



THE BAHAMAS **51ST** INDEPENDENCE



ONE PEOPLE UNITED IN **LOVE & SERVICE**

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET
The 51st Independence Celebrations
Tuesday, 9th July, 2024
Clifford Park, West Bay Street
Nassau, New Providence



The logo for this year is elegantly striking. By blending the number 5 with the word “one”, it symbolizes the unity of our islands and communities. Let this emblem visually embody our collective unity and commitment to love and service as echoed in the theme.

The theme is an excerpt of our National Pledge, that calls us to reaffirm our commitment to Bahamian pride, our faith, and our rich heritage. It urges us to focus on the commonalities that unite us, rather than the differences that divide us. It reminds us to take pride in our Bahamian identity, letting that pride inspire us to service our country, support our fellow citizens, and collaborate towards a better, safer, cleaner, and more prosperous Bahamas.



MESSAGE FROM
HER EXCELLENCY THE MOST HONOURABLE
DAME CYNTHIA A. PRATT, O.N., GCMG
GOVERNOR-GENERAL, COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

My Fellow Bahamians,

On this 51st Anniversary of our Independence, I extend greetings to all of us who are privileged to be citizens of this beautiful and Sovereign Archipelago given to our care by the will of Almighty God, and I call attention to the theme under which we celebrate: “One People, United in Love and Service”.

Naturally, this Theme appropriately calls us to recognize the fundamental objectives which will enhance our intention to remain a free and Independent Nation. It is also a clarion call to action to each one of us to strive to preserve the meaning of being a free and Sovereign people within this beautiful Commonwealth of The Bahamas. It is also a call from which no Citizen can be exempted because the full responsibility for the continued building of this Nation lies within the responsibility of each one of us.

Celebrating our 51st Anniversary is therefore an appropriate time for us to weigh our commitment to what it means to be a citizen in an Independent Bahamas, for it is only through individual action that we shall be able to make proper and positive contributions to our Nation. This Anniversary also provides an opportunity to recall with pride our Fellow-Citizens who have made, and are continuing to make, valuable contributions to our Nation, particularly in the fields of education, sports, industry and commerce, public service, civic and social development and outreach, and other areas of our National life.

The stellar achievements made by hard-working and dedicated Bahamians who promote the good name and reputation of our Commonwealth, and while worthy of praise, they also form patterns for all of us to emulate. It is timely and important, however, to re-

member that further successes will only be achieved in a determined spirit of Unity and Objectivity, underpinned by a deep commitment to Faith in Almighty God.

We must ever remember that it is totally through God's Love that we exist, and through which we are enabled to continue the bold work of nation-building. I therefore commend our Theme to all Bahamians, as it calls each and every one of us to renewal of a commitment to work together, applying willing minds, hearts and hands toward engaging ourselves in every community of our Archipelago in the work of promoting those time-honoured values for which we have always been well-known. These values, faithfully applied, will bring the necessary respect and high regard for each other and from friends, beyond the borders of our wonderful Country.

And so, I call most solemnly for a renewed spirit of self-respect, and that we may, individually and collectively, be models of propriety, faithfully observing our laws and regulations, maintaining and practicing our Faith in Almighty God, and being good examples for our youth, and for all others who engage themselves within our Nation. Let us therefore meaningfully lift high our Flag, together with those standards which will make the world see and feel the real meaning of what it is to be Bahamian!

Happy Independence!



MESSAGE FROM
THE HONOURABLE PHILIP DAVIS, K.C., MP
PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

Friends,

As we gather to celebrate the 51st anniversary of our nation's independence, I am filled with pride and gratitude. This milestone reflects our journey as a people, marked by perseverance, resilience, and a commitment to our shared future.

Fifty-one years ago, our ancestors dreamed of a Bahamas that could stand on its own, free and proud. Their vision and bravery have paved the way for the nation we are today. We honor their legacy and follow their path as we continue to build a better Bahamas for future generations.

This year's theme, "One People: United in Love & Service," speaks to the essence of who we are. Our unity has always been our greatest strength. Through our collective efforts, shared values, and common goals, we have overcome challenges and achieved much together.

Reflecting on our history, we see stories of triumphs and trials, communities coming together in times of need, and individuals striving for excellence in every field. From our first steps toward independence to the present day, each chapter of our story is filled with examples of Bahamian determination and ingenuity. The Ecumenical Service and Cultural Show are more than annual events; they are celebrations of our rich heritage and the diverse elements that make up our nation. They remind us of the faith, community, and cultural vibrancy that define us and drive us forward. Our cultural heritage, from the lively rhythms of Junkanoo to the inspiring tales of our forebears, is a source of immense pride and a foundation upon which we build our future.

Our journey has faced many challenges. We have encountered natural disasters, economic hurdles, and

social issues. Yet, time and again, we have risen to the occasion, demonstrating a spirit of resilience that is uniquely Bahamian. This resilience is a testament to the strength of our communities and the bonds that tie us together as a nation.

On this special day, let us reaffirm our commitment to each other and to our country. Let us pledge to work hand in hand to ensure that every Bahamian has the opportunity to thrive, that our nation remains a symbol of hope and progress, and that we continue to uphold the values that have brought us this far.

As your Prime Minister, I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me. Together, we have accomplished much, and together, we will achieve even more. Our progress is measured in the strength of our communities, the quality of our education, the health of our environment, and the opportunities available to every citizen.

We must continue to invest in our young people, providing them with the education and opportunities they need to succeed. They are the future of our nation, and their success is our success. We must also continue to support our elders, who have given so much and deserve our respect and care. And we must protect our environment, recognizing that the natural beauty of our islands is both a gift and a responsibility.

As we look to the future, let us do so with optimism and confidence. We have faced many challenges, but we have always emerged stronger. With unity, determination, and a shared vision, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

Happy Independence, Bahamas! Let us celebrate with joy, pride, and a renewed commitment to our beloved nation.



MESSAGE FROM
THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL PINTARD
LEADER OF HIS MAJESTY'S LOYAL OPPOSITION

The Bahamas has made great strides over the last 51 years. We have many reasons to be grateful to God and proud as a people. Our collective efforts have improved the quality of life for the vast majority of our citizens. In a wide range of areas we have performed at such a high-level that we are among the world leaders in several noteworthy categories. In various sporting disciplines we have distinguished ourselves and have become world champions. Talented Bahamians have not only excelled academically around the world but have gone on to lecture at or lead prestigious universities. At home and abroad we have produced powerful thinkers and doers who continue to shape companies, government initiatives and Non-governmental organizations. Our small nation has made a big impression and has had a big impact globally. Many of our Pastor's and spiritual teacher's work impact the lives of men and women globally; so much so that thousands flock to our shores to stage their own events and benefit from our strong spiritual tradition.

Our economy at varying times has been cited among the leaders in our hemisphere in terms economic stability and high income per capital. We have been counted as one of the oldest and best examples of a stable and thriving democracy. In financial services, tourism and environmental stewardship we are in the global conversation. Our vibrant culture is the glue that pulls us together and establishes our uniqueness in the human family. Through different genres of the Arts we express the individual and collective genius of our people. The beauty, vibrancy and messages in our music, dances and varied creations resonates internationally.

This 51st anniversary must be marked by a humble and healthy recognition of how far we have come and to count our blessings in terms of how much we have accomplished and contributed to the world. However,

the majority of our attention must be trained on how we stop, then reverse the troubling trends that threaten to undermine the significant gains we have made over the last five decades.

Our next 51 years must find us increasing the number of our citizens who are owners of our country's resources and economy. There must not only be economic growth but widespread development with greater equity in the distribution of our collective wealth. We must cultivate a passion for lifelong learning, and socialize our citizens to appreciate and respect each other and protect the sanctity of life, rather than grow comfortable with the violence that we see and experience too often. In our politics, we must reduce the tribalism, and cultivate a class of policy-makers who govern with a servant heart and a shared commitment to empower all of our people, regardless of political colors. We must be sensitive to the diversity of our population and respectful of differences in views, while not losing our fundamental Christian character. For the next 51 years, we must fashion a nation that makes available to the world examples of best practices across multiple segments of national life. We must make the necessary structural adjustments, so that the sources of revenue come from a wide range of areas that have traditionally been spoken about but not yet given a chance to flourish. We must renew our urban centers while we develop our rural communities so that we explode opportunities for all of our citizens.

It is to these and other transformative goals that we as a people must dedicate ourselves in order to fashion the new Bahamas. Happy 51st birthday and May God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.



MESSAGE FROM
APOSTLE DELTON FERNANDER

My Brothers and Sisters

I believe that our greatest collective achievement thus far has been obtaining and successfully maintaining the sovereignty of this great nation. We are indeed indebted to God for his guidance in this regard. We must also be grateful that we live in a country where we are free to worship, speak, demonstrate and pursue our highest goals and aspirations.

In the years to come as we move toward our 60th anniversary. We must recognize the faith it took for our founding fathers and mothers to move in order for this generation to benefit from their fruitful labour, a milestone that many who our assisted in ensuring our freedom may not live to enjoy. It is now time that we exercise that same level of faith to attain more for our country and its citizens that will transcend time and our various biases.

The book of James 2:14 reads, “what does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? The faith that brought us this far is the same faith we need to move forward successfully. There are some who say that The Bahamas is the place where God lives and I firmly believe that we are the recipients of His immeasurable favor. I also believe that He has provided us with everything that we need to develop this country in a meaningful way. We must seek His wisdom and guidance to ensure that we are headed in the right direction. God has prepared many of us for service to country and we must utilize our faith and move.

Though we have made great strides over the decades and in recent times with the record number in tourist arrivals, the admirable number of people gainfully employed and our economic recovery, there are difficult issues that still affect our nation. We must continue in our efforts to address social ills, low productivity,

juvenile delinquency, crime and violence and family dysfunction. The baton of nation building is firmly in our hand.

We must not be found wanting. While we adopt the technology of the present and future we must not abandon the values and faith of the past. Those values built the foundation on which we stand today. Those values were based on love and service to God, country, family and neighbours.

Rev. Philip Rahming penned the words of our pledge of allegiance that serve as this year's theme, "One People United In Love and Service". This love is the kind of love that asks nothing in return for the service that we render understanding that that same service will repay us many times over if it benefits the majority of Bahamians.

As citizens of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas we must answer the call of God to use the gifts that he has bestowed upon us to make our communities and by extension our country a better place. As we celebrate our independence I call on every Bahamian, in country and abroad to give much thought to what their contribution should be to the development of our country. God is calling for those who he has prepared to step forward for service. We owe it Him to answer the call and to do so with love and humility. As we move forward, I pray that our democracy deepens, our sovereignty remains well maintained and that we hold fast to the Christian principles on which our country was founded.

On behalf of myself, my family, the Bahamas Christian Council and the wider Christian community I wish every Bahamian citizen a very happy Independence Day. May God bless you and may God continue to bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.



MESSAGE FROM
HER EXCELLENCY LESLIA MILLER-BRICE
CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE SECRETARIAT

Happy Independence Day, Bahamas!

As we proudly step into our 51st year of independence, we are deeply inspired by this year's theme: "One People: United in Love and Service." This powerful theme encourages us to renew our dedication to the values that define us as Bahamians—our pride, our faith, and our rich heritage. It calls upon us to embrace the commonalities that unite us, setting aside our differences to serve our nation and each other with unwavering love and commitment.

Reflecting on the journey we've travelled, it's clear that our unity has been our greatest strength. From the spirited rhythm of Junkanoo to the heartfelt expressions of our culture in art, music, and dance, we have always come together as one people. Each celebration, each shared moment of joy, and each act of kindness has woven a rich tapestry of togetherness that defines us.

This theme, "One People: United in Love and Service," serves as a poignant reminder that our unity is the bedrock of our strength. By focusing on what binds us together—our shared identity and our collective pride in being Bahamian—we can work hand in hand to create a more peaceful and more prosperous Bahamas. It is through unity and mutual respect that we can address the challenges we face and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

This year, let us challenge ourselves to strive for excellence in all that we do. Let us march forward with our heads held high, united in our love for our country and our dedication to service. By choosing love, service, and unity, we will ensure that our beloved Bahamas remains a beacon of pride and progress for future generations. Together, we can honour our heritage, cherish our traditions, and build a bright future for all.

Let us remember the sacrifices of those who came before us, whose dreams and hard work laid the foundation upon which we stand today. Let us honour their legacy by committing ourselves to the continued growth and betterment of our nation. Each of us has a role to play in this grand journey, and together, we can make our Bahamaland even more beautiful, just, and prosperous.

Happy Independence Day, Bahamas! Let us celebrate our past, embrace our present, and look forward to a future filled with promise and potential. Let us carry forward the spirit of love and service, and let it guide us as we strive to build a nation that we, and future generations, can always be proud of.

With pride and unity,
H.E. Leslie Miller-Brice
Chair of the National Independence Secretariat



COAT OF ARMS OF THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas coat of arms is a composition of things indigenous to these islands, while the motto "Forward Upward Onward Together" heralds the direction and manner in which the Bahamian nation should move.

The crest of the arms, a light pink conch shell, symbolise: the marine life of The Bahamas. The top of the crest is composed of wavy green palm fronds, symbolic of the natural vegetation. The Santa Maria, flagship of Christopher Columbus, appears on the shield of the coat of arms. Wavy barrulets of blue symbolise the waters of The Bahamas. The shield is charged with a resplendent or radiant sun signify the world-famous balmy resort climate, and it al connotes the bright future of these islands. A flamingo, the national bird, and a silvery blue marlin support the shield. The national motto is draped across the base of the coat of arms.

There was a national competition to produce the motto for the coat of arms, and the competition was won by 11-year-old students - Vivian F. Moultrie of Inagua Pub School and Melvern B. Bowe of the Government High School in New Providence. Bahamian artist Hervis Bain prepared the preliminary design of the coat of arms.

