

Biography of Hon. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, M.P.
Minister Within the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs



Hon. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, M.P. was born to, now retired Headmaster, Ignatius Garrido and Maria Josepha Garrido of Moruca, Region #1 on March 24, 1960.

An exceptional daughter of the soil, she strives to enhance the lives of Guyana's most vulnerable, especially the indigenous peoples. Her wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience of the needs and problems of Guyana's indigenous peoples have created in her, a passion for hinterland development. Hence, when she became a Parliamentarian in 2011, she focused on empowering indigenous and hinterland women and youth through relevant skills training which she undertook via workshops in Santa Rosa Village in Region One and Paramakatoi and Campbelltown villages in Region # 8 where they were trained in art and craft, fashion design and cookery. She also worked with farmers, visiting their farms, distributing seeds and holding seminars.

In Region Four, Minister Garrido-Lowe worked with the women and youth of Soesdyke, forming a women's group and a youth sports club. In Timehri North she worked with both women and youth to help to improve their lives.

Apart from being a businesswoman in the field of Computer Graphic Design for many years, Hon. Valerie Garrido-Lowe has also made stellar contributions to the field of Education, Health Journalism, Advertising and Insurance. She is an ardent sports lover who served on the Guyana Boxing Board of Control and on the Hinterland Youth and Sports Development Association. She also served on the Guyana Relief for Haiti Committee combining compassion with a skill for organizing.

The plight of single mothers is another platform that Minister Garrido-Lowe is passionate about, herself a proud parent of two children, whom she raised as a single parent. She is also a grandmother of two wonderful grandchildren, one of whom is autistic and has cerebral palsy which motivated her to accept the positions of secretary of the Guyana Greenheart Autistic Society and a member of the Disabled Persons Organization of Guyana.

Minister Garrido-Lowe spent her early years in different parts of Guyana's interior since her family, which consists of nine siblings, moved to several hinterland areas with her father, a headmaster who was transferred to various primary schools in Regions One and Nine. She attended Santa Rosa Primary School in Region # 1, Sawariwau Primary School, Achawib Primary School in Region # 9, and for a while, Aishalton Primary School, also in Region # 9. She later attended St. Rose's High School in Georgetown after which she went to join her father in the teaching profession at Santa Cruz Primary School and later at Kwebana Primary School in the Moruca Sub-Region, Region One.

Minister Valerie Garrido-Lowe entered politics as a teenager when she was involved in the PNC's youth arm – the then Young Socialist Movement (YSM) – and was at one time the

chairman of her community's YSM group. Her next stint with politics came in 1995 when she joined The United Force Party.

In 2010, Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe was elected the leader of The United Force Party after the former leader, Mr. Manzoor Nadir, stepped down. She then became the Party's Presidential Candidate to contest the 2011 National Elections but there was a serious division within the Party and it was split into two factions - those who supported the former leader and those who supported the new leader. This split saw Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe and those who supported her, moving to the Alliance For Change Party just before Elections Nominations Day. After the 2011 General and Regional Elections, the Alliance For Change Party won six seats in the National Assembly and Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe was sworn in as a Member of Parliament. Parliament was prorogued by the then PPP/C Government in 2014 and new General and Regional Elections were held again after three years which saw the APNU+AFC Coalition victorious.

Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe was sworn in by His Excellency, President David Granger, on 22nd May, 2015 as *Minister within* the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs.

As one of the Ministers responsible for the indigenous peoples of Guyana, Minister Valerie Garrido-Lowe has a huge responsibility in the areas of youth empowerment and sports, as well as the welfare of women and children.

She has committed to improving the standard of living and lifestyle of youth and young adults who reside in the hinterland areas through the Hinterland Employment and Youth Service which is aimed at creating sustainable jobs and providing youths with relevant skills towards becoming

successful entrepreneurs. This initiative is within President David Granger's and the Government of Guyana's ten point strategy for the sustainable development of the hinterland communities.

On 3rd September, 2016, Minister Valerie Garrido-Lowe was appointed Patron for Women's Football in Guyana by the Guyana Football Federation.

Minister Garrido- Lowe believes that there are workable solutions available that will enhance the lives of all Guyanese and is prepared to dedicate her energies towards making the dreams of her people come through.

As a firm believer in God she believes that he has a plan for everyone and hers is to serve her brothers and sisters of this great nation – Guyana.