

Program for the Celebration of the life of

Robert C. Whittaker

September 12, 1957 - January 22, 2024



"I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

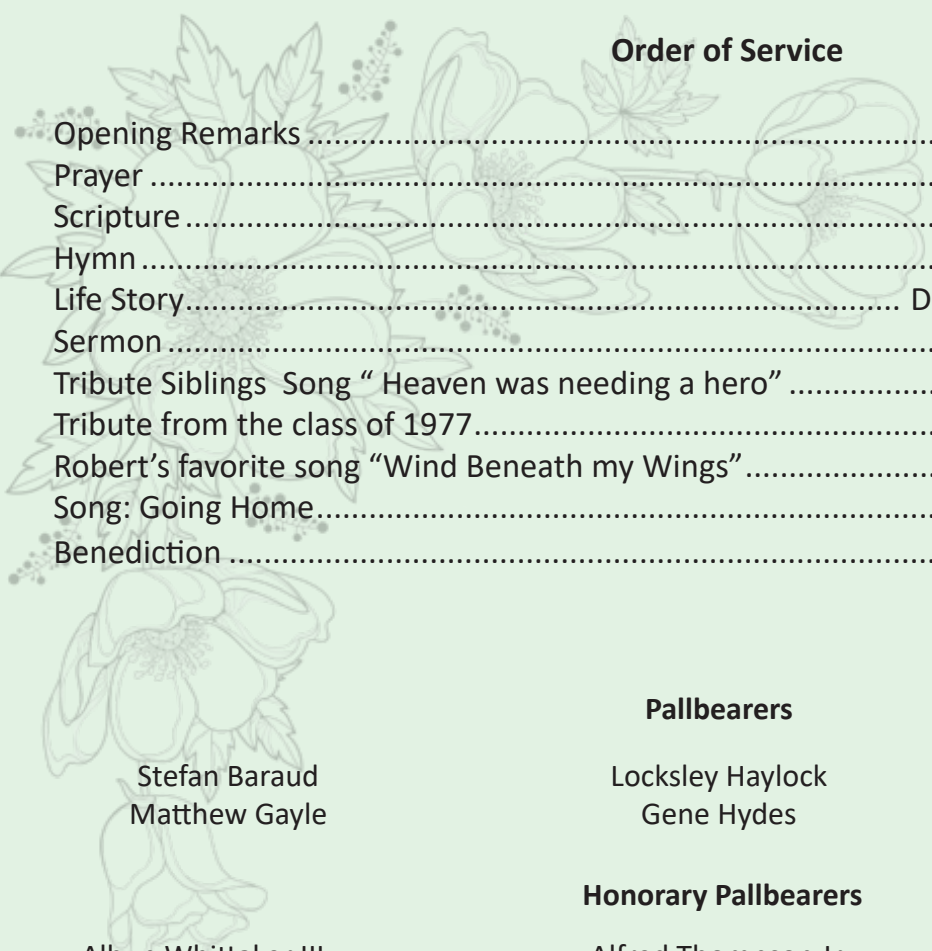
February 18th, 2024, | Service at 2:30 PM

Church of God Chapel, 22 Academy Way, Walkers Road, George Town

Officiating: Pastor Alson Ebanks & Pastor Ellen Peguero

Pianist: Mr. Olivaire Watler

Order of Service



Opening Remarks	Pastor Alson Ebanks
Prayer	Pastor Alson Ebanks
Scripture	Mrs Marjorie Ebanks
Hymn	How Great Thou Art
Life Story.....	Dr.Hon. Linford Pierson OBE, JP
Sermon	Pastor Ellen Peguero
Tribute Siblings Song “ Heaven was needing a hero”	Ms. Racquel Parsons
Tribute from the class of 1977.....	Class Slideshow
Robert’s favorite song “Wind Beneath my Wings”	Music Tribute
Song: Going Home.....	Pastor Alson Ebanks
Benediction	Pastor Ellen Peguero

