



Members of the Class of 2003

Elizabeth Marion "Betty" Cole

Elizabeth Marion "Betty" Cole personified the axiom that achievement is the crown of unrelenting effort. She marshaled the natural instincts of her human circumstances to subdue all the poignant challenges placed in her path, attempting to thwart her from her chosen mission of liberating the minds and grooming the physicality of the young men and women she elected to serve.

Betty's status as a genuine *Mulier Fortis* is confirmed by her demonstrated commitment to the betterment of Bahamian youth, in her role as athlete, coach, sports administrator or as Girl Guides coordinator, collectively measuring a period of sixty years.

In the course of her sustained involvement in sport and physical culture, Betty proved a pioneer in women's basketball. Her natural love of the game, coupled with the reasoned expressions of Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Marcian Peters, compelled Betty to be the

Instrument for cancelling the last vestiges of the tired conventions separating women

Basketball players of Bain Town from competing against players from East Bay Street.

Thusly, when the team which she founded, the Dizzy Dames (later the Pedal Pushers) played against St. Bernard's in 1949, a watershed occurred in local women's basketball, the result of which was that in the ensuing decade of the 1950s, more women's basketball teams existed than at any other time in the history of the sport, even to the present. And this caused the emergence of opportunities previously unavailable to the female segment of the local basketball community.

Betty owned a fifty year affiliation with what was then an all-girls school, Xavier's College, as a physical education teacher and varsity coach. Though in a voluntary capacity for the most part, she again created precedence by becoming the first local female coach and teacher specifically dedicated to the full-time propagation of female athletics. Her

unmatched accomplishment remains the production of a particular athlete, Jackie Barnette, who managed to enter and win every single women's event, during a Friends of The Bahamas (FOB) meet, hosted at St. Augustine's in 1959. One stadium record achieved by Barnette at that meet was 18'6" in the long jump, which remained in place until erased by St. Augustine's College Debbie Greene in 1980.

The indisputable distinction achieved by Betty was her founding of the Dolphins Swim Club, the first and oldest such body in the Bahamas Swim Federation and the first such agency devoted to opening opportunities of competitive swimming to the majority of Bahamians. This Dolphins Club was instrumental in producing for The Bahamas its first set of world class swimmers.

In her own unassuming fashion and generosity of spirit, Elizabeth Marion "Betty" Cole managed to achieve all that she originally set out to accomplish, which was to simply

advance the state of the Bahamian condition.