

# JAMAICA®

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## JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FOR EDITH BAXTER MEMORIAL AWARD

*Commemorative award program honours Canadians who elevate Jamaica*

**TORONTO, ON – August 30, 2023** – The [Jamaica Tourist Board](#) (JTB) is pleased to announce the five finalists for the 2023 edition of the [Edith Baxter Memorial Award](#). Founded in 2021, the biennial competition recognizes outstanding individuals who leverage their influence to promote the positive advancement of Jamaica's tourist industry and/or Jamaican culture within Canada.

The commemorative award program was established in partnership with the Baxter family in memory of Canadian travel industry publishing icon Edith Baxter. In keeping with the competition's namesake, the five finalists for the 2023 competition were selected based on their strong character and outstanding efforts toward promoting and advocating for Destination Jamaica.

The finalists for the 2023 Edith Baxter Memorial Award are:



**Ron Fanfair**

A longtime writer and photographer, Ron Fanfair's contributions over the last 37 years to *Share*, Canada's largest ethnic newspaper, and ronfanfair.com have allowed him to inform, educate and entertain a wide cross-section of readers. His reporting on local and international events provides readers with an immediate and deeper understanding of the significant issues impacting Canada's ethnic communities, including the Jamaican diaspora. Fanfair is also a member of the University of the West Indies Toronto gala committee, which raises money to fund scholarships for students attending the Caribbean academic institution.



### **Dave McLaughlin**

Dave McLaughlin is an internationally renowned saxophonist, recording artist and dedicated humanitarian who has performed for world leaders, celebrities and professional athletes. Driven by a strong belief in giving back, the Montego Bay native has supported academic scholarships for Canadian and Jamaican students through his fundraising concerts and CD sales. McLaughlin has also worked alongside Usain Bolt and Yohan Blake to raise funds for Jamaica's hospitals to purchase much-needed medical supplies, including incubators and bedding.



### **Simone Smith**

For more than 13 years, Simone Smith has been a prominent leader in a diverse cross-

section of professional roles, including print media, creative design and social media, mental health, education and mentoring. She serves as a columnist, talk show host, operations manager, and chief correspondent at Carib101 Media Group. Smith also contributes to the advancement of Toronto's African and Caribbean communities in her role as project manager for the fundraising group Brothers Who Care, and as the founder of Hear 2 Help Inc., which offers community services that range from tutoring and adult learning to life coaching and business development.



### **Sandra Whiting**

A well-known storyteller and speaker, Sandra Whiting was born in Kingston Jamaica, and has been at the epicentre of activity and change in Toronto's African Canadian community for many years. She has worked with The Black Business & Professional Association as President and Board member, served as past president of P.A.C.E. (Canada), chaired the Walk Good Walkathon at the Jamaican Canadian Association, and has contributed to many more organizations over the years as a Board member and/or volunteer. Whiting is currently the Vice President of Culchahworks, an organization supporting Toronto's arts community. She also works with the Toronto Courts and the Immigration and Refugee Board as an interpreter of Jamaican patois.



### **Diana Winters**

Diana Winters has worked in the tourism industry for close to 30 years and demonstrates an unmatched passion for making travel dreams come true and giving back to communities in both Canada and Jamaica. She has been an unwavering advocate for Destination Jamaica throughout her career as a travel advisor and in her roles with tour operators and hoteliers. During her time at Palace Resorts, Diana discovered her philanthropical side while working with the company's Fundación Palace Resorts program. Branching out on her own, Winters has undertaken numerous independent charitable initiatives to encourage support for the people of Jamaica. She has organized philanthropic trips for Canadian travel agents to build homes and schools on the island, raised funds for local medical clinics, and launched a donation drive during the pandemic to collect tablets, laptops and other education supplies.

The short-list for the 2023 edition of the Edith Baxter Memorial Award was chosen by a panel of four judges, including: Angella Bennett, Regional Director, Jamaica Tourist Board, Canada; Wendy McClung, Executive Vice President, Baxter Media; Lincoln G. Downer, Consul General of Jamaica in Toronto; and Kelly Schmitt, President and Co-Founder, Spoiled Agent.

The group of five nominees will be recognized during the Edith Baxter Memorial Award luncheon in Toronto on Friday, September 22, hosted by Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett. Prominent Jamaican-born writer, speaker and podcaster, Arlene Amitirigala, will serve as the M.C. for the event.

The final grand prize winner will be revealed during the Edith Baxter Memorial Award luncheon and will be awarded a luxury all-inclusive vacation for two to Jamaica courtesy of award partners [Sandals Resorts](#) and [Air Canada Vacations](#).

For more information about the Edith Baxter Memorial Award, including nomination guidelines and eligibility requirements, please visit [www.edithbaxteraward.com](http://www.edithbaxteraward.com).

#### **About The Jamaica Tourist Board**

The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), founded in 1955, is Jamaica's national tourism agency based in the capital city of Kingston. JTB offices are also located in Montego Bay, Miami, Toronto and Germany and London. Representative offices are located in Berlin, Spain, Italy, Mumbai and Tokyo.

In 2022, the JTB was declared 'World's Leading Cruise Destination,' 'World's Leading Family Destination' and 'World's Leading Wedding Destination' by the World Travel Awards, which also named it the 'Caribbean's Leading Tourist Board' for the 15th consecutive year; and the 'Caribbean's Leading Destination' for the 17th consecutive year; as well as the 'Caribbean's Leading Nature Destination' and the 'Caribbean's Best Adventure

Tourism Destination.’ In addition, Jamaica earned seven awards in the prestigious gold and silver categories at the 2022 Travvy Awards, including ‘Best Wedding Destination – Overall’, ‘Best Destination – Caribbean,’ ‘Best Culinary Destination – Caribbean,’ ‘Best Tourism Board – Caribbean,’ ‘Best Travel Agent Academy Program,’ ‘Best Cruise Destination - Caribbean’ and ‘Best Wedding Destination – Caribbean.’ Jamaica is home to some of the world’s best accommodations, attractions and service providers that continue to receive prominent global recognition.

For details on upcoming special events, attractions and accommodations in Jamaica, go to the JTB’s website at [www.visitjamaica.com](http://www.visitjamaica.com) or call the Jamaica Tourist Board at 1-800-JAMAICA (1-800-526-2422). Follow the JTB on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#). View the JTB blog at [visitjamaica.com/blog](http://visitjamaica.com/blog).

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