Pallbearers

Stefan Baraud
Matthew Gayle

Locksley Haylock
Gene Hydes

James Whittaker Jr.
Forde Pierson

Honorary Pallbearers

Albun Whittaker III
James Whittaker Sr.
Jonathan Whittaker
Raymond Whittaker
Enrique Terc
Brian Whittaker
Clem Thompson
Handel Whittaker
Archie Whittaker
Gladstone Black
Shane Bothwell
Allen Bush
Clinton Whittaker
Dustin Jackson
Duanne Jackson
Roderick Pierson
Paul Nixon
Denny Ebanks
Hon.James Ryan CBE, JP
Hon.Dr.McKeeva Bush JP, MP

Alfred Thompson Jr.
Johan Fajardo
Renard Moxam
Graham Rankine
David Wight
Chris Wight
Martin Gochi
Reggie Nixon
Robert Baraud
Shane Marchand
Barry Gablehouse
Easton Russell
Ding Robinson
James Gorman
Herbert Bodden
Archie Rivers
Kent Green
Ken Smith
Dominique Baraud

Hon.Franz Manderson, MBE, Cert,JP
Kelvin Thompson
Michael Gayle
Gordon Lightbourne
Kennedy Ebanks
Anthony Hawkins
John Surdeen
Alberto Bango
Carlos Sandova
Dr. Savitr Sastri
Austin Harris
David Ritch OBE
Charles Walter MBE
Walter Hernandez
Sir.Alden McLaughlin Jr. KCMG, MBE,
KC, JP, MP

Ushers

Sonia Pierson
Jane Ebanks

Paulette Conolly
Sidehan Whittaker

Guest Book Attendants

Liz Thompson
Karen Gourzong

Life Story of Robert C. Whittaker

Robert Carroll Whittaker, also known as “Butchie”, “Bo-Bo”, “Robbie”, “Mr. Robert”, and “Uncle Robert ” was born in George Town on 12 September 1957 to the late Alburn Whittaker and Hyacinth Nixon-Whittaker; he was the fourth of six children. He attended Triple C. School, same as his mother and that of his brothers and sister, and Aunts Gay and Elsie. Triple C. School was always close to his heart, and from an early age he took a leadership role, always looking at the needs of the school. He held the positions of President of the Student Council for four terms in various grades. He was recognized by teacher Mrs. Majorie Ebanks and awarded the ‘Outstanding Senior Award’ in 1977, which was the first Honor Award in the history of the school--an award which has continued at Triple C. His dream upon graduating was to be a lawyer, and he spent his last year of school in an after-school program at the Law Firm of Hunter and Hunter (now Appleby Law Firm), at the invitation of the late Mr. Arthur Hunter OBE. However, as fate would have it, this was not to be because he had attended an American School System and not the British System, so upon graduating he would have had to go to Cayman Islands High School to obtain his GCE and O Levels in order to attend Law school in England. (The Cayman Island Law school was not established at the time). Robert never lost his love for Law, and although he never got a Law Degree, he always said he was taught law by the late Miss Annie Hulda Bodden OBE; he attended her office after school and became like an adopted son to her, and this relationship lasted for over 40 years.

He joined the company of A.L. Thompson in the late 70’s where he worked closely with his former Principal Mrs. Berna Thompson Cummings and Mr. A.L. Thompson, Jr. He started as a clerk and was later promoted as Senior Floor Manager in which position, he served for 15 years. In 1991 Robert joined the Cayman Islands Government as a Labour Inspector, and was promoted to Senior Labour Inspector in 1996. In 2000 he was promoted to Assistant Director of Labour, and assigned the responsibility of revamping the Labour Tribunals and the Labour Appeal Boards, which outcome was accomplished following much dedication and hard work. He also served on the Immigration Board as an Ex-Officio member for 14 years, which at the time dealt with work permits, trade and business licenses, cayman status and permanent residency applications; he was the first person and Caymanian to hold the Ex-Officio position, which he held until his retirement in 2014. In 2019 he was invited by the Hon. Premier of Cayman Islands, Mr. Alden McLaughlin to serve as a member of the Business Staffing Board at Immigration, which he gladly accepted having been in retirement for 5 years. In this position, he developed a very working relationship with the Board Members, and often said that Ken Thompson was the life of the meetings. Robert’s adopted motto was: “I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

