

EULOGY on the LIFE of **ERROL GLADSTONE KING “EG”**

St. George’s Cathedral, Kingstown
Friday 18th August 2006 at 3:00 p.m.

Delivered by John Horne

The eulogy that I read this afternoon is a collaborative effort. As such it is not merely a tribute but rather speaks essentially to the measure; the breadth and depth of the man whom today we lay to rest. No matter how well each of his friends and colleagues knew him no one person knew the total man totally. We are therefore indebted to Margaret Allen and others in New York for their substantial contribution.

Errol was born to Norma Hamilton and Fitzroy King on Sunday the 19th of July 1942. He passed away on Sunday 13th August 2006. He grew up in Pauls Lot now more familiarly known as Pauls Avenue and attended the Richmond Hill Government School under the headship of Tommy Saunders. His success at the Scholarship examinations earned him a Kingstown Town Board Scholarship and heralded a series of academic achievements beginning with his entry into the St. Vincent Boys’ Grammar School. To understand better the kind of student Errol was we must ask the question how many students in the history of Secondary Education in SVG obtained a double skip of forms after the first year and a skip into a senior form in the second year. Friends and family and indeed his Alma Mater were extremely proud of this young man who achieved excellent grades at the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations the then equivalents of the now CXC and “A” Level Examinations. Errol’s performance earned him the prestigious Island Scholarship and a secure place at the University of the West Indies Mona Jamaica where he pursued the Medical Sciences.

In the year in which he did the Second MB examinations he received two of the three awards bestowed. Upon graduation Dr. King embarked on his internship at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados and completed his residency at the Lennox Hill Hospital in New York City. Dr. King specialized as a General Surgeon and was Board-Certified by the American Board of Surgery. Following this period of training at Lennox Hill Hospital he worked in private practice in Arkansas for several years. Errol had had time to hone his skills and make the commitment to return to his country of birth to give service in acknowledgement of the benefits he had received. Dr. King took up work at the Kingstown General Hospital and served his people from 1984 to 1987. Perhaps the finest tribute paid to Dr. Errol

Gladstone King was by a nurse who had worked with him in the Kingstown General Hospital Operating Theatre and who, upon hearing of his passing, recounted the incidental lectures she received from this doctor. She said that in the course of an operation the doctor would ask "Nurse what is this?" and the nurse would name the part or organ after which the doctor would proceed to detail its composition, function and relative importance.

EG the Sportsman

But EG was not only academics and intellectual discourse. He was a sportsman, cultural enthusiast and Philanthropist. In athletics, specifically track and field, he won consistently at High Jump. He represented the Grammar School at the 1960 Windward Islands Inter-Schools tournament in several events and at football. He also played with the Eagles Club football team. While at University EG developed a love for Lawn Tennis and remained passionate about it. So committed he was that he spared no effort in obtaining tennis scholarships to a College in the United States for two Vincentians. One of these persons coached tennis in Europe and in St. Vincent and both returned home eventually and have since contributed to training at the National Tennis Centre at Golden Vale. Not surprisingly the SVG Lawn Tennis Association recently paid glowing tribute to EG's involvement in the development of and support for Tennis. EG was instrumental in acquiring team blazers for a SVG football team to enable them to take part in the march pass of an international tournament. We heard also that our friend and brother was eagerly looking forward to World Cup Cricket 2007.

The Philanthropist

EG King's tireless efforts to assist Vincentians and his homeland St. Vincent and the Grenadines, his undying commitment to the social upliftment of Vincentians and Caribbean peoples in the diaspora, his determination to be always intimately involved in the administration of organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life of Vincentians through enhancement of Health Care, Education and other Social Services all comprise a formidable undertaking by one man. One of the contributors to this tribute reminds us that for several years this man has organized, with and without help, the collection and shipment of trophies for the St. Vincent Grammar School graduation ceremonies. We are told further that on several occasions EG has driven long distances to collect books and other reading material and ship them to the Ministry of Education and to the School Library. He has

organized the purchase, collection and shipment of medical equipment and supplies for the hospital. Similarly, football gear has been collected and shipped to the local Football Federation.

When one reads the list of organizations of which Errol was a member one is left in no doubt about the zeal with which he strove to keep the flag of SVG aloft and fluttering in the breeze.

- He was an active member of the Friends of the St. Vincent Grammar School,
- the Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Organisations - on which he served as President for two years
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines American Medical Association
- the Guild of Graduates of the UWI
- member of the Editorial Board of Carib-beat magazine of the New York Daily NEWS Newspaper
- Friends of SVG for the Promotion of Secondary Education (FSVGS Inc.)
- He represented the Vincentian Community serving as Vice Chair in the National Council of Caribbean Organisations - a Washington based group.

