

## **EULOGY FOR CLEMENT JEREMIAH NOEL**

By

Donald Browne (Brother-in-law) 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014

Clement Jeremiah named Clairmonte Jeremiah by his parents, Virginia Ambrose and Abraham Noel at birth, entered this world on November 16<sup>th</sup> 1933 in the tiny village of Ashton, Union Island in the Southern Grenadines. Clement is well characterized as a person on an independent mind and this was early exhibited in the act of his changing his name to what we now know it to be by way of a Legal Instrument. This sense of independent-mindedness ran through the whole fabric of his later life.

Clement entered the Teaching Profession as a part-time teacher in January 1948 at the Bequia Anglican School but by October of that same year found himself back at his Alma Mater, the Ashton Government School, as a First Year Pupil Teacher. In 1954 he was transferred to mainland St.Vincent to complete the local teachers' certificate examination. He was then sent to the Buccament Government School and was later transferred to the Calliaqua Anglican School where he did yeoman service over the next four years. The transfer turned out to be blessing in disguise for it was there that he became fascinated with a charming Beatrice Browne. Beatrice was as fascinated as he because she gleefully told me of this dashing young teacher from Union Island whom she would want me to meet and that if I liked him, she was sure that mother would approve of him too. We met. I liked him right away and later discovered that we were both born in November.

He was respectful and respectable, but I still jestingly gave him a watered down version of the riot act. He assured me that he would certainly marry Beatrice soon and he kept his word for they were married on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1955 in this very St.Paul's Anglican Church, Calliaqua. It was a very big wedding. Clement made his pledge and has kept his vows, until separated by death, for fifty eight and a half years.

Not long after they were married sister Gwennie (Mrs Arrindell) emigrated to Curacao and sister Lyn (Mrs. Stone) emigrated to England a year or so later, both in quest of better conditions in order to also assist mother, not long widowed, with four small children. Clement and Beatrice took hold of the situation and Clement became the anchor of that household. We in the entire Browne family

demonstrated our gratitude through the love and respect we have had for Clement over the years.

In 1961 Clement went to Erdiston Teachers College, Barbados, and gained a University of the West Indies Teachers Certificate. He was appointed Head Teacher in 1963 of the Rose Hall Government School and in turn was transferred to Chateaubelair, Troumaca, Mesopotamia and Kingstown Government Schools before entering Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree. On completion he returned to St.Vincent and the Grenadines and taught for one school term at the Girls High School and for the two ensuing terms at the Boys Grammar School. He was then appointed to the Civil Service. However, even after his formal transfer from teaching, he conducted classes for a few years at the University of the West Indies Centre in Kingstown.

I still marvel at the academic successes of both Clement and Beatrice – she went to Mona Campus, Jamaica – while they were bringing up a large family. When asked, Clement ascribed their academic achievements to dedication, determination and personal sacrifice so as to be better able to serve the people of St.Vincent and the Grenadines.

Clement was appointed Clerk of the House of Assembly in 1975 and received training in that capacity in the United Kingdom, India, Zambia and Kenya. Beatrice joined him in the UK and while there they were officially invited to the pre – wedding function for Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer, which was hosted at Marlborough House, London, and attended by all Commonwealth Heads of State and Prime Ministers who were there for the wedding. He served faithfully and efficiently as the Clerk under two administrations from 1975 – 1990 and had been the first Vincentian to hold that Office after Independence.

Upon retiring from the Public Service Clement joined the Private Sector as he felt that it was not time “to hang up his boots”. He served as Business Manager and later as Executive Director of the St.Vincent Employers Federation and, in the meantime, was influential in establishing the well-known Rio Foods Restaurant which was managed by his late son, Ronald. Yet, in addition to all of this, he was involved in Service Clubs and other voluntary or helping hands organisations. He served twice as President of Lions Club South apart from holding office in every

position in that club. He loved and enjoyed cricket and, at any time that the West Indies lost a match or the series, he would agonize and be ready to pick a new team to replace the hapless one.

He was a staunch Anglican who took part in various activities of the church as Sunday School Teacher, Lay Reader and became a fixture on the list of regular lesson readers for Sundays. He stated that his religious obligations were a major priority throughout his life, and found himself in his closing years in fervent prayer and worship. He read the Bible (KJV) from cover to cover in keeping with a New Year resolution and chose Psalm 46 and the hymn "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" to demonstrate his complete dependence upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

It cannot be denied that with his wealth of knowledge and experiences Clement made a major contribution in nation building. Yet he was a humble man. However, it was not all work and no play for he was fun loving, going to house parties, picnics and other outings, especially when Beatrice was either hosting or catering for them. He enjoyed clean jokes and anything put in the present he would ironically relegate it to the past. Yes he was fun!

He leaves to mourn his dear wife Beatrice who has been, and still is, very ill for the past three years and cannot be here today, six children, twelve grand children, three great grand children, one sister, one brother, one son-in-law, three daughters-in-law, many nieces and nephews, many sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, other relatives and friends.

St.Vincent and the Grenadines has lost a noble son and we, his relatives, have lost a family member for whom there is no tangible replacement.

May he Rest in Peace.