

# THE POST-INDEPENDENCE CHIEF JUSTICES OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

## RECOGNISING 50 YEARS OF HONOURABLE SERVICE IN THE FIELD OF JUSTICE TO A DEMOCRATIC NATION



**THE HONOURABLE HERBERT VOLNEY MP**  
Minister of Justice,  
Trinidad and Tobago

Justices Noor Hassanali,  
Clement Phillips,  
Arthur McShine and  
P.T. Georges in 1971

The Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago is the highest judge of the state and presides in his Supreme Court of Judicature. He is appointed by a common decision of the President on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The independence of the Judiciary and the Office of Chief Justice is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was established in 2010 with the mandate to re-engineer the Criminal Justice System through consultation with all stakeholders to ensure swift justice from the point of arrest to the final determination.

Leading the charge since the Ministry's establishment is the Honourable Herbert Philip Volney. As a former distinguished Judge of the Supreme Court of Trinidad and Tobago, Minister Volney recognises the important role and function of the Office of the Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago to nation building. Therefore, as we celebrate our 50th anniversary, the Ministry

wishes to highlight the Chief Justices that have served Trinidad and Tobago since the dawn of our nationhood in 1962.



**The Right Honourable Sir Hugh Wooding TC, KB, Chief Justice 1962-1968**

Sir Hugh Olliviere Beresford Wooding was born on the 14th January 1904 in Trinidad of Barbadian

parentage. His academic brilliance was evidenced early in his life with the award of an exhibition to Queen's Royal College in 1914. Wooding won the Jerningham Gold Medal in 1923, and an Island Scholarship to study Law at Middle Temple.

He has the honour of being the first Chief Justice of Trinidad and Tobago to come directly from the private Bar, on 29th August 1962. However, his contribution was not only to the law: he also became involved in city politics from 1941 and was elected Mayor of Port of Spain in 1943. He retired as Chief Justice on 31st December 1968 and he died on July 26th 1974.



**The Honourable Sir Arthur McShine TC, KB, Chief Justice 1969-1970**

Sir Arthur Hugh McShine was educated at Tranquility Boys Intermediate School and Queen's Royal College in

Port of Spain. He was called to the Bar at Middle Temple in London in 1941.

Sir Arthur was a Director of the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, President of the Trinidad Chess Association, a Member of the Trinidad Turf Club, Union Park Turf Club, Trinidad Yacht Club and the Queen's Park Cricket Club. He also enjoyed music and took part in several Music Festivals as a flautist. He was a recipient of the Trinity Cross in 1971 and passed away on the 10th July 1983.



**The Honourable  
Clement Phillips, TC,  
Chief Justice 1970-1971  
(Acting)**

Mr Justice Clement Ewart Gladstone Phillips was born on 11th September 1914 and entered St Mary's College on a Government Exhibition. At St Mary's, he distinguished himself academically and won the Jerningham Silver Medal in 1929, the Jerningham Book Prize in 1930, and the Jerningham Gold Medal and Open Island Scholarship in 1934.

He then proceeded to England and was enrolled at University College, London, where he read Law. After taking his degree, he was duly called to the Bar in 1939.

He became a member of the country's first post-Independence Court of Appeal, headed by Chief Justice Sir Hugh Wooding TC. His legacy is in his many judgments, and it is widely acknowledged that he has made a most valuable contribution to jurisprudence, not only in Trinidad and Tobago but throughout the Commonwealth. He was awarded the Trinity Cross in 1979 and died in 1980.



**The Honourable  
Sir Isaac Hyatali TC, KB,  
Chief Justice 1972-1983**

Sir Isaac Emanuel Hyatali attended Naparima College. He was admitted to practice Law at the Court of Gray's Inn in London in 1947. His Judicial Appointments include Judge of the High Court on 18th March 1939. He became Judge of the Court of Appeal in 1962, was knighted by Her Majesty The Queen in 1973 and received the Trinity Cross in 1974.

He was the First President of the Industrial Court under the Industrial Stabilisation Act, 1965, until 1972 when he became Chief Justice. He also served as Chairman of the Constitution

Commission in 1987 and Chairman of the Elections and Boundaries Commission until his death on 2nd December 2000.



