This special issue of the Ministers’ Brief is dedicated in memory of Mr. Norman Gibson, Manager, Science, Technology and Innovation, CARDI.

Norman passed away on April 8, 2019 after a brief illness.

Norman’s career in agriculture spanned more than 30 years, the majority of which was spent with CARDI.

As an Animal Scientist he will be remembered for his work in the development of the Region’s small ruminants industry.

We at CARDI and the Region by extension have lost a consummate professional and a true champion for agriculture development.

He will be greatly missed by all researchers and staff at the Institute; as an academic, a colleague and a friend.
A Good Man, Gone Too Soon

On the 14th February Norman Gibson sent an email to his staff informing them of his medical affliction, explaining the surgery he was about to undertake. Cognisant of the nature of the operation he remained positive telling staff “the operation itself is very complex and is expected to last about 7 hours. It is called Whipple’s procedure – the doctor is only NOW telling me that open heart surgery is simple by comparison. That is the nature of the challenge. At the earliest, I should be back to office in about 6 weeks. Thanks for your messages of support”.

This message is such an apt reflection of who Norman was - always positive, cool, calm, collected and articulate.

Norman spent his entire professional life at CARDI. He joined our family on January 1986 as a Research Assistant in his native Barbados. As a trained Animal Scientist, he primarily worked in the area of animal production. His aptitude and passion for agricultural research and developmental issues helped him to quickly progress to various positions within the Institute, across the region. During his sojourn at CARDI he has worked as a Research Assistant, Research Officer (Antigua and Barbuda), Scientific Officer (Trinidad and Tobago) and CARDI Representative (Trinidad and Tobago and St Kitts and Nevis).

On 3 April 2017, Norman was appointed Manager, Science Technology and Innovation where he was responsible for providing scientific, technical and managerial leadership in science, technology and innovation to CARDI’s programmes. He directly supervised CARDI’s scientific staff and was responsible for coordinating the delivery of the Institute’s very diverse research portfolio.

Norman was a transformational leader and a change agent who had a vision for what CARDI and Caribbean agriculture could be. He was especially passionate on the adoption of ICT’s, Climate Change adaptation and mitigation and youth development. To this end he was overseeing the deployment of an ICT revolution within CARDI saying “that it will simplify and efficiently change the way we work and collaborate”. He believed in the youth and was a strong advocate and a champion for CARDI’s Global OJT Programme. He willingly gave his time to mentor the upcoming young scientific staff at the Institute. He believed in their development and gave them support as well as provided opportunities for them to develop their skills.

His advice and encouragement to the youths and by extension all staff who sought his council were always grounded and informed by his strong faith and religious beliefs. They all knew they had more than a supervisor in Norman - they had a friend, a father figure, a councillor, a confidante. His ability to balance his work life, spiritual life and personal life resonated with the younger staff, with many noting at our Memorial it’s something they are striving for and hope to successfully emulate.

Inspite of his work commitments Norman found time to complete his Ph.D thesis on the “Validation of analytical and intervention model for the small ruminants’ industry in selected member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).” He submitted it to the University of the West Indies, St Augustine in January 2019. He was awaiting his oral examination.

As a colleague he will be remembered for his brilliance, thoughtfulness and collaborative nature. His research focused on improving the production and productivity of small holder animal farmers, sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable groups particularly those operating in watersheds and environmentally sensitive areas. His extensive work in the area of small ruminant development and the adoption of the science, technology and innovation model in agriculture was significant and impactful.

In addition to his devotion to his work and to the improvement of CARDI and by extension the agriculture sector, Norman always made time for his family. He loved his family beyond belief. They were his pride and joy - his greatest accomplishment. His love for his wife Sharon and daughters Ashedah, Chananel and Jekilyah cannot be overstated. They were never far from his thoughts. He kept in regular contact with them even when he was away from home, something I always admired. We at CARDI hold him and his cherished family in our hearts as we grieve his loss together.

It was a privilege for me to have been a part of Norman’s life. Although much too short, his, was a life well lived! He was a determined, visionary, collaborative, caring person who loved life and all that it offered.

I will miss him - we all at CARDI will miss him as an academic, a colleague and a friend. His insightful interactions, warmth, cool temperament and infectious laughter will all be missed.

Norman a caring family man, an academic, a true friend and cherished colleague, you will be missed but never forgotten.

In your words we’ll press on!!!
A Huge Loss to Agriculture

I am saddened by the news of Mr. Gibson's passing. It is a huge loss for his family, CARDI and the agricultural and rural milieu.

Please accept and convey my sincere condolences to Mrs. Gibson and his family, and the extended CARDI family.

May he Rest in Perfect Peace.

Ignatius Jean, Chairman, CARDI Board of Directors

Always Respectful

It is with a heavy heart, great sadness and a sense of disbelief that I am writing this note to share some thoughts in remembrance of Mr Gibson.

It is clear to me that Mr Gibson loved his wife, Sharon and three children, Ashedah, Chananel and Jekilyah with all that he had to offer. His family was the focus of his life, it was everything to him. Like a good father, he was very protective of his girls and cared for them deeply. He must be pleased that God granted him sufficient time to at least nurture and see them become very successful young ladies.

