

# A&B ASSOCIATIONS UNITED.

## Unifying Antiguan and Barbudans at home and abroad

Antigua and Barbuda, our beloved twin-island state, are but specs on the globe that billions call home. While the physical representation of our very existence may be miniscule to some, the influence of our proud people stretches across the world, representing the country's diaspora.

This collection of native sons and daughters have made their mark in varying fields both professionally and socially, but perhaps more importantly, have loaned their support and experiences back to their home land. One of the organisations leading this charge is Antigua and Barbuda Associations United (ABAU).

The ABAU, which was founded on January 15, 2006, now represents over 25 non-profit organisations in the northeast United States and its mission is to strengthen and unify the Antigua and Barbuda community organisations throughout the US, so they can enhance the lives of Antiguan and Barbudans at home and abroad.

Since its inception, the ABAU has helped to coordinate support for educational institutions, disaster relief and provide training, aid and assistance in the field of health and nutrition.

The grouping has worked to provide much needed school supplies to the nation's primary institutions, run the Antigua and Barbuda Health Fete and the Antigua and Barbuda Breast and Ovarian Cancer

Support Group Project, among many other impactful initiatives.

For the ABAU's present Chairman, Conrad Andy Howell, cooperation between the twin island and its sons and daughters abroad remains a relationship worth preserving and strengthening.

"Diaspora engagement is very important, because there are Antiguan and Barbudans in the diaspora that have developed skills and knowledge that is paramount to building our country, and it would be great if Antigua and Barbuda can harness those talents," he said.

Howell also encourages citizens who have made their homes abroad to not only visit the sandy shores and crystal blue waters of the twin-island state but to also seek ways to contribute to nation building.

"Visit the hospital, schools, churches, nursing homes, orphanages and community centres, then adopt a place and go back abroad and gather nationals to help improve these places," he explained. "We have an obligation to take ownership of places in our country and help build them up."

As the Antigua and Barbuda Associations United continues its work in the nation through donations and fundraisers, they continue to press for "all Antigua and Barbuda companies and organizations in the diaspora to use their resources to improve the lives of Antiguan and Barbudans abroad and at home."



# ABAU

Antigua and Barbuda  
Associations United



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# MEET SOME OF OUR MEMBERS



## CONRAD ANDY HOWELL, ABAU CHAIRMAN

Conrad Andy Howell was born in Liberta in 1964, moved to Harlem, New York with his family when he was nine, then to Jersey City when he was 13.

In 1987, he graduated with a BS degree in Mathematics and Computer Science from St Peter's University where he was a member of the track and field team, President of the Black Action Committee, and represented his class as Student Council Senator.

Howell is currently President of Antigua and Barbuda Associations United and Sidewalk University, which he founded in January 2001 to promote education and scholarships in underserved areas in the world.

In November 2012, he received the President's Volunteer Service Award from President Barack Obama, an award created to recognize the contributions volunteers make in communities throughout the United States. Howell was selected for his extensive volunteer work in New Jersey, New York, and Antigua and Barbuda with Sidewalk University.



## ANDY WETHERILL

Andy Wetherill is an Agribusiness Faculty at Delaware State University in Delaware USA. Born in Greenbay, Antigua in 1966, he enjoyed playing soccer, cricket lawn tennis, and the steel pan.

A graduate of St Joseph's Academy, Antigua College and the Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, in Trinidad and Tobago, Andy migrated to the United States in 1995 and completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri in 1998. He completed his Masters of Agribusiness Degree at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida in 2000.

He currently works at Delaware State University and has been at the forefront of assisting organisations that want to serve the Antiguan community at home and abroad. In 2014, Andy became a member of the Antigua and Barbuda Association of Philadelphia, and now serves as the association's technical advisor. In 2015 he received the '*Citizen of the Year Award*' from the Association for his contribution to Agriculture education and outreach.



# MEET SOME OF OUR MEMBERS

## EDMOND BROOKS

Edmond 'Brooksy' Brooks is an Antiguan Stalwart in the entertainment business in New York City. He was born in Sea View Farm in 1967, where he spent his first 16 years and excelled in soccer, table tennis and cricket.

