



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Department of Culture

# 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BERMUDA DAY PARADE



# FOR THE CULTURE

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

VISIT THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

[www.culture.bm](http://www.culture.bm) #ForTheCulture #BermudaDay

# BERMUDA DAY 2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## MORNING

- 8:15 AM**      **Sinclair Packwood Memorial Youth Cycle Race**  
Start: Red Hole, Paget  
Finish: Cedar Avenue
- 8:20 AM**      **Sinclair Packwood Memorial Cycle Race**  
Start: Somerset  
Finish: Cedar Avenue
- 8:30 AM**      **Bermuda Half Marathon Derby**  
Start: Somerset  
Finish: Bernard's Park
- 8:40 AM**      **4-Person & 2-Person Relay Race**  
Start: Somerset  
Finish: Bernard's Park
- 8:50 AM**      **Heritage Junior Classic Race**  
Start: Docksidiers, 121 Front Street  
Finish: Bernard's Park

## AFTERNOON

- 1:30 PM**      **Bermuda Day Parade**  
Start: Albuoy's Point, Front Street  
Finish: Marsh Folly Road/Dutton Avenue

**Parade coverage will be streaming live on CITV and The Government of Bermuda Facebook page from 1:30 PM.**





## MESSAGE FROM THE **PREMIER**

On Friday, May 22, 2026, Bermuda Day will once again bring our community together in celebration. From the energy of the races to the vibrancy of the parade, we will see our culture on full display through the people who take part and those who support the day's events.

Bermuda Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate the legacy that continues to shape who we are today. While embracing our diverse histories and heritage, we come together as one people to observe this year's theme, "For the Culture".

This year's theme is a reminder of what connects us. Our culture is the common thread within all of our lives that makes us proud to be Bermudian. It is the parade, the Gombeyes, majorettes, and dance groups that we lined the streets of Hamilton to see. It is our food, and the conversations we have in our family camps. Bermuda's culture is in the work of our local artists, our athletes, and all those who carry our island's story beyond our shores.

Our culture is also in our warmth and hospitality. We are proud to welcome our visitors to celebrate this special time with us. A unique time and experience that they will only get here in Bermuda.

As this will be my final Bermuda Day message as Premier, I thank you, my fellow Bermudians, for how welcoming you have been to me on every Bermuda Day. Welcoming me into your camps, sharing food, taking pictures, cheering on the runners and allowing me to enjoy the parade with you and your families. Thank you for your kind words, your honest feedback, and most of all, for welcoming my family and me with a smile, a hug, and plenty of laughs and wonderful memories.

I extend my appreciation to The Hon. Owen K. Darrell, Minister of Tourism & Transport, Culture & Sport, and his team for their continued dedication to celebrating and strengthening our cultural heritage.

On behalf of the Government of Bermuda, Happy Bermuda Day!

**The Hon. E. David G. Burt, JP, MP**  
Premier of Bermuda



## MESSAGE FROM THE **MINISTER**

As we gather to celebrate Bermuda Day once again, we are reminded of the power of culture to unite, inspire, and define us as a people. Bermuda Day is one of the most cherished expressions of Bermuda's identity, a vibrant celebration of our traditions, creativity, and community spirit.

This year's Heritage Month theme, "For The Culture", is both a celebration and a call to action. It speaks to the importance of honouring the traditions that have shaped us while continuing to invest in the cultural expressions that keep Bermuda's spirit alive for future generations. Our culture lives in the rhythm of the Gombeyes, the pride of our majorettes, the artistry of our dancers, musicians, and float builders, and in the stories and traditions passed down through generations.

"For The Culture" is about recognising that our heritage is not simply something we remember, it is something we actively live, protect, and promote. Every parade participant, community group, volunteer, and supporter contributes to preserving the unique character of Bermuda and strengthening the sense of belonging that connects us all.

