



## USAIN'S GIRL

**Bolt is no longer single, ladies. He's now engaged to a supermodel**

# CHAU, LIONEL

**Messi officially retires from International Football**



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# INVALUABLE 47

## ‘DJ’ Bravo becomes first player in CPL history to have his jersey retired

The Trinbago Knight Riders have retired Dwayne Bravo’s number 47 jersey in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to the team, the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), and cricket in Trinidad and Tobago.

Bravo was honoured during a ceremony before the August 26 game against the Jamaica Kingsmen at the Queen’s Park Oval.

The 42-year-old Bravo won the CPL five times as a player and also led the Knight Riders to the title last year as head coach.

He is the first player in CPL history to have his jersey retired.

CEO of the Knight Riders group, Venky Mysore said Bravo’s contribution to the team was invaluable.

“Dwayne Bravo’s contribution to the Knight Riders and to the CPL is impossible to measure.

“Retiring No. 47 is our way of ensuring that his legacy will forever be a part of this franchise. There could be no more fitting player to become the first in CPL history to receive this honour,” Mysore said.

Overall, Bravo played 107 CPL matches, picking up 129 wickets at an economy rate of 8.74.

Despite last playing in 2024, he remains the third highest wicket-taker in the history of the tournament, behind only Sunil Narine (139) and Imran Tahir (135).

Several of the team’s players including captain Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard and Sunil Narine lauded Bravo for his accomplishments on and off the field.

“Thank you for being an inspiration and a role model. We’re really happy to have you in our corner.

“Thank you for being a bigger brother. Thank you for being a father figure at times for



**Trinbago Knight Riders CEO, Venky Mysore, left, stands with a smiling Dwayne Bravo during the ceremony where Bravo’s No.47 was retired in honour of the former player’s contribution to the franchise and the Caribbean Premier League.**

us, but most importantly, thanks for being that inspiration in my life,” Pooran said.

Narine said, “I think you have paved the way for a lot of young cricketers. The way you care about yourself, your energy levels, and always wanting to win in everything.”

Meanwhile, Pollard added, “Thank you for all that you have done obviously for me personally as an individual, and then you know we’re coming together as a force to be reckoned with, something that you always spoke about and being able to win championships and games

and create an environment where people will enjoy.”



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# GETTING IN Your Own Way

Have you ever looked back at something you really wanted and wondered, why did I make that harder than it needed to be? Maybe you delayed until the opportunity passed. Maybe you kept changing the plan. Maybe you talked yourself out of starting, or you started and then disappeared the moment things became uncomfortable. I have been there too. It can be frustrating because part of you knows what you want, while another part seems determined to pull you in the opposite direction. You may even say, I am my own worst enemy. But I do not believe we get in our own way for no reason. Usually, there is something underneath the behaviour that is doing its best to protect us, even if the way it is doing it, that no longer makes sense.

We often call it self-sabotage, but that word can sound as though you are deliberately ruining your own life. Most of the time, that is not what is happening. You are not waking up and deciding to block your own progress. It is usually much quieter than that. It can look like procrastination, overthinking, perfectionism, changing your mind again and again, waiting for the perfect time, or staying busy with everything except the one thing that truly matters. Sometimes it looks like choosing people or situations that keep you stuck because they feel familiar. Sometimes it looks like saying you want more, but feeling uncomfortable when more actually begins to arrive.

Think about someone standing at the edge of a swimming pool. They want to get in. They came prepared. They can see other people enjoying the water. But every time they move closer, they imagine how cold it might be, how deep it might be, or how foolish they might look (that is me and this is why I cannot swim). So they keep walking around the edge, telling themselves they will get in soon. That is what getting in your own way can feel like. You are close enough to see the life you want, but the thoughts, fears, and old stories keep circling.

I know what it is like to have a goal and still feel resistance. You

may know exactly what to do, but something inside says, not yet. Wait until you feel more confident. Wait until you have more money. Wait until you know more. Wait until no one can criticize you. The problem is that the mind can always find another reason to wait. That busy monkey mind of ours can take one small concern and turn it into a whole movie, complete with the worst possible ending. Before you know it, you are responding to something that has not even happened.

Sometimes the real fear is not failure. Sometimes it is what could happen if you succeed. What if people expect more from you? What if your life changes? What if you become visible? What if the people around you do not understand the new version of you? What if you can no longer hide behind the story that you were never given a chance? These are not easy questions, but they are real. Growth can feel exciting and uncomfortable at the same time. You can want the new life while still feeling attached to the old one because the old one is familiar.

That is why I do not believe the answer is to shame yourself. Calling yourself lazy, weak, or undisciplined usually makes the pattern heavier. Shame does not help you move. It makes you want to hide. A better place to begin is curiosity. Instead of asking, what is wrong with me, try asking, what am I afraid might happen if I move forward? What am I protecting myself from? What would change if this actually worked? Those questions can uncover what the delay is really about.

Maybe you learned that being successful makes people jealous. Maybe you saw someone you loved work hard and still struggle, so part of you believes effort will not pay off. Maybe you were criticized whenever you tried something new, so now you hesitate before letting anyone see you begin. Maybe you learned that making a mistake meant embarrassment, punishment, or rejection. If that is the story sitting underneath your goal, of course part of you will pull back. It is not because you do not care. It

may be because you care so much that failing feels unbearable.

Perfectionism is one of the most convincing ways we get in our own way. It sounds responsible. It sounds like you simply want to do a good job. But perfectionism can keep you preparing forever. You keep fixing, rewriting, researching, rearranging, and waiting. You tell yourself you are not ready, but sometimes ready is not a feeling that arrives before you begin. Sometimes readiness grows because you begin. A bird does not wait to feel certain about the wind before it leaves the branch. It uses its wings and adjusts as it goes.

Procrastination can work the same way. You may think you are putting off the task, but often you are putting off the feeling connected to the task. Maybe the task makes you feel exposed, unsure, overwhelmed, or afraid of being judged. Once you understand that, the question changes. It is no longer, why can I not just do this? It becomes, what feeling am I trying not to feel? That is a much kinder and more useful question.

