

**‘The People’s Psychiatrist’: Chief Madman or Revolutionary Healer?  
Dr. Fred Hickling and the Development of Postcolonial Psychiatry in Jamaica**

By Anne Hickling-Hudson  
Queensland University of Technology, Australia  
[a.hudson@qut.edu.au](mailto:a.hudson@qut.edu.au)

**Introduction: ‘Champion of the Mentally Ill’**

Frederick Hickling, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at The University of the West Indies, died in Jamaica on May 7, 2020. He was 75, and my brother. This paper is a short tribute to his innovative career in psychiatric medicine.

Fred was a pioneer, both in Jamaica and internationally, in the range of interacting medical and cultural systems that he implemented in the service of psychiatry. These included deinstitutionalization of a mental hospital, community care, cultural therapy, radio psychiatry and individual therapy. He developed this approach to meet the huge needs of treating and caring for mental health patients in Jamaica and elsewhere. His six books and his more than 100 academic articles constitute a valuable archive discussing his research and case studies on schizophrenia, personality disorder, community psychiatry, psychotherapy, political psychology and cultural therapy (See <https://mona-uwi.academia.edu/Hickling/CurriculumVitae>). One of his unique achievements was to relate his medical work and research to the situation of societies formerly colonized and enslaved by Europeans, particularly people of the Black/African diaspora. On behalf of the Jamaican Psychological Association, the Chair wrote in his memory:

*Professor Hickling was a brilliant orator and visionary. He was always controversial and always supportive of research and growth and was a mentor to many in the field of mental health. He made a significant contribution to the understanding of how history, especially slavery, has shaped the Jamaican psyche (Chung Voordouw, Jamaica Observer, 2020).*

Fred was a controversial figure. Over his career of fifty years, some raised questions about his methods of practising psychiatry. In a society which remained for many years steeped in conservative colonial thinking, although independent of the British from 1962, it was said that some of his attitudes and strategies veered on madness themselves. He stridently and publicly denounced the racism and classism of colonial rule by the British and other Europeans, and linked this to what he argued was the aftermath of traumatized societies with deeply flawed mental health services that the colonizers had put in place. Characteristic of his radical challenge were some firm commitments. He publicly supported those whom the society oppressed, including his defence of the persecuted grouping of Rastafarians. He sought to level entrenched hierarchical distinctions in the mental hospital when he became its director, and to transfer many hospital patients into systematic community healthcare. He pioneered controversial new psychotherapy approaches utilising political analysis and the creative arts. He was one of the early voices arguing for the selective medical use of cannabis. He interacted with colleagues in Cuba and later in Africa in his medical work, at a time when such collaboration was rare.

*While Fred's ethos and career seemed reckless and mad to his detractors, his pioneering and innovative psychiatry became famous and was honoured with national and international awards. On his death, a series of obituaries in the local newspapers remembered Fred with glowing tributes. One newspaper report noted that the President of Jamaica's Senate, Tom Tavares-Finson, "directed the clerk to write to Hickling's family, expressing the condolences of the House and that this correspondence should be accompanied by a copy of the Hansard in order that the family could read the glowing tributes paid to him" (Christopher Serju, Jamaica Gleaner, May 9, 2020).*

Among the tributes to Fred from the Senators was this from Senator Lambert Brown:

*Hickling was instrumental in changing the view of how society saw people with mental challenges. "He made it clear, as a **champion of the mentally ill**, that they deserved better treatment from society and for that we owe Freddie Hickling a tremendous debt of gratitude," Brown insisted. He recalled the psychiatrist's pivotal role in establishing the community mental health programme in the 1970s, describing Hickling as a fiercely independent and progressive character (Serju, Jamaica Gleaner, May 9, 2020).*

Another newspaper honoured Fred's passing in this editorial:

*Just when we needed him the most, renowned professor of psychiatry Frederick Hickling has died. The nation has lost a commanding presence and the sage healing advice of the popular psychiatrist. In a career spanning 50 years, Professor Hickling helped to establish a community psychiatric service and pioneered cultural therapy in Jamaica (Jamaica Observer, May 10, 2020).*

## **Background**

I have some knowledge of my brother's work not only because he has carefully documented it in his academic writings, but also because he and I, just a year apart in age, grew up, studied and developed our careers side by side in Jamaica. We shared and often discussed a radical postcolonial/decolonising understanding of our Caribbean society and its place in the world. We were third-generation professionals in our family. Our grandparents and parents built their careers during British colonialism, as Fred outlines in his inaugural professorial lecture at The University of the West Indies in 2002 (See Hickling, 2007:2-4), and as siblings we absorbed the oral history of our foreparents. We went to English-style grammar schools during Jamaica's last decade of colonialism. Recognising that we were among the fortunate few in the society with the opportunity to go to the best high schools and study at university, we shared with many of our generation a fierce commitment to challenge, tackle and change negative colonial legacies. Much of our work (his in medicine, mine in History and Education, and that of our two younger sisters, Gillian and Kathryn, in the Biological Sciences and Education) was based on a postcolonial analysis of the personal and generational trauma of histories of colonial enslavement and oppression.

