

Remarks at Reception

Introducing Michael Fountain

Bahamas Honorary Consul for the

Mid-Western United States

To the Chicago Community

By Fred Mitchell MP

Minister of Foreign Affairs

5th September 2014

I am very proud to be here today. I am happy to be here. I want to add my words of welcome to you all on behalf of the Prime Minister, the government and people of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of our Consul General for this state Paulette Zonicle, who has travelled from Washington for this occasion. She will be the person with whom Michael Fountain will be working on most matters, save and except on matters arising in states which are part of the district of the Consul General in Atlanta.

I acknowledge also the friends of Mr. Fountain who have travelled from The Bahamas to be with him today.

On 15th August, Michael Fountain was presented with his official commission making him the first Honorary Consul for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas in Chicago, serving the mid-western states of the United States of America. This is a big job

and covers vast territories and it is quite gracious of Mr. Fountain to take on this pioneering task.

There are several responsibilities which come with this duty:

Promoting Bahamian interests abroad;

Promoting good relations between Bahamians and the people of this region, this state, this city;

Promoting increased trade and commercial ties with the region, the state and the city;

Organizing or at least supporting the organization of Bahamians who live in this region, this state and this city;

Being a point of support and rescue for citizens of The Bahamas who are in problems;

Being the first point of contact for those who are interested in knowing about The Bahamas.

Mr. Fountain had a visit with the Prime Minister during his last stay in Nassau. He and his wife and family engaged in a good exchange on the mammoth task which he now undertakes. I can tell you from the moment that I met him I knew that he had the dynamism, energy and verve to carry out these responsibilities I am sure that he will do well.

In this he has a willing and supportive partner with his wife at his side. I am happy to welcome both of them into the diplomatic fold.

I wish to add that this is part of a wider effort that we in The Bahamas are seeking to carry out. Our mission in Foreign Affairs to make it as seamless as possible for Bahamians to move around the world whether for business or tourism.

We believe that this area is one of the most dynamic in the world and it requires greater attention.

In addition, however, we have asked the U S State Department to consider honorary consuls in Los Angeles, Denver and Houston.

So congratulations to you Mr. Fountain. I know you will do well. I wish to thank you and through you the people of this state and this city who have welcomed me and my delegation on this occasion. I remember with great fondness the visit that I made to your state capital last year and the warm welcome which I received then. Since that time I have had the opportunity to greet many of the friends this year in The Bahamas that I met in Springfield last year.

So thank you all once again for coming and for showing your support for our Honorary Consul Michael Fountain and Mrs. Fountain.

God bless you all. God bless the United States of America and God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.