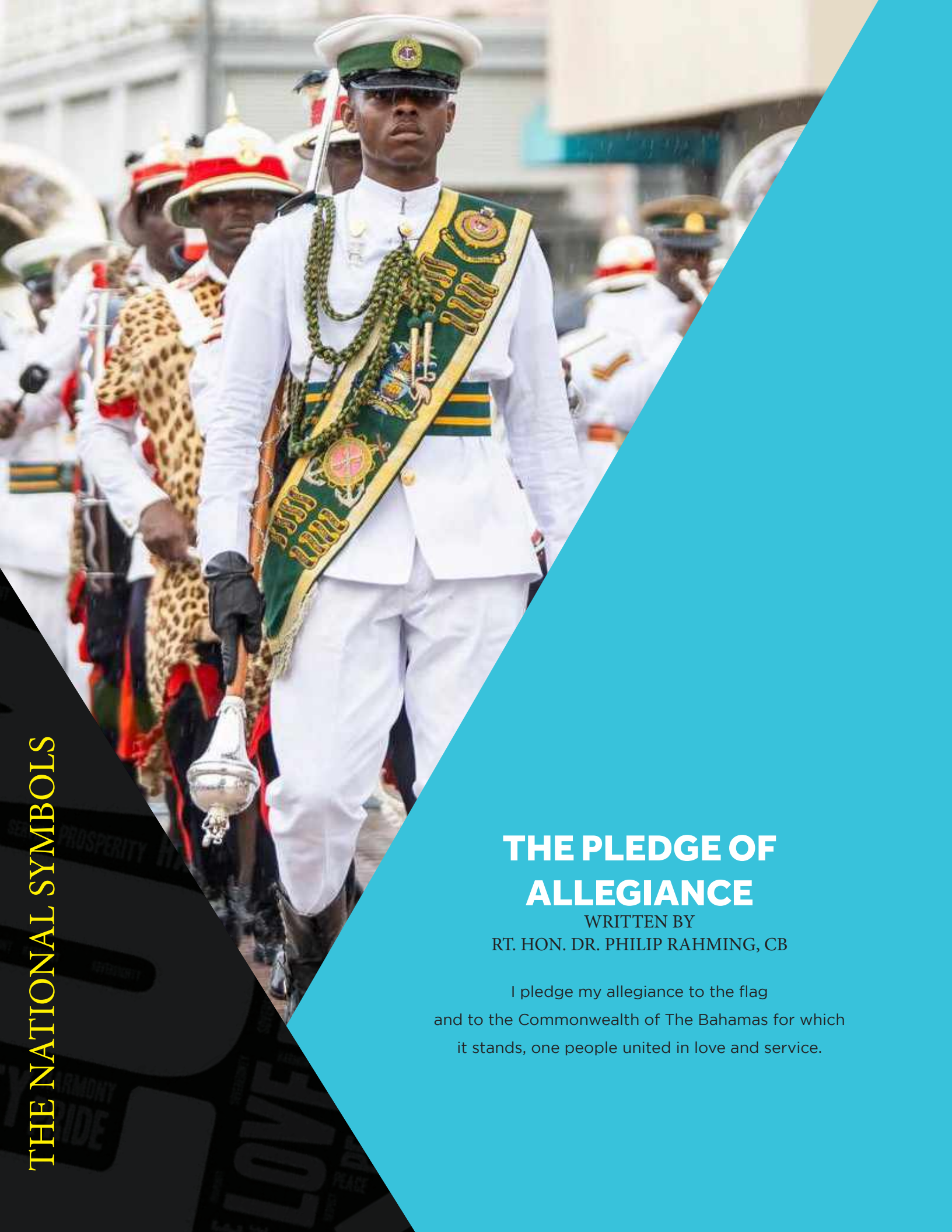


FLAG OF THE BAHAMAS

The colours embodied in the design of the Bahamian flag symbolise the Image and aspirations of the people of The Bahamas; the design reflects aspects of the natural environment (sun, sand, and sea) and the economic and social development. The flag is a black equilateral triangle against the mast, superimposed on a horizontal background made up of two colours on three equal stripes of aquamarine, gold and aquamarine.

The symbolism of the flag is as follows: Black, a strong colour, represents the vigour and force of a united people, the triangle pointing towards the body of the flag represents the enterprise and determination of The Bahamian people to develop and possess the rich resources of sun and sea symbolized by gold and aquamarine respectively.

There are rules on how to use the flag for certain events. The black triangle, for example, should never be displayed pointing upwards or from the viewers right. This would be a sign of distress.



THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WRITTEN BY
RT. HON. DR. PHILIP RAHMING, CB

I pledge my allegiance to the flag
and to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas for which
it stands, one people united in love and service.



NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE BAHAMAS

MARCH ON BAHAMA LAND

Lift up your head to the rising sun, Bahamaland;

March on to glory your bright banners waving high.

See how the world marks the manner of your bearing!

Pledge to excel through love and unity.

Pressing onward, march together to a common loftier
goal; Steady sunward, tho' the weather hide the wide
and treach'rous shoal. Lift up your head to the rising
sun, Bahamaland,

'Til the road you've trod lead unto your God,

March Bahamaland.

- TIMOTHY GIBSON 1903-1978

THE NATIONAL SYMBOLS

NATIONAL SONG OF THE BAHAMAS

GOD BLESS OUR SUNNY CLIME

LYRICS BY RT. HON. REV. DR. PHILIP RAHMING,
CB MUSIC BY TIMOTHY GIBSON (1903-1978) AND
E. CLEMENT BETHEL (1938-1987)

God bless our sunny clime, spur us to height sublime.

To keep men free, let brothers, sisters stand firm,
trusting hand in hand, throughout Bahamaland one
brotherhood, one brotherhood.

Let gratefulness ascend, courageous deeds extend
from isle to isle. Long let us treasure peace, so may
our lives increase, our prayers never cease.

Let freedom ring! Let freedom ring!

The long, long night has passed, the morning breaks
at last, from shore to shore, sunrise with golden gleam
sons n' daughters, share the dream, for one working
team one brotherhood, one brotherhood.

Not for this time nor for this chosen few alone we
pledge ourselves.

Live loyal to our God.

Love country, friend and foe, oh help us by thy might!

Great God our King! Great God our King!



NATIONAL FLOWER OF THE BAHAMAS

THE YELLOW ELDER

The Yellow Elder was chosen as the national flower of The Bahamas because it is native to the Bahama Islands and it blooms throughout the year.

Selection of the yellow elder over many other flowers was made through the combined popular vote of members of all four of New Providence's garden clubs of the 1970s - the Nassau Garden Club, the Carver Garden Club, the International Garden Club, and the Y.W.C.A. Garden Club.

They reasoned that other flowers grown here - such as the bougainvillea, hibiscus, and poinciana - had already been chosen as the national flowers of other countries. The yellow elder, on the other hand, was unclaimed by other countries (although it is now also the national flower of the United States Virgin Islands).



NATIONAL FISH OF THE BAHAMAS

THE BLUE MARLIN

The Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans* before nomenclature change) is a fish that is found in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, with reports of the largest sizes found in the latter. However, many persons first encounter the fish in Ernest Hemingway's book *Old Man and the Sea*. Mr. Hemingway was a frequent visitor to The Bahamas, especially the island of Bimini, where the blue marlin is highly prized among the strong game-fishing community. The blue marlin, a relative of the sailfish and swordfish, is easily recognizable for the long "sword" or spike of its upper jaw, its high and pointed dorsal fin, and pointed anal fin. It is said that the fish uses its "sword" to club other fish on which it feeds.

The marlin's back is cobalt blue and its flanks and underbelly are silvery white. There may be light-blue or lavender vertical stripes on the sides as well.

A powerful and aggressive fighter, the blue marlin can run hard and long, sound of deep dive, and leap high into the air in display and strength.



NATIONAL TREE OF THE BAHAMAS

THE LIGNUM VITAE

Lignum Vitae, meaning tree of life, is from the genus *Guaicum* (catop family or *Zygophyllaceae*).

The extremely hard and heavy self-lubricating wood is especially adapted for bearings or bushings of propeller shafts on steamships, and also serves for bearings in steel mills, for bowling balls, and pulleys. For many years, dating back to World War II, shipments of the wood were made from The Bahamas to the United Kingdom and the United States by the old New Providence firm of Duncombe and Bufler.

Apart from its industrial uses, the bark of the tree is used for medicinal dinises, and many Bahamians throughout the islands steep the bark and. drink it as a tonic for creating energy as an aphrodisiac.

THE NATIONAL SYMBOLS



THE FAMILY ISLANDS' FUTURE

BY JOAN ROLLE

A Cree Native American Prophecy tells us that: “Only when the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, and the last stream poisoned, will we realize we cannot eat money.” Oh Bahamas, my Bahamas. These words are reminiscent of the words of elder statesman Clarence Bain who was so fond of saying, ‘Oh, Andros, my Andros’. Let us not cut down the last tree, catch the last fish and poison the last mangrove before we have made it easy for all of our children to taste the beauty of the Family Islands. I would not want my great grandnephews to lament, ‘Oh Exuma, my Exuma’.

Eleven years ago, I decided to take early retirement at the age of 55 and come to the Emerald Isle of Exuma and embrace the land of my ancestors. First Nation People the world over maintain that you must be able to call at least 7 generations of your Ancestors in order to pay tribute and move with and in the rhythm of the Universe. I can only call 5 generations in my paternal lineage. I am a Rolle. The names that I can call are: David, Samuel, Julie-Anne, Amos and Livingstone.

David Rolle was born into slavery in the settlement of Ramsey, Exuma in 1815. At the age of 35, in 1850, 16 years after Emancipation my great, great, great grandfather David purchased a cay on the south side of Exuma And in 1863, at the age of 48, he purchased property on Jimmy Hill, next door to Ramsey, the settlement of his enslavement. This is the story that was passed on to my brother and me by our father Livingston Stafford Rolle. This is the story that inspired me to leave a very lucrative job in New Providence 10 years before retirement and come to the Emerald Isle of Exuma. This is the story that has inspired me to place at the entrance to my property on Jimmy Hill the words from the poem, "Still I Rise", by Maya Angelou, "I am the hope and the dream of the slave." I am the hope and the dream of David Rolle, born into slavery but died a land owner.

I have been able to rise up and call his name. Whenever I drive or walk up the hill to what I now call, not Jimmy Hill but, Gye Nyame, the Supremacy of God, I sing song songs such as "Hush, Hush Somebody's Calling My Name", "Wade in the Water" and "Follow the Drinking Gourd". I also say these words: "Those who have gone before us, rise up and call their names." I do this to pay tribute to David Rolle of Ramsey Exuma, born into slavery, freed and died a landowner.

So here I am at Gye Nyame, Healing Hills, Exuma, where I have welcomed my great grandnephews Khayden, Liam and Steven over the summer so that they too can hear the story. They will be able to greet the Universe in power because they can call 8 Generations of their ancestors: David, Samuel, Julie-Ann, Amos, Livingstone, Stafford, Sandy, Sanderia. David is their great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather: 'Those Who Have Gone Before Us, Rise Up and Call Their Names'.

I will tell them the story of the wonders of Family Island living but I will not forget the caveat: Life on a Family Island is not always a bed of roses. I will tell them that the Family Islands are infinitely beautiful in their environmental charm and Exuma tops the chart in natural beauty from the coppice forest to the mangroves to the crystal-clear aquamarine waters. I will let them know that unfortunately in the play book of those who write the script, you may find yourself playing second fiddle to those who come to fill the coffers if you are not wise. I will tell them that if they do not fight hard and demand their place in the sun, they might forever remain bit players in this game. I will teach them to love the land that their Ancestor David bought and left as an inheritance to them.

I will teach them pride in landownership. I will teach them how not to let selling the land be the default but to look first at farming the land because you cannot eat money. I will go against the grain and tell them that it is more important to plant food than to build

an Airbnb. Exuma is booming. Airbnbs are popping out of the ground in the same way that corn, sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes, crops of all kind use to pop out of the ground. We are no longer farming. We are not self-sufficient in Exuma and if the supply chain breaks, we will be in for a bumpy ride. When will we learn that you cannot eat money. Where have all the farmers gone? They have all gone to Airbnb.

Another caveat: Beach access in Exuma is dwindling. Houses now occupy the best beaches, reminiscent of the story of the Eastern Road and Cable Beach Strip in New Providence. I will tell Khayden, Liam and Steven to fight tooth and nail to maintain beach access in Exuma. The watch word is "the high-water mark".

Sustainable tourism is vital on the Family Islands. With this model you develop your island in such a way that all citizens benefit maximally over a long period of time. The island is developed as a beautiful space for the citizens and residents as the first players and then the visitors are invited to come in and enjoy what we enjoy. The food that we grow feeds us and the visitors to the island. If crops can grow in the desert of Israel, then why can't they grow in the rock? Unfortunately, the model that now exists in our beloved land is that we develop the beauty for the visitor and if we are lucky, we get to take a peek at that beauty every now and again or we become employees who now do not live in Paradise, but work in Paradise.

We encourage the youth to venture into the Family Islands to create a life, but we must pave the way to make it easy for them. We must continuously focus on ways to make the ease of doing business, and even the ease of living in the Family Islands, a reality for all islanders. But I press on, loving the peace and tranquillity that is Gye Nyame, Healing Hills and the Emerald Isle of Exuma. I will not trade it for the world. Thank you, David. I will continue to tell the story to your descendants because, "We are the hope and the dream of the slave". Ashe.

An aerial photograph of a Bahamian island, showing a lush green coastline with a white sandy beach. The water transitions from a shallow, light turquoise near the shore to a deep, dark blue further out. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy clouds. The title text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Bring Back a Healthy Bahamas

By Rhonda Wright



The wealth of a nation is determined by its resources. The most important resource of any nation is its people. The Bahamas, considered a Small Island Developing State, and made up of an archipelago of more than 700 islands, is home to more than 380,000 of the most proud, protective and peculiar people. On the global scene, we are fiercely protective of each other and our country. Anyone who dares to ‘attack’ us – people or country – swiftly feel the wrath of our unique nationalism. The popular saying which speaks to most Bahamian’s pride: ‘Born, Bred, Ga Dead, Bahamian’, can be heard ringing out over the social media airwaves, along with other popularized phrases. Appropriate or not, we all know what they are.

The Bahamas is known for its friendly and hospitable people, pristine turquoise waters, and sandy beaches. We are home to the world’s second deepest blue hole, Dean’s Blue Hole on Long Island, and boasts the third largest barrier reef on the planet – the Andros Barrier Reef. We boast the third highest per capita GDP in the western hemisphere, with a strong economy, fueled largely by our number one industry – tourism. The opportunities for entrepreneurship, and financial success are within reach.

We have so much to be proud of as a people... as a nation. There is no question about the many strides we have made, as well as the growth, development and accomplishments we have made over the past 51 years. There is much promise for continued progress and prosperity to look forward to for the next 51 years and beyond.

