

## **PRODYUT DEBNATH**

**By Dr. Kesava Mandalaneni**

Known for his selfless service to the Indian Diaspora, we are privileged to honour and recognize Mr. Prodyut Debnath today.

Born in Kolkata, India, Mr. Debnath and his two siblings were lovingly raised by his parents. He was only 20 when he was invited to travel to the Caribbean with his uncle and a doctor from Guyana . The trip was to be one of business exploration and a myriad of adventures. Mr. Debnath visited many Indian businesspersons and explored the counties of Guyana, Jamaica, St Vincent, Curacao and Grenada. While he had options of settling in any of these islands, he chose Grenada as his home when he arrived here in 1985. The beauty of the country, the promise of good business opportunities and the feel of a supportive Indian community all played a part in confirming his decision.

Mr. Debnath's contribution to the business community started with a mentorship under the late great Mr. Prem Chandiramani, the renowned Indian Businessman, who taught him the ropes in the business and trained him to be a savvy business person. Under Mr. Prem's tutelage, he flourished as an entrepreneur and learned how to assimilate with the Grenadian community and simultaneously support the Indian and Grenadian communities. This valuable apprenticeship bore fruit in 1991 when Mr. Debnath opened his own business, the Caribazaar Department Store, selling a wide range of household merchandise, electronics and clothing. He also noticed the void in the local market for musical instruments and sports products, prompting him to specialise on these products. He believes that by providing access to musical instruments sports equipment gear to Grenadian children, they have a an opportunity to excel in these areas. He also made the decision to support local families by only employing Grenadians in his business.

Mr. Debnath's sense of corporate social responsibility was seen early on in his businesses. He was known for providing necessities for families in need, organizing hamper distributions and giving discounts and gifts to needy families requiring school supplies. Social causes remain close to his heart even to this day. Every Wednesday, he personally prepares and distributes food boxes for people in need and the displaced in the St Georges town area. He believes that serving others is ultimately an expression of his service to God.

Over the years, Mr. Debnath has tirelessly organised and participated in a wide range of social and cultural activities in Grenada including Carnival,

Phagwah, Diwali, Holi and Indian Arrival Day celebrations to name a few. He has contributed immensely to the increased awareness of Indian, Indo-Grenadian and Grenadian culture. Mr. Debnath is a valuable and active member of these communities. He is recognised by many as a man of wisdom as he now serves as a mentor to many young business persons and Indian citizens when they arrive in Grenada, helping them assimilate and even acted as a liaison with the High Commission Office in Trinidad before the office of the Honorary Consul was established here. He has also written two books—a Bengal Book entitled ‘Kalkata Caribbean and my Life’ which was written to educate his people back home about Caribbean people and culture. He also authored an Audiobook ‘Golpo Holey Sotti’ which means ‘story come true’. It is a story about his experiences in Kolkata and the Caribbean and his love for the Caribbean and its beauty and culture.

Mr. Debnath is also known as a committed family man. He was married to Dr. Keya Debnath until her passing in 2019. Together they have one daughter Shahana Debnath.

It is with great pride and honour that we sincerely thank, applaud and congratulate Mr. Prodyut Debnath for his outstanding contributions to the Indian diaspora and the enrichment of Indian heritage & culture, and for being a trailblazer in business and a stalwart of social community efforts for the betterment of the people of Grenada. Let’s all give Mr. Debnath a big round of applause!