Robert’s numerous accomplishments include: recognition as Cayman Islands Government Civil Servant of the year in 1997; the Paul Harris Fellow Award by Rotary International in appreciation of Tangible and Significant assistance for the furtherance of better understanding among the people of the world; in 2011 he was also awarded a certificate of appreciation by Former First Lady Michelle Obama in recognition of his importance to the ongoing fight against hatred and intolerance in America, then later his name was added to the wall of honor in Montgomery, Alabama.

In addition to his many friends in the Cayman Islands, Robert has many overseas friends including in Costa Rica where he met and became lifelong friends of former President Luis Monte and his family; also, the Hon Francis McNeil, former US Ambassador to Costa Rica, who awarded him the honor of merit at the US Embassy residence; present at this ceremony was the late Brian Uzzell, his wife and other guests. In 1984 Robert met the late Pope John Paul II in Rome where he received the Pope’s blessings.

Robert cherished his lifelong friendship with Isabelle Thompson Giger whom he considered to be an older sister, mother, and indeed a true friend. Anyone who knew him and Isabelle knows that their friendship was a true friendship; they traveled together and were supportive of each other through thick and thin. He always admired her quest to help others, especially those less fortunate. He called her “Mother Teresa and the South Sound Rose.”

In his later years his health began to fail because he had to undergo major neck surgery after many months of suffering and struggles. He was finally admitted to Health City Cayman where he met his angel --the man who saved his life--Doctor Savitr Sastri. After many weeks of medical consultation, he finally had the neck surgery which took some 8 hours. He was relieved of his pain and until his passing day he credited Dr. Sastri with saving his life. He would often say: “I owe my life to this kind caring doctor”.

In the last years of his life, he dedicated his time by continuing what he loved to do: cooking and telling all his stories on the history of our islands, and his travel around the world. He first learned to cook from his father and mother who were excellent cooks, then the European Chefs at Lobster Pot during the time it was managed by his brother Al Whittaker and Roger Duffield. Many of us will remember Robert’s famous chili, people came from all over the island to eat his chili, and his turtle meat. His friend Michelle Tayler always asked: “Robert when are you cooking chili again?” Robert will long be remembered as a man that could fix a meal in 10 minutes which was fitting for a king.” He enjoyed visits from his dear friends Isabelle Thompson Giger, Ann Green, Betty and Stefan Baraud, Locksley Haylock, Denny Ebanks, Liz Walton Thompson, Matthew Gayle, Edith Yates, Alberto Bango, Ceta Crowe, Lana Cayasso, Denise Archer, Amy Parchment, and Lloys Watler.

Robert always said, quote: “If I die tomorrow, I will die a happy man, I have traveled the world and enjoyed life to the fullest”; he was all about giving, and would give you the shirt off his back, or give his last meal to those in need. Sadly, Robert passed away on 22 January 2024. Robert was preceded in death by his grandparents, parents, brothers Al and Arthur Whittaker, Nieces Tricia Whittaker and Kelly Whittaker and Nephew James Bothwell. Left to mourn his passing are his brothers Eldon and Raymond, and Sister Cindy Terc, Aunts Elsie Black, Gay Jackson, Cynthia Whittaker, and Nell Whittaker; Uncle Clinton Whittaker, Special Cousin Gail Bush, Nephews, Nieces, and a host of other relatives and friends.



His Journey's Just Begun

Don't think of him as gone away
his journey's just begun,
life holds so many facets
this earth is only one.
Just think of him as resting
from the sorrows and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days and years.
Think how he must be wishing
that we could know today
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.
And think of him as living
in the hearts of those he touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost
and he was loved so much.