Fred and I completed high school in December 1961 and started university in September 1962, the first year of Jamaica's independence after over three centuries of British colonialism. We confronted our 1950s colonial education and socialization with the perspectives of the radical sixties and seventies. These stemmed not only from being students whose eyes were being opened by our studies at The University of the West Indies (UWI, in 1962, newly independent of London University) followed by our postgraduate studies abroad, but also from

the tumultuous changes around us. Marcus Garvey, CLR James, Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, Eric Williams, Elsa Goveia, Walter Rodney and Fidel Castro were among those who influenced our thinking. The raging discussions of our student days and after were about anti-imperialism, Rastafarianism, Negritude, Marxism, democratic socialism, the women's liberation movement, Maoism, Cuba, Vietnam, the Black Power/civil rights struggles in the USA, Africa's 'Wind of Change,' apartheid in South Africa and 'Rhodesia,' the overthrow of left-wing movements in Indonesia, Brazil, and Chile, and the sacking of the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam by Australia's Governor General. Together with like-minded peers, we strove in our various fields to implement strategies to tackle the monumental problems left by British imperial rule and arguably being continued in our generation by US-dominated structural imperialism.

Fred was educated in medicine and psychiatry at UWI Mona. He received specialist training in anatomy at St. Thomas' Hospital Medical School, University of London, and postgraduate training in psychiatry at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, University of Edinburgh. He was outraged at the racism that he personally encountered while he was studying in Britain, experiences that led him to see the harmful impacts of the British empire with ever greater clarity (See Hickling, 2016, 'Experiencing Britain', pp. 50-63, and 'Becoming Radical', pp. 57-61). As Fred put it with regard to his field:

In postcolonial Jamaica, our greatest mental health challenge has been to counter the psychological impact of 500 years of European racism and colonial oppression. For the descendants of African people enslaved in Jamaica, this has been a process of dismantling the colonial policies and structures that saw thousands of Jamaicans incarcerated in lunatic asylums, while also seeking ways to heal the historical legacy of sustained structural violence and abuse that remain potent causative factors in contemporary mental illness (Hickling, 2020).

### **'Madhouse' to Mental Hospital**

In the early 1970s, at the start of his career, Fred worked with a small team of Jamaican psychiatrists striving to establish a model of community care that would replace the colonial-inherited custodial form of psychiatric treatment. Since the hospital's inception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people thought to be 'lunatics' had been apprehended by police, locked up indefinitely in the notorious Bellevue 'Madhouse' or 'Lunatic Asylum' with over two thousand incarcerated patients, and sometimes subjected to barbaric treatments such as electro-convulsive therapy (Hickling, 2016:77-79). In the new model, after patients were diagnosed and treated, many of them were moved as soon as possible into the care of their families assisted by systematised local medical services (Hickling, 2016, Ch. 7).

Once Fred moved into a leadership role in the health sector, his pioneering achievement was to expand and implement this community care model island-wide, together with making other fundamental improvements in Jamaica's mental health services. As Senior Medical Officer in charge of Bellevue hospital for eight years (1976-1983), Fred moved the hospital into a new world that is discussed in his 2016 book *Owning Our Madness. Facing Reality in Post-Colonial Jamaica*. This included banning the Bellevue hospital's use of electro-convulsive shock treatment. Another aspect of the medical significance of Fred's work, as his colleague Professor Peter Figueroa wrote to me, was that:

*He helped to establish the importance of the role of mental health officers in the treatment of the mentally ill as well as showing that mentally ill persons admitted to general hospitals did much better than those admitted to a mental institution (Figueroa, Personal email, September 10, 2020)*

Almost every strategy that Fred used in the transformation of the mental hospital (See Hickling, 2016, Ch. 6 & Ch. 8) was controversial and contested. Some of the health care staff at first were dismayed at the challenge to tradition and hierarchy, as were some in the wider public. But whatever the criticisms, Fred was always fierce and uncompromising in his goal of de-institutionalising and destigmatising mental health care. Some saw this as progressive and revolutionary, others as madly dangerous to social order. What was incontestable was that he brought the issue of mental illness and mental health into public view in a way that it had never been before. In this process, Jamaicans came to see those with mental health problems as needing health care in a modern hospital and/or through community clinics, rather than incarceration in a ‘madhouse.’

### ‘Revolutionary Healer’

UWI professor Carolyn Cooper sees Fred as ‘a revolutionary healer’ in his extraordinary establishment of cultural therapy at the Bellevue hospital (Cooper, 2020).

Drama and music were his passions. There cannot be many doctors who make artistic passions central to their medical practice. Fred involved hospital staff and patients in a creative process (Hickling, 2016, Ch. 10) in which they interwove life narratives, colonial histories and decolonising analyses to produce innovative musical docu-dramas on the nature of ‘madness’ and views about it. This was the cultural therapy aspect of healing. The dramas were given thought-provoking names drawn from Rastafarian lingo, such as ‘**Madnificent Irations**’, ‘**Visionated Penetrations**’, ‘**Madaptations**’ and ‘**Irations Explosions**.’