On Bermuda Day, we see our culture on full display. From the determination of the Half-Marathon Derby participants and cyclists in the Sinclair Packwood Memorial Race to the colour, music, and excitement that fill the streets of Hamilton during the parade, this day reminds us of the pride we share as Bermudians.

I encourage everyone to embrace this year's celebrations with joy, respect, and appreciation for the traditions that continue to shape our identity. Whether you are performing, supporting loved ones along the route, or simply taking part in the festivities, know that you are helping to carry our culture forward.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Department of Culture, parade participants, organisers, volunteers, and all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make Bermuda Day possible each year. Your dedication ensures that our heritage continues to thrive and evolve.

May this Bermuda Day be filled with pride, unity, and unforgettable memories for you and your families.

Happy Bermuda Day!

**The Hon. Owen K. Darrell, JP, MP**  
Minister of Tourism & Transport, Culture & Sport



MESSAGE FROM THE  
**LEADER OF THE  
OPPOSITION**

Bermuda Day is by far one of my most favourite holidays of the year. It's a time when residents from across the island join together for one common goal—to enjoy the day set aside each year to celebrate our unique culture. But what does culture mean to you? Whether it's watching the cyclists and runners in the morning and then enjoying the parade, spending the day at the beach or on the water, or simply relaxing at home with loved ones, happily pass along with each year.

Culture to me is preparing a traditional Bermudian meal with all the fixings that my grandmother and mother used to make, and enjoying it as I watch the city come to life with the vibrant colours of the Bermuda Day costumes, and off course the all too familiar pulsating beat of the bass drums accompanying the Gombeyes.

This is culture. This is Bermuda.

Today is an opportunity for strangers to assemble as friends, for tourists to witness and indulge in our traditions. It's a day for peace, unity and celebration; where differences should not matter and commonalities strengthen our bonds.

No matter what you do today, enjoy it to the fullest. Create memories that will last forever and greet every person you meet today with that warm signature smile that we are famous for.

Happy Bermuda Day!

**The Hon. Ben Smith MP**  
Opposition Leader



## MESSAGE FROM THE **DEPARTMENT**

Warm holiday wishes to you on the 47<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of Bermuda Day.

For the Culture is more than a theme. It is a truth we have always carried, written into the way we move and celebrate and show up for one another. Our culture is bold, creative, and deeply rooted in community. It lives in the rhythm of the drums, in the art that tells our stories, in the parades that fill our streets with colour and sound, and in the people who pour themselves into bringing it all to life. This year, as we gather along the route and lift our voices and our feet, we do so knowing that every step, every beat, every shimmy and shank dank is part of something far greater than any one of us.

The Bermuda Day Parade was born from a vision, one articulated in the Pitt Report of 1978, that called our community toward harmony, toward civic pride, toward the shared recognition of who we are together. Over 47 years, that vision has grown into something extraordinary and enduring. We have danced through sunshine and stomped through downpours. We have watched tiny Gombey's command the street with a ferocity that belies their size, seen majorettes move with immaculate grace and precision, and felt the rumble of drums settle somewhere deep in our chests long after the parade has passed. Each year, the streets remind us of what we already know in our bones: Bermudian culture is not a relic to be preserved behind glass. It is alive, it is ours, and it is powerful.

For the Culture is also a reminder that our heritage carries a quiet strength beneath the celebration. Within the joy lives a pursuit of peace, a recognition that unity is not something that simply happens but something we choose, again and again, every time we line the streets together. Our culture holds the memory of those who came before us and the hopes of those still to come. When we show up for the parade, for Cup Match, for each other, we are participating in something unbroken and sacred, an act of belonging that stretches across generations.

I am continually humbled by the dedication of every participant who gives months of quiet, invisible effort so that a few magnificent minutes on the street can take our breath away. The costumes sewn stitch by stitch, the routines rehearsed long past dark, the floats built with love and imagination and stubborn creativity. To each of you: Bermuda sees you, and Bermuda is grateful.

