

Dorothy Louise Callender

SI San Fernando

Dorothy Callender became a charter member of Soroptimist International of San Fernando in 1962, and has continued to serve this organisation from its inception to present. She contributed to the development of women and girls in the areas of education, health, economic activity and environmental awareness through her significant contributions to the various club projects over the past fifty eight years. In 1970, at a time when Homes for the Elderly were just as needed but not as common as they are today, Dorothy contributed significantly to the establishment of the Soroptimist Home for the Elderly which is a haven for persons in the winter of their years. For 45 years Dorothy has kept the books of the Home, dipping in her own pocket at times to ensure the welfare of all residents. Her book keeping was impeccable and beyond reproach. It was through her oversight of the finances that the Home was able to weather difficult periods when repairs and maintenance costs were high.

When Dorothy became a Soroptimist she was already a member of the San Fernando branch of the Coterie of Social Workers, which she joined in 1950 at the age of 21. She has therefore also given sixty five years of unbroken service to this organisation. In 1956 she contributed to the establishment of a building to house the Coterie's Day Nursery, which afforded lower income and single mothers a safe haven for their children while they were at work. She was also actively involved in the school feeding programme run by the Coterie, prior to the Government assuming this responsibility. Dot also kept the accounts of the Coterie on a continuous basis for over 30 years, even as she simultaneously kept the books of the Soroptimist Home, all on a voluntary basis.

Dorothy lost her hearing at an early age but never allowed this impairment to hamper her involvement in community service. The sheer duration (forty five and sixty five years respectively) of her quiet and consistent contribution to the Soroptimist Club and the Coterie of Social Workers, sets her apart from others who have made similar contributions to these and other organisations. In the case of the Soroptimist Home, not only did she do the book keeping, but has kept all the records of every single activity of the Home from its inception in 1970 up to three years ago, while still contributing to the other activities of the club. She also kept records of every resident during this period. She is the epitome of selfless service, dedication and fortitude and has without doubt performed long and meritorious service to her country.

Dorothy has influenced a generation of younger members of the organisation to which she belongs, inspiring them to give voluntary, selfless service to their communities. She is an outstanding example to her community of how business acumen should be utilised not just for self gain, but for the development of institutions that benefit the community.