In the mid-1970s, Fred, his patients and his staff together built a garden theatre at the mental hospital using lightweight bamboo, and this was nicknamed the ‘Bamboo Theatre.’ There, patients and staff together performed the socio-dramas they had written, for audiences that paid to see them. For the audiences, it was culturally both confronting and exciting to consider the shows’ interpretations of ‘madness’ in historical context. Spectators would squirm uneasily when it was not known which actors were mental hospital patients or health care staff, gasping when either of these might suddenly brandish a machete and accost them with an unanswerable question such as: ‘Who mad – me or you?’

Fred’s experience in the arts was the basis for this work. From 1963, his second year as a medical student, through the next 15 years, he played a dynamic role as stage manager for Jamaica’s famous National Dance Theatre company led by dancer, choreographer and historian Rex Nettleford who later became Vice Chancellor of UWI (Hickling, 2007:5; Hickling, 2016:121-122), and who was one of Fred’s most significant mentors. Fred was road manager for some popular music groups, too, such as Toots and the Maytals, and Tommy McCook and the Skatalites. Working with them in the 1960s immersed him in ‘learning about my society – this was the scholarship that cemented the ethnopsychiatry of the future’ (Hickling, 2007:5-6). In 1973 Fred, by then a qualified psychiatrist aged 29, carried out cultural therapy and artistic work with Jamaica’s famous band, *Third World*, reggae-fusion musicians with whom he co-developed the spectacular

stage show '**Explanitations**', combining life stories, reggae music and choreography (Hickling, 2004:45-66). 'Explanitations' was the inspiration for his evolving model of group cultural therapy.

In Fred's compelling narrative of the changes he initiated at Bellevue Hospital (2016, Ch. 10), he shows how he established the concept of the 'reasoning circle' – daily group meetings of health professionals together with patients to discuss and evaluate ongoing therapeutic tasks. Levels of rehabilitative treatment were graded in terms of patients moving from needing high, to moderate, to low levels of supervision, some culminating in discharge into community and family care.

His occupational therapy strategy at Bellevue insisted on work as therapy and included the provision of art, craft and agricultural initiatives that earned weekly stipends for hospital patients. Within a few years the number of long-stay patients in Bellevue hospital was significantly reduced, and many of those who remained as patients were earning a weekly income from their work therapy activities.

Aspects of this new, deinstitutionalizing model of mental health care were inspired by the transformational changes that Fred studied and visited in the mental health system in Cuba during the regime of Fidel Castro (Hickling, 2016:140-142), and by his own love of the creative arts. He organised teams of colleagues from the English-speaking Caribbean, Cuba, India, and the USA to work with him putting in place the many dimensions of the new Bellevue hospital model (Hickling, 2016:143).

Fred's determination to destigmatize public perceptions of mental health took another step forward when he expanded the tradition of an annual Open Day at the hospital, to an Open Week when the public could visit and interact with the daily work of patients and staff. Initially, both staff and patients resisted the idea of a week of work exposure to the public. But community enthusiasm for the interactive visits turned initial reluctance from hospital participants into positive motivation and self-pride.

Between 1978 and 1981, Fred oversaw the organisation of guided tours of over 5000 visitors to Bellevue, many of them schoolchildren, 'in an effort to educate them about mental illness and its treatment and to reduce the massive stigma that existed' (Hickling, 2016:165). The 'Bamboo Theatre' metamorphosed into a setting for this wider community outreach, becoming a centre of creativity. Some hospital patients forming the 'Irrations Band' met there regularly to practise music, and in the process taught Fred the basics of playing the saxophone to the point where he could join them occasionally in performance (Hickling, 2016:177). He often expressed regret that he had not mastered a musical instrument, having refused as a child to take music lessons in either the piano or the violin, as our piano-teaching mother wanted him to. But in the 'circles' at Bellevue, he happily accepted music lessons from his patients.

Other patients and staff met at the Bamboo Theatre for informal singing and religious sessions. People from neighbouring communities held informal concerts there. Drama groups, including the popular 'Sistren' group led by Jamaican dramatist and writer Honor Ford-Smith, used it as a rehearsal stage for musical and dramatic shows that they were preparing. Daily snacks were available for sale. College students from the Jamaica School of Drama did teaching internships in the community theatre therapy program (Hickling, 2016:167-168). Honor Ford-

Smith, now a professor at York University, Toronto, sent me this lovely remembrance of those days of energy in the setting of the garden theatre:

*My favorite memories of Fred are the amazing days of the Bellevue garden theatre. I loved that theatre – which carried our memories of tea meetings, grounations, kumina booths and fairs on the church grounds of the 1950s. It was cheaply made completely of local materials – bamboo and bagasse board – easily replaceable materials that at the time were accessible and reminded us of the roots and self-sufficiency we must all find routes to regain.*

