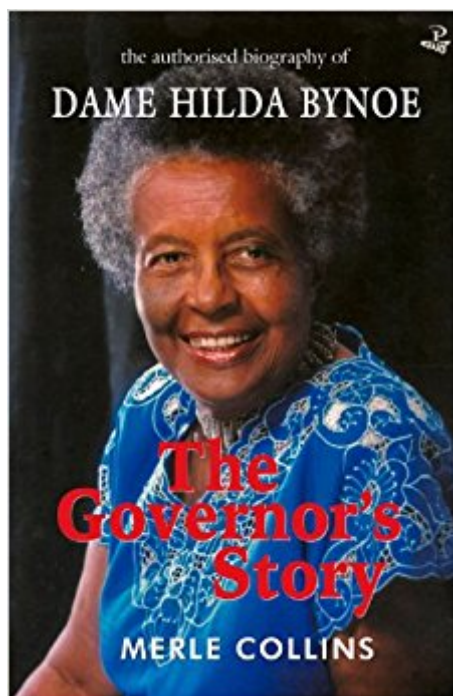


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The Governor's Story: The Authorised Biography Of Dame Hilda Bynoe



Synopsis

One of the very first local governors in the Caribbean in the years before independence, and the first woman and black woman, at that time to be appointed governor anywhere in the Commonwealth, Dr. Hilda Bynoe's appointment placed her at the heart of local, regional, and international change, and later of conflict. This biography, the only authorized account of Bynoe's life, probes beyond the governor's story for its antecedents and its meaning in a broader Caribbean context. Based on interviews with Bynoe herself, Merle Collins—a native Grenadian who was involved in the events that ultimately led to the governor's resignation, due to the latter's ties to Premier Eric Gairy and his repression of political opposition—explores the meaning of ancestry, family, the small nation state and regional identities, intra- and extra-Caribbean migration, class, and race in the formation of Dr. Bynoe's conception of her role. In doing so, Collins provides an insightful portrayal, not only of an exceptional woman, but also of the emergence of an aspiring working class into a new Caribbean middle class. This biography, which ably blends local knowledge, empathetic identification, narrative skills, and analytical questioning, serves as an important record of the political history of Grenada.

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Customer Reviews

Merle Collins is a professor of comparative literature and English at the University of Maryland. She is the author of the poetry collections *Because the Dawn Breaks* and *Rotten Pomerack*, the novels

Angel and The Colour of Forgetting, and the short story collection Rain Darling. Her critical works have appeared in From My Guy to Sci-Fi: Genre and Women's Writing in the Postmodern World and Slavery and Abolition. Her literary work has appeared in Penguin Modern Poets Volume 8 and The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories.

The subject of this authorized biography, Grenada's first female Governor Dame Hilda Bynoe, told author Merle Collins: "Demonstrators had been marching along the road past Government House and chanting 'Belmar must go and Gairy too!'" And I would stand on the balcony and look at them. When the demonstrators added "the Governor" to the chant, Dame Bynoe felt the level of disrespect towards her and her position as Governor signaled her to resign. A few days later, the same day Maurice Bishop's father was killed, Hilda Bynoe left her native land, Grenada. Dr. Bynoe's story illustrates the force of pressures upon her decision. The word "grace" comes to mind about Hilda Gibbs Bynoe who moved through her life with intellectual finesse, sensibility, and sentiment grounded in family, extended family, friends and communal bonds. What a treat to read about the complexities of her life, so like us all with varying tones of grey. Nothing in her life was black or white, especially during the tumultuous political times in Grenada, the West Indies. Writer, Professor and Grenadian Merle Collins has written an accessible story told within the rich context of Grenadian society and the deep contradictions felt by a woman, wife and mother. Highly recommended not only for academic libraries and women's collections, but also for general libraries. As for retail purchase, why not pick up the story of Dame Hilda Bynoe and get for yourself a compact history of Grenada in one excellently-written book.

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