

Mr. Speaker:

The Most Honourable P.J. Patterson once reminded me of a story of a very young girl, who many years ago, was distributing flyers for the Vice Presidential contest at a PNP Annual Conference being held at the National Arena.

P.J. Patterson was among the vice presidential candidates. He arrived at the National Arena and she enthusiastically handed him a flyer with a bright smile. He looked at it and saw that it was one of his own leaflets. He smiled warmly, hugged her, asked her her name and allowed her to get on with her mission.

Little did they both know then, that he had just retrieved that flyer from the young woman who would succeed him as Party Leader and Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Again today we are gathered here, because “We say PJ”. That is, we say thank you and well done in this Fiftieth year of political independence to the Most Honourable Percival James Patterson former Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker:

Celebration of politicians is not a fully settled part of our political culture. Yet, the overall contributions of **P.J. Patterson** compel us to break that mould.

He was a brilliant intuitive politician.

A great parliamentarian,

He was effective in debate.

He was master of legislative and administrative detail.

He was father of important governance institutions and programmes.

He also possessed a robust international vision.

He reflected a deliberative, calm, reasonable and thoughtful personality.

The Politician/Parliamentarian

Mr. Speaker:

PJ came to politics motivated by a sense of service; driven by injustices in society; anxious for a bright future for Jamaica. He was always sensitive to the role of political organization in the scheme of things.

Preparation for the political enterprise was shaped by his rural toughness, by tutorials from National Hero N.W. Manley, and his habits of careful, logical thought.

All these forces enabled his full and successful engagement in Jamaican politics for over **five decades**.

Today **Mr. Speaker**, we celebrate **PJ** as a skillful political organizer.

He combined belief in community action with a lawyer's attention to detail to achieve successful political outcomes. This astute and pragmatic politician would conceptualize, promote, and defend a broad public policy agenda that had transformative effects. He would do so from positions as portfolio Minister, as member of Cabinet, and as Prime Minister.

PJ was the all-purpose parliamentarian. Perhaps he managed more ministerial portfolios than any post-independence politician. Thus, he advanced a robust legislative agenda that touched the significant spheres of Jamaica's socio-political, corporate, economic and judicial life.

In particular, we recognize and celebrate him for promoting root and branch reform of Jamaica's economic and governance systems. They continue to impart positive effects on our public administration and wider development path to this day. We give thanks to **PJ**, for his seminal contributions to the **Peoples National Party**. You continue to be a great asset to our movement.

We continue to associate you with the organizational vitality of our party. We are ever grateful for the special role and influence on the Party's policy thinking.

You impress by the consistency of your political conviction and social conscience. Equally, your consensus-building and pragmatic style remains a model of how we should do business in party, in government, and in society. For these and other reasons, we celebrate you today **PJ** as an extra-ordinary parliamentarian with an enduring international vision.

The Internationalism

That vision totally rejects insular impulses. It has consistently favoured regionalism within a progressive CARICOM integration movement. That international vision also extends to the broad sweep of foreign policy matters and institutions that affect developing countries.

PJ's international vision continues to be strong in its development-oriented thrust. So throughout his long and exceptionally articulate public life, **PJ** has been a respected architect, negotiator, and advocate for a better deal for the community of emerging nations. He has advanced their case especially in trade relations.

He has questioned existing patterns of how development assistance is allocated. He has proposed new models in power-sharing within the international system. His ongoing contribution spans the political, diplomatic, economic and cultural spheres. But some of his most powerful analyses and actions were employed to tame forces of colonialism, apartheid and discrimination in every form. Whether in the councils UNCTAD; in the Non-Aligned Movement; in the UN Security Council; or in the ACP/EU Ministerial meetings, **PJ's** mission was the same. It aimed to change

the landscape of the international socio-economic order; to make it fairer, more just, more balanced, more transparent, and more inclusive.

The core political thought

Now **Mr. Speaker**, at least two dimensions of **PJ's** political thought are representative of his overall advocacy and action.

The first is that the purpose of politics is about creating opportunities for the people everywhere; now and in the future.