*We Sistren, opened our second play Bandoolu Version there in 1979. As you will know, the theatre was an attempt to make the hospital less “Other” to the community around it. Didi (Bev Eliot), one of the Sistren leads, lived in the community of East Kingston, so it was a perfect choice for us to open the play there.*

*The theatre was more or less free. Every day it was in use by folks at Bellevue. There was a garden outside, and folks would gather there to work in it and smoke herb. It was busy and full of energy and Dr. Fred would drop by to reason with the folks working there. He was the Senior Medical Officer (SMO) at the Bellevue Hospital then, but the patients riffed on those initials, creole style, and called him ‘Eskimo’ (completely unconnected to anything Innuit – just one of those English words that sounded strange and meant something...well...? strange.) “Unu see Eskimo tideh?” they would ask us.*

*On the night of the opening of our play, Bandoolu Version, the community came out to the show, and moments before, we were told to prepare for attendance by the Prime Minister, his family, PJ and a huge entourage of folks from East Kingston (Ford-Smith, Personal email, May 30, 2020).*

### **‘Chief Madman’, ‘Dr. Dreadlocks’, ‘The People’s Psychiatrist’ and University Professor**

While carrying out his radical work at the hospital and in communities, Fred developed another innovative strategy of outreach psychiatry through a daily radio program that presented him as the ‘Radio Psychiatrist’. In this role, he answered questions from people calling in about mental health problems that they were having, advising them on the community mental health services in their area on which they could draw. This became an immensely popular program, ‘providing a profound insight into the psychopathology of the Jamaican people, their sufferings, their culture and their coping responses’ and explaining and destigmatising psychiatry to the public (Hickling, 2016:182-186). Attracting some 58% of total national listenership, according to media surveys between 1977 and 1981, it ran on the Jamaica Broadcasting Service for nine years.

It was the ‘first time that radio psychiatry was to be used anywhere in the world as a community education and health promotion programme’ (Hickling, 2007:22; Hickling, 1992:739-741). This regular, island-wide discussion of the psychological concerns of Jamaicans from all walks of life led to Fred becoming known as ‘the people’s psychiatrist.’ Fred’s Radio Psychiatrist show was also valuable to some of his medical colleagues. Professor Shaughan Terry, an English doctor who practised for many years in Jamaica, expressed it this way in email messages to me:

*I was always a fan of Freddie’s. His Radio Psychiatrist programme was brilliant and he taught me a lot about how to talk to patients and their hard to fix problems... I remember*

*him for his work in mental health..., his work with Third World Band, his support for Bellevue Hospital and his personal kindness to me when I was sick in Jamaica. His was a life well-lived... He will be remembered with respect and gratitude ...he will live on in the hearts of many.* (Terry, Personal emails, May 8, 2020; November 20, 2020)

At the same time, Fred attracted the labels of 'mad psychiatrist,' 'chief madman' and 'Dr. Dreadlocks' because of his public defence of the socio-cultural movement of Jamaica's Rastafarians, and his adoption of their dreadlocks hairstyle as a show of support. Rastafarians with their message and symbols of African identity and self-affirmation, in strident negation of Eurocentric culture, were controversial. Though admired by some for their resistant, Afrocentric culture, they were also rejected, mocked, feared and disproportionately incarcerated, some imprisoned and others locked up in their hundreds in the Bellevue mental hospital (See Hickling, 2016:147-159).

Fred ensured that many of the Rastafarians incarcerated in Bellevue were released after being clinically tested. He argued that their social behaviour, beliefs, and ritual use of ganja (marijuana) did not constitute 'madness.' His view was that the Rastafari movement, although it 'has shaped what is culturally central in the lives of the Jamaican people' is still 'a source of profound psychological denial' for many Jamaicans who 'continue to be ambivalent about their African racial identity' (Hickling, 2016:159).

It was not surprising when Fred's popular radio psychiatry program was terminated in 1984 by a newly-elected government that was bent on restoring conventional strategies in Jamaica (See Hickling, 2016:186-187). This government, led by Edward Seaga, was part of a backlash against the socialist-oriented government of Michael Manley who had been Jamaica's Prime Minister for eight years (1972-1980).

The Michael Manley regime had established a framework of fundamental and controversial rethinking of Jamaica's goals in a decolonizing direction, along with improvements in the lives of workers, women, the poor and the marginalized. With the 1980s backlash against the difficulties of this path of socio-cultural change, Fred's appointment as Senior Medical Officer was not renewed, and his new hospital programs, including the Garden Theatre, were discontinued. Here is how Honor Ford-Smith describes it:

*That theatre as you know was destroyed in 1981 when new leadership took over the hospital and the theatre was never replaced. Aye. Aye. Aye. That was like what happened to Ngugi's theatre in Kenya. The Kamirithu theatre.*

*I sincerely wish that we might live to see it or its equivalent re-inaugurated in memory of Fred's achievements. It was a stupid and senseless act of destruction that did a grave disservice to the community of East Kingston, the theatre and the folks in the hospital. Now more than ever when there are so few theatres left and those which are left are so costly to operate, we need public space and cheap access to performance space, how I wish it could be rebuilt in his memory* (Ford-Smith, Personal email, May 30, 2020)

Bellevue mental hospital was returned, as Fred describes it, to 'the administrative principle of custodialization' (Hickling, 2016:145). As he observed, 'the destruction of the Garden Theatre and the eradication of the cultural therapy process was an act of administrative vandalism which defied logical explanation' (Cooper, *Jamaica Gleaner*, May 25, 2020). In 2016,

Fred cited newspaper reports of 1987 and 2012 that describe a state of disarray and dysfunctionality from which the hospital had not yet recovered (Hickling, 2016:145-146).

