



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***University of Guyana to Commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1823 Demerara Revolt in Guyana***

The University of Guyana through the Department of History and Caribbean Studies will be hosting a series of events in August 2023 to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1823 Demerara Uprising in Guyana. The events, organised under the theme "Honoring our Ancestors' Sacrifices and Extraordinary Achievements," will be open to all Guyanese.

The 1823 Demerara Rebellion was the first massive slave uprising in Demerara, British Guiana. It broke out on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 1823, and involved an estimated 11,000 to 12,000 enslaved people from about fifty-five plantations on the East Coast of Demerara, from Liliendal to Mahaica. This uprising was an attempt by Africans to gain their freedom from an oppressive, authoritarian system that characterised the plantation economy in British Guiana. This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the uprising by these enslaved people who eventually won their full emancipation on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1838.

The planned events include an essay competition, a symposium, a community presentation, a radio and newspaper historical series, and a student tour of the revolt route.

The 1823 Bicentennial Essay competition is open to public and private school students from Grade Five to Grade Twelve. Students will have the opportunity to win plaques,

trophies, and book vouchers. The organising committee has also planned a series of radio appearances (UG Radio, HJ Radio and Demerara Waves Radio) between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of August where members of the Department will highlight the major features of the rebellion as part of our public awareness initiative. Articles on the rebellion, written by Professor Emeritus Winston McGowan, will also be published in all the major daily newspapers.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, the day the rebellion began, a symposium will be hosted at the University of Guyana. Panelists will comprise leading Guyanese academics whose presentations will focus on various aspects of the rebellion. Presenters include Cecilia McAlmont whose presentation will examine Quamina's Trial, Dwayne Benjamin who will present on Christianity and the rebellion, Dr. Estherine Adams who will deliver a paper on Women and the use of prisons in the rebellion, and Shammane Joseph-Jackson who will present on the historical significance of the rebellion. Professor Nigel Westmaas will focus on the Views in the News, (historical newspaper coverage of the 1823 Rebellion). The symposium will also feature a brief award ceremony for the essay competition winners as well as cultural presentations in the form of African drumming, poetry recital and a Steel pan rendition.

The committee is also organising a historical tour tracing the route of the uprising, focusing on the plantations/villages involved and the locations of notable events/battles. The commemoration activities will conclude on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August, the day of the Battle of Bachelor's Adventure, with a Community presentation at Parbamel Community Centre at Bachelor's Adventure. This activity will feature a libation ceremony, a wreath-laying ceremony at the 1823 Monument in Bachelor's Adventure, presentations on the rebellion, and drumming.

The University will also launch an 1823 Bicentennial website at the beginning of August 2023. The website will feature an overview of the revolt, historical and contemporary maps of the area that was included in the uprising (general East Coast from Liliendaal to Mahaica, highlighting significant areas such as Bachelor's Adventure, Success, Le Resouvenir, Parade Ground, etc.), historical and current

images of the area, artist rendition of the leaders and other images related to the event, images of various monuments dedicated to the revolt, images of Rev. John Smith, copies of other related primary sources from the National Archives and other repositories, past newspaper articles, etc., a bibliography, blogs, list of events and copies of the winning essays.

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### **UG IN BRIEF**

The University of Guyana, now in its 60th year, was founded in October 1963. “UG” as it is fondly referred to offers 150 programmes plus in over 60 disciplines in online, face-to-face or blended formats. UG delivers in a Guyana-based system across eight campuses. It is the largest, oldest, most advanced and only state University in Guyana with a student population of over 10,000.

“UG” has provided education, training and research for over 50,000 alumni over its 60-year history. UG’s national and global impact and footprint are significant. Its graduates have risen to populate the commanding heights of national, regional and international organisations of repute in over 150 different disciplines. The mission of the University is to discover, generate, disseminate and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation, and all mankind within an atmosphere of academic freedom, innovation and universal respect.

UG’s forward-thinking Blueprint 2040 is currently setting the course for the University’s future design and institutional response to the changing needs of Guyana, the region and the world. UG is currently celebrating its 60th anniversary and is stepping up its focus on becoming one of the leading and most sought-after educational institutions in the world for both staff and students.