



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Ministry of Education

Contact:

Ministry of Education

P. O. Box N-3913

Phone: 502- 2708

Fax: 356 -0007

## **Cat Island repeats as the National High School Debate Champions**



**THE GREAT DEBATERS – The Cat Island District team with ministry officials and coaches.**

Pictured L-R are: Mr. Ralph Durant, Coach; Ms. Sherrylee Smith, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education; Champions - Danya Farrington, Giovanni Bowe and Michelle Greene; Mr. Lionel Sands, acting Director of Education; Ms. Abigail Ralph, coach; Mrs. Beverly Thacker, District Superintendent, Cat Island, San Salvador & Rum Cay District and Mrs. Nazmoon Seymour, coach.

The environment was the winner over the economy in the 11<sup>th</sup> Ministry of Education National High School Debate Championship held Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2009 at the Rainforest Theatre, Wyndham Cable Beach Resort. The event featured the Cat Island District team against a Long Island District team debating the topic, “Be it resolved that the economic development of The Bahamas is more important than protecting the environment.”

The Cat Island team comprised returning debater, Giovanni Bowe and newcomers, Michelle Greene and Danya Farrington who were able to persuade the judges that protecting the environment of The Bahamas is more important than developing the economy. They defended their title in a close victory over the team of Salathiel Wells, Jason Hilton and Adam Sands from Long Island.

Cat Island lead by Giovanni stated that The Bahamas thrives off its waters and landscape and if they are destroyed, then the economy would cease to exist. The lead opposition spokesman told the story of a father and son who operated a fishing business but had different outlooks on the environment. The father believed in conservation, but the son was concerned with depleting the sea to sustain his lifestyle. The father's respect for nature earned him a livelihood during his lifetime and the son's over-fishing caused the conch, fish and crawfish sources being depleted hence delving him into poverty..

Giovanni, the Opposition Lead Speaker also pointed out that on his home Cat Island, the Ministry of Works and the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are carrying out several environmental impact studies to ensure that the multi-million dollar resort project slated for that island is developed according to sustainable guidelines.

Michelle Greene, Second Speaker –Opposition affirmed their stance citing that World Health Organization study that revealed that 25 per cent of preventable deaths world wide are due to an unhealthy environment.

Proposition's lead speaker, Salathiel Wells stated that, "You need money first to go green" Wells who captured Best Speaker for the Proposition, and the Overall Debate, noted that even environmentalist need money to survive and revealed sources that , environment professionals earned as much as much as \$97,000.00 annually.

Adam Sands, Third Speaker for the Proposition used neighbouring Haiti as an example of a country where economic instability has caused environmental degradation. Sands stated that The Bahamas focused more on the environment than the economy then, like Haiti - "Bahamians would strip every twig and blade of grass to survive."

Minister of Education, the Honourable Carl W. Bethel officially opened the event which was broadcast live on ZNS Radio 1540. He told the audience that the fact that two Family Island teams are in the finals is not an exception to the rule but "evidence of the every child living in The Bahamas access to universal, quality education."

"This and other achievements of our Family Island schools serves, notice that geography does not determine success, "Minister Bethel acknowledged. He cited the fact that two Family Island students placed third in the recent Bahamas National Spelling Bee and Berinque Pinder, a student of Crooked Island High who has won two national essay competitions during the past school year.

The judges for the competition were veteran educator, Samuel Bethel, Mr. Jeff Dubel, Chief of Political, Economic & Public Affairs Section, US Embassy Nassau; Mrs. Ivy Higgins, Assistant Professor, School of English Studies at the College of The Bahamas and Mrs. Lynette Headley, Head of the Mathematics Department at Faith Temple Christian Academy.

The event featured the Mangrove Cay High Marching Band in their national performing debut. The band is directed by Mrs. Pearlimae Francis, a National Teacher of the Year finalist and music teacher at the school located in Mangrove Cay, South Andros.

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