In 1983, Edmund and his family migrated to New York where he completed high school and later pursued a career as an auto body technician. He presently manages an auto bodywork garage in Mount Vernon New York.

However, his greatest passion is in the entertainment field and over the past 13 years, he has become one of the leading musical promoters in Antiguan and Caribbean circles in New York.

He is renowned for putting on spectacular boat rides with live action featuring vintage calypso artists such as Latumba and King Smartie Jr; current Soca artists such as Supa Mario, Claudette Peters, Tian Winter and Menace; and some of the most popular disc jockeys from Antigua and New York. His musical tribute (virtual) to King Swallow in the Summer of 2020 generated over 1 million views on social media.

In June, 2021, Brooksy collaborated with Cannabis Sounds to sponsor a free breakfast fete in Antigua, which was an opportunity to provide meals to less fortunate citizens of Antigua and Barbuda. He has hosted boat rides and other events to raise funds for community organisations that serve underserved communities in Antigua and Barbuda and the Diaspora.

Edmond believes that governments, organisations and individuals should work together to foster unity and togetherness among the people of Antigua and Barbuda, because when we come together we can be more progressive as a country.







*Happy Anniversary of Independence*  
**40 years**  
**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**  
 FROM THE  
 SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF WILLIKIES, INC

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Est. 1934

## Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society, Inc.

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# A LIGHTHOUSE IN HARLEM: USA CONNECTING NATIONALS AT HOME AND ABROAD

During the Great Depression, President Franklin D Roosevelt ushered in a series of federal programmes and reforms to help spur the United States economy; it was referred to as the “New Deal”. However, it was a “Raw Deal” for some immigrants who had migrated to the United States in search of economic opportunities. Many in the immigrant communities suddenly found themselves on the bread line as some were ineligible for relief assistance and benefits from the social programs of the “New Deal”.

In 1934, the effects of the Great Depression on the immigrant community prompted 22 Antiguan (living in Harlem, New York City) under the leadership of James P Roberts, Sr, to establish the Antigua Progressive Society. The mission of the organisation was to help newly arrived immigrants from Antigua and Barbuda navigate the challenges and provide a support system. The organisation helped strengthen community bonds and financial support during this period when hunger, joblessness, homelessness and despair was rampant throughout many immigrant communities as well as in our homeland of Antigua and Barbuda.

In 1964, Salome Drysdale, one of the founding members, offered up the deed to her home as collateral to purchase a brownstone at 12

West 122nd Street in Harlem, New York. The property, referred to as the “Antigua and Barbuda House”, still functions as its Headquarters. In 2010, the by-laws of the organisation were revised to include the sister island of Barbuda and became The Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society, Inc. The Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society has become a symbol of pride, determination and community development for immigrant communities.

Artifacts from the first 50 years of the organisation’s development were featured in an exhibit at the Schaumburg Center for Black culture in 2013, kicking off the organisations’ 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The display offered reflections on the society’s past and present; captured its political sensibilities, diasporic sympathies and pan-Caribbean learnings. The exhibit also highlighted the diaspora as a strategically positioned political force with the ability to wield significant influence through its social and economic contributions.

As Antigua and Barbuda celebrates 40 years of Independence, the Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society, like many Antiguan and Barbudans and their descendants in the diaspora, continue to maintain strong emotional, cultural, spiritual and economic links to our country. Through seamless technological




communications, they regard themselves as legitimate members of the country's collective identity. Beyond their well-established role as senders of remittances, many have created businesses, bought property and sought viable opportunities to spur entrepreneurship. Greater mobilisation and connectivity have also helped to revitalise patriotic bonding and assertiveness among Diasporas. It has facilitated the potential transfer of new knowledge, skills and innovation as promoters of tourism, trade and foreign direct investment opportunities.

