

### **Founders of the Berkeley Institute**

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1879, the first meeting of the Berkeley Education Society was held at the home of Samuel David Robinson on Princess Street. A subsequent meeting was held one week later and from this meeting The Berkeley Institute was formed. The founders comprised of Samuel David Robinson, Joseph Henry Thomas, Richard Henry Duerden, William Henry Thomas Joell, Eugenius Charles Jackson, Charles William Thomas Smith, William Orlando F. Bascome, John Henry Jackson, Samuel Parker Sr., Samuel Parker Jr. and Henry T. Dyer. United in their quest to provide the opportunity for black Bermudians to receive a high school education, the founders proudly established The Berkeley Institute and its doors were opened on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1897 at Samaritan's Hall.

### **The Young Men's Friendly Institution**

The Young Men's Friendly Institution was the first of the friendly institutions or lodges formed to serve the needs of black Bermudians. Founded by free black Richard Tucker, on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1832, it remained in existence for more than 30 years. Its role in securing freedom for the *Enterprise* slaves has ensured its place in history.

### **Founders of the Bermuda Union of Teachers**

The Bermuda Union of Teachers, Bermuda's oldest union, was formed in February 1919 by educators Adele Tucker, cousins Matilda and Edith Crawford and Rev. Rufus Stovell. These founders laid the groundwork for the creation of a union. It was the start of a long struggle to raise salaries and improve working conditions for black teachers. In 1947 the Bermuda Union of Teachers was the first union to register under the Island's first trade union law.

### **Founders of the Bermuda Workers Association**

During the construction of two U.S. bases during the Second World War master carpenters Gerald Brangman, Robert Wilson and William David discovered that they were being paid less than their American counterparts. In July 1944, the three formed the NOB Workmen's Association and at a mass meeting elected Mr. Brangman as president, Mr. Wilson, vice-president and Mr. Davis, treasurer. At a subsequent meeting, support for the organization island-wide prompted name change to the Bermuda Workers Association and Dr. E. F. Gordon replaced Gerald Brangman as president. Under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Gordon, the BWA fought for trade union legislation and social democratic form.

### **Leaders of the Bermudiana Theatre Club Protest**

In 1951, after being denied tickets to attend plays, Hilton Hill, his wife Georgine Hill, sister Carol Hill and cousin Eva Robinson carried pickets on Front Street to protect against the segregationist policies of the Bermudiana Theatre. Word filtered back to the United States and the United Kingdom, shining a light on segregation in Bermuda. Support for the protest came from various overseas entities and was raised in the House of Parliament in London. The Bermudiana Theatre Club protest is considered a forerunner of the 1959 Theatre Boycott, which ended segregation in theatres, hotels and restaurants.

### **Founder of the Progressive Labour Party**

Two months after Parliament passed a historic bill giving all adults the right to vote, Bermuda's first political party burst on the scene. The Progressive Labour Party was founded in February 1963 by seven men: Wilfred "Mose" Allen, Walter N. H. Robinson, Hugh "Rio" Richardson, Robert Austin Wilson, Albert "Peter" Smith, Dilton Cann and Edward deJean.

They were seeking, among other things, an end to racial discrimination, better housing and health care and greater educational opportunities for all Bermudians. The PLP fielded a slate of nine candidates in the May 1963 election and six were successful at the polls.

The PLP's electoral success had far-reaching implications for Bermuda. One year later, the United Bermuda Party was established. Over the next four decades, Bermuda would experience its share of political trials and triumphs, but with the formation of PLP, Bermuda was put on the path to becoming the more democratic society its founder had envisioned.

### **William Henry Thomas Joell (1838-1885)**

William H.T. Joell was the first black person to win a seat in the House of Parliament in May 1883. A carpenter and cabinet-maker by trade, William Joell carved the original staircase of the Wesley Methodist Church and built the Glebe Road in Pembroke. He was one of the founders of the first Co-operative store on Court Street and also one of 11 founders of the Berkeley Educational Society.

### **Julian Tucker (1843-1904)**

Mason Julian Tucker was singled out in the media for his work as a head builder of the tower and steeple at St. Mark's Church in Smith's Parish. It is believed that several black tradesmen helped build the tower and steeple but Julian Tucker is the only one who was ever publicly identified. He later built a modified replica of the steeple and tower for St. Paul AME Church.

### **William Francis Wilson II (1869 – 1932)**

William F. Wilson was a master mason, loyal lodgeman, committed Anglican and Garveyite. He helped to build landmarks and create community institutions. He led the rebuilding of the Colonial opera House and worked on the construction of St. Monica's Mission and Alexandrina Lodge. An enterprising business man, he established the Colonial Mineral Water Factory as well as the North Village Savings Club and was an active member of St. Monica's Mission. His legacy lives on at the William F. Wilson Park on St. Monica's Road.

