

# JOHN HEARNE

1926 -1994

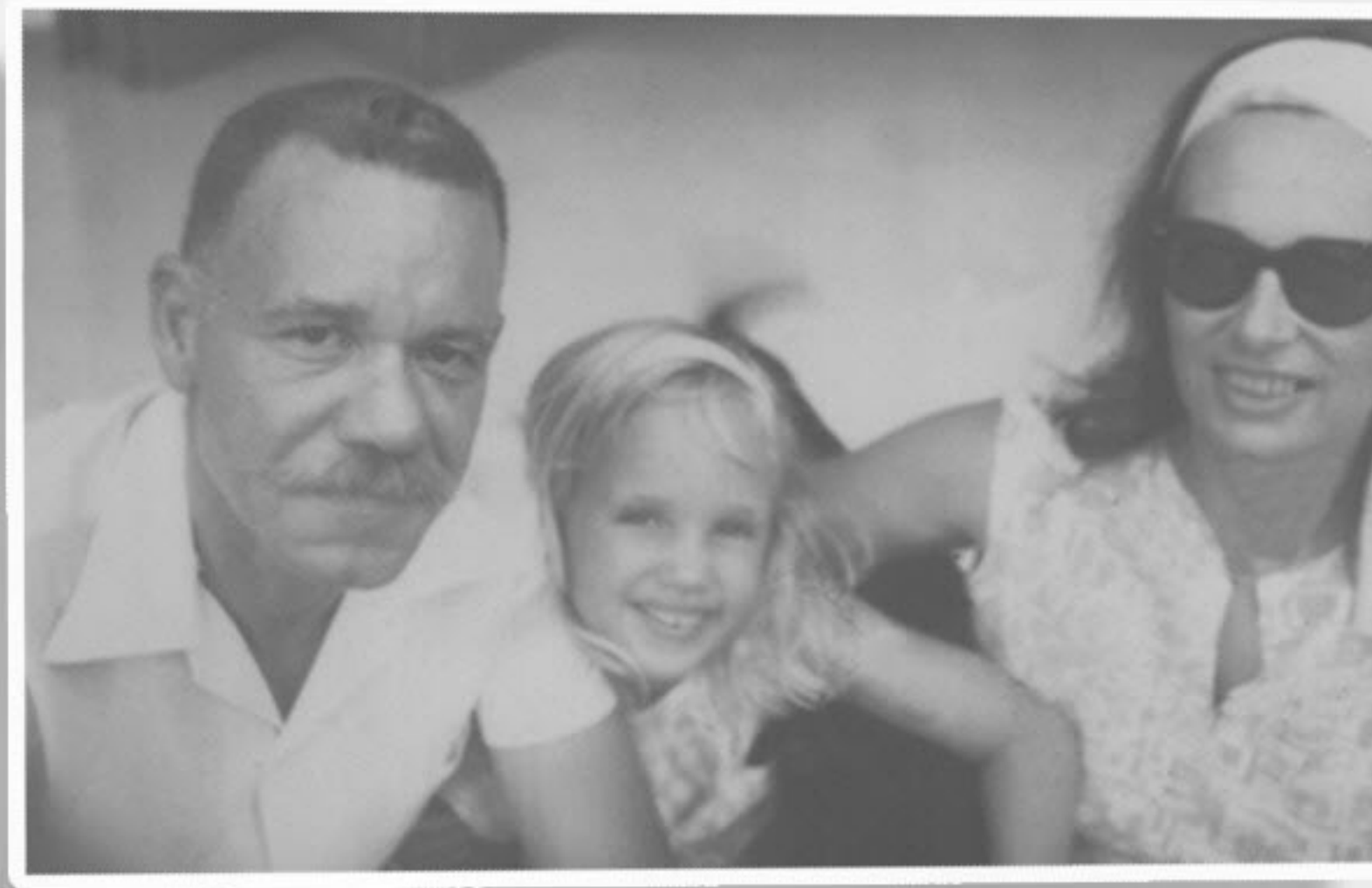
## *A Literary Giant*



Prolific writer, opinionated newspaper columnist and fearless social commentator, John Hearne exhibited a versatility and audacity which generated much debate, and earned him the enmity of hard core Jamaican political party supporters.

As one of the pioneering West Indian writers credited with the creation of a West Indian aesthetic, he broke the mould of colonial imitation and helped to define West Indian Literature.



