

Tribute to the Life and Work of Icilda 'Joy' Ffrench

Home Economist Extraordinaire



Another stalwart has gone on ahead. It is a road we will all travel but some are privileged to complete their tasks in this earthly realm early and then graciously step aside to allow those of us who remain to carry on. Why aren't we surprised that Icilda Ffrench has finished early? It is what she did; finished early, finished quickly, finished well. We know that, but we are nonetheless saddened that she has actually gone on before us. We wanted her to be around us a little longer to show us just how it is done... quickly and well. We wanted her to be here so we could continue to hear her sharp wit in conversations that required clarity with precision and a touch of humour. We wanted to be able to see her moving at the speed of light

whether in her actual walk along the corridors of the institution in which she taught or as she made her fingers walk on the telephone as she placed calls to make arrangements to meet deadlines way in advance of events, or 'see' her brain in action walking through the various stages of an activity, meticulously putting everything in its right place. Although we wanted her to stay, we loved her too much to want her to suffer here and so we have agreed with her Maker that He knows his child best and He has done what is in her best interest. Thank you, Lord.

Icilda was introduced to and fully emersed herself in the professional organizations aligned to home economics; The Jamaican Home Economics Association (JHEA), Caribbean Association of Home Economists (CAHE), and International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), when she started teaching at the University of Technology, Jamaica in 1998. She was fully engaged in the activities of the organizations as she was a firm believer in professional and personal development that would prepare her to become better at her craft and allow her to serve her profession outstandingly. She engaged in the organizations with much enthusiasm, verve, and steadfastness and had soon become an active member attending meetings, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Soon, attending activities was not enough and so she started to serve on committees and in the highest leadership roles.

She served at the leadership level in both the Jamaican Home Economics Association and the Caribbean Association of Home Economists. Icilda Ffrench assumed the roles of Chairperson of the Research Committee of the Caribbean Association of Home Economists in 2005 and President of the Jamaican Home Economics Association in 2007. As with any task she took on, she gave both roles her all. In her role as Chairperson of the Research Committee of CAHE, she took on the established task of producing the association's research journal. This can be a daunting task, as Ffrench knew but took on nonetheless, and within the two-year period of her service produced the 6th edition of the Caribbean Journal of Home Economics. She was no doubt able to do this by following her maxim, "Work smart, not hard." When she had achieved success in doing so, she is fondly remembered for saying in the meeting in which she proudly presented the document, "Di baby baawn!"

We will miss Ffrench's presence at the CAHE conferences which she faithfully and enthusiastically attended; whether conference was in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, The Bahamas or any other of our beautiful islands in the Caribbean. She was, as usual, always the first to make arrangements to attend; register, book hotels, and of course check out the shopping sights! She always took part in the team's cultural night presentations and always remembers fondly her role in the presentation in Guyana where she presented the final 'A' in Jamaica to mean 'Andastan!' (Jamaican for understand). She often repeated it in our conversations as we frequently reminisced on our memorable conference tours.

Our conferences were not all fun and games but even the work was fun as to Icilda it was always a labour of love. She gave her 100% as she participated fully in planning CAHE conferences held in Jamaica in 2001 and 2017. In 2001 she was responsible for conference evaluation and in 2017 she and Maxine Hills co-chaired the planning committee for in-conference workshops. The duo went all out in organizing this activity, from sourcing reputable presenters and identifying appropriate facilities to assembling materials and tokens for workshop participants. Icilda and Maxine were also the pre-conference workshop presenters at the 2011 CAHE conference held in St Vincent and the Grenadines under the theme "Home economics in the Caribbean: A response to the challenges of local home economics organizations and the United Nations Millennium

Development Goal - Strengthening international co-operations to improve the quality of life.” Professor Geraldene Hodelin recalls her trip to the IFHE Africa Regional Biennial Conference in Swaziland, South Africa in 2009 with Ffrench as her conference partner. At that meeting, Icilda confidently chaired a conference activity and made us all proud. She was overjoyed! That’s the woman we knew and will remember fondly. She will go in the annals of these professional organizations as a member par excellence; caring, compassionate, cooperative, dynamic, enthusiastic, hospitable, professional, and of course, fun-loving. She has left a legacy of attributes of a true home economist and a treasure trove of warm memories of her vibrant spirit, radiant smile, and infectious laughter.

We will not soon forget you, Icilda ‘Joy’ Ffrench.