

**TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM Wilton Joseph “BILL” CARTWRIGHT
CMG former MHA**

BY

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MEMORIAL SERVICE

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I count it an honor and a privilege to pay tribute to and celebrate the life of a husband, father, visionary, freedom fighter, national hero, Bahamian patriot and my personal friend, William Wilton Joseph “Bill” Cartwright.

To fully appreciate Bill’s contribution to the modern political history and development of The Bahamas, we must know of the major events that helped to shape the modern political history and development in the Bahamas.

Local historians may differ on the significance of these events on our current body politic and political culture, but I can only speak for Bradley B. Roberts:

The Burma Road riots of 1942

The Citizens Committee to fight for Sir Sidney Poitier's film showing 1950

The birth of the Progressive Liberal Party on 23rd November 1953

The election of the first class of PLP candidates to Parliament in 1956

The formation of the United Bahamian Party (UBP) in 1958

The general strike of 1958

Women won the right to vote in 1961

The expansion of the seats 1960 bye-elections

Women vote for the first time 1962

Constitutional change on 7 January 1965

Black Tuesday on the 27th April 1965

Majority Rule on 10th of January 1967

18 year olds got the right to vote in 1969

Bahamas attains Independence on July 10th 1973 and the rest is history as they say.

It is clear for all to see that the Progressive Liberal Party with its mantra of equality and social justice for all significantly influenced the modern political development in this country. When one considers that Bill Cartwright was one of the founding fathers of the PLP, his place as a political giant and the father of Bahamian party politics is secured.

While the Progressive Liberal Party is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. William “Bill” Cartwright CMG, MHA we are grateful for the time Almighty God has loan Bill to us.

Mr. Cartwright was born at Long Island, Bahamas. He is the son of England Cartwright and Eva Strachan Cartwright. He was educated in public schools in Hope Town, Abaco and Long Island, Bahamas. He also enrolled successfully in correspondence schools in the United States and the United Kingdom and held certificates in Journalism from the Magazine Institute, New York.

Affectionately known as “Bill” by friend and foe alike, Mr. Cartwright is hailed as a revolutionary, a National Hero, a Freedom Fighter, a Drum Major for social justice and a trailblazer as his political activism shaped and figured prominently in the modern political history of the Bahamas.

Mr. Cartwright devoted some twenty years to public life. He was elected to the House for the Cat Island District in 1949 and served in Parliament for seven years. It is recorded that with no model to go by to start a political party and at great financial expense, he traveled to London in June of 1952 to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. According to Henry Milton Taylor, another founding member and

Governor General, it was in Jamaica on the return leg of this trip that he gathered valuable information and guidelines in establishing the first political party, The Progressive Liberal Party, which made its debut in September of the same year. The PLP's official birthday is pegged at 23rd November 1953.

As a sign of the times, Mr. Cartwright paid a heavy price for his bold and revolutionary stand as he was crushed by the political and economic power of Bay Street. History now records that the maturity and embellishment of the party system in the Bahamas and its indelible influence on our democratic development place Mr. Cartwright on the right side of history.

Further, the history of the PLP and its inextricable link to the creation of the modern Bahamas and the continued growth and development of this country are testaments to the relevance and timelessness of the vision of Bill Cartwright. The Bahamas is a better place because of Bill and we owe him a debt of gratitude.

Professionally, Bill was heavily involved in both real estate and journalism. He founded the only successfully published weekly magazine in the Bahamas, the **PEOPLE AND TV WEEKLY** that made its debut in August of 1976.

He also published a monthly magazine called the **ELEUTHERA TRAVELER**; this was in addition to the successful Bahamian Review Magazine. Bill was kind enough to feature yours truly on the cover of the Bahamian Review in 1973 when I was appointed President of Burns House Limited/Bahamas Blenders.

To Bill's family, I say to you that he lived a full, fruitful and purpose-driven life. He fought the good fight and was successful beyond the wildest dreams of many. He has gone on to be with his maker and to receive his just reward.

We who remain must carry on Bill's legacy and this gallant and noble fight for the soul of our nation continues. We cannot and must not fail the Bahamian people as too much is at stake.

I express our heartfelt condolences to you and my thoughts and prayers are with you during this very difficult time.

May his soul and the soul of all the dearly departed rest in peace.

Thank you