I have learned that changing this pattern does not always require one huge, brave action. Sometimes it begins with making the next step smaller. Not the whole plan, just the next honest step. Make the call. Write the first paragraph. Ask the question. Send the proposal. Put your name forward. Give yourself twenty minutes instead of waiting for a perfect day. Small movement can break the spell of overthinking because action gives the mind new information. It shows you that you can move and still be safe.

There may still be discomfort. You may still hear the old voice telling you to wait, hide, or turn back. That does not mean you are making the wrong choice. Sometimes discomfort is simply the feeling of doing something different. The old pattern wants familiarity. The new choice asks for courage. Courage does not always feel powerful. Sometimes it feels like a shaky hand pressing send.

It also helps to notice how you speak to yourself after a setback. Do



## HEART & SOUL

with  
Dianne Ojar



you turn one mistake into proof that you should stop? Do you say, see, I knew I could not do it? That is the old story looking for evidence. One difficult moment does not mean the whole path is wrong. A wrong turn on the road does not mean you throw away the car. You correct the direction and keep going.

If you have been getting in your own way, please do not use this as another reason to judge yourself. Use it as a reason to understand yourself. There is usually a part of you that is afraid, unsure, or still following an old rule. You can thank that part for trying to protect you and still choose differently now. You can say, I understand why I learned this, but I do not need to keep living by it.

The shift begins when you stop waiting to become someone else before you act. You do not need to become fearless. You do not need to have every answer. You only need to stop letting the old fear make every decision. You can feel uncertain and still move. You can feel nervous and still speak. You can have doubts and still take the next step.

So, the next time you notice yourself delaying, disappearing, overthinking, or making the road harder, pause before calling yourself a problem. Ask what is really happening underneath. Listen to the answer without shame. Then choose one small step that supports the life you say you want. You may be surprised by how much can change when you stop fighting yourself and start walking with yourself.

*About the Author*

Dianne Ojar is an author, speaker, transformational guide, Kuan Yin Lineage Holder, and author of *The Strategic Goal Seeker's Handbook*, with professional credentials through the American Board of Hypnotherapy and the American Board of Neuro-Linguistic Programming.



The Machel Montano exhibition is part of the Brooklyn Public Library's Living Caribbean Archive

## LEAVING A LEGACY

### Exhibition turns four decades of Machel Montano into a living Caribbean archive

MORE than four decades of costumes, photographs, records, awards and memories documenting Machel Montano's extraordinary career have found a temporary home in Brooklyn, transforming one of New York's major public libraries into a celebration of soca and Caribbean cultural history.

"Journey of a Soca King: The Exhibition" is now open at the Brooklyn Public Library's (BPL) Central Library, following a special preview attended by Montano, his mother Elizabeth "Lady" Montano, US Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, elected officials, members of the Caribbean community, media, family and friends.

For Montano, the experience of walking through an exhibition devoted to a life he has spent largely looking forward proved unexpectedly revealing.

"This is more than a reflection; this is even a lesson to me just to walk through this exhibit," Montano said. "I have dreams, but when I walk through this place, I realise sometimes life can give you more than you can ever dream of."

The exhibition traces Montano's evolution from the precocious child performer who emerged in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1980s, to the internationally recognised entertainer who has spent decades carrying soca music and Carnival culture to audiences around the world.

However, behind many of the objects now displayed in Brooklyn is another story: the foresight of Elizabeth "Lady" Montano, who preserved material from her son's career long before there was any certainty it would one day form part of an international exhibition.

Lady Montano recalled observing how the

histories of major international entertainers were documented and preserved and deciding early in her son's career that his story also deserved to be saved. Decades later, that collection now allows visitors to encounter Montano's journey through original memorabilia, stage costumes, photographs, recordings and multimedia installations rather than simply reading about his achievements.

For Machel, seeing those memories assembled in one place also reinforced the role Brooklyn played in shaping his development.

That relationship makes Brooklyn a particularly fitting home for the exhibition. The borough has one of the largest Caribbean communities outside the region and has long provided an important meeting point for Caribbean music, migration and culture.

# The last game

## Lionel Messi officially retires from international football

Lionel Messi has officially retired from international football, bringing the curtain down on one of the most remarkable careers in the history of the game.

The 39-year-old Argentina captain announced his decision on Monday in an emotional statement posted to Instagram, weeks after Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain in extra time in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final.

Messi said he had initially written the farewell message shortly after the World Cup final but that the recent death of his father, Jorge Messi, further confirmed his decision to step away from the national team.

The defeat to Spain on July 19 at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey ended Argentina's hopes of successfully defending the World Cup title it won in 2022. Spain's Ferran Torres scored the decisive goal in the 106th minute.

Messi, who made his Argentina senior debut in 2005, leaves international football as the country's most-capped player and its all-time leading goalscorer.

He finished his Argentina career with 207 appearances and 125 goals.

His international honours include the 2022 FIFA World Cup, two Copa América titles in 2021 and 2024, and the 2022 Finalissima.

The 2026 tournament was Messi's sixth World Cup appearance, having also represented Argentina at the 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022 tournaments.

His international journey was marked by both extraordinary success and periods of disappointment. After losing the 2014 World Cup final to Germany and suffering further setbacks in major tournaments, Messi eventually led Argentina to Copa América glory in 2021 and the



**Lionel Messi: will continue his club career with Inter Miami**

World Cup in Qatar in 2022.

He also helped Argentina retain the Copa América in 2024.

In his farewell message, Messi said he had given everything he could to the national team and believed it was time to make way for a new generation.

His decision ends a 21-year international career during which he became the defining fig-

ure of Argentine football and one of the most decorated players in the sport's history.

Messi is not retiring from football altogether. He will continue his club career with Inter Miami, where he remains a major figure in Major League Soccer. He scored four goals and provided an assist in Miami's 7-1 victory over CF Montréal on Sunday, taking his MLS tally for the season to 18 goals.

