

Remarks by Fred Mitchell MP
Fox Hill
Emancipation Day 5th August 2013
Fox Hill Parade

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen

Good morning and the very best to you this morning. It is a great day to be free and alive. I want to begin by thanking Maurice Tynes and his team of the Fox Hill Festival Committee for once again stepping up to the plate and ensuring that this Festival is such a winning success.

Junkanoo was a smashing success. I understand that all the major groups were here. I wish especially to remember in connection with Junkanoo our star of Junkanoo Winston "Gus" Cooper who is ill in hospital in Florida, and we wish him a speedy recovery and thank him for all that he has done for the protection and promotion of African culture in The Bahamas.

The Fox Hill constituency has existed since 1968. In that time the following people have served as representatives for Fox Hill: Lionel Davis, Frank Edgecombe, George Mackey, Juanianne Dorsett and myself. Each of the representatives took an active role in protecting and uplifting a central feature of the life of Fox Hill and that is protecting its cultural heritage.

In the weeks leading up to this Festival, people recalled that it was Lionel Davis who is widely credited with bringing back to the modern era the climbing of the greasy pole. We all remember him dressed in African garb for these occasions. Today we remember him and all the representatives who served this area.

We remember today the former Chairs of the Fox Hill Festival Committee: Eric Wilmott, William Rahming and Charles Johnson, all former parishioners of St. Anselm's Church. All of them are now deceased. We remember them all but especially Mr. Wilmott who is widely credited with creating the modern Fox Hill Festival by combining the days from Emancipation Day to Fox Hill day into one continuous series of activities.

This year we will be doing two special things. One is a lecture on the history of Fox Hill by myself commissioned by the Prime Minister last year as a part of the 40th anniversary of the independence of our country. The lecture is designed to show how Fox Hill contributed to the development of The Bahamas.

That lecture will take place on Wednesday 7th August at Mt. Carey Baptist Church, the oldest of the Baptist Churches in the Village. It was established in the year 1843. I hope you are able to join us. This is to be carried live on ZNS TV and radio.

Then the next day on Thursday 8th August, there will be a public ceremony at the home of Frank Edgecombe when the Prime Minister will come to re-name the street on which he lives Frank Edgecombe Street. That will begin at six thirty p.m. We hope you can join us. There will be a reception which follows.

Today I want to say that we are facing unusual challenges with the level of unemployment. It is the toughest that I have ever seen but these are problems which we must all try to patiently work through, keeping our humanity toward one another.

I want to thank all the pastors and their church congregations for the work which they do at keeping the peace. I begin with St. Anne's and Fr. Hugh Bartlett, Mt. Carey and Rev. Warren Anderson, St. Mark's and the Rev. Carrington Pinder; the Church of God Romer Street, the Coke Methodist Church at Rose Street, the Coke Methodist Church at Bernard Road, the St. Paul's Baptist Church and Rev J. Carl Rahming, St. Anselm's Church and Monsignor Preston Moss, Macedonia Baptist Church and Rev. Hartman Nixon, the Church of God Bernard Road and Rev. Julia Bain, the Church of God faith Mission

and Rev. Shirelle Saunders. And all ladies and gentlemen of the cloth who continue to help in this part of the vineyard.

We in this generation of leaders have a special ask to build up the common life, to protect the public peace, to raise the children in the nurture and the fear of the Lord, to enhance the public welfare and the welfare of our land. It is a lot which falls to every generation. Each generation must try to leave things better than when they met it.

All of those names that came before us that I listed today tried to do their best. We must do ours. I thank all of you for allowing me to lead at this time and for giving of your generous support in money and in kind and in time.

The students of our public and private schools should know that soon it will be their turn. One day I will sit in the seats on the floor and I will watch as another Member of Parliament from another generation takes the stage and carries on the traditions of Africa transplanted in to Fox Hill.

We must continue to fight for freedom
Until every man and woman is free.

George Mackey the former MP recalled a talk which two of the heroes of his generation gave to him at the Government High School. One was by the late A F Adderley and another by the late Leon Walton Young, who was from Fox Hill, served in the House of Assembly and after whom the L W. Young School is named.

Mr. Young's name is given to the school because he represented this area before it was called the Fox Hill constituency.

George Mackey said Mr. Adderley told the boys that day at Government High that they must do well in school so that they could contribute to the greater good of their nation and of mankind. Mr. Young said afterwards while he heard and appreciated what Mr. Adderley was saying, they should actually learn their lessons in school so they could go out and get a job and provide for their families.

Leon Walton Young passed away in Nassau in 19 . He has served years in the House of Assembly. Dr. Cleveland Eneas writing in his book Bain Town remembers Mr. Young this way: Whenever Mr. Young came to Bain Town, he came in the Buick, and we were able to spot it parked in front of my grandfather's house, which still stands immediately west of Wesley's School Room on Meadow Street... It was a fast race up Meadow Street, by us boys, whenever we saw this sight, and we would stand around it for a long time as he was visiting, looking and touching and gaping and ah-ing. When he was ready to leave, my brother and I always had the privilege of riding the running board while he cruised slowly down the street to our house; our friends ran along the side all the way. That was always a big event in our day.

Mr. Young was a great Bahamian, who in his time helped to shape the country, to become what it is today. Besides the school in Congo Town Young Street is named for him, and one day there might still be standing somewhere, a monument to his memory. To me, he was Yoruba, who was not ashamed of his ancestry, and helped to stimulate my early interest in the subject.

When he Leon Walton Young died the Nassau Guardian described his funeral as the largest one that had ever taken place in Fox Hill. When the late George Mackey died and I was then the representative and we were planning his funeral I wanted to plan and execute a funeral that would rival that of Leon Young for the contribution which George made to the modern development of Fox Hill.

Let us remember them all, now gone on and thank them for their contributions to the quality of our lives. Bless them all. Bless you and the people of Fox Hill. God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.
end

