

TRIBUTE
BY
THE RT. HON. PERRY G. CHRISTIE
PRIME MINISTER
AT STATE FUNERAL FOR
THE HON. PAUL LAWRENCE ADDERLEY
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
SEPT. 28TH, 2012

One hundred and seventy four years ago, a ship bearing slaves to Cuba was intercepted by the British Navy and brought to Nassau. There the slaves were freed. Among these "Liberated Africans", as they were called, was a young man of the Yoruba ethnic group from what is modern-day Nigeria. His name was Alliday. He was an alien in a bewildering new world, thousands of miles from home with the unbridgeable vastness of the Atlantic Ocean in between; a man without connections, without family, with nothing to his name, penniless and poor.

But not for long.

By the time of his death in 1885, Alliday Adderley had become the biggest black landowner in all of New Providence. Amongst the lands that he bought and paid for out of his own pocket was a large tract stretching from Goodman's Bay and taking in Stapledon Gardens and the land lying west of the Tonique Williams-Darling Highway, all the way down to where Robin Hood used to be. He owned all that, and a lot more too. And lest we forget, this was a black man who had come to this country in chains.

But Alliday produced a great deal more than just landed wealth. He also produced sons. One of them, William Campbell Adderley, would become the first unambiguously black member of the House of Assembly where before there had only been whites and the occasional mulatto or two.

A generation passed and a new one came, and with it came Alliday's grandson, Wilfred Parliament Adderley - W.P. Adderley, for short. He became a prominent building contractor and downtown merchant with his ambitiously-named dry goods emporium on Marlborough Street: "The Big Store" is what it was called. Of greater consequence, W.P became the second generation of Adderleys to sit in the House of

Assembly. And he was no ordinary member either. He was an outspoken, combative and clever legislator, and a social reformer too.

Another generation would come and go, and in the one that followed would come forth W.P. Adderley's only son. His name was Alfred Francis Adderley – better known as A.F. Adderley – and from the beginning of the Bahamas till now he remains the closest thing we have ever had to black royalty.

Educated at Cambridge, he became far and away the best barrister at the local bar, dominating the courtroom from his call in 1919 to his death in 1953. But A.F. Adderley was so much more than just the pre-eminent trial lawyer of his times. Of infinitely greater consequence, he also attained unprecedented heights for a black Bahamian in the political establishment, first as a member of the House of Assembly, later as a member of the Upper House - then known as the Legislative Council - and finally as a member of that most exclusive of all the power-sets in the colony, the Executive Council.

He would also become Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese. Moreover, he would serve in 1951 as acting Chief Justice, much to the

consternation of the dominant power clique. His involvement in the life of the community would extend into other spheres as well, most notably in sports. He was, for example, the founding President of the BAAA.

The litany of A.F. Adderley's trailblazing accomplishments goes on and on. In truth, he went where no black man had ever gone before. No one of his colour had ever risen higher, or accomplished as much, as A.F. did, and at a time, moreover, when it was the hardest thing in the world for any man of colour to make his way upward in the Bahamas, constructed as it was back then.

And no one gave it to A.F. Adderley. He achieved it all on merit : by brainpower, by spotless integrity, by discipline, and by the relentless pursuit of excellence in everything he did.

And of all the things he did, there was none more consequential than this: by the sheer power of his example, he became the quintessential role model for successive generations of young black Bahamian men, throughout the 20s and 30s and 40s and even into the early 50's, instilling in them, by example, the confidence, the conviction, that they, too, could become lawyers and doctors and engineers and that they, too,

could become masters of their own destiny and leaders in their own land.

There is a transformative phenomenon in human relations called “the Power of One”. A.F. Adderley’s life and example encapsulated exactly that.

And then came Paul.....Paul Lawrence Adderley, the fifth successive generation of Adderleys to make its mark on the life of our country, and the fourth successive generation of the family to sit among the makers of laws in the hallowed halls of parliament. That remains a record unmatched by any other self-acknowledged family of colour in our country.

