THE INAUGURAL DR RUDRANATH CAPILDEO LEGACY LECTURE

"From Lion House to Legend" Dr Rudranath "Rudy" Capildeo
Venue: Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain
Date: Sunday, May 4th, 2014
Time: 7 p.m.

I shall begin by expressing my deep debt of gratitude to Governor Rambarran, whose vision was realised through the excellence of his officers of the Central Bank. I especially thank Charlene Ramdhanie for helping me through this process. Governor Rambarran, thank you for making this tribute to my father possible, for the superb exhibition you have arranged, for inviting me to give this talk, for inviting my wife Rita and our family — I really cannot believe that this happened; I really cannot believe that this was going to happen in my life time. Perhaps you thought, "Get Rudy before he goes off to see his Pa, Rudranath Capildeo."

Of course, this occasion would not have happened if you did not cherish the memory of my father. Your presence here tonight is most gratefully acknowledged and I thank you all for coming, especially the students of QRC. Thank you, one and all.

I have to say, Governor, that you are very brave. You knew of my father Dr Rudranath Capildeo but you did not know Dr Rudy Capildeo! So everybody is thinking, "What will he be like, what will his talk be like, will it be "feast or famine", Prosecco or vintage Champagne, tired canapés or banquet for the senses! I have no doubt you will tell me in due course!

In this talk I will present to you the two loves of my father — your country, Trinidad and Tobago and Science in London. I will also touch upon his extraordinary knowledge of comparative religion.

In preparing my talk I have been greatly helped by my wife, Rita Lucia and my son, Rudy Charles Capildeo and the support of my children Lucy, Joseph and Oliver, and by all of you who have found time to talk to me: Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, Senator Suren Capildeo and Shakti Capildeo, Mrs Pria Capildeo, Mrs Leila Capildeo, Vahni Capildeo, Mr Jokhar and, of course, Governor and Mrs Rambarran.

I am grateful to a number of sources — not least Anthony de Verteuil's book, *Eight East Indian Immigrants*, the collection of Capildeo Speeches in the *Lotus and Dagger* compiled by Samaroo Siewah, *A History of Modern Trinidad (1783–1962)*, by Bridget Brereton, Ivar Oxaal's *Black Intellectuals come to Power*, Eric Williams's *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, which he famously wrote in one month, his history of slavery in the Caribbean (1942) when Williams was at Howard University; the evocative novel of Trinidad *The White Woman on the Green Bicycle* by Monique Roffey in which she bases her story in Trinidad 1956, 1963, 1970 and 2006. I have revisited Naipaul and even looked up *Rough Guide to Trinidad and Tobago* (and even my *Year Book of Trinidad and Tobago 1965–1966* compiled by H. Dow "100th year of issue" $4.00. My copy signed M. J. Pearson — given to me by one of my patients recently).

Of my father's books, the most important is *The Wisdom of India*, edited by Lin Yutang, 4th Edition, 1956. This is the book he always had by his bedside and the last book he read before he died.

If my father were alive today he would be 94 years of age. He died 44 years ago — nearly two generations have passed. In six years time it would be 100 years from his birth date and 50 years from the time of his death in 1970 at St James' Hospital, Balham, London. My father would have approved of this simple mathematical logic — it puts the timing of my talk and the exhibition into perspective. Fortunately, I have lived 20 years longer than my father otherwise I would not have been here to give you this talk this evening.

Where memory stops, history begins. Tonight I will be giving you vivid memories of my father. I never thought I would ever have this opportunity to speak about him in public, let alone on this platform, here in Trinidad, the country he loved — in front of this audience and tomorrow's audience of Trinidadians, the young Trinidadians, the future of this wonderful country. What a wonderful challenge and a wonderful opportunity! I believe my father's spirit is with us tonight.

How do I remember my father? How do we remember our parents? How important are they in our life? There is a simple test which also brings a universal conclusion. If I asked you to write six pages of A4 about your grandparents, with dates and details, how many of you would struggle? If I ask you to write a page of A4 about your parents, you would say "impossible —10 pages or a book but I could not do a single sheet of A4."This simple test shows how important are our parents in our life. So it was with my father, Rudranath, and my mother Ruth who only left me five years ago, aged 85 years.

My father divided his time between London and Trinidad — everybody in Trinidad knew that he was a university lecturer in Mathematics at University College, London. Most commentators that I have read have missed the point that he also had a wife and son to return to in the UK and also that he needed a salary. He never had independent means, contrary to what Ivar Oxaal has written. He relied on his salary. Later, after his mother died in 1952, he had an inheritance, but my father was always very conscious that for years, money, namely lack of it, was a constant problem. Like Naipaul's first wife, Pat, who looked after Naipaul for years, my father depended on my mother, Ruth having a teacher's salary, to look after me and our home in England.

My father compartmentalised his life: London was where his wife, Ruth and I were and university work which gave him time to think and to do his university work. In London he found time, somehow, to become a barrister and I remember my mother helping him and testing him on cases that he had memorised. This was about 1953 when I was eight years old and living in Brighton. I remember asking him if he was going to get a "First" in his law degree — I already knew that he had a brilliant brain but he said "I only have to pass this one," which mystified me. Between his law books he also loved to read my "Just William" books by Richmal Crompton. He used to buy them for me in his favourite secondhand book shops. (His other vice was the weekly Littlewood's Football Coupon — a lottery ticket to a fortune which never came!) However, if you don't buy a ticket ....! You don't win a fortune. I remember him sitting up in bed on a Sunday morning, pyjamas and dressing gown on reading "Just William"! Trinidad was very different, particularly when he was dragged into politics. He succumbed to enormous pressure to take on the leadership of the DLP, the Democratic Labour Party — it would have major consequences which included a family split from his elder brother Simbhoonath (his sisters also dividing their loyalty) and was seriously detrimental to his health. Both brothers wanted to help the Indian population in Trinidad but they also wanted a better life for everybody through education but also economic improvement, getting rid of unemployment and so forth. They were destined to do it in different ways. I just wonder if the DLP could have done things better, much better. Most importantly my father talked about the need for a new type of Trinidadian.

It is clear to me that the events surrounding the death of my father remain somewhat of a mystery to a Trinidadian audience. This is not surprising since my father had always kept a strong division between his life in Trinidad and his life in London. The division was the width of the Atlantic Ocean. He had been taken into St James's Hospital, Balham two months or so before his death on, I believe, the 12th of May, 1970. He was transferred to the Hammersmith Hospital, where the famous Postgraduate Medical School was, because St James' Hospital had no kidney unit or facilities for renal dialysis. At the time, I was working as a senior house officer at the Guy's Maudsley Neurosurgical Unit opposite King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill in Camberwell.

I visited my father every third day because of my on-call duties at my hospital. He was not well. He was undergoing tests. Sitting by his bedside often with other people there, I could see he was restless, unsettled and he appeared more Indian and more specifically Hindu. When we, the visitors, were not there I suspected that he was reading his favourite book which he always had by his bedside, *The Wisdom of India* edited by Lin Yutang. This book had chapters on Indian piety — hymns from the Rigveda, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, a chapter on Indian Imagination, stories from the Ramayana; a chapter on Indian Humour – the Fables of Pantachantra and a chapter on Buddhism.

