

QUEEN OF BROKDONG LILA 'LEELA' GENUS VERNON (1950 - 2017)



Born October 21st, 1950

- Referred to as the 'Queen of Brokdong', Lila Genus Vernon was born to a family of proud African and Maya heritage. She was the preeminent voice for the safeguarding and promotion of Creole culture in Belize.
- Lila sang the 'Buru' style Brokdong, a style which is believed to have originated in Creole communities of southern Belize.
- In 1987, she established the Ebolites Dance Group. This brought young people together to train and showcase their culture through music and dance. She performed internationally as a solo artist and with the group in New York and Mexico.
- In 1994, Lila performed for Queen Elizabeth II upon her visit to Punta Gorda Town. She was later recognized with the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire award.
- Lila and her daughter Juliette Vernon Austin, along with Mr. Percival Neal, joined forces to establish the first branch of the National Kriol Council in Punta Gorda Town. This later expanded and led to the formation of a National Council based in Belize City.
- Her most well-known song is 'Ah Waahn Noa Hoo Seh Kriol Noh Ga No Kolcha!' which was released in 2001. This song has been adopted as the mantra for persons of Creole descent in asserting their cultural heritage.
- Lila was recognized with several awards during her lifetime including Brokdong Artist of the Year by the Institute of Creative Arts (2004) and the Woman of Culture award by the National Institute of Culture and History (2011).
- Lila Genus Vernon passed away on the morning of February 19, 2017.



Images courtesy the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) and Mrs. Myrna Manzanarez



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