This Heritage Month, we celebrate for our ancestors, for our people, and for the future. We celebrate the traditions that shaped us and the talent that continues to redefine what it means to be Bermudian. We celebrate with pride, with gratitude, and with the kind of joy that only comes from knowing exactly who you are and where you come from. This one is for the culture.

Happy Bermuda Day to each of you. I wish you abundant inspiration, limitless national pride, and boasty vibes.

**Aden Peets**

Cultural Programme Manager, Department of Culture

# THE ORIGINS OF HERITAGE MONTH AND BERMUDA DAY

Civil unrest in the 1960s and 1970s prompted the Bermuda Government to commission a report examining the social conditions in Bermuda and make recommendations to promote a more unified and peaceful social atmosphere. The Pitt Report of 1978 gave an accurate representation of the social and racially tense atmosphere at the time, and included feedback from many Bermudians that suggested an event should be organised to bring Bermudians together in harmony and to build a sense of civic pride.

It was decided that a parade would provide an opportunity for camaraderie and celebration, similar to the Easter Parade that ran from the 1930s through to the 1960s. During that time, many farmers grew flowers so that they could be in full bloom for the Easter period. It was also suggested in the Pitt Report that the proposed event capture the unifying spirit of the existing May 24 half-marathon. These events both served as inspiration for the Bermuda Day Heritage Parade which replaced Empire Day, the annual public holiday recognising Queen Victoria's birthday. The first Bermuda Day Parade took place in 1979. It was historically celebrated on May 24<sup>th</sup> or the weekday nearest May 24<sup>th</sup> if that date fell

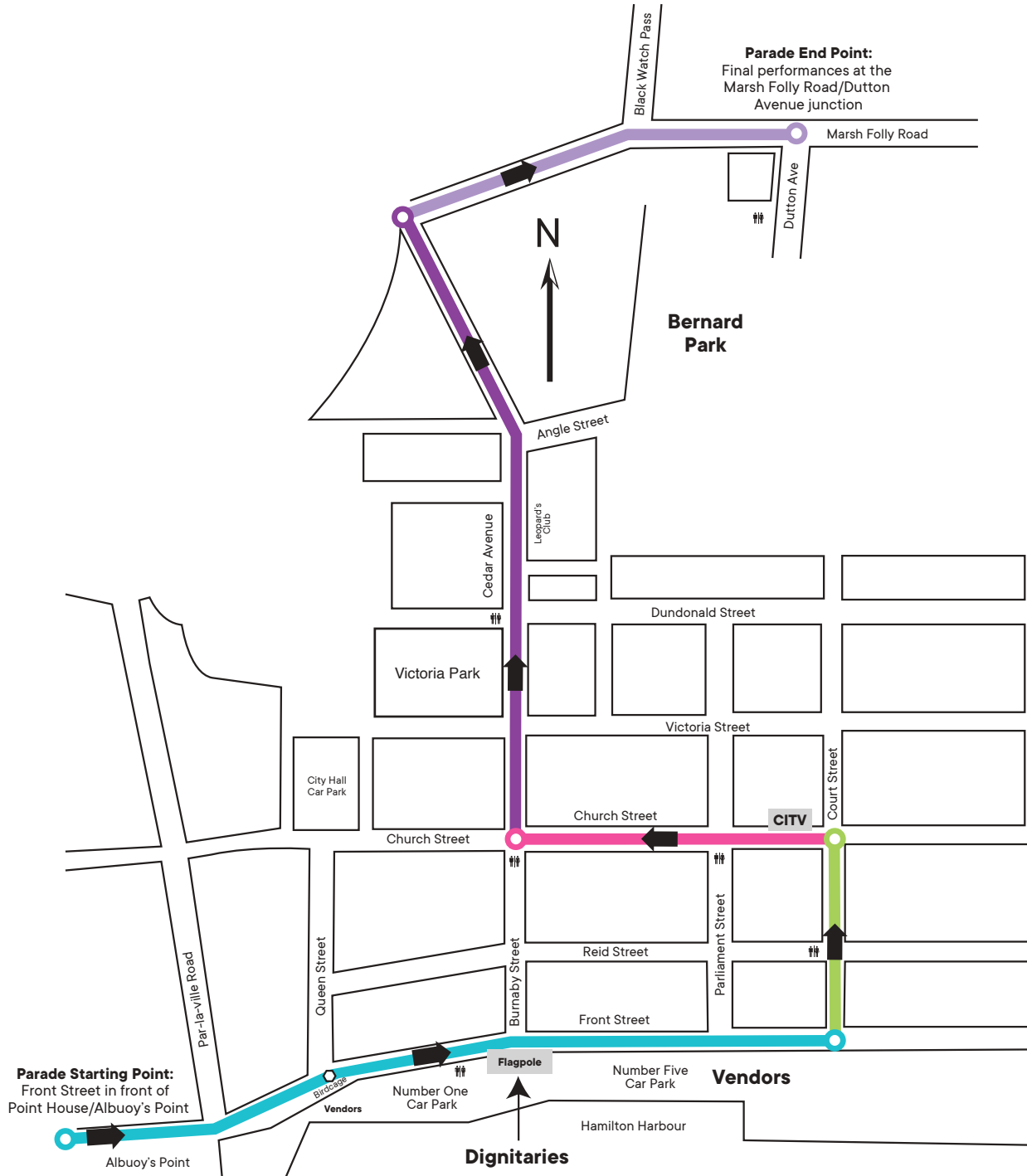
on a weekend, in 2018 adjusted to the last Friday in May, and in 2019 onward it will be on the fourth Friday in May. **The Bermuda Day Parade in 2026 is on Friday, May 22, 2026.**

