

# NAJASO - MARCUS MOSIAH GARVEY SCHOLARSHIP FUND SHAPES LIVES AT UWI

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The NAJASO-Marcus Mosiah Garvey Heritage Foundation was established in 1987 by the **National Association of Jamaican and Supportive Organizations (NAJASO)** to provide a college education for Jamaican Nationals attending the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. The scholarship was initiated by the late Rev. Colin Bennett, OD, NAJASO President (1977-1982) and Dr. Pat Szopinski, NAJASO President (1982-1993). To date there has been twenty-eighty (28) recipients of this scholarship which has helped to shape the lives of its recipient. At the recent NAJASO 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention held in Cleveland Ohio July 16-18, 2015, the first recipient of the scholarship award, Mr. Horace Sinclair returned to tell the story of how receiving the scholarship enabled him to fulfill his ambitions and become a productive member of his community. He attributed his current success to be a result of receiving this award. It was a very touching story for the occasion and an affirmation of the impact and effectiveness of the NAJASO organization.

Mr. Sinclair commended NAJASO and spoke at length about his experience in applying for the scholarship, his hopes, the interview process, and ultimately his selection as the first recipient. He made it quite clear that because of his humble beginnings and his family situation, that obtaining a college education would not have been possible had it not been for this scholarship opportunity which



*Mr. Horace Sinclair, (center) 1<sup>st</sup> recipient of the Marcus Garvey Scholarship Heritage Fund speaks to audience at NAJASO's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, July 18, 2015, Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. Looking on is Dr. Alston Meade (left) and Mrs. Vernetta Byron Meade, (right) President and Chairperson respectively of the Foundation.*

provides \$US1000 for each student to attend UWI each year. At the time of its inception approximately twenty-eight (28) years ago the award amount covered registration fees, tuition costs, books and living expenses for the entire year. The cost of a college education has increased substantially since the inception of the scholarship and the foundation is presently working towards increasing the amount allocated. Dr. Meade remains as the President of the scholarship foundation and his wife, Mrs. Vernetta Byron Meade serves as Chairperson raising funds and administering the functional responsibilities for maintaining the foundation.

The scholarship award continues to serve those students in financial need. It is available to students with high academic performance and those who have demonstrated leadership qualities. Students must reside in Jamaica. They must be enrolled in Level I of the degree programme at the Mona campus in

Humanities, Education, Social Studies, Science and Technology. Recipients are also required to serve in Jamaica for a minimum of three (3) immediately upon graduation.

Mr. Sinclair spoke on behalf of the many awardees that followed him expressing heart-felt appreciation to the NAJASO team and deep gratitude to Dr. and Mrs. Meade for their continued administration of the fund while stressing and emphasizing the importance of the foundation in helping young people achieve their dream of a college education.

Mr. Sinclair currently resides in Jamaica as a professional working in the Information Technology industry. He has committed himself to work in supporting the Marcus Garvey Scholarship Fund and other programs within NAJASO aimed at helping young adults achieve their goals and aspirations.

NAJASO President Ricardo Nugent affirmed the organization's commitment to embrace and support programs similar to the NAJASO-Marcus Mosiah Garvey Heritage Foundation. At a recent meeting of his Executive team he directed his officers to explore opportunities in President Obama's Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) which includes provisions of 250 Fellowships each year which would enable participants from the US and Caribbean regions to develop joint business and civil society initiatives of which Marcus Garvey scholars under the age of 35 years old are eligible. Fellowship opportunities on the YLAI program can be found at: <http://share.america.gov/ylai>.