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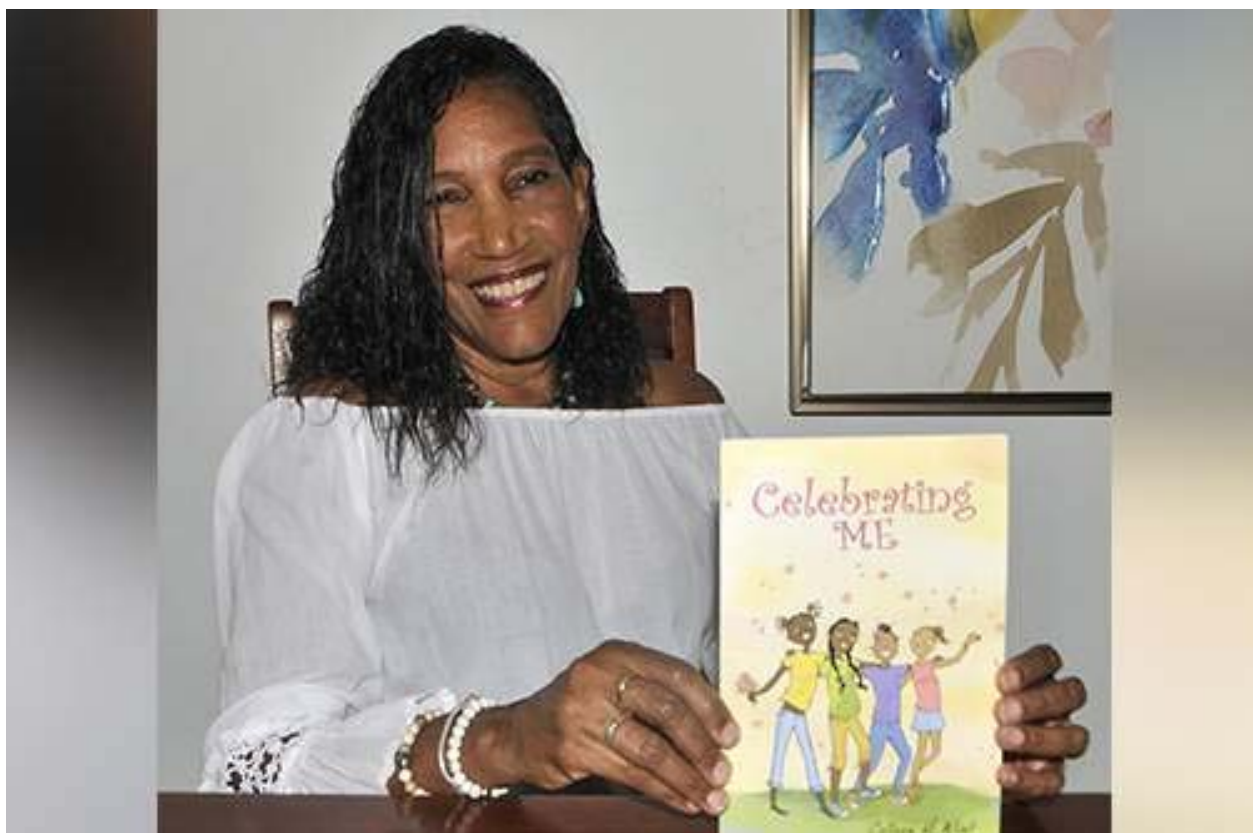


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Colleen Wint-Bond (Photo: Karl McLarty)

# Colleen Wint-Bond - A life of service

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**AS the last of Dr Arthur Wint's three daughters, Colleen Wint-Bond was too young to attend the ceremony in 1962 wherein the drive was named in his honour, and she didn't understand much of the pomp and pageantry that was associated with his name. In fact, it wasn't until she was working on a film project in college that she learned about many of his accolades on the track as Jamaica's first Olympic gold medallist, his service in the second World War, and his distinction as a diplomat. The man she called daddy was the kind and gentle doctor and nation-builder who enjoyed serving people. His selfless service to others lit the path for Colleen to pursue a career in social services.**

“When he lived in Lucea he was the only doctor in Hanover for a number of years, which was a very respected position, but he would also go down to the beach and play dominoes with the guys on the beach. He sang in the Hanover parish choir, and so on,” she recalled.

