



BRIEF REMARKS

by

**THE HONOURABLE T. DESMOND BANNISTER,
M.P.,**

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

on the occasion of:

***The Sir Gerald Cash National Distinguished Teachers'
Awards Program (NDTA)***

at

**Government House
Nassau, The Bahamas**

12th, November 2010

7:00 p.m.

Salutations:

1. **Permanent Secretary** – Mrs. Elma Garraway
2. **Director of Education** – Mr. Lionel Sands

3. **President of Fidelity Bank (Bahamas) Ltd** – Mr. Gregory Bethel
4. **Executive Vice President Fidelity Bank (Bahamas), Ltd** – Mr. Alfred Stewart

Board Members & Directors: Mr. Frank Crothers, Mr. Peter Andrews, & Mr. Hugh Sands

5. Distinguished Panel of Judges:

- Reverend, Dr. Charles Saunders
- Mr. Donald Symonette
- Mrs. Vylma Thompson
- Ms. Beverly Taylor
- Mrs. Arlene Nash- Ferguson, and
- Mrs. Dorothy Yearwood

6. Partners & Representatives of:

7. The Tribune Media Group, Cable Bahamas, and the Bahamas Union of Teachers
8. Deserving Nominees
9. Ladies & Gentlemen

Good Evening!

Helen Caldicott, an Australian physician and author once said, **“Teachers, I believe, are the most responsible and important members of society because their professional efforts affect the fate of the earth.”** This is a very powerful statement which reminds you that your actions as teachers, both in and out of the classroom can have lasting positive or negative effects on our children and by extension, our society. I am certain, however, that the persons in this room would have faced their young charges daily with this thought at the forefront of their minds, and would have chosen to uphold the former, hence their presence here this evening.

I am truly honoured to join the Fidelity Bank (Bahamas) Limited, and you, our extraordinary nation builders who have been chosen for this special recognition at **The Sir Gerald Cash National Distinguished Teachers’ Awards Program** for the year **2010**. This event and the presence of these awardees confirm the fact that we do not have to look outside of our country to find consummate professionals, heroes, and role models. Before us sit ten (10) outstanding Bahamians who have worked hard, earned their way, and who are now being spotlighted for upholding the high

standards required of those who choose to enter the teaching profession. The Ministry of Education applauds each of you for having met the criteria to be selected as winners of this awards ceremony.

There is no doubt that teachers are heavily relied upon when it comes to the learning and achievement levels of our students. The Government of The Bahamas in collaboration with Ministry of Education make policy decisions, which are established to ensure access and a high quality of education, and you the principals and teachers are responsible for the delivery of instruction, and modeling the behaviour which are desirable for the development of an orderly society. In addition to fulfilling these obligations required by the state, you also find yourselves having to play other roles such as that of: parent, counsellor, mediator, and in some cases, spiritual advisor.

Often the general public does not realize just how hard teachers work to help their students find success, and may seem unappreciative. Even though there are a few teachers, who through their actions bring negative press to the profession, we remain convinced that the vast majority of

our nation's teachers are outstanding citizens who are committed to their jobs and do not hesitate to go above and beyond the call of duty.

Therefore, when organizations other than the Ministry of Education, such as Fidelity Bank (Bahamas) Limited, Cable Bahamas, The Tribune Media Group, and The Bahamas Union of Teachers decide to award teachers for **“exemplifying at a high and consistent level, qualities expected and revered in their profession”** we, at the MOE are very heartened and fully encourage this spirit amongst all who recognize and value the contributions of teachers everywhere.

These awards, having been named after Sir Gerald Cash, GCMG, GCVO, OBE, JP, who has himself exhibited outstanding qualities as a father, husband, political leader, and champion for education, adheres to high nomination standards which include amongst others:

- Demonstrating high mastery of subject matter;
- Respect for students and colleagues;
- Effective communication with parents/guardians;

- Pursuing professional development above and beyond the call of duty; and
- Contributing to school and/or the community.

The committee is applauded for considering educators across our archipelago, from both the public and private sectors for this honour.

Sitting in the seats of honour this evening are:

Pre-School Teachers:

1. Lenora Brown (Gambier Primary Sch)
2. Alexya Young (Willard Patton Pre- School)

Primary School Teachers:

3. Joan Knowles-Turnquest (Oakes Field Primary Sch)
4. Gaynell Funes-Padilla (Palmdale Primary Sch)

Junior High School Teachers:

5. Lynn Gibson (L.W. Young Junior High Sch)
6. Ramona Wells (C.H. Reeves Junior High Sch)

Senior High School Teachers:

7. David Mindorff (Lyford Cay Sch)

8. Demetra Rolle (Anatol Rodgers High Sch)

All –Age School Teacher:

9. Josette Green-Thompson (Moore’s Island All-Age Sch
–Abaco)

Special Education Teacher:

10. Carolyn Wright-Mitchell (Garvin Tynes Primary Sch)

I want you to know how very proud we are of each of you, but I also wish to stress that with more recognition comes more responsibility. We need you to:

- Think more creatively and critically about how you are going to effect the positive transformation of our educational system;
- Write books because we need more Bahamian material in our schools;
- Research, and pursue professional development opportunities because we need to be aware of the latest developments and advancements in the profession;

- Become more culturally diverse in your thinking and attitudes, because our nation is accepted as a part of the global village;
- Always respect your students, and help them to find success no matter the point at which you found them;
- Uphold positive values and high ethical standards; and
- Remain abreast of technology.

Yes, awardees, you may give yourselves a pat on the back for having positively influenced the course of education in the past, but now we look to you for an even greater contribution going forward. Continue to help the MOE to raise the literacy and numeracy levels in our country, and to encourage respectful and responsible behaviour in our nation's children. British politician, Thomas McKinnon once advised, "***Be a wonderful role model because you will be the window through which many children will see themselves.***" Congratulations to you and I hope to see more male teachers as winners in this competition next year.

Once again, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, I express gratitude to the Fidelity Bank, The Tribune, Cable Bahamas and the Bahamas Union of Teachers and all who may have

worked tirelessly to make this event a success. Your support in advancing the cause of education through recognition of our educators is admirable and greatly needed. Thanks to all of you, and best wishes going forward.