

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. G. Edward Ebanks

Dr. G. Edward Ebanks (1938-2021) passed away on Monday, November 8, 2021 at the Elisabeth Bruyere Health Centre Hospice after a brief battle with cancer.

Eddie grew up in a small rural community on the south coast of Jamaica, where he excelled in school, winning scholarships throughout this period. He studied Mathematics at the University of the West Indies, then went to Cornell University for post graduate studies on a full scholarship from the Population Council. He was awarded the prestigious Population Council scholarship for three years, 1964-1966 and again in 1967-68. By 1968, Eddie had completed his M.A and Ph.D. in sociology, specializing in Demography.

He joined Western University in 1968 as an assistant professor in the newly established department of Sociology with a specialization in Population Studies. His unique combination of a strong background in Statistics and Quantitative methods and Demography was valuable in developing a strong Population Studies program at Western. He rapidly progressed through the ranks, soon becoming a tenured full Professor. He spent 35 years, his full academic career, at Western University until he retired in 2003.

Eddie supervised a large number of Masters and PhD students. He proudly followed their achievements, with many finding work in various other universities, governmental institutions such as Statistics Canada and abroad such as the World Health Organization and CIDA. He kept in close contact with many of them.

Eddie's large research output in scholarly journals, research monographs and publications of the United Nations reveal careful attention to rigour and practical

relevance. His work was often interdisciplinary, relying on data collection and rigorous statistical analysis. He published seminal works on fertility, migration, and urbanization in Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America, with his work appearing in such prestigious journals as *Demography*, *Population Studies*, and *Studies in Family Planning*. His sabbaticals took him to U.N. Demographic centres in San Jose, Costa Rica, Santiago Chile, and to the World Fertility Survey offices in London, England which enabled him to do research in other Latin American countries. He did extensive field work in Barbados. These sabbaticals resulted in monographs establishing his reputation as a specialist in his field. His many consultantships with the Population Council, CIDA, IDRC, and the International Statistical Institute are a tribute to his standing in the field.

At Western, Eddie's accomplishments went beyond teaching and research. He was Chair of the Sociology department for five years, honing his skills in governance and administration. During his term, a number of young talented faculty were recruited. He was a champion for graduate students, often finding resources for them to present their work at national and international conferences. At the wider university level, he was three times President of the Faculty Association, a member of the University Senate and a member of the Board of Governors of Western. In his note of condolence, former Western Provost J. Clark Leith noted "Eddie was very effective in representing the interest of the UWO faculty at the bargaining table. The result on each occasion was an agreement that was in the interest of the Faculty and the University as a whole". Eddie's love affair with Western was lifelong and included cheering on the Western Mustangs football and basketball teams.

Eddie was a founding member of the Canadian Population Society (CPS) in 1973-1974. He served on the council of CPS for many years, and finally as the President of CPS in 1998-2000. From small beginnings, CPS has grown into a major demography association with its own journal. During his career at Western, Eddie probably attended every annual conference of CPS and the Population Association of America, where he played an active role. In 1972, he was elected to the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP).

Throughout his career, Eddie would make time to join friends in a game of golf or a tennis match. Joining a running group in his early days at Western, he continued

to run most lunch hours of his career, forming enduring friendships with his running mates.

Eddie had a fine mind and an adventurous spirit that took him from rural Jamaica to an Ivy League University to a long and successful academic career. He had an intellectual curiosity that led him to collaborate with geographers and explore social anthropology in his spare time. Much of what brought joy to Eddie was his family and his numerous close friends. He delighted in family and the many friends made in his field of expertise, colleagues across the university, fellow champions of causes, neighbours and most recently his caregivers. Each felt the warmth of his huge heart and generous spirit. He will be missed.

(co-authored by Dr. Heather Dryburgh and Dr. Bala Balakrishnan, and reviewed by Dr. Carl Grindstaff, Dr. Rod Beaujot, Dr. Danièle Bélanger, Dr. Zenaida Ravanera, and Dr. Kevin McQuillan