His comments were addressed to his visitors; I received the asides. Sometimes he seemed cross, frustrated and probably did not know what was going on. Suddenly, he was transferred from the Hammersmith Hospital back to St James' Hospital, Balham. I had a summons that Dr Keith Peters, Reader in Medicine (later Professor) at the Hammersmith Hospital wanted to see me. It was never an easy journey by public transport getting to the Hammersmith Hospital, which sat next to the austere Victorian prison called Wormwood Scrubs. I could not get to the Hammersmith Hospital quick enough to hear what Dr Peters had to say.

It took me nearly two hours that day to get there. I was told to go to a laboratory where I found Dr Peters talking to two research fellows. As I walked into the laboratory at the appointed hour, Dr Peters immediately turned and came over to me. I was standing. He was standing, leaning his elbow on a laboratory bench. "I'm sorry" he said. "Your father is Australia Antigen positive so we can't dialyse him." He turned on his heels and went back to the two research fellows. I continued to stand there, shocked. It did not really sink in what Peters had said. I did not know what to do, but I could not believe that the "relative's interview" was over in less than 1½ minutes. Peters, realising that I was still standing there, turned again and said, "Can I help you with anything else?" "No, thank you," I said, and I turned and went. I was going to have to work out what he meant about my father. Whatever else, I vowed that I would never treat a relative of a very sick patient, let alone a doctor with a sick relative, in this manner — never, ever. I find professional arrogance in any profession totally unacceptable. Knowledge and experience should bring increased understanding and with better understanding, increased humility and awareness, increasing as we climb higher in our profession year on year.

Australia Antigen is now known as Hepatitis B Surface Antigen and can indicate current hepatitis infection. The antigen was originally isolated from an Australian Aborigine by an American, Barrak Bloomberg. I remember my father saying that he had received blood transfusions when he was ill from rheumatic fever. Screening for hepatitis B in donor blood used for transfusions was not carried out until the 1980s and screening for hepatitis C, not until the 1990s. Usually, contact with the virus in healthy people was associated with recovery in about 85% of cases but around 10% would have a chronic hepatitis illness and also would be carriers of the hepatitis virus. In immuno-compromised patients contact with carriers could be disastrous. In Edinburgh, 1969–1970, there was an outbreak of dialysis associated hepatitis. This would have been known to Peters. Seven patients on dialysis died and two transplant surgeons and two laboratory technicians died. My father was a carrier and his hepatitis may have still been active according to the tests done at the Hammersmith Hospital. So dialysis was not offered to him.

Back at St James' Hospital, my father was treated very kindly. He had a single room — very unusual in the National Health Service, but it usually meant a huge favour or that the patient was very ill. In my father's case it was both, although the full realisation did not hit us. Later, his Consultant Physician would tell me how much he respected my father, of my father's formidable intellect and the realisation that my father was a very special person. Nobody uses the words "Your father is dying" or "Your father is going to die". In our psyche we all expect tomorrow. We travel in hope. I worked at my own hospital and went to see my father when my duties no longer called. Our on-call rota was very strict. I rarely finished my day duties until 7 or 8 pm and, if on night duty, this would follow daytime duties, and after being on-call at night you followed with your normal duties the next day. So it was unusual that I was at St James's Hospital around 7 pm. As usual a lot of people had come to see my father. From 1967, Kalawatee (my father's elder sister who had always been very close to him from the time he was a baby, as she recounted to me in 1961), Kalawatee had sent her two daughters, Sawati and Chitrawati, to look after my father at his home at 17 Malwood Road, Clapham South and in return he helped them both to enter teacher's training college, Sawati in London and Chitrawati to Bristol, both to become teachers.

This particular night, Sawati was upset. Chitrawati had found a boyfriend and Sawati wanted Mamoo to correct Chitra. I remember getting agitated that so many people were there — Trinidadians, I believe, but I don't know who they all were. I didn't want Sawati to bother my father, but she was insistent. Unlike the National Health Service in the UK today with uncontrolled visiting hours, relatives entered the room in ones or twos especially when the patient was in a side room off the main ward, a small single room of the sort my father was in. By the time it was my turn — I was the last — it was getting very close to the end of visiting time. My father was very calm despite the stream of visitors. I apologised for all the visitors, which I had no control over, and for Sawati bothering him. Again, he said, "Of no matter." He was quiet. He was himself. He was clearly ready for a rest, he was ready for me to go. I kissed him "Good Night," and I said I would see him the next day.

At this time, I was living in a flat at 54 Orlando Road, Clapham Old Town in a house that my father had bought in 1965. The telephone went downstairs (one telephone, near the front door, for all three flats) . . . the telephone went at "ten to seven" in the morning. The nurse said, "Your father has died."

I got to the hospital. I do not remember very much. But I have never forgotten what the nurse said. She went into my father's hospital room at about ten to six. He was sitting up and reading his only bedside

book *The Wisdom of India*. She asked him if "he was alright?" "Did he want anything?" He apparently thanked her. He said that he did not need anything. He was comfortable. He carried on reading until 6.15 am. Then he put his book down and died at 6.20 am.

I went back to my father's house in Malwood Road. In the garden, where the only photograph in my possession with my father was taken, (it is here at the Exhibition), I stood looking at the large tree at the bottom of the garden, the raised lawn and path all around the rectangle where we had played cricket with a real cricket ball, a second hand bat and an upturned crate; the wall on the left side of the garden, looking down the garden where the cement covering had come away a long time ago, the rubble face stretching down to the garden bed where as a youngster, I used to watch a colony of tiny red ants go about their daily work; the back of the house with its many windows and many memories; to the adjacent equally tall Victorian houses and then I saw it. I can't explain. A small beautiful yellow bird, perhaps a hint or two of deep red, was sitting on the wall looking at me. I was in a highly emotional state. But the bird sat there, sideways on, head turned towards me. It was in no hurry. I stood there. The bird continued to look at me. It did not move nor did I. Then it went. Such portents are commonly described in the literature of the ancients. I don't pretend to explain or understand. It was, however, a very strange occurrence on a dreadful day. The bird had gone. I didn't know what to do for the rest of the day. I had jobs to do for my patients on this day so I went into my hospital ward and worked.

I had not been able to warn my mother that my father's death was imminent. I had no idea myself. I thought there would be a tomorrow. I thought he would be discharged home on a low-protein diet given to patients with chronic renal failure. I thought there was still more time. My mother was very upset.

The funeral was very sad. The service was held at the South London Crematorium, Rowan Road, Streatham Vale, SW16. My cousin Owad Permanand, arrived to tell me that he had wanted me to release my father's body and that he, Owad, would take my father's body back to Trinidad for a huge Hindu funeral where thousands and thousands would come. The more he talked the more it sounded like a circus. I said that I had decided that my father's body would be cremated and since his whole life revolved around Trinidad and London, London and Trinidad I would arrange for his ashes to be dispersed in mid-Atlantic half way between Trinidad and London. At the funeral, Sawati had arranged for a pundit to say prayers. Two or three DLP members, I believe, came but I do not remember who they were. They did not stay long at the Wake at Malwood Road.

