

## **Jacques Pierre Marie Daudin (1926 – 2011)**

Jacques was born in China on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1926 to Pierre and Marie-Louise Daudin. His very early education began in 1931 in China and ended in Vietnam where he attended school in Ho Chi Minh City with his childhood friend Norodom Sihanouk, the King of Cambodia. When the Japanese invaded French Indochina, Jacques was captured and he spent six months as a Japanese prisoner-of-war in 1945. He then spent the following year fighting on the side of his new Vietnamese friends the Viet Minh in the first Vietnam War, before returning to France to continue his education.

Jacques completed his education in Tropical Agronomy at the University of Nancy in France and graduated in 1949 with a MD in Agronomic Science. Jacques married Monique Landreat after his graduation and his first and only child Sylvie, was born in Martinique four years later. He left the following year for Africa where he did his first of many research projects into bananas at the Research Station of Kindia, in Guinea. After one year of research in Africa he returned to France but on his way back to France in December 1950, the DCK (UAT) plane in which he was returning crashed in Bordeaux, France killing all forty-four passengers. Jacques of course, was the only survivor.

Jacques left France the following year for Guadeloupe where he worked at the Banana Research Station from 1951 to 1953. He then moved to the Banana Research Station in Martinique and stayed there until 1959. It is here in Martinique that he was credited with the discovery of a special oil spray that was used against the Sigatoga disease in bananas. For a short time Jacques was a consultant with the Mobil Oil Company where he invented a product to protect bananas that is still used today. He then went to revolutionary Cuba where he continued work on bananas and plantains at the Institute Nationale Research Agronomic that was headed at that time by Che Guevara. For a short time in 1960 he was a guest of the United Fruit Company at their Dunlap Research Laboratory in Honduras.

In 1961, Jacques created a banana spraying company that he called SATAIR. He had three spray planes that worked in Martinique, St Lucia and Dominica spraying bananas. While he ran his SATAIR spraying business, he also did consultancy work for the Dominica Bananas Growers Association; for WINBAN (West Indian Banana Growers Association) in St. Lucia; for the Port Maria Banana Growers Association in Jamaica; and in 1966 for the Chevron Chemical Co when he was a guest at the phytopharmaceutical symposium in

London. Jacques also worked for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in controlling an invasion of locusts, and in 1975 he did some rice-spraying surveys in Guiana and Suriname.

The first plane to land at the Union Island airport, in 1974, was one of Jacques SATAIR planes. SATAIR was not only an agricultural enterprise – it also became a civil transport business with a DC3 and BN2 islander planes. SATAIR eventually became Air Martinique. It was from these early flying visits that Jacques soon fell in love with Union Island and in 1977 he decided to settle and build a small hotel resort here while living first in Ashton. Jacques bought a piece of land close to the Anchorage Hotel in 1978 but the property was sold to him with a false title deed and he lost everything except the house that he continued to live in for the remainder of his life in Union. In 1980, Jacques bought Bloody Bay but sold it five years later because this area was much too inaccessible.

Jacques continued to do agricultural spraying work and in 1981, he set up a rice-spraying company in French Guiana. In 1983, the government of Cameroon in Africa employed him to make a full survey of their banana industry and he completed this work in four months. In his final report he also included the serious effects of official corruption that was destroying their industry. The Cameroon government did not like this and he therefore became '*persona non grata*' in that country.

Jacques first grandchild Sebastien was born in Martinique in 1983 and six years after he received his second grandchild Pierre-Gilles. He was always happy to receive these grandchildren in Union Island where he taught them the sea and how to fish. Jacques started fishing with local fishermen in Union in 1983. They were the first local fishing crew to fish at a depth of 50 fathoms with nets, palangs, and big deep-water fish pots on a well-equipped boat. The boat, however, caught fire and burnt in Clifton Harbor in 1987 and Jacques gave up fishing. He decided to rent the Sunny Grenadines Restaurant to improve the local tourism industry, and he did this quite successfully up until 1991.

Jacques eventually became seriously concerned with the destruction of Union Island's natural environment and he began teaching the children and others to care for their natural and cultural heritage. He began as a voluntary teacher of science and the environment at the Union Island Secondary School from 1993, but was soon 'fired' from this non-paying job because of his vocal environmental stance. He later formed the UIAP (Union Island Association for

Ecological Protection) and with the assistance of the Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness began a campaign to protect Union Island's environment. Protecting the natural environment in our small islands is very difficult when the government does not appear to care and in fact often directly contributes by its policies to its destruction. Jacques made his voice heard when he thought that the extension of the airport could have been done in a more environmentally friendly manner; he protested against the Italian Ashton Lagoon Marina project that had plans to completely destroy the mangroves; and he protested when his personal and close friend the Comrade tried to hand over of the Tobago Cays Marine Park to the Palm Island Resort.

Jacques last big accomplishment was when he published his first book "*A Socio-political History of Union Island*" in 2000. This work took him almost 24 years to complete. This very important book soon sold out and he again revised and reprinted it last year. Jacques also published another book "*A Natural History Monograph of Union Island*" in 2003, and this book also has been completely sold out. Jacques was so happy in 2005 when scientists named a new species of lizard after him. This beautiful lizard is found only on Union Island.

Jacques celebrated his 74<sup>th</sup> birthday in the year 2000, and it was from this year that his health started to deteriorate. He had an operation to remove one of his kidneys that had developed cancer, and in the same year had two operations on his eyes for retina displacement. Jacques started to slow down and could not go walking into the bush anymore – a thing that he loved very much, but he still walked into Clifton everyday with his straw hat and his dark shades to protect against the sun. He walked into Clifton every day to buy bread and bananas to make breakfast for his many 'Taliban' – his adopted stepchildren that he loved and took care of.

While visiting St. Vincent earlier this year Jacques became seriously ill and had to be hospitalized. He was later taken to Martinique where the doctors there gave him five months to live – his cancer was much too advanced for treatment. He immediately returned to his adopted home of Union Island and to his numerous beloved stepchildren who cared for him until he finally died on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011, fifteen days short of his eighty-fifth birthday. Jacques remained a committed socialist and a peoples' person all his life, and even though he rose to the heights of fame as a scientist, businessman and an environmentalist he never departed from the simple humble and absolutely committed life of a Taoist father caring for his many, many adopted children.