



Government of Bermuda

The Ministry of Community, Culture and Sports

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

To the House of Assembly

By

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Minister of Community, Culture and Sports

HERITAGE MONTH THEMES: 2015, 2016 & 2017

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Mr. Speaker, forward planning is a hallmark of good governance; and it is in this spirit that I rise this morning to inform Honourable Members and the people of Bermuda about Heritage Month themes for the next several years.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Culture, and in an attempt to demonstrate our responsibility and commitment to the people of Bermuda I wish to announce the Heritage Month themes - not only for 2015 - but also for 2016 and 2017, so that all who are interested may begin now to creatively explore ways through which the themes can be expressed and brought to life to showcase the best of our heritage and culture.

Mr. Speaker, I am taking the unprecedented step of announcing the themes well in advance in order to give everyone who is interested in participating in Heritage Month activities and the Annual Bermuda Day Parade additional time to prepare. This will hopefully allow and encourage entities such as schools, parish councils, community clubs and other organizations to plan how they wish to celebrate Heritage Month and Bermuda Day, and to embrace a renewed community spirit which will ensure that our collective heritage is celebrated successfully each year.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, with the valuable contributions from the Heritage Advisory Committee, has already begun preparations for Heritage Month 2015.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Bermuda Day Parade was very successful; and I would like to acknowledge and extend sincere thanks to the members of the Heritage Advisory Committee who enthusiastically deliberate and plan months in advance so that this day can be such a success. The Heritage Advisory Committee is ably and most effectively chaired by the Department's Cultural Affairs Programme Manager Mrs. Louise Tannock, Ms. Clyde – A– Mae Tucker (Events Coordinator for the Department) also works with this Committee. Other members of the Committee include Mr. Andrew Baylay, Mrs. Betty Christopher, Mrs. Nell Johnston MBE, Mr. Milton Raposo, Mr. St. Clair Tucker, and Ms. Ami Zanders.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you and the people of Bermuda will recall the beautiful floats that were featured in this year's parade. Each float was spectacular; and captured aspects of the theme in most artistic and creative ways. When I announced the results a few weeks ago I referred to the floats as “*works of art*” because they were indeed just that. I am very grateful to all of the community groups, schools and Government Departments for entering the 2014 Bermuda Day

Parade! We are also most appreciative of the work of the judges; who had the unenviable task of appraising and evaluating each entry to determine the winners for the various categories. Thank you judges!

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can build on this year's success by giving everyone - schools, community groups, dancers, float builders and the private sector - sufficient time to plan now to participate in our Heritage Month and Bermuda Day celebrations over the next three (3) years.

Mr. Speaker, the Heritage Month and Bermuda Day theme for 2015 is *Bermuda: An Atlantic Garden*. This theme encourages folk to celebrate Bermuda's beautiful surrounding ocean and coral reefs - home to a multiplicity of organisms. As Bermudians we have a long and proud maritime history. During our earliest beginnings, Bermuda was a sea-faring community; and our involvement with the surrounding ocean caused us to build boats, such as the fitted dinghy and the incorporation of the hull design of the Bermuda Sloop, which became the standard for many years of vessels built on the eastern coast of the United States. This theme also provides an avenue for "land lovers" who may wish to focus on Bermuda's beautiful environment which of course includes the flora and fauna that we take pride in caring for, cultivating and protecting. The term "*garden*" therefore allows float builders the creative space to design oceanic scenes as well as to highlight our open spaces and our valuable landscapes.

Mr. Speaker, the Heritage Month and Bermuda theme for 2016 is *Our Sporting Heritage*. The focus here will be on our love of sports and our sporting heroes. This theme encourages us as a people to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of some of our notable sporting figures such as our Olympic

participants, football players, boat racers, tennis players, cricketers, swimmers, marathon runners, cyclists and many other outstanding sports persons.

Mr. Speaker, I note that 2016 is an Olympic year, and no doubt there are several Bermudians who aspire to be among those that qualify to compete in the Summer Olympic Games to be held in Brazil. I think the theme of *Our Sporting Heritage* could serve as a motivator for such persons.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017 we will focus on the “roots” of our people by having as the theme for Heritage Month and Bermuda Day “*Bermuda: The Roots Within*”.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Day Parade was instituted after a period of social unrest in Bermuda; and was put forth as an event that could bring the people of Bermuda together in harmony, with the aim of building a sense of community and civic pride.

This sense of pride in who we are as a people and the need to also embrace the influences of our many and diverse ancestors is, I believe, crucial to us moving forward as a people. It is critical to mending and healing the social fabric of our community. Thus the theme, *Bermuda: The Roots Within* provides us with a golden opportunity to embrace, promote and celebrate our diversity as a people. Our roots can be traced to the islands of the Caribbean (such as Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saba and Trinidad to name a few). Then too, some of our ancestors hail from Africa, the Azores, Portugal, England, Canada, and the United States of America. Through this theme we as a people can celebrate the traditions and customs, passed down to us from our ancestors that have now become our way of life and our way of making meaning!

Mr. Speaker, when I speak about our “*way of making meaning*” I am referring to our intangible cultural heritage; which UNESCO defines as “ *the shared cultural expressions that have been passed down from one generation to another, [and] have evolved in response to their environments and contribute to giving a sense of identity and continuity ...* ”. We have our customs, traditions, stories, and folklore that make us who we are as Bermudians. Let's celebrate that as a people.

Thank you Mr. Speaker!