Some 90 years after the "Great Depression", the world faces another crisis -- the Covid -19 pandemic. Once again, the Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society has mobilised, offering assistance to members, other nationals and leadership throughout the immigrant communities in the USA, as well as their homeland of Antigua and Barbuda. In 2020, during the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic, the organisation partnered with The Lions Club of Antigua and Barbuda to get much needed equipment and supplies to the Fiennes Institute and Her Majesty's Prison in Antigua. The organisation also provided financial support to several nationals seeking medical assistance in the USA, and tablets to the Holy Trinity School in Barbuda.

This year, as the organisation celebrates its 87<sup>th</sup> year of service and support to communities both in the United States and in our homeland, it has again joined many in the Diaspora spurred into action providing relief with food supplies, school supplies and toiletries.

The legacy lives on. Like our ancestors, the Antigua and Barbuda Progressive Society remains focused on helping those in need and will continue to play a pivotal role to help "Communities Thrive and Grow" both here in the United States and in our homeland.



Est. 1934  
Antigua & Barbuda Progressive Society, Inc.  
A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization  
"Helping Communities Thrive and Grow"

# HAPPY 40<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

THE OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS OF THE  
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY, INC.

## WE PROUDLY CONGRATULATE OUR HOMELAND

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# ARE WE TRULY AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY?

By Antiguan & Barbudans  
for Constitution Reform &  
Education (ABCRE)

During this time of year, Antiguan and Barbudans in the diaspora look forward to independence celebrations with great anticipation. We gather, worship and dance. We revel in all things Antiguan and Barbudan: our food and drinks, our patriotic music, artists, and heroes. With the advent of social media, we proudly display our flag on our profiles and DM's. We reminisce on where we were on November 1st, 1981 when the ties that bound us to Great Britain were finally severed.

As an organization based in New York, the members of ABCRE celebrate independence just as exuberantly as our brothers and sisters at home and around the world. However, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary of political independence and reflect on our nation's journey, we ask the question: are we truly independent?

Independent countries share four common facets – a people, a territory, a gov-

ernment, and the ability to conduct relations with other states on a sovereign basis. For many, our twin-island state's political independence from Britain satisfies these four facets, but with political maturity, we must challenge ourselves to revisit the state of our nation. When we think of "a people", all citizens should be treated equally. Our constitution affirms this concept in clear terms. Section 111 states that on and after 1st November 1981, a person is regarded as belonging to Antigua and Barbuda if he/she is a citizen. There are no tiers of citizenship – at least, that is what this section of the Constitution expresses. However, our supreme law contravenes itself by excluding citizens from serving in government if they are either a minister of religion or if one born "on the rock" holds dual citizenship. Here, citizens -- because of their choice of religious calling or to obtain dual citizenship -- are not entitled to be protected equally and are subject to state discrimination. Interestingly, those who are born abroad and become

citizens of Antigua and Barbuda, are not so barred. This includes those who obtain citizenship by our much-touted and marketed citizenship by investment. So, we have chosen to discriminate against the born Antiguan and Barbudan. Is this independence?

Concerning our territory, our parliament passed legislation authorising one individual to cede portions of our sovereignty to foreign interests. This creates a jurisdiction within our jurisdiction, which is not subject to the laws and governance of our nation. Additionally, our country's excessive borrowing has become the proverbial elephant on the land that no one talks about. Our debt to GDP ratio is not only untenable, but crushing, and threatens to mortgage our children's future to foreign lenders. Our Constitution does not protect our territories from speculators, and our representatives are not inclined to protect our lands and our environment. Our 170 square miles are quickly being whittled down to Bantustans with buffer zones. Denying future generations the ability to determine and maximise the income potential of our lands, in light of the conditions we now face, is one of the biggest betrayals of the sacrifices of our inheritance.



As for governance, our Constitution states, "...there shall be a Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda who shall be a citizen appointed by Her Majesty and shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure and who shall be Her Majesty's representative in Antigua and Barbuda." While most argue that the role of the Governor General is "symbolic", in actuality, it is not. The Governor General is instrumental in the appointment of all public officers, from the Prime Minister to Assistant Registrars of the Court and members of the AG's office. The executive authority of the government is vested in him as the Queen's representative. All bills require the Governor General's signature to become law. Even the rituals of our 'independent unitary state' retain symbols of colonial governance -- land belonging to the state is referred to as "Crown Land"; criminal cases are brought in the name of the sovereign, (Rex/Regina); and Her Majesty In Council remains the country's apex court. Our 400-year quest for freedom and independence remains unfinished.

