



Reference Biography Service

RT. HON. SIR LYNDEN PINDLING PRIME MINISTER & FATHER OF THE BAHAMIAN NATION

The Right Honorable Sir Lynden Pindling, KCMG, father of the Bahamian nation quietly passed away on August 26, 2000 at his home in Skyline Heights, New Providence. He was 70 years old.

One of the longest serving heads of government in the Commonwealth, Sir Lynden served as Prime Minister of The Bahamas for nearly 26 years, during which time he led the country to Independence from Great Britain on July 10, 1973. Additionally, he served as a Member of the House of Assembly for 41 consecutive years.

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Hubert Ingraham, at the time of Sir Lynden's death in 2000, described Sir Lynden as the Father of the Nation and the architect of the modern Bahamas. He further noted that Sir Lynden "was a giant of our times, an outstanding personality who towered over the modern political landscape. He is unique in our history, having authored and shaped our transformation from colony to independent country. No one past, present and I dare say future will so impact our country's history; few have had the impact, which he had on my personal formation.

The grandson of a Bahamian seaman and son of a retired policeman (Arnold F. Pindling), was born March 22, 1930 and attended Government High School in Nassau from 1943 to 1946. During that time he became junior sprint champion of The Bahamas.

At the age of 18, Sir Lynden left The Bahamas to attend the University of London, where he received his LL.B in 1952. He was called to the English Bar, Middle Temple, as a barrister-at-law in January, 1953, and to The Bahamas Bar that August.

He joined the minority Progressive Liberal Party shortly after its formation in 1953 and in 1965 was elected to the House of Assembly for the Southern District, New Providence. He was elected senior member for the South Central District in 1962 and the following year became chairman of the P.L.P. In the general election of 1967, he chose to run in an Out Island constituency and his victory helped secure a majority for his party, without which, the formation of a government would have been impossible. He represented the Kemp's Bay constituency located in Andros until he resigned in 1997.

As Prime Minister Sir Lynden reached a number of major objectives. A principle goal, sovereignty for The Bahamas, came to fruition July 10, 1973, when the island-nation became fully independent. On September 18, he also told the General Assembly in a speech accepting United Nations membership that "we believe that we can make a contribution in human relations in effecting change without disorder, revolution without bloodshed and in developing a stable economic and social order."

Upon his election to the House of Assembly in 1956 as a member of the PLP, Sir Lynden immediately became the Party's Parliamentary Leader. He was subsequently elected Party Leader and led the PLP to election victories in six successive polls- 1967, 1968, 1977, 1982 and 1987. During his first two years as Premier, he served as Minister of Tourism and Development. In 1968 he welcomed the millionth visitor of the year. And by the end of 1989, visitor arrivals exceeded three million.

In a Cabinet reorganization in January, 1989, Sir Lynden retained the important assignment of Minister of Finance. On October 1, 1990, Sir Lynden again reshuffled his Cabinet, relinquishing the Finance portfolio and taking on Tourism once again.

Sir Lynden was a noted regional and international leader. In October, 1985, he was chairman of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which was held in Nassau. At the same time he was host to the Queen during her fourth state visits to The Bahamas.

The PLP under Sir Lynden's 25 years leadership lost the 1992 and 1997 General Elections to Mr. Hubert Ingraham's Free National Movement (FNM). On July 9, 1997, one day before the 24th anniversary of independence, Sir Lynden resigned from Parliament, bringing to an end a political era in The Bahamas

In 1973 an honorary LL.D., doctor of laws, was conferred on him by Howard University, Washington, D.C. and in 1977 an honorary D.H.L. doctor of human letters, by the University of Miami. He received honorary doctor of laws degrees from Bethune-Cookman College in 1978 and Fisk University in 1979. He was made a member of the Queen's Privy Council in 1976 and on January 1, 1983, the Queen elevated him to the rank of Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, Leader of the Progressive Liberal Party, (2002-2007) renamed Nassau International Airport in Sir Lynden's honour to the Lynden Pindling International Airport on July 6, 2006.

Sir Lynden in his final speech to Parliament on July 9, 1997, noted, "When all I did for good is put on the balance against all I did for ill, I hope that future generations will not find me sorely wanting."

Sir Lynden married the former Marguerite McKenzie of Long Bay Cays, Andros, on May 5, 1956, in Nassau. The union reared two sons, Obafemi (born in 1959) and Leslie (1961) and two daughters, Michelle (1962) and Monique (1967).