It is for this reason that it is imperative that we continue to prioritize the health of our people, and more importantly, engage in ongoing national dialogue about the issues behind it. We must remove the kid gloves and honestly identify the sources of the state of our country’s health, and make it our number one priority to change the trajectory of this nation. The wealth, and promise of progress and prosperity of our nation, can only materialize if the health of the nation is strong.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), reports that non-communicable diseases are on the rise in The Bahamas. Over the last 20 years, heart disease has become the number one cause of death, followed by stroke, hypertensive heart disease, and diabetes. The top ten causes of death also include kidney dis-

ease, breast cancer and cirrhosis of the liver. Worldwide, non-communicable diseases are collectively responsible for 74% of all deaths worldwide. In the Bahamas in 2019, cardiovascular disease, cancers and diabetes were the top three causes of death, collectively accounting for 38.4% of all lives lost due to disease. PAHO statistics indicate that in 2016, in people age 15 and older, the prevalence of obesity was 64.4%.

As we can see, and many Bahamians can attest first hand, the epidemic of non-communicable diseases present devastating health consequences for individuals, families, and communities. They also threaten to overwhelm our healthcare system. The good news is, that due to the causes of these diseases also known as chronic diseases, we have predominant control over turning these statistics around by reducing the top four major modifiable risk factors, which are: tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets.

As we tackle these risk factors, in particular unhealthy diets, here is where the conversation can become sensitive for many Bahamians. Yet, this is where we must be brutally honest, even at the risk of being the recipient of our well defined, communal protective wrath and response.

As with any other country, our food is also embedded in who we are, and serves as an integral aspect of our culture. We have become known for our conch, and the many delectable ways that it can be prepared. Other mainstays include, guava duff, Bahamian stew fish, souse, johnny cake, peas soup and dumpling, and of course, fire engine (corned beef and white rice)!

I have memories near and dear to my heart of my grandmother, Thelma Cordella Scavella-Thompson, who lived until she was 102, preparing what to date, is still the best baked macaroni I have ever eaten! Her peas soup and dough with all the usual fixings was legendary. I waited with bated breath for her okra soup and homemade bread, which she made for us several times a month. Everything she made was absolutely mouth-watering and delicious. My mother's potato salad, coleslaw, meatloaf, and peas n' rice set the foundation and reference for how I learned to cook and prepare meals for my own family.

When I think of my Bahamas as it regards to the rich legacy, resilience, strength, dedication, fortitude, values and principles, as a people and as a country, as well as the journey of our food and its impact on the state of our health, it is my grandmother's life and those of her generation that are the most accurate representations of who we are, who we can become, and what we must return to.

I have always considered Mother, as we all called her, to be the strongest woman I know, physically and also in spirit. She bore 17 children, was a no-nonsense woman of faith, and though she never worked a job in

day in her life, she was always engaged and productive.

Growing up, it is her yard where I have the earliest memories of native fruit trees. The collection of trees included cherries, mangoes, dilly, star apple, hog plums, and guinep. The yard, which she took immense pride in, was always lush with plants and flowers. It seemed humungous to me as a child, and contributed to endless hours of climbing, eating and exploration for my siblings, cousins and I.

My grandmother never smoked and she never drank. She was ritual in her sleep patterns, and was in bed by sundown, and up before dawn to greet the day with prayers and gratitude daily. My grandmother is one of the best cooks I've known. She knew nothing about plant-based or vegan eating, yet while she enjoyed the fares of the traditional Bahamian diet, she was very particular about what she ate, and was never gluttonous or overindulged. Additionally, she was strict about drinking her eight glasses of water every day. But she definitely had a sweet tooth; she loved her desserts, especially ice cream.

I don't recall my grandmother getting sick very often, as her 102 years of life would imply. It wasn't until much later in her life that she began to experience the pains of arthritis. I often saw her rubbing down her knees as a result. Even then, she still didn't like to be still. In her last 2 years, it became excruciating for her, minimizing her mobility and eventually making walking so painful, she would prefer not to leave the house much anymore, and would require a wheelchair when she did. Today, we now better understand that the pain she was experiencing in her knees, arthritis, is as a result of inflammation of the joints. This is often times directly related to the inflammatory foods we eat. Because of the way she structured her life, she was able to enjoy the majority of her long life with minimal ailments. She was able to sustain herself without health issues because of these habits. I also believe that she didn't suffer from arthritic pain until late in her life because of them. The food my grandmother was raised up on, and that I enjoyed eating from her while growing up, is not the same food we are eating today.

In the last 50 years, American farms have gone industrial, with the conversion of the small and medium sized farms into massive industrial factories designed to get animals to our plates as efficiently and inexpensively as possible. This has led to practices that include the use of hormones, pesticides, herbicides, and chemicals as a standard part of the process. This directly impacts us in The Bahamas, as we still import most of our food. Additionally, in the past 50 years, sugar consumption has increased; portion sizes and calories have grown; calories from oils and fats have expanded; fast food chains have exploded; the diet

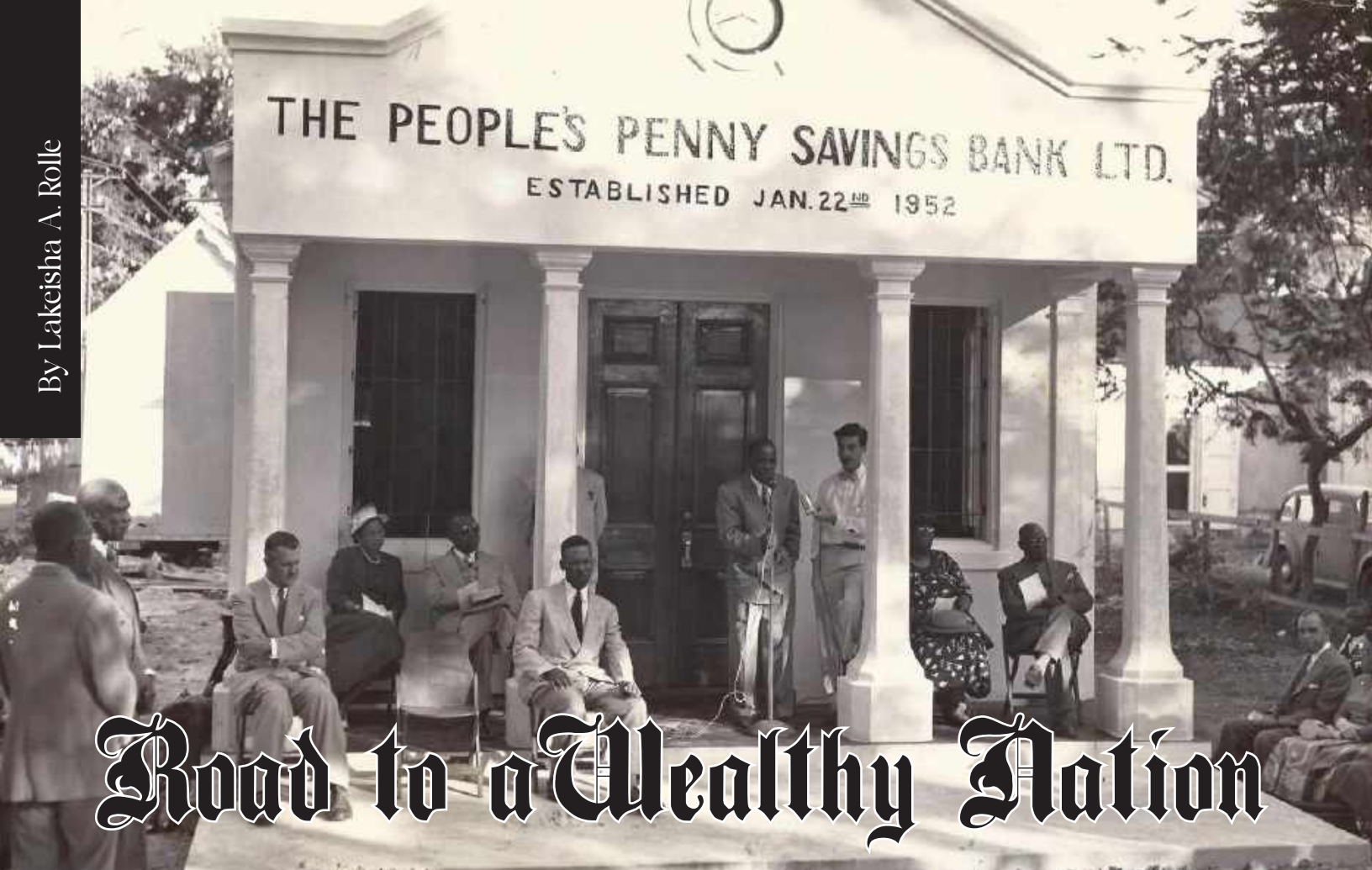
culture has become pervasive; genetically engineered crops have grown; and there has been a merger between the food and chemical industries, deliberately targeting of our taste buds. This has led to high levels of food addictions and craving, the obesity epidemic has expanded, and with companies spending billions of dollars on advertising, especially targeting our children, temptation is everywhere. Not to mention, there are the perils of climate change and concerns around food security.

Fortunately, along with these changes, we have also seen a greater focus on health and wellness, including healthy eating, and establishing more sustainable practices. There has been an explosion of healthy food products in the marketplace, as businesses follow this trend and demand by consumers. I have been a plant-based vegan eater for over 20 years. Over the years, I have seen the shelves transform to cater to the more health-conscious consumer since I initially transitioned. Ancient grains like quinoa, amaranth and fonio have made a come-back, and plant-based milks have emerged. The produce section in the stores have expanded, and farmer's markets have made a come-back with many local farmers consistently providing local, in-season produce. The farm to table movement has taken root, with some schools and restaurants growing their own ingredients or sourcing them locally for meals. The smoothie has now become just as popular for breakfast, as the traditional meal. Sustainable, eco-friendly practices are on the rise, and Bahamian consumers are now more aware, interested and educated about what and how they are eating. Knowledge of, and transition to veganism and/or plant rich or 100% plant based food lifestyles have exploded, with black women being the fastest growing demographic to transition to veganism in the US.

The 'wellness habits' that my grandmother instinctually exemplified as an everyday part of her life, like many other Bahamians of her generation, providing a foundational template for our way forward to address our health crisis. It is upon the lifestyle habits of our grandparents and great grand-parents which we stand, and that we must now return to, if our next fifty-one years as an independent nation is to maximize the productivity, purpose, passions, talents, and skills of our greatest resource - our people.

With the research backed knowledge that we have today about what leads to optimal health and wellness, which include nutrition, research has shown that a diet rich in whole food plant-based foods is the best. We also need exercise and movement, rejuvenating rest, stress management, and healthy relationship. As we celebrate fifty-one years of Independence, I encourage all citizens of The Bahamas to use the lessons and template from Thelma Thompson's wellness lifestyle and legacy, along with the intentional focus of incorporating healthier ways to enjoy the Bahamian

foods we have grown up loving, so that we can turn around the state of our nation's health. This way, we can ensure that we can all be here and healthy for the next fifty-one years - "One People - United in Love and Service!"



Road to a Wealthy Nation

Money has been around for centuries. The way we interact with money has changed, from the way we save money, to the way we spend money, to the way we invest and even borrow money. With the advent of many types of financial institutions and instruments over the many years, and the implementation of various systems, strategies, and technological advancements, individuals are able to create a plan their financial future many years in advance. They could create an individual retirement plan from the moment they enter the workforce, begin their college education, or shortly following the birth of their child.

A CULTURE OF SAVING

In 1835, the Government Savings Bank was established in The Bahamas, which would later become the Public Savings Bank in 1837. It accepted deposits and issued loans to individuals. However, by 1885, the bank had collapsed due to a high non-performing loan

portfolio coupled with having to borrow huge amounts of money to repay its depositors. Shortly thereafter in 1889, the Bank of Nassau was established, before being taken over by the Royal Bank of Canada in 1908, of which was the only commercial bank in operation until 1947.

In the late 1800's, popular community savings methods were established including Friendly Societies and Asues. "Black organized" Friendly Societies became increasingly popular with the establishment of the first Friendly Society, the Bahamas Friendly Society, followed by the Grants Town Friendly Society. Friendly Societies were not only used to save money but were also to support its members during periods of sickness, financial hardship as a result of unemployment, and to assist with burial expenses. During this time, an African savings practice used to assist communities with not only building but also sharing wealth, commonly known as "Asue", was a simple

method used to collectively save money. Many individuals still benefit from using Asues today. Asues have provided so many individuals with the opportunity to purchase homes, vehicles, and enroll in college or university without having to repay interest or meet criteria to join.

In 1936, the Post Office Savings Bank was established as a means of assisting individuals that were unable to open a savings account at a commercial bank. Presently, the Post Office Savings Bank is still used in New Providence and on the Family Islands which do not have a commercial bank or Automated Teller Machine. The Post Office Savings Bank is still a convenient method used to save money of which children may open personal accounts with a minimum deposit of only \$3.00 to get started. In 1952, The People's Penny Savings Bank was established and made it even more convenient for children and adults to open a savings account with a minimum deposit of

just one penny. The People's Penny Savings Bank was described as an "all-colored, all-Bahamian owned organization" with the objective of instilling the importance of financial prudence, saving, and placing money aside for a rainy day using their attractive account offerings.

ACCESS TO LOCAL INVESTMENT PRODUCTS

In 2000, our financial markets expanded with the establishment of the Bahamas International Securities Exchange which allowed for domestic public companies to be listed and traded. To date, the local exchange has a variety of stocks, corporate and government bonds, preferred shares and mutual funds, which are available to local and international investors. This allows for Bahamians to own shares of local companies and diversify their investments via mutual funds with exposure to local and international stocks, bonds, and real estate.

EVOLUTION OF PAYMENT METHODS

As we continue to adopt new ways of doing business and the advancement of digital payment systems, credit cards, debit cards, and digital currency are popular methods of payment locally. Approximately two decades ago, the Bahamian Payments Modernization Initiative was implemented by the Central Bank of The Bahamas as the first steps to make our financial landscape more attractive, inclusive, efficient and secure. In 2020, the Sand Dollar was issued by the Central Bank of The Bahamas, which is simply the digital version of the physical currency used daily. Similar to The People's Penny Savings Bank's efforts to promote financial inclusion by allowing adults and children to open accounts easily, the Sand Dollar allows for just about anyone to transact includ-

ing visitors, non-residents, and individuals that do not have bank accounts. With the implementation of the Sand Dollar, individuals can keep their money in a safe place and not have to worry about it being stolen or having to incur transaction fees that come along with swiping a credit or debit card when purchasing items.