Bermuda quickly realised that one day of celebration was not enough time to recognise the broad spectrum of Bermudian heritage and traditions. Heritage Week was born, celebrated in the last week in May. By the mid-1980's, this was expanded further into Heritage Month with a calendar full of events through May that celebrates Bermudian culture, heritage, and traditions.

Bermuda Day has become the culminating point of Heritage Month and one of the most beloved cultural holidays alongside Cup Match (Emancipation Day & Mary Prince Day). On Bermuda Day, Bermudians showcase their pride in the beauty and diverse culture of our island - whether they participate in the parade, the half-marathon, go for their first swim of the year, attend the season's first fitted dinghy boat races, or follow the Gombeyes through the streets crying, "Ay-oh!".



# BERMUDA DAY 2026 PARADE ROUTE



The **2026 Bermuda Day Parade** will begin at **1:30 PM**. The parade will begin on Front Street in front of Point House/Albuoy's Point area and continue along Front Street. The parade then turns left onto Court Street, takes a left onto Church Street, a right along Cedar Avenue, and ends at Marsh Folly Road/Dutton Avenue junction.

# BERMUDA DAY 2026

# PARADE PARTICIPANTS

- African Diaspora Heritage Trail Foundation
- Bermuda Carifta: Miles Outerbridge
- Bermuda College
- Bermuda Dance Academy
- Bermuda Donkili African Drumming & Dance Troupe
- Bermuda Gymnastics Association
- Bermuda Long Riders Motorcycle Club and Association
- Bermuda Motocross Association
- Bermuda Nurses Association: Nurse of the Year: Maxine Simmons
- Bermuda Prayer Center
- Bermuda Public Service Career Fair & Expo
- Bermuda Shriners Club
- Bermuda Squad
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bermuda: Female Mentor of the Year
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bermuda: Male Mentor of the Year
- CedarBridge Academy: Float and Car
- CedarBridge Academy: Fusion Steel Pan Band
- Classic Bikes
- Country Time
- Department of Culture
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Devonshire Ultimate "STAR" Twirlers & Drum Corp Band
- Fuze Dance Team
- Gass On Entertainment
- Gombey Evolution
- Gombey Warriors
- **Grand Marshal:** Demeka "Tiny T" Tacklyn
- **Grand Marshal:** Jules Roberts
- **Grand Marshal:** Sonya Smith
- **Grand Marshal:** Tawana Lee
- H&H Gombey
- Hamilton Parish Community Hot Peppers
- Jumuiya Ya Africa
- Kultured
- Lorraine Nursing Home
- M.A.I. Making an Impact Bermuda
- Ministry of Health Youth Advisory Board
- One Body In Christ Movement - For God's Purpose - Float and Dance Group
- PHC Majorettes & Drum Corps
- Phoenix Gombey Troupe
- Place's New Generation Gombey
- Project Action
- Prospect Preschool
- Prospect Twirlers & Ensemble Band
- Rated E! Dance Group
- Reggae Defenders
- Royal Bermuda Regiment Band & Corps of Drums
- Seniors Bus sponsored by the Department of Culture
- SMS Village Gombey
- Soca King