ABCRE's goal from inception is to educate ourselves and our fellow Antiguan and Barbudans about our Constitution, clearing the way for meaningful and transformational change that inure to the benefit of our children and generations yet unborn. True freedom and independence begin with meaningful changes to our Constitution, which we believe are long overdue, and must be citizen-driven.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary of political independence, let us continue to demand more of our leaders. We must continue to work harder at nation-building, designed by us and for us. Perhaps then, we would be more inclined to protect and preserve our resources, and protect our Nation from speculators. Only then can we say we are truly independent.

Alas, there is much more work to be done.

# HAPPY 40th INDEPENDENCE

Our Constitution Is the  
Supreme Law Of The Land  
Let's Study It Together!



Join

**Antiguans & Barbudans For Constitutional Reform & Education**  
on Monday evenings at 7pm on Observer Radio 91.1FM

**"Know your constitution, own your freedom."**

[www.abcreny.org](http://www.abcreny.org)

# GREETINGS FROM THE DIASPORA:

## LET'S BUILD FORWARD, BETTER TOGETHER

Home is where the heart is, and for tens of thousands of us nationals who are scattered across the globe, Antigua and Barbuda will always be our home. Many of our children across generations -- although not born in Antigua and Barbuda -- have also embraced our home as their "other home."

Regardless of differences in our economic status, religious beliefs, political persuasion, or community ties, Antiguan and Barbudans will always be connected by the pulsating beats of our steelpan music and the seven rays of hope (representing Antigua's six parishes and Barbuda) that emanate from the horizon in our national flag.

### **Antiguan and Barbudan Celebrations and Traditions**

Events, such as Antigua and Barbuda Day in New York, bring throngs of na-

tionals together to reconnect and celebrate our food, music and culture. At the center of the excitement is a deep sense of national pride and patriotism. True to our culture of storytelling, those blessed to be born in our island paradise often relish any opportunity to reminisce and celebrate the "good old days."

Thoughts of home often conjure up fond memories and deep longings which tug at the heart and the navel strings to do more for our beloved country. However, nothing beats being on the rock to experience our island paradise. Hence, we jump at any chance to travel home for summer or Christmas vacations, carnivals, independence, food fairs, family reunions, weddings, funerals, or other milestone celebrations. Whether to just connect with memories that par-

ents, grandparents and other relatives speak of, or to create fond memories of our own, the ties to Antigua and Barbuda are ardent and strong.

Although thousands of miles away, many Antiguan and Barbudans still hold on dearly to many culinary traditions that distinguish us as a people. For some, a new week must begin with the traditional Sunday morning breakfast: stewed codfish or saltfish, chop-up or choba, boiled eggs, avocados, lettuce and cucumbers, served with either bread, fried dumpling or fritters all washed down with a cup of bush tea. Good Friday is incomplete without ducuna, potato dumpling and chop-up or choba served with codfish, saltfish, mackerel, or red herring. If we don't know how to prepare it for ourselves, we definitely know at least one person whose pot we can rely on during the holy season. Similarly, at Christmas, the table must include black cake, sorrel, and Christmas ham -- even if it's not for our personal consumption.

Independence Day is an important date on our calendars. Patriotism goes on full display leading up to November 1, when we "pledge to be good citizens" and proudly parade our national colours, recreate memo-



ries, and sing patriotic songs. Some church congregations even join the celebration by singing our national anthem and praying for our beloved nation, because according to Ambassador Rupert “Baba” Blaize, “no matter where I go, Antigua and Barbuda is my home”.