IMPACT OF CREDIT REPORTING

In 2021, the CRIF Credit Bureau began operations in The Bahamas. However, the credit bureau began collecting credit history information from financial institutions as early as 2018. This credit history is used to develop a credit report which contains a credit score. In layman's terms, a credit report is a financial report card that gives you a snapshot of your financial habits. It helps you to face your spending patterns head on and forces you to be honest with yourself about the way you manage money. The introduction of credit scores can be seen as a way of encouraging individuals to adjust their financial habits and reflect on the habits that in some cases, have become culturally acceptable, in the areas of late bill payments, non-payments or payment of the minimum amount required. Credit reports may be accessed by a number of parties including debt collectors, landlords, employers, and insurance companies. Unfortunately, many individuals will be labeled as "high risk" as a result of these practices and become restricted from access to certain financial products and opportunities.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

Over the past 51 years, we have made significant strides that support financial inclusion and technological advances. However, there is much to be done in the area of financial education to promote the importance of financial respon-

sibility and educate individuals about the far-reaching impacts of a lack thereof. Statistics show that more than 1 in 4 Bahamians have less than 90 days' worth of savings in an emergency fund and nearly 90 percent of Bahamians have less than \$5,000 in their bank accounts. As the Founder of The Financial Academy, we have specifically designed products to provide youth as early as age 7 with access to resources that will transform their money thoughts and break the cycles of financial illiteracy and poverty. Together, let us work to raise a generation of financially literate citizens and shift their mindset from poverty to prosperity!

Another major goal is to increase the rate of Bahamian ownership, especially in tourism. The rate of Bahamian entrepreneurs has grown exponentially. This came out of the tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed the lives of more than 800 Bahamians. The true resilience of our people was revealed as pop ups, delivery and concierge services, food businesses and more arose out of necessity. The new frontier for us, is to become owners of more hotels and related businesses, so that the number one industry, tourism, can truly be controlled by us. Andy Ingraham, a successful Bahamian businessman in Florida, is the founder of the National Association of Black Hotel Owners and Operators (NABHOOD) in America. Change is happening, and the push is on for more Bahamian hotel owners and operators to enter this space.

This nation building at 51 years and beyond must address the health of our nation; for without it, there is no wealth. The statistics are startling, and we must do all we can to save the lives unnecessarily lost to non-communicable diseases that came about based on diet, and the rising rates of cancer. More Ba-

hamians are becoming health conscious and are interested in fitness and mental well-being. Bahamian chefs – we're counting on you to help create new cuisine for The Bahamas – one based on the traditional favorites, created in healthier yet flavorful ways, and the invention new dishes for Bahamians to fall in love with.

This leads to the topic of conch. The national delicacy is just a step away from crisis, yet we act as if nothing is wrong. We continue to promote it without protecting and preserving it. Our beloved mollusk takes about 5 years to reach sexual maturity, and can live for more than 30 years. Yet, declining conch populations in habitats throughout the country indicate that they have been overfished over the decades. We cannot advance tourism to the detriment of the conch. Regulations are helping, and fishermen are being educated about the importance of not harvesting a conch with a beautiful, pink lip less than 15mm thick (about the width of a penny). But the pace for preservation has to be quickened, and test conch farms are already operating in a few Family Islands. Aquaculture can help to protect our marine wildlife populations and create new jobs and economic opportunities. Sustainability is the keyword for the future. In every aspect of our national development going forward, let us temper it with a course to sustainability.

It is the mindset of Bahamians that will really determine the future. If we have the mindset that all these problems exist, yet we do nothing to make affirmative action, we are wasting words. If every Bahamian who complained about what is going on decided to do something about it, the entire nation would grow exponentially. Each individual can look to do just what is within their power. Others will be inspired and oth-

ers will join in. This is the true meaning of the motto born on our Coat of Arms: Forward, Upward, Onward, Together”.

Let us take the mantle and move FORWARD to the kind of progress that will bring about economic independence for our country. Let us move UPWARD - away from the social ills that mar the island of New Providence by remembering who we are and where we came from. Let us move ONWARD - past the time of social and racial prejudice, uniting and finding common ground as human beings, regardless of race, class and creed. And let us move TOGETHER towards the common loftier goal of a stable country - one people united in love and service.

While studies have shown that one is more likely to succeed at their wellness goals when they have an accountability partner, it is imperative to remember that your wellness path may differ from theirs. In the old Bahamian vernacular “don't watch nuttin”, focus on your path. It's not just about reaching a destination – it's about the journey. Working together, and staying true to our Bahamian spirit, we can reach heights like never before. Our country can reach new levels of progress and prosperity simply by getting out there and moving. So whether it is running on the beach or playing your favorite sports game with friends, make sure to get up and move! That's what Independence -- 51 years and beyond - is all about. Let's take the action now, fly that kite, till the soil in your backyard, climb a tree, put on the sweet sounds of Junkanoo and Rake & Scrape music when cleaning the house and dance! A healthier nation provides a brighter future for all of us, and we are “One People, United in Love and Service”. Let's move Bahamas!



An Independent Bahamas

By A. Felicity Darville, Chief Editor

The Bahamas became an independent nation fifty-one years ago. For young people, that sounds like eons. Some of them haven't lived half of that amount of time. Many of them don't automatically connect with the significance of July 10, 1973. They weren't there when The Bahamas first became an independent nation. Not enough is shared about the experiences of those who were there. They need to hear more about the path laid to get there. I wasn't there. I was born several years later. And as I navigate all of the events and all of the discourse taking place since the Road to 50 began, leading to our Golden Jubilee in 2023, I am gaining more understanding and insight into it all. The more I learn, the more I am amazed by the strength and resilience of the Bahamian people.

Nineteen seventy-three was a golden era. It was the culmination of a series of struggles to lift the Bahamian people up to the point of self-governance. The crowning achievement of the struggle was Independence. As we celebrate the 51st anniversary, we have to reflect on the path that was laid in order to better understand where we are now, and where we really need to go. We owe it to our young people to give them all the knowledge we have in order to fuel their fire so that their light could shine brightly. Educate them with the facts about the road to independence. Inspire them to carry the torch of Bahamian ideals to higher heights. Uplift and empower them today so that they can take the lead in this country.

Sir Lynden O. Pindling, father of the nation, was 37 years old when he first became Prime Minister of The Bahamas in 1967. This country has not seen a Prime Minister that young ever since. But that young political leader was able to carry a nation into independence. He didn't do it alone. A cadre of young men and women helped to make it happen. It was their youth that gave them the thrust and the vigor to stand up to the oligarchy of the day. Their youth gave them the energy to rally the people to action in order to bring about change. Their youth gave them the courage to stand up to the oligarchs, without fear of anything to lose. We have every reason, in this time, to believe in our young people, to trust our young people, and give them the reins to guide us through the next 51 years and beyond.

Young people, in the same vein, should develop a higher level of respect for their elders and the road that has been paved for them. They need to seek guidance from those who came before them. They should hone in on the lessons of the past in order to avoid the same mistakes. They should trust one another and realize that this is not a competition. The Bahamas will grow exponentially when the people begin to move as one body. There are many parts to a body, all playing important roles. But they all function together. Yes, sometimes, "teeth and tongue will fall out", but they continue to dwell together, unable to move to some other part of the body. In the same way, Bahamians - at home or abroad - should see themselves as a part of one body. This body is a movement of a people - "ONE PEOPLE, UNITED IN LOVE AND SERVICE".

photo by Bahamas Weekly

MUSIC IN MY SOUL

By Sonovia "Novie" Pierre



Bahamian music - what does it mean to you? I've asked that question so many times and it's usually met with mixed answers. Some of the answers are shocking and others would make you realize just how much we, as a people, may have missed the opportunity to celebrate, educate and keep our music relevant.

The 1900's were a buzz with the sounds of what is called "Goombay" at the night clubs that littered the islands. New Providence can boast of clubs that were strewn from the Oakes Field Monument all across Poinciana Drive, to Wulff Road and into Fox Hill. Every few steps along the way, there was a club with live musicians and entertainers. I have had the pleasure of speaking to great historians of the musical world like Ronald Simms, Isaiah Taylor of the Grammy-award Winning Baha Men, Link Scavella, aka Leonard Ferguson, and David "Funky D" Ferguson. They have spoken about their memories as young men walking safely through the streets of New Providence, looking for nothing more than to enjoy the live sounds of Bahamian music.

John Berkley, aka "Peanuts" Taylor of the world-famous Drum Beat Club and John "Chippie" Chipman, King of the Junkanoo Drum, are known as two kings and masters of an instrument that is as old as time itself. George Symonette is often referred to as King of The Goombay. Ronald Butler Sr. aka "Ronnie Butler", is referred to as

"The Godfather of Bahamian Music" by musicians of today. Then you have the Calypso Mama, Maureen Duvalier, and let's not forget Freddie Munnings Sr. whose establishment The Cat and The Fiddle hosted superstars from around the world. Local greats like Fireball Freddie, Dudley Caprone, and Mamadoo Lucille Adlerley mingled with and shared the stage at The Cat and The Fiddle with international musicians like Benny King, Otis Redding, Sam Cooke and Nat King Cole.

The Family Islands had its share of clubs and musicians that are known for their contribution to the cultural thread of music of The Bahamas. Cat Island boasts of native sons like "Exuma The Obeah Man" Tony McKay, Rev. JJ Stubbs and The Region Bells, and more recently, Philip Stubbs and The Rahming Brothers. From Inagua, we have Alphonso Higgs aka Blind Blake. Eleuthera and Harbour Island saw Clubs like The Ponderosa, White Castle and was home to folk songwriters and musicians like Eddie Minnis and the Funk Gang, now The Brilanders. Acklins is the home Rupert of Rupert and the Rolling Coins. Exuma is known for Clubs from George Town to Barretarre and musicians like LB Curtis, King Eric Gibson of King and Knights and Basie B.J. Smith. From simple beginnings, internationally respected Joseph Spence hailed from Small Hope, Andros. He is considered the master of an untuned guitar, plagued by spirits and has made The Bahamian Rhyming Spiritual and "The Spence" playing style, a global phenomenon. From Grand Bahama, we have Theophilus Coakley of The T- Connection and soul crooner Jay Mitchell. The list goes on and on and on featuring men and women who are written in the annals of Bahamian music history.

The Turks and Caicos Islands and The Bahamas shared the same culture for many years. The ongoing controversy of which came first, "the chicken or the egg" when it comes to Rip Saw (TCI) and Rake N' Scape (Bahamas) is still in question today. As a matter of fact, when did the term Rake N' Scape come into being? Veteran journalist Charles Carter is credited with coining the name Rake N' Scape after traveling the country and observing musicians in Cat Island playing the carpenter's saw with a simple screwdriver or nail. He heard the drum with its distinct rhythm and a melodic instrument like the concertina or accordion and harmonica (mouth organ) and boom! The term Rake N' Scape was born.

Junkanoo is often referred to as the number one cultural expression of the Bahamian people. This may not be 100% agreed upon. One has to admit that Bahamian Junkanoo captures the mind and spirit of its observers. The revelers perform as if in a trance and bring their costumes to life with different themes. However, Junkanoo was not always as vibrant and colorful as it is today.

The average Bahamian, if asked, will loudly and

proudly boast that Junkanoo is unequivocally Bahamian-born. Scholars agree that this African music began somewhere in the western coastal countries of Africa. We've heard legends upon legends of John Canoe and how he danced in the streets. Studies have shown that the Caribbean tradition of Junkanoo really began in Jamaica, and then the stories become a bit muddled as to whether it traveled to New Bern North Carolina, and back to The Bahamas through the African slaves, or vice versa. Either way, the Junkanoo of the Bahamas differs from the Jonkonuu of Jamaica and New Bern. One thing that is agreed upon is that this celebration was a time when generations of enslaved Africans were allowed to celebrate their religious and festival traditions by using music, dance, costume, and the drum.

Bahamian Junkanoo has since grown into exciting competitive parades and is most prominent during the wee hours of Boxing Day and New Year's Day. The vague beginnings are no longer in the minds of Bahamians. They just want their beloved groups to win so that they can have bragging rights all year round. Junkanoo music was tamed, canned and recorded and made popular by Tyrone Fitzgerald, aka Dr. Off and groups like Baha Men with the famous anthems like "Get Involved" and "Dance the Junkanoo".

Today, music of The Bahamas has evolved. However, the question still stands: What is our national music? New artists have infused Soca, Calypso and Reggae, but the fee-faw of the Rake N' Scape is what is craved and heard at homecomings, regattas and festivals around the country. The Junkanoo rhythm, cowbells, drums and whistles are what feed the souls of the Bahamian people as we celebrate our uniqueness.

The generations of Bahamian entertainers and musicians to come, should stand proud on the shoulders of The Kings and Queens of Goombay, Rake n' Scape and Junkanoo. They need to recognize and respect the journey of love, tears, sweat and hard work. They must understand that it was all to formulate, cultivate and protect, our nation's culture - One People, United in Love and Service.



Photo by Nicholas Popov

Looking Forward, Upward, Onward, Together: S.E.E.ing Sustainability

By Dr. Ancilleno Davis

Our national motto: “Forward, Upward, Onward, Together” continues to inspire after 51 years. The motto pushes us ‘Forward’ in progress as our country pursues technological advancement and digitization. We have moved ‘Upward’, as all levels of Bahamian society achieve higher attainment financially, academically and in terms of access to health services and food. We have pushed ‘Onward’ through tragedies and challenges when faced with the constant parade of hurricanes and recent global impacts of COVID-19. Most importantly, we have done all this ‘Together’. Indeed, we have taken key steps to Social, Economic and Environmental (S.E.E.) Sustainability. However, to truly “SEE” Sustainability, we still have a long way to go.

Social sustainability includes democratic processes to ensure that all people are represented equally by the government and treated equally under the law. It means that our communities are educated in ways that allow them to succeed as individuals and empowered to share their knowledge with their community to uplift future generations. Economic sustainability includes all the measures that allow our country to profit from the natural and human resources we have. It means ensuring that we get premium value for the sale and use of those resources today without reducing the value of those resources to future generations. It means that decision making processes involve all the people and groups that will be affected and ensure that an economic decision that benefits one group does not disenfranchise another.

