

THE POST-WAR ERA

During the 1950's, New York City became a place for young Bahamians to come to pursue their University studies. Like the founding fathers of the Association, Bahamian students saw the need to adopt the principles of sharing, caring and maintaining community while away from home. The Bahamian students found an open welcome to the Association.

It was not long before students felt the need to establish a students' organization. Mr. Ernest Strachan, a dedicated worker within the Association, became the first president of the Bahamas Student Association on June 14, 1959. This vibrant student group flourished during the sixties and seventies. Many of the members have returned to the Bahamas and have made sizeable contributions to the growth and development of the country. People like Mr. John Deleveaux, Executive Director - Bahamas Hotel Association, Mr. David Saunders of the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation, The Former Governor of the Central Bank, Mr. Bill Allen, prominent local actress Gwen Kelly and others. Mr. Strachan, who had ascended the ranks of the United Nations, returned home and was performing a pivotal function in the foreign affairs activities of the country before he passed.

Perhaps most notable out of this era of student sponsored activity was the support given to the late Dr. Doris Johnson, leader of the woman's suffrage movement in the Bahamas. Dr. Johnson, the first and only female to serve in the Government of the Bahamas at the time, was a member of the Association. While completing her doctoral studies at New York University, she received financial support from the Association, and was instrumental in establishing a scholarship program to assist other students in the New York City area.

The Nassau Bahamas Association continues to build the bonds of community within the New York City area and in the Bahamas. Here in New York City, the Association has served as a food distribution point for local citizens in need of assistance. It sponsored thanksgiving dinners for Senior Citizens, and hosts a Christmas party for neighborhood children. In the Bahamas, the Association has made financial contributions to the Princess Margaret Hospital, The Ranfurly Home for Children, The Home for Retarded Children and the Mother's Club. In 1967, the Association had the distinction of hosting Prime Minister Pindling and Lady Pindling, recognizing his victory in becoming Prime Minister.

THE EIGHTIES

The 1980's is proving to be a decade of destiny. The Nassau Bahamas Association weathered a serious crisis. Forces from without and within threatened a collapse and destruction of the organization. There was a crisis at the leadership level and problems at the membership level. It became clear that the future would require a restructuring of the organization, an improved system of management and the institution of modern business practices in the conduct of affairs of the organization. Happily, these noble strengths in Bahamian character emerged triumphant as the membership supported the progressive changes needed to prepare the organization to face the challenges of the nineties and beyond. The day November 14, 1987 was indeed the Finest Hour in the history of the Nassau Bahamas Association. It was the proud occasion at the celebration of our 75th Anniversary.

However, the Association in the decade of the nineties has experienced a period of internal and external challenges, but also a period of reclamation, which has carried through to the present day! HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL TO THE OPTIMIST, and experience has taught us THAT WINNERS NEVER QUIT, AND QUITTERS NEVER WIN!

Therefore, in the spirit of winners, we envision in this new millennium a reclaimed, and renovated building, at 211 West 137th Street, in New York City, which will provide a basement and sub-basement area for the Association's use; a first floor to host or sponsor seminars, conferences, community and cultural events; and a second and third floor area, which will compliment the activities of the first floor, or other uses consistent with the charter of our not-for-profit organization.

Our success as a people who have survived a long history of challenges, political as well as social, will not be accomplished purely by the increase of material wealth, but rather by the GUIDING STAR OF THE FOUNDERS, as exemplified in their vision of PERSEVERANCE, TENACITY AND COURAGE.