



Members of the Class of 2003

Roderick Alphonso Simms

(1917-1990)

Roderick Alphonso Simms lived his mission with a passion born out of a sincere affection for sport and the potential that it had for exciting the minds and enhancing the lives of the generations of youth he mentored during his tenure as a Physical Education teacher and coach. The eloquence of his athletic career first announced itself on May 30, 1930 when C. H. Reeves, Secretary of the Board of Education, organized the first-ever interschool Sports Day, held at the Southern Recreation Grounds. From then to 1990, in one form or another, this pioneer was actively involved in sports, during which he punctuated his career with extraordinary personal achievement in basketball, cricket, rugby, soccer, softball, table tennis, boxing, lawn tennis, track and field and swimming. In basketball, his team was the Hornets, the first club to actually purchase its own basketball.

Possessing such a plethora of athletic talent was what so ably equipped Roderick to fulfil his pre-ordained civic assignment, which was to write history by becoming the first Physical Education Teacher employed in The Bahamas by what was then the Board of Education, now the Ministry of Education. So unique was this appointment that he was assigned to all junior and senior secondary schools, rotating his duties to day to day and from school to school. A musician himself, he created space in his off-hours to develop youth bands at the various schools where he tutored.

For all his historical accomplishments, Roderick remained a humble, tranquil soul, dedicated to developing the intellect and strengthening the bodies of his charges. His calling further extended itself when he was invited to introduce organized sports to the student membership of The Bahamas Association for the Physically Disabled. Consistent with his kind disposition, he willingly accepted the challenge by introducing his new pupils table tennis, wheelchair racing, and track and field. He soon had his new students so adapt in their various sporting disciplines that they eventually qualified for participation in the Paraplegic Olympics and the Pan American Games.

Many of these students developed into Olympic Champions in their respective events, with Simms serving as National Paraplegics Coach from 1972 to 1984.

In his eloquent steadfast fashion, then, it is accurate to proclaim that Roderick Alphonso Simms had a very strong hand in the creation of the kind of international athletic reputation that The Bahamas currently enjoys. Indeed, it was he who actually fathered Bahamian Sports Power.