Environmental sustainability means that we make the decisions in all areas that ensure that we continue to have breathable air, swimmable, fishable oceans, drinkable groundwater and healthy land suitable for life and farming. The built and natural environments must exist in harmony. All three arenas of Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability must be given equal weight for our Bahamian communities to survive the next fifty years and to thrive beyond that.

As we look beyond these first fifty-one years of Independence, let us acknowledge the sustainable successes of the past. The College of the Bahamas (COB) has evolved to University of the Bahamas (UB) to support and lead the social development of our country in more potent ways. COB was often seen as a fallback school for those without the resources or grades to pay for foreign university, or a practice school for students to learn how to be a college student. Now, UB can take a student to the culmination of their academic ambitions with full Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Research-based Master’s and Doctorate degrees in science are in the pipeline. Bahamian writers and researchers like the late Dr. Gail Saunders, Dr. Michael Pateman and Dr. Chris Curry show the value of higher education by not only having taught Bahamians about ourselves, but literally rewriting history. There is nothing quite as powerful as the democratization of knowledge and people that understand themselves. Recent publications like “Towards a Democratic Franchise” by Dr. Stephen Aranha and “Black Rinse” by Christopher Davis enlighten Bahamians on our recent and distant past in ways that are more relevant and honest than previous texts - some of which are still used in our school system.

Our economic sustainability has taken several major hits from hurricanes and

global economic impacts of war and pandemic diseases that disrupt supply chains and tourism. Vulnerability to external factors continues to play a significant role in our tourism-based economy. COVID-19 may be fresh in our minds, but MERS, SARS, Dengue, and Chikungunya viruses all had cooling effects on travel into the Bahamas.

Though our United Nations Human Development index is above average for Latin America and the Caribbean, that agency states in their 2019 report that our economy is vulnerable to environmental and health impacts. Part of that vulnerability comes from our geography, which we cannot change. However, we can change the way we treat our Family Islands to make ourselves more sustainable. Stepping away from New Providence-centric development, smaller, sustainable tourism and commercial operations throughout the islands create microeconomies that generate resilience and autonomy. Collaborations like the One Eleuthera Foundation exemplify local initiatives that support a broader framework where social support systems bolster the economy while protecting the environment. New initiatives for small business development throughout the islands, the adoption of decentralized government and digital currency platforms are connecting our economy like never before.

Environmental conservation and sustainability in the Bahamas are also seeing a renaissance of sorts. Dozens of national park and marine protected area designations over the past twenty years have set the stage for conservation and sustainability professionals to come home. Environmental scientists like Dr. Krista Sherman (Perry Institute for Marine Science), Dr. Nicholas Higgs (The Island School), and Dr. Lester Gittens (Department of Marine Resources) are leading our country in research and protection of fisheries resources like Nassau Grouper, Queen Conch, and Spiny Lobster. Marine Scientists like Natalie Maillis, and Felicity Burrows (The Nature Conservancy) have collaborated with local people to create economically viable, sustainable fisheries in the Bahamas. Organizations like The Bahamas National Trust, The Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation, The Cat Island Conservation Institute and Friends of the Environment have inspired local Bahamian youth and entire communities to conserve and protect our terrestrial and marine environments through education, engagement, and science. Bahamians know more about our natural resources now than ever before and it is in part due to the work of these groups.

We have made great strides in Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability. But sustainability is not a destination, it is a way of travel.

It is this author's opinion that for our Bahamas to survive the next fifty-one years, we need to SEE sustainability in all areas. Social sustainability must focus on education. While we celebrate the Bahamians that have helped us see new perspectives on our history and the current state of our natural resources, we need to train our minds to be critical of all information. Ask who is telling us what to value and how much we and our country are worth. Every Bahamian should be able to independently balance the risk of oil exploration against the value of our tourism, fisheries, and land crab economies.

Those economies should no longer exist in siloes, but weave together like our families. Each island should have the ability to stand on its own, with an economy and culture that shines brightly on the world stage, while knowing they can rely on their neighboring islands. A Sister-Island emergency response system for disaster recovery would outfit every island with the resources needed for a large-scale chemical spill or climate powered hurricane that impacts them directly. When they survive unscathed, they can support their neighbors; Eleuthera helps Abaco; Abaco supports Grand Bahama and Eleuthera. We are living in a climate emergency and the storms will not stop but we can be prepared to survive and recover faster. We live in an archipelago and may not be able to change our geography, but we can change our view to see how we are connected by water, not separated by it. As we look forward, I hope we can better SEE sustainability.



Keep it Moving, Bahamas!

By Donovan “Jay” Rolle

The importance of movement for a healthy lifestyle has been well-documented for centuries. Bahamians are people of motion and not solely to the sounds to the goat skin drum and the horns of sweet Junkanoo music or the saw from our favorite rake & scrape band. Movement is enriched into our culture, from our days of sponging, farming and fishing. Do you remember the days of walking to school, toting water, flying kites, playing marbles? I remember a time not too long ago when we played hopscotch and bat & ball in the streets: where the ball

was a tennis ball, the bat was an old mop or broom stick and the bases, well at least 1st & 3rd base were the BEC lamp poles. Can you recall when we climbed trees to pick our fruits, or at the very least threw rocks at those too tall to reach? Now the only time we are outside is from walking to and from the car or bus as we enter and exit our homes and place of employment. Our kids play video games and scroll through social media endlessly and our fruits are purchased from a store or our nearest vendor, if we consume them at all.

It comes as no surprise that due to our sedentary lifestyle that many of Bahamians are in less than ideal health. According to the 2021 Pan American Public Health Agency (PAHO) report, The Bahamas ranks in the top 20 in the Caribbean in for cases of diabetes and ranks in the top 5 for obesity in the Caribbean, according to Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). Research has shown that physical activity can help reduce the risk of numerous health conditions including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and even certain cancers. It also helps people stay fit and maintain a healthy weight, while decreasing stress levels and improving sleep quality. “Bring back the good ole days,” where movement was the Bahamian way of life.

Has our financial progress caused our health regression? Have we successfully marched towards our “common loftier goal” while simultaneously falling out of alignment with our once healthy lifestyle? Have we become too busy driving to and from one destination to the next that we are not driven enough to move our own bodies for the benefit or our health?

I understand that life demands of the past 51 years have changed and that with these increased demands and responsibilities that there still only remains 24 hours in a day and 7 days a week and our jobs, family and rigors of life leave very little time for one to rest, be entertained not to mention exercise. Most of us are aware of the saying that you cannot pour from an empty cup, therefore I am of the belief that it is our duty to be the best versions of ourselves so that we can be the best mate, coworker, parent and Bahamian that we can be. The best version of yourself is the healthiest version of yourself. Many studies have concluded that to attain and maintain and baseline level of wellness, one needs to exercise 30 – 45 minutes, three to four times a week.

We are Bahamians! Playing it small and doing the minimum is not in our DNA. Re-

searchers at Harvard and several other international universities determined that 5 to 10 hours of moderate physical activity per week provided more health benefits and lowered the all-cause mortality rate by 26% - 31%. Pick the time of day and the days that based on your schedule that will allow you to keep the commitment to yourself. One hour is only 4% of your day. Why are we showing greater commitment to people and things that do not serve us and neglecting to love, commit and value ourselves. I think you are worth 4% of your day – don’t you? Moving your body regularly can help improve your mental clarity and mood by releasing endorphins as well as providing relief from everyday stresses. It can also improve strength and endurance, while increasing energy levels throughout the day. Furthermore, actively engaging in physical activities can help build stronger bones and muscles, as well as improving coordination and balance.

While studies have shown that one is more likely to succeed at their wellness goals when they have an accountability partner, it is imperative to remember that your wellness path may differ from theirs. In the old Bahamian vernacular “don’t watch nuttin”, focus on your path. It’s not just about reaching a destination – it’s about the journey. Working together, and staying true to our Bahamian spirit, we can reach heights like never before. Our country can reach new levels of progress and prosperity simply by getting out there and moving. So whether it is running on the beach or playing your favorite sports game with friends, make sure to get up and move! That’s what Independence -- 51 years and beyond - is all about. Let’s take the action now, fly that kite, till the soil in your backyard, climb a tree, put on the sweet sounds of Junkanoo and Rake & Scrape music when cleaning the house and dance! A healthier nation provides a brighter future for all of us, and we are “One People, United in Love and Service”. Let’s move Bahamas!



The Worship Experience

51st INDEPENDENCE ECUMENICAL SERVICE

9th July, 2024

Moderator	Pastor Mario Moxey 1st Vice President The Bahamas Christian Council
Opening Selection	Bishop Denczil Rolle & Friends
Passing of the Baton Introduction	Pastor Mario Moxey
Video	Rev. Dr. Philip Rahming
Pledge Of Allegiance	Rev. Dr. Philip Ramming
Congregational Song	God Bless Our Sunny Clime
Call To Worship	Bishop Dr. Franklin Ferguson National Overseer Church of God Of Prophecy in The Bahamas
Invocation	Bishop Theophilus Rolle President The Bahamas Turks Islands Conference of The Methodist Church in The Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA)
Scripture - Psalm 133	Bishop Moses Johnson Administrative Bishop Church Of God Bahamas Read By: Reverend Tyrone Perpall
Video 1	Apostle Ed Watson & Pastor Necole Watson
Prayer	The Church and its Leaders The Right Reverend Laish Boyd The Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of The Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands Government, Judiciary and Law Enforcement Bishop Anthony Farrington Diocesan Bishop of The Bahamas & Turks & Caicos Islands, Pentecostal Assemblies of The World



Musical Selection	Davian Chase
Video 2	Reverend Angela Palacios & Pastor Designate Tanya Duncombe
Prayer	Marriages, Youth & Children The Most Reverend Patrick Christopher Pinder Archbishop of The Archdiocese of Nassau, Bahamas Read By: Fr. Devereaux King
Prayer	Economy, Tourism & Education Pastor Kenny Deveaux President South Bahamas Conference of Seventh Day Adventists
Musical Selection	Church of God of Prophecy Children's Choir
Video 3	Pastor Gary Curry & Mr. Shelton Curtis
Presentation of The Speaker	Rev. Dr. Vaughn L. Cash General Superintendent Assemblies of God In The Bahamas Including The Turks and Caicos Islands
Sermonic Selection	Bishop Denczil Rolle & Friends
The Sermon	Bishop Delton Fernander President, Bahamas Christian Council President, The Bahamas National Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention
Benediction	Reverend James Neilly President Bahamas Conference of The Methodist Church (BCMC)
Closing Musical Selection	Ecumenical Choir



CULTURAL PRESENTATION

MC Introduction

51 Wishes Video

Time Capsule Presentation

Performance

Opening Scene

Performance

Scene 1

Performance

Performance

Performance

Scene 2

Junkanoo Rush/Crowd Participation

Scene 3

Performance

MC SEGMENT

Performance

Scene 4

Performance

Scene 5

Performance

Performance

Scene 6

Performance

Scene 7

Performance

Scene 8

Closing Song

Timico 'Sawyer Boy' Sawyer

Video Presentation

Presented By RBPF Rangers & RBDF Cadets

R.M. Bailey High School Elevation Pop Band

Video

Nishie L. S./Akeela Darville

Kentario McKenzie, Juan Pratt, Rodericka Collie

National Children's Choir

Danielle Lee

Shine 242

Giavanna Knowles, Hartman Brown, Dominick Stubbs

W2 Dancers/Rising Stars Junkanoo Troupe

Giavanna Knowles, Hartman Brown, Dominick Stubbs,
Juan Pratt

Junkanoo In Paradise Cast

Timico 'Sawyer Boy' Sawyer

K.B.

Candi Rigby, Vallyah Rolle

Elkin 360

Kentario McKenzie, Candi Rigby, Vallyah Rolle,

Jaquay 'Das Quay' Adderley

Ilsha

D-Mac

Kentario McKenzie, Juan Pratt, Nicole Musgrove,

Rashad 'Shad Fer' Ferguson

Judah Tha Lion

Nicole Musgrove, Rashad 'Shad Fer' Ferguson,
Brentwood Burrows

Karrington McKenzie/Ashley Knowles &

The Independence Ensemble

Rodericka Collie, Kentario McKenzie, Juan Pratt,

Ilsha McPhee with Full Cast

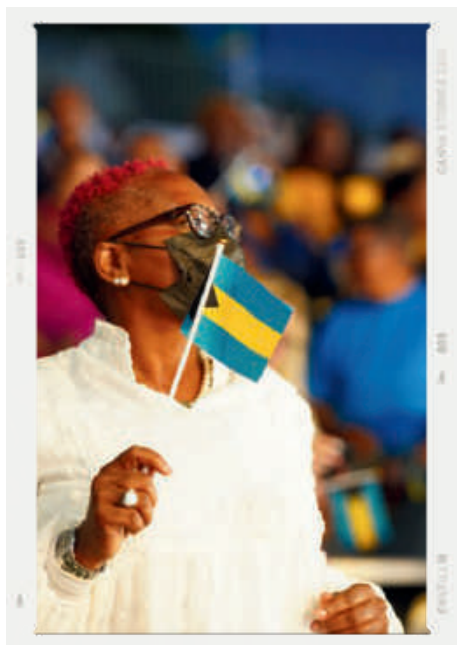
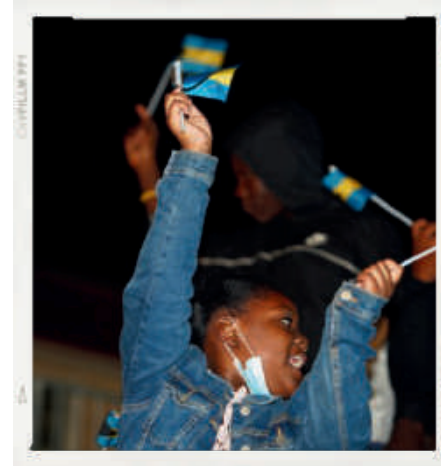
Police March Past

Prayer & Flag Raising

Military Branch

Bahamas Christian Council/Military

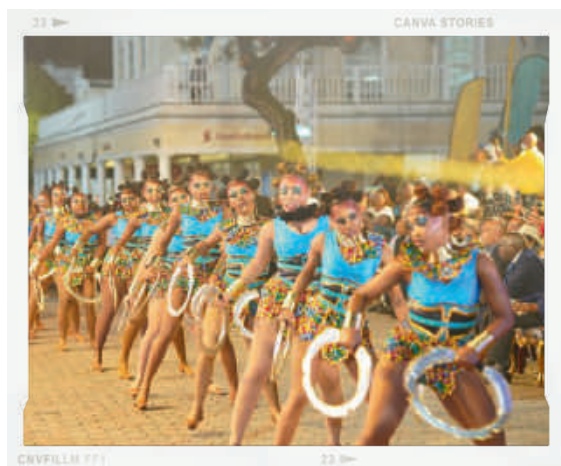
ROAD TO 50 CALLED NAR OF EVENTS

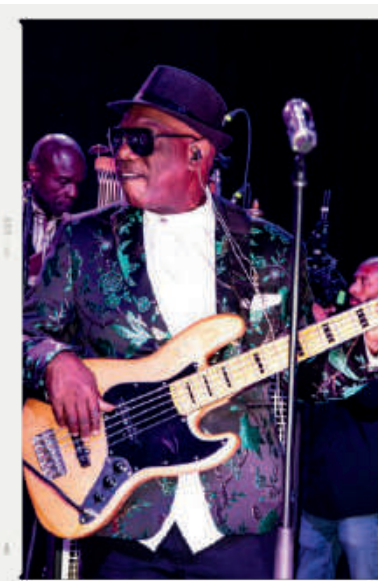




UNVEILING OF 50TH LOGO

The Grand Unveiling was the first in a lengthy series of events that were held during the Golden Jubilee celebrations. The official 50th Independence anniversary logo was revealed. The artwork, which highlighted a golden number 50 with a celebrating Bahamian and three Junkanoo flamingos rising forward, upward and onward, was well received. Bahamians throughout the country were free to utilise this logo to sell their independence memorabilia. The motto displayed under the logo was designed to set the national tone for 50 years and beyond: One Nation. Our Legacy. Our Future.