### **Horace Francis Musson (1880 – 1971)**

Horace Musson's Machine Shop was a Court Street institution for nearly 70 years. In it, he repaired everything from lawn mowers to baby carriages and sharpened tools. Mr. Musson qualified as an engine fitter after completing a rigorous six-year apprenticeship at HM Dockyard. In 1914, at the outbreak of the

First World War, he began an association with the St. George's Machine Ship, servicing war ships. Mr. Musson, who was also an inventor, established a reputation within local shipping companies for his outstanding work.

### **Millicent Neverson, MBE (1882-1975)**

Millicent Neverson devoted herself to the causes of education, youth development and social welfare. She came to Bermuda in 1921 from the West Indies to teach at The Berkeley Institute and later opened Excelsior Secondary School. In 1932 she successfully established Bermuda's first black Girl Guide Company, First Excelsior, and due to high interest established the Second Excelsior Girl Guide Company two years later. In 1948 she formed an orphanage, The Haven, where she ran a school. She also served on the Social Welfare Board and the Juvenile Panel. Her commitment to enhancing the lives of young people led to the award of MBE and a papal citation.

### **Agnes May Robinson (1885-1954)**

Agnes May Robinson was the founder of the Sunshine League, Bermuda's oldest charity. A member of the first class of The Berkeley Institute, she became interested in children's homes while living in Philadelphia, where she spent a year taking a hat-making course. That, along with concerns about child poverty in Bermuda, led her to found the Sunshine League in 1919. In 1929 the Sunshine League opened a day nursery, which later became a children's home. Agnes Robinson was recognised for her work in 1937, with the award of a Coronation Medal.

### **Alfred Brownlow "A.B." Place**

A.B. Place was one of five men who started the *Bermuda Recorder*, Bermuda's first black newspaper, in 1925. Many predicted that that newspaper would survive for just six months, but it remained in existence for one week short of 50 years. During his 45 years with the paper, A.B. Place served as manager, printer and advertising manager, and also at various times as managing editor. The *Recorder* covered local and international news, chronicled social events and milestones and gave black journalists a foothold in the newspaper industry. For his contribution to journalism, A.B. Place was awarded the Queen's Certificate and Badge of Honour in 1974.

### **Victor Scott, MBE (1896 – 1977) and Edna Mae Scott, MBE (1907-2007)**

Victor Scott, ably supported by wife Edna Mae, can claim credit for putting Central School on the map as one of the island's top primary schools. Victor Scott took over the reins of Central in 1934, with a proven record as a gifted headmaster in his native Jamaica and at West End School. He set high standards in the classroom and introduced innovative extra-curricular programmes. Edna Mae Scott joined Central in 1943 as a classroom teacher. As director of Central's choir she led students in concerts, radio and television performances and at the annual schools' Festival of Music. The Scotts helped mould the lives of hundreds of students, including at least two premiers, in their formative years. After his death, Central was renamed in Victor Scott's honour. Edna Mae continued to contribute to education as principal of Elliot and then Harrington Sound Primary School.

### **Wesley LeRoy Tucker, CBE (1907 – 1963)**

W.L. Tucker has been hailed as the 'Father of the Franchise Bill' for the part he played in the long struggle to win full voting rights for all Bermudians. He was a prominent business man, a Member of Parliament, the first black member of the Executive Council and the first black president of the Bermuda Employers Council. In 1958, he brought a bill to Parliament that sought to give adults who were not property owners the right to vote. As chairman of a parliamentary committee, W.L. Tucker led the bill through Parliament. The bill, which became law in December 1962, fell short of what Tucker had envisioned, but it led to all adults over age 25 getting full voting rights ahead of a May 1963 election. In June 1963 he became the first black Bermudian awarded the CBE.

### **Vernon Jackson (1907-1996)**

Vernon Jackson left an enviable legacy as a policeman, restaurateur and hotelier and as a chronicler of his family history in the book *The Jackson Clan*. He was a policeman for 14 years, but quit the Force at age 40 because he was denied the opportunity to receive overseas training because of his race. He and his wife Nina then opened the Blue Jay Restaurant, which was one of Hamilton's most popular eateries during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1962, they started Sapphire Bay Cottage Colony on South Shore, which became a magnet for many visiting celebrities including Joe Louis and Dionne Warwick. During retirement, Vernon Jackson discovered his talent for writing and gave lively accounts of his life and careers in newspaper columns and his book.

