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## Headteacher, 79, graduates with doctorate from Texas University

By Naomi Parris - June 7, 2022



*Rev. Dr. Bishop R.M. Massiah and the Chief Education Officer in Guyana, Dr. Marcel Hutson, adorning Ms. Evonne Osman with her hood and medallion, while the Professors in Texas, read her citation, in the background screen, at a special graduation ceremony that was held at the Generation Next building in Durban Street Wortmanville last Saturday*

WITH a scripture in her heart, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,' 79-year-old Evonne Osman, gracefully walked across the stage of a special graduation ceremony last Saturday to receive her doctorate in Transformational Leadership from Bakke Graduate University (BGU), a Dallas, Texas-based university.

Osman, a mother of one and grandmother to one, has always had a knack for obtaining information, as such, her motto was always to shoot for the stars.

During an exclusive interview with this newspaper, Osman, who is currently the headteacher of the Nehemiah Comprehensive School, said that her journey to achieving her academic goals began at the age of 12 after her father's death, which led to her migration to Guyana from Aruba, the country of her birth.

Since she had spent most of her childhood in Aruba, Osman had to return to primary school when she arrived in Guyana, although she had completed that level of schooling in her previous home country.

However, she quickly adapted and enrolled in the Cambridge Academy, a private institution where she furthered her secondary education.

Upon graduating, Osman took up a teaching position at the very institution she attended. She discovered what she wanted to do for the rest of her life, and that was to impart whatever knowledge she had gained to others.

"While there [Cambridge Academy], I had a stint of teaching...I had a three-month stint there, so that was my first-time teaching, and from then I loved it," she said, adding: "I had to leave the private institution in order to attend the teacher's training college, that was in 1964. I worked during the day and went to training college at night."

Osman moved on to the University of Guyana (UG) where she read for a Certificate and Bachelor's Degree in Education.

Shortly after completing her studies at the University, Osman thought briefly about applying for another academic programme. However, she wanted time to spend with her husband and family.

"I did a Certificate of Education at UG, and I did a Bachelors in Education at UG. Then I applied to the Caribbean Graduate school of Theology, but I left to go with my husband to Dominica. I came back to Guyana in 1999 and applied to one and two colleges," she reflected.



*Ms. Evonne Osman at her graduation ceremony*

## **OVERCOMING THE HURDLES**

Determined to learn more, Osman decided to again apply to a university to read for her master's and doctorate degrees.

"In 2012 I registered at BGU [Bakke Graduate University], so I started my masters with them, and so I continued to do the doctorate there," she said.

While studying and academics were nothing new to her, technology was a hurdle she did not think she'd had to face this time.

"I was not particularly technology-based person ...over the years, young people have been helping me. For the university, they were specific formatting that had to be done, I couldn't handle that."

However, this did not alter her course; while she wasn't the most 'tech savvy' student, she was most definitely the most determined.

The new technologies did take some time to get used to, so Osman had no trouble getting by with her studies, but the inevitables of life almost plundered in her spirit.

While embarking on this new journey, Osman suffered the loss of her dear husband, Rasheed, who was one of her biggest supporters.

Adding to her grief, Osman also lost a dear friend and very close colleague whom she had worked with for many years. Her troubles did not end there, as the ailments that come along with age also crept up on her.

Her physical health was not as before, but despite having to go through two eye surgeries and suffering from vertigo imbalance, Osman was determined not to let life's challenges sidetrack her from her goals.

Still full of energy and an inquiring mind, Osman noted that she is nowhere near retiring as her journey continues.

"It's a continuation, my general vision for life is helping young people achieve success, how? By studying and developing characteristics that are positive in life," Osman said.

She hopes that her journey will be seen as more than just a story, but an inspiration to everyone to not limit themselves because of challenges they may face in life, but to make determination and perseverance their ultimate drive to success and excellence.

“This has been my philosophy, and this I will continue at this stage. Young people in particular and anybody need to realise if God has brought me through all these years at this age to get my doctoral degree, then he can do it for them,” she said with a smile.

Mrs. Osman added, “So this is inspiration and motivation for others. I am here to motivate and inspire others that it can be done despite the hurdles, you need to have determination, you have to plan and you have to persevere.”

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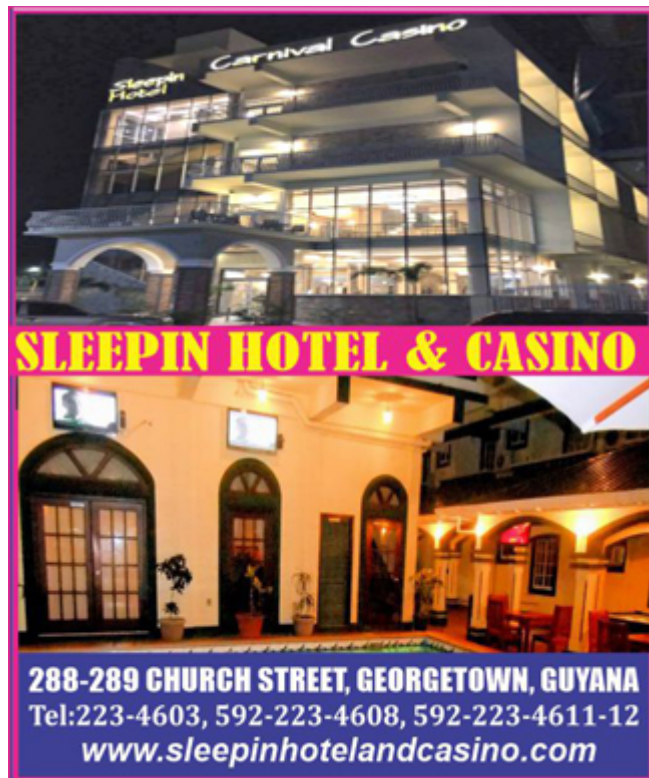
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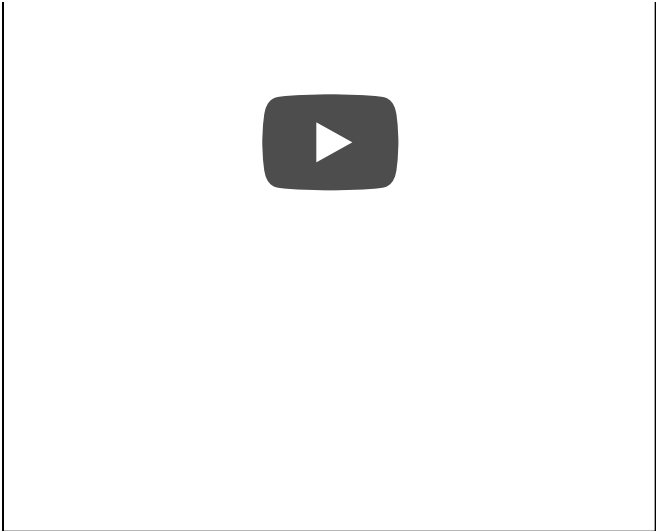
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