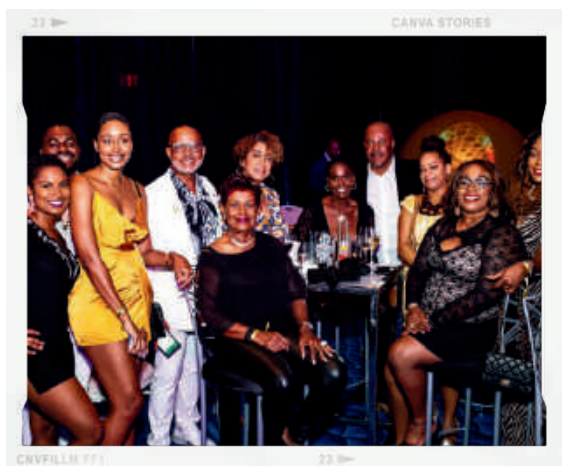






50TH GOLDEN SOIREE

A step back in time to 1973 - the year of Bahamian Independence - would not be complete without a look back at the party scene. **Party Like It's 1973: Golden Oldies Soiree** brought nostalgia for those who were alive during the first Independence day, and gave a glimpse into a glorious past for the younger ones who enjoyed the concert. T-Connection, one of the greatest bands in the world in the 1970s, headlined the soiree.







THE GOLDEN JUBILEE TEA PARTY

Elegance and good old-fashioned Bahamian tea combined to create the **Golden Jubilee Tea Party**. This event reminded people everywhere why Bahamians are so well known for fashion. Tea party dresses, gloves, hats and tuxedos were the order of the day as attendees laughed together and held meaningful conversations about their country over tea.

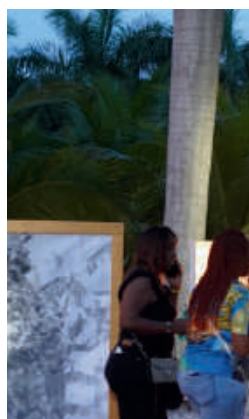


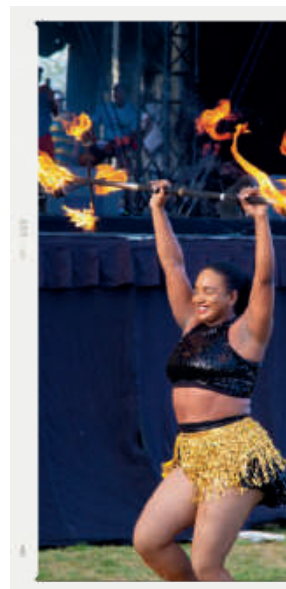
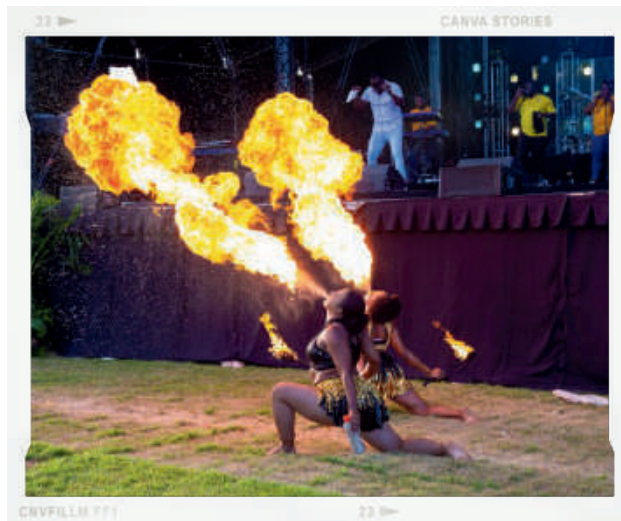
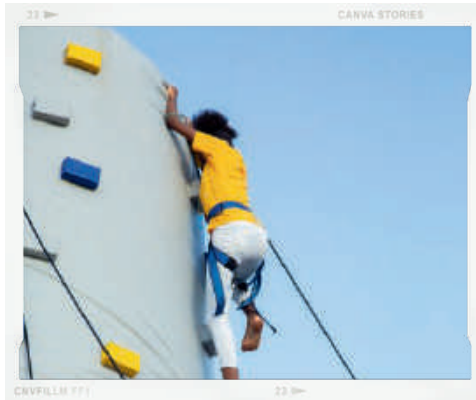
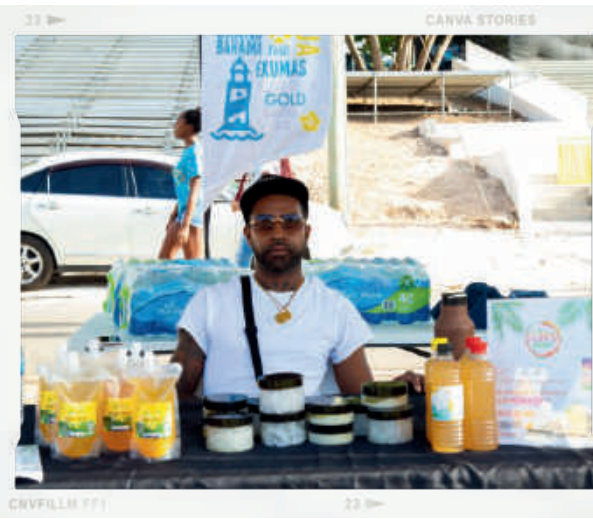




RUSH, SIP & PASTE

Junkanoo enthusiasts made unforgettable memories at the **Rush, Sip & Paste** event held at historic Collins House. With cow and goat skin drums vibrating, cowbells ringing, whistles tooting, and horns bellowing the sweet sounds of Junkanoo, attendees danced and enjoyed festivities through the night. Independence cultural merchandise, crafts, and memorabilia were on sale, thanks to some amazing local vendors.







INDEPENDENCE FAMILY FUN DAY

On Independence Day, July 10, 2023, thousands of Bahamians gathered at Clifford Park to enjoy the inaugural **Family Fun Day**. This event brought new meaning to our country's Independence anniversary. After the main celebrations the night before, including the Ecumenical Service, Military Tattoo and cultural display, families had reason to come back to the historic park and engage in meaningful activities that were free of charge. Prizes and surprises were given out throughout the day, families enjoyed a fun-filled Bahamian concert, and they patronized Bahamian vendors selling food, treats and memorabilia.







Dame Doris Johnson National Women's Unity March & Concert

Women from all walks of life joined together to march in solidarity at the **Dame Doris Johnson National Women's Unity March & Concert**. The event, held on March 26, 2023, was held in honor of International Women's Month and International Women's Day (March 8). Symbolically, women walked to honor the trailblazing women who played significant roles in the road to Independence, such as the Women's Suffrage Movement; they marched for the women of today, and they marched for the women yet to be born who will take up the mantle of the new Bahamas.





MASTER CLASS SERIES: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The role of the church has always been the backbone of society. We are a praying people, and our national decisions have been made through prayer and followed through with praise. **The 1973 Masterclass series** took an intricate look at **The Role of the Church** - a significant role in Independence and nation building.







MASTER CLASS SERIES: LEGACY OF SIR LYNDEN PINDLING

The 1973 Masterclass series taught us about the value of Independence. The Road to 50 was paved with the blood, sweat and tears of our nation builders, who fought for The Bahamas we have today. We learned about the Legacy of the Father of the Nation, Sir Lynden Pindling. We focused on a “United People: The Role of the Labour Movement” in tribute to Sir Randol Fawkes. We also took a candid look at: “What is Bahamian Music?” to teach us of the past and inspire us to new heights in Bahamian music culture.







THE 50TH ON BAY STREET FESTIVAL



The 50th on Bay Street Festival was an unforgettable experience on the Road to 50. A magnificent variety of Bahamian made products were available to the thousands of patrons who passed through in the day or during the night's festivities. Music, culture, art, and food - all on display for Bahamians to remember, and the world to know why it's "better in The Bahamas".







ROAD TO 50 RACE

The Road to 50 Race was not just for the marathon runners - although it gave them a chance to shine. It was for everyone. Bahamians turned out in droves to walk together, jog together, push, roll, whatever they had to do, to work out together. With statistics providing the stark reality of our nation's health, the Road to 50 Race kicked off what would become a series of health and wellness events designed to motivate Bahamians to prioritize exercise and take care of their health.





NATIONAL FLAG DAY

One Bahamian flag was hoisted on every main island in the Bahamian archipelago during the Road to 50. That single flag served as a meaningful symbol of our unity as a family of islands. It was raised from island to island with an official ceremony, honoring National Flag Day. The Bahamas has one of the most beautiful and outstanding flags in the world. It is up to us to celebrate it.







blow to UBP hopes ---
o Victory call by I



NATIONAL JUBILEE DAY

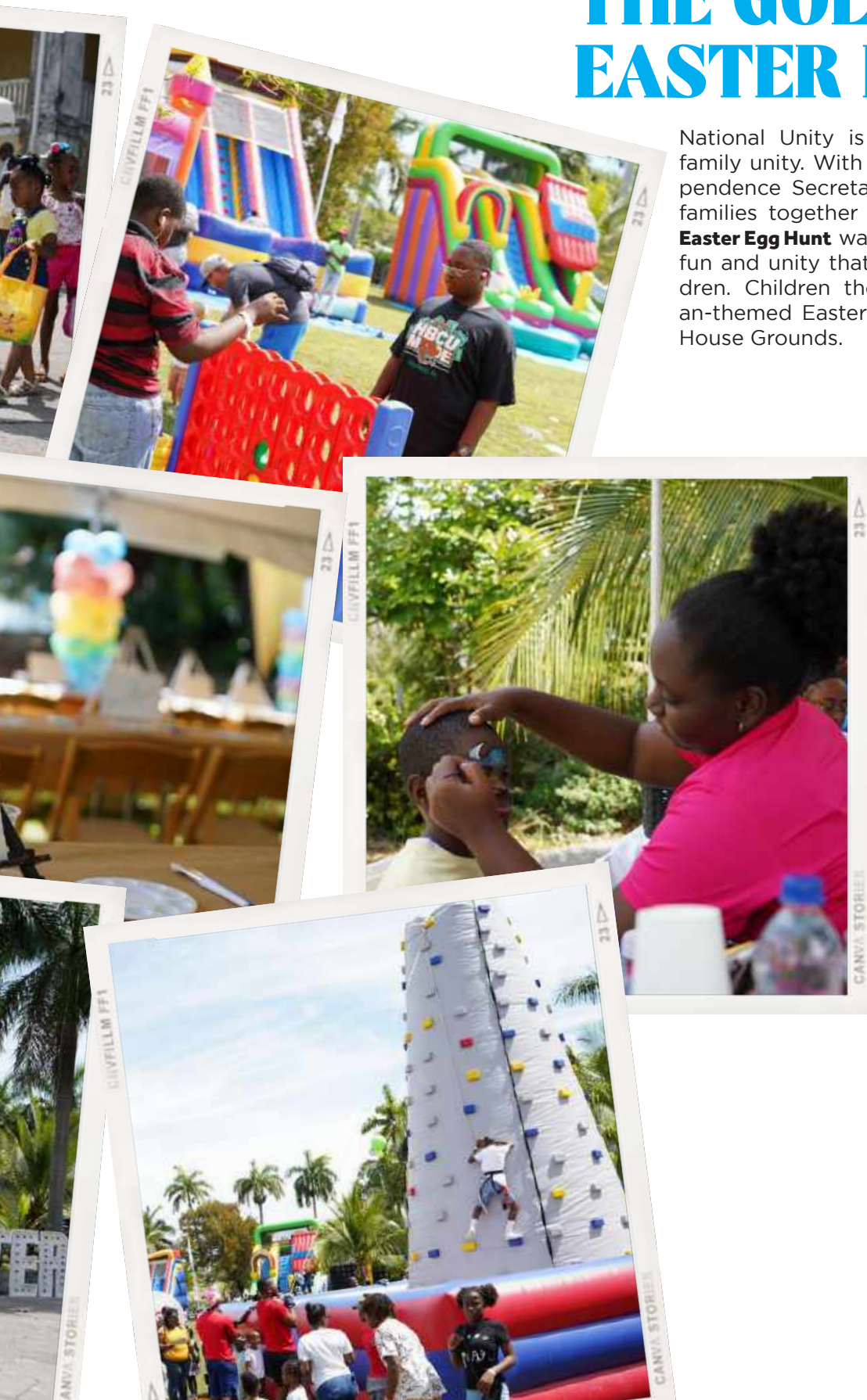
National Jubilee Day: The Road to Independence Production provided a time to commemorate the Golden Jubilee. Only once in our nation's history will the country celebrate its 50th Independence. National Jubilee day gave Bahamians a time to commemorate the occasion. The top-class production highlighted some of the best in Bahamian music and drama, and reminded the hundreds of people in attendance of the significance of this once-in-a-lifetime event.