But when it came to Paul, it was not just the Adderley lineage that was at work. Paul also had a mother - Ethel Adderley nee Lunn - and she hailed from the Lunn/Rodgers clan which, over the course of a century and more, has produced a distinguished line of medical doctors, scholars, public servants and diplomats, skilled tradesmen, and sportsmen of world renown, with names like Dr. Kenneth Rodgers, Dr. Johnny Lunn, Dr. Jonathon Rodgers, Dr. Patricia Rodgers, and the late Andre Rodgers of Major League Baseball fame.

So Paul really got it from both sides.

I have begun my tribute as I have not so much to share with you a remarkable family history that too few of us know about but rather to submit to you that there was bred in Paul's very bones from birth a profound consciousness that he was part of a trans-generational relay, and that it was now his turn to take the baton and beat a new path into the future that lay before him.

Just as Alliday Adderley had done in his own time and as William Campbell Adderley had done in the generation that followed, and as W.P. Adderley had done in his own time, and as A.F. Adderley had done in his, Paul Lawrence Adderley knew that he was a part of that continuum, and that he was in duty bound to enlarge upon the accomplishments of his ancestors.

Believe me when I say that we cannot comprehend who and what Paul Adderley was, or what he came to mean to the life and times of our country over the course of his 84 years, nor can we comprehend what the lessons of his life hold for us now and for the children of tomorrow

unless we first realize that Paul himself understood that there was a family tradition of excellence, of high accomplishment, of sacrifice, and of service that he had to live up to.

Paul was an outstanding historian in his own right. Historical research was one of his great passions, and there was no subject that he ever researched more assiduously than that of his own family history. He knew it inside out, and he knew profoundly that the golden cord that bound him to his forbears and which, in turn, connected him to the Bahamian people, was a deep and abiding sense of obligation to apply himself to the very best of his abilities; to do so in his every undertaking; and to do so in a way that would uplift not only himself but the whole of this country that he loved so dearly. That was at once Paul's ethos and his mission, and in embracing it he was keeping faith with the best traditions of his own family.

To whom much is given, much is expected. Paul knew that only too well. He knew that much was expected of him. And as we recall the course of his life today, we see only too clearly that Paul not only lived up to what was expected of him but that he gave a great deal more, much more than could reasonably have been expected of him.

We saw it in the way he applied his mind. He was a man of immense intelligence. He was a rationalist, a man who believed in the civilizing power of logic over mindless passion; a scholarly man of deep learning, not only in the law but in so many other disciplines and areas of study, ranging from political philosophy to photography, from history to stamp collecting, from gardening to golf, from the theatres of London and New York to Junkanoo on Bay Street.

That's what always so impressed me about Paul, not just the depth of his intellect but its scope. He was well versed in so many different subjects, and it always seemed to me that there was no subject upon which he did not entertain an informed opinion.

Paul was a true Renaissance Man, well rounded in his interests and in his learning. He was in my personal estimation, and that of many others, the most intellectually gifted man of his generation.

We also saw Paul's passion for excellence in the way that he practised law. The greatest compliment you can ever pay a lawyer is to say of him that he is a 'lawyer's lawyer', someone that not only lay clients go to for advice and counsel but someone that other lawyers go to as well for

guidance on difficult points of law. That was Paul – a lawyer’s lawyer.

He was an advocate of extraordinary brilliance and tactical skill. He had an absolutely amazing record of acquittals as a criminal defence lawyer and he enjoyed equal success at the civil bar, beating some of the best and brightest of the English bar, including, most famously, the late Sir Robert Megarry, the pre-eminent real property lawyer of his time and later one of the truly great judges of the 20th century in England.

As a lawyer, Paul always prepared his cases with the most thorough and meticulous of care. And he applied this rigorous standard of preparation to every case he did, be it large or small, be it a dispute over a tiny plot of land in Grant’s Town or a case involving the liquidation of a billion-dollar company with assets all around the world.

And he was a paragon of ethical rectitude in his profession too. For him there was no quality more important for a lawyer to have than personal integrity of the very highest degree. As his own father had been before him, Paul was a role model for young lawyers to emulate in this and so many other ways.