**The Honourable Mr  
Justice Cecil Kelsick TC  
Chief Justice 1983-1985**

Mr Justice Cecil Arthur Kelsick was born in Dominica. He was educated in Montserrat at the Montserrat Grammar School. In 1938 he was awarded the Leeward Islands scholarship to study Law at King's College, University of London. In Trinidad he served as a legal draughtman and Solicitor-General from 1957-66. He was appointed to the High Court as a Judge on 1st February 1961.

The Honourable Justice Cecil Kelsick was also honoured as Father of the Year in 1979 and served as Vice President of the Scout Association, President of Harvard Sports Club and a Member of the Board of Management of Holy Name Convent. Chief Justice Kelsick received the Trinity Cross in 1985.

## The independence of the Judiciary and the Office of Chief Justice is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Chief Justice Clinton Bernard congratulates Mr A.N.R. Robinson after being sworn in as Prime Minister by President Ellis Clarke in December 1986



The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago was established in 2010 with the mandate to re-engineer the Criminal Justice System through consultation with all stakeholders



**The Honourable Mr Justice Clinton Bernard TC  
Chief Justice 1985-1995**

Mr Justice Clinton Bernard was born in Belmont, Port of Spain. He attended Osmond High School. During his legal career he served at the Ministry of Legal Affairs and was also appointed Solicitor-General. Clinton Bernard was appointed a High Court Judge in 1977. He was awarded the Trinity Cross in 1987 and accepted Silk to become a Senior Counsel in 1988.



**The Right Honourable Mr Justice Michael de la Bastide TC  
Chief Justice 1995-2002**

Mr Justice Michael de la Bastide TC, was born in Port of Spain. He attended St Mary's College, Port of Spain, where he won the Trinidad and Tobago Open Scholarship (Languages) in 1954. Between November 1961 and April 1963, he served as Crown Counsel in the office of the Attorney-General of Trinidad and Tobago; thereafter, he entered private practice.

He represented Trinidad and Tobago at hockey at the Pan American Games in Cali, Colombia in 1971, and at bridge in several international tournaments between 1980 and 1995. He was awarded the Trinity Cross in 1996. He has also served as a member of the Board of Management of St Dominic's Home from 1968 to 1988, a member of the Management Committee of Queen's Park Cricket Club from 1969 to 1992, and Vice-President of the Club from 1982 to 1992.



**The Honourable Mr Justice Satnarine Sharma TC, CMT  
Chief Justice 2002 -2008**

Justice Satnarine Sharma was born in Curepe, Trinidad. He

attended the Curepe Canadian Mission School and Hillview College. He went to England in 1963 to read Law and was called to the Bar of Inner Temple in London in 1966, and the following year was admitted to the Bar of Trinidad and Tobago.

In 1968, he returned to Trinidad and practised extensively in the Magistrate's Courts and Assizes. He was appointed a Judge of the High Court on 20th December 1983 and was elevated to the appellate bench in March of 1987. For his substantial and pioneering contribution to the development of legal jurisprudence in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean, he was awarded the Chaconia Medal (Gold) in 1998.



**The Honourable Mr Justice Ivor Archie  
Chief Justice 2008-Present**

Mr Justice Ivor Archie was born on 18th August 1960 on the island of Tobago. He attended the Scarborough Anglican Boys' School, the Bishop's High School in Scarborough, and St Mary's College in Port of Spain, Trinidad. He studied Law at the University of Southampton in the UK.

He was admitted to the Bar of Trinidad and Tobago, and began his legal career in private practice with the reputable firm, Clarke and Company, and then in service to the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands as State Counsel and Senior Crown Counsel. He also served as Solicitor General of the Cayman Islands, and acted as Attorney General on a number of occasions.

Mr Justice Ivor Archie is the youngest person to assume the duty of Chief Justice in Trinidad and Tobago. Beside the Law, the Honourable the Chief Justice has interests which range from theology to music. In fact, he is a member of one of Trinidad and Tobago's best known and celebrated choir, the Lydians. ■