THE GOLDEN EASTER EGG HUNT

National Unity is built upon the foundation of family unity. With that in mind, the National Independence Secretariat held many events to bring families together in meaningful ways. **The Golden Easter Egg Hunt** was a spectacular display of family fun and unity that focused on the delight of children. Children thoroughly enjoyed this Bahami-an-themed Easter egg hunt held on Government House Grounds.







THE BEAT RETREAT

The Annual Pre-Independence Beat Retreat was one of the most exciting events on the Golden Jubilee calendar. Under the theme "Marching To Our Own Beat", officers of the Royal Bahamas Police and The Royal Bahamas Defence Forces wowed a packed audience with their military and musical skills as they performed on Bay Street.







BAHAMA ROCK

Bahamian music in my soul... **The Bahama Rock Concert** was a night of epic proportions. A concert to remember, this display of many of the best in Bahamian talent will go down in history, with Grammy award-winning Baha Men headlining the list. Bahamian artists showed their excellence from Neo Soul to down-home Rake N Scrape to Junkanoo and genres in between.







EVENING OF CULTURE AND COUTURE

Under the patronage of Dame Marguerite Pindling, an Evening of Culture and Couture was a history-making event in Bahamian fashion - one that is still buzzing in the halls of fashion today. Elegant displays of fashion and art were highlighted at the Atlantis Paradise Island Resort. Some of the biggest names in fashion, as well as up-and-coming designers, showcased impeccable, wearable, Bahamian-inspired apparel.





THE ECUMENICAL SERVICE & CULTURAL SHOW

IN CELEBRATION OF OUR
51ST ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE
OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS
UNDER THE THEME:
'ONE PEOPLE UNITED IN LOVE AND SERVICE'

• • • • •

CLIFFORD PARK, WEST BAY STREET
NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

• • • • •



THE 51ST INDEPENDENCE
ECUMENICAL SERVICE &
CULTURAL SHOW 2024
PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

PRODUCTION TEAM

FRED FERGUSON | PRODUCER
RONALD SIMMS | STAGE MANAGER
ADMIRAL FERGUSON JR. | STAGE MANAGER ASST.
VERNAL GLEN CLARKE | PRODUCTION ASST.
JONICO PRATT | SCRIPT WRITER/DIRECTOR
RICARDO CHRISTIE | CHOREOGRAPHER

HOUSE BAND (SHAAD COLLIE & THE VIPS)

RISHAAD 'SHAAD' COLLIE
JOEY YOUNG
LEON CLARKE
JOHNATHAN 'JOHN RUSTY' DEVEAUX
BRIAN SAUNDERS
JEFFERSON WILLIAMSON
ANDREW 'TINO' RICHARDSON
DANIELLE DORSETT
ILSHA MCPHEE
DON SEYMOUR
CHARISSA SMITH
DARIEN 'D FRANZ' FRANCIS

ACTORS

JUAN PRATT
RODERICKA COLLIE
KENTARIO MCKENZIE
CANDI RIGBY
VALLYAH ROLLE
NICOLE MUSGROVE
RASHAD 'SHAD FER' FERGUSON
HARTMAN BROWN
DOMINICK STUBBS
BRENTWOOD BURROWS
JAQUAY 'DAS QUAY' ADDERLEY
GIAVANNA KNOWLES

DANCERS

AALIYAH MINNIS
ALBERNEIK PETERS
ANHELI FRANK
ASIA COLEBROOKE
BRITTNEY LOCKHART
BRYANNAH INGRAHAM
CARYN ADDERLEY
CHANTE THOMPSON
CHAARI JOHNSON
CLANEECE WILLIAMS
DANYELL CULMER
DARRONIQUE BROWN
DE'ARA ROLLE

DANCER'S CONT'D

DELEASHA ROLLE
DINAE BROWN
ISRAEL NOTTAGE
JAIDYN RUSSELL
JHORDYN RUSSELL
KAITLYN SANDS
KASHVI SHARMA
KENIYA DAMES
KI'YAH MAJOR
LASHAE LIGHTBOURNE
LEAH GITTENS
LYRIQ MCFALL
NAVARAH DOUGLAS-SANDS
NAILAH COOPER
NIKESHA MCPHEE
NORTH FARQUHARSON
PARIS HEPBURN
QUIANA BAIN
RAY-ANNE KNIGHT
SAMIYAH WALFORD
SARAH JOHNSON-HANNA
SARAI DUNCOMBE
SOLO HINSEY
SYDNEY DAVIES
TANEA LOCKHART
TANEALL MAJOR
TARUA TAYLOR
TATYANA THOMPSON
TORRANCE CAREY
WARNIKA BROWN
CHELSEA JOHNSON
TREVONA THOMPSON
SHEREIKA FERGUSON
JAZMYNE BUTLER
MYRKEEVA JOHNSON
NICOLE GATES
ELLIYAH MILLER
MACKENZIE PEET
DENZEL WALLACE
TAHJ DORSETT
BIMINI RECKLEY
RENAE SEYMOUR
RACHEL OUTTEN

PERFORMERS

R.M. BAILEY HIGH SCHOOL ELEVATION POP BAND

DESTINY TUTULIEN
GLENNIQUE MILLS
CHAUNCEY WRIGHT
JOSHUA THERVIL
JOSHUA THOMPSON
DINO WILLIAMS
OZZIE SMITH
GEORGE NELSON
LASHANTAE MILLER
SANTHIA CIRENUS
THEADOSIA SMITH
ACTORS
JUAN PRATT
RODERICKA COLLIE
KENTARIO MCKENZIE
CANDI RIGBY
VALLYAH ROLLE
NICOLE MUSGROVE
RASHAD 'SHAD FER' FERGUSON
HARTMAN BROWN
DOMINICK STUBBS
BRENTWOOD BURROWS
JAQUAY 'DAS QUAY' ADDERLEY
GIAVANNA KNOWLES

SINGERS

ANISHKA 'NISHE L. S.' LEWIS
AKEELA DARVILLE
DANIELLE
LAVADO 'SHINE 242' SANDS
THE CAST OF JUNKANOO IN PARADISE
KIRKLAND 'KB' BODIE
ELKIN 360
ILHA MCPHEE
JUDAH THA LION
KARRINGTON MCKENZIE

ASHLEY KNOWLES & THE INDEPENDENCE ENSEMBLE
ASHLEY KNOWLES - DIRECTOR
ALICIA FERGUSON
ALLISON GARCIA
ARTHURNIQUE JONES
DENIRO THOMPSON
FELISHA THOMPSON
JAMAL MILLER
JERMAIN DAMES
JOEL SWEETING
JOPAUL SCAVELLA
KACEY DUNCOMBE
KAREEM ROLLE
KENYETTA BAIN
LEONEISHA JOHNSON
NOEMI HIGGS

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHOIR

ADANNE MCPHEE
AIYANNA HERNANDEZ
AKAI PIERRE
ALDRIN KING
ALYANNA ROLLE
ALYSSA RICHARDS
AMARI PINDER
ANTONIO HERNANDEZ
ASARI MACKEY
ASIA MCPHEE
BENJAMIN CLEARE
BREANNA SAUNDERS
CAMERON FERGOSON
CIERA KNOWLES
DE'LYN RAHMING
DERAND ROLLE
DONOVAN JONES
GABRIELLE GRANT
GABRIELLE RHODRIQUEZ
GIOVANN MILLER
HARMONY WILLIAMSON
ISIAH PASCAL

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHOIR

JADA MCKINNEY
JAIMIE MACKEY
JONATHON COX
K'RON SMITH
KAMDEN SMITH
KAYLAH RUSSELL
KIRSTEN ROLLE
KRISTON ROLLE
KYHIELLE WALLACE
LAYEL GARRAWAY
LEIGHA CHARLTON
LEONARD DELANCY
LYNETTE DELANCY
MADISON FERGUSON
MARLEE POITIER
MAYGEN-GRACE STRACHAN
MEGHAN GRANT
MELIA BRIDGEWATER
NALA NEELY
NYLAH SYMONETTE
REIGN TAYLOR
RENAE SEYMOUR
SELINA STRACHAN
SHIANN MCKENZIE
TEMPERANCE THURSTON
TRACY JOHNSON
TYSHA JOHNSON
ZAKARRI ANDERSON

INDEPENDENCE PARADE **PLATOONS**

PARADE COMMANDERS Ch/Supt. D. Hanna-ISD Supt. D. McCartney-ISD	
COLOR PARTY	
ESCORT	
PC 4637 Cartwright-TPD (Police Escort)	(RBDF)
FLAG BEARERS	
Cpl. 3604 Major-PID (National Flag)	Cpl. 3950 Knowles-ISD (Police Flag)
PO Jovann Sands (RBDF Flag)	Cpl. Crispin Gibson (Corrections)
TIO Joshua Rolle (Immigration)	(Customs)
DRESSING OFFICER	
Insp. T. Stubbs-CIB	
HOISTING OF THE NATIONAL FLAG	
(RBPF)	(RBDF)
(RBPF)	(RBDF)

PLATOON ONE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES MALE PCO Zhavonne Mackey and PCO John Cartwright	
Sgt. Daniel Cadet	Sgt. Ian Bethel
Cpl. Akeem Ferguson	Cpl. Rubin Campbell
Cpl. Travis Ferguson	Cpl. Matthew Nottage
C/O Desmond Jones	C/O Standley Louis
C/O Earl Lafleur	C/O Thomas Smith
C/O Valentino Cooper	C/O Tevin Johnson
C/O Ethan Anderson	C/O Jayson Saunders
C/O Terrance Bullard	C/O Bruno Rolle
C/O Rasean Minns	C/O Christiano Knowles
C/O Andrew Mackey	C/O Jaquon Burrows
C/O Standley Louis	C/O Marvin Smith
C/O Allan William	C/O Floyd Sands

PLATOON TWO
BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES FEMALE

PLATOON THREE
THE ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE FIRE SERVICES
Insp. T. Morley-FS

Sgt. 2785 Cedenro Hepburn-FS	Cpl. 1782 Nigel Miller-FS
Cpl. 2784 Claudius Henry-FS	PC 4447 Junior Knowles-FS
PC 4566 Nigel LaFleur-FS	PC 4556 Preston Cartwright-FS
PC 4567 Darren Mackey-FS	PC 4557 Kayton Cephas-FS
PC 4568 Mario Marcus-FS	PC 4559 Deonte Clarke-FS
PC 4569 Ephraim Miller-FS	PC 4560 Kadeem Clarke-FS
PC 4570 L'tahjipo Moxey-FS	PC 4562 Samuel Deleveaux-FS
PC 4571 Colin Oliver-FS	PC 4563 Nathaniel Farrington-FS
PC 4572 Cedner Ornelus-FS	PC 4565 Theron Johnson-FS
PC 4573 Craig Whyllly-FS	

PLATOON FOUR
ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE VOLUNTARY POLICE RESERVES
Insp. Kirkwood Ferguson & Insp. Garnell Newbold

VR/Sgt. 585 Lorraine Hinsey-CF	VR/Sgt. 755 Latisha Williamson-RO
VR/Sgt. 844 Sancia Seymour-SP	VR/Sgt. 615 Mavis Pratt-RO
VR/Sgt. 90 Barron Musgrove-RO	VR/Sgt. 946 Marco Gomez-RO
VR/Cpl. 793 Randy Adderley-MD	VR/Cpl. 733 Jaketo McPhee-NWD
VR/Cpl. 797 Ingrid Adderley-CF	VR/Cpl. 12 Julian Archer-RO
VR/Cpl. 19 Marco Thompson-RO	VRC 945 Leon Eugene-RO
VRC 3065 Krysten Rolle-RO	VRC 259 Anthony Gardiner-RO
VRC 3038 Willissa Saunders-RO	VRC 3090 Marcian Saunders-RO
VRC 3122 Stephen Sands-RO	VRC 3066 Lianel Rolle-RO
VRC 3017 Timonhy Clarke-RO	VRC 3058 Omarra Lightbourne-RO
VRC 3022 Sharon Eyma-RO	VRC 3061 Leon Morris-RO
VRC 3070 Lakeisha Davis-RO	VRC 3085 Marsha McFall-RO
VRC 3018 Dwayne Dean-RO	VRC 3014 Shayne Bethel-RO
VRC 3028 Torrie Knowles-RO	VRC 3093 Ryan Strachan-RO
VRC 3109 Reubendero Gibson-RO	

PLATOON FIVE
ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE MALE RIFLE
Insp. T. Stubbs-CIB and Insp. T. Taylor-PS

Sgt. 3720 Briceston Anderson-PTC	Sgt. 3531 Gonzalo Braccacio-SIB
Cpl. 4017 Edrico Demeritte-CID	Cpl. 4073 Cameron Ramsey-CID
PC 4107 Shavano Arthur-FS	PC 4490 Carlos Brown-SP
PC 4725 Marvin Fleurenvil-MD	PC 4439 Gladstone Bodie-NED
PC 4052 Kevin Kelly-CID	PC 4617 Danacio Cash-PID
PC 4463 David Wade-SD	PC 4729 Allen Jean-Spring Break
PC 4496 Gervard Green-UR	PC 4648 Craig Rolle-TPD
PC 4433 Chislon Moss-NED	PC 4599 Salathiel Butler-SP
PC 4670 Christopher Scott-SD	PC 4694 Javon Neymour-SD
PC 4671 Tre Stuart-ED	PC 4613 Jude Taylor-NED
PC 4649 Krishian Russell-AGFITF	PC 4687 Benjamin Johnson-CID
PC 4425 Ethan Farrington-MSSU	PC 4735 Trevor Outten-SWD
PC 4448 Jahiem Leadon-SWD	PC 4777 Adam Sturup-SED
PC 4479 Mario Murphy- SCD	PC 4659 Joshua Clarke-ED

PLATOON SIX
ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE FEMALE RIFLE
Insp. R. Curry-CID* and Insp. K. Major-UR*

