

The University of Manchester Medal of Honour 2026

Citation for Mrs Locita Brandy

I am delighted to be here today, to introduce Mrs Locita Brandy and her incredible body of work.

Mrs Brandy migrated to Manchester from Nevis in the Caribbean in 1956. Since her arrival, she has been an active and influential member of her local community, shaping the cultural, political, and social landscape of the city for over 70 years.

Mrs Brandy has invested in the education and wellbeing of local children for decades, particularly in ensuring that children of Caribbean heritage understand their roots and feel happy, supported, and accepted in schools and – importantly – pride in their Caribbean roots.

She researched Black history and volunteered in schools and youth spaces to support learning in areas not emphasised in the curriculum. This invaluable work ensured the children felt a strong sense of identity, community, and belonging.

She voluntarily ran a young people's holiday club out of Broadfield Road Park in Moss Side. This began with taking her own children to the park but grew as other local children joined them. She encouraged others to support by volunteering their time, and raised funding for activities such as trips to the seaside, farms, and stately homes.

Many of the children who attended would never have had the opportunity to experience such activities without Mrs Brandy's work. She is still fondly regarded as 'Auntie Locita' by many of the children who took part, now parents and grandparents themselves.

In the 1970s, Mrs Brandy campaigned on behalf of children of Caribbean heritage who were unfairly deemed 'educationally subnormal.' She fought the local education authority on behalf of these children whose education was damaged by this labelling, advocating for their places in mainstream schooling.

From arrival, Mrs Brandy has been an active member of her local community, Moss Side. She has always believed in Moss Side as a community, and has tirelessly campaigned for the rights and needs of local people.

In 1960 she became the first Black woman to join her local Mother's Union branch. This was an extremely courageous act in the face of the widespread hostility towards Caribbean migrants at the time.

She was an active member of the Moss Side Residents' Association, leading many campaigns and advocating for road safety, youth education and for effective anti-poverty and crime interventions. Between 2003 and 2007, Mrs Brandy served as a councillor for Moss Side Ward as a member of the Labour Party.

The late Tony Lloyd MP, in 2020, wrote the following of Mrs. Brandy: *"I have known Mrs Brandy for many decades and can testify to the energy and commitment she has always shown when working with communities in Manchester's inner-city areas. Mrs Brandy worked all through the worst times of gang violence in South Manchester and was prepared to stand up for what was right when others kept quiet. She was a champion for a community that needed that strong and determined voice."*

Mrs Brandy has made a lasting mark on the cultural life of Manchester. As a founding member and chair of the Manchester Alexandra Park Association and an active member of the Leeward Islands People's Association, she was instrumental in establishing Manchester Caribbean Carnival and played a vital role in its organization for nearly three decades. The Carnival is not only an important celebration of Caribbean culture and heritage. It is now also rightly recognised as one of Manchester's most anticipated and best attended cultural events, drawing visitors from across the UK, and beyond.

At the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre, part of the University of Manchester Library's Special Collections, we have collected [material](#) relating to Mrs Brandy's life and work to ensure her legacy is remembered. Items from her collection featured in the recent exhibition '[We Have Always Been Here](#)' at the John Rylands Library, which attracted over one hundred thousand visitors. We value not only Mrs Brandy's body of work, but also her keen interest in supporting our archiving. Without her donations, Manchester's Caribbean Carnival would have little archival presence.

I could say much more; Mrs Brandy's work for the residents of Manchester has been sustained and prolific. Mrs Brandy achieved all this while raising her own family and has passed on her strong sense of community and public service to her children and grandchildren, who continue to [build upon her legacy](#).

It is therefore fitting that we honour Mrs Brandy, in her 91st year, for her enduring commitment to Moss Side and Manchester. Her inspiring leadership embodies the University's values of humanity, courage, and a pioneering spirit. Her work has shaped Manchester's communities, culture and civic life.

We therefore present Mrs Brandy with this Medal of Honour in recognition of her vision, leadership and her immense contributions to the city of Manchester.