

## Her Honour Ena Collymore-Woodstock MBE OD

Her Honour Mrs Ena Collymore-Woodstock, MBE, OD, has been described as a 'Caribbean Icon' who gave distinguished service for many years in the Jamaican and Caribbean judiciary, as a Guide of international stature, as a Soroptimist and in many other organisations.

She was born in Spanish Town, Jamaica, on 10th September 1917.

Her distinguished career started very early when as a young lady she was among the first Jamaican women who volunteered to serve in World War II in the Auxiliary Territorial Service. On arrival she was assigned to an office but declared she hadn't come all that way to work in an office. As a result, she was trained and worked as a radar operator in Europe, seeing active service just behind the front lines. This took great courage as it was not without its dangers.

After the War she stayed in England and studied law at Grays Inn, where she was the only woman on the debate team, and was Vice President of the Inns of Court Students Union. She was the third woman to qualify as a Barrister in Jamaica and the first to actively practise.



After returning to Jamaica Mrs Collymore-Woodstock became the first woman to hold judicial office in Jamaica. On her retirement from public office she was described as a fair and honest judge, a distinguished member of the legal profession and judiciary and the woman who blazed the trail in the legal profession and judiciary for other women.

Ena was appointed a Judge of the Grand Court of Grand Cayman, and Magistrate, Registrar of Companies, Registrar, Acting Judge and Ex Officio Member of the Legislative Council in the Turks and Caicos Islands. She also provided legal services in Anguilla, acting as Registrar of Companies and Trademarks, as well as Consultant on the re-organisation of the courts departments and registries in Montserrat.

Ena was Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides Association of Jamaica for 10 years and a member of the World Committee of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and received the highest award of the Commonwealth Girl Guides, the Silver Fish, and Jamaica's highest, the Silver Bee.

As Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides movement, Ena endeavoured to ensure that Girl Guiding spread throughout Jamaica and she succeeded in having active Guide and Brownie companies in all the parishes of Jamaica. Through her training commissioners she was able to improve the standard of leaders and thus the training of Guides and Brownies in becoming useful, capable and concerned citizens. Under her leadership a number of significant projects were undertaken, including summer camps for the less fortunate children in Kingston at the Girl Guide Headquarters on Waterloo Road, and island-wide adult literacy programmes.

She was instrumental in starting Soroptimist International Clubs in the Caribbean and was a founding member of Soroptimist International of Jamaica and the Caribbean grouping of Soroptimists. As a prominent member of the Soroptimist club's civic committee she was instrumental in the lobby against discrimination in salaries for women; the establishment of the Family Court; and the establishment of a women's desk, now the Women's Bureau. A significant achievement was the promotion of legal rights for children born out of wedlock, which resulted in the passage of the Status of Children Act; this law ushered in a new day for children born out of wedlock, among other changes the names of their father on the birth certificate, they can inherit from their fathers and the bastardy law was repealed.

Ena was involved in advocacy to big business to encourage them to provide childcare spaces so that women with young children could mind their little ones in their off periods, and lobbying businesses that used young boys to sell their newspapers not to make them available until after 3:00 p.m. so that the boys would get to attend school and still have the opportunity to earn some money and assist their parents.

As she travelled and worked in other islands, Ena was instrumental in the forming of clubs in the Turks and Caicos Islands and Anguilla and served as Extension Officer for the Caribbean, working with clubs. She has been President of the Caribbean Regional Council, Chairman of the Constitutional Committee

and recognized as an outstanding Caribbean

Soroptimist. Both her daughters (Marguerite and

Careth) are Soroptimists and continue to make footprints. Marguerite has served in various capacities in Barbados, the Caribbean and internationally as President of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI). Careth is a founding member of SI Indianapolis Metro and present Coordinator/Director of their Live Your Dream programme.

Ena has been actively involved in the church, serving in various capacities, and with the civil service and YWCA.