Professionally, beside his achievements during the course of his career at CARDI which are well documented, the trait that stood out to me was his ability to “sell” you anything. You want to sell a cage to a lion? Call in Mr Gibson. He will make the case to the lion and the lion will end up buying 2. His manner of writing and speaking was calm and convincing. I really can’t recall Mr Gibson being visibly angry at any time in the 15 years that I have worked with him. He had this methodological and analytical way of laying out his case which was admirable. He could churn out concept notes and reports in an hour or two, something that might take me days.

Whenever we had disagreements on an issue, he was always respectful in his discourse even if it is concluded with us agreeing to disagree. A key point here though, is that he moved on immediately afterwards with no hard feelings. He would never “keep that in mind” and seek to victimize you later on as some bosses in other places may feel the need to do. I will miss our bantering and “ole talking” and the characteristic laugh that goes along with it.

Mr Gibson was also like an in-house counsellor at CARDI. He exuded this aura which made persons comfortable in seeking him out for professional or personal advice on almost any matter, confident that the details will remain private. If you have a problem, go to Mr Gibson and he will solve it. He had a genuine concern for the well-being and development of persons in CARDI, always trying to provide guidance and encouragement for us to stay on the right path and do the right thing, trying as best as he could to improve our lives. I know many of us will miss that guiding hand.
You really cannot speak about Mr. Gibson without making reference to his religion and devotion to God. He would always abide by the principles of his faith. Surely, he has a place in heaven.

When you look at Mr. Gibson’s life, it is clear that he succeeded in all the areas that mattered: his family, his faith and his profession.

We, at CARDI Barbados, join our colleagues throughout the Region in extending our condolences to Mr. Gibson’s family and may he Rest in Peace.

Ansari Hosein, CARDI Representative, Barbados

On behalf of the CARDI Guyana Unit, I would like to extend deepest condolences to the family of Norman Gibson. We of the CARDI family will greatly miss a stalwart leader. As a friend and colleague, he was always positive and hopeful, even when the evidence seemed to be screaming otherwise. His optimism for CARDI, love of family and devotion to God are the memories I will remember him by.

Rest in Peace, Norman.

Dr. C. S. Roberts, CARDI Representative, Guyana

We Shared Many Memorable Moments
I am very saddened by the passing of my colleague Norman Gibson. We have worked together since 1992 trying to improve the small ruminant sector in the region and with that time have shared many memorable moments. His passing has left a void not only within CARDI but across the region. The members of the Small Ruminant Association of Jamaica remembered the role he played in the CFC Small Ruminant Project and the New Zealand Activity and the impact to the local industry, they extend their sympathies.

Rest in Peace my Brother.

Albert Fearon, Animal Scientist, CARDI Jamaica

The World Has Lost One of its Visionaries with Passing of Norman Gibson
As the start-up partners in the small ruminant project, I am very sad - the world has lost one of its visionaries with passing of Norman Gibson.

Please pass on my condolences and heart felt wishes to his other colleagues and family.

He was a man with whom I enjoyed sharing many moments in the journey we trod during the New Zealand-CARDI Small Ruminant Activity, and who served both CARDI and his family faithfully and with much hard work and effort over the short time we knew each other.

He was always concerned for his family, working to set his daughter up in London and making us all laugh at the trials and tribulations of life in general.
I trust that his path into the world beyond this one will be equally full of laughter, and that he will find peace and happiness with his forefathers in the world above the skies. Until we meet again, my friend and colleague.

“May the road rise up to meet you, and your journey be smooth,
May the winds blow softly with your spirit, And the rain refresh you, in your new found youth”

Dr Chris Asby, Senior Associate, Prime Consulting International, New Zealand

A Brilliant Researcher Who Will Be Missed
On behalf of the Executive of the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC), we extend our deepest condolences on the passing of Mr. Gibson.

He was a brilliant researcher and his presence will be keenly missed in the region given his work in agriculture with vulnerable groups in environmentally sensitive areas. We trust that CARDI will continue his work for the benefit of present and future generations in the Caribbean.

May the peace of God comfort his immediate family and the CARDI family during this time of grief.

Jessie Dirpaul, Co-ordinator, CAIC Trinidad and Tobago

The Grenada segment of the CARDI family are saddened by this untimely loss and expresses our deepest sympathies to his family.

Reginald Andall CARDI Representative/Agronomist CARDI Grenada

Please express condolences on behalf of Rico and myself. I pray that God strengthens and comforts his family at this time.

Annika T. Minott, Scientist 1, CARDI, Cayman Islands

He Will Be Missed as a Colleague and Friend
On behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), please accept sincere and heartfelt condolences on the passing of Mr. Norman Gibson.

Many Officers in FAO worked closely with Mr. Gibson over the years, particularly in the area of livestock development and more recently in his capacity as the Manager, Science Technology and Innovation.

He will be missed as a colleague and friend.

Please also convey our condolences to his family and friends.