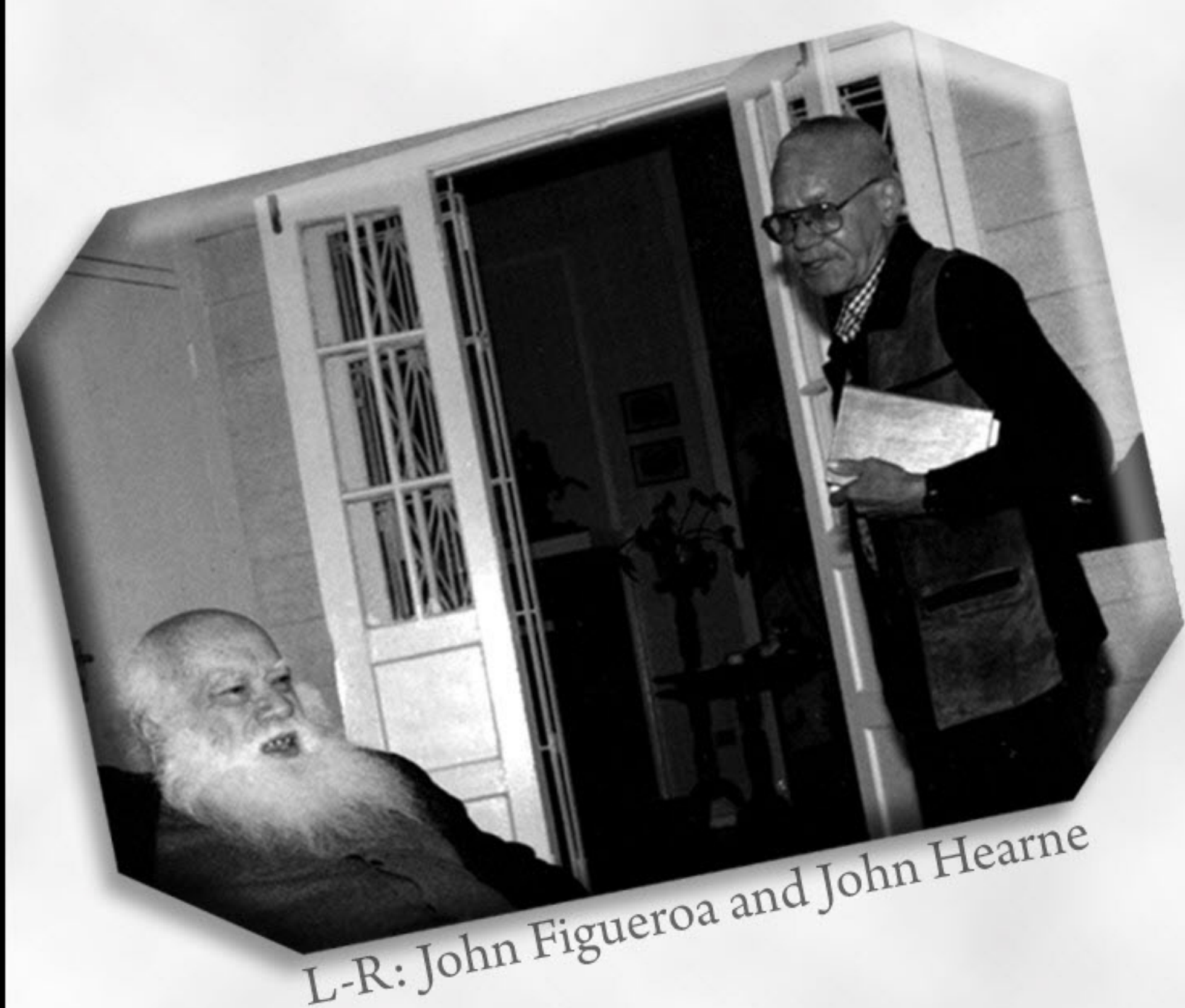


Novelist, broadcaster, journalist and university lecturer, John Hearne was born in Montreal, Canada and grew up in Jamaica. At age 17 he returned to Canada to join the Royal Air Force. After a period of training in Canada and the United States, he was stationed in England as an air gunner in the British Air Force during World War II (1943-1946). Following the war, he read for a degree in history at the University of Edinburgh where he developed an interest in writing. He became an assistant editor for *The Student*, the university's student paper founded by Robert Louis Stevenson, noted writer of the Victorian era.

Hearne completed a Diploma in Teaching at The University of London in 1950, after which he returned to Jamaica and taught briefly at his alma mater, Jamaica College. In 1952 he relocated to Europe where he spent a decade teaching in London and Paris as well as writing teleplays and novels.



John Hearne joined the staff of The University of the West Indies (UWI) in 1962 as tutor in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies. He was later made Administrative Head of the Creative Arts Centre with responsibility for coordinating all cultural activities and courses. Despite his busy schedule, he also taught a course in Creative Writing for the Department of English and was a lecturer in Language and Media at the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC).



L-R: John Figueroa and John Hearne

In 1974, Hearne was seconded to the Government of Jamaica as Executive Chairman of the Agency for Public Information, charged with the responsibility to establish a national information service. He resumed his position at the Creative Arts Centre in 1976 where he served until his retirement in 1992. From 1981-1984, Hearne was Chairman of the Institute of Jamaica.



L-R: Leeta Hearne, John Hearne, Rex Nettleford & Jean Small

During his tenure at UWI, John Hearne held appointments as Gregory Fellow in Literature at Leeds University,

Visiting Professor in Literature at Colgate University, USA and Writer in Residence, University of New Brunswick, Canada.



