

Barbara Makeda Blake-Hannah

Barbara Makeda Blake-Hannah is a Jamaican author, journalist, filmmaker, public speaker and managing director of Jamaica Media Productions. Mrs. Blake-Hannah was the first Rastafarian to sit in the Jamaican Parliament, appointed an Independent Opposition Senator in 1984-1988.

She first made history in 1968, when she became the first Black TV journalist in Britain on THAMES-TV's daily evening show, Today with Eamonn Andrews. She worked with BBC-TV, ATV-Birmingham and CHANNEL 4-TV.

Mrs. Blake-Hannah is one of Jamaica's most respected cultural historians and authors. Her book Rastafari & The New Creation first published in 1982 is the first book about Rastafari written by a practicing member of the faith, now in its 6th edition. Her novel Joseph: A Rasta Reggae Fable is inspired by the life of Bob Marley. She was presented with a Gold Centenary Adowa Award by the Ethiopian Crown Council for her work on behalf of the global Rastafari community. Her book Home & The First School is a homeschooling guide book based on her own parenting experience.

Mrs. Blake-Hannah has spoken on Caribbean culture at several universities including NYU Graduate School of Cultural Anthropology; The University of Vienna, Austria; the University of the West Indies, Kingston and Guyana; the University of the Virgin Islands; Florida International University and she was a member of the Jamaican Delegation to the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism.

She has served in the Office of 3 Jamaican Prime Ministers: Michael Manley, Edward Seaga and Bruce Golding. Her most recent assignment was as Advisor/Consultant to the Jamaican Minister of Information, Culture, Youth & Sports, during which she established the Jamaica Film Academy and initiated the first Reggae Film Festival.

She has made 8 films including the world-famous documentary Race, Rhetoric, Rastafari produced for CHANNEL 4-UK in 1982, and Kids Paradise a children's TV drama that won an audience award at the 1994 Chicago Children's Film Festival. Her latest documentary The Road through the Blue Mountains, is a spiritual journey through the most beautiful natural locales of Jamaica's famous coffee region.

On a personal level, she is well-known in Jamaica as a pioneer of homeschooling, as her son Makonnen made international history in 1998 when he was appointed at age 13 years as the Government's Youth Technology consultant. Her book Home & The First School: A Guide to Early Childhood Education was published in 2009. Growing Out her autobiography of her London years was published in August 2010.