May his soul Rest in Peace.

Vyjayanthi F Lopez, Sub-regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, FAO Sub Regional Office, Barbados
A Consummate Professional

It is with great sadness that I extend condolences to the family, love ones, close friends and professional colleagues of the late Norman Gibson on behalf of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Norman dedicated over three (3) decades of his professional life to furthering the development of the agricultural sector in the Caribbean while serving with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago. He was a consummate professional who demonstrated a fervent commitment to service in the cause of regional development and his contribution to the development and implementation of regional agricultural research and innovation activities was significant. Indeed, his passing represents a major loss to the agricultural sector in the region.

In my capacity as IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago and Coordinator, Regional Integration, Caribbean, I had the privilege of working closely with Norman in various capacities over the past eleven (11) years including as CARDI Country Representative in Trinidad and Tobago and more recently as Manager, Science, Technology and Innovation. We at IICA, enjoyed working with Norman who always displayed a strong capacity for articulating technically sound, strategic, common sense and logical approaches to the conduct of research and development actions in the region. His work in the area of small ruminant development and the adoption of the science, technology and innovation model in agriculture was significant and impactful.

In more recent years, Norman spearheaded CARDI’s engagement with IICA under the IICA/CARDI Cooperative Agreement and was instrumental in the finalization of the recently signed General Technical Cooperation Agreement between IICA and CARDI. Norman was an easily approachable, affable, well respected and decent individual who possessed personal qualities which made working with him both enjoyable and rewarding. In this connection, many colleagues in IICA would have had the benefit of working closely with Norman and the Institute therefore wishes to recognize his contribution in the area of agricultural research and technological innovation. Indeed, Norman served the region with distinction.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation (IICA) therefore wishes to join others in paying tribute to Norman Gibson for his contribution to the development of agriculture in the Caribbean. He has left a positive mark on the regional agricultural landscape and will be missed by many.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you - his family, love ones, close friends, and professional colleagues at this difficult time. May he Rest In Peace.

Gregg C.E. Rawlins, IICA Representative in Trinidad and Tobago
Fond Memories of Working Together
We have very fond memories of working together and I recall his key role in facilitating the training of CARDI staff in crop modelling in Trinidad recently.

Our hearts go out to his family and the broader CARDI family. We know it must be quite difficult for the staff at the Institute, we do offer sincere condolences. If there is anything we can do to cushion this blow we are ready to help.

Deepest condolences to Norman’s family and CARDI.

Dale Rankine, Department of Physics, UWI Mona

His Family and CARDI have been Robbed of a Solid Scientist, Good Husband and Father
I still cannot believe that Norman is no longer with us.

I have followed his career as an animal scientist with CARDI with interest. I saw potential in him when I hired him in 1985 and was extremely proud of his work for his Masters in the UK. I am sure you will miss his expertise and commitment as a scientist unfortunately he, his family and your organization have been robbed of a solid scientist, good husband and father. As a former colleague I take this opportunity to express sincere condolences to Norman’s wife and children and to all his friends and his peers at CARDI.

May he Rest in Peace.

Gerald Proverbs, Former CARDI Representative, Barbados

Sincere Condolences to the Gibson and CARDI Families
It is with deep sadness and regret that I learn of the passing of our former friend and colleague, Norman Gibson.

I extend to you and the whole CARDI family, and of course Norman’s family, my sincere condolences. Let me assure you, and especially his family, of my prayer for God’s strength and comfort in this their time of grief.

May he Rest in Peace.

Rev. Michael Hunte (Retired), Ministry of Agriculture, Barbados

Always Maintained a High Level of Professionalism in Executing His Duties
In his humble and dignified disposition, Norman was able to maintain a very high level of professionalism in executing his duties especially in dealing with people.

We at CABA had excellent working relations with him and therefore feel the pain of his passing.

We would like to join the Caribbean Community in extending condolences and sympathy to Norman’s family and CARDI’s Team.

May his soul Rest in Peace.

Ramgopaul Roop, Regional Administrator, Caribbean Agribusiness Association

It is very sad to have seen this news as Norman has made a contribution to the agriculture sector in Barbados and the region. Our prayers go out to his family on this most sad occasion.

Mr. James Paul, Chief Executive Officer, Barbados Agricultural Society

Please pass on the condolences of the entire CSGM family to his family and the wider CARDI family.

Professor Michael Taylor, Dean Faculty Science and Technology, UWI Mona

Additionally, in his own quiet, firm and reassuring manner he will also be remembered for championing staff welfare matters whilst serving on the executive of the Cardi Professional Staff Association CPSA, during very challenging times. I shall certainly mourn his passing and shall remember and celebrate this life of a true friend and colleague. Heartfelt sympathy, strength and faith to his family and the staff of CARDI. RIP my Brother.

Julius Ross former CARDI Representative Antigua and Barbuda

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Rest in Peace

Thank You

The management and staff of CARDI would like to thank everyone who took the time to pay respect and share their fondest memories on the passing of our colleague, Norman Gibson. We are deeply grateful for support and encouragement during this difficult time.