We celebrate together, and we also share anguish from a distance. When we learn that our country is in the projected path for a storm, we summon prayers for the protection of our homeland from every person we know – even if they fail to pronounce the name of our country correctly. And whenever a natural disaster strikes, we tap into our collective resources and networks without hesitation. Even the elected officials in our adopted homeland are called on to help mobilise the necessary aid, to get our country and its people back to recovery.

### **Stronger Ties Through Technology**

Today, technology has virtually brought us even closer to our home. For many, our daily routines include reading the local newspapers and listening to one – or several – radio stations. We are also a part of the local grapevine and often hear the breaking stories in real time before most people at home.

Moreso, the global pandemic deepened our connections with relatives, friends and loved ones at home. It brought us closer, especially as we spend more time on Zoom and other platforms attending virtual meetings, services, gatherings, funerals, weddings, celebrations and other events.

For most of us in the diaspora, these strong ties with our homeland are more than merely sentimental. They are deeply rooted in our values, time and resources. Many of us routinely send remittances, financial help, or other support to our families, friends and loved ones back home. Some of us are affiliated with at least one Antiguan and Barbudan community-based organization in the diaspora – whether formally or informally. These organizations were established to provide support to various communities and initiatives back home.

### **Tapping Into the Diaspora Talent Pool and Resources**

Many of us have acquired a range of skills having capitalised on educational opportunities at the highest levels, so that we can leverage our intellectual capital to assist in the development of our home. The 2013 report of a World Bank study described the Caribbean diaspora as “a

sizable, well-educated, and affluent demographic whose large majority is interested in investing in its countries of origin.” The report found that 90 percent of the Caribbean diaspora wants to engage deeper with the region, representing a significant, untapped potential for economic development. It further stated: “supported by the right incentives and policies, diaspora members could play an even larger role in contributing to the region’s development.”

Over the years, several Caribbean countries have made significant progress toward implementing meaningful diaspora engagement policies and programmes. Jamaica created the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council and the Global Jamaica Youth Council to offer inclusivity throughout their diaspora. Barbados created channels to institutionalise and facilitate diaspora engagement as a pillar of foreign investment strategies, specifically in sectors related to the blue and green economies. Recently, Grenada launched the National Diaspora Engagement Policy, which outlines the importance of the diaspora to national unity and nation building in six thematic areas: engagement, investment, remittances, philanthropy,

human capital transfers, and governance and administration.

Diaspora support is extremely critical to small economies like Antigua and Barbuda, which have been hit hard by the global pandemic. The domestic lockdown and border closure in early 2020 precipitated a collapse of tourism-related activities and a contraction of the economy. A recent International Monetary Fund report revealed that our country's economy contracted by an estimated 17.3 percent in 2020, and it is projected to contract by another one percent in 2021 before recovery in the second half of this year. Although tourism arrivals this past July reportedly surpassed pre-COVID levels, this is not a sustainable trend unless the number of positive cases and deaths is brought under control.

Clearly, our country needs an effective economic recovery plan. However, it will be incomplete without a strategy to unlock the untapped resources of the diaspora. Moreover, as Antigua and Barbuda celebrates its 40th anniversary of independence, the national plans to build forward better must include meaningful diaspora engagement. As Sophie Sirtaine, World Bank Group Country Director for the Ca-

ribbean said, "increased engagement and investment by the diaspora will be a boost for entrepreneurs in the region, eventually leading to new, high-skilled jobs".

Throughout the pandemic, many in the diaspora have become even more deeply entrenched in the sociopolitical order through multiple attachments that have been facilitated by social media. Travel restrictions have limited travel to Antigua and Barbuda and prompted the cancellation of cultural celebrations, such as Carnival. Yet the diaspora remains even more committed and motivated to strengthen cultural ties when presented with opportunities to help their communities.

### **Diaspora Progressives Advocating for Greater Engagement and Inclusion**

During the pandemic, a new community group has emerged. Formed in May 2021, Diaspora Progressives consists of patriotic Antiguan and Barbudans across the global diaspora with a shared political vision and a commitment to help advance national development in our beloved country. This growing movement is committed to advocating for greater inclusion of the diaspora as partners in national development. To help ease the burden

of struggling families during the pandemic, the group embarked on food and back-to-school drives, shipping 40 barrels to Antigua and Barbuda to date.