*"Hearne was arguably the finest craftsman among his generation of West Indian writers. He is very much a part of what critics and historians may in time refer to as a movement for the revitalization of English Literature in the period following the Second World War." (Nettleford, 1994)*



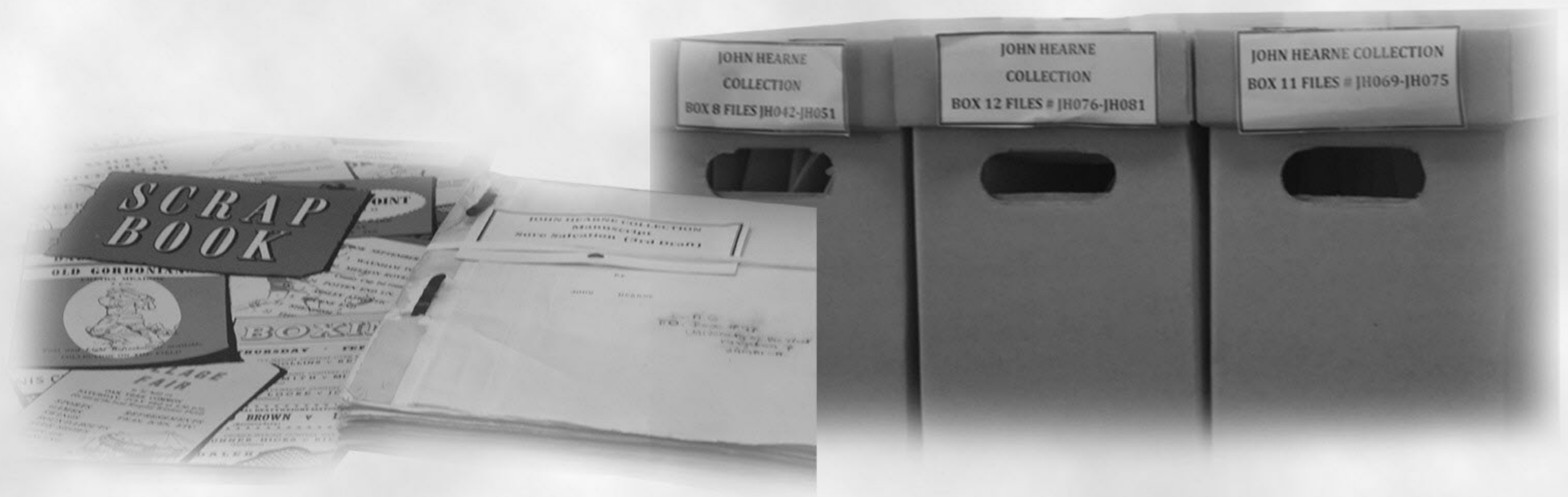
In 1955 John Hearne published his first full-length novel, *Voices under the Window*. For this autobiographical work he won the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1956; an award presented to the best novel by a British Commonwealth author under thirty. Hearne went on to publish six other novels: *Stranger at the Gate* (1956), *The Faces of Love* (1957), *Eye of the Storm* (1958), *The Autumn Equinox* (1961), *Land of The Living* (1961) and *The Sure Salvation* (1981). His novels have been translated and published in several languages; his last, *The Sure Salvation*, published under the title *Das Paradies Vor Augen* (The Paradise Ahead) by German publishers, Reihe Duran.

Collaborating with fellow journalist, Morris Cargill, Hearne also published under the pseudonym John Morris. The three titles *Fever Grass* (1969), *The Candywine Development* (1970) and *The Checkerboard Caper* (1975), followed the exploits of Jassy Vane, a female version of the fictitious spy James Bond. While in England, Hearne wrote radio and television plays for the British Broadcasting Corporation. Two of the better-known plays were *Freedom Man* (1957) and *Soldier in the Snow* (1960).

Hearne was awarded the Silver Musgrave Medal for Literature by the Institute of Jamaica in 1965; and the Jamaica Centenary Medal for Literature in 1979. For thirty years, he was a columnist for *The Gleaner* and one of Jamaica's most respected social commentators.



# *The John Hearne Collection*



The John Hearne Collection was gifted to The University of the West Indies Library by his family in two installments, 1994 and 2007.

The Collection spans eight decades and contains biographical materials, correspondence, scrapbooks, notebooks, manuscripts, audiotapes, photographs and ephemera. Included also are manuscripts of his significant novels, short stories, poetry and other works such as articles written for the newspaper column “Your World and Mine.”

Handwritten notes, correspondence and scrapbooks provide insight into the social and economic conditions of Jamaica from the 1940s to the early 1990s. Events such as the 1979 and 1985 gas riots; the enactment of the Gun Court Act and the general political climate during the late 1970s into the 1980s are documented. Hearne’s numerous correspondence include those from family and friends as well as notable West Indian writers such as Andrew Salkey, Derek Walcott, George Lamming and Kenneth Ramchand.

This collection has primary sources relating to the political, social, cultural and economic history of Jamaica. It is an excellent source for interdisciplinary research and can be accessed from <http://library-contentdm.mona.uwi.edu/>.