

JAMAICA

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA

WINSOME A. HUDSON – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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BACKGROUND

The National Library of Jamaica was established in 1979. It inherited the collections and infrastructure of the West India Reference Library of the Institute of Jamaica.

- The Library's mandate included to:
- serve as the centre for information on Jamaica through the collection, documentation and preservation of print, audio visual and electronic material
- serve as a gateway for access to the information resources of the country
- serve as the focal point for the network of libraries that make up the **National Information System**

THE NATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

The National Library has the responsibility for developing and coordinating an integrated network of libraries in the public and private sectors and serves as the focal point for the network of units in the **National Information System**, the subsystems of which are:

- Science and Technology Information System (STIN)
- College Libraries Information Network (COLINET)
- The Legal Information Network (LINET)
- Social and Economic Information Network (SECIN)
- Jamaica Agricultural Documentation and Information Network (JADIN)
- Audio visual information network (AVIN); launched in April 2003.

MANAGEMENT

The National Library is managed by the Board of Management appointed by the Minister of Education Youth and Culture. Former Executive Director Mr John Aarons (1992-2002) is now Chief Government Archivist. The present Executive Director (May, 2003) is Mrs Winsome Hudson. The Executive Director's position is supported by a Deputy Director and a management team comprising eight heads of department.

FACILITY

Major refurbishing of a large reading room is underway and on completion, will ease the serious lack of space that currently exists.

COMPUTERIZATION

The Library's computerization programme is well advanced. A local Area Network (LAN) Online catalogue and public access to the Internet are available. The catalogue is mounted on the Library's website at www.nlj.org.jm

AUDIO VISUAL ARCHIVE

An audiovisual archive has been established and is in its fourth year of operation. The earliest black and white films on Jamaica's social and political life made in the 1950's are being transferred to video. This has enhanced access and preservation. A database management system based on CDS/ISIS software has been developed by the library specifically for audio visual collections.

LEGAL DEPOSIT ACT

The Legal Deposit Act 2000 (July 17, 2002) designated the National Library of Jamaica "**the principal Legal Depository into which all documents shall be deposited.**" This has placed a tremendous responsibility and opportunity on the library to collect and preserve all items published in the country. The regulations are presently being drafted.

CONCLUSION

The National Library of Jamaica continues to play a vital role in the information sector and seeks new ways to carry out its mandate. Digitization of parts of the collections is high on the list of projects being undertaken. The Library has institutional membership in several international organizations such as INFOLAC, ACURIL, IFLA, FIAT/IFTA and IASA and has plans to host in November 2003 a Conference on audio visual archiving as well as twenty-fifth anniversary celebratory events in 2004.

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