



**Remarks by**  
**The Minister of Education**  
**The Honourable T. Desmond Bannister, M.P.**  
**At**  
**The Charles W. Saunders Baptist High School**  
**First Founder's Day**  
**On**  
**Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2010**  
**Charles W. Saunders Baptist High School**  
**Jean Street**  
**10:00 am**

**Salutations:**

**Mr. Wenley Miller, Principal;**

**Reverend Charles W. Saunders, The Honouree of this Occasion;**

**Sir Arlington Butler;**

**Reverend Dr. William Thompson, President of The Bahamas National Baptist Missionary and Educational Conference;**

**Reverend Anthony Carroll,**

**Teachers;**

**Staff;**

**Students;**

**Good Morning.**

**It is indeed my distinct pleasure to be at your school's Founder's Day Celebration recognizing the man in whose honour this school was named. I am particularly pleased that he is here today, so that I can personally thank him on behalf of the Government and the citizens of The Bahamas for his significant contributions to Education for more than five decades.**

**I would like to reiterate the words of Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Hubert Ingraham when he lauded Dr. Saunders at a ceremony in 2002, for his service to the Bahamian people calling him “ a Prince of the Baptist Church in The Bahamas”.**

***“Like his predecessors (late Rev Dr. Harcourt W. Brown, the Rev. Talmage Sands, and the Rev. Reuben E. Cooper Sr) in the church, Reverend Saunders has sought to promote respect***

*for, and protection of, the rights and the dignity of God's people in The Bahamas. Throughout his life, he stood for improving the lot of those least able to assist themselves, the young, the elderly, and the disenfranchised. He took a fearless stance in opposition to the inbred inequalities and prejudices which blighted our country during the period of minority government form an important part of our history.”*

**There are many persons of my generation and subsequent generations who speak with deep-rooted respect of Dr. Saunders because of his deep faith in God and his belief in discipline and education as the paths to success. There are many persons, whose greatness comes to light just prior to their demise, but Reverend Charles W. Saunders is a gentleman who has left an imprint on so many lives throughout the years that he is a living legend and he continues to be revered in many circles in our country.**

**I can speak firsthand to the many lives that Rev. Saunders has touched because I am one of those people. In his first assignment as Headmaster Rev. Saunders came to the Staniard Creek All Age School in Staniard Creek, Andros. Both of my parents were young student teachers at that school, which I was later to attend. Rev. Saunders made an indelible impression on both of my parents, and even taught my mother in evening classes. In fact, whenever Rev. Saunders sees me he reminds me that I would have been born in Exuma had he not transferred my parents back to Andros just a few months before I was born. Years later, he and my father worked closely together in the Ministry of Education; both making a very real difference in the lives of thousands of young Bahamians.**

**For your many contributions, Sir, we all remain extremely grateful.**

**Whenever Rev Saunders is spoken off, it is with the utmost respect. He is a leader, an educator, preacher, scholar, and a uniter. In fact, he has been credited by no less a person than the Right Hon. Prime Minister for contributing "in no small way to the peaceful social revolution which led to radical change in the lives and prospects of tens of thousands of Bahamians."**

**When one thinks of the sacrifices of Rev Saunders and others of his generation, It hurts when I see young Bahamians who take so much for granted. They do not appreciate that just a few years ago there were many public places in this country that they could not enter because of the colour of their skin. When we speak of Rev Saunders, therefore, we speak of a national icon who has through his own sacrifices paved the way for us to live the lives that we live today.**

**It therefore, most appropriate that this school is named after him and that he is been recognized today for his efforts to educate our citizenry. I delighted that Reverend Saunders, is getting the recognition that he deserves and that you the students of this school have a link to an individual who still has much to offer. One day, you will brag to your children and grandchildren that you knew this great Bahamian legend.**

**The fact that school bears the name C. W. Saunders means that there are some high expectations that you have to meet. Although, the doors to this institution has been open only twenty-two years; I am aware that you are making a name for yourselves among the schools that comprise the Bahamas Association of Independent Secondary Schools (BAISS). I congratulate you for your accomplishments to date, but I hasten to remind you that Rev. Saunders has set extremely high standards throughout his life; hence he expects no less than excellence from all of you.**

**And you can do it...I had the opportunity to hear Ms. Shaquille Saunders read her award winning essay which she wrote for the Martin Luther King Essay Competition. I also know that Walter Evans Jr., a former alumnus of this school was an outstanding student in the National After-School Art & Craft Programme and won many awards for his paintings. What will your legacy be ? How will you live up to the very legitimate expectations which are placed on students who attend this school which bears the name of this great Bahamian ?**

**I am delighted to see that you have expanded to include a primary school; it seems reasonable that you would want students to be rooted from an early age in the C. W. Saunders way.**

**I wish to say that The Bahamas has been the benefactor of the efforts of Dr. Saunders, Dr. Thompson and the Bahamas Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention's efforts to provide education in a Christian environment for many students over the years. We support these efforts by awarding an annual grant so that teachers can be employed and resources are available to assist in the classroom instruction.**

**Students, the best way in which you can pay tribute to your founder is to learn your lessons, become a disciplined and respectful human being and have God at the centre of your life. If you acquired one or more of these principles, Dr. Saunders would say that his life and labour to God and country were not in vain.**

**I trust that we continue to uplift Dr. Saunders throughout his life and that we will never forget his contribution to the development of The Bahamas. He is one who taught Bahamians to be proud of their heritage to strive for loftier goals.**

**Thank you and good morning.**