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# Rum & Reggae

## Protoje to headline Treasure Beach Festival in Jamaica

Grammy-nominated reggae artist Protoje is set to return to his home parish of St. Elizabeth this November to headline the 2026 Treasure Beach Food, Rum & Reggae Festival.

The festival, scheduled for Nov. 6-8, will also feature reggae singer Lila Iké as organizers introduce an expanded three-day format combining live music, Jamaican food, rum, agriculture and South Coast culture.

This year's staging marks the festival's return to Treasure Beach following disruptions caused by Hurricane Melissa in 2025.

Protoje, who was born in St. Elizabeth, has become one of the leading figures in contemporary Jamaican reggae, building an international following while maintaining strong connections to his home parish.

Festival partner and West Palm Events

Marketing Director Jason Ricketts said Protoje's homecoming has added to the excitement surrounding the event.

"What is amazing about this staging is that we have a native son of the soil who is headlining the show, Protoje. The people of St. Elizabeth are very excited and ecstatic to see him," Ricketts said.

"We are inviting Jamaicans and visitors alike to come and indulge in our food, indulge in our boutique hotels and villas here in Treasure Beach, and really experience everything this community and the wider South Coast have to offer."

The 2026 festival will begin Friday, Nov. 6, with Dubwise, an event celebrating reggae, dub and Jamaica's sound system culture. The main Food, Rum & Reggae Festival activities will take place Nov. 7.



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Ras Ajai, right, played Claude Massop in the movie Bob Marley, One Love

# NO LOVE

## 'Bob Marley: One Love' actor killed in shooting

Brian-Todd Anthony Boucher, the actor who portrayed Jamaican gangster Claudie Massop in the 2024 film Bob Marley: One Love, was shot and killed in Waterford, St Catherine, late Saturday, police have confirmed.

Boucher, 43, who was also known as "Ras Ajai" and was from Northport Way in New York, had arrived in Jamaica just hours before the fatal shooting, according to sources.

Another man, 37, was injured in the attack and remains hospitalized. The incident is under investigation by the St Catherine South Police.

According to police, Boucher and the other man were walking along a road in Waterford when a vehicle carrying several armed men stopped nearby. One of the attackers exited the vehicle and opened fire on both men before fleeing the scene with the others.

Boucher was taken to Spanish Town General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The second victim remains under medical observation.

Investigators have not disclosed a motive for the shooting, and no arrests have been made.

Boucher appeared as Claudie Massop in Bob Marley: One Love, the internationally successful biographical film chronicling the life and legacy of reggae icon Bob Marley. Massop was a reputed Jamaican political enforcer whose life intersected with events depicted in the film.

Police are continuing their investigations into the fatal shooting.





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# THEY'RE BLUE

SVG reportedly owes US carrier JetBlue millions of dollars



St. Vincent and the Grenadines owes U.S.-based carrier JetBlue more than EC\$10 million under an agreement reached by the previous administration, Tourism Minister Dr. Kishore Shallow has disclosed.

Shallow made the revelation in Parliament while responding to a question from opposition legislator Keisal Peters about Delta Air Lines' decision to end its nonstop service between Atlanta and Argyle International Airport in September.

The tourism minister did not provide a detailed breakdown of the amount owed to JetBlue but said the debt was among the financial liabilities inherited by the New Democratic Party government when it took office in November 2025.

"JetBlue, for example, [is a] very important airline to St. Vincent and the Grenadines," Shallow said.

"We entered in an agreement ... and from 2024 to when you demitted office, you refused to pay your bill, resulting in us owing that airline over \$10 million today."

Shallow also criticized the way the agreement was negotiated, telling lawmakers he was unaware of who represented the former government in the discussions and alleging that no professional organization or consultant was involved.

His comments came as the government faces questions over Delta's decision to discontinue its Atlanta-St. Vincent nonstop service.

According to Shallow, government officials held meetings with Delta on May 19 and July 31 before the airline announced its decision.

He said Delta cited passenger demand falling below projections, high fuel costs and weaker-than-expected demand for premium travel among the reasons for ending the route.

However, Shallow said the carrier has indicated that it is willing to consider restoring some level of service during the next winter season.

Delta launched the Atlanta-Argyle International Airport route on Dec. 20, 2025, with plans to operate 22 flights per month.

Shallow described that schedule as "ambitious" compared with other airlines serving the destination, which operated fewer monthly

flights.

Despite Delta's decision, the minister said passenger numbers have been improving.

The average number of arriving passengers on Delta flights increased from 64 during the carrier's first three months of service to 117 over the most recent three-month period, according to Shallow.

JetBlue also recorded an increase, with its average arriving passenger count rising from 114 during the first three months of the government's term to 140 during the most recent three-month period.

Shallow said the figures demonstrated growth in visitor traffic and maintained that the government was working to strengthen St. Vincent and the Grenadines' tourism and aviation sectors.

The government is also restructuring the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority, including the appointment of Shafia London as its new chief executive officer.

Shallow said senior positions are also being established in commercial development, marketing, tourism product and experience, quality intelligence and strategy, and internal operations.

The minister said the government has begun re-engaging existing airlines and is holding discussions with two potential new carriers.

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# CARIBBEAN BEAT

## Music pioneer Granville Straker of Straker's Records dies at 86

Granville Leonard Straker, the Vincentian-born music producer and entrepreneur whose influential Straker's Records helped bring generations of calypso and soca artists to international audiences, has died. He was 86.

Straker died on Aug. 27, according to his family, which announced his passing in a statement.

Born in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on Sept. 12, 1939, Straker became one of the most influential figures in the production, preservation and distribution of Caribbean music, building an operation that connected artists from the region with audiences throughout the diaspora.

His involvement in the music business began in Brooklyn in the 1960s, where he established record stores catering to New York's growing Caribbean immigrant community.