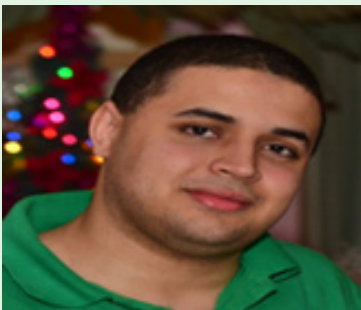


Tribute from Nieces and Nephews

Of all the special gifts in life
However great or small
To have you as our uncle
Was the greatest gift of all



May the winds of love blow softly
And whisper in your ear
“We love and miss you Uncle
And wish that you were here”



Deep in our hearts, your life is kept to love
and cherish, not forget
No more tomorrows we can
share but yesterdays are always there



A silent thought, a secret tear
Keeps your memory ever near.



Tribute from Cheryl Reid

Robert, you were a kind-hearted, caring and warm person who touched the hearts of many. In a world that's often harsh and cruel your love and kindness always shine.

I will always cherish your dedication to your family. You were always willing to listen, make me laugh and give great advice. Thank you for all the special things you did for me and Brain. Because of you our family get together and travels were fun and entertaining

For in my heart, you will always remain as my dear brother-in-law. Rest in Peace.
Love always, Cheryl



Tribute from Gail Bush

To a Loving Cousin
Although our worlds are different now
Or is that just how it seems
For I see you when I close my eyes
Because you're always in my dreams

I know you're up in Heaven
And looking down on me
And when I look up at the stars
I know that's where you'll be

Even though I miss you
You not too far away
Because my heart is full of memories
And I treasure them everyday

Our time on Earth was special
But it's only the very start
So please keep watching over me
While we're not so far apart

Someday the time will come
When I no longer feel this pain
That is the day when heaven calls
And we will meet again.

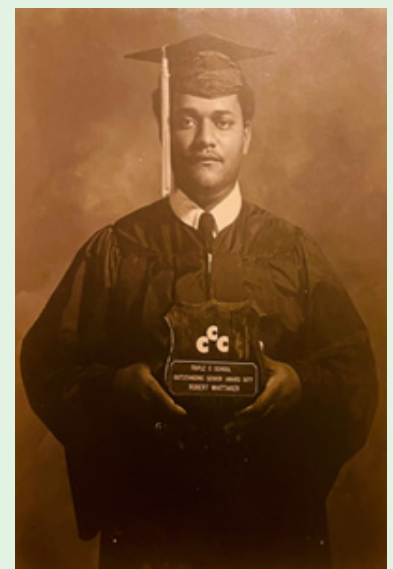


Tribute from Marjorie Ebanks

I thought I would cover it in a few lines, but I decided to say as much as was necessary to communicate what I felt in 1977 and who Robert was.

I taught Robert my first year at Triple C School, 1976-77. There were two grades to a classroom (an improvement from the all grades classroom and later the four grades classroom) and Robert was with a group of 11th and 12th grade students in my class that really made my first year at Triple C School a great experience.

Robert was exemplary in his attitude, his work ethic, his leadership, his personality, his volunteerism, and his respect for teachers and students alike. We had no award at that time that encapsulated those qualities, so as we observed Robert, we realized that we had to find a way to recognize him. We didn't ask what are the criteria or what are the qualities required for the Outstanding Senior. We simply looked at Robert and the criteria was established. It was an award inspired by him with the criteria determined by who he was. Robert became the first senior to receive the Outstanding Senior Award at Triple C School. It is an award still given 46 years later based on the very qualities that Robert emulated that led the school leadership in 1977 to establish the Outstanding Senior Award. It could easily be called the Robert Whittaker Outstanding Senior Award because of the origin and the deserving young man that inspired it.



Tribute from Friends by Ceta Aurillard

Robbie, the day you left us,
You took a part of each of us with you.
Now, Heaven got a new angel who is watching over us
As you always did while here on earth.