It is for me a proud moment to stand here and proclaim the friendship and brotherhood to which Errol contributed as a member of that extraordinary organization THE BRIDGE BOYS. It was that organization that spawned THE EAGLES CLUB which was involved in just about every sporting activity except Boxing perhaps at least not the official sport. Any informal involvement in it would not have been among the membership but rather on its behalf and or in defense of the unfortunate, downtrodden and dispossessed. Believe it or not Errol even played Carnival. I can see him now brandishing his sword as he breasted Victoria Park. During the past week I received telephone calls from Roy Austin presently in Pennsylvania and away from his ambassadorial duties in Trinidad and Tobago, from Bernard Hewitt in New York - a former Senior Customs Officer, from Ardon Bess - Actor in Toronto who is currently performing in a Season of shows at a Toronto Park and who dedicated one of his performances this week to his friend EG King, from Raymond England - in Toronto who is at the fore-front of Cultural promotions involving the Vincentian and Caribbean diaspora of North America. Meanwhile the local chapter of the Bridge Boys is represented here today by Leroy Mulraine, Winston Spence, Dennis London, 'Cims' Martin and myself.

We know that EG had dedicated himself to many organizations but perhaps none moreso than his alma mater - the St. Vincent Grammar School. Those of us including one Bassy Alexander will never forget the experiences of preparing for last years reunion of the Class of 54-55. The gathering was convened by telephone

calls and held at the School. At the first meeting EG took his place at the head of the table and things proceeded apace. On the issue of dress for the church service it was agreed that members would wear the school uniform minus blazers for those who did not have them. This meant white shirt, school tie, grey pants. After listening attentively one bright spark, Norrell Mc Kenzie by name in his usual soft voice politely asked Chairman EG, and I quote "Chairman, would it be ok if I wore my short khaki pants?" There was a pause, silence, the Chairman put his head down, raised it, raised his eyebrows, threw his head to the left and then to the right then bowed a couple of times. After the meeting EG goes to Bassy and says "that fellow Mc Kenzie thinks he still in the Junior School, he's not serious, he is still a disruptive element. I don't think we should have him at the next meeting," he said half jokingly. That night Sebastian Zinc Alexander calls Norrel and says to him, "Norrel, EG thought you made a tremendous contribution to today's meeting and he will be glad to see you there next week." Some members of the Class of 54-55 are here today resplendent in their school uniform to pay tribute to a stalwart among us.

Errol put his literary skills to good use as he played a leading role in the publication of a booklet on George A. Mc Intosh a patriot and one of the early pioneers of a new St. Vincent and West Indies

In the midst of glowing tribute to a life lived to the fullest let us not believe that Errol did not have to ride out horrific storms that threatened his existence. It is to his credit that, notwithstanding any negative impact on his psyche, he battled three notable incidents in his life and survived even if perhaps battle-scarred. These incidents occurred at specific periods in his life - as a secondary school student, as a family man and in his chosen profession. In all of this extraordinary activity Errol experienced bouts of ill health but he soldiered on.

One of Errol's closest friends is quoted as saying "for all his successes he remains as loving and dutiful a son that any mother can bring forth." Errol held his parents in high esteem, cared for and cared his mother Miss Norma with a passion. The same love that he received he transmitted to his only child his son Erick to whom he was a devoted and caring father. In Betty's words he was a great father to Erik! And what of Erik? If ever there was a near perfect cross over in personality between mother and father - it is Erik - articulate, bright, self confident, straight forward and to the point. The legacy lives on.

Today we give God thanks for the life of a devoted member of this congregation of the Cathedral Church of St. George who attended Sunday mass at 5:30 a.m.

most times but also at 7:00 a.m. His mother Norma, father Fitzroy, Betty, Erik, Oswald Ash - Uncle, Thora Hamilton - Aunt, The Creese family of Marcella, Joyce Marcus and their Spouses, the Etienne, Ryan, Osborne, Hamilton, King, Rose, Boyea and Sutherland families, the many other relatives and friends including Margaret all give thanks to God for this model of humanity who gave so much without expecting anything in return.

In the words of Ann Landers - "Class is an aura of confidence that is being sure without being cocky. Class has nothing to do with money. Class never runs scared. It is self-discipline and self-knowledge. It's the sure footedness that comes with having proved you can meet life."

And so I can quote aptly from a character in the Trinidadian playwright Errol John's "Moon on a Rainbow Shawl".... "Poopa you was class!"

Rest peacefully Errol. Thanks for so much.