His businesses included the landmark Straker's Records store at 242 Utica Ave. and another location on Nostrand Avenue, with additional retail operations in St. Vincent and Trinidad.

In 1971, Straker founded the Straker's Records label in Brooklyn, creating a platform for Caribbean performers at a pivotal period in the growth of New York's West Indian community.

Over approximately three decades, the label built an extensive catalog of Caribbean popular music. Straker estimated that it released between 600 and 700 albums, more than 1,000 12-inch records and several thousand singles.

Its roster included some of the biggest names in calypso and soca, among them Calypso Rose, The Mighty Shadow, Black Stalin, Chalkdust, Lord Nelson, Lord Melody, Mighty Duke, Explainer, Winston Soso, Singing Francine and Machel Montano.

Among the recordings associated with the label was The Mighty Shadow's "Bassman," which became one of the Trinidadian calypsonian's signature songs. Black Stalin's "Ah Feel to Party" also became part of the influential Straker's catalog and later provided the title for the retrospective collection "The Best of Straker's: Ah Feel to Party."

Straker's influence extended beyond his role



**Granville Straker**

as a label owner. During his career, he worked as a producer, promoter, talent scout and distributor, travelling throughout the Caribbean in search of performers and helping artists gain access to professional recording and international distribution.

His Brooklyn businesses also became gathering places for Caribbean immigrants looking for the music and culture of home, while helping establish the borough as an important center for Caribbean music production and distribution.

Another important chapter in Straker's career began in 1978 when fellow Vincentian musician and arranger Frankie McIntosh joined Straker's Records as musical director.

McIntosh led studio band The Equitables, arranged music for numerous artists and oversaw hundreds of recording sessions. Their partnership helped develop a distinctive Brooklyn-based calypso and soca sound that reached audiences across the Caribbean and its diaspora.

Straker's contribution to Caribbean music earned him several honors during his lifetime.

He received the Martin's International/Inter-Culture Award of Honor at the 2009 International Reggae & World Music Awards. In 2014, he was honored in Brooklyn for "Excellence in Worldwide Music Production over the Years."

His family said his work created opportuni-

ties for Caribbean artists who otherwise might have struggled to gain access to the international recording industry, connecting performers with audiences in New York, Toronto, London and elsewhere.

"My father spent his life creating opportunities for Caribbean artists and making certain that our music could be heard beyond the shores of the islands," his daughter, Dr. Suzanne Straker Greenidge-Hewitt, said.

"For our family, preserving his legacy means preserving an important part of Caribbean history. His work lives in the music, in the artists he championed and in generations of people around the world who still hear home when they hear those recordings."

Straker was predeceased by his first wife, Jean "Patsy" Straker Jackson, who his family said played a foundational role in the early development of Straker's Records.

He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Beverly Straker; his children, Leroy, Shirley, Suzanne, Granville Jr., Lavern, Clement and Allan; 15 grandchildren; and other relatives.

His family described him as a husband, father, grandfather, mentor and friend whose entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to Caribbean culture influenced generations.

From his beginnings in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the record stores and studios of Brooklyn, Straker spent decades building connections between Caribbean artists and their audiences, leaving behind a catalog that chronicles a significant period in the development of calypso and soca music.



# WONDERMIND

## Selena Gomez pushes back against 'frivolous' fraud claims

Selena Gomez's social media accounts brim with adoring fans: two million likes for her most recent post showing her and her husband in a rose-petal strewn hotel, and thousands of comments praising her beauty, her lipstick and the perfume brand she founded.

This week the PR focus for the star – who rose to fame on the Disney channel but has moved into song-writing, films and TV drama – was supposed to be on the upcoming series six of *Only Murders in the Building* that sees its podcasting sleuths transferred to London for their next adventure.

But the wider chat, outside those friendly spaces, has gone off-script and is largely on a less flattering topic, namely claims from investors who allege she breached her contract by not properly backing the mental health platform Wondermind that she cofounded with her mother five years ago. As a result, the five investors argue, they were defrauded of the nearly \$1.2m they invested.

Gomez is pushing back against those allegations - her lawyer has asked that she be dismissed from the case altogether, saying the claims made against her are "threadbare" and arguing she should never have been "dragged into" the case at all.

The investors claim they were told that "Selena Gomez, one of the most famous women on earth, with a billion-dollar brand and a platform unmatched in social media, would be actively building the company as its head of marketing".

Gomez's attorney Matthew Rosengart says their allegations are "vague, generalised and contradictory" and that Gomez never agreed to, and did not, manage the company, or make the kind of commitments they are suggesting.

"The claims against her are meritless if not frivolous," he said.

Mr Rosengart added that the legal team was "exploring other avenues of relief for Ms. Gomez including sanctions against plaintiffs".

The emphatic pushback from Gomez may reflect a concern for her reputation but it also leaves her mother in the hot-seat, facing the fraud allegations alongside the company itself and a third co-founder.

Crisis PR commentator, Lauren Beeching,



**Selena Gomez (c) is part of the Mental Health wellness site Wondermind**

founder of Honest London says Gomez is far from the first celebrity to try working with a close family member. At times it can come off like in the Jenner-Kardashian household or with the tennis-playing Williams sisters.

But there are plenty of examples - from the Beckhams' to Britney Spears - where family brands and business don't mix well.

Working with close relatives, whether that's a sibling or a parent, or someone else is almost always a higher risk approach, says Beeching.

"It can make the boundaries between the personal relationship with the business and the celebrity's reputation much harder to separate," she says.

The natural level of trust means that you might not apply the same rules as you would in a normal commercial relationship, so better guardrails are needed, she says.

"If you're going into business [as a] family, I'd put more structure around it, not less, for sure.

"Define everybody's responsibilities, bring in independent oversight, and decide what happens if something goes wrong before something goes wrong."

"A family relationship shouldn't be a company's governance structure."

At the end of the day Gomez may not need to worry too much over this case, says Beeching.

