



Member of the Class of 2011 *Godfrey K. Kelly, CMG*

Godfrey Kenneth Kelly, CMG, upon completing law studies at Cambridge University in July 1952, wasted no time in joining The Bahamas Yachting Team at the Helsinki Olympic Games. Though not a participant at that time, Kelly, motivated by a sense of personal and national commitment, felt it necessary to be with his brother Basil who was a member of the team, and to support the team in any way he could.

Godfrey Kelly's opportunity for international competition came in 1960 when he was chosen as the skipper of an International Dragon Class yacht in the Rome Olympics. That sailing event took place in the Bay of Naples. Kelly however, after acquiring his own yacht, skippered his Dragon Class yacht named "Guanahani" in the Olympic Games of the XVIII Olympiad in Tokyo 1964 and the Games of the XIX Olympiad in Acapulco, Mexico in 1968. He again participated along with his brother David as the spinnaker-man in the Games of XX Olympiad in Kiel, Germany in 1972.

Godfrey Kelly, in spite of his many notable accomplishments, when questioned on the highlights of his illustrious career, testifies that his greatest Olympic racing thrill came when the team won the 7th and final Dragon race at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 in a time of 2 hours 24 minutes and 31 seconds with his brother Basil as tactician and Robert Eardley as spinnaker-man. Though this race resulted in a seventh place finish, the team's overall aspirations for victory was heightened when upon returning to the dock after the race, they were informed that Sir Durward Knowles and Cecil Cooke had won the Gold medal in the Star Class. A great day indeed for the Bahamian Olympic sailors. Godfrey further emphasizes that apart from winning the race, the most moving moment at the Olympics came when the team marched into the Olympic Stadium during the Opening Ceremony. The cheers by the many thousands of persons were heart-felt and inspiring.

Committed to and knowledgeable of competitive sailing, Kelly, keenly acknowledges that in addition to Olympic victories won by Sir Durward Knowles, there were other Class victories where both he and Kenneth Albury were also successful in Olympic competition; sailing the Finn Dinghy and the Dragon Class.

When reflecting on his career in sailing, Godfrey Kelly proudly acknowledges that it began with his brothers Basil and David on Montagu Bay as teenagers competing in a locally built boat called a "Flamingo". His first taste of international racing came in 1954 when he teamed up with Peter Christie in Havana, Cuba to take part in the Snipe Western Hemisphere Championship. Kelly relentlessly competed in competitions; representing The Bahamas numerous times in the Snipe Class from 1954 to 1984, in the Dragon Class category from 1960 to 1973. In 1962, Kelly as skipper of a Dragon Class yacht, along with crewmen, Bobby Symonette and Roy Ramsey, won the Gold medal at the CAC Games in Kingston, Jamaica.

Godfrey Kelly's contribution to the development of The Bahamas through Sports was realized when Great Britain granted internal self-governance to The Bahamas on the 7th January 1964. Kelly was appointed Minister of Education with responsibility for Sports. A Sports Commissioner and a Sports Advisory Council were created with his brother, Basil Kelly as Chairman and Keith Parker as Secretary. In August 1964 the Government of The Bahamas approved the general scheme for development of the National Sports Centre at Oakes Field, and on the 2nd September, 1966, Kelly, as Minister of Sports, in the presence of the Governor Sir Ralph Grey, officially opened the Queen Elizabeth Sports Centre. Also present on that historical occasion was the Premier Sir Roland Symonette. Thus, proper sports facilities for the first time became available for the development of track and field and the sport of baseball.

Godfrey Kelly, in 1956, in collaboration with Sir Harold Christie, CBE, conceived and sponsored the first Cat Island Regatta. Kelly reminisced that at that time, **"no one could then have envisaged that the idea would establish such permanence and become an annual event in the ensuing 55 years"**. The first Regatta was held at Knowles on the 24th May, 1956, thus establishing the Cat Island Regatta as the second oldest of the Family Island Regattas. Exuma was the first. **"In those early years only boats owned or sailed by Cat Island residents were eligible to take part and in 1959 as many as 48 local boats participated"**. Kelly's love for sailing has never diminished. He continues to support the Regatta Committee in their endeavors.