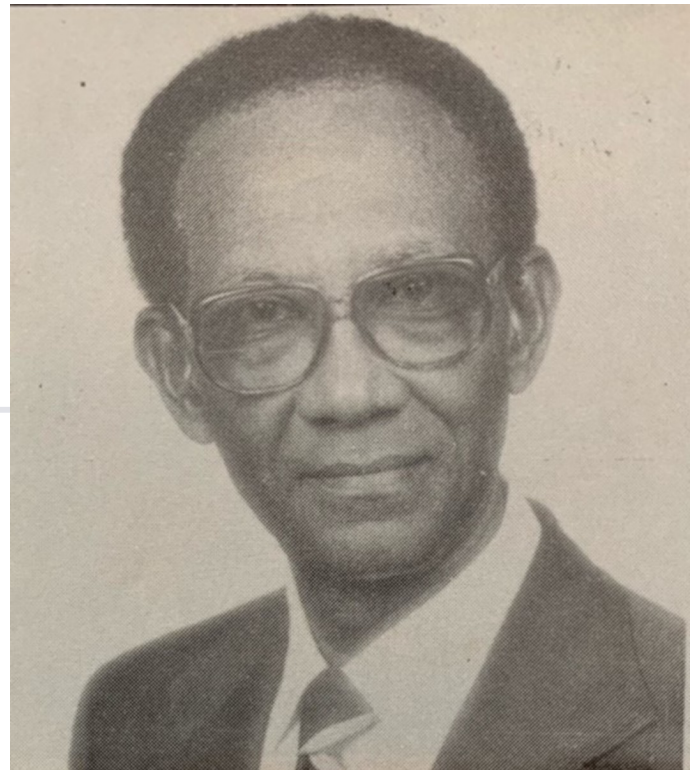


Murray, Eric Sydney John (1920–2008)



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."

Eric Murray was a Caribbean church administrator whose leadership office and administrative church work spanned over 50 years of service, beginning in 1942 while he was still a student and continuing until 1995, during which time he served as conference and union secretary-treasurer and president,

chairperson of a college board of trustees, and an author of narratives that examined church history at a time when nationals had begun to replace missionaries in these positions.¹

Eric Sydney John Murray was born on March 7, 1920, to Fritz and Mabel Murray in Scarborough, Tobago, where he received his early education at the Scarborough Roman Catholic School. As a youngster, he also became interested in musical performance and played the piano and violin.²

On January 1, 1937, Murray enrolled at Caribbean Union College (now the University of the South Caribbean) in Trinidad, where he completed his high school studies, then completed the college business course, graduating with the class of 1945.³ During these college years, he worked as a stenographer at the Caribbean Union Mission office in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

Elder Murray continued his studies in the United States of America at both Atlantic Union College and Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University), completing a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1951. He began a long tenure of service, serving as the treasurer of the Bahamas Mission from

Pastor Eric J. Murray

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p. 2.

1951 to 1953, then as accountant for the Caribbean Union Mission in Trinidad until 1959, before accepting the position of secretary-treasurer of the East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados. He served there until 1965 and was ordained to the ministry in 1964.⁴

Elder Murray accepted a call in 1965 to serve as the secretary-treasurer of the Caribbean Union Conference. He obtained his master's degree in business administration from Andrews University in 1969 and continued in that position until 1978. He was next elected president of the Caribbean Union Conference, holding that position for 13 years, ending in 1991. He was the first Trinidadian to serve in this position of leadership and did so for a longer time than his predecessors.⁵ During his leadership of the Caribbean Union College Board of Trustees, significant strides were made to begin moving the institution toward university status.

One of his interests was writing about the historical growth of Adventism in his homeland, which celebrated the centenary anniversary of its official arrival in 1991. He had been a contributor to the 1966 *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* on early Adventism around the eastern Caribbean. He would later publish *A History of The Seventh-day Adventist in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1981* (1982); *the National Biography Handbook of Trinidad and Tobago* (1996), and *Religions of Trinidad and Tobago* (1998). He also prepared an unpublished history of Adventism around the eastern Caribbean.

Elder Murray married Bessie Anabel Dow in 1953,⁶ and to this union came Arlene and Hans. After his retirement, Elder Murray continued to work for the church and served as the administrator for the church's Port-of-Spain Community Hospital from 1992 to 1995. He was active until months before his passing on September 29, 2008. His funeral was held on October 6, 2008, at the Stanmore Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

SOURCES

Greaves, Norma E., ed. *100 Plus Distinguished Alumni of Caribbean Union College*. Maracas Valley, Trinidad: Office of Alumni Relations, Caribbean Union College, 2005.

Murray, Arlene. "Obituary of Eric John Murray." Unpublished Funeral Program of Eric John Murray on October 6, 2008. Stanmore Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

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

NOTES

1. Arlene Murray, "Obituary of Eric John Murray," Funeral Program of Eric John Murray, October 6, 2008, Stanmore Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, 1-2.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.; "Caribbean Training College Student Enrollment Record Book, 1927-1947" (St. Joseph, Trinidad, 1947), 12.
 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), 178.
 5. Norma E. Greaves, ed., *100 Plus Distinguished Alumni of Caribbean Union College* (Maracas Valley, Trinidad: Office of Alumni Relations, Caribbean Union College, 2005), 1.
 6. Arlene Murray, "Obituary of Eric John Murray."
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