- Somersfield Academy
- St. David's Primary
- St. George's Original Dancerettes
- St. John Ambulance Bermuda
- Stop The Violence Bermuda Movement
- Sui Generis Dance Team
- Tee'L Pre-Emancipation Day & Pre-Cup Match Senior Tea
- The Association of Filipinos in Bermuda
- The Ex-Artillery Elite Majorettes
- The St. David's Islanders & Native Community
- Time Out
- United Dance Productions
- Vasco da Gama; The Portuguese Cultural Association
- Vibe Tribe Gombey Troupe
- Warwick Gombey
- Warwick United Majorettes & Drum Corps
- Wave of Change
- Whitney Institute Middle School
- YouthVision Promotions & Friends
- After Party Truck by: One Communications & D'General

# BERMUDA DAY 2026

## GRAND MARSHALS



### TAWANA LEE

#### *Guardian of Bermuda's Majorette Legacy*

Tawana Lee, a pivotal figure in Bermuda's cultural landscape, has dedicated her life to the preservation and advancement of the Island's cherished majorette tradition. As the driving force behind the PHC Majorettes & Drum Corps (PHCMDC), Lee has not only kept a vital part of Bermuda's parade culture thriving but has also molded it into a powerful vehicle for youth development and community engagement.

Her journey began in 2002 when she crafted a vision for a Majorette & Drum group that placed community at its heart. With a belief that there should be a place for everyone, she was instrumental in expanding the group's scope to include activities catering to various talents beyond baton twirling, a move that solidified PHCMDC as a family-oriented powerhouse where every member could find their niche.

Under Lee's steadfast direction for the past 24 years, the corps offered a robust programme that not only entertained but also inspired the community, with a firm aim to perpetuate the majorette tradition through generations. However, between 2012 and 2016, she faced a worrying decline in traditional majorette groups and a surge in dance troupes, which saw PHCMDC membership fall to less than 40 members from 150. This spurred Lee to pioneer creative solutions to sustain this beloved part of Bermudian culture.

In 2017, Lee began an outreach strategy, starting with an educational presentation on majorettes and drumming at Purvis Primary School. Surprised to learn that some children were unaware of this tradition, she expanded this effort to more schools and corporate entities, passionately advocating for the importance of preserving Bermuda's Heritage month traditions.

Lee's commitment to preserving the majorette and drum corps tradition is unwavering. Her success is a testament not only to her dedication but also to her extraordinary team of leaders and managers who have shared in her vision, as well as the sponsors who have supported their mission over the years. Through Lee's visionary leadership, PHCMDC has remained a bedrock of Bermudian heritage, ensuring that the majorette and drum corps not only endure but also continue to thrive in the hearts of Bermudians.



