 5.
 3. "Niles Supports Educational Reform for Prison Inmates," *Barbados Advocate*, March 20, 1990, 10.
 4. "Hundreds Say Farewell to Niles," *Nation*, May 11, 2005, 1.
 5. Nigel Wallace, "Youth Alliance Launch," *Barbados Advocate*, January 6, 2006, 3.
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