In *Lotus and the Dagger* there is an interview with Mr Kenneth Lalla who I am delighted to say is here this evening. Mr Lalla "had been admitted to the Middle Temple, Inns of Court in October 1956 and qualified as a Barrister at Law in 1958," the same time as my father. "He would return to Trinidad working in private practice in 1959 and become Member of Parliament for Couva in 1966 on a DLP ticket." The interview began with the interviewer asking Mr Lalla, "Perhaps we could start with the death of Dr Rudranath Capildeo in 1970 in London where his body was cremated. Then we can work our way to the middle and beginning."

Charlene Ramdhanie would ask me the same when she interviewed me at the T & T High Commission in London, March 24th, 2014.

In his interview Mr Lalla states, "It was around the middle of May, 1970 after the Black Power Uprising." He describes colleagues congregating at the DLP headquarters in Carlos Street. Amongst them were Bhadashe Muraj and Owad Permanand. They had been informed by Kalawatee, now Senator Permanand. Apparently, Mr Lalla went with Dr Ramcharan, Dr Bharalt to London to attend the funeral.

In that interview, Mr Lalla recalled chatting with my father when they were law students in London and Rudranath said that he was caught between two worlds — whether to continue his lectureship at the University of London, to write his books, or come to Trinidad.

Mr Lalla arrived when the ceremony was in progress and the pundit was giving the last rites. For Mr Lalla, "it was a very sad, emotional and melancholy moment for me", "it was indeed sad, touching and a moment of great loss", "the end of Dr Rudranath Capildeo a scholar, a mathematical genius and distinguished son of the soil".

The deep sorrow felt by everyone meant that it was not the time for a eulogy.

The Trinidad contingent paid their respects to me and left. I never heard from them again. The London *Times* did record my father's death. A number of my former medical students at St George's Hospital thought that I was the Dr R Capildeo who had died! I think they were pleased to know that the news of my death was premature. At least they asked, "Who was your father and where are you from again?" Previously it was "Where are you from?", looking at my brown skin.

Some of you might have liked a large Hindu funeral in Trinidad for my father. I believed he was above this. He was a Trinidadian and very proud of it. His beliefs related to all men. I wanted my father remembered for what he had done for Trinidad, for science, for what he stood for and what he had done for all of you. I also did not want his funeral turned into a political statement for East Indians, to encourage a rise in Indian nationalism or an occasion used to cause disharmony and division in a Trinidad reeling from the Black Power Riots. These things would pass. My father's legacy would not.

So, my father died of chronic renal failure. How long was he ill? Nine months or so before he died I remember my father inviting me around for lunch. He made it himself in the little kitchen on the first floor of Malwood Road, looking out at the garden and the tree with full branches at the end of the garden that blotted out the yard behind. In a previous time, this was the small bedroom for guests that Naipaul had complained about. My father made the famous Italian dish, chicken cacciatore. To my surprise the meal was just for me. I asked him why he was not eating, he said "I can't" — he was already on a low protein diet. He already had chronic renal failure. It was the beginning of the end.

It was around this time that he gave me a sealed envelope that had been deposited in the Euston Branch of Barclays Bank in August 1951. My father was just 31 years of age in 1951. Underneath the seals, there was the signature of his brother Simbhoonath Capildeo, a solicitor by profession. The envelope contained a scientific paper that he felt was so important he put it in the bank for safe-keeping. "Don't publish it for 50 years — they are not ready for it," I was told.

My father was happy that I had enjoyed my meal he had prepared for me. The serious, thoughtful face that I remember so well but on this occasion was kindly, patronising, affectionate — a moment to cherish. There would not be any more.

Chronic renal failure develops over three years on average. Perhaps it was ironic that after working as a senior house officer in neurosurgery, my next job was an SHO in Brighton, a post which included renal medicine. For the first four months of this job I looked after the patients coming in three times a week for renal dialysis and when I was on call I looked after the renal unit. I was the assistant to the Guy's transplant surgeon, Mike Buick, when the first kidney transplant in Brighton was carried out in 1971. This option was denied my father.

My father was ill when he did not return to Trinidad in 1967. Commentators also miss the point that physical illness seriously affected my father's life at crucial times in his development. I did not know until I was doing my research for this paper that my father's first attack of rheumatic fever was when he was a young boy of eight years.

In the interview with Ivar Oxaal in *Black Intellectuals Come To Power*, my father said he was bedridden for two years. He recovered. This must have been a desperate time for the Capildeo family in the "Lion House" in Chaguanas. Pundit Capildeo had died when my father was five years old. His brother, Simbhoonath, six years older than my father was now head of the family. There had been 12 children, nine girls and two boys surviving. The eighth child, a boy, Omkar, had died very young. My grandmother Soogee must have thought that Rudranath would also die. Soogee must have decided that everything depended on my father's recovery and that she would drill him the only way she knew how.

Storming into the Headmaster's study at QRC (the legend goes), she demanded that Rudranath should be admitted. At that time, out of 366 scholars, 60 were of European background, the rest 23 "Negroes" (as they were called in those days) and only six Indians according to Anthony de Verteuil. Soogee made sure that all the girls were educated until the age of 15 years. She made even more sure my father studied far harder.

For seven years, from1931 to 1938, every Sunday evening Soogee and my father gathered up their essentials, flour, rice, fish for the week and then came back to the "Lion House" on a Friday, and at weekends my father did clerical duties in the shop. They stayed at 17 Luis Street, Woodbrook, Port of Spain during the week.

Pupils of QRC! Don't believe for one minute that my father was brilliant from day one! His English was poor. They spoke a mixture at home of Hindi and English. He had a rival in Lionel Seemungal, who won the Stollmeyer Prize in Mathematics three years running in the Sixth Form ahead of my father. In 1937, at "A" Level, my father came in fourth with 58.6%! I can hear Soogee say, "The boy need a lash, I'm not sitting in Luis Street all week for 58.6%!"

My father then said, "No more clerical duties in the shop at weekends." Next time he got 84.2% — but Seemungal had 87.1%. My father tried the Island Scholarship early, in 1937, but was unsuccessful. In 1938, he beat Seemungal and won the Island Scholarship because he was better at Latin. My father was outstanding in Geometry and Calculus . Arithmetic, I was faster ! [Big Smile, Audience disbelief!]. I tell this part of my story to encourage all students everywhere, especially QRC students: Ability and Stickability. Stickability means hard work, focusing on your goal and never giving up. But first you need to know yourself and you need a mentor to guide you otherwise you will join the "School of Hard Knocks".

In the *Lotus and the Dagger,* Dr John Gaffar La Guerre writes, "The Island Scholarship was the most coveted prize in Trinidad and Tobago; it was a prize which invested the winner with superhuman qualities even today [1994]. Island Scholars were expected to misbehave — a mark of their genius it was argued. It was heresy to question their views since they were certified as knowing everything, a tendency which sometimes led to arrogance on the scholar's part." He goes on to state that these attitudes were to a large degree related to the way society was stratified, the paucity of higher education, and success at examinations was one of the avenues by which racial equality could be proven. To beat the ruling Whites was behind the African ambitions and clearly in Soogee, my grandmother. It was her driving ambition and clearly involved the entire Capildeo family, as well.