Secondly for **PJ**, the essential foundations of national development and prosperity are political struggle against inequality, the availability of educational opportunities, and inclusive institutions.

This statesman also understood that these two core political principles would not work without strong social **capital** in society. That is why this brilliant political strategist always emphasized the need for consensus in social and political life. It is easy to understand too **PJ's** commitment to the “**Values and Attitudes**” programme he proposed for **Jamaica**.

This takes me to more personal matters.

The personal style

I learned much of my political craft from three men, who have made a lasting impression on my life - PJ Patterson was one of them. The other two were The Most Honourable Michael Manley and Tony Spaulding, both of blessed memory. **PJ** continues to be my brother, my colleague, my mentor, and friend. **I truly love this courageous man**. I know him to be capable, strong-willed, and mild-mannered.

Mr. Speaker

I have observed that he approaches every issue carefully and thoughtfully, with a lawyer's attention to detail.

He is always calm and reflective. He would not be rushed...nor is he quick to anger and has a great sense of humour

For example Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker,

We all know of **PJ's** formidable and legendary organizational skills. It is the case too, that supporters and political opponents alike respect him for the ‘courtesy, unfailing civility, non-confrontational attitude, and for his constant search for consensus’. He is entirely incapable of holding a grudge.

That is not all.

For those who may not know, **PJ** loves music and likes to dance. Few would contest his expert knowledge of **jazz**. He will tell you that jazz excites the imagination, and calms the spirit. He is a most enthusiastic dancer!

For PJ, music is not just for enjoyment. At one time music was business. For him, the development of world music also represented the changing global political tides.

Early in P.J. Patterson's political life Miriam Makeba and Nina Simone were singing for freedom.

The music of the time has since changed as the generations evolved...and with it came changes in political messages and emphases. The Cold War ended the Berlin Wall fell. A black man became President of the United States.

PJ's political career spanned the period which saw The Skatelites as emerging artistes in need of assistance and management that he provided - to becoming foundation names in the history of Jamaican music.

During his time he saw Bob Marley's transition from one of many singers emerging from the Studios of Down Town Kingston to the stages of the world and to become the global Millennium Artiste. P.J. Patterson understood, first hand, the significance of that trajectory for many Jamaicans who themselves have journeyed long and far. He himself had made a significant journey from young, rural dweller to elder - statesman - both at home, in the region and across the globe.

Let me also celebrate his clever and fluent wit, and his ability to lighten tense moments. Let me also affirm **PJ's** strong core of compassion, generosity and reliability. Further, we are compelled to respect the intellectual vitality that **PJ** brought to the tasks of leadership.

He believed absolutely in the capacity of succeeding generations after his to lead us to growth and development.

He would leave office as Jamaica's longest serving Prime Minister, between 1992 and 2006.

Put together, these personal characteristics, and the work he pursued throughout his long and exceptionally articulate public life, simply define **PJ** as a great Jamaican and international statesman and visionary.

His international vision and work continue to engender support, and sustain respect.

PJ is truly the embodiment of excellence in public service.

He would harvest many significant national and international honours in the forms of Honorary Degrees, Orders of Recognition, Citations for Excellence, as well as Medals and Cross of Honor.

In particular, I congratulate him on his most recently announced honour, the high national award of the **Order of the Companion of O.R. Tambo in Gold, to be conferred upon him by the Government of the Republic of South Africa.**

Mr. Speaker.

From the agitation of ‘Young, Gifted and Black’ to a place of quiet reflection, PJ Patterson’s career has been a meaningful and a full one.

Today as we “Hail the Man” we examine the changes that have taken place at home that he had a hand in influencing and directing.

We also look ‘to the world’ in which he shaped policy, and direction that changed the lives of many. The Most Honourable P.J. Patterson Jamaica salutes you in this its fiftieth year of independence.

So Mr. Speaker, I call upon this Hon. House to salute the Most. Hon. Percival James Patterson as one of our brightest and most deserving members whose star continues to shine brightly, not only across Jamaica but across the world.

PJ, may God continue to bless you in every way.