In our efforts to foster more meaningful diaspora engagement, Diaspora Progressives recently partnered with the United Progressive Party (UPP) to host two virtual forums. These in-depth discussions went beyond the UPP's plans and proposals for the country and explored a new role and opportunities for the diaspora to participate in the nation building and development process.

Today, we celebrate a major milestone in our nation's development. As our national flag blows in the direction of the wind it signals how vulnerable our nation can be. Our inability to direct the wind, should remind us that we will be buffeted by events that are beyond our control. But it is how we work together as Antiguan and Barbudans, whether living at home or abroad, that will ultimately determine our strength as a nation.

Our hands are extended and our hearts are committed. Let's build forward, better together.

Happy 40th Independence, Antigua and Barbuda!





Each Endeavoring All Achieving



Happy Independence,  
**ANTIGUA and BARBUDA**

Our hands are extended and our hearts are committed



# WORKING WITH THE NATIONAL LIBRARY TO CURATE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S CULTURE

Friends of the National Public Library – New York (formerly Friends of the Antigua Public Library) was formed in 2006 by a group of Antiguan and Barbudans in New York. Our mission is to promote literacy and literary art among the patrons of the National Public Library. In keeping with our mandate, we have enjoyed a close collaborative relationship with the National Public Library over the years and have worked hard to dispel the notion that our library is just a beautiful repository for books. It is so much more than that. Our library plays an important role in our national development, which transcends the walls of the edifice at Queen Victoria Park. At the National Public Library, there is space for everyone.

As a “Friend” of the library, our organisation assists through volunteer and programme support, and most importantly, through advocacy. We take great joy in assisting the library as a cultural custodian. To that end, at home and abroad, we host events and experiences geared to expressing and celebrating our language, folktales, music, and literature. Professor Lonnie Bunch, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, wisely

spoke about the importance of institutions like our national public library. It is not only to help us remember what we want to remember, but what we need to remember to grow as a nation.

Friends of the National Public Library constantly finds creative ways to maintain the momentum of memory and showcase our culture. Our membership meets bi-monthly to read fiction and nonfiction written by our local authors and others throughout the Caribbean. With the use of our virtual platform, anyone from anywhere in the world can join our discussions, and we extend an invitation to all. Our ‘Meet the Author’ series connects our members with the authors and artists who keep our culture alive through art and storytelling. Past featured guests include Joanne Hillhouse, Joy Lawrence, Mary-Elena John, Dorbrine Omarde, Monica Matthew, Dr Elizabeth Nunez, Paddy “The Griot” Simon, Dr Natasha Lightfoot, Dr Ronan Matthew and Dr Althea Prince, and the roster keeps growing.

Another project we’ve undertaken is the Voice of the People Reading Project with Observer Radio. Every Friday in July, we discuss books

that bring the story of Antigua and Barbuda’s journey from enslavement to post-Independence to life. In Harlem, New York, we’ve hosted film viewing and reviews, shared tales of the past at our Story Night events, and have started our Collecting Memories Project, where we work to bring together our shared experiences and stories through essays and oral history. It is important to remember that while we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of nationhood, which is a milestone, we own a rich culture that spans centuries.

Members of Friends of the National Public Library understand the importance of Antigua & Barbuda’s culture, and we will continue to play our role in its preservation. As we grow as a nation, we pledge to continue our work with the National Public Library to ensure that our stories of the past survive for future generations.

We extend congratulations to Antiguan and Barbudans at home and throughout the diaspora, on celebrating our political independence. Let us always value our Public Library as a national asset, and never forget that the masterpiece of our culture is worth preserving.





Members of Friends of the National Public Library – New York hosting Paddy “The Griot” Simon.



Our Treasurer Peter Martin with Professor Elizabeth Nunez at our “Meet the Author Series” Event at The Antigua & Barbuda House in Harlem, New York



Celebrating Jamaica Kincaid.