“He would go through the formalities and the motions but the occasions he enjoyed the most were just the community ones with regular folks. I think it was from him and my mother, who was a secretary and soroptimist, that I learnt the value of service to others.”

Colleen left St Andrew High School to complete her secondary schooling at South Hampstead High School in London, England, when her father was posted there as high commissioner to Jamaica, then she returned home for a gap year before attending university. In that year she taught mathematics and physical education at Green Island Secondary School in Hanover.

“Then I had a boyfriend here,” she giggled. “So The University of the West Indies (UWI) seemed like the place to go to further my studies.”

She had fancied herself a vet in her younger years, but as she came of age Wint-Bond felt herself being tugged in the direction of social services. She enrolled in the social administration programme at The UWI, where she was lectured by Owen Arthur, Donald Robotham, Hermione McKenzie and other distinguished sociologists and anthropologists.

“And then I spent three years working in Barbados at the Caribbean Tourism Resource Centre (now Caribbean Tourism Organization) as a communications officer,” she said. “It was good. The work was enjoyable and we had to travel around the region doing surveys and so on, so I got to see more of the Caribbean.”

After island-hopping, Wint-Bond sought to further her education, another trait that she credits to her father who was always seeking to learn more. She pursued a master's in

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media at The New School in New York, USA, specialising in video production, then worked with a small production company in New York.

“But again the social services side of me kept pulling, and my sister who was in Jamaica was planning to migrate so I decided to come home and stay with our parents,” she said, muttering under her breath that she also hated the cold.

Upon returning home, Wint-Bond worked in both the public and private sectors, primarily in television production, communications, public relations and social development. Having developed a penchant for family services while under the tutelage of Hermione McKenzie, she returned to Barbados years later to work on the Caribbean Child Support Initiative with a CARICOM agency, focused on replicating an early childhood and parenting initiative in the Eastern Caribbean.

Working with the Caribbean Child Development Centre, UNICEF, the Coalition for Better Parenting, the Cayman Islands Social Services Department, and Parenting Partners Caribbean, and now with the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), Wint-Bond has satisfied her lifelong passion of service by working in the non-profit community development arena.

She has felt most purposeful working with NGOs such as 3D Projects, a rural community rehabilitation project for children with disabilities.

“We worked with parents of children who have disabilities, so rather than put them in homes, we would train the parents to work with them,” she explained. “I developed training videos and training manuals for people who interface with persons with disabilities, such as teachers, doctors and parents.”

With the VPA, she is still using her skills and experience to fortify families. As project coordinator of CAMP Cornwall (Child Abuse Mitigation Project) in St James, Wint-Bond helps to address the psychosocial needs of the children and youth.

“So when they come into the hospital with violence-related injuries, then we link with the hospital and get their address and so on, then we do home visits, school visits, and find out exactly what is happening, and see how we can help,” she said.

In 2014 Wint-Bond self-published her first short story, *Celebrating Me, a coming of age story based in the Caribbean*. “I started it when my daughter was a teenager and facing puberty, but it wasn't until she was nearly married that I published it,” the mother of two adult children snickered. “It's really about the changes girls' bodies go through in puberty, from their perspective.”

Between working for the VPA and penning her second book, Wint-Bond enjoys dancing and walking with her husband, Ian, to stay fit. Naturally, she enjoys track and field and also football and is a loyal supporter of Manchester United, having spent her formative years in Altrincham, Manchester, whilst her father completed his medical studies. She is a certified reflexologist and vegetarian.

Wint-Bond hopes to continue working with programmes that help the people who need it most, simply because Jamaica is her home.

“It's home and there is a lot that we have going for us and a lot that we need to do,” she reasoned. “If my little piece can help, then here is a little piece. It takes everybody. I think the people that I work with feel that way genuinely as well. Let's not just look at what the negatives are, but how we can move forward.”

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