



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TO THE SENATE

BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP

MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT

“THE ENERGY OF BERMUDA DAY”

WEDNESDAY 29th MAY 2024

Madam President, I’m pleased to stand before you today and reflect on the incredible experience that was the 2024 Bermuda Day Parade. This year’s event was truly a celebration of our culture, our resilience, and our community spirit, all set against the backdrop of picture-perfect weather. What a stark and delightful contrast to last year, when record-breaking rainfall dampened our festivities, but not our spirits.

Madam President, this year the sun shone brightly upon us, providing the perfect setting for a parade that was nothing short of spectacular. The turnout was phenomenal, with this year’s parade boasting a record number of participant entries, filling our streets with an unprecedented level of enthusiasm and creativity.

The heart and soul of Bermuda were on full display, each participant bringing their unique flair to the celebration.

Madam President, adding to the incredible energy of the day were spirited performances by a number of majorette groups including the Ex-Artillery Majorettes and the Hamilton Parish Hot Peppers Majorettes. Their high-stepping marches and infectious enthusiasm brought smiles to faces all along the parade route. The return of the Association of Filipinos in Bermuda to the parade was marked by vibrant costumes, while the PHC Majorettes and Drum Corps and captivated the crowd with their precision and flair, each step perfectly timed to the beat of the drums.

Madam President, the floats this year were a visual feast, showcasing the creativity and hard work of our community. From the charming box-cart floats designed by our talented primary schools to the grand, elaborately decorated floats by various charities and culture groups, each entry told a unique story. Floats by CedarBridge Academy, Delta Sigman Theta Sorority Inc. Bermuda Alumnae Chapter, our very own Department of Culture, designed and executed by the Chewstick Foundation, Vasco da

Gama Club, and One Body in Christ Movement for God's Purpose, were particularly impressive. It was a stunning representation of our island's rich cultural heritage and a testament to the artistic talent within our community.

Madam President, one of the most inspiring stories of the day came from CedarBridge Academy. Their award-winning float faced an unexpected challenge when the truck carrying it broke down. However, in a true display of Bermudian resilience and ingenuity, they managed to weld the broken part and continue their journey. This act of determination was a powerful reminder of our community's ability to overcome obstacles and keep moving forward.

Madam President, while there were many stories of triumph, there were also moments of disappointment. The Bermuda Gymnastics Association's truck was involved in a road traffic accident shortly before their scheduled arrival at the parade, preventing them from participating. Their absence was felt, but their dedication and spirit were acknowledged and appreciated by all.

Madam President, a crucial factor in this year's successful turnout was the Bermuda Day Fund, funded primarily by the Government of Bermuda. This initiative enabled 26 of the 66 entries to receive financial support, offsetting costs and allowing for more robust participation from a diverse array of community groups. The fund played an essential role in ensuring that the parade was inclusive and representative of the entire community.

Madam President, celebrating Bermudian excellence was a highlight of this year's parade, with the acknowledgment of our distinguished grand marshals: Brian Wellman, Dennie O'Connor, Lizz Pimentel, Dr. Kyjuan Brown, and posthumously Judith Simons. Each of these individuals has made significant contributions to our island in various fields such as sport, the arts, tourism, and community service. Their achievements and dedication were rightfully honoured, serving as an inspiration to all.

Madam President, adding a touch of quirky ingenuity to the parade was Alexander Winfield, a Bermudian puppeteer who returned to the island specifically to participate. His creation, the Trash Gobbler, was a delightful addition that captured the imagination of both young and old. This whimsical entry

showcased the creative spirit that thrives in Bermuda and added an element of fun and innovation to the festivities.

Madam President, the parade concluded in traditional fashion with electrifying performances from our beloved Gombeyes. The energy they brought to the streets was palpable, their rhythmic beats and colorful regalia a vivid reminder of our rich cultural heritage. A standout moment was the tribute by H&H Gombeyes, who wore black as part of their traditional regalia in honour of their founding members and all their past members who have passed. This heartfelt tribute was a touching blend of tradition and personal remembrance, resonating deeply with all who witnessed it.

Madam President, as we reflect on this year's parade, we do so with immense pride and gratitude. The 2024 Bermuda Day Parade was a magnificent display of Bermudian culture and heritage. From the electrifying performances and beautiful floats to the inspiring stories of resilience and the celebration of our community's excellence, the participants truly "showed us their energy."

Madam President, none of this would have been possible without the efforts by the team at Department of Culture led by Dr. Kim Dismont Robinson, particularly the tireless efforts of Cultural Programme Manager Carlita Lodge, who organizes the parade. Ms. Lodge's dedication, attention to detail, and countless sleepless nights in the lead-up to the parade ensured that every aspect, both large and small, was meticulously planned and executed. Her hard work and passion were evident in the spectacular success of the event.

Madam President, this year's parade has set a high standard, and as we look forward to next year, we do so with the confidence that we will build on the strength of this year's fantastic showing. The vibrant energy, creativity, and community spirit we witnessed are a testament to the enduring strength and unity of our island.

Thank you to everyone who participated, supported, and celebrated. Together, we have made this day one to remember. Here's to the continued celebration of our vibrant culture and the spirit of Bermuda. We eagerly anticipate next year's parade,

where we will undoubtedly surpass the brilliance of this year and continue to showcase the best of what Bermuda has to offer.

Let us all cherish the memories of this remarkable day as we look forward to an even brighter and more spectacular Bermuda Day Parade in 2025.

Thank you, **Madam President.**