

Maureen Banton - In Service to Sigma Run

BY [Shane Bennett](#) Posted [February 19, 2021](#)

Behind the eyes of the oft reserved and introverted Maureen Banton lie decades of wisdom and service known only if you get the chance to speak with her.

Banton, an over three-decade veteran of Sagicor, knows much about change and progress; having had her start at the then First Life Insurance Company, she's steadily grown with the Group, having an attitude of service above self. It was this same attitude that brought tears to her eyes when she was, to her surprise, awarded the Philanthropy Individual Award, Sagicor Life Employee Benefits Division in 2019.

But what drives her life of service? In today's #FeatureFriday, we unearth her story.

Sigma Virtual Run Secretariat

We meet her deep in the throes of work, volunteering no less; gathering and sorting the Invitational Race Day packages for the upcoming Sigma Virtual Run of which she remains a key in its back end operations. The Sigma Run Secretariat, her base at this time of year, is abuzz with activity, as close to one hundred top runners are set to take the stage in the first hybrid run of its kind. Like little worker bees, systematically processing and greeting guests, this is what February is all about. Banton, focused at her core, is in her element.

Door buzzers and the sound of hustling feet mark the start of our conversation as the air is filled with the continuous cries of "Maureen!".

She closes the door to facilitate the interview.

Sheepish and reluctant, she finally settles down while having lunch saying abruptly "I'm very shy".

The interview pauses before we even begin.

We're accustomed to seeing this people-oriented, results-driven Sigma Run Queen in motion; albeit she *is* quiet yet very much in control. Shy, however, is a far cry.

"I actually don't like to speak; I think I have a lisp and most words I don't pronounce right – people always ask me what I said – so I'm quiet and reserved".

However, like many introverts once she's in a place of comfort she lets loose.

This freedom is seen with ease when it comes to Sigma Run; a task she takes to heart. For as long as we've known her, she has, among others, been the go-to for issues to be fixed in relations to the annual Road Race. She knows where everything is located and who gets what and where.

The door knocks.

"Maureen, one second", enters a Secretariat Associate seeking clarity on the task as they meet another runner for a package. "Check the storeroom", she says.

This constant need for Banton is persistent throughout our talk on the penultimate Friday before race day. Calm and collected, she deals with the issues as they arise, highlighting key traits she brings to her work, family life and volunteering.

But why does she love to volunteer so much?

With a hectic schedule, busy family life, she surely has other things to do. For Banton, it's innate.

"For me, knowing that somebody needs help and knowing that I could help, and I do not help, it would bother me", says this Jim Rohn podcast fan.

So keen on helping others, she prefers to do it discreetly with every ounce of strength.

A strong work ethic and family ties are also key areas of her life. She uses these same principles at Sagikor as she gently guides her team to produce great work for the Run. "I'm always helping, I love an adventure and if I'm doing something, I tend to put my all in it; (save and) except for public speaking, I'll go blank. Alysia is my role model for that. I wish I could bring that to the team, I'll just do my part."

Diligent Team Player

When asked how she copes with managing the runners' expectations for their bibs and packages as well as her team of volunteers she says "Everyone is not the same; dealing with persons over the years has taught me a lot. I don't like confrontation; I prefer to be calm, understanding steps and process makes it all come together"

This, she knows first-hand during her 9-5.

Maureen, employed to Sagikor's Group Administration is integral in the management of Group Health Plans; the skills and lessons, she's used to her benefit at Sigma Run. "It's like I'm doing my job at Sigma; it's pretty much the same thing - detailed, organized and collected, but I'm generally like that. If I'm hanging out clothes, I use one colour clothes pin, and you know if it's white clothes, it's all the white pins I use"

OCD? Maybe. Meticulous? Correct.

But where does this kind yet powerful energy come from? Banton says "my mom".

The product of an assiduous mother, she credits the diligence she now has, thanks to her; recalling the tale of how, while struggling, her mother was approached by a doctor who came to the family home repeatedly wanting to adopt baby Maureen. Her mom, seeing the promise of her daughter, rejected his request and would go on to work multiple jobs, purchase her own land, build her house and have a legacy for her children, Maureen included, to do more for themselves from her small-scale [farming](#).

"She's a fighter and a go-getter and a kind soul".

Taking the model from her mother, this reggae and disco-loving Group Insurance Administrator sought to develop these same principles in her son, former national swim team member Khaleel Williams who can be seen helping with Sigma Run annually.

She recalls his swimming days. "I would wake up and by 4 a.m. we're by the pool, I'd snooze in the car, wake up and get him some breakfast then school, go to work; work all through my lunch time, leave at 3:30, pick up him back to

class, then swimming and home". This has built a close relationship she shares with her son. A hectic but humbling life, much to her delight.

Always a busy body, she admittedly is trying to say "no" these days but still, once there's some way she can stretch her creativity and assist, she will always take the adventurous path, no matter what prizes or surprises come her way. Little did she know, she would have been awarded for her diligence by Sagicor.

Awards & Rewards

At the 2019 Corporate Awards, she sat transfixed once her name was called. Maureen would walk away, amidst a standing ovation, with the Philanthropy Individual Award.

She recounts the night in question.

"Look here, I had no idea", Maureen, confessed to being clueless at the award and recognition. "I never knew it was me; when I tried getting up, my legs wouldn't allow me to get up."

That night, she shook and cried with joy.

"Maureen!" They call again during her emotional recall.

Even tempered and calm, she speaks about how her podcasts keep her focused; she cherishes the "Millionaire Next Door" and the book "The Richest Man in Babylon".

An amateur investor herself, she declares that patience has allowed her to reap much in life, even though she started with little. Volunteering has assisted her in the process of giving back and remaining true to a cause. Her advice? "Start with whatever you have; you can create a lot with a small amount"

She's used that same principle, a small amount of perseverance seen in her mother, to build a legacy of service.

"I'm a humble person wanting to do something for someone else; that's what makes me happy".

On happiness, she notes "for me it's different; money doesn't make me happy, as my son would say, you can only watch one tv at one time and eat out of one plate at one time".

Speaking of food, Maureen, in the future, may even open a deli.

Why? "Because I like cooking, food and love serving people, or maybe I'll become an interior decorator."

For now, she plans to continue to support the run even after she's retired from Sagicor. "After retirement I plan to still be helping and mentor those who I can mentor".

Her advice to others who wish to walk in her path? "Walk in your own race, there's others that you can like but take the good from them."

"Maureen!" shouts her team member.

Duty calls.

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