"This will generate headlines because Selena Gomez is enormously famous, but I don't think it's the type of story her core audience is particularly interested in," she says.

"There's an important difference between generating negative headlines and causing lasting reputational damage."

Still, for celebrities considering trading on their personal brand, Beeching does have words of advice.

"Before lending your name to a company, don't ask what your reputation could do for the business. Ask what that business can eventually do for your reputation as well."

# RIPPED

## Indian politician blames jeans for all that ails the young and women

Denim - the favourite punching bag of Indian patriarchs who routinely blame the fabric for the moral degradation of youth - is back in the news.

The latest to be riled by jeans is Tirath Singh Rawat, the newly-appointed chief minister of the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand.

Earlier this week, he blamed "ripped jeans" for all that ails the young.

Speaking at a workshop organised by the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Mr Rawat criticised an unnamed woman he met on a flight.

The woman, he said, was travelling with two children and was "wearing boots, jeans ripped on the knees, and had several bracelets on her arm".

"You run an NGO, wear jeans ripped at the knees, move about in society, children are with you, what values you will teach?" he asked.

A member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, Mr Rawat went on to describe ripped jeans as clothing that both caused and was symptomatic of moral turpitude and criticised parents for allowing their children, especially girls, to wear them.

The chief minister chastised Indians for "running towards nudity" and claimed that "while people in India were wearing ripped jeans, those abroad were covering their bodies properly and doing yoga".

Mr Rawat's comments attracted widespread condemnation in India.

The opposition Congress party issued a statement asking him to "apologise to all Indian women" - or resign.

On Thursday, senior party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra shared photographs of PM Modi and one of his cabinet colleagues "showing their knees."

The head of Delhi Commission for Women Swati Maliwal tweeted accusing Mr Rawat of "propagating misogyny"

In a Hindi tweet, Ms Maliwal pointed out that there was a problem with not just what Mr Rawat said, but also the way he said it - she



### Indian women in ripped jeans are sparking debate

said he had admitted to "looking the woman up and down".

His remarks also set off a Twitter storm with thousands of Indian women - and some men - sharing their photos wearing ripped jeans. And hashtags #RippedJeansTwitter and #RippedJeans trended for hours.

Some tagged Mr Rawat in their tweets; and some advised him to worry about more important matters like "ripped economy" and "women's safety."

On Friday, Mr Rawat did offer an apology - he said he was sorry if his comments had hurt anyone. He said his intention was not to show disrespect to anyone and everyone was free to wear what they chose.

The Uttarakhand chief minister is not the only Indian politician with clothing advice for women. Five years ago, then Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma said that a list given to tourists at airports advised them not to wear skirts or dresses in India or venture out alone at night in small towns. Several prominent politicians had connected rape and sexual assault to women's outfits.

In 2014, legendary singer KJ Yesudas was criticised for saying women should not wear jeans as it was "against Indian culture" and provoked "undesirable" behaviour. Clothing restrictions, especially for women and girls, are routinely reported from rural India, steeped in patriarchy.

# GLOBAL AMBASSADORS

## Shyne, Calypso Rose to receive honors at 2026 Caribbean Music Awards

International recording artist, politician and humanitarian Shyne will receive the Global Ambassador Honor at the fourth annual Caribbean Music Awards, while calypso legend Calypso Rose, Haitian-American singer-songwriter Alan Cavé and Jamaican dancehall icon Patra will also be recognized during the ceremony.

The Caribbean Music Awards will take place Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026, at the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Presented by Tourism Trinidad Limited, with support from the Tobago Tourism Agency Limited, the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, and Global Trinidad and Tobago, this year's ceremony will serve as the centerpiece of the inaugural Caribbean Music Awards Elite Weekend Experience.

The three-day celebration, taking place Sept. 18-20 throughout Trinidad and Tobago, will bring together artists, fans, industry leaders, cultural tastemakers and visitors from across the Caribbean and beyond to celebrate the region's music and cultural influence.

Inspired by the theme "Sounds of the Caribbean," the 2026 awards will honor four artists whose careers have helped shape Caribbean music's international reach.

### Patra to receive Lifetime Achievement Honor

Patra will receive the Lifetime Achievement Honor for her pioneering contributions to dancehall, reggae and global Black music.

Born in Westmoreland, Jamaica, Patra began her career as a female DJ known as "Lady Patra" before gaining international recognition through her work with dancehall star Shabba Ranks, including their collaboration on "Family Affair."

Her 1993 debut album, *Queen of the Pack*, released by Epic Records, became the first album by a Jamaican female artist to reach No. 1 on Billboard's Reggae Albums chart. The album was later certified Gold in the United States.

It also produced Patra's signature hit "Worker Man," which reached No. 53 on the Billboard Hot 100, entered the Top 20 on Billboard's R&B chart and topped the U.S. Dance chart.

Additional hits, including "Romantic Call,"



Calypso Rose and Shyne

"Scent of Attraction," "Black Cinderella" and her remake of Grace Jones' "Pull Up to the Bumper," helped establish Patra as one of the most recognizable female figures of Jamaica's 1990s dancehall movement.

Her influence extended beyond reggae and dancehall, with appearances in music videos for major American hip-hop artists including The Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac Shakur. Her style and crossover presence also helped open doors for subsequent generations of female dancehall performers.

### Shyne recognized as Global Ambassador

Shyne will receive the Global Ambassador Honor for his evolution from internationally known recording artist to cultural leader, humanitarian and advocate for Belize and the Caribbean. His 2000 self-titled debut album on Bad Boy Records debuted at No. 5 on the Billboard 200 and was later certified Gold.

In the years since, Shyne has shifted much of his focus toward public service, youth empowerment and cultural advocacy. He has also served as Belize's Music and Goodwill Ambassador.

The award recognizes his contributions to Caribbean culture and his efforts to promote Belize and the wider region on the international stage.

### Calypso Rose to receive Elite Calypso Honor

Tobago-born calypso icon Calypso Rose will receive the Elite Calypso Honor for her decades-long contribution to Caribbean music and her

role in bringing calypso to audiences worldwide.