Sgt. 3989 Elyse Pinder-DEU*	Cpl. 3991 Danielle Moultrie-Pros.*
Cpl. 4087 Kadeshia Griffin-CID*	PC 4635 Roniqua Albury-TPD*
PC 4125 Rendya Kemp-FS*	PC 4180 Ja'Liece Darling-FSS*
PC 4181 Vanessa Davis-CF*	PC 4221 Ariel Johnson-SD*
PC 4588 Jayde Rahming-RP*	PC 4480 Christianna Nairn-TPD*
PC 4506 Angel Patton-TPD*	PC 4398 Calvernair Kemp-NWD*
PC 4679 Resade Burrows RP*	PC 4619 Lavencia Fanfan-ED*
PC 4538 Zoe Deveaux-ED*	PC 4605 Stephanie Joseph-SCD*
PC 4642 J'annle Ingraham-SP*	PC 4663 Daneka Marshall-DEU*
PC 4676 Janae Allen-SED*	PC 4472 Kacey Johnson-SCD*
PC 4738 Jamara Rolle-MD*	PC 4743 Destinee Wood-SED*
PC 4754 Tiffany Fernander-CID*	

PLATOON SEVEN ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE MALE RIFLE Commander: CPO Raynard Dawkins Parade Marshals: CPO Ian Hall and PO Rodney Davis Rifles: L/S John Gaitor and L/S Patrick Wilson	
PO Demetrius Clarke	L/S Timeco Barry
A/B Stephen Maycock	A/B Marvin Minnis
A/B Dhylliri Fowler	A/B Cochise Thompson
A/B Jonathon Telisnord	A/B Albert Simms
A/B Rhandon Scott	A/B Dion Bowles
A/B Clinton Johnson	M/S Adrian Rolle
M/S Carl Knowles	M/S Sari Bullard
M/S Judah Brown	M/S Trevon Brown
M/S Tawanto Saunders	M/S Tyler Ranger
M/S Kallie Taylor	M/S Sean Taylor
M/S Cameron Shephard	M/S Ethan Clarke
M/S Leonardo Swain	M/S Huderly Hanna
M/S Cameron Russell	M/S Neville Johnson
M/S D'Angelo Rolle	M/S Stephen Seymour
M/S Kendal Joseph	M/S Sharron Thomas
M/S Daquan Gray	M/S Eryn Ingraham
M/S Abrian Rahming	M/S Justin Symonette

PLATOON EIGHT
THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE FEMALE RIFLE
Commander: Sub Lt. Opal Faquharson
Parade Marshalls: CPO Malisha Richardson and L/S Deangelo Green

P/O Latoya Jacques	P/O Nydia Farrington
L/W Yasmine Symonette	A/W/M Erika Longley
A/W/M Karissa Farquharson	A/W/M Jada Lewis
A/W/M Kristin Dames	A/W/M Lavender Marche
A/W/M Tarvia Rolle	W/M Ashlee Johnson
W/M Rachael Evans	W/M Miar Rolle
W/M Kianna Adderley	W/M Aaliyha Newbold
W/M McKeisha Nabbie	W/M Shaquiana Brown
W/M Malani Burrows	W/M Shanique Gibbs
W/M Trevonya Knowles	W/M Gardel Parker
W/M Shadiamon Demeritte	W/M Phanarje Culmer
W/M Brenae Neely	W/M Kaitlyn Lambert
W/M Naja Brown	W/M Jireh Sturup
W/M Carlene Johnson	W/M Charlisia Carey
W/M Tamika Adderley	W/M Krizzaire Marshall
W/M Alissa Miller	W/M Juliette Nottage
W/M Raven Hepburn	W/M Charmae Davis
W/M Garenisha Adderley	W/M Shirley Joseph
W/M Kimiah Rox	W/M Victoria Hoyte
W/M Savanna Pelitier	W/M Antonia Butler

PLATOON NINE
THE BAHAMAS CUSTOMS COMBINE
Commanders: Supt. George Mortimer

CRO Gr I Marjorie Munroe*	CRO Gr I Brian Evans
CRO Gr II Lloyd Bodie	CRO Gr I Keith Williams
CRO Gr II Shownia Forbes	CRO Gr II Tremeiko Outten
CRO Gr II Loren Forbes	CRO Gr II D'Angelo Cartwright
CRO Gr II Eldrica Rolle*	CRO Gr II Shanice Johnson
CRO Julianne Robinson	CRO Johnathon Mackey
CRO Patrick A. Smith	CRO Lucie Deshommes
CRO Karina Alminor	CRO Keanu Braynen
CRO Destiny Petty	CRO Jonay Cartwright
CRO Natae Braynen	CRO Paulette Turnquest
CRO Sancia Walkes	CRO Muhasje Nixon
CRO Mystique Knowles	

PLATOON TEN
THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION COMBINE

TIO Dominic Taylor	TIO Rica Farrington
TIO Cyron Ferguson	TIO Branea Stubbs
TIO Justin Mackey	TIO Keithra Barr
TIO Jacquez Newton	TIO Rashan Darling
TIO Adrian Bethel	TIO Lissa Baptiste
TIO Rashad Smith	TIO Petra Knowles
TIO Kevard Rolle	TIO Warrenique McPhee
TIO Marcian Swaby	TIO Shantae Porter
TIO Jameco Seymour	TIO Shasha Storr
TIO Cameron McKenzie	TIO Shanell Williams
TIO Keith Cleare	TIO Pedronique Robeldo
TIO Amari Cleare	TIO Glenn Rolle
TIO Charles Rolle	

PLATOON ELEVEN ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE COMBINE Commander: Insp. S. Saunders-PTC*	
16 Joviah Ramsey*	17 Vernon Jones
18 Bernii Anderson	22 Garcia Brown*
24 Antonique Ferguson*	26 Chester Sawyer III
27 Erinique Burrows*	28 Shaneil Jones*
29 Perrinique Pierre- Louis*	30 Tyrell Beneby
31 Joshua Emmanuel	33 Zaria Fowler*
39 Trevor Rose	43 Lloyd Codner
46 Jayeden Robinson	48 Morris
51 Michael Thompson	52 Burrows*
53 Lightbourne	78 Resante Arthur*
80 Edwinique Sturup*	82 Ferguson
83 Kerney*	96 Brown*
59 Clarke	94 Sherman

PLATOON TWELVE
THE ROYAL DEFENCE FORCE RANGERS

PLATOON THIRTEEN COMBINED CANINE Commander: Supt. Kyle Capron-K9	
ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE	
Insp. 2824 Cassandra Burnside (Sub-Commander)	
Sgt. 2835 Eltura Deveaux	K-9 Slot
Sgt. 478 Knowles	K-9 Farouk
Cpl. 2958 Armbrister	K-9 Dunga
Cpl. 3890 Keron King	K-9 Tracker
Cpl. 3997 Jasmine Sands*	K-9 Niko
PC 4038 Wilkinson	K-9 Django
PC 4208 Clifton Bowe	K-9 Beast
PC 4646 Poitier	K-9 Archie
PC 4714 Bethel	K-9 Rambo
PC 4774 Sherman	K-9 Oki
ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE	
A/B Rose	K-9 Zena
W/M Roker	K-9 Daliah
M/S Cox	K-9 King
M/S Taylor	K-9 Max

PLATOON FOURTEEN ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE MOBILE UNIT	
Sgt. 3883 Greenslade-MD	Cpl. 3823 Seymour-MD
Cpl. 3868 Cifort-MD	PC 4585 Pierre-MD
PC 4614 Ward-MD	PC 4686 Hall-MD
(1) Nissan Frontier	(2) Dodge Chargers

PLATOON FIFTEEN ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE FIRE SERVICES VEHICLES Supt. Demeris Armbrister	
FIRE SERVICES Fire Delta #67	
Cpl. 3036 Forbes-FS	PC 4112 Brown-FS
Fire Delta # 57	
Cpl. 2782 Gittens-FS	PC 4109 Bowles-FS*

PLATOON SIXTEEN THE ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE CYCLISTS Silver Commander: Ch/Supt. E. Strachan Bronze Commander: Supt. C. Jennings	
Insp. Jerone Thompson	Insp. Meko Evans
Insp. Kristoff Greenslade	Sgt. 2414 Ryan Curry
Cpl. 3288 Argenor	Cpl. 3922 Murrell Duford
Cpl. 3928 Goddard	Cpl. 3935 Jarad McPhee
Cpl. 3938 Jameko Thompson	Cpl. 3961 Cordero Rolle
Cpl. 3541 Steven Duncombe	Cpl. 3836 Kevin Munnings Jr.
PC 4027 Percy Leary	PC 4212 Renardo Cash
PC 4352 Alpheus Bevans	PC 4432 Shawndee Miller
PC 4446 Answell Johnson	PC 4510 Sirmar Rolle
PC 4540 Daramus Dorcelie	PC 4621 Cassius Gaitor
PC 4668 Alexis Rolle	

COMBINED BANDS

THE ROYAL BAHAMAS POLICE FORCE BAND DIRECTOR Chief Superintendent Seldin Adderley	
ASP Tabori Dean	Insp Jamie Tinker
Insp Corey Cartwright	Insp Cory Hield
Sgt. 341 Shantelle Rolle*	Sgt. 3221 Lynden Sands
Sgt 387 Treco Johnson	Sgt. 3405 Phillip Colebrooke Jr.
Sgt. 2932 Denise Richardson*	Sgt. 3408 John Evans
Sgt. 3419 Brian Saunders	Cpl. 3410 Gary Francis
Cpl. 3416 Rashad Rox	Cpl. 3918 Dejuan Davis
Cpl. 3944 Ontario Dames	PC 4142 Michael Adderley
PC 4413 Andre Williams	PC 4155 Patrick Humes
PC 4418 Freddieisha Carroll*	PC 4219 Tevin Hepburn
PC 4434 Jabari Roberts	PC 4327 Casurae Johnson*
PC 4471 Bryon Harvey	PC 4505 Vernon Moss
PC 4498 James Hutcheson Jr.	PC 4360 Leoneisha Johnson*
PC 4452 Chavese Moss	

BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BAND DIRECTOR James Hutcheson	
PO Andrew Farrington	Sgt. Terrence Adderley
Cpl. Owen Rolle	Cpl. Kirkwood Thompson
Cpl. Lamar Polhamus	Cpl. Jamal Cooper
Cpl. Donovan Rolle	Cpl. Valdaron Cleare
C/O Sean Ferguson	C/O Kirtwood Cleare
C/O Lashawn Bassett	C/O Allen Dorsette
C/O Santino Bain	C/O Romon Butler
C/O Trevor Strachan	C/O Nicole Rahming Dean
C/O Lewis Colebrooke	TCO Angel Brown
TCO Kylan Davis	TCO Donte Ferguson
Jeffery Severe	

THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE

Senior lieutenant Kevin Toote
Petty officer Dale Ellis
Leading Seaman Darron Adderley
Leading woman Krishanda Lewis
Leading Seaman Davin Johnson
Leading Seaman Don Seymour
Able Seaman Kaishon Cumberbatch
Able Seaman Toran Fortune
Able Seaman Keano Mckenzie

Able Seaman Shadae Lloyd
Able Seaman D'Quan Smith
Able woman Robyn Mackey
Marine Seaman Collin Capron
Marine Seaman Kenron Joseph
Marine Seaman Rashad Armbrister
Marine Seaman Anniyo Rolle
Marine Seaman Kyle Wright

RANGERS

Sanai Neely
D'Yontae Mackey L
aziah Brice
Shaniah Dickinson
Kelya Turnquest
Jessiken Feaste
Lameneka Brennen
Joshua Turnquest
Garnett Marie
Andre Sweeting

Kai Gardiner
David Ferguson
Michael Stubbs
Devon Ferguson
Wayne Kelly
Waynique Kelly
Christian Lockhart
Stefon Walkes
Tatyanna McKenzie
William Clarke

COMMITTEES:

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE SECRETARIAT - LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Jack Thompson – Permanent Secretary
Her Excellency Leslia Miller Brice – Chairperson
Miss Philippa Beneby – First Assistant Secretary
Ms Lindsay Thompson – Senior Information Officer, Bahamas Information Services
Mr Greg Wilkinson – Event Designer and Coordinator of Logistics
Mrs Cynette Archer – Events Coordinator
Mr Antonio Smith - Personal Assistant, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Captain Frederick Brown – Royal Bahamas Defence Force
Lt Commander Elizabeth Simms – Royal Bahamas Defence Force
Assistant Commissioner of Police Damien Robinson - Royal Bahamas Police Force
Assistant Commissioner of Police Janet McKenzie - Royal Bahamas Police Force
Assistant Commissioner of Police Dwight Adderley - Royal Bahamas Police Force
Chief Superintendent Dexter Hanna – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Chief Superintendent of Police Angela Johnson – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Superintendent of Police Keilen Knowles – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Superintendent of Police Schneika Campbell – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Superintendent of Police Donevon Martin – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Superintendent of Police Devaughn McCartney – Royal Bahamas Police Force
Miss Sonia Culmer – Under Secretary, Ministry of Education
Mrs Demetria Rolle – Education Officer, Ministry of Education
Mrs Coral Miller – Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health and Wellness
Mr Terry Archer – Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Ivan Thompson – Senior Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mrs Karen Rolle – Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr Barry Wilmott – Senior Manager, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources
Ms Antoinette Brown – Personal Assistant III, Cabinet Office
Mrs Bernadette Bastian – General Manager, Family Island Development, Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation
Mr Sean Adderley – Manager of Marketing & Sales, Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas (ZNS)
Mr Chedi Ferguson – Supervisor, Ministry of Works
Mr Adrian Thompson – Bahamas Information Services
Bishop Denczil Rolle – The Bahamas Christian Council
Antonio Oliver - National Independence Secretariat
Mrs Esther Maycock - National Independence Secretariat
Miss Dahana St Fort – National Independence Secretariat
Vanette Ward – National Independence Secretariat

NEW PROVIDENCE TIME CAPSULE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mr Jack Thompson – Permanent Secretary

Her Excellency Leslia Miller-Brice – Chair, National Independence Secretariat (NIS)

Ms Lindsay Thompson – Bahamas Information Services/Coordinator, National Time Capsule Project

Mrs Sandra Hylton Kemp – Office of the Prime Minister

Mr Antonio Smith – Personal Assistant, Ministry of Foreign Affairs/National Independence Secretariat

Dr Christopher Curry – Director, Antiquities, Monuments & Museum Corporation (AMMC)

Miss Patrice Williams – Director, The Department of Archives

Mrs Demetria Rolle – Ministry of Education

Mr Julian Anderson-Rolle – ZNS

Mr Greg Wilkinson – Event Designer and Coordinator of Logistics, NIS

Mrs Cynette Archer – Events Coordinator, NIS