My father had arrived in London in August 1939 to start his medical studies at University College. In October 1939, the science faculty moved to Bangor, North Wales because of the bombing of London by Hitler's Germany, what became known as the "Blitz". As a student at Bangor University in North Wales he again had another attack of rheumatic fever which put him to bed, my father told me, for at least nine months. It was at this time he realised he could not continue his medical course and he "changed horses" — he switched to mathematics as a result of his illness.

My father had to cope with the fatigue of his prolonged periods of illness, the rheumatic fever had affected his heart and his muscles were very weak. As a boy, "he had to learn to walk again." The impact on his mother, Soogee, and the rest of the children must have been considerable.

Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory illness that typically follows a throat infection due to the streptococcus bacteria. It commonly occurs in children between the ages of six and 15. It is an autoimmune type of illness and is believed to be due to an antigen sensitising the tissues, and an antibody cross — reactivity, that typically involves joints (hence the term "rheumatic"), but also skin, heart and even brain.

My father almost certainly had myocarditis, inflammation of the heart muscle. I remember when I was eight or nine years of age, 1953 onwards, that he had regular checks with "old Mallinson" (Dr Mallinson) at University College Hospital in Gower Street. Later I remember that my father used to check his pulse when he was getting "vexed". Whether he was checking a cardiac arrhythmia or a tachycardia I did not know but it was a powerful reminder that all was not well. Rheumatic fever also affects heart valves.

Today, streptococcal infection can easily be treated with penicillin. I had severe recurrent tonsillitis as a child and was a regular visitor to the "Polish Doctor", a few doors down in Malwood Road. Eventually I became resistant to penicillin. My daughter, Lucy, aged 18 months, went down with acute Henoch-Schonlein Purpura, an allergic vasculitis occurring after streptococcal infection.

Fortunately, she recovered in six weeks. On my renal unit in Brighton, nearly 20 per cent of the patients had renal failure secondary to acute Henoch-Schonlein purpura. I did not need reminding of my father's renal failure nor what might happen to my beautiful daughter. In my time I went down with beta-haemolytic streptococcal septicaemia. So there is clearly a genetic predisposition on my side of the Capildeo family to streptococcal related illness.

My father also had "a stoop" — a tendency to be round shouldered, to appear as if looking to the floor when walking. I know he had been diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic inflammatory disease of the spine with a tendency for the vertebra to fuse together. Severe cases are referred to as a "bamboo spine" due to the fusion of many vertebrae. It can affect many joints in the body. Ankylosing spondylitis has a strong genetic predisposition with more than 90% of cases having the HLA-B27 genotype. My father told me that he received gamma radiation treatment to his spine. This early type of radiotherapy treatment was never used in my 45 years in medicine and had been discontinued due to its inherent dangers. However, today, we have harnessed the benefits of gamma rays and the gamma-knife is used in surgery and in PET scanning which also uses gamma rays to localise cancer cells.

My father called his stoop the "famous Capildeo stoop", implying that other members of the family had it too.

Some commentators, including Ivar Oxaal, refer to my father's physical frailty and at times, psychological frailty. The opposing argument is to think that my father achieved a great deal despite his physical illness and at times his depression or psychological frailty was secondary to his on-going physical illness with periods of remissions and relapses.

He did not accept his illnesses passively. He was of short stature, about 5 feet 7 inches on a good day, and depending upon who held the tape measure! He used weights to build up his shoulders, straighten the upper part of his spine and he developed huge biceps and triceps. Certainly far bigger than mine. I got to know them well. When I was being bullied at school my father's reaction was to go out and buy me boxing gloves. He was very angry with me and the world and between love and tears he taught me to box and the huge biceps and triceps were my punch bags. I did not want to fight and I'm by nature a pacifist but to survive in school, let alone the outside world, I would have to learn to physically stand up for myself. My last fight, related to the colour of my skin, was at the age of 14 years.

My father was not a great "DIY" person. He tried. The efforts were more a "B — could do better". He had built the huge bookshelves that lined his study at Malwood Road with his brother, Simbhoonath. In Brighton, in the basement of the house and in the corridor, he dug out the walls and cemented in a short scaffolding pole that he could stretch from. I loved it because I could dive from the stairs and grab the pole and swing like Tarzan in the trees before letting go and jumping to the floor. Part of the scaffolding pole went through the front basement room wall and into the room! Since this room had an old kitchen table in it, where my father and mother enjoyed playing table tennis, it did not matter so much. That table was where Barry and I played Subbuteo table football as teenagers when I went to Varndean Grammar School.

My father used his powerful shoulders for swimming in the sea in Brighton. Brighton was the original home of sea-bathing in Britain. One day I was coming out of the water. My father was partly dressed. We were experts at changing from our wet costumes under the towel when changing on the beach, before the walk home. My father dropped his trousers. He had his long white underpants on — we probably would call them trendy long shorts today — and suddenly he ran down the pebbled beach (it was difficult enough to walk on the pebbles let alone run) – and into the water. Thirty or 40 yards out he saved a drowning woman. Nobody else had noticed her cries for help. By the time the police had arrived my mother had gone home to get some dry clothes for my father and returned. He had dressed and we were going home. The policeman did not even notice us as we went past.

It was the only time I had ever seen him run. Playing cricket, he never ran up to bowl. He enjoyed bowling. He stood at the crease and let fly! There was no point in subtlety! Aim for the middle stump! Any rate in our garden, you did not want to encourage the batsman by "bowling outside the stumps" — besides we used a crate not stumps! He was also a very accurate thrower of the ball and his slipper!

It was my father's desire to separate his life in Trinidad and his life in London and England. In a long interview with Ivar Oxaal my father never mentions my mother or me. Yet it was at Bangor, North

Wales that they met. My mother, Ruth, was a very bright young student who went to University at 17 years of age. She was one of the first female students at Bangor University where she read English and Philosophy. She became an expert on Shakespeare and Chaucer.

At home, I have a tape recording of her on her 89th Birthday. She recited the first three pages of "The Pardonner's Tale" from memory in Chaucerian English. She was attracted to my father's charisma but most of all by his intellect. Simply she said, "He stood head and shoulders above them all." She saw him in the debates where he was outstanding. He could argue for either side of the motion, the "for or against", to see both sides of the argument, the basis for his logic in applied physics, the same ability required to be lawyer, and I suspect, lead others to see him as a future politician. From president of the Debating Society he would become president of the Union, which demanded personal charisma, popularity and votes, the attributes I believe which lead him to one day becoming the Leader of the DLP Party in Trinidad.

He had done his first MB – Chemistry, Physics and Biology – having won the Island Scholarship in 1938, in Mathematics, Spanish and Latin. The acute reccurence of rheumatic fever after successfully finishing the first MB in Medicine put him back to bed and he could not continue his studies in medicine. Amazingly, he switched to Mathematics and from out of the disappointments, his home sickness and loneliness there would come an exceptional flowering which I believe was due to my mother's presence in his life. Very soon his genius in Mathematics and Applied Physics would be recognised. In the Mathematics Department my father had a tutor and a mentor in Professor A. C. Stevenson. Stevenson would teach him "Elasticity" and Applied Physics.