My Longtime friend
It's funny when i was with you,
The years seem to all disappear.
The past comes back ever so clearly,
Whenever my old friend was near.

The laughs, and the pranks and the problems,
That we manage to get into,
Have a luster that time has polished,
They've taken a different hue.

They're all tucked away for safekeeping,
And whenever I need to smile,
I know I can pick out a memory,
And sit down and laugh for a while.

And Though I might have always said it,
It comes down to this in the end,
Few things I value more deeply,
Then the memories I share with you my friend.

Robbie, We all will miss you
Forever, love you always!
Broken hearted.

Ceta & All Your Friends



Tribute from Gene Hydes

Whilst we mourn the loss of a friend, colleague and genuine great person, we also pay tribute and celebrate a life that was well lived. When the sad news of Robbie's passing was heard; we all were shocked and saddened that death has now deprived us of a good friend.

Having known Robert all my life, I can attest to his commitment not only to his family, but also to his friends and co-workers. We both had a love of politics and he would refer to me many times as "Mr. Willie" (referring to my Grandfather) and I on the other hand would refer to him as "Miss Annie" due to the close relationship he had with the late Ms. Annie Bodden. His memory was the size of an elephant and there was nothing or no one he could not remember. With his rich knowledge of politics and the political landscape of Cayman- he has taken this to his resting place. I don't think that many of us will leave behind a legacy of having the memory that Robert did.

When I joined the Labour Office, Robert counseled and guided me as I transitioned into a role that saw many bumps in the road. His knowledge was exemplary and he executed his duties flawlessly. He was a great Leader, who always made sure that the Officers who worked under him, and even those who didn't, were taken care of. With his rich experience, knowledge and insight, Robert could easily be dubbed the "Father of Labour Administration" in the Cayman Islands. As with any job, the work that Robert undertook could be and was challenging at times, but he faced those adversities, with courage and determination whilst ensuring equity and equality for all.

Moreover, Robert was a pillar of strength in times of adversity. His resilience in the face of challenges was admirable, and his optimistic outlook was a constant source of motivation for the team. He taught us the invaluable lesson that no obstacle was too great when faced with determination and a positive attitude.

In his own quiet and calm manner, he showed how to work with and get along with everyone, be it through challenging or good times. He always insisted on inclusion and carried everyone along. Despite all challenges, Robert was a modest man, a real gentleman who never failed to show the true spirit of humanity, through his personality. As I pen this tribute, I have tried to think of one time that I saw Robert angry, and nothing comes to mind. This in itself shows the great human he was.

Life can be fleeting. But a life lived to the fullest is a comfort. Robert through his decorum, grace, kind heartedness, joking and jovial manner has endeared himself to many.

This is a particularly difficult time for his family and us who were fortunate to call Robert our friend. It is accepted that the physical person we knew as "Robbie" is no longer with us, let us however; continue to live through his memory as Robert had a unique gift for making each of us feel valued and heard, fostering an environment of mutual respect and collaboration.

In closing, let us honor Robert's memory by embodying the qualities he exemplified. Let us strive to be compassionate, to lead with purpose, to face challenges with courage, and to find joy in our daily lives.

Robbie, 'ole heart'- may you rest in peace knowing that you have made an immeasurable impact on so many lives. You will be missed. Sleep in Eternal Peace and may light perpetual shine on your soul.

Tribute From Mario Ebanks, the former Director of Labour & Pensions, and colleagues.

Robert Whittaker was a model student at Triple C. School, and during the majority of his working career he was an advocate and defender of the rights of working men and women. Robert's career always featured the subjects of employment and workplace relations. He joined the public sector in circa 1991 and the Labour Department from its early creation, serving under many Directors, starting with the late Mr. Rudi Selzer, and then Capt. Dale Banks. He then served with other Directors of Labour, including Mr. Philip Scott, Mr. Walling Whittaker, Mr. Lonny Tibbetts, Mrs. Jennifer Smith, and Mr. Mario E. Ebanks. During his career in Labour, he also served under a number of notable Ministers responsible for Labour. In early 2008 he assumed the role of Assistant Director in the then Department of Employment Relations (DER).

