

Kiwanis Club of Barbados South

President's Message - June 2021

Fellow Kiwanians we have now entered the month of June. For us as Kiwanians it means we are close to the end of this administrative year, with September 30th being the last official day of our term. For us in this hemisphere it signals the beginning of a season which for this message will remain nameless. humnnn.... It's the month for weddings - I've had invitations for three, interestingly enough they were all beach weddings - go figure, maybe that's the new trend. You may agree that now is the perfect time to try new things, trends change all the time I suppose but isn't this a simply fantastic time to just open your arms and jump headfirst into everything? This environment is so ripe for change, for new expressions of life don't you think?

June is also the month in which we celebrate Fathers Day! Today, I want to use my voice to celebrate not one, not two but three very important men in my life, they are all gone now but they held and continue to hold a magic place in my heart. I think of them often and sometimes its almost as if they are still with me - I know that sounds kookie, but it's true.

The first is my dad, Carlisle McDonald. He was like a great force, tall and thick but not an ounce of fat, he hated to wear his shoes and had the strangest way of getting into the car. I remember sitting on his lap in the large white one seater by the front door. I would wait until he was distracted and pull the curly white hair from his forearm. Each time he would say the same thing "aye lil girl", not sure why that was funny but I would crack up every time. His favourite song strangely enough was, "Don't cry for me Argentina" we used to sing it together - now it's my favourite song. They played it at his funeral when he died. I lament the fact that I didn't get enough time with him, I think about him often even though he has been gone for so very long.

Then there was my second Dad, Eric St. Clair. He was a different type of force, a quiet, gentle force, soft spoken but strong. I spent

most of my childhood sitting on his shoulders. We did everything together, if he was painting so was I. He would even buy me my own paint brushes. He taught me how to change the fuse, how to change the light bulbs, to use the sewing machine, hammer, drill machine and so many other things. I couldn't stand dolls, but he taught me how to make clothes for my sister's brood. He is the one responsible for any semblance of self-confidence I might have. He taught me that I could do anything I wanted to do, there was always a way all I had to do was sit still (almost impossible then and to this very day) and the path would come to me. We wanted to have a party for his seventy fourth birthday but he wouldn't allow it. He said maybe and only maybe, we could do seventy-five. His birthday would have been Dec 21st, just a few weeks later he was laid to rest. You know how names have meaning? Well to me the name Eric means unconditional love and support, it means that there is always someone there to catch you if you should stumble, 'cause you will certainly never fall. He wasn't my father, but he was definitely my dad!

Uncle Jim (funny enough I don't know his middle name). He was my mum's uncle and I met him when I was nine years old. I loved him on sight, so I stole him from mummy and he became mine. Now here was a quiet man, he hardly spoke but his smile and his hugs spoke volumes. Every weekend I'd head off to Orange Hill to hang out with uncle Jim. He used to sit in his patio on Saturday and Sunday evenings and talk to all his friends who passed by to say "hi". My spot was on the steps with my head resting on my arm in his lap. We had "deep" conversations. What little he said was immensely important and I hung on to his every word. My mum loved him too and sometimes she would tell me stories of growing up in Orange Hill and spending time at his house with him and aunt Clem.

They have all passed on now and I miss their physical presence dreadfully, but I know they are still with me every day in all the important ways. I feel them and I know that they are my Angels. Happy Fathers Day!

President Sandra