

EDWIN GERALD NAPOLEON ARCHER

Portrait of A proud and productive New York Bahamian



It can be said that in 1959 when Eddie Archer arrived in New York to take up residence, to be educated, and to begin a new life, the whole Bahamian landscape in the Big Apple was wonderfully changed. Over the intervening 44 years there has hardly been a single one of the thousands of Bahamians who has lived in or passed through New York who has not been delightfully touched directly or indirectly by this quiet, unassuming, but passionately patriotic ambassador.

The son of the late Alphonso N. Archer and Gertrude I. Archer of Nassau Bahamas, Edwin Gerald Napoleon Archer was born on Friday 2nd August 1935 in East Street, where his enterprising parents resided and operated the popular Archer's Inn, once famous for his delectable native dishes.

He attended Southern Primary, Junior and Senior Schools, and in 1949, at the age of 14, Edwin left school and began work at the late Sir Elienne Dupuch's Nassau Daily Tribune, the leading newspaper of the day.

At the paper he was apprenticed to veteran linotype operators Arthur Foukias (now Sir Arthur), and the late Samuel Haven, Percival Ford, Dennis Fernandez, and Louise Hall. In time Edwin became one of the leading linotype operators at the newspaper, a capability which, was later to stand him in extremely good stead when he arrived in New York to begin the second part of his life. Early in 1957, Edwin left The Tribune and went to work for the morning daily, The Nassau Guardian, under the supervision

of Hubert Wong. He remained at the Guardian until August of 1959.

Baptised and confirmed at St. Agnes Anglican Church in Grant's Town, Edwin became active in the historic church as an acolyte and thurifer, on the watch of the late great Canon Milton E. Cooper. He was also a member of the Boys Brigade at Wesley Methodist Church, and then headed by the late Captain Simpson Penn.

In 1957 when the priest/playwright Rev. John E. Taylor served as curate at St. Agnes and revived his former Little Theatre Players, Edwin became a member and played outstanding roles in various productions. Some speculated that Edwin anticipated a Broadway career once he hit New York, however, the suave East Street fellow remained smilingly silent on that point.

Having been accepted for study at Rhodes Preparatory School in Manhattan, Edwin arrived in New York in August 1959, and took up residence with Mrs. Maud Gibson in upper Harlem and later that year, with his fellow St. Agnes alumnus P. Anthony White, he moved to 123rd Street, where they and other students from the care and unstinting kindness of surrogate Bahamian mother and late Mrs. Adriana Thompson.

Edwin graduated from Rhodes School in 1962. He also attended Bronx Community College, and later enrolled in the school of General Studies at Brooklyn College.

The lovely and charming Joan E. Higgs, niece of Rev. John and Coral Taylor, caught Edwin's eye soon after he arrived in New York. There was definitely romance in the Empire State air. The couple were eventually married by the bride's uncle at St. Alban the Martyr Church in Jamaica, Queens New York, on Saturday 16 June 1962.

Members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church on Decatur Street in Brooklyn since 1971, on 16 June this year, Edwin and Joan celebrated their 41st anniversary. They are the proud parents of one son, Edwin A. C. Archer, daughter-in-law Kim E. and grandsons Edwin R.W. and Christian E.V. Archer. Another son, Ricardo Knowles, reside in Nassau, Bahamas with his mother, Andrea Sawyer.

A member of the original Bahamian Students Association (of which Joan was secretary), and a member of the Nassau Bahamas Association, Inc. since the 1970's Edwin is today a member of St. Philip's Harvest Committee and the Crusaders Guild, Brotherhood of St. Andrew's chapter.

In New York, while attending school Edwin took up employment as a linotype operator, and later when modern technology came on-stream, he easily moved into the highly demanding area of proofreading, particularly with financial printers. In 1997 he retired as a member of the New York Typographical Printers Union, Local 6, but returned to work, that same as a proofreader at New York's Merrill Lynch Corporation, as one of the city's leading financial printers, where he is still employed.

Above and beyond the serious responsibilities of obtaining an education, making a home, caring for a family, Edwin has always gone out of his way to remain knowledgeable about every important issue relating to The Bahamas, has made it a point of attendance at important United Nations sessions involving The Bahamas, and has never failed to respond to invitations or other request from the Consulate.

Over four decades Edwin Gerald Napoleon Archer has become perhaps the most exhaustive, and concerned Bahamian resource in New York City, and is today a proud and productive Bahamian ambassador.