He was very fond of Stevenson and frequently went to Stevenson's house. In 1943, he was awarded a B.Sc. with 1st Class Honours and a Distinction (1944) in advanced subjects, Hydrodynamics and Elasticity and college prizes in Applied Mathematics (1943) and Pure Mathematics (1944). In 1945, he was awarded the M.Sc. with Distinction. He was 25 years of age. He goes on to get his Ph.D. [the fees paid for by my mother] October 1946 to June 1948.

About two years ago, on the same day when I took my father's 1951 paper out of "deep storage", a nurse, on a Tuesday afternoon in my Essex Nuffield Clinic room said, "There is a man here who wants to say 'Hello'. Apparently, he knew your father." I invited him in. "My name is Stevenson" (Junior). I knew your father as a young boy. He would come often to our house in Bangor when the Science Department was there in World War II." Stevenson (Junior) had retired, a physicist working for Amersham Radioactive Pharmaceuticals. His daughter was an eye surgeon who had married a colleague of mine. "I remember one story — your father came into the house in Bangor, North Wales — laughing. A little boy (obviously Welsh) had seen my father and had ran off down the road shouting "Mum, Mum, Mum — I've seen a cannibal."

My mother must have been very strong-minded to form a relationship with my father in the early 1940s when prejudice was rife, particularly "mixed marriages" were frowned on. Later Naipaul would find the same when he married Pat, his mentor, provider and editor of his work. The attraction between Ruth and Rudranath was mutual and matured into love and in 1945, I was the benefactor.

In her 80s my mother asked with a twinkle in her eye, "Do you know where you were conceived?" Clearly I did not know. "In a bluebell wood in North Wales!" was the answer. Six months ago, I was in my newly decorated room in the Essex Nuffield Hospital, Brentwood. Sister Kate said, "We are putting pictures up in the rooms. I thought you would like these London pictures." I looked at the excellent photographs that had been framed. Seeing that I had not immediately chosen the "Houses of Parliament" or the "London Eye" she showed me option two — a sunset and two woodland scenes — Bluebell Woods! I chose the "Bluebell Woods" for my room.

My parents returned to London in 1944. I know that they lived in a small flat in Kilburn: two rooms with a kitchen on the landing and water had to come up two flights of stairs. They were very happy despite their poverty. My grandmother, Barbara, came to help. Barbara was devoted to me and I was to her. It may have been in this house that my father took on a kindness to the landlady. She had lost a son in the RAF. I know nothing about him but his first name was "Tony". She asked my father to promise that his first son would be called "Tony" in honour of her dead son. I was duly registered on my birth certificate as "Tony Rudranath Capildeo". I was not christened. Later I was told "religion was up to me." My mother was not hugely impressed with the name "Tony"! I was called Rudy at home and at

school. When I showed my personal credentials for entrance to university I was not the person registered on my birth certificate — all my school certificates said “Rudy Capildeo” so I had to go to a firm of solicitors to swear an affidavit that “I was me”, and I have been Rudy ever since.

1945 must have been very hard for my mother. I was born in February and in September my father returned to Trinidad, fearful that he might not get a university teaching post in London, according to Ivar Oxaal, “to test the waters” in Trinidad, I believe. My grandmother, Barbara, helped to look after me as my mother, Ruth, started her teaching profession.

My father got a teaching post at QRC and lived with his mother back at Luis Street cycling to and from college (Ivar Oxaal, p. 66). His elder brother, Simbhoonath, had become a solicitor, largely self-taught by all accounts. He was a sugarcane farmer when Rudranath left. Now, Simbhoonath was also involved in politics, social relations and Hinduism (p. xix, *Lotus and the Dagger*). Ivar Oxaal (p. 166) states that “from 1945 can be dated the renaissance of Indian consciousness and culture in the colony.” “Also that Rudranath helped his brother Simbhoonath in ‘mustering the vote for the United Front candidate in Caroni’.

There appears to have been a fracas at QRC (Oxaal, p. 166) in which my father suggested that QRC science students “could be radically expanded and that QRC could become a university college.” This did not go down well. Perhaps it was a way to leave QRC. He returned to London, to his wife Ruth and to me. My father had not told his mother that he was married and that he had a son. It would be three more years before she knew. Unfortunately, I never met Soogee. From what I have read and surmised, she was the Capildeo family and she made the Capildeos in Trinidad.

My father got a post as a Junior Demonstrator in Mathematics at University College in London, going up the different grades to become a full Lecturer in 1950. My parents bought a small terraced house, 10 West Avenue, Wallington. I remember the tea table — I must have been around three and the odd occasions that I knocked over the full glass of milk (no plastic beakers in those days). I don’t think it was a particular favourite of mine — particularly warmed up milk. Running away from my mother, I ran into the wooden table leg and have a small scar on my forehead to prove it. But in Britain, in the immediate post-war years 1945 to 1950 was an even greater period of austerity; ration books meant people still went hungry and for me to knock over the precious allowance of milk was unforgiveable.

I remember that we kept a few chickens in the garden. I am not sure who brought the chicken run but I remember my father in the cold putting up the chicken wire and my mother planting some vegetables. In the house the heating was a coal fire downstairs — it was long before central heating and sometimes the house felt colder inside than outside. This was winter, however. The good natured old lady from next door would throw over a bag of vegetable peelings for the chickens. I was outside bending down with my father getting a bucket of coal. It was cold and very dark, the worst of the winter days. Suddenly over the fence coming down from a height was the bag of vegetable peelings hitting my father on his shoulder – with one swift movement he had picked up the bag and pitched it back over the fence and I heard the cry of “Oh”! I laughed and couldn’t wait to “spill the beans” to my Mum who gave my Dad a telling-off.

When there were just three of you it was always better to be on the “2-to-1” side. My father could never kill the chickens so “a man” came in to do that. The chickens and the chicken pen lasted only a season or so then normality returned to the garden.

At this time, racial prejudice and particularly colour prejudice had heightened because of more West Indian immigrants coming to the UK and London in particular. They would take the menial jobs that the English did not want, but they had hoped for a better life for their children and hoped the English education system would give their children the start that they required and that their parents hoped for.

It was in 1950 that my father bought his house in London with his brother Simbhoonath, 17 Malwood Road, Clapham South, where he would live for the rest of his life. It was on the Northern Line, close to the Underground Station and a direct line to Goodge Street or Warren Street and University College. Simbhoonath had hoped to become a solicitor in London but it was not to be and he returned to Trinidad with his wife and children in 1951. I remember Sita, Dewen and Suren from these times. Sita was very kind to me.

I remember my father's study on the first floor at the front of the house. As you went into the room, the enormous bookshelves floor to ceiling, filling the entire wall, facing the wall with the fireplace, and either side of the fireplace, in the alcoves, again floor to ceiling bookshelves — all full! He belonged to Foyle's Scientific Book Club. He loved secondhand bookshops. Many books were covered in white lining wallpaper which he did himself, signing the inside hard cover and the books that were important to him were underlined in red pencil and "RC" in the margins in other words – READ CAREFULLY. His bed was pushed up against the inside wall of the room and then the roll-top desk which fascinated me. He did not like working at a desk. Near the large bay window he had a large Victorian table covered in green baize and a red angle poise lamp on it. The table was clear. I don't remember anything on that table — always clear to work on. There was a small wardrobe with shelves for his white shirts, vests and shorts. Always white shirts, one or two knitted V-neck sleeveless jumpers and knitted socks. My mother was a great knitter! I remember four Dunn's tweed jackets, grey trousers and two pairs of highly polished black shoes and I think one brown pair. I am not sure. I do not remember a suit. A rain mac, a trilby, I am not even sure if there was an overcoat. On a hanger were four ties, all red and his favourite was a red woolly tie. There was no suit, no dinner jacket, nothing but the bare essentials. All the furniture in the room was secondhand. He bought two Edwardian highbacked desk chairs. I have the one from Brighton in my study at home.

