



**PARIEDEAU “PERRY” ADOLPHUS MARS,  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
(B. APRIL 23, 1941 – D. MAY 12, 2016)**

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**P**rofessor Emeritus of Wayne State University, Dr. Pariedeau Mars, known to his friends and colleagues as “Perry” was murdered in his home by young people on May 12, 2016 in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, the land of his birth. After retiring from his sojourn at Wayne State University in the USA where he taught numerous courses in Caribbean and World Politics, and Africana Studies, he returned home to continue to serve in a country he loved and had written prodigiously about. In retirement he continued to write and to paint, one of his hobbies. Unfortunately he was cut down before he could offer other iterations, in print and activism on a long and distinguished career.

It appears now that in Mars’ country of birth, from pauper to priest is fair game to crime and criminality of every stripe—from petty theft to hideous murder. One prominent daily columnist in Guyana, Frederick Kissoon, wrote the following tribute in the aftermath of Mars’s death that sums up the character of the man:

he is one of the most decent, multi-racial, African Guyanese I have ever met. This will not be a free-flowing column because I will not pen

it with calm emotions. It is the manner of his death that has devastated me. A man that was one of the best social science thinkers this country has produced had to die in a home invasion—robbed and murdered. It is not right. This cannot be right. This cannot be happening to Guyana. I would like to share with readers one incident that shows the type of human Perry Mars was. He was giving me a ride from UG (University of Guyana) ... to pick up his son. His son crossed the road towards the car and this cyclist rode into the little boy and knocked him onto the roadway. Perry came out of the car and in a quiet tone, gently admonished the rider. I know this could not have been me if that had happened to my daughter. I know this could not have been most people in the world if that had happened to their child. But such was the nature of the man.

The violence in Guyana is endemic and all theories and ongoing discussion and about its origins and solution(s) has reached a climax, to put it mildly. It is both national trauma and tragedy.

Paradoxically, Mars had turned his mind again and again to the root causes of the social violence and political division of a racial nature in Guyana.

Prior to his academic sojourn at Wayne State University in the United States, Mars received a B.A. in History at the University of Guyana, afterwards proceeding to Carleton University in Ottawa for his M.A. in International Relations and a Ph.D. in Political Science. He held visiting academic positions at the University of California and at the New School of Research at the University of the West Indies, among others.

Mars was a brilliant political analyst and incisive writer and author of numerous articles, academic papers and books. His specializations included ethnic politics and conflict resolution, labour formations and relations, regional political conflicts, strategic culture and geopolitics and Caribbean politics and culture.

One of his main books, *Ideology and Change: The Transformation of the Caribbean Left*, is a defining master work for understanding the political complexity of political parties of the left in the Caribbean and Guyana. In this comprehensive study of the Left in this part of the world Mars analysed the origins of what he called the “marginalisation” of the Caribbean in the face of “cataclysmic world events”. These cataclysmic world events were however only a part of the problem. The left, as he acknowledges, also faced other serious deficiencies internal to itself.

He left an unsurprising academic range of contributions to Caribbean and global analysis

He also wrote, among his scores of articles, for example, “The Guyana Diaspora and Homeland Conflict Resolution,” a powerful treatise on the potential role of the diaspora in Guyana’s affairs. The great irony is that Perry bravely returned to the homeland to think and write

about the issues that embodied his life's work.

Mars, throughout his illustrious academic career also wrote voluminously on race relations in the Caribbean and especially solutions to political and ethnic unity in Guyana where politics, as noted earlier have been defined "ethnic insecurity" and race based politics. In addressing the issue of "racial reconciliation" he argued that the Caribbean Left demonstrated an "inability to grasp or resolve the increasing tensions between the different disadvantaged groups."

He was also a trade union activist at his alma mater, the University of Guyana where he both taught and researched at the Departments of Political Science and the Institute of Development Studies as he mentored legions of students including those who ran the once vibrant University of Guyana History society.

Mars is survived by his wife Dr. Joan Mars, herself an academic and his sons.