A trailblazer for women in Caribbean music, Calypso Rose has spent more than six decades performing and recording, becoming one of the genre's most influential figures.

She made history as the first woman to win Trinidad and Tobago's Road March title and later achieved international recognition, including with her platinum-selling album *Far From Home*.

### Alan Cavé to receive Elite Konpa Honor

Haitian-American singer-songwriter Alan Cavé will receive the Elite Konpa Honor for his influence on Haitian music and the international Konpa movement.

Known as the "King of Kompa Love," Cavé has spent more than three decades building a career as a songwriter, vocalist and performer.

He first gained prominence as a member of the Haitian band Zin before establishing himself as a successful solo artist. His music and songwriting have helped shape contemporary Konpa while influencing musicians across Haiti, the Caribbean and the diaspora.

The four honorees will be celebrated as part of the Caribbean Music Awards Elite Weekend Experience, which will feature a welcome reception, industry programming, cultural activations, fan experiences, the awards ceremony, an official after-party and a special Steelpan celebration featuring Stars and Steel. The event marks an international expansion for the Caribbean Music Awards following three successful years in Brooklyn, New York.



# KING OF THE BASSLINE

## Leroy Sibbles says he's earned the title for reggae

Bob Marley is remembered as the King of Reggae. Yellowman, Vybz Kartel and Beenie Man have each worn the crown of King of Dancehall. Now, reggae's rhythmic architecture has a king of its own.

"I am King of the Reggae Bassline," Leroy Sibbles proclaimed during a recent performance in New York. Sibbles said the title is one he has earned, not just claimed.

"I create the basslines that bass players play," Sibbles said. "Every prominent Jamaican singer is on a Leroy Sibbles bassline."

Long before the title, there was the work. As lead vocalist of The Heptones and the chief arranger and session bassist at Clement "Coxsone" Dodd's Studio One, Sibbles helped engineer the sound that carried Jamaican music from ska into

rocksteady and roots reggae. He stretched bass notes into long, melodic lines and built rhythmic space that other musicians are still building on today.

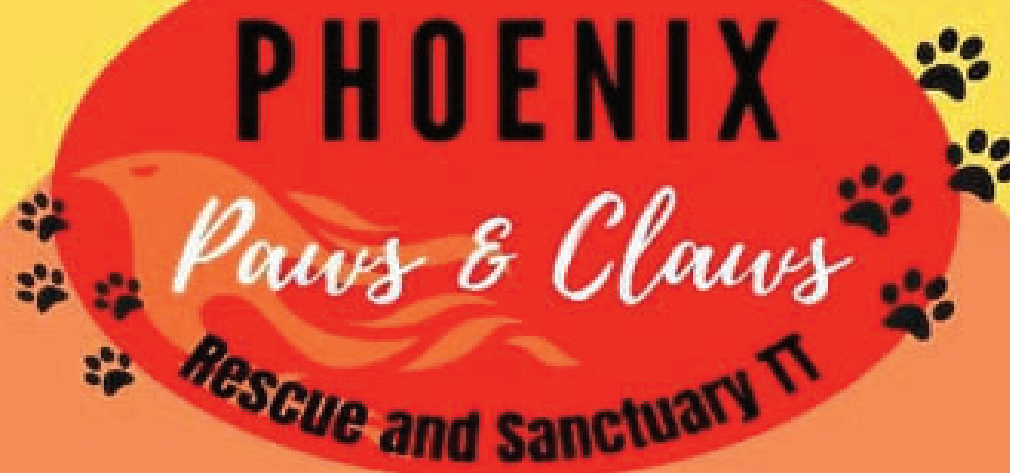
His fingerprints are on some of the most reused recordings in music history. The instrumental "Full Up," which he created at Studio One, resurfaced decades later as the foundation for Musical Youth's international hit "Pass the Dutchie." He also laid the bassline for "Satta Massagana" and "Declaration of Rights," two of The Abyssinians' most enduring spiritual anthems.

After keyboardist Jackie Mittoo left Studio One, Sibbles stepped in as the studio's primary arranger, shaping sessions and backing artists including Burning Spear, Alton Ellis, Dennis

Brown and Horace Andy. As a member of the Soul Vendors, he played behind Bob Andy, Ken Boothe, John Holt, Slim Smith and dozens more, contributing to tracks including "Freedom Blues," "Love Me Forever," "Queen of the Minstrel," "Ten to One" and "Door Peep."

Asked how he approaches building a bassline, Sibbles said the process starts with listening, not playing. "My basslines are guided by the song and the melody of the song," he explained. "Whenever I am going to play a bassline to a song, I listen to the song and I am influenced by the melody, the words and the chord structure, and I use that to create my basslines."

For Sibbles, the King of the Bassline title isn't just an honorific — it's something he now builds directly into his live shows.



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# Usain's Girl

## Superstar athlete Bolt engaged to longtime partner Kasi Bennett

Jamaican track icon Usain Bolt is set to marry his longtime partner, Kasi Bennett, after reportedly proposing during his 40th birthday celebrations in Kingston.

Bolt reportedly asked Bennett to marry him while the couple was celebrating at the rooftop of One Belmont. He presented her with a five-carat engagement ring during the proposal.

The engagement comes more than a decade after Bolt and Bennett began their relationship, which has grown from a largely private romance into one of Jamaica's most recognizable celebrity partnerships.

Bennett, a Jamaican model, entrepreneur and philanthropist, has been a constant presence in Bolt's life through the latter years of his record-breaking athletics career and his transition into life after competitive track and field.

Bolt and Bennett reportedly began dating around 2013, keeping their relationship mostly away from public attention in its early years.

The couple's romance came into the spotlight during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, when Bennett publicly supported Bolt as he added to his already remarkable Olympic legacy.

In the years since, Bolt and Bennett have occasionally offered fans glimpses into their relationship and family life, while continuing to keep many aspects of their personal lives private.