I remember him getting ready for work. He would stand at the kitchen sink and shave. The kitchen was separate to the breakfast/living room where I would be sitting at the breakfast room table, oilcloth on, doing my arithmetic before going to school in the morning. By the age of seven years I was top of the children in my class thanks to his "drilling" of me.

I came home with the prize, a large book in July 1953 — *The Youngest Omnibus*. My father asked me what did I get it for? I said "Entertainment"! In the book the prize was for "Attainment". I did not know what Attainment meant, hence "entertainment"! He roared with laughter.

My father was terrifying when he came to see how I was doing with my morning arithmetic – his face partly shaved, heavy soap lather from his shaving brush, eyes and nose flaring if he saw mistakes. I would then have a kiss and cuddle before leaving home and a brisk walk down Balham Hill to school in Alderbrook Road. He had a huge, loud laugh that was highly infectious. He would look attentively at your eyes when you talked. He had a serious face which would often soften and give him a warm countenance, but he rarely smiled since it would quickly become a laugh. Growing up I was not allowed to read Enid Blyton. My father railed against the racial prejudice he saw in her books: the "black golliwog" in the younger books and "Black Sambo" in the children's books who was the "bad guy". Enid Blyton's books were edited some 20 years later to remove offending sentences for the sensitive readers. She was of a different era with different ideas and sympathies.

He hated the word "coolie", the insult he grew up with at QRC and he hated the word "Black". He taught me to hit anybody who called me "black". He would not have liked "Black Power" in Trinidad any more than "East Indian Nationalism" in Trinidad.

He would not have understood how in the UK, the population was described in official language as "white" or "black" — the blacks being of Asian or African origin. He would have raged that somebody in the Civil Service had deemed that Asians and Africans could be lumped together as "black". He would have called all the Asians and Africans who ticked the box "black" as "stupid asses". (That was about the limit of his swearing). In Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* he tells this story: "Eh! I tell you about the foreman? One day he say, 'Blackie, come here a minute'. I watch at him, and I say 'Good, I coming'. I went up and hit him baps! Clean through a glass window." These insults are clearly racist and are to be resisted. "Indians" not "East Indians", "Afro-Caribbean" perhaps never "Black" — best of all I suggest plain, simple TRINIDADIAN embracing colour, race, religion.

When my father came home, he changed into his pyjamas, dressing gown, pyjama trousers tucked into his knitted woollen socks and the old reddish patterned dressing gown with the braided collar and waist sash. Always pyjamas in bed in the morning and all day if he could get away with it. He hated to go out at night. At the weekends, he liked to buy fruit from the Clapham South Parade of shops, a few minutes from the turning around the cinema and into Malwood Road, on Friday evening. Once at home he would prefer to stay in his pyjamas for the weekend — the modern equivalent of the track suit. (Monique Roffey says the same about herself). I remember him polishing the lino in the breakfast room, slippers off, dusters on each foot skating across the lino. I remember the large radio in the

corner, listening to the boat race. He favoured the Cambridge boat crew so I was mystified when many commentators said that my father had won the Island Scholarship to go to Oxford! Naipaul went to Oxford, and of course Eric Williams. Perhaps that is why he wanted the Cambridge crew to win!

I do remember frequent visitors coming on a Saturday afternoon to talk to my father. They were always Trinidadians, "all sorts" who came to talk and invariably ask his advice. My father never joined the London scene in any capacity. He loved his home and people came to see him. He did not like to go and visit anyone. I only remember once going to a restaurant with him. He hated the idea of waiters or chefs "with dirty hands". He hated public lavatories. He was very conscious of cleanliness in all things. He never smoked. He was teetotaler. Eating at home, very simply, Kellogg's for breakfast, fried egg at weekends, French toast, rarely fish, never red meat and at weekends invariably chicken curry eating with his hands and "sucking the bones clean". He enjoyed the cinema which was an occasional treat. Looking back, I think he ran an informal surgery for Trinidadians on Saturday afternoons. His thoughts of Trinidad were never far away.

My father would set the mathematics papers for the London University students. He set the papers but hated marking them! I loved to stand and watch him mark. I remember one set of answer papers — a student who had written eight or nine pages. My father's pencil started at the top in the middle of the page. The pencil went straight down to the bottom of the page. Page 2, 3, 4 — the same treatment. At the end "zero out of ten". "Why?" I exclaimed, "He has written so much?" "No clue at all. Can't be helped at all." Then a scruffy piece of paper, two-thirds of a page for the same question — my father suddenly was concentrating — "Good" he would say, "seven out of ten. He would get it completely right with better teaching".

But most of all, I remember him sitting in an armchair with broad arms and a brown wood-stained board stretched across the arms of the armchair. He would sit in the chair and call for his board and papers. There was a hole big enough for a pencil to fall through close to one end. I assumed that this was to put on a peg on the wall, but we had no peg and the board was always ready, resting on the wall behind the armchair. I never knew the reason for the hole. His papers were a sheaf of clean white paper about one inch thick and an extra fine yellow biro was his favourite writing tool. The biro had to be extra fine. He sat down, brown board on the arms, sheaf of paper in front of him and his biro. Three hours later a scientific paper had been written.

Most of his work was done after 10.30 pm until 2 or 3 am in the morning. His work and sleep pattern meant he wanted to be alone at these times. Sundays he could be like a bear with a sore head if he had been working through the night. Watch out! The Bear's about!

Commentators have had great difficulty trying to write about his genius as a mathematician. I struggle also. I wanted to do Maths but at the age of eight years my father said to me "you are going to be a doctor — independent", by inference not bound to a university and university hierarchy, professor, reader, lecturer, demonstrator — and I could "hang up my plate" anywhere. Soogee had wanted this for my father, Rudranath. It was not to be.

The father of Dr Eric Williams had also expressed the same thoughts to the young Eric. In *Inward Hunger*, Williams says that his father's wish was that "I should study medicine — to have independence but I was determined to be a teacher. He was accordingly very angry with me. He protested and remonstrated, argued and sneered, cajoled and persuaded. It was all in vain. He gave in with poor grace". Now we know where Williams got his traits from! Williams uses the old joke about his Ph.D. — his father greeted him in 1944 "after twelve years" with "so you are a doctor after all".

I remember somebody coming to ask me to give a talk about my father's scientific achievements, perhaps in 1991. They realized I could not fulfill the task. I was sent a nice calendar instead with 12 famous West Indians in it. No Williams, no Naipaul, I noticed. My father was the "Pin-Up" for March with rather a nice eulogy.