We also saw Paul's passion for excellence in the way that he practiced his politics. O' and how Paul loved the cut-and-thrust of politics! He was a gladiator through and through. He was a master of parliamentary debate, again because of the thoroughness of his preparation, the power of his intellect, and because of the fire and brimstone that he would heap upon his adversaries. He was a fiery orator, and he was absolutely relentless, even ferocious, in debate. Words and logic were his weapons and he wielded them with consummate skill and with pulverizing effect upon the arguments of his opponents. It was just fascinating to see him in action. He was positively spellbinding. And I need to add this: Paul, no matter the provocation, never stooped to character assassination. He would destroy the argument but never the man.

While on the subject of Paul's life as a politician I really do have to publicly acknowledge something that I do not think has ever been publicly acknowledged before, namely, the enormous debt my Party, the Progressive Liberal Party, owes him, not just for his unparalleled service as Minister of State, as Attorney-General, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, as Minister of National Security, as Minister of Education, as Minister of Finance, as Chairman of the Hotel Corporation, and late in his life, as Co-Chairman of the first Constitutional Commission – not just all that, but also for showing up and always being there when his Party needed him most.

Some of us here today have no idea of what a great boost it was for the PLP and its cause when Paul Lawrence Adderley, the Prince of Poinciana Hill, threw his lot in with the PLP in the late 1950s. People like Their Excellencies, Sir Arthur Foulkes and the Hon. A.D. Hanna will know what I'm talking about here. Paul Adderley joining the PLP gave instantaneous legitimacy to the PLP and its struggle for Majority Rule among an influential class of Bahamians for whom the PLP would have had little appeal until then.

Much the same thing happened again in 1971 when, following a period of estrangement between Paul and the PLP, he re-joined the Party. His embrace of the then emerging campaign for Independence legitimized it for many who would otherwise have turned their backs on it. But if Independence was a good thing to Paul Adderley's way of thinking, it was a good thing for such folks too.

And we continue to see this dynamic at work in the years that ensued. The fact that as Attorney-General and Minister of National Security in the turbulent 80's, Paul Adderley was seen by just about everybody, both here and abroad, as the absolutely incorruptible leader of the war on drug trafficking, gave local and international legitimacy to the PLP

Government at a time when it was desperately needed. It helped stabilize the government and, if truth be told, it contributed in no small way to the PLP's improbable success in the 1987 General Election as well. I have absolutely no doubt that future historians will conclude that it could not have been done without Paul Adderley.

Yes, my Party owes a great deal to the man whose mortal remains we commit for burial today, and I acknowledge that debt today before all of you here assembled.

I have up to this point spoken of things that are all pretty much in the public domain but we would do well to remember this: we gain the true measure of a man not by what he does or says when the cameras are rolling or but rather what he reveals about himself when he is off-stage, unseen by the multitudes. That's where the public persona fades and the real man rises out of the shadows to reveal his truer self.

I was blessed to see that largely unseen side of Paul Adderley too. More than just a colleague and mentor, he was a close and valued friend of many years, someone I really loved and admired greatly.

And the side of Paul Adderley that revealed his truer self so clearly and so beautifully, I thought, was his private life as a family man.

One of the most poignant memories I have of Paul is the look of absolute delight he would have on his face, long ago, during the time when we were in our first cabinet together, and when he would be sharing with me one story or another of how one daughter or another had fared so well in an examination, or of how impressed he was with some interesting opinion they had expressed upon one subject or another.

Paul loved walking to the Post Office each day in the hope that there would be some letter from Catherine or Roseanne or Paula while they were away in school. And when there was such a letter, it would make his day. He was so proud of each of them. A more devoted father no child could have ever asked for.

And what a gem of a wife and life-partner Paul had in Lilith! A model of love and devotion through and through, she was always at his side, looking up to him and looking after him in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, until his death.

Lilith, you were such a wonderful support for Paul, his best friend too, and he loved you dearly. And Catherine, Roseanne and Paula, you brought your father so much pride and joy. And the devotion you showed him, especially in the time of his affliction at the close of his earthly life, speaks volumes of the great love that you had for your father - and have for him still, for love never dies, and the parting you endure today is only for a time.

