

Ursula deCastro

“All I want to do is SERVE”. These are the words by which SI Esperance’s nominee for #WhoisShe, lives.

At age ninety-four, Ursula is still an active member of SI Esperance, where she is loved and revered by all. She shows no sign of slowing down. At Club socials, she is usually the first on the dance floor - no evidence of knee or hip pains for her - and her creativity with floristry knows no bounds.

She has been a Soroptimist for more than forty years and has served the organisation as President, SI San Fernando, and President of the National Association of Trinidad and Tobago. She has represented Trinidad and Tobago Soroptimists at local and international conferences. The name Soroptimist was coined from the Latin ‘soror’ meaning sister, and ‘optima’ meaning best, so Soroptimist is interpreted as ‘the best for women’. Ursula epitomizes the spirit of Soroptimism.



Over the years, she has been actively involved in many organizations, sitting on committees and working groups that have focused on community issues. She is currently on the board of The Halfway House, which offers a safe space for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

Ursula started in the world of secretarial work, but like many women of that era, after marriage she chose to be a full-time wife and mother. When her children grew older and she became an ‘empty-nester’, she decided to pursue her dreams. She enrolled in a floristry course and was among an early group of pioneering women who went into business by opening her own florist shop. She has provided the flowers for all her club’s events, and often other clubs as well. She was a woman entrepreneur long before entrepreneurship became a buzz-word.

Ever-smiling, effervescent, gracious, dancing-queen, tenacious, indefatigable, committed, warm, dedicated to the cause of women’s empowerment – these are the words that come to mind when you think of Ursula deCastro. She has had and continues to have an immeasurable impact on the lives of many women in the southern community of Trinidad.

She offers as her favourite poem, a prayer for Women’s Clubs written by Mary Stewart:

The Collect for Women

Keep us O Lord from pettiness;

Let us be large in thought, in word and deed.

Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking.

May we put away all pretence and meet each other face to face,
Without self-pity and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgment and always generous.

Let us take time for all things; make us to grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences;
That in the big things of life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and know the great, common human heart of us all.

And O Lord God, let us forget not, to be kind!