In *Lotus and the Dagger* an old student of my father's, Professor Edwin Power, gave a talk on September 22nd, 1991 at the Mount Hope Medical Complex on "Dr Rudranath Capildeo, the Late Scientist, Politician and National Hero", in which he said my father made science a "Thing of Beauty". As a student of my father he said that my father gave very impressive lectures on applied mathematics. I knew he lectured without any notes, white chalk on the black board (legitimate use of white and

black, please notice). Professor Power says, “Afterwards he would get very involved in talking politics to various students — mainly to my friends. He also had his “Theory of Relativity” which I recall impressed me quite a bit. I have very fond memories of him.” Again he says “Cap (my father’s nickname was Cap or Rood, never, I think, Rudy) — Cap looked for beauty in his work — both in content and perhaps even more in the development — the structure”. You remember him marking the student’s paper — looking at the structure — 7 out of 10 — and with better teaching the student would have got the answer.

Strange as it sounds, I do believe I have something new to tell you.

Firstly, though, something I remember from many years ago. Referring to the formation of the galaxies he said, “They have got it all wrong”; the centre of the galaxy with the spiral and the long arm apparently releasing materials. In 1964, in an 18-line letter to *Nature*, he deduced that the angular velocity of the Galaxy was 1.7 x 10-15 radians per second. The present value given by astronomers is 10-15 radians per second.

In his paper “Gravity — A New Approach, 1968”, after nine separate steps, each step building on the former, using a series of mathematical equations, he shows that gravity is one consequence of the galactic rotation. He ends with three seemingly simple paragraphs, based on his supreme knowledge of Applied Physics, explaining how galaxies were formed and how they generate new matter to form new galaxies. He says:

a) Streams of matter which are inherently free from gravity move in space and sometimes impinge on each other, forming vortices due to frictional or electromagnetic forces. These vortices will necessarily occur in groups and are galaxies. The shapes of vortices will depend on the initial conditions of impact and so there will be comparatively young galaxies and their arms will trail opposite to the sense of rotation.

b) Gravity will appear as a consequence of rotation. The inward acceleration will cause the matter to move towards the galactic centre, (in other words, opposite to what had previously been thought) where the motion will be resisted by radiation pressure and other forces. Contraction will continue. Atoms will be stripped of their electrons; heavy nuclei will form. Ultimately, the assembly explodes or becomes a quasar.

c) The exploding galaxies give rise to streams of matter and the formation of new galaxies. The process recurs. Cosmic rays are mainly part of the remnants of shattered galaxies.

And the relevance today? Well, 4,000 years ago the Babylonians knew the planets up to Saturn. In 1781, you would have been excited to learn that after Saturn there was another planet, Uranus; 50 years later, Neptune, then 90 years later the “Dwarf Planets” Pluto and then Sedna in 2003 and Eris in 2005 and now “2012VP113” (280 miles across) orbiting in a region of space called the Ooart cloud. Its orbit is eccentric, still held by the Sun’s gravitational pull but “2012VP113” should have a more circular orbital path and it is possible that a super-planet, 10 times the mass of Earth (called “Super Earth”) may be pulling it by virtue of its gravitational influence — pushing and pulling the smaller dwarf planets. Mass, gravity, rotation, predicting a huge super planet that we cannot yet see. Mathematics, applied physics meets astronomy and the stars!

So what have I got to offer you? I have told you that in 1951 my father asked his brother Simbhoonath to seal an envelope containing a paper which he kept in the Euston Road branch of Barclays Bank. He thought his paper was so important. When you asked me to give this talk I thought this was the time to “type it up”. You will remember that my father gave me the envelope containing the paper in 1969 with words “Publish it in 50 years they are not ready for it yet”. I have it for you to publish. My father would like your help to do it. It is a very exciting prospect.

Before I leave this topic I would like to quote from Professor Powers again: “I have the sense of great privilege of being a friend and being taught by a man who has justly won renown in this his country. This renown arises from his work in science in addition to the practice of politics. He has thought through many issues scientific and non-scientific with sharp intelligence and with humour and sensitivity. That he shared these with his pupils, colleagues and friends is the sign of a great human

being." It is frequently recorded that in times of extreme stress, even those of us with the least interest in the Almighty, may suddenly turn to religion for solace and help.

Various commentators have suggested that this was the case with my father. However, there is strong evidence that my father's innermost spiritual self was there throughout his life.

Firstly, he was brought up in a Brahmin home. His father, Pundit Capildeo, had seven daughters before a son, Simbhoonath, whom he hoped would succeed him as a Pundit or if not Simbhoonath then his youngest son, Rudranath. Capil was from a village Mahadenwadubey; Dubey was also the name of a subsect of the Brahmin caste and according to Anthony de Verteuil, Capil was a direct descendent of at least 13 generations of priests who presided over the local population. The village was in the district of Somira, County of Gorakhpur, in the State of Uttar Pradesh, in East Central India. Pundit Capildeo was born in 1873 and died in 1926 — at the age of 53 years on his last visit to India. Simbhoonath was 11 years old. He would have known more of his father, seen more of Pundit Capildeo's religious activities all around the area in which they lived and would have gone with his father on many such occasions. There is a photograph in the exhibition of Simbhoonath around the age of eight years with his father Pundit Capildeo in with the subtitle "An informal photograph in which the father's pride in his son is evident". The heavy gold necklace worn by Simbhoonath . . . is the one I have brought for the exhibition.

Both sons were initiated but neither chose to be pundits like their father. Simbhoonath would be instrumental in helping to establish more than 40 Hindu schools in Trinidad and build the St James Temple. My father was only five years old when his father died. His approach to Hinduism and religion in general would be different. My father valued two books above all others — The Gita and The Upanishads. His approach was "Knowledge through Meditation".

I remember a wet rainy day carrying the New Testament, a black leather copy, with every page marked in red with "RC" — read carefully — at key points — to school. I was about seven years of age on the way to my primary school in Alderbrook Road. I remember dropping it — drying the inside marbled leaves, greatful that the moisture did not show. The class was bringing their New Testament to school. Everybody had one. My father knew the New Testament "backwards". When a professor in Khartoum for nine months in 1956, he was exposed to the Muslim faith and he read the Koran. But it was in 1963 that he published *The Gita — A Personal View*. I know of no other politician in the last 50 years who had the knowledge or intent to publish anything with a religious or philosophical intent.

In the preface, my father says, "This small book was originally intended to be part of a much larger work on the religions of mankind." He had been persuaded to publish *The Gita — A Personal View — "A Small Volume on the Hindu Faith Especially For Its Followers in the Caribbean Area*.

In the fourth paragraph of his introduction we find "throughout the book references will be written as follows IV-26. This means Chapter Four written in Roman Numerals and the Verse 26 in Hindu Numerals".

In Chapter IV, my father states that it is an extremely important chapter, in which "since there is just one basic unity it is difficult to believe that any particular religion is completely right and other religions are completely wrong". He cites Chapter IV Verse 11, "In whatever way men may worship me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires, for it is of My Essence that men should worship in different ways."

He goes on to say how differences in the great religions have been stressed and used to the detriment of millions of people who have died in religious wars.

But, my father states, "the impartial student of comparative religion will recognise a startling fact — that there is a basic identity in all the great religious systems of the world and the differences that exist can be largely traced to the vagaries of local geography."

