

IN MEMORIAM

W. DONALD SOUTAR (1920-2015)



IN HIS OWN WORDS

William Donald Soutar was born April 14, 1920 in Kingston, Jamaica. After leaving Jamaica College in 1938 he worked for the Bank of Nova Scotia. He later trained with the British Army in the Jamaican Battalion and the Royal Signal Corps in electronics, particularly communications, for which he had developed a passion from age 12, building a radio using his homemade blow torch and soldering iron.

He gained a scholarship in the USA to be trained at RCA (Radio Corp. of America). On his return to Jamaica he worked as Asst Eng. for the very first Radio Broadcasting Station ever to be on the Air in Jamaica, called ZQI with an Englishman, Denis Gick. He then joined Excide Battery Co. which later became Wills Battery Company, in 1950. In 1962 he became the General Manager and was the Manager Director before leaving for the USA in 1975. His last years at Wills, saw him managing 89 permanent staff, 120 salespersons and numerous agencies throughout the island. During his time at Wills he was also able to assist persons with their ham radios, hi-fi sets and even hearing aids, whenever they required servicing. He was affectionately known as Dr. Soutar to his hearing aid 'clients'

In the USA, he managed 2 vegetable oil tankers and provided several shipping companies with parts and technical training under his company Island Shipping Agencies. He retired in 2002 and continued to reside in South Florida.

Sadly he passed away after a battle with cancer in Florida on January 24th, 2015. He is survived by his younger brother Farren (Jamaica), elder sister Yvonne (Trinidad), his wife Audrey (Jamaica) the mother of his children Donnie and Carolyn, and grandchildren Sarah, Joseph, Lauren, his second wife Patsy (USA), her child Lisa, and grandchildren Tiffany and Lindsey.

Instead of tributes or flowers, please send a donation in his memory to the Jamaica College Old Boys Foundation:

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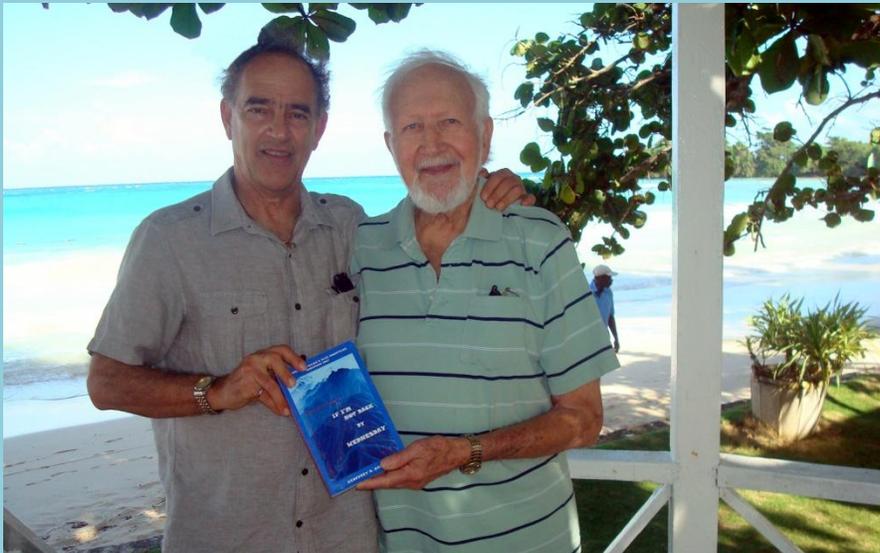
Mailing Address for Checks: Jamaica College Old Boys Association of Florida

P.O.Box 824643 Pembroke Pines, FL 33082

Checks can be made payable to JCOBAFL or Jamaica College Old Boys Association of Florida.

Please notify the Treasurer Steven Gordon when sent: (jcobafltreasurer@gmail.com).

ANECDOTE



I was fortunate to have met Donald Soutar nearly 75 years after his encounter with the Blue Mountains and nearly 50 years in my case. The chance meeting took place at Mamee Bay in December 2013 where we shared our experiences over several days. The meeting was arranged by Donnie, his son, and surprisingly included two of my ‘almost lost for

good’ hiking buddies, Gordon Cooper and Cecil Ward. W. Donald graciously accepted my request to review my book “If I’m not back by Wednesday – Trapped in Jamaica’s Blue Mountains – December 1967” (www.geoffreyhaddadbooks.com) and I for one am happy that he did. In May of 2014 I was able to share with him his contribution as it now stands. It was indeed an honour and a privilege to have known him and to have shared many of his life experiences.



L-R: Gordon Cooper, W. Donald Soutar, Geoffrey B. Haddad, Cecil Ward & Donnie Soutar

On the last day of his hike in 1939 along with his 4 other JC lads it was he who spoke the first words to persons who they had encountered.

According to his fellow hiker Douglas Hall; ‘The man who had called now appeared from behind the trees. Needless to say we were surprised.’ “You the five buoy dat lost in de bush? “We are”, Soutar shouted and the rest became history.

Hartley Neita, one of the island’s prominent historians and communications consultants had penned a book called *The Search* which chronicled the misadventure of Soutar and his other 4 Jamaica College colleagues in April of 1939. He frequently wrote, in *The Gleaner*, excerpts from newsworthy items under “This Day in our Past” or “Interesting Historical highlights”. One such item dated December 23, 1997 read as follows:

1967: Army and Police patrols, assisted by the Air Wing of the Jamaica Defence Force, are searching the Blue Mountains for five Jamaica College school boys* who left Kingston six days ago to hike to the Peak and have not been seen since. Five Jamaica College boys were also lost in the mountains at Easter in **1939** and were found after nearly three weeks (actually 2 weeks) of search by the army, police, scouts and citizens. They were Eric Gray, now working with Times Store, Donald Soutar at Wills Battery Company, Douglas Hall, now a Professor at the University of the West Indies, Teddy Hastings who is in business in British Honduras and John Ennever who has since died. *Thus connecting the two adventures nearly 40 years apart, forever*

*Those five boys were Roger Bates, Gordon Cooper, Cecil Ward, George Hussey and Geoffrey Haddad.

Hartley Neita would end each one of such writings with **Today’s Memory Gem:**

On this day he wrote:

“There is a morning in all human night
And life and birth and beauty beyond death.”

May Donald’s memory be for a blessing and his soul rest in peace.