“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.” (Theodore Roosevelt)

Dana Seetahal dared greatly in every facet of her life. She was a great advocate, teacher, academic, legal luminary, author, columnist, parliamentarian, friend and colleague. She was diminutive in stature but stood as a giant among men. She was never afraid to give her
opinions on matters of national significance regardless of the consequences. Her voice was always heard.

She willingly gave her time to the students of the Law School during her tenure as a full-time member of staff and afterwards as an Associate Tutor. Dana remained as an Associate Tutor even after she stopped teaching so that she could assist the Law School in training the students for international moots. She always willingly accepted them in her chambers. She recently successfully led the Law School’s team in the Americas Round of the International Criminal Court Moot resulting in the award of the Best Prosecutorial Brief. She was very proud of the team and wished that she could have gone with them to the finals in The Hague later in May but as she said to me, a special family commitment that she was supposed to host in May came first.

Dana was a brilliant lawyer with a strong work ethic who demanded of others no less than she demanded of herself. To us, she was a model of excellence. Dana was helpful and kind and assisted anyone who required help. She was reliable and true to her word. If she said that she was going to do something, it was done. She was not afraid to let you know that she was not in agreement with a course of conduct or actions that she perceived as wrong or unfair. She believed that we all had a duty to do the right thing.

Dana was the first graduate of the Hugh Wooding Law School to hold the post of President of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago. The Chairman and Members of the Council of Legal Education and the Principal and staff of the Hugh Wooding Law School (both full-time and adjunct) as well as the students mourn her loss. We express our sincere and deepest condolences to her family, friends and the nation which has lost one of its best citizens.

The following are some of the tributes that the Law School has received:

“Dana was a true star of the profession in the region, right at the top of her game as a true advocate and a lawyer’s lawyer. She and I for several years enjoyed a creative and untroubled collaboration as Course Tutors in Evidence, fuelled entirely by her tremendous work ethic and sense of balance.” Mr. Justice Dennis Morrison of the Court of Appeal of Jamaica.

“On behalf of the Jamaican Bar Association I extend our deepest condolences, thoughts and prayers to our colleagues and friends at the Hugh Wooding Law School and the Trinidad and Tobago Bar on the untimely death and brutal murder of Dana Seetahal, SC. We fondly recall Ms. Seetahal as a leading member of the Trinidad & Tobago Bar, a Past President of the Trinidad and Tobago Law Association, a former Independent Senator in the Trinidad and Tobago government, a Senior Tutor at the Hugh Wooding Law School, author and columnist for the Trinidad Express. The Jamaican Bar Association mourns the loss of our distinguished colleague Dana Seetahal SC. We condemn her brutal murder and hope that no stone will be left unturned in bringing her killer(s) to justice. We also offer our sincere condolences to her family, the Trinidadian people, the Trinidad and Tobago Law Association and her many friends and students. Our formal letter of condolence will be sent to her family and the Trinidad and Tobago Law Association.” Donovan C. Walker, President – The Jamaican Bar Association.
“I am truly saddened and wish to express my condolences. I agree with those who hailed her as a “giant”, a “titan”, and a “champion”. Mankind and Trinidad and Tobago in particular has lost a great woman. My sympathies to her friends and family.” Ruth Bowe-Darville, former President of the Bahamas Bar Association.

“Dana’s passing is too horrendous to comprehend. May God grant strength to her family, friends and colleagues throughout this difficult time.” Beverley Phillips, retired Assistant Registrar, Norman Manley Law School.

“I am extremely saddened by the manner of her passing. Please accept my sympathies as I pray that our countries will come back from the terrible brink that we seem to be heading over.” Lady Beverley Walrond QC.

“I wish to express my shock and distress on receiving the news of the awful murder of our friend and colleague, Dana Seetahal SC. Dana will be remembered by the countless attorneys across the region with whom she studied at UWI and HWLS and those who she taught and who read her work.” E. Ann Henry QC, Antigua.

“It was with a mixture of profound anguish, deep regret and disbelief that the students of the Hugh Wooding Law School and members of the legal community awoke on Sunday, 4th May, 2014 to learn of the death of a greatly admired, respected and beloved legal professional. Ms. Dana S. Seetahal, SC devoted her life to the law. As a senior practitioner, she fearlessly defended the cause of justice in every conceivable role. Her passion for law was equalled only by her sense of public service and duty to her country. She educated the public about law and influenced public opinion on legal affairs as a regular columnist in the Guardian newspaper. For us law students, she will be remembered for her selfless dedication to academia and legal education throughout the Commonwealth Caribbean. A Fulbright scholar herself, she served with distinction as a senior lecturer and course director at the Hugh Wooding Law School for twelve years. In addition, she was the author of the comprehensive and authoritative legal treatise, Commonwealth Caribbean Criminal Practice and Procedure, soon to be in its 4th edition. Through her publication, she has, and will continue to educate and inspire in countless generations of law students the same love she possessed for this field of law. We wish to extend its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Ms. Seetahal. She was one of our own, and we will continue to see her not only as a beloved teacher, but as a role model and friend. Her example will forever serve to remind us of the incalculable heights that a passion and lifelong dedication to law and justice can enable one to achieve.” Student Representative Council, HWLS.

Dana fought a good fight and lived her life her way and enjoyed every moment of it. We will miss her greatly. Her legacy as a model of excellence will live on.

May she rest in eternal peace.

Miriam Samaru, Principal, Hugh Wooding Law School

(A condolence book will be opened at the Law School from today for those who wish to remember Dana.)