Fred's open discussion of the medical use of cannabis caused controversy and anger among some of his colleagues, and after he left Bellevue and set up his own psychiatric practice, he continued to provoke controversy. Yet his academic, professional and international achievements were so outstanding that in 2000 he won the post of Professor of Psychiatry, heading the Section of Psychiatry in the Department of Community Health and Psychiatry of the Medical Faculty of The University of the West Indies. When he retired, the UWI appointed him Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry in 2011.

In his inaugural Professorial Lecture in 2001 at UWI, he intrigued the audience with the narrative that in one of his lecture presentations, "...I demonstrated how I had used Cannabis Replacement Therapy to cure (a patient's) violent debilitating alcoholism. After that... I was told that there were a number of my colleagues who vowed that Freddie Hickling would never, ever teach in this university and in this Faculty of Medicine. I daresay that some of these people are sitting right here in this room this evening!" (Hickling, 2007:19-20).

### **Management, Medicine, Psychohistoriography and Children's Therapy**

From the mid-1980s, Fred worked as a consultant psychiatrist both in private practice and in government organizations in Jamaica, the UK (Birmingham) and New Zealand (at Massey University), with partnerships also in Canada and the USA. During this time, his managerial skills went into many psychiatric care projects that he led, some of these supported by competitive research grants that he won. 'His influence was felt beyond the region, for example, in the development of policy on African Caribbean mental health in the United Kingdom' (Editorial, *Jamaica Observer*, May 10, 2020). He combined entrepreneurship, management and medicine in two organisations that he established, Psychotherapy Associates, a psychological service centre for private patients, and CARIMENSA, the Caribbean Institute of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, a mental health research and treatment centre at the University of the West Indies (Hickling, 2016:194-197).

Out of his career experience of blending psychiatry, history, drama and music, Fred systematized an innovative therapeutic technique that he called 'psychohistoriography,' documented in his 2007 book, republished in 2012: *Psychohistoriography: A Postcolonial Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic model*. This technique asks group participants to reflect on their personal histories in the context of the wider history of European colonization, which is explained as a delusional psychosis perpetrated by the European invaders. The aim is for participants to understand their mental health issues in socio-historical context, with a focus on the generational traumas stemming from slavery and imperialism. Group therapeutic exercises involve challenging dominant discourses of historical events, in order to tackle the legacy of current problems and move forward to a mental healing that included demanding justice.

Fred taught this technique widely, to medical students and collegial partnership groups in many countries. As a cultural therapy approach, drawing from his stinging critique of the traditional 'absence of culture' in psychoanalytic thinking (Hickling, 2007, Ch. 9), it is a key part of his legacy. A reviewer of this book writes that:

'Dr. Hickling effectively challenges traditional Western views about the genesis of "mental illness." Although the theory of what he calls "European-American psychosis" may not be to everyone's liking, it certainly makes the point that the domination of the non-Western world by the West has had a profound effect on the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry. What I found most interesting and helpful in this book were the detailed descriptions of "cultural therapy" applicable to working with people from Black and other minority ethnic groups in Western settings' (Fernando, 2013).

As well as teaching his own undergraduate and graduate students at the University of the West Indies, Fred also provided valuable guest-teaching sessions for the students of some of his colleagues. Professor Peter Figueroa of the University of the West Indies wrote to me that 'Freddie did some superb seminars with my Doctor of Public Health students, including one a few weeks before he passed. I am glad that he agreed to me taping him. In his last seminar his theme in relating the history and development of mental health in Jamaica was to show the psychotic delusions that the colonisers suffered from' (Figueroa, Personal email, September 2020). One of the members of the Jamaican Senate, Senator Dr. Sapphire Longmore, who is also a psychiatrist, posted on social media in immediate response to the news of Fred's death: 'Rest in Peace Professor Hickling. You are an inspiration of a fighter and a dreamer. I am grateful to have learned from you' (*Jamaica Gleaner*, May 8, 2020).

A newspaper editorial in Jamaica observes: 'In another pioneering intervention, Professor Hickling and collaborators at The UWI's Caribbean Institute of Mental Health and Substance Abuse employed cultural therapy at a handful of inner-city schools for students and teachers, significantly improving behaviour and educational outcomes. Unfortunately, the programme was allowed to lapse for lack of funding' (Editorial, *Jamaica Gleaner*, May 13, 2020; See also Graham et al., 2007; Robertson-Hickling et al., 2009). Called 'Dream-A-World,' this project was recognised as an 'out-of-the-box' approach contributing to global mental health strategies, with its use of the creative arts in primary schools promoting 'social well-being, resilience and improved academic performance; increasing self-control; reducing antisocial behaviour and promoting "wholesome" identity' (Pedersen, 2015). Fred and his CARIMENSA colleagues led this 'Dream-A-World' project from the stage of being a research initiative to one that secured government partnership and funding that expanded it to 35 schools (Hickling, 2015). Hopefully, more funding for the programme can be won in the future.