Finally, there was Paul the patriot. And there are just two aspects of that part of Paul's persona that I want to touch on, and then I will be done. But I really do have to say what I'm about to say because, more than anything else, it reveals, I think, the greatness of Paul Adderley and how faithful he really was to the family tradition of service to country that I spoke about at the beginning; service with sacrifice and service with honour.

The sovereignty of The Bahamas is something we all pretty much take for granted these days but there have been times over the past nearly 40 years of Independence, especially during our infant years as a nation, when we have had to defend our sovereignty against foreign encroachments in one form or another. And in nearly all these cases it fell to Paul, whether as Minister of Foreign Affairs or as Attorney-

General or as Minister of National Security to stand up for The Bahamas and defend its sovereignty against the bullying or belligerence of others.

Paul was unfailingly courageous and unapologetically bold in this regard, and he would dress down any representative of any foreign power, be he or she an ambassador or law enforcement official or congressman or senator, indeed be they anyone who Paul felt was trespassing on Bahamian sovereignty. When it came to fighting for his country, Paul never took last. He was a loyal and vigorous defender of our nation from its very beginnings and throughout his life.

There can be no doubt that because of Paul Adderley, The Bahamas was able to withstand many an external threat to its sovereignty and, in so doing, consolidate its standing among the free and sovereign nations of the world.

But for me the most singularly convincing and the most poignant proof of Paul's patriotism would come in the closing years of his ministerial career when he served as Minister of Finance.

What few of us in the country appreciated at the time were the heroic measures that Paul was obliged to take every day to help keep the country afloat as it tossed about on the turbulent waters of one of the worst recessions in years. To make matters worse, there was a general election looming.

It would have been all too easy for Paul to simply embrace a policy of reckless borrowing and profligate spending but he would have none of that. Instead, he put country over party. He put statesmanship over politics, declining to do things that might have made the political prospects a little brighter for his party but which he knew would definitely have made the financial situation for the country very much worse.

Paul ignored the grumbling, endured all the complaints, even from within his own ranks, because he knew that by adhering to fiscal prudence and discipline and by staying the course with austerity measures, he was doing the right thing for the country.

But that's not really the part I want to talk about today. What I really want to tell you about is something that I only found out about the day

after Paul died.

Even though I sat very close to Paul in the cabinet leading up to the 1992 election when he was Minister of finance and even though I talked with him all the time, I had absolutely no idea that even as he struggled mightily each day to hold the country's finances together, he was privately battling both bladder cancer and heart disease. Most of us knew that he had a history of heart problems but none of us ever knew about the cancer. He never let on. He never complained about that or anything else. He just got on with the job, as he had always done.

What a man he was! What a patriot! But that was vintage Paul Adderley, always putting country over self, even at peril to his health, bearing his pain in silence yet rising from his bed early in the morning to go forth into the day to lift his people up, and to serve his country to the very best of his ability.

In making that kind of personal sacrifice, it were as if Paul was taking directly into his own heart and then pouring into his devotion to duty the stirring lyrics of a well-known hymn that he would have sung at Government High long before, in the halcyon years of his youth; a hymn

whose opening stanza goes like this:

**'I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.'**

Paul Adderley was a patriot for whom no task was too demanding, no burden too onerous, no personal sacrifice too great if it was calculated to preserve the Bahamas and move it forward.

Paul Adderley loved this little country of ours. He loved it with all his heart and soul, and he never stopped loving it. And he never stopped serving it either.

Paul Lawrence Adderley, a founding father of the modern Bahamas; defender of its sovereignty; patriot of the first rank; exemplary servant of

the people; outstanding minister of the government; illustrious parliamentarian; a lawyer's lawyer; historian; intellectual; sportsman; loving husband; devoted father; proud citizen of the country he helped make, he served his country and its people to the very best of his ability, doing so with complete integrity and shunning all honours.

He was indeed a prince among men.

May he rest in peace.