

Reproduced from page 15 of the Wednesday, January 16, 2013, #2674 issue of the *Amandala*.

by *Evondale Coburn*

I'm sitting down listening to some of my jazz selections and reading the headlines of the *Amandala* online titled "**4 throats cut; city shuts down in panic.**" I am deeply saddened; and it's causing me to reflect on my neighborhood where I grew up and spent the first twenty one years of my life before having the privilege of migrating to the United States, thanks to my parents and family hard work. My parents were the ultimate role models. One of my sisters (who prefers to live in Belize) and her family still lives in the house where we grew up. Oh, my Belizean blues!

I was born on Plues Street between South and Berkeley Streets, one block from where these gruesome murders took place. What I remember most about my 'hood is that it was a village. This village had love, communication, respect, pride, dignity, integrity, values, morals, and all the intangibles that make up a people, family, and their neighborhood. We knew every family: north to Bishop Street, south to Rocky Road, east to Foreshore and west to Collet Canal. Oh, my Belizean blues!

My neighborhood produced some of the most prominent professionals, educators, academics, and athletes that ever trod The Jewel. Take a walk down memory lane with me through my

'hood. Oh, Belizean blues!

Directly across the street from my house lived the first Belizean-born Chief Engineer of Public Works, James Flowers. He was also in the first graduating class of the Belize Technical College. Several of his siblings were educators. His brother, Gilbert Flowers, was one of my teachers at Wesley College. In the same house lived the former Chief Meteorological Officer, Kenrick Leslie.

Down the street crossing Berkeley Street lived the first female Belizean Governor-General Dame Minita Gordon. She used to discipline us every time we stumbled and would tell our mother afterwards what she did to us. Oh, my Belizean blues!

Just across South Street from my block lived Dr. Bob Bennett and his wife, Nurse Bennett. He was the head of the Social Development Department. His wife used to administer our annual checkup, injections, and medicine when needed. In the same block lived one of the greatest softball pitchers from the Dougal family, Consuelo Dougal. Oh, my Belizean blues!

Let's walk around the corner to West and Basra Streets; there lived the Chief Magistrate, Mr. Johnson. At the corner of George and Berkeley Streets lived one of my teachers from Wesley School, Mr. Parham. Crossing over South Street bridge on East Canal lived the current Governor-General, Sir Colville Young, and another one of my teachers, Mr. Matthews. When we needed a

haircut, Prince barbershop was around the corner. Oh, my Belizean blues!

Also, on Plues Street and trod on further to Dean Street, lived the first family of Cross Country Cycling - the Miguel Family. The following is a record of their Cross Country championships: Edward Miguel - 1956, 1958, 1959; Arthur Miguel - 1962; John Miguel - 1960 (dead heat with Duncan Vernon), 1964, 1965, 1968. Rudy Miguel - 1970. Move on to West Canal crossing Berkeley Street, there were the Sutherland brothers - Lindsford Sutherland - 1963; Kenneth "Powder" Sutherland - 1966. Oh, my Belizean blues!

Moving back to my block, Senior Counsel Ellis Arnold grew up with us. He lived four houses adjacent to mine. Living in my house with our family during his attendance at Wesley College, he became one of The Jewel's greatest entertainers - Bernard "Nelson Diamond." Oh, my Belizean blues!

Some other notables from my 'hood: Clinton "Pulu" Lightburn, Charles Goff, Eric Gladden, Frankie Bob Rivers, Victor "Bart" Hewitt, Clive Young, Dr. Dorian Barrow (my classmate at Wesley School). Kent and "Pro" Myvett (next door neighbors). The Sosa family lived at the corner of my block and made some of the best panadés at the time. The Singh family, Mr. Lee, the boledo man. I can go on and name many more that were not in my immediate neighborhood, but were close to and had a positive effect on my life, but that is for another time. Oh, my

Belizean blues!

In the words of the late great Marvin Gaye, "What's going on?" Inner City Blues "Makes me wanna holler, throw up both my hands." But we can't give up. We have to find the solutions. How did we get here? Where did we go wrong? How do we fix it? Where are all the positive role models? We were surrounded by positive role models in my village, so we had no choice but to do the right thing. Maybe that's part of the solution. All these questions are for us to ponder and find solutions so that the next generation can experience the village that I had.

My humble contribution to part of the solution is the work I do with my COBY Foundation annual "3 on 3" basketball tournaments. For an entire day more than four hundred kids are off the streets and doing something positive. Belizeans, let's reach out to our kids. Using my own quote, "No one cares how much you got until they got how much you care."

By the way, it's not cool to toot your own horn, but I also became one of The Jewel's best basketball players. My team, "Old Parr," won four championships in five years: 1970 & 1971 Junior Champs, 1972 & 1974 Senior Champs. Wesley & St. Ignatius School playgrounds were my backyard. Oh, my Belizean blues!

Evondale Coburn

CEO COBY Foundation

Hinesville, Georgia

[ameribel@yahoo.com](mailto:ameribel@yahoo.com)

[www.cobyfoundationsystems.org](http://www.cobyfoundationsystems.org)

