



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TO THE SENATE

BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP

MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT

“NATIONAL HEROES WEEKEND 2024:

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY”

WEDNESDAY 12th JUNE 2024

Madam President, June is the month when we come together to honour our National Heroes, those exemplary individuals whose courage and outstanding achievements have profoundly shaped Bermuda.

Madam President, being named a national hero is more than just a title; it is a recognition of extraordinary individuals who have made significant positive contributions to our society. Recognizing our heroes provides us with an important opportunity to celebrate our collective history, our heritage, our values as a society, and our culture. Our heroes remind us that individual

contributions can lead to significant societal change, inspiring future generations to strive for greatness.

Madam President, the desired outcomes of celebrating our national heroes include fostering a community that takes pride in the contributions made by individuals or groups, increasing awareness about Bermuda's history, heritage, and culture, and enhancing our sense of national unity and social cohesion. These outcomes are essential for building a stronger, more inclusive Bermuda.

Madam President, to honour our eight national heroes, the Department of Culture will host the annual **Premier's Concert** on Sunday, June 30th. This event, open and free to the public, showcases the best Bermudian talent. Originally designed as a youth-focused event in 1985, the Premier's Concert has evolved into a tribute to Bermuda's National Heroes, highlighting artists who have benefited from governmental support. This year's concert will feature performances by Rikka Scott of Rhythmflow, Donquili African drummers, Fire Wayne, and more. For more information, members of the public can visit www.culture.bm.

Madam President, our eight national heroes have each made unique and profound contributions to our nation. We honour **Dame Lois Browne-Evans,** a tireless advocate for equality and justice. Her powerful voice resonated in Parliament for 40 years, as she fought to create a more equitable society. Her legacy is one of relentless dedication to the betterment of Bermuda.

Dr. Edgar Fitzgerald Gordon, was a founding father of the labour movement and a pivotal leader in 20th-century Bermuda. His efforts as a Member of Parliament and his leadership in labour rights have left an indelible mark on our society.

Madam President, we honour the contributions of **Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego,** who was a civil rights leader and political activist who played a crucial role in the fight to abolish the property vote. As the founder of the Committee for Universal Adult Suffrage, his work was instrumental in ensuring fair voting rights for all Bermudians.

Sir Henry Tucker is celebrated as the architect of modern Bermuda. A founding father of international business on the

island, his vision and leadership helped shape Bermuda into a global financial center.

Madam President, Mary Prince is a Bermuda National Hero whose legacy is celebrated internationally. Born into slavery in Devonshire, she wrote a groundbreaking autobiography, *The History of Mary Prince*, published in London in 1831. Her story is recognized as a powerful testament to the abolition movement and the fight for freedom and human dignity.

Gladys Morrell, the founder of the Bermuda Woman Suffragette Society, led a 25-year battle for women's voting rights in Bermuda. Her unwavering determination ensured that women's voices would be heard and valued in our democracy.

Madam President, Sir Edward Trenton Richards was a lawyer and Member of Parliament who fought against social, racial, and political injustices. As Bermuda's first Black leader and Premier, his leadership and vision paved the way for a more just and inclusive society.

Lastly **Madam Speaker, Sir John W. Swan** holds the distinction of being Bermuda's longest-serving Premier. His negotiations between the United States and the United Kingdom established Bermuda as a major offshore financial center. Beyond his political achievements, he is also known as a real estate developer and philanthropist who has contributed greatly to our community.

Madam President, in addition to celebrating our National Heroes, June offers a variety of events that highlight our vibrant culture. National Heroes Day also coincides with the Edward Cross Long Distance Comet Race, a historic event in Bermuda's sailing calendar. This year marks the 80th anniversary of this iconic race, which takes place between the West End Sailboat Club, the Mid Atlantic Boat and Sports Club, and the East End Mini Yacht Club. This race stands as a tribute to Edward "Jack" Cross, who created the trophy awarded annually to the winner of the race. As part of a rich legacy of Black Bermudian sailing heritage, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport supports this race which stands as a celebration of our maritime history as well as the spirit of competition and camaraderie. I look forward to traveling from West End Sailboat Club on Monday morning by boat to view first-hand the start on the race in St. George's.

Finally **Madam President**, National Heroes Weekend is also synonymous with the vibrant celebration of Carnival in Bermuda, which includes the popular Raft Up and the spectacular "Revel De Road" Carnival Parade. It is a time of revelry, costumes, music, and dance, bringing our community together in a colorful display of unity and celebration.

Madam President, as we remember the contributions of our National Heroes, let us remember that their legacy is our shared history. By recognizing and celebrating their community work, we strengthen our sense of national identity and pride.

Madam President, let us continue to honour their achievements by striving for a society that upholds their values: justice, equality, and unity. In celebrating our National Heroes, we celebrate the very best of Bermuda.

Thank you, **Madam President**.