Fred also regularly collaborated with mental health colleagues in several African countries, and was on the steering committee and international advisory committee of AMARI, the African Mental Health Research Initiative. This was founded in 2015 'to build an Africa-led network of future leaders in mental, neurological and substance use (MNS) research in Ethiopia, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe' (See <https://amari-africa.org/ourstaff>).

Fred did much of his post-retirement work as an Emeritus Professor through CARIMENSA, the UWI Caribbean institute that he established as a preventive mental health organization. On what would have been his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday, November 19, 2020, his colleagues at CARIMENSA organized a virtual memorial conference honouring his legacy, hosted by his wife Dr. Hilary Robertson-Hickling and his colleague Dr. Geoffrey Walcott. A feature of the conference was the keynote lecture that he gave on January 25, 2020, as an invited guest of SAVVY International, a cross-cultural Fine Arts foundation in Berlin. In Fred's lecture, 'Owning our Madness: Contributions of Jamaican Psychiatry to Decolonizing Global Mental Health'

(Hickling, 2020, See <https://vimeo.com/417702916>), he elucidated the development of his work on psycho-historiographic cultural therapy, post-slavery trauma, the ‘Dream-a-World’ child resiliency project, and deinstitutionalization in Jamaica. At the virtual memorial conference, there were tributes from Professor Jaswant Guzder of McGill University, Professor Dixon Chibanda of the University of Zimbabwe and Dr. Vitor Pordeus of the People’s University of Art and Science, Brazil, among others. As Professor Guzder described it, *‘The memorial was a celebration of his significant contribution to global health, anti-racism and therapeutic innovations embracing the wounds of slavery’* (Guzder, Personal email, November 24, 2020).

The culminating work of Fred’s career is the book published by Palgrave in 2020: *‘Decolonization of Psychiatry in Jamaica: Madnificent Irations’*, which he completed shortly before his death (<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030484880#aboutBook>).

### **Family and Friends**

Fred was married twice. With his first wife, the popular radio broadcaster and artistically talented Pamela Gordon-Hickling, came three children, Deborah, Daniella and Akindele Hickling, now all creative, trail-blazing professionals in lecturing and management roles at the University of the West Indies and Jamaica’s University of Technology. Sadly, Pam contracted an illness and died in 2006, but their marriage had collapsed in the 1980s, during a time of social upheaval in Jamaica.

In 1987, Fred married Hilary Robertson-Hickling, who became stepmother to his three children who were then in primary school, and now mother to baby boy Chinua whom they adopted two years ago when he was only two weeks old. Hilary is ten years younger than we are. During the 1970s/80s, she was a university student doing her degree in Geography, and was taught, among others, by my geographer husband Dr. Brian Hudson lecturing at the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies. She later became an academic at UWI, having done her PhD in social psychology at the University of Birmingham, UK. As Dr. Hilary Robertson-Hickling, she lectured at UWI in Human Resource Management in the Faculty of Social Science’s School of Business and Management. As well as publishing her own research, she and Fred worked together on mental health and social projects, some of which continue today. Publications that they co-authored are listed at: <https://mona-uw.academia.edu/HilaryRobertsonHickling/CurriculumVitae>.

Fred’s extraordinary arts-based work in psychiatry had strong roots in the culture of our family. The foundation of his talent for co-developing and producing musical docu-dramas was his immersion in the arts. We four siblings had grown up absorbing classical music in the setting of the piano-teaching studio run by our mother Kathleen Bond-Hickling, and the adjacent violin-teaching studio run by one of her colleagues, Doris Livingston. As Fred put it, ‘I grew up in the episteme of Beethoven’s Spring Sonata!’ (Hickling, 2007:4). He later excoriated much of the European episteme, but this was a piece that he continued loving, long after he had to listen to me practising it over and over in 1960 and ‘61 for my Grade 8 (final) Royal Schools of Music violin exam. (I also practised the A Minor Violin Concerto by J. S. Bach, BWV 1041, but the ‘Spring Sonata,’ No. 5, Op 24, was the one he loved best). All three of his sisters were immersed for ten years of our upbringing in performing for the British piano and violin exams and Jamaican music festivals. That meant that he too was immersed in listening to us practice. In our home life, the piano and violin studios enveloped us all day and into the night with music.