In his bedside book, *The Wisdom of India* he had all he could have wanted. I believe he loved Sir Edward Arnold's famous poem on the life of Buddha. "The Light of Asia" appeared in 1879, the long poem going through 60 editions in England and 80 editions in the United States, selling hundreds of

thousands of copies. At home his sandalwood statue of the Buddha was my father's favourite personal possession, to be put higher in the room than any other article. It is in the exhibition.

The book *The Wisdom of India,* which I have brought for the Exhibition, is the book he read in the last hour of his life. In the frontispiece he has written:

"Just as with her own life a mother shields from hurt her only child — so let all-embracing thoughts for all that live be thine — an all-embracing love for all the universe in all its heights and depths and breadth, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity." (The author) – Gautama, The Buddha.

This volume is dedicated by my father to my mother, "To dearest Ruth, from Rudranath in the hope that it will bring you many, many hours of happiness. With my deepest love". In his letters, when my father wrote a kiss, an x at the end of a letter, he added an "n", that is a kiss to the nth degree.

There were times when his faith deserted him I am sure. Why ever DLP friends brought in a spiritualist to help him when he was psychologically questioning himself in 1960, I shall never know. He picked himself up for the 1961 General Election leading the DLP against Dr Eric Williams. These were times that he needed to meditate, to look at himself. In his early life, he also needed the strength of his mother, Soogee; in London, the strength of my mother, Ruth; and in Trinidad the strength of his sister Kalawatee. But when the noise of the day had passed and he was on his own at night he could meditate, he could think about this world and the next in philosophical terms and also in scientific terms. He firmly believed in knowledge as the source of understanding. I grew up surrounded by books and grew up in an environment of study and that the only way Capildeos would progress in life would be through study. This was the legacy that my mother and father gave me.

My mother Ruth was my Soogee — one-to-one until the day that she died.

So, what of Trinidadian politics? Some commentators have said that my father was a poor politician, not able to withstand the daily thrust of politics. When he took on the leadership of the DLP he was not prepared for the infighting within the DLP. He thought his battle was with Eric Williams and the PNM. He was never going to win the 1961 election. Williams had been preparing for 14 years. He had won the 1956 election with the help of seats handed to him by the British Government. He had an entourage of hand-picked colleagues who were to support him, no matter what machinations he undertook. Despite this, Williams was shocked at the outcome of the 1958 Federal elections and was determined to win the 1961 elections at all cost.

He had been educating Trinidadians and impressing with his oratory at the so-called University of Woodford Square. He stirred up nationalistic feelings by challenging the USA to give up their base at the Chaguaramas Naval Station which lead to new negotiations and the support of the US which, ultimately, I believe taught him that one way to win elections was by using US voting machines. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan would come to Trinidad in 1960 to reassure Eric Williams that he would be the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. As if this was not enough, Williams, in addition to voting machines (the first country in the world to use them outside the US) he introduced changes to the electoral boundaries, permanent personal registration and ID cards with photograph and signature with a thumbprint for illiterates. No wonder the DLP members and, in particular their leader, my father, Rudranath Capildeo, were incensed. Williams, a historian, must have forgotten the indignities to the Indian population in the 19th century when failure to carry their papers was a criminal offence. No wonder the 1961 election was seen as the ultimate battle between the races in Trinidad and the probable permanent subjugation of the Trinidadian Indians. No wonder the rhetoric became violent because violence was the threat throughout the 1961 election.

May 1962. The Marlborough House Conference. After hours and days of fighting between the two parties, Eric Williams and my father found themselves on a balcony during the tea interval. In his book, *Inward Hunger* (page 285), Williams states "I decided to settle the matter face to face with Dr Capildeo, Leader of the Opposition. I drew him aside during the tea interval, told him my original intention, indicated that I had abandoned it and explained that I would make a statement to the conference on the resumption".

"I (Dr Williams speaking) made the statement to the effect that I intended on my return to Trinidad to raise with the Opposition the general question of national integration and national unity with specific reference to (a) Nehru's Integration Committee in India (b) the promotion of the national culture (c) the working out of a campaign code on elections — (surprise, surprise) — (d) fair employing practices without discrimination on grounds of race, political affiliations, etc. Capildeo thanked me and withdrew all opposition to the date of independence".

So Dr Eric Williams and Dr Rudranath Capildeo signed the Declaration of Independence for Trinidad and Tobago which came into being on August 31st 1962, the Princess Royal representing Her Majesty the Queen in Port of Spain at the famous ceremony.

The previous day, Williams had spoken at a children's rally — "You, the children, yours is the great responsibility to educate your parents. Teach them to live together in harmony, the difference being not race or colour of skin but merit only, differences of wealth and family status being rejected in favour of equality of opportunity." My father would not have disagreed.

Williams was not to keep his word. My father would fight the 1966 election but by then the world had moved on — Cuba, Kennedy, Jagan in Guyana — it was not the time in Trinidad to have an Indian Prime Minister. I believe my father was a Statesman, Williams was a Politician.

In *White Woman on the Green Bicycle*, Monique Roffey has her heroine Sabine living in Trinidad in 2006 saying "Black Power — that's what it's been since the PNM took over. Black power for one man only or for the few."

Even the Mighty Sparrow turned on Williams in calypso-style. Williams stayed too long.

1969 the first five recipients of the Trinity Cross were:

Dr Rudranath Capildeo, Scientist; Sir Ellis Clarke, Ambassador to the United States; Sir Solomon Hochoy, Governor General; Count Finbar Ryan, Retired Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain; Sir Hugh Wooding, retired Chief Justice.

WOW! What a list.

For my father, recognition amongst other luminaries that had served Trinidad and Tobago and were the first to receive Trinidad and Tobago's highest award. My father's Trinity Cross is in the Exhibition.

In ending, I have to thank you again Governor Rambarran, for your team, Nicole, Charlene, Nimah, Al, and all of you.

I give you a challenge. What do you want for your Trinidad stars of tomorrow? Must they stay or can they go? Go to conquer the world? Then what? Do you want them back? If you do, make sure that Trinidad and Tobago is a worthy home for returning heroes. Welcome them home, yes, but use their knowledge and skills to help Trinidad and Tobago to grow in all directions and in all ways for the betterment of the country. Build the new TRINIDADIAN.

You did not know that my father, Dr Rudranath Capildeo would reach for the stars. My father would not have known that I would have four sons and a daughter to bring honour to his name through my wife, Rita, who has also been our Soogee for our family. Hopefully, in this talk I have brought much of this together for the first time.

In his will, my father left his half of the Lion House to me. In the last 44 years, my cousin, Suren Capildeo has done his utmost to stop the Lion House from falling down. I hope we can work together, Suren, to save the Lion House for the Nation and one day I would love it to be a National Heritage site with a new purpose.

In Trinidad, the Capildeos began through Pundit Capildeo and his wonderful wife, Soogee, the mother of the Capildeo family in Trinidad and my grandmother.

In reaching for the stars, Dr Rudranath Capildeo was a scientist, a lawyer, a politician, a statesman, a husband, a father, a grandfather and now a great-grandfather.

On his rocket in very large letters it said “MADE IN TRINIDAD”.

Thank you very much.