



Remarks by

The Minister of Education

**The Hon. T. Desmond Bannister
On the Occasion
Of
The American Embassy**

**2010 Martin Luther King Essay Competition
Awards Presentation**

Friday, 5th February, 2010

4:00 pm

**Victoria Room
British Colonial Hilton
West Bay Street**

Salutations:

**Her Excellency Nicole Avant, United States
Ambassador to The Bahamas;**

Ministry of Education Officials;

**Mr. David Elmo, Charge d' Affaires, US Embassy, The
Bahamas;**

**Mr. Jeff Dubel; Chief Political/Economic/Public
Diplomacy;**

**Mrs. Katherine Stewart-Gibson; Public Affairs
Specialist, US Embassy;**

Distinguished Guests;

Students;

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon

It is my pleasure to be here this afternoon to share this triumphant moment with students who have taken on the challenge of examining an issue that is relevant for people throughout the world – **“The issue of personal integrity and our responsibility to improve conditions in our community”**.

I gather from the topic, that this competition is trying to promote the fact that people who have personal integrity are people who do things to make a difference in the lives of others and their communities.

If we look throughout the history of The Bahamas, the United States or any other country, we will find men and women who have unselfishly sacrificed their lives and their freedom to bring about change in their communities to make life better for others.

We know that Harriet Tubman, Rosa Park, Martin Luther King Jr. are known as people of integrity who made a difference in the lives of African-Americans in the United States. We know that Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk(the last president of South Africa under Apartheid), were instrumental in abolishing Apartheid in South Africa they too made a difference in the lives of millions of South Africans. In The Bahamas, individuals like Sir Milo Bulter; Clarence A. Bain, Dame Doris Johnson were persons who made a difference.

The lessons we should extract from these great men and women is that personal integrity was the driving force to do good. It is virtually impossible to do good if one does not have honourable intentions.

The global response to the recent earthquake is a classic example of what Dr. King meant in his statement and through his life's mission of fighting for equal rights for all citizens.

Students, I trust that this competition has provided you with a moment to look within yourselves to determine your own personal integrity and also realize the victory is not in coming first or walking away with a prize; but in self-discovery and being an agent of change for the betterment of the human race.

Finally, I wish to thank our partner, the United States Embassy and their sponsors for establishing this forum where our students contribute to discussions on matters of world importance and at the same time develop their creative and cognitive skills.

Students, I congratulate you for your participation in this competition and I trust that your message will be heralded both near.

