

Women wow in award ceremony



*Agriculture –
Novella Payne*



*Banking & Finance –
Dawn Soleyn*



*Business, Industry, & Commerce –
Valerie Hodge*



*Community Changemaker –
Barbara Arindell*



*Culinary Arts –
Coleen Simpson*



*Culture –
Heather Doram, MFA, GCM*



*Economic Development –
Roberta Williams*



*Education –
Joann Boulos Callias*

By Kadeem Joseph

“Girl, just keep taking up space,” was an affirmation that resonated among the recipients and attendees at the inaugural Women of Wadadli (WOW) Awards ceremony.

The event organised by the Directorate of Gender Affairs (DoGA) was held on Sunday night at the Sandals Grande Antigua resort. It honoured 25 women and one private sector agency celebrating females for their contributions in changing the country’s developmental landscape and championing

gender equality.

It was the awardee in the field of fine arts, Zahra Airall, who invited the audience to chime the phrase in a spoken word poem, a phrase that punctuated the evening’s proceedings thereafter.

Kai Davis, who was recognised for her work in the field of religion said that being honoured for something that she “lives for is amazing,” because there is nothing driving her other than her “natural passion for life”.

Davis, who is of the Rastafarian faith said, “In

our community there is no gender bias, neither is there age bias... little and big, female and male, we all work and we all have our place and that’s what we fulfil.”

Meanwhile, the award recipient for outstanding contributions in culture, Heather Doram, said while she has received many awards throughout her lifetime, the WOW award made her “emotional”.

The cultural icon, who designed the country’s national dress, said there are many unsung heroes in Antigua and Barbuda who need to be recognised.

“I am hoping that it becomes something like a catalogue. We need to really start showing the young people whose shoulders they would be standing on... the kind of contributions that you’ve made,” she said.

“Because you can’t look at a person and know what their achievements are and how much they have done to contribute to nation building.”

The awards were distributed in three categories to include the Women of Wadadli Awards, which were presented to women of at least 30 years of age who



*Environmental Activism –
Andrea Otto*



*Fashion –
Noreen Phillips*



*Fine Arts –
Zahra Airall*



*Human Rights Activism –
Dr Cleon Athill*



*Healthcare –
Dr Jillia Bird*



*Law –
E. Ann Henry, QC*



*Literature –
Joanne C Hillhouse*



*Media & Communications –
Mickel Brann*



*Music & Entertainment –
Marion Byron*



*Political Leadership –
Dr Jacqui Quinn*



*Dame Gwendolyn Tonge Lifetime
Legacy Award - E Ann Henry, QC*



*Prime Minister's Corporate Citizen
Award - AS Bryden & Sons*

have made exceptional contributions to their specific field of interest and the empowerment of women and girls nationally.

The Minister of Gender

Affairs also presented a Woman to Watch Award to a woman under age 30 making significant progress in her profession. And the Dame Gwendolyn

Tonge Lifetime Legacy Award was given to a woman over 55 years of age who has made significant contributions to national development and the promo-

tion of gender equality throughout her lifetime.

In addition, the Prime Minister's Corporate Citizen Award was granted to a private sector agency that pro-



Religion – Kai Davis



Science & Technology – Mako Williams



Trade Unionism – Nathalie Payne



Minister of Gender Affairs Woman to Watch Award - Shawnisha Hector



Sports – Renee Edwards-Ambrose



Tourism - Vashti Ramsey-Casimir

notes gender equality through its policies and programmes.

The winners were selected by a committee from a field of approximately 100 nominations.

During the event, the executive director of DoGA,

Farmala Jacobs, saluted the women for their “hard work, commitment and passion for change”. But she noted there is still work to done.

“However, in this night of celebration, we will cheer, we will clap, we will celebrate each other, we will

dance on the dancefloor, but let us not forget the mission, the unfinished agenda and goal to achieve gender equality,” she said.

Jacobs urged the awardees to develop a fire for addressing the issues that plague women and girls and to not be afraid to “stand ablaze” in the promotion of social justice, equality and peace.

Meanwhile, Minister for Gender Affairs, Samantha Marshall said progress made to fulfilling gender equity “must be protected,” as new challenges emerge globally.

Marshall not only charged awardees to “keep moving forward” with their commitments and actions but reminded them that they have “a key role to inspire our nation’s youth”.

“As reflected by tonight’s Woman to Watch

Award, the younger generation is poised and ready to take up the baton to push our nation forward towards sustainable development,” she said. “Your contributions and sacrifices will always remind us that we can achieve our goals.”

The night’s featured speaker, gender advocate Amina Doherty, urged women to take stock of advancements, but noted that many of the “hard-earned gains” are still not enough.

“Here in Antigua, despite all of our efforts, we continue to face high levels of violence against women through domestic violence, sexual harassment, and in several cases, leading to women’s lives being lost at the hand of their partners,” she said, before asking for a moment of silence in their memory.

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