### JULES ROBERTS

#### *Voice of Bermuda's Reggae Revolution*

Jules Roberts, revered as the lead vocalist and guitarist for Ital Foundation, stands as an unwavering figure in Bermuda's music landscape. Since the late 1970s, Roberts and his band have been pioneers of the roots reggae movement on the island, underscoring the genre's ethos of spirituality and social justice drawn from Rastafarian influences.

Ital Foundation was founded in 1977 by Roberts, along with Kevin 'Aswad' Wilson, a vocalist and percussionist, and others who shared a love for reggae music. Their debut album, "Ital Foundation

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Vol. 1," released in 1980, was not just a collection of music tracks but a cornerstone in defining Bermuda's reggae scene. The album, which was recorded on the Island, encapsulated messages of resistance and empowerment, resonating deeply within the local community and beyond.

Roberts' proficiency on the guitar, combined with his evocative lyrics, has not only entertained but educated his audience on matters close to the heart of Bermuda's identity. His work with Ital Foundation has been instrumental in broadcasting the Island's unique voice and stance through the universal language of reggae music.

In addition to his musical contributions, Roberts is a mentor to aspiring musicians, nurturing talent that seeks to explore reggae's rich auditory and spiritual heritage. His passion extends beyond performance; he is committed to fostering a deeper understanding of the music's roots and its potential to mobilise societal change.

Through decades of rhythmic advocacy and cultural enrichment, Roberts has earned a revered spot among Bermuda's cultural icons. His ongoing journey with Ital Foundation continues to inspire and invigorate the local arts scene, ensuring that the pulse of Bermuda's reggae rhythm remains strong and impactful. As he moves forward, his legacy is marked not only by the beats he plays but by the minds he opens and the community he builds.



### DEMEKA 'TINY T' TACKLYN

#### *Bermuda's Dance Icon and Cultural Innovator*

Demeka "Tiny T" Tacklyn is a real mover and shaker in Bermuda's arts and business circles. Her style and drive have made her a key figure in the local dance scene and beyond. On stage, Tiny T is unforgettable. Her dance is a celebration of Bermuda and its rich cultural heritage, something you can feel in every one of her powerful, committed performances. She shows what it means to be Bermudian with movement that grabs your attention and doesn't let go.

Her connection to local culture began at age 12, as a member of her uncle George Richardson's troupe, Richardson's Gombey's. As part of the troupe, she went on to represent Bermuda as a dancer in the West Indian American Day Carnival Parade in Brooklyn, New York, showcasing local talent on an international stage. At age 14, she was given the opportunity to perform as an opening act for popular artists including Shabba Ranks, Buju Banton, Beenie Man, and Lil' Kim. Later, she gained national recognition after winning Bermuda's first dancehall queen competition.

Her entrepreneurial path also began early with a small popcorn business selling at schools and football games, which later expanded into distribution in grocery stores across the Island. Tiny T later founded Street Vybez, a brand inspired by traditional Gombey culture. The business produces clothing and accessories that incorporate cultural elements into contemporary designs, offering a way to represent Bermudian identity through fashion while also giving back to and helping preserve the culture that inspires her work.

She has since expanded her business portfolio with the opening of Love Tiny Bermuda, a retail store on Front Street offering organic products and clothing for men, women, and children.

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In addition to her work in performance and retail, Tiny T contributes to youth development through summer camps and after-school programmes focused on creativity and confidence-building. Through Brokout Studio, her dance fitness space, she provides an environment for individuals to engage in movement and self-expression.

Her career reflects a combination of performance, business development, and community engagement - all rooted in Bermudian culture.



## SONYA SMITH

### *Trailblazer of Bermuda's Athletic Excellence*

Sonya Smith, a name forever etched in the records of Bermuda's sports history, is a towering figure whose prowess in track and field has paved the way for future generations of athletes. Her extraordinary journey began with a simple throw—a javelin soaring through the air—sparking a career peppered with broken records and pioneering achievements.

