



**The Queen's Chapel**  
St James's Palace

A Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration  
for the life of

**Sir Shridath 'Sonny' Ramphal**

Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 11am



**The Commonwealth**

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**Sir Shridath 'Sonny' Ramphal**  
3 October 1928 – 30 August 2024

## ORDER OF SERVICE

*Music before the Service*

Prelude and Fugue in G Major, op.37 No.2 *Felix Mendelssohn*  
Prelude on 'Rhoysmedre' *Ralph Vaughan Williams*

### INTROIT

If ye love me *Thomas Tallis*  
*Choir of the Chapel Royal*

### WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYERS

Reverend Canon Paul Wright LVO MA  
*Sub-Dean of the Chapel Royal*

### HYMN

Make me a channel of your peace:  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*Refrain*

O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

*Refrain*

O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

*Sebastian Temple arr. Alan Bullard*

## READING

*Read by Hon. Shirley Botchwey*  
*Commonwealth Secretary-General*

Let us now praise famous men,  
And our Fathers that begat us.  
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms,  
Men renowned for their power.

Leaders of the people  
By their counsels and by their knowledge.  
Such as found out musical tunes,  
And recited verses in writing:  
All these were honoured in their generations,  
And were the glory of their times.

And some there be, which have no memorial;  
Who are perished, as though they had never been.

Their bodies are buried in peace;  
But their name liveth for ever more.

*Ecclesiasticus 44:4 1-14*

### ANTHEM

Valiant for truth *Ralph Vaughan Williams*  
*Choir of the Chapel Royal*

## READING

*Read by India Hennessy*

When great trees fall,  
rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down in tall grasses,  
and even elephants lumber after safety.  
When great trees fall in forests,  
small things recoil into silence,  
their senses eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly, see with a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines,  
gnaws on kind words unsaid,  
promised walks never taken.

Great souls die and our reality,  
bound to them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls, dependent upon their nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed and informed by their  
radiance, fall away.  
We are not so much maddened as reduced  
to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always irregularly.  
Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never to be the same,  
whisper to us. They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.

*Maya Angelou*

## HYMN

Morning has broken like the first morning,  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

*Eleanor Farjeon/arr. John Leavitt*

## TRIBUTE

*Given by Amanda Hennessy*

## TRIBUTE

*Given by Chief Emeka Anyaoku GCON, GCVO CFR*

## MUSIC

*A Moment of Reflection*

**Guyana with Love** *composed and performed by*  
*Dr Keith Waithe*

## PRAYERS

*Led by Canon Paul Wright*

## ANTHEM

**Dream the impossible dream** *Joe Darien and Mitch Leigh*  
*Soloist and Choir of the Chapel Royal*

## THE BLESSING

*Followed by*

**God be in my head** *Walford-Davies*  
*Choir of the Chapel Royal*

*Retiring Music*

**Prelude and Fugue in A Major, BWV 538** *Johann Sebastian Bach*

*The congregation are asked to remain in their seats until directed by the ushers.*



### A FEW WORDS IN HONOUR OF SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL

I had the honour and joy of working with Sonny for more than two decades, on cases before international courts and tribunals, acting to protect the legal interests – on sea and land - of his beloved Guyana.

He was, of course, whip smart and super strategic, with a total mastery of matters of history and the facts and also the law. No surprise there. But what started as a professional relationship became a deep friendship because he allowed so much more: a commitment to collegiality, a most generous form of leadership, the desire to share a decent meal, a deep warmth and a profound sense of humanity and decency.

He became a mentor, a man of the generation that lived through colonialism and into the era of decolonisation, utterly committed to the ideals of the rule of law and the multilateral moment that emerged after 1945.

It was always a joy to be in Sonny's presence. I miss the missives and the intellectual acuity. I miss the progressive values and the decency. I miss the laugh and the twinkle of the eye. Yet that sparkling, brilliant nature is ever present, a guiding light in times good and not so good.

Thank you dear Sonny, for all you gave us, over decades, and for all you gave the world, with your leadership, your style and decency and your smile.

**Prof. Philippe Sands** 9 June 2025

### TRIBUTES AND OBITUARIES

Tributes and memories of Sonny Ramphal from staff and former Commonwealth colleagues

<https://comassoc.org/tributes-to-sir-shridath-ramphal-18-june-2025-2/>

Tributes published in The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs and Policy Studies

<https://www.commonwealthroundtable.co.uk/commonwealth/sir-shridath-ramphal-a-tribute-by-richard-bourne/>

Tributes and obituaries assembled by CARICOM in the Caribbean

<https://caricom.org/category/tributes-sir-shridath-ramphal/>



**Sonny Ramphal relaxing at his home in Barbados**

## BOOK OF CONDOLENCE

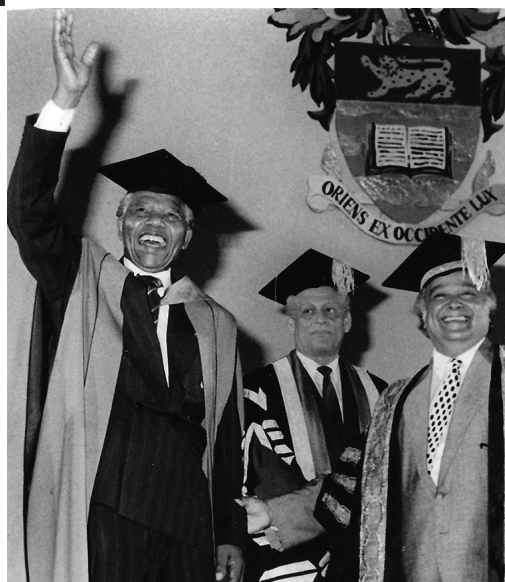
A book of condolence, which was opened by the Commonwealth Secretariat shortly after Sir Shridath's death, will be available in Marlborough House for any further entries and will be closed later in the afternoon.



*Shridath Ramphal QC on his appointment as Attorney-General of pre-independence British Guiana, 1965*



*Sir Shridath Ramphal, appointed Commonwealth Secretary-General in 1975, escorts Queen Elizabeth to his first Commonwealth Day reception*



*Sir Shridath Ramphal, as Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, awarding Nelson Mandela an Honorary Doctorate in Laws during his visit to the Caribbean in 1991. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir Alister McIntyre, looks on.*