

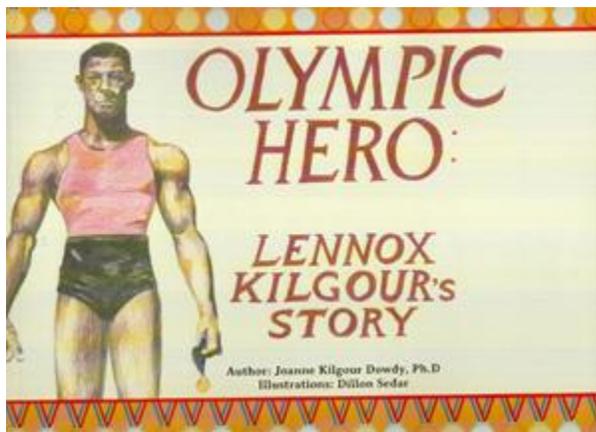
# Book Review...A chronicle of accomplished dreams

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**Book:** *Olympic Hero: Lennox Kilgour's Story*  
**Author:** *Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, Ph.D*  
**Critic:** *Dr Glenville Ashby*

Joanne Dowdy, a professor at Kent University (OH) in the School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies, is a name synonymous with fine literature. In this, her latest oeuvre, she seals her worth as a literary artist and one of the best the Caribbean has produced.

'Olympic Hero: Lennox Kilgour's story 'is inspirational as it is instructive. Unquestionably, it is a pedagogical tool that should earn a place in oral tradition. It chronicles the rise of a young man from the ashes of obscurity



The book cover of Olympic Hero

and poverty in Trinidad, to the podium of accomplishment. "Olympic Hero" transcends sports. It invariably touches on the will of the human spirit and the usually unexplored inner resource from which we must tap to attain greatness. If only we knew what is available when we pry within. Surely, Lennox Kilgour did.

Kilgour chalked up key awards in weightlifting, including a silver medal in the 1951 Pan American Games in Argentina; a bronze medal in the 1952 Olympics in Finland; and a silver medal in the 1954 British Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada. But his awards tell half of this illustrious story.

Dowdy never takes friendship and mentorship for granted. Kilgour wasn't alone. Close to him were Leo Seemungal, Freddie Mendes and John Davis. They ensured that his training, although void of today's performance enhancement supplements and so-called scientifically proven regimens, was structured, detailed and technically sound.

"Gour," as he was affectionately called, was never unbowed by the arduous work required to get to the Helsinki games. Dowdy intones: "Late nights, late shifts, hustling to make the extra dollars

for food, for a doctor, for all the expenses that an athlete needs to cover. Cod liver oil, malt, milk, ice cream, figs says the Health and Strength magazine. Who would sponsor him? How could Gour pay? But the athlete smiled and did bench presses everyday and kept on pressing on. Money, food, lodging. Would they send him, the team for...the Olympic Games?"

But therein lies more than the vagaries of sports. It showcases the uncomely fabric of politics and the colonial era of the 1940s through the 1950s when the worth of natives was undervalued.

"Where were the friends, the committees, the athletes, the government even when Gour...returned to Trinidad with his team?" (He was) "always puzzled about this shoddy treatment....Gour smiled, a bitter smile, shrugged his shoulder, pressed and lifted on," Dowdy pens.

It took decades for national acknowledgement in the form of the Trinidad and Tobago Hummingbird Medal (Gold) in 1989. And in 2000, Kilgour was included in the 100 Most Outstanding T&T Men and Women of the 1900s.

Dowdy's stanzas are well cadenced and sharply written. It is delivered with simplicity, albeit loaded with philosophical depth. She is the consummate griot with an overarching poetic substance and veneer; a bard in the tradition of the Druids of yore. This undertaking is compelling deliberate, incisive and spared of superfluity; her words fluidly marching alongside bold, raw illustrations that depict seminal moments in Kilgour's impressive career.

"Olympic Hero" is a classical tale of sheer grit embodied in a man who rallied for himself, his people and the Caribbean region, in an era when a simple smile from Providence was never certain.

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Rating: Recommended