

TRIBUTE TO NORMAN FRANCIS, LLB.(HONS) UWI at the Funeral Service held on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 held at the St. Joseph the Worker Church, Gros Islet.

BY MARY JULIANA CHARLES, LLB (HONS) LOND.

It is with profound sadness that we, the Bar Association of Saint Lucia received the news of the passing of MR. NORMAN FRANCIS, first, a son of the Commonwealth of Dominica, who became a son of Saint Lucia.

He arrived in Saint Lucia in 1979, exactly 40 years ago, at age 16 years, to attend Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, having been sent here by his late father, who was a parliamentarian and also a lawyer, following Hurricane David, which negatively affected Dominica including the schools and it's A-Level College

Norman was first introduced to me by retired High Court Judge Ms. Cheryl Mathurin with whom he was called to the Bar in Saint Lucia on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1986 together with colleagues, JEANINE GIRAUDY now President of the Senate and VICTOR PHILIP LACORBINIÈRE, former Minister of Legal Affairs.

We hit it off well. I called him NORMS and he called me JU.

After his Call he worked as the Deputy Registrar of the High Court in Saint Lucia but in 1987 he joined the firm of GORDON, GORDON & CO. as an associate. He spent a great deal of time in litigation particularly in the Magistrate Court – he was not afraid to push the envelope in support of justice.

In my estimation, Norman was a keen administrator, an eloquent and tactful speaker and an excellent listener – at least those virtues were displayed while he taught myself and others in the years 1989 – 1993 in the Para-legal programme conducted by Sir Arthur Lewis Community College. His stint as a Rotarian must have had some bearing on those virtues.

His innate kindness and gentleness won him many friends, as he is well known to execute much notarial work pro bono. Whenever a crisis or confrontation appeared imminent Norman's voice could be heard quietly trying to calm the troubled waters.

Even though he diversified to other ventures such as the acquisition of the infamous backhoe attempting construction of some sort - two subjects were dear to Norman – the Law and his family. His first two children DANIEL AND DAVID by his first marriage with ELMA-GENE became lawyers too and much to his delight a third child PERDITA by his marriage to ELEANOR has also chosen law and is attending the faculty of law in Trinidad & Tobago.

It is said that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy and for NORMAN this adage holds true. For several years he took part in the Carnival pageants competing in the King of the Bands competition with his elaborately designed costume. He won the title of King of the Bands 7 times; after all he had become an expert in navigating on Stage, the elaborate costumes he designed and portrayed, which assisted with his success.

In 1993 he left the firm of Gordon, Gordon & Co. to join The Banking World, the National Commercial Bank, as its Corporate Secretary and Legal Officer.

In 2001 following a merger of NATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK AND THE SAINT LUCIA DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE BANK OF SAINT LUCIA emerged and he established a legal department there while serving as the Bank's inhouse lawyer partnering with THADDEUS ANTOINE now President of the OECS Bar.

In 2010 I joined him at FRANCIS & ANTOINE until the return from Law School of his eldest child DANIEL FRANCIS.

Norman Francis will be fondly remembered by members of the Bar and litigants alike for the courtesy that he always demonstrated to them.

Although Saint Lucia was not the land of his birth, he embraced Saint Lucia with a patriotism, loyalty and commitment to duty that truly made him one of us. After all he came to us in 1979 during Saint Lucia's first Independence celebrations and he has now left us 40 years later during Saint Lucia's Independence anniversary celebrations.

He lived a reasonably good life, he touched many along the way, he achieved for himself and his family all that he set out to do, he made many good friends, he laughed a lot; he was dearly loved by his family and friends and he knew it.

Personally, his passing has left a void in my life.

I extend my sincere condolences to his wife ELEANOR FRANCIS and to all the children and other members of the Francis family, in particular, Norman's mother and suggest, that all of you should be comforted by the Serenity prayer:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference."

I also extend sincere condolences to Elma-Gene (herself a lawyer) and the Isaac family, Edison Raoul, his accountant and friend, Sherlan Louis, his former Secretary at the Bank of Saint Lucia, and all those with whom he associated at that Bank, such as Pearl Charlemagne, those with whom he worked at GORDON, GORDON & CO., UNCLE his trusted contractor, his burglar-bar man ISAAC CHERY and many others too numerous to mention.

REST IN PERFECT PEACE my friend, brother, mentor, colleague – FAREWELL – you are forever in our hearts and I promise while I sojourn this earth to keep a keen eye on your children.

With love

MARY JULIANA CHARLES.

