

Born to run

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Veronica Campbell-Brown

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*In recognition of the Inter-American Year of Women, the Bureau of Women's Affairs and **Flair** place the spotlight on Veronica Campbell-Brown for her outstanding achievements in athletics.*

Olympian Veronica Campbell-Brown is a graduate of the University of Arkansas. After graduating from Vere Technical in Clarendon, she also attended Barton Community College in Kansas.

Born in Trelawny, running was a sport she has always enjoyed. As she grew, so did her passion for track and field. "I was born to run," she states confidently. Campbell-Brown has been involved in athletics for over 18 years and has been competing professionally since 2004. She has embraced her talent with hard work, determination and courage, all of which have made her one of the greatest female athletes in the world.

A two-time Olympic 200m champion, 100m world champion and World Indoor Champion in the 60m, she has set numerous athletic records at each institution she attended.

The number-one challenge to her career has been injuries. She describes them as 'major setbacks' that have to be overcome with determination, listening to sound advice, and allowing the body time to heal and a commitment to training. Another challenge is losing. As someone who enjoys winning, she has learned to accept that sometimes you can be defeated even when you have done your best. She has come to appreciate the lessons learnt in defeat and says that they motivate her and allow her to appreciate

winning even more.

Gender Issues

Campbell-Brown was recently declared as UNESCO's champion for sports and for peace, with a special mission of promoting gender equality in sports. Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture with responsibility for women's and gender affairs Olivia Grange, announced that Campbell-Brown is now one of three persons in the Caribbean and Latin America who serve as UNESCO's champions for sports for peace in the world. "When you are made an ambassador and a champion for sport for peace by UNESCO, it means you are an ambassador to the world and that you not only represent your country, but you represent what is the best in the world and you are a medium through which the United Nations will promote gender equality and sports for peace," she said.

Campbell-Brown hopes to use her 2009 appointment as a way to promote this equality and get women's athletics the well-deserved recognition it needs. However, she has concerns about the lack of appreciation for female athletes despite the fierce competition that women bring to the sport. She feels that gender equality is an issue that needs to be addressed in the sport.

Being an athlete requires tremendous hard work. She must advise aspiring athletes that they must have the right attitude and determination to succeed. "As long as you know yourself, know what you want to achieve and love what you do, the road to success will be an enjoyable one. To be successful in anything, a strong positive mindset, continued hard work and love for God are helpful."

But she also promotes a balance between athletics and a good education.

When she is not on the track, Campbell-Brown enjoys bowling, reading, mini-golf and watching movies. She also has a flair for fashion and loves to 'dress up'. She is married to fellow Jamaican sprinter Omar Brown and they live in Florida.