The reported proposal now marks a new milestone for the couple, following years of public interest and speculation over whether the eight-time Olympic gold medalist would eventually tie the knot with Bennett.

The pair share three children.

Their first child, daughter Olympia Lightning Bolt, was born in 2020. They welcomed twin sons, Thunder Bolt and Saint Leo Bolt, the following year.



It's official: Bolt with girlfriend Kasi Bennett



# GRAND MARSHALS

## Buju Banton, Kes to be honoured at New York Caribbean Carnival

Reggae star Buju Banton and Trinidad and Tobago soca singer Kees Dieffenthaler, better known as Kes, have been named honorary grand marshals for the 59th annual New York Caribbean Carnival Parade in Brooklyn.

The West Indian American Day Carnival Association (WIADCA) announced that the two Caribbean music stars will be honored during the Labor Day parade on Monday, Sept. 7.

Their selection reflects this year's theme, "One Caribbean," with Buju representing Jamaica's reggae and dancehall traditions and Kes representing Trinidad and Tobago's soca and Carnival culture.

"The appointment of Kees Dieffenthaler of KesTheBand and Buju Banton as Honorary Grand Marshals is a powerful representation of what One Caribbean means to us," the WIADCA Board of Directors said. "They have each carried

Caribbean music and culture to the world, while remaining deeply rooted in the communities and traditions that shaped them."

Buju Banton, one of Jamaica's most internationally recognized reggae and dancehall artists, has spent decades taking Jamaican music and culture to audiences around the world.

Kes, the lead vocalist of KesTheBand, has similarly emerged as one of the leading international ambassadors for soca, helping introduce the genre to wider audiences while maintaining strong ties to Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival traditions.

The artists will be formally recognized during WIADCA's 59th annual VIP Breakfast from 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Labor Day at the Carlos Lezama Netball Court at Lincoln Terrace Park in Brooklyn.

The event is expected to bring together

elected officials, community leaders, cultural ambassadors, business executives and members of New York's Caribbean-American community ahead of the main parade.

The New York Caribbean Carnival Parade will then take over Eastern Parkway beginning at 11 a.m., continuing a Labor Day tradition that has become one of the largest celebrations of Caribbean culture in the United States.

The annual festivities showcase the region's music, elaborate costumes, masquerade traditions and food while drawing participants and spectators from across the Caribbean diaspora.

This year's celebration marks the 59th staging of the parade, with WIADCA using the "One Caribbean" theme to highlight the shared cultural traditions and connections among Caribbean nations and their diaspora communities.

# Freddie's Splendid Things

Eight famous costumes worn by Freddie Mercury, including the outfit featured on the cover of Queen's debut album and the catsuit from the video for Bohemian Rhapsody, are to go on display at the V&A in London this autumn to mark what would have been the singer's 80th birthday.

Freddie Mercury | Splendid Things, a free trail developed with Mercury's former fiancée and close friend Mary Austin, will run from 24 October 2026 to 17 January 2027. Austin is lending seven of the looks, which span Mercury's career from the 1970s to his final years.

Among them is a monochrome ensemble worn for an early Queen gig at Imperial College and pictured on the cover of the band's eponymous debut album. Also on display will be the "Mercury Wing" catsuit, designed by Wendy de Smet and worn during the A Night at the Opera tour in 1975-76, as well as in the groundbreaking Bohemian Rhapsody video.

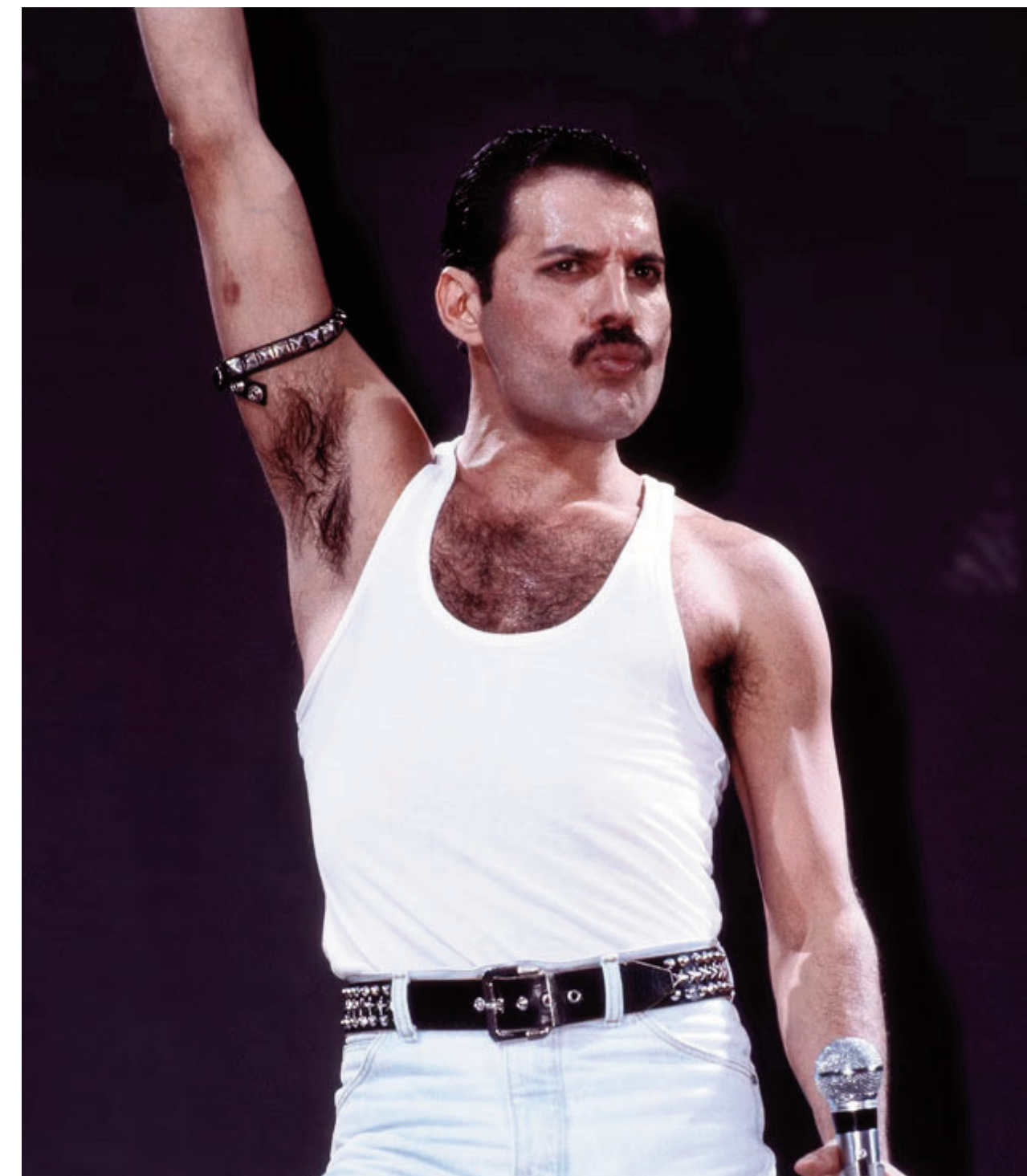
Mercury's crown and cloak, designed by Diana Moseley and worn during Queen's 1986 Magic Tour, will also feature. He wore the outfit for the band's final live performance at Knebworth that year. The display will also include a costume from the Made in Heaven music video, as well as accessories and items from his personal wardrobe.