Before I became Director of Labour & Pensions in early 2012, I was well acquainted with Mr. Robert Whittaker and the positions that he took to protect the rights of workers. I also know that he also ensured that businesses were given proper guidance in administering the Labour Law and Regulations, including all terms and conditions as well as Gratuities and Minimum Wage etc. During my time as Director, I worked closely with Robert, and always benefited from his insights and guidance. Collaborating closely with many colleagues over the years, and during my time as Director, he worked particularly close to Mrs. Loyal Linwood, Mr. Gene Hydes, Ms. Kara Connor, Mr. Dwayne Forde, Ms. Toska Seymour, Mr. Marlon Bodden, Mr. Locksley Haylock, and Ms. Jean Solomon and others. He was always willing to share his opinions and his knowledge of Labour legislation, the Tribunal process, the Immigration legislation, and so much more. His colleagues learned so much from Robert in relation to the intent, driving forces, Tribunal interpretations, Government legal counsel rulings, and general insights on specific sections of the Law. His willingness to share his knowledge and his genuine opinions and cautions were his attributes that his colleagues benefitted from and will always be grateful for.

We fondly remember his storytelling, which he did so well, and the funny stories of local employment disputes and antics, and also funny tales about his travels within the Caribbean region and elsewhere to attend Labour business, including conferences and meetings of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

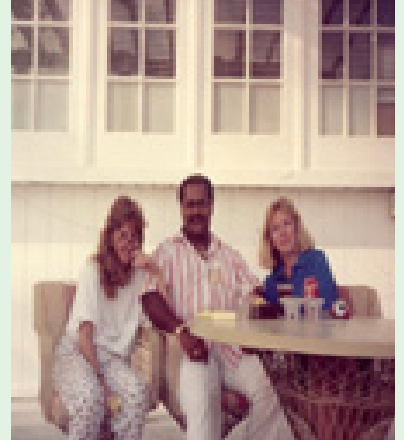
Without a doubt, Robert was always a champion for the working class and a constant advocate for tranquil labor and workplace relations. Robert would always go the extra mile and fight to ensure that employees got justice and fair terms and conditions of employment in accordance with the Labour legislation, best practices, and human rights. However, he was always fair to the employers as well because he understood the importance of employers to the economy. It was this particular trait and maintaining this delicate balance that endeared me to Robert, and allowed us to make significant progress in enhancing the reputation, Mission, Core Values, and contribution of the Department to good governance in these Islands, particularly in the areas of employment relations and employee benefits compliance.

I shall forever cherish the memories of this fine public servant, not a perfect person (none of us are), but a good and decent man who made everyday count by ensuring that his actions were beneficial to all concerned. In recent years he also served on the Work Permits Board, and was its current Chairman, and I am certain that he carried the same passion for fair employment practices, the human capital development of Caymanians, and equitable treatment of employers, to that role as well.

Thank you, Robert, for your service in the Manpower Development, Labour Relations, Human Resource management, and Human Capital Development in these Cayman Islands. Your work on earth is done, and you can now Rest in Eternal Peace – Well Done good and faithful public servant.

On behalf of all former and current Directors and co-workers in the Labour and Employment regulatory arena, I bid a sad farewell to our dear friend and "fighter" Robert Whittaker. We will miss you brother.







Graveside Service

Prayers..... Pastor Ellen Peguero
Floral Tribute Family and Friends
Hymn You Raise Me Up
Committal Pastor Ellen Peguero
Hymn I Want To Stroll Over Heaven With You
Hymns God On The Mountain
Benediction Pastor Alson Ebanks

Acknowledgment

The family of the late Robert Whittaker wish to express their sincere gratitude to the many relatives and friends whose support has meant so much during this difficult time .

Bodden Funeral Service for their excellent service

Not Alone



Welcome Home