Fred, the only son, refused to take music lessons in the music studios at home. Yet at school, church and university he was deeply involved in singing both solo and in choirs, and as an adult, never lost his love of this music. We were sent to elocution lessons as children, and he acted in amateur theatre at school and university, becoming student president of the UWI drama society. Additionally, we were engrossed as adolescents in the rock music of the time, as well as in a large repertoire of Jamaican folk songs which were a feature of social gatherings of our parents and their friends. We were caught up in the excitement of our talented mother's drama passion, for she wrote plays drawing on Jamaican history that were performed by our school drama club, and religious pageants for our church that she set to music she had composed. Our father Herbert, working steadily in the British colonial Civil Service, supported and encouraged all of us in the artistic activity of the household, which featured a visiting stream of our parents' friends from the world of Jamaica's creative arts. That fiery, intense world of music – classical, folk, mento and rock, drama, dance, concerts, performance, Christmas pantomimes, visual art and literary pursuits was the seedbed for the spectacular Jamaican Arts explosion from the 1970s (See Nettleford, 1995) that galvanised the world, germinating and nurturing the cultural therapy innovations forged by my brother in his medical career.

The 'In Memoriam' reflections on Fred's personality and work by Ronnie Thwaites, a lawyer and an elected member of the Jamaican parliament, could only have been written by a lifetime friend. Mourning Fred's passing, Ronnie remembers that they both started preparatory school together in 1950.

His larger-than-life persona, bubbly and inquisitive, budded in those years. Our paths criss-crossed at debating and drama bouts during high-school years... Enviably for those of us without such a charisma, Fred blended his sexy stammer and wicked sense of humour (remember that laugh!) to have the hot St. Andrew's [High School] girls hanging on to his every approach. He seemed able to read their personalities well from then. We later contended for the Rhodes Scholarship. His interview came first, and from the downstairs of King's House where the rest of us waited nervously, one could hear the peals of laughter which Freddie induced from the very staid and humourless committee. He had that way with high-ups, distressed patients, pompous people, friends and family. And yes, he could be difficult, very difficult and scathing sometimes (Thwaites, May 2020)

### **Conclusion: Blazing a Decolonising Trail**

Fred's unusual and unique achievements in psychiatry were internationally recognised. He was elected a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association in 2008, a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK, in 2011, and was awarded the Black Psychiatrists of America Andrea Delgado Award for Excellence in November 2010. He received one of Jamaica's highest national honours, the Order of Distinction (Commander) from the Government of Jamaica in August 2012.

Fred and I, as well as our two younger sisters Gillian and Kathryn, and many of our friends and colleagues, were among the first of the independence generation of Jamaican professionals embarking on a path of postcolonial challenge to the fractured race, class and cultural dysfunctions of the old social order. Fred's challenge was so unorthodox, creative and confrontational that his detractors called it 'mad.' But as the people's psychiatrist, he was highly effective, blazing a decolonising trail. Again, Ronnie Thwaites captures this in the succinct observation that Fred's

praxis of relocating mental health treatment to communities rather than in institutions, and empowering community health aides, has been one of the greatest humanising shifts for Jamaicans with mental challenges, then and since. Who else has had the outrageous courage to help us to see ourselves as we really are, but keep on denying, by telling us that more than half of us are afflicted with some level of psychological dysfunction? He could be troublingly critical and unfailingly compassionate, all at the same time. (Thwaites, May 2020).

After my brother's death in May, scores of people wrote to me honouring his memory. These included three of his close friends who had studied medicine with him during university days in the 1960s and 70s, and also had outstanding careers – Professor Sir Henry Fraser, Professor Renn Holness, Professor John Stewart. I will cite three messages here. First, the 'In Memoriam' email cited above, by Professor Honor Ford-Smith of Toronto's York University, ended with this warm tribute to Fred as a source of inspiration:

*Fred's brilliant and original work on performance and mental health in the 1970s and 80s made a huge contribution to the field of race and Caribbean psychiatry and led to a whole set of innovations in public education on mental health. His work meant a great deal to me and as seems to happen so often now, he left before I had the chance to tell him.*

*What a wonderful original, soul! Never baffled by bullshit, never afraid to provoke, irritate, confront, fantasize and disturb and always warm and funny too...I am so glad he lived in a moment in which he was able to put many of his ideas into practice. May he walk good and may his memory remain an inspiration for us to complete the long project of full emancipation...*

*How relevant is this observation from James Baldwin: "The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do." (Ford-Smith, Personal email, May 30, 2020)*

The message from Professor E. Nigel Harris, Emeritus Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, saw Fred as exceptional:

*We mourn the loss of a friend and in larger context, the loss of an exceptional human being. Freddie's indomitable intellect, his boldness in crafting and advocating new ideas, the fearlessness with which he spoke truth to power was equalled by few people I have known. (Harris, Personal email, May 8, 2020)*

And Professor Rupert Lewis, our UWI 'batch-mate' friend and colleague, who was also shaped in our 1960s/70s cohort at UWI by the Caribbean's new postcolonial understandings and possibilities, was especially struck by Fred's insight into the 'madness' of the neo-colonial order:

*I look forward to reading more of Fred's work. I remember his brilliant inaugural lecture and so much more. Earlier this year we were on a panel discussing reparative justice, and his interpretation of our madness explained so much about our lives and history. He went further than Fanon in seeing the madness implicit in the colonial order and how much we have bought into it. (Lewis, Personal email, May 11, 2020)*

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### **Personal Email Messages**

Figueroa, Peter. Personal email, September 10, 2020.