In her formative years, Smith's exceptional talent manifested itself as she shattered a staggering 18 school competition records, many of which still stand as a testament to her outstanding ability. At the tender age of 13, Smith captured the national imagination by setting a Bermuda record in javelin, a benchmark no athlete has since surpassed.

The Carifta Games became Smith's competitive domain from 1977 to 1981, her accolades accumulating to 11 medals with five golds, primarily in her favorite javelin event. Her 1979 Carifta javelin record remains unbroken, a monolith of her athletic dominance.

Her journey beyond Bermuda's borders was marked with distinction. She represented the Island with pride at the Commonwealth Games, Pan American Games, and CAC Games, and etched her mark in history as Bermuda's first javelin medalist at the Junior Pan Am Games.

Her tenure at Abilene Christian University saw Smith continue her meteoric rise, smashing collegiate records and becoming the first woman to triumph at the Texas Relays. Qualifying for the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games, she made her country proud on both occasions—her legacy commemorated by a street bearing her name on her alma mater's campus.

Smith's imprint on sport in Bermuda transcends the records she broke and the medals she won. As a beacon of determination and excellence, she has inspired countless young Bermudians to reach for their dreams. Today, her inspirational story continues to motivate aspiring athletes, securing her place as one of Bermuda's most revered sporting legends.

# BERMUDA DAY 2026

# GRAND MARSHALS



## POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION: ALLAN WARNER

### *Bermuda's Celebrated Gombey Icon and Community Champion*

Allan Warner, a name synonymous with Bermuda's Gombey culture, has left an undeniable mark as one of the most honoured Gombey captains in the Island's history. Steeped in the tradition from the tender age of three, Warner's remarkable journey within this vibrant art form saw him honing skills in dance, drumming, and costume creation, bridging the artistry of his ancestors with Bermuda's contemporary pulse.

His leadership of Warner Gombey's spanned over five and a half decades, during which time he led the group with passion and integrity, ensuring the sacred dance and music echoed through the streets of Bermuda and resonated on international stages. Warner was an advocate for community, often guiding the troupe to perform at charity events. He stood by the belief that Gombey's true essence was its ability to instill pride, maintain discipline, and carry the collective memory of a people.

In 1995, Warner's dedication was recognised with the Queen's Certificate of Honour—an accolade that declared him the first Gombey Captain to be so distinguished. Yet again, in 2015, his lifetime achievements were celebrated at the Gombey Festival, reinforcing his role as a stalwart of the tradition he so dearly cherished. He also traveled internationally representing Bermuda in numerous festivals in Tennessee, Washington, Virginia, Philadelphia, as well as in Switzerland. Warner Gombey's was also the first group to visit St Kitts to forge connections to family traditions.

His belief in the Gombey spirit as a vital link to cultural heritage motivated Warner to impart his knowledge to the youth, molding future custodians of the Gombey legacy. The late Allan Warner's contribution to Bermuda's cultural fabric transcends his role as a captain; he was an educator, a mentor and an inspiration to all who would follow the captivating drumbeats and footsteps he left behind with his passing in October 2016.

Today, his influence continues to be seen and felt across Bermuda's Gombey troupes, reflected in their rhythms, discipline, and the enduring pride with which they carry the tradition forward.







## SPECIAL THANKS

**Carlita Lodge**

Director, Department of Culture

**Aden Peets**

Cultural Programme Manager, Department of Culture

## ADDITIONAL THANKS

Department of Culture Staff

Department of Communications

CITV

Department of Corrections

City of Hamilton

The Media Maven

Paolo Odoli

Spanish Town Entertainment

Universal Security Alliance

**FILL IN OUR  
POST EVENT  
PARADE  
SURVEY!**



**bermudaculture**



**Department of Culture**

**Government Administration Building**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 30 Parliament Street • Hamilton, Bermuda HM12

Phone: (441) 292-1681 | [www.culture.bm](http://www.culture.bm)