



*The
R.E. Cooper
National
Meritorious
Service Award*

EST. 1965





MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

It is, indeed, a pleasure to provide my patronage as Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the 2016 R.E. Cooper Sr National Meritorious Awards. I extend warm greetings to the Rev. R.E. Cooper, Jr the Chairman of the Committee and to members of the Organizing Committee for fostering and nurturing this prestigious event over the years. It is an event that honours the memory and legacy of a Bahamian legend, the late Rev. Dr. R. E. Cooper, Sr. who distinguished himself in the field of religion and community development and one who served as an aspiration to many.

The idea behind these Meritorious Awards as I understand is to honour those who in their own unique ways have merited such recognition through their private avocation and contribution in the public sphere, especially in areas of philanthropy and community development. It recognizes people whose efforts have impacted the public weal and have had a lasting influence on people's lives.

This year's lists of Honourees exemplify the standards of the Award and include those who blazed a trail in the professions and fraternal organizations, such as Mr. Basil Sands. The Hon. Godfrey Kelly has distinguished himself in philanthropy through his generous support of scholarships to local institutions and for his support of sailing to mention some of his contributions. The Hon. Cynthia Pratt is among the Honourees and is well known for her distinguished career as an educator, sports development and at the forefront of public life and community development. The list is populated by persons, both young and old, including some new faces which may not be as well known to the public but each of whom have a case for merit.

As a young nation, it is very important that we carve out spaces in our national memory for those who have contributed in the building up of our nation. It is recognized that this is not a task that should be left to the Government or public institutions alone. Rather, it is something which organizations such as the R. E. Cooper, Sr, National Meritorious Award Committee under the auspices of the Mission Baptist Church should foster and encourage. Many people are deserving of recognition and here, I am reminded of Ecclesiasticus: ***"And some there be, which have no memorial; but these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten."***

As we develop as a nation it is important that we remember those deserving of praise. It is in this vein that I extend my warmest congratulations to all of the honourees and wish them the very best for the future.

Perry G. Christie
Prime Minister

