

Raymond Marcio Wright, Ph.D., CD 13th June 1940 - 7th July 2011

Dr Raymond Marcio Wright, Manager of Special Projects at the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica, and a leading authority on geology and energy resources, died on July 7, 2011 at the age of 71 after a prolonged illness.

EARLY LIFE

RAYMOND WRIGHT was born in Southfield in the parish of St Elizabeth, Jamaica, on the 13th of June, 1940. His interest in geology was aroused while he was at Primary school when, at the age of 9, he read a Penguin Paperback book by W. G. Fearnside entitled "*Geology in the Service of Man*" and by the age of 11 had decided that he would be a geologist.

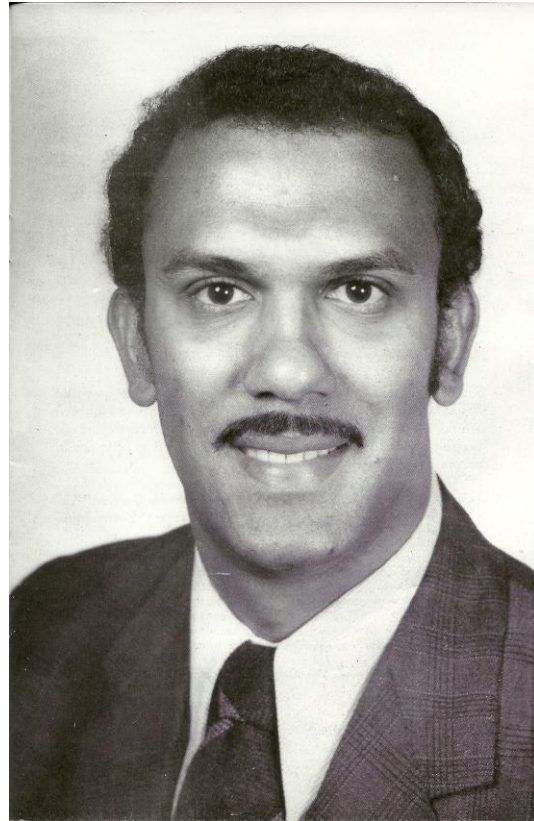
He was educated at Clarendon College in central Jamaica, where the Vice Principal, William Haydn Middleton, had introduced geology into the curriculum. Raymond studied geology and took the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations at Advanced Level, obtaining a distinction and receiving a letter of commendation for his performance from the University of Cambridge.

Raymond obtained a B.Sc. in geology with a minor in zoology at the University of Durham, England, in 1963, supported by a Jamaica government scholarship. He then undertook a M.Sc. in micropalaeontology at University College, London University supported by a British Council Scholarship in 1964.

THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Raymond Wright joined the Geological Survey of Jamaica on the 22nd of August 22 of 1964, and was soon assigned duties with the Groundwater Section. Here his work included field mapping, well logging and karst hydrogeology.

In the mid-1960s he returned to the University of London to undertake an M.Phil. under Dr Tom Barnard in carbonate sedimentology, palaeoecology and micropalaeontology. His M.Phil. encompassed a study of the larger foraminiferal-bearing Tertiary limestones of the Cockpit Country and its borders in central Jamaica. With support from a United Nations Fellowship, he visited the Institute of Geology, in Athens, Greece, and the University of Zagreb, Yugoslavia, to study hydrology and karst. His thesis entitled "*Biostratigraphical studies on the Tertiary White Limestone in parts of Trelawny and St. Ann, Jamaica*" was completed in 1967.

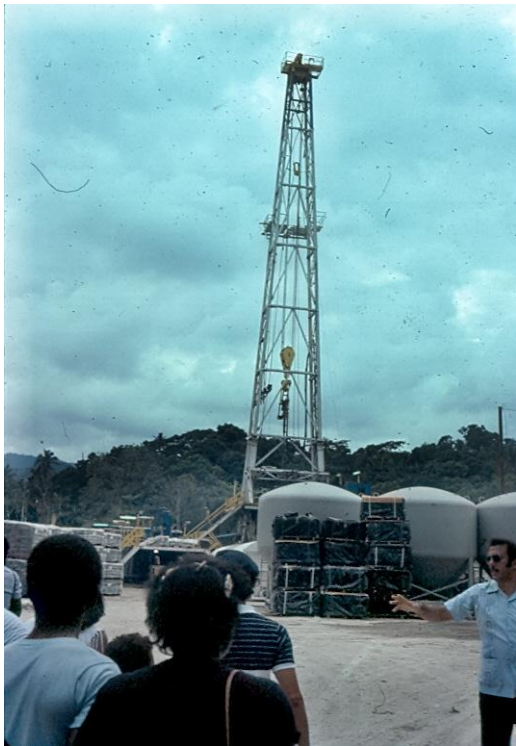


In 1973, Raymond Wright became Commissioner of Mines at the age of 33, directing the affairs of the then combined departments of Geological Surveys and Mining.