### **Dame Marjorie Bean, DBE (1909 – 2001)**

Dame Marjorie Bean overcame obstacles encountered by countless black women of her time with dignity and grace. She was an influential education and cultural icon, whose impeccable diction and penchant for perfectionism put her in a class of her own. Dame Marjorie Bean served as a classroom teacher at Central School and The Berkeley Institute and was appointed as the first black supervisor of school in 1949. In 198- she became the first woman appointed to the Upper House and in 1995 she became the Bermudian woman to receive a knighthood.

### **Alma "Champ" Hunt, OBE (1910-1999)**

Champ Hunt is regarded the finest cricket player ever produced by Bermuda. He dominated the game as a player and administrator for more than 50 years. He started his career with Somerset Cricket Club, went on to captain both Somerset and Bermuda, and became the first Bermudian cricketer to establish himself as a professional overseas and represented Scotland at the international level. He is the only Bermudian ever to have been invited to play a trial match for the West Indies Test team. He later became a respected sports journalist and influential administrator in the game, holds positions within the Bermuda Cricket Board of Control and the International Cricket Council. The ICC Trophy, the World Cup qualifying tournament for non-Test nations, was his brainchild.

### **The Brangman sisters – Olga (1911-2004), Mary (1916-2011) and Mona (1919-2005)**

Olga Brangman, OBE, with the help of her sisters Mary and Mona brought up scores of children at their home on Glebe Road, Pembroke. Olga founded the Brangman Home and ran it full time for 40 years. Her sister Mona and Mary both made significant contributions as well. Mona, a teacher, helped with homework and ran summer camps, while Mary cooked breakfast and packed as many as 20 school lunches every day. In 1972, Olga moved to the Government property Penhurst, where she spent nine years before retiring. Children raised at the home are today making their own contributions to society as teachers, nurses, secretaries, writers and accountants, and in numerous other ways, a testament to the dedication and selflessness of the Brangman sisters.

#### **Dr. Kenneth E. Robinson, OBE (1911-1978)**

Dr. Kenneth E. Robinson rose up through the ranks to become Bermuda's first Chief Education Officer. He gave much to education, as a role model and mentor, and as an advocate for training, improved facilities and higher salaries for the island's underpaid teachers. He served as president of the Bermuda Union of Teachers during a period known as the 'Fighting Forties' and helped put the Union on a firmer footing. Historians are indebted to Dr. Robinson for his book *Heritage*, which documents the accomplishment of black Bermudians during the pre-post Emancipation period. *Heritage* was a realisation of his commitment to "write black into the history of Bermuda."

#### **Cecil Dismont, OBE (1915 – 2004)**

Cecil Dismont's election in 1988 as the first black Mayor of Hamilton capped 30 years of service as a member of the Corporation of Hamilton. His election, which signalled the falling of another barrier for black Bermudians, won broad approval and was also vindication for his father Albert, whose bid for a seat on the Corporation was unsuccessful. During his tenure, Hamilton became a more accessible city for people with disabilities. The popular Concerts in the Park were starting during his tenure. In 2003, the city fathers renamed Dismont Drive in his honour.

#### **Lancelot Hayward (1916-1991)**

One of Bermuda's most celebrated musicians, Lance Hayward achieved success locally and overseas. Blind since infancy, he was raised in a musical home, where he taught himself to play the piano and later studied classical piano with Joseph Richards. Striking out as a professional musician, he formed the Hayward and Hayward Vocal Ensemble, and appeared at venues all over Bermuda. In 1966, frustrated by limited work opportunities, he moved to New York. He found steady work at the Village Corner, playing solo piano and winning a new set of fans. When he died in 1991, his obituary was carried in the *New York Times* – an indication of his status in the New York music scene.

#### **Earl Cameron, CBE (1917 -)**

Earl Cameron has won a place in the annals of film as a pioneering black British actor. His ground breaking role in the 1951 film *Pool of London* made him a star. Born on Angle Street, Earl had no aspiration to be an actor. He left Bermuda in 1939 and joined the crew of a merchant ship. Several years later he was stranded in London and found work as a kitchen porter. His acting career came about totally by accident. He appeared in nearly 40 films as well as in stage plays and television programmes. In 2005, he was called out of retirement to appear with Nicole Kidman in the film, *The Interpreter*. In recent years, he has received greater recognition in his homeland, most recently in 2012 when City Hall Theatre was renamed in his honour.

#### **Dr. Earl Edward Seaton (1924-1992)**

Dr. Earle Seaton spent a large part of his distinguished international career working in the newly emerging nations in Africa. He received his legal training in London, and later obtained a PhD in International Relations from the University of Southern California. He spent many years in Tanzania, representing the United Nations. As Puisne Judge in Bermuda's Supreme Court, he presided over the murder trial of Erskine "Buck" Burrows and Larry Tacklyn. He was Chief Justice of the Seychelles for 10 years and spent two years as an Appellate Judge in Uganda.