Ford-Smith, Honor. Personal email, 'In Memoriam' message to Anne Hickling-Hudson and Hilary Hickling, May 30, 2020.

Guzder, Jaswant. Personal email, November 24, 2020.

Harris, Nigel. Personal email, May 8, 2020.

Lewis, Rupert. Personal email, May 11, 2020.

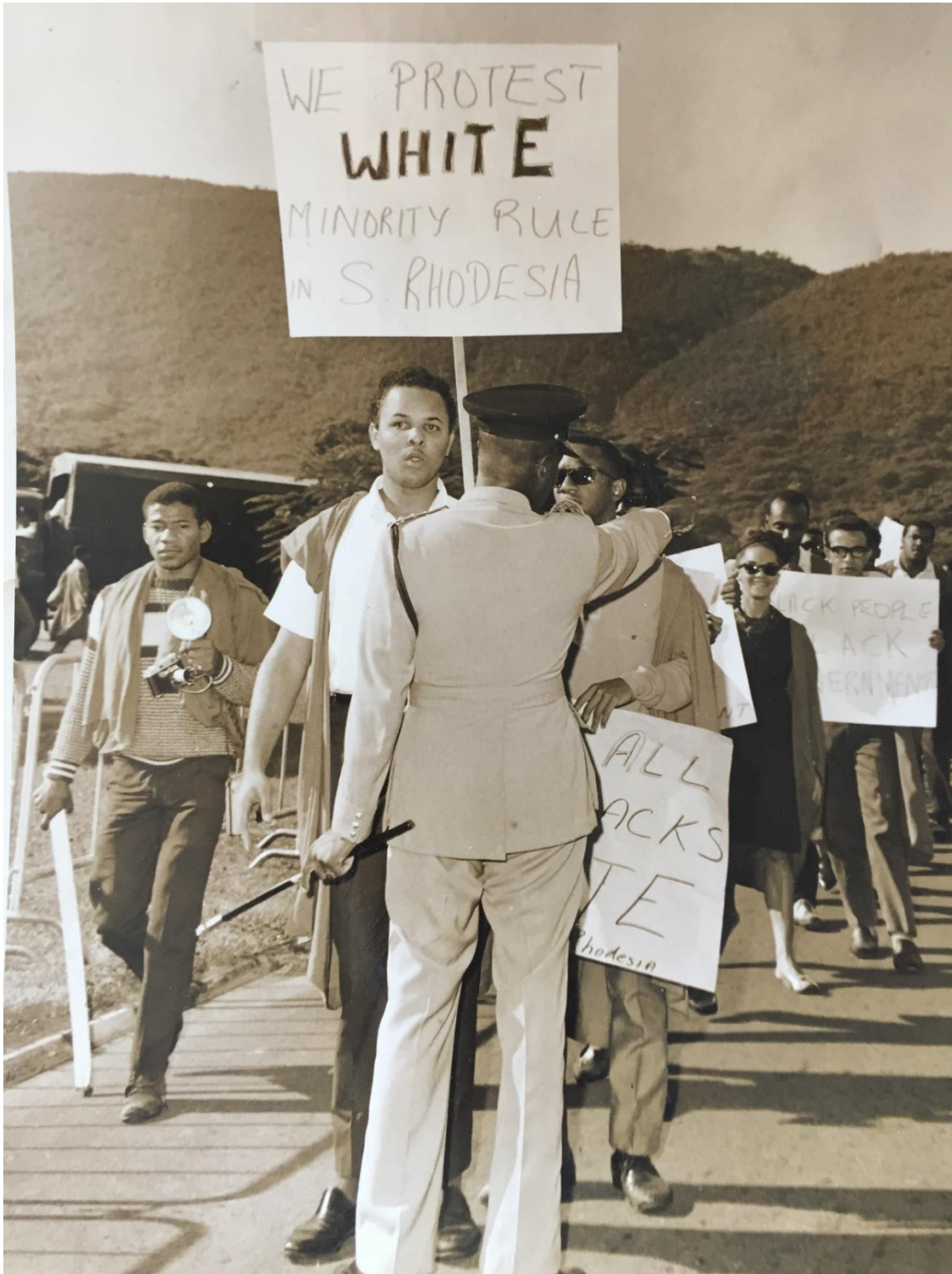
Terry, Shaughan. Personal emails, May 8, 2020; November 20, 2020.



***Left to Right: Fred Hickling; sister, Anne Hickling-Hudson; friend, Nigel Harris (UWI)***



***Left to Right: Fred's wife, Hilary Robertson-Hickling (UWI) and Fred Hickling***



**The demonstration (1965) of the UWI students at the Mona Campus against Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of independence in Rhodesia. The protest was led by Fred Hickling and Trevor Monroe. Fred is partially obscured by the sign, which reads: 'We Protest White Minority Rule in S. Rhodesia'.**