The trail takes its name from a remark Mercury made in 1978: "I like to be surrounded by splendid things. I want to lead a Victorian life surrounded by exquisite clutter."

Austin first met Mercury when she was 19 and he was 24, while they were both working around Kensington's Biba fashion scene. Mercury, born as Farrokh Bulsara on 5 September 1946 in Zanzibar, was selling his artwork and vintage clothes from a stall in Kensington Market. They became engaged on Christmas Day 1973, the year Queen released their debut album.

Their relationship ended in the mid-1970s, but they remained close for the rest of Mercury's life. When he died in 1991, he left Austin his Kensington home, Garden Lodge, and his possessions.

Austin has described Mercury's clothes as



central to the image he created as a performer. "The clothes were part of that exploration," she said in A Life in Lyrics, due to be published in September. "Freddie understood early on that he wasn't just wearing clothes; he was providing an image to match the scale of the space and the vastness of the crowd."

Austin said the clothes and costumes to be displayed at the V&A "tell a hugely important part" of Mercury's story both on and off the stage: "Never mere accoutrements, his costumes and clothes were essential to his performances, creative vision, and wider self-expression, carefully designed to create a lasting visual and emo-

tional impact that has reached across the generations and still reverberates today."

The installations have been designed by Tom Piper, whose work includes productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Tower of London poppies and the V&A's Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser and Taylor Swift | Songbook Trail.

Each of the trail's six stops will be staged differently, using sets, sound and lighting to evoke moments from Mercury's career.

Kate Bailey, the V&A's senior curator of theatre and performance, said the display would explore Mercury's "love of 'splendid things'" and his interest in art, design and fashion.

# OH DOLLY

## Ms Parton was far more than just a world-famous singer

Singer and businesswoman Dolly Parton, who died earlier in August, had a slew of projects in the pipeline including a biopic, documentary, avatar show, museum, travel stop for truckers, coffee brand and dog treats.

"Dolly worked up until the day she died. She loved seeing her dreams come to life and loved knowing her work brought people joy," her long-time manager Danny Nozell told US media including Hollywood Reporter.

"If you see unreleased music, products, books, experiences and campaigns launched through official Dolly Parton channels, you can have confidence in knowing that she placed her personal stamp on it," he added.

Parton died peacefully in hospital in Nashville on 25 August after a "brief battle with cancer", after being admitted four days before her death with kidney and autoimmune issues.

Nozell said that Parton had worked with her "handpicked" team for the past several years, to "build a project roadmap that will guide us for decades to come".

The hugely successful and popular singer-songwriter and philanthropist took shrewd decisions throughout her career, which made her millions.

Just before her death, she told People on 21 August she was exploring new ways of touring, and that her team was collaborating with companies that create "avatar performances" given her recent health concerns.

She added they were in the "early stages of development", People said.

Other upcoming projects include:

Dolly's Tennessean Travel Stops (celebrating National Truck Driver Appreciation Week)

Dolly Parton's SongTeller Hotel

Dolly scripted series

Docuseries

Billy the Kid animated series

Dolly Dolls

Dolly's Life of Many Colors Museum

Dolly's Cup Of Ambition Coffee

Dolly's Dog Treats

Dolly on the Holly

Dolly Bedding & Home Decor

Her Broadway show, Dolly: A True Original Musical, opens in December.



**Dolly Parton was most proud of her work with children's literacy**

Meanwhile, flags across the US flew at half-mast on Wednesday, in tribute to the singer.

A family source has told news outlets that a private funeral service is due to take place this weekend in Nashville.

Last year, Parton said she had one song she couldn't talk about - it was still secret and buried in a vault in Dollywood, and will not be released until 2045.

"It's not supposed to be open 'til I'll be 100, and which, that's the day after tomorrow," Parton joked at the time.

Maike Currie, vice-president of personal finance at savings firm PensionBee, told the BBC's Wake Up to Money that Parton had set examples for others.

She described her as a "brilliant business-

woman, but also an iconic investor and a real example to women about the power of what happens if women are financially independent".

Parton, who came from a humble, poor background in Tennessee, was always keen to encourage self-belief and confidence in others.

She wrote to the young recipients of books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, saying: "You and all of your friends are very special. There is no limit to what you can do or how far you can go.

"Just remember the lessons my family taught me - dream big dreams; learn everything you can learn; and care for all those who care for you. You do all of these things and you can be anyone you want to be."



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