#### **Rev. Canon Thomas Nisbett, OBE (1925-)**

Canon Thomas Nisbett overcame institutional resistance and roadblocks with his ordination in 1963 as Bermuda's first black Anglican priest. He has been active in the Anglican Church since the age of eight when he became a choirboy at the St. Monica's Mission. He later served as an altar boy, becoming a lay reader at age 16. He has served at St. John's Church, Pembroke and was the long time rector of Christ Church, Devonshire. Canon Nisbett, who was honorary chairman of the Anti-Apartheid Group during the 1980s, paved the way for others.

#### **Alpheus "Ardie" Black, MBE (1925-)**

Born black and poor in segregated Bermuda, Alpheus "Ardie" Black learned early on that hard work and discipline could help him achieve success. At age 16 he was taken on as a blacksmith's apprentice. Seven years later, he was running the business where he learnt his trade and later bought out the owner. Over the years, Black's Metal Works adapted to changing times and became a King Street institution and he became a North Hamilton Icon.

#### **Ruth Seaton James, MBE (1926-1970)**

With her appointment as Registrar General in 1966, Ruth Seaton James became the first black person to head a Government department in Bermuda. Her initial attempt to join the civil service was rebuffed because of her race. She was subsequently offered a position as a clerk in the Registry General, which put her on the path to her appointment to the top post. In April 1968 she was praised by Governor Lord Mortonmere for her efficient preparation of the voters list for the forthcoming general election in May. Her career was cut short by cancer; however the Ruth Seaton James Centre for the Performing Arts is a lasting tribute to her contribution.

**Rev. Dr. Merle Brock Swan Williams, MBE (1929 -)**

Hundreds of young people have Merle Brock Swan Williams to thank for giving them a second chance. While a teacher at The Berkeley Institute, she began tutoring five students who had left school before obtaining a high school diploma. This led her to found the Adult Education School in 1958. The school has been a lifeline for students wishing to obtain a high school qualification to enable them to proceed on to college. She was the director of the school for 30 years and did not get a salary until 1980 when the school received a Government grant. Rotary International's Paul Harris Fellow and an honorary doctorate are just two of the awards Merle Brock Swan Williams has received of the years in recognition of her contributions.

## **INDIVIDUALS**

John Adderley

David H. Augustus

Dr. Norma Astwood

Dr. Barbara Ball

Thyra Bascome

John G. Bassett

Sydney Bean

Maria Benn

Dr. Roosevelt Brown (Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego) **NATIONAL HERO**

Aurelia Burch

Mary Busby

Marie Swan Carmichael

Grace Janet Clarke

Doris Corbin

David Critchley

Matilda "Mattie" Crawford

Robert C. Crawford

Maude Bascome Cummings

Wilfred DeGraff Sr.

Hazard F. Dill

Philip Dublin and the Dublinairs

Phyllis Edness

Dame Lois Browne-Evans **NATIONAL HERO**

James Flood

Kenneth Flood

Eddie Fough

Arnold Francis

Cecil Frith

Wesley and Cora Gayle

Dr. E. F. Gordon **NATIONAL HERO**

William "Chummy" Hayward

Albert Jackson

Jean Jacques

Dr. Clarence James

Ida James

Jonathan James

Wenona Jennings

W.E.R. Joell

Reid Johannsen

Perry Johnson

Sally Jones

Robert Kennedy

Edith King

Dr. V. Odonell King

Ebenezer Lespere

Joseph Mills Sr.

Archie and Lillian Minors



Olivette Morris  
Eli Nisbett  
Ifor Nisbett  
Thomas Nisbett  
Charles Ebenezer Norford  
Reginald Place  
James 'Dick' Richards  
Joseph Richards  
Campbell Richardson  
Hugh Richardson  
Walter Robinson  
Valerie Scott  
Eunice Ming Simons  
Ottiwell Simmons  
Dr. Charles Smith  
Rev. Daniel J. Smith  
Hubert Smith  
Ida J. Smith  
Morris 'Syke' Smith  
Reginald Hilgrove Smith  
Herbert G. A. Stirling  
Alice Stovell  
Dr. T.C. Stowe  
Sir John Swan  
Kingsley Swan Sr.  
Mark Swan  
Nellie Swan  
Norman Augustus Swan  
Thelma Wilson-Tucker  
John Herbert Taylor  
Rev. Harold R. Thomas  
Joseph Henry Thomas  
Dr. Dorothy Thompson  
George Trott  
Olive Richardson Trott  
Carl P. Wade  
L. Frederick Wade  
John James Warner  
Dr. Leon Williams  
Ray Williams  
Sadie Williams  
Frederick Yearwood  
**GROUPS**  
Al Davis and Band  
Leopards Club  
Pembroke Community Centre