

TRIBUTE TO DONALD MACKINLAY



Donald George MacKinlay was born and raised in Strathroy Ontario. He worked at CIBC for 40 years, retiring in 1999. In 2000 he went to Barbados on a one-year assignment with CIBC First Caribbean, an assignment that began his love affair with Barbados. In 2004 he returned to the island on another one-year assignment.

Don completely enjoyed his time working in Barbados and his subsequent vacations on the island. He explored the island's nooks and crannies and loved Bajan food. He loved dolphin (otherwise known as mahi-mahi, not flipper ladies and gentlemen), flying fish, puddin and souse, cou-cou and coconut water.

He made many friends in Barbados, including Uncle George at the Oistins Fish Fry, whose dolphin he enjoyed, and Nicole who owned the Rum Shack. In fact, once or twice a week he would pick her up and take her to get supplies as she did not have a car - a demonstration of his kindness.

He also loved Barbadian culture and music and was always taken with how upbeat and optimistic the music and lyrics were. He was a fan of the comedy theatre group *Laff It Off*, enjoyed *Crop Over* and *Kadooment* and followed the *Pic-O-De-Crop* and *Party Monarch* contests, even though he did not understand much of the Bajan slang.

When he returned to Canada it was his love for the music and culture of Barbados that motivated him to connect with the Barbadian community in Toronto and led him to the Barbados Ball. After attending his first Ball in 2005 he soon volunteered with this fundraising gala's organizing committee. Don joined the board of Barbados Ball Canada Aid (BBCA) in 2007 and served as Treasurer for from 2008 to 2013. He also assisted with fundraising and was responsible for establishing the Ball's relationships with several Barbados resorts that donate vacation stays for the Live and Silent Auctions at the Ball. He would make long distance calls and mail letters of solicitation at his own expense, never once asking for reimbursement of the cost. He was unrelenting in seeking support for BBCA and encouraging friends and even people he met for the first time to attend the Ball.

In addition to serving Barbados through Barbados Ball Canada aid, on the formation of the Barbados Canada Foundation as a registered charity in 2013, he joined this charity's board of directors and despite his health challenges, continued to serve on the Foundation's board until his death. Such outstanding commitment is rarely seen. We were privileged to have had him on the Foundation's board.

Don was truly an ambassador for Barbados and in his work with Barbados Ball Canada Aid and the Barbados Canada Foundation, he not only demonstrated his love for Barbados and commitment to serving the people of Barbados, but most importantly he demonstrated his charitable nature and his humanity. He supported almost every event put on by Barbadian organizations in Toronto, even when it was obvious in the last few years that his mobility was impaired by declining health, and that he was in pain.

We at Barbados Ball Canada Aid are pleased to have recognized him with the *Outstanding Volunteer Award* for his contributions at the 2016 Barbados Ball, and I am personally extremely pleased that we sung him praises while he was around to hear them and to understand how much we appreciated him.

Don was referred to by many as an Honorary Bajan and was awarded the *Friend of Barbados Award* by the Barbados Consulate at the Barbados Independence Celebration Dinner in 2011. I say that while Don was born a Canadian, he was a Bajan. A Bajan at heart. A Bajan by his actions in support of Barbados. All Barbadians lost an adopted brother who cared. We at Barbados Canada Foundation lost a friend. We lost a good man. May he rest in peace.