

MESSAGE OF TRIBUTE
TO
WYCLIFFE SAMUEL BENNETT
BY
HOPETON S. DUNN Ph.D., CHAIRMAN,
BROADCASTING COMMISSION OF JAMAICA
AT
SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING, PROVIDENCE METHODIST
CHURCH,
OCTOBER 17, 2009

- Prime Minister, the Hon. Bruce Golding,
- Leader of the Opposition, the Most Hon. Mrs Portia Simpson Miller
- Minister of Information, Youth and Culture, Ms Olivia Grange,
- Members of Parliament
- Dr Hazel Bennett and Members of the Bennett Family,
- Members of the Clergy,
- Members of the Community of The Arts, Culture and Media
- Other Distinguished Guests,
- Friends All

The entire fraternity and leadership of the broadcasting industry and the wider media sector in Jamaica feel a deep sense of loss at the passing of someone we consider to be the Dean of our creative and professional Community.

This is a time when we in the media set aside all our competitive and even regulatory differences to celebrate the life of one who represented the best of us.

The leadership, officers and staff of the *Broadcasting Commission*, as well as of those of the *Media Association of Jamaica*, the *Press Association of Jamaica*, **and** the *Caribbean Broadcasting Union* have all indicated to me their wish to be closely associated with sentiments of profound gratitude for the life and contribution of Wycliffe Bennett. Like no one else, he nurtured and transformed the professional lives of so many of us within the industry, and will continue to inspire us long after this moment of bereavement at his passing.

JBC/CPTC TRAINING

Both at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) and at the CPTC, Mr. Bennett created a knowledge society long before the term became popular. He understood the intrinsic value of lifelong learning and education and was unstinting in exposing his charges to the benefits of both in-house and where possible university training for national leadership.

He ran compulsory broadcasting courses, personally conducting the training of his staff, and required detailed production meetings both before and after every major broadcast. Sometimes we complained about the length of the inevitable rehearsals, the production precision he exacted, and the rigors of the phonetic alphabet.

But ultimately we understood that we were professionals in the process of formation at the hands of a master tutor par excellence. Mr. B. made sure that the lessons of each session formed the benchmark for the next outside broadcast, the next studio production and ultimately, the next stage of our lives.

RETIREMENT IRONY

The establishment at the CPTC of the **Media Technology Institute** during my own later **leadership** tenure **there**, was really a culmination of the groundwork of training AND DEVELOPMENT that my predecessor Wycliffe had laid.

In an ironic twist of fate, I was to become his Chairman in the latter stages of his tenure as CEO at the CPTC. I had the daunting and unenviable task of signing his letter of well deserved retirement: one of my most difficult duties. It was Wycliffe, after all, who had been instrumental in the signing of my own letter of **admission into media**, at a national level, over three decades earlier at the JBC. In that moment of irony at the CPTC I remembered one of Wycliffe's favourite Shakespearean quotations. He often reminded us that "**All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts...**"

Indeed, his were many parts. The indomitable Wycliffe Bennett had retired, but he never stopped working and never stopped being our inspirational leader, our chief individual cheerleader, critic and friend.

WIDER VISION

For those of us who came to know him better, it became clear that his vision was not only about quality broadcasting, proper speech and high production standards, important as these are.

For him, these were indispensable strands in a larger tapestry of nation-building, one person at a time. And while for many of us, he remained our mentor, father figure and confidante, in the larger scheme of things, his vision and achievements amounted to a great deal more. Through the seminal institutions he built or strengthened, through the values he promoted, through the lives he transformed and in the legacy that he has left us, Wycliffe Samuel Bennett was really one of the foremost **architects of modern Jamaica**.

We celebrate his life today, and thank his dear wife, of over 5 decades, Miss Hazel, for the support she offered him, and us, through all his Seasons.

Walk Good, Dear Wycliffe! You have fought the good fight, you have *finished* the *course*, you have kept the faith...May your soul rest... in peace.

HSD