For his Ph.D., Raymond studied at the University of Stanford in California, with a specialization in sedimentology, sedimentary petrology, mathematical geology, palaeoecology, and taxonomy. He produced four papers for publication, received two research grants from Geological Society of America, and was supported by three separate fellowships from Stanford University. His thesis entitled "*Aspects of the geology of Tertiary limestones in west-central Jamaica, West Indies*" was completed in 1976.

THE OIL CRISIS

During the 1970s, when oil prices started to escalate, Raymond embarked on a renewed search for fossil fuel resources in Jamaica, and his subsequent career focused on conventional and alternative energy supplies for the country. With the aid of consultants from the oil industry he was instrumental in preparing and selling a package on Jamaican petroleum prospects to the industry. Already he had embarked, with colleagues, on a review of the geology of Jamaica and previous attempts to drill for petroleum. The oil crisis and other developments led to him helping to establish what became the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ) in 1979 where he became its Director of Exploration. With external funding, another round of exploration for oil and gas in the island was conducted which led to the drilling of several wells onshore (Hertford, Retrieve and Windsor) and the deepening of one offshore (Arawak) by the PCJ in the early 1980s.



Raymond Wright at Windsor #1 oil well in the early 1980s.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Throughout this time Raymond took a leading role in examining alternative energy sources, while assisting in developing the role of the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica in the management of energy use in Jamaica. This led to his appointment

as Group Managing Director of PCJ in 1994, a post he held until retirement in 2005. During that time he was instrumental in the push to develop Jamaica's first wind farm at Wigton in Manchester, which was completed in April 2004. In that same year, he again influenced the re-initiation of a further round of exploration for hydrocarbons, focussing on the offshore, utilizing updated exploration techniques and which continues to this date.

Following retirement, Raymond continued to serve the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica in a consulting capacity, as Special Projects Manager, advising on energy matters and leading its oil and gas exploration programme. He did so faithfully until his death.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Dr Wright's distinguished service was not limited to Jamaica. He served in various capacities internationally, including extensively as Consultant to numerous organizations and governments on all continents, except Australia. He published over 120 professional papers and two books, "*Biostratigraphy of Jamaica*" which he co-edited, in 1993, and "*Jamaica's Energy - Old Prospects New Resources*", in 1996. An updated version of the latter, entitled "*Energy, the New Agenda*" appeared in 2010.

For eight years, he gave yeoman service as Editor of the *Journal of the Geological Society of Jamaica*.

As Director on several Boards, Dr Wright gave wise counsel, demonstrating his passion for both geological and energy related matters. He was a member of several professional organizations including the Geological Society of Jamaica, American Association of Petroleum Geologists and Association of Geoscientists for International Development. An adventurer, Dr Wright also participated in five deep dives in the submersible ALVIN which later found the Titanic.

HONOURS

With such an illustrious career, it is no surprise that Raymond Wright was held in very high esteem and has been honoured with many awards, including **Commander of the Order of Distinction** from the Government of Jamaica for outstanding contributions to energy and mining, 1989; the **Chubb Award** for Excellence in the Geological sciences, 1993; **Pioneer in Renewable Energy** from the World Renewable Energy Congress, Cologne, Germany, July 2002; the inaugural **CARICOM Science Award and Medal** for Dedication to Developing the Area of Earth

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Science, 2006; and the **The National Medal for Science and Technology** from the Government of Jamaica in 2008.

Ray was a person of great charm, whose infectious passion for his subject and kindly attitude endeared him to his friends and colleagues alike. In many ways he was the epitome of that rare being, a civil servant who was able to communicate

in lay terms to the political establishment the value of science for improving the prosperity of the nation.

Edward Robinson
Gavin Gunter
Simon F. Mitchell