

REMARKS OF SENATOR ALLYSON MAYNARD GIBSON GIVEN  
ON 11TH JUNE 2011 AT THE OPENING OF THE DAME LOIS  
BROWNE EVANS BUILDING AND THE UNVEILING OF HER  
STATUE IN HAMILTON BERMUDA.

We in The Bahamas love, as our own, Dame Lois Browne Evans: first female lawyer [1953]; first black woman to be elected MP [1963]; first female Attorney General [1998]; first female to lead the Opposition of a Commonwealth country [1968]; first National Hero of Bermuda; Honourary Counsel to Jamaica; and so much more.

She became Bermuda's first female barrister in 1953 after being called to the bar at Middle Temple, London, England where she met Sir Lynden Pindling, the father of our nation, The Bahamas. They became lifelong friends.

The path of the PLP in The Bahamas and Bermuda are similar. They are sisters. I have a picture of my first visit to Bermuda, on Dame Lois' porch as a very young 4 or 5 year old. Our families go back a very long way.

My uncle, Andrew (Dud) Maynard, whom I represent today, became a regular visitor to Bermuda and intimately involved in political campaigns – a key strategist and campaign coordinator for the PLP in The Bahamas, he became a sounding board for Dame Lois.

I speak with firsthand knowledge when I say the woman who you honour today by naming a building after her and unveiling a statue of her, although Bermudian, belongs to the Caribbean and the entire Diaspora.

She knew who she was and whose she was. Therefore, she believed in the dignity of humankind and respected all people as equals. Her struggle in Bermuda and the Caribbean at its core was to institutionalize that precept – all people are equal. She was a freedom fighter by whatever yardstick used to define such nobility.

Frequently the sole female voice, she stood out not only because of that fact but because she was a trailblazer, well ahead of her time.

Bermudians and all in the Diaspora are the better because she passed this way.

I don't want to leave anyone here today with the impression that she was all work and no play. Dame Lois was a loving and loyal friend. She was a raconteur par excellence. She would have all of us, captivated by her stories which frequently were laced with humor about life experiences. Whenever she was in Nassau she and Uncle John, if he was with her, joined the Maynards at family dinner. I note uncle John's passing and extend condolences especially to Tina, Donald and Nadine and Pat. May he rest in peace.

I also want to note the sacrifices of Dame Lois' children. Thank you for allowing your mother to serve your country and the Diaspora.

As I close, also as the President of the International Women's Forum, I salute Dame Lois Brown Evans as an exceptional female world leader.

The International Figure Skating Champion Michelle Kwan is quoted as having said "In the end, your finest moments in life aren't necessarily those in which you finish first but instead the times when you know that you simply did your best – when you did it heart and soul and held nothing back". Dame Lois Browne Evans held nothing back in her quest to leave Bermuda and the world a better place.

I thank and salute the Government and people of Bermuda for honouring in this way this great daughter of Bermuda and child of the Diaspora.