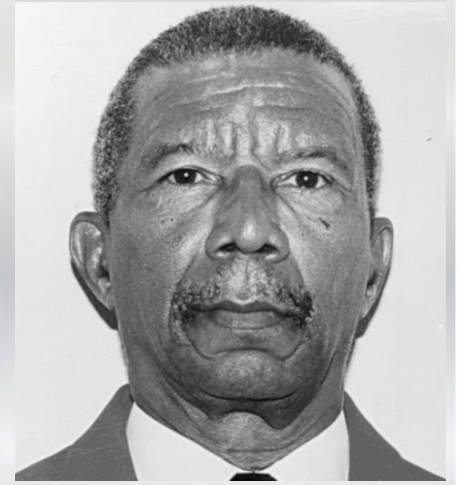
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Alexander Chapman

H.B.M

Administrator

Inducted in 1995

'Mr. Olympic'. A fitting moniker for the man who believed in the ideals of the Olympic movement, dedicating his life to its principles, and creating the means for Trinidad and Tobago's sportsmen to take part within it.

It was fitting that Alexander Chapman was a weightlifter in his youth because he shouldered many tasks throughout his life with his tireless work – domestically and internationally – to provide his countrymen with the opportunity to perform, and to help provide the wider organization for global athletes to compete.

No one has served longer within the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic bodies, well over five decades in a formal capacity, much more informally. Chapman was present from the very beginning of the nation's Olympic participation, witnessing iconic moments in Trinidad and Tobago's sporting history, eventually being recognized as an icon himself.

Growing up on Town Council Street in east Port of Spain, Chapman gravitated towards weightlifting which was popular in the 1940's and 50s in Trinidad, as young men sought to develop their bodies. He was soon involved in the management of other weightlifters, which was fortunate as when Trinidad and Tobago sent its first representatives to an Olympics (the post-war 1948 London Games), weightlifter Rodney Wilkes was front and centre as the first Olympic medallist. Four years later, Chapman's chosen sport was successful once again when Lennox Kilgour, with whom Chapman was closely associated and managed, joined Wilkes as a medal winner.

By 1954, Chapman was attending major games in the dual capacity of weightlifting coach and general manager of the Trinidad and Tobago team. This was the era when teams travelled by boat for two weeks or more to the host city and where Chapman displayed his managerial nous by having the foresight to arrange workout venues abroad for his charges that were jaded from the journey. He was also a hands-on manager that liaised with the athletes, often feeding them the variables to help them make their own decisions, rather than try to dictate to them. It was a style that he maintained throughout his career. As an example, when middleweight weightlifter Lionel de Freitas wanted to immediately lift 300lbs at the 1954 Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Chapman chimed in with an advisory: "It's a long time since you lifted (due to travel), and if you fail the first attempt, you're out." Or at the 1959 Pan Am Games when he politely suggested to 400m runner, Basil Ince, that the piercing stomach pains that put him in hospital the night before the final were simply nerves. Both men would go on to win silver medals.

When Hasely Crawford won the gold medal in the 100m in Montreal in 1976, Chapman was one of the last comforting voices that 'Crawfie' heard prior to facing the starter's pistol.
He progressed within the burgeoning local Olympic movement, becoming the natural choice – given his organizational skills, knowledge and experience gained – to become the General Secretary of the then Trinidad & Tobago Olympic Association in 1964, which was the year the nation brought home three medals from the Tokyo games.

Accustomed to multi-tasking, Chapman was often the Chef de Mission for the international games from the 1960s to the 1980s. It meant that his duties consumed his days and nights, but his attendance also provided him with the opportunity to immerse himself within the wider organizations such as the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the Commonwealth Games Federation. He became a staunch member of both, espousing the ethos that 'rules are rules' enshrined in each sporting body's constitution with no room for flexibility.

The wider Trinidad and Tobago public became more familiar with Chapman when he performed nightly duties calling the numbers of 'TV Bingo' which was the TTOA's fund raising initiative of which he was an integral part. Chapman's work was also about empowerment, and those that worked with him speak of his ability to include every relevant person within an entity, passing on what he had learnt, introducing persons to his international colleagues. Throughout the 1980s he wrote manuals for local sport administrators to use as guidelines for their various bodies. During the same period, Chapman ensured that the various bodies that were contributing to the Sports Foundation were following the same procedures, recognizing the importance of uniformity and a high level of

professionalism. Even though he was far from finished with his contribution to Trinidad and Tobago, his efforts thus far were recognized when he was awarded the Hummingbird Silver medal in the 1983 national awards list.

By 1989 he became the President of the TTOA as it morphed into the Trinidad & Tobago Olympic Committee. Ever mindful of the importance of his role, not just for local sport but regional too, he utilized his position to help Caribbean officials get onto various Olympic committees; he knew that greater administrative participation by the region would greatly benefit Caribbean athletes.

A longstanding Board member of the WITCO Sports Foundation, and its successor the First Citizens Sports Foundation (resigning in 2018), Chapman served as TTOC President until 1997, again an iconic year as Ato Boldon won the country's first ever athletic world championship title, emphasising that a lot of the results during and after Chapman's direct involvement with Olympic events may not have been possible without his pioneering efforts that lasted decades. It was based on patriotism and volunteerism, but most of all, passion.

The man that rose to become a lifetime Vice-President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, Honorary Vice-President of the Central American & Caribbean Sports Organization, as well as a valued IOC member, was duly honoured with the creation of the Alexander B. Chapman Award at the First Citizens Sports Foundations Awards. Inaugurated at the 2017 awards, it is for the contribution to sport and Olympism, particularly in the promotion of Olympic ideals – a fitting and

outstanding tribute to an administrator extraordinaire who was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 1995.