

INF Service Award

Presented at INF Congress – Sydney – August 2015

Deborah Lynch Theobalds

Deborah's illustrious netball career spans more than 40 years as a player, umpire and administrator. She represented her school at the junior and senior level, captaining the team at both levels and later captaining the Barbados Schoolgirls' Team. She was selected to the Barbados National Team as a teenager in 1969 and represented her country for 12 years captaining the team for 4 years. She also competed in World Championships in 1979.

During her playing career Deborah's insatiable hunger for knowledge of the sport saw her branching into umpiring. She received the Barbados National Umpiring Award in 1983, and umpired at the highest level for many years, officiating at two World Championships, one Commonwealth Games (umpired the bronze medal match) and many international series. She was selected to the first International Pool of Umpires in 1998 and attained INF's highest umpiring award, the IUA.

With her wealth of knowledge and experience in umpiring, Deborah's commitment to the sport and its development saw her become an administrator. This role would see her put great effort into developing umpiring skills locally, regionally and internationally recognising the benefits to the players as well as to the sport. She is currently a member of the International Umpires' Accreditation Review Committee, which over the years has developed and reviewed the umpires' protocols used to assess umpires.

She currently assists in the setting and marking of umpiring exams locally and regionally at all levels and continues to be involved in netball and umpiring development. Deborah has been a delegate at World Tournaments and has also been a member of the Umpires' Appointment Panel at World Tournaments, World Youth and Commonwealth Games.

Deborah has received numerous awards over the years for her contribution to the sport as an umpire and administrator. Of note is her award by the National Sports Council in 1996, the Barbados Olympic Association for volunteerism during the international year of volunteers in 2001, the Caribbean Netball Association during their Diamond Jubilee in 2014 for 40 years of outstanding contribution to netball in the Caribbean and the Life Achievement Award in 2014 from the Barbados Association of Netball Umpires of which she is a founder member.