



Kenneth Everard Niven Ingram

He moves quietly but purposefully through the consciousness of those who know him, dapper, punctilious, of impeccable tact, his neatly trimmed goatee being his only concession to dash and stylishness, a man of whom it has been said that one cannot imagine him ever making a wrong move. Chancellor, if we could command his own bibliographical thoroughness and exactitude to catalogue all the right moves he has made, and if we could annotate the list with his lively sense of human idiosyncrasy and the temper of his times, we should no doubt have done our honorary graduand justice.

I present, Chancellor, Kenneth Everard Ingram, Officer of the Order of Distinction, Gold Musgrave medallist, librarian, bibliographer, historian, institution-builder. He retired from the service of this University, and from the position of University Librarian twenty-one years ago, having served in that post for ten years, and on the staff of the Mona Library for thirty-one years. Since retiring, he has continued to bring honour, by association, to the University, through his steady output of publications, the products of his two major career interests, librarianship and history.

These two interests have existed in symbiotic relationship ever since, having excelled in History at Jamaica College, he joined the staff of the West India Reference Library of the Institute of Jamaica in 1941 as Library Assistant. He was promoted to the position of Supervisor, in effect Librarian, in 1947. At the WIRL, later to become the National Library of Jamaica, his twin interests found not only fertile soil in which to grow, but also a new sense of national purpose in keeping with the spirit of the time. That was the time, too, the 1940s, when the young librarian enjoyed some reputation as a poet, one of that vibrant group that has a place in literary history as representing the cultural awakening that was a function of the national consciousness of the time.

Ken Ingram's career interests had the benefit of his outstanding academic ability. He was named the Jamaica £80 Scholar for 1939 on the basis of his performance in the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations. While at the Institute of Jamaica he won a British Council scholarship, which enabled him to earn the Associateship of the Library Association at the Manchester College of Technology in 1945. He thus became the first Jamaican ever to be professionally trained as a librarian.

At the West India Reference Library, Ingram built on the foundation laid by Frank Cundall. When he was recruited by the fledgling Library of the University College of the West Indies in 1950, as Senior Library Assistant, his portfolio included, happily and appropriately, the West Indian holdings of rare and special material. This collection had been started by the first Librarian, Harold Holdsworth, who understood that the Library of a University College of the West Indies needed to have a good West Indian research collection. Ingram's work in this regard has, in the words of Professor Barry Higman of the Australian National University, "helped make Mona the third point in a Jamaican 'research triangle,' the other two points being the National Library and the Government Archives." When Ken became Campus Librarian, he proceeded to have the West Indian Collection formally established as a separate section of the Library.

Ken Ingram's tenure of office as Librarian at Mona was marked by his administrative acumen, his sound judgement and willingness to listen. The 1970s were not easy years for the Library, what with severe budgetary constraints and with ideological upheaval in the wider society. The Librarian had to deal with worker demonstrations; he had to take some difficult decisions on his own. Before the idea of worker participation became fashionable, he introduced a form of worker participation into the running of the Library. When he retired, he left with the goodwill and great respect of the vast majority of those who had worked with him.

His contribution to the development of the profession of librarianship in Jamaica has included much voluntary service. He was a member of the Board of Management of the National Library for twenty-one years. He was a founding member, first Secretary, and on two occasions President of the Jamaica Library Association. On the second occasion, 1972, the Association, in electing him, was keen to "present its best image" at the International Library Conference which was to be held in Jamaica that year. Their President did them proud. Similarly, he was elected President of the Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL) in the year when Jamaica was to host, for the first time, the Association's annual meeting.

In 1969 Ken Ingram became the first person ever to be awarded the M.Phil. degree in the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies at University College London. Characteristically, he established a benchmark for the School, winning the Dunn and Wilson Award for work of distinction in a research degree in Librarianship. No wonder; his thesis became the invaluable two volume publication *Sources of Jamaican History 1655-1838: a bibliographic survey with particular reference to manuscript sources*. Chancellor, if you were to look at the copies of this book in the Mona Library today, you would be struck by how well thumbed they are, and you would agree that what you had before you were examples of usefulness made visible.

This usefulness is enhanced by the detailed annotations to many of the entries. The annotations are so engaging in themselves that they have elicited the observation that the work makes good bedside reading. The *Sources of Jamaican History* and his other bibliographic guides, including the recent *Manuscript Sources for the History of the West Indies*, constitute the aspect of Ken Ingram's lifework for which his praises have been most eloquently sung. The *Manuscript Sources* won the Book Industry Association of Jamaica Award for the best academic book published in 1999-2000. As Professor Barry Higman says, "Ken's guides have made it possible to plan a research journey ... through several continents, ... and we can still say that travel broadens the historian's mind so long as she has Ingram under her arm, so to speak."

We note too his several historical articles and his book *The Q.C. and the Middleman*, the story of a well documented lawsuit, which illustrates some of the social problems of the period immediately after the Morant Bay Rebellion. Our librarian has also been an officer of the Jamaica Historical Society, and he edited the Society's *Bulletin* for most of the 1990s.

We do not thank Ken adequately unless we also thank his wife Gloria, his chief support, confidante and co-worker, always by his side as he tracks manuscripts across the globe, sharing the sense of mission that lightened the tedium of the task, copying material, typing drafts.

Chancellor, we rest our case. In honouring a life in which industry, scholarship and service have been graced by integrity, decency and civility, the University of the West Indies honours one of its own family in whom it is well pleased. For conferment of the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*, by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of the University, I present Kenneth Everard Niven Ingram.

Mona
8 November 2002