



Official Funeral



Alford Everett Penn

14th April, 1920 - 28th April, 2009

Road Town Methodist Church

Saturday, 9th May, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Survivors

- Wife :** Inez Blanche Penn
- Children :** David Alford Turpin Penn and Alicia Dianne Penn Butler
Son in Law: Roderic Butler
- Brother:** Ivan Penn
- Sisters :** Norma Penn Osborne
Elaine Hoyte
Ethel Maduro
- Nephews:** William Osborne
Reginald Hoyte
Benson Maduro
Glanville Penn
Algernon Penn
Timothy Penn
Ronald Penn
Randolph Penn
Peter Turpin
Derek Lane
Norman Lane
- Nieces:** Nelly Alicia Penn Carmona
Eileen Martin
Nadine Maduro Potter
Verna Penn Moll
Shirley Penn Combs
Dotsie Penn Tolbert
Gloria Matthias
Darriel Lee
Muriel Penn
Suzanne Turpin Mair
Peggy Turpin
Linda Lane
- Grand Nephews:** David Penn
John Penn
Mitchell Penn
Dexter Penn
Laurence Mair
Matthew Lane
- Grand Nieces:** Tracey Penn Russ
Gloria Penn Wheatley
Chantalle Mair
Michelle Lane
- Godson:** Ted Thomas

VIEWING

9:00 a.m.

SERVICE

10:00 a.m.

OFFICIATING CLERGY

Reverend Moreland Williams

Reverend Glasgow

Father Ronald Branche

THE ORGANISTS

Mr. Cedric Dawson

Mr. Derrick Swaney

Mr. Quinson Thomas

PALL BEARERS

Members of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force

HONORARY PALL BEARERS

Funeral Home to hearse

St. Ursula's Lodge Brothers

Road Town Church and East End

Mr. David Turpin Penn

Mr. William Osborne

Mr. Reginald Hoyte

Mr. David Penn

Dr. Mitchell Penn

Mr. John Penn

Mr. Roderic Butler

Mr. Peter Turpin

Mr. Handel Bhola

Mr. Keith Kassarie

Mr. Martin Rodriguez Stephens

Mr. Michael Georges

Mr. Archibald Christian

Mr. Miller Maximea

Mr. Horace (Smiley) Brown

Mr. Randolph Mars

Mr. Osei Baisden

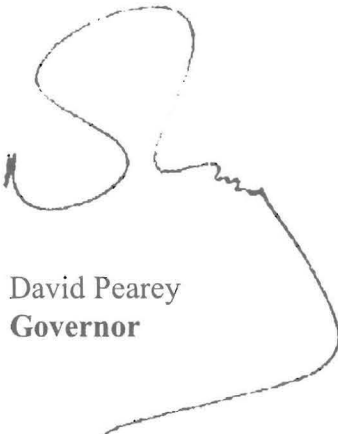


It is with great sadness that the people of the BVI join with his family to mourn the passing of Alford E. Penn, OBE, one of the BVI's greats. Those of Alford Penn's stature can never be replaced but will also never be forgotten. This sad day offers the occasion to remember, and indeed celebrate, his very considerable legacy. I am delighted and honoured to join the many others, who perhaps knew Alford Penn better than I, in paying our respectful tributes.

Mr. Alford Penn's contribution to the BVI public service will long be remembered. He has etched his place in BVI history by being the first to be appointed to the post of Deputy Governor, then titled Chief Secretary, a post he held for 14 years. In this period, through a critical time in the political development of the Territory, Alford Penn helped lay the foundation for the public service which we find today. But more than this, Alford Penn was a figure of regional significance whose contribution to public affairs extended well beyond the shores of the BVI.

Alford Penn's calm demeanour even in the most stressful situations, his humility, his extensive experience and skills, his caring personality and his desire to attain the highest standards all contributed to making him a model civil servant and indeed a model human being. His commitment to public service was absolute; he performed his duties with distinction and dedication; and he saw to it, at a time when seniority was synonymous with distance and superiority, that he was always available to his appreciative staff.

Alford Penn will be sorely missed. There is so much that we can learn from the example he set. We would be sadly remiss if those lessons went unlearned. As we reflect on a life of great importance, our thoughts and condolences are with his wife, children and all other close family members.



David Pearey
Governor



TRIBUTE TO MR. ALFORD PENN

A cedar has fallen in Lebanon. These words came to me as I heard of the death of Mr. Alford Everett Penn, OBE. Here was a gentleman who learnt from his parents the ideal of serving the public. As a young man he saw his father as a Local Constable and Government Agent, as it was then called, in the East End/Long Look area, and his mother as District Registrar of Births and Deaths in same area.

He joined the Civil Service as Clerk to the Commissioner and those who knew him working in the Commissioner's Office always spoke about his good manners and willingness to help. After serving in Road Town for some time, he was transferred to Antigua and also did a stint in St. Kitts. From Antigua he served in the Pre-Federal Organisation and eventually went to Trinidad where the Capital of the West Indies Federation was situated. His picture appeared many times in the company of the Legislators of the Federal Government of the Leeward Islands as he was Clerk of the Federal Legislative and Executive Council of the Leeward Islands.

Wherever he worked he was always described as a gentleman and a person who always demonstrated a humble attitude and he dealt with rich or poor, white or black, big or small with the same respect and courtesy. Our people in the Virgin Islands had a chance to see this gentleman at work when he returned to the Territory and took up the position as the First Chief Secretary of the Territory, later changed to Deputy Governor. In this position he served for many years, but these positions never went to his head. In fact, in talking with Mr. Penn, I would refer to 1st Corinthians, Chapter 13, where it speaks about charity and instead of the word charity; I would substitute the word humility. It says in one verse Charity is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, charity suffereth long and is kind. If we substitute humility for charity, this was Mr. Alford Penn. In fact, as we would say here, he was a person who would not mash and ant.

Brother Penn had a vast store of experience. It was a pleasure to sit and talk with him and he would relate stories of happenings in the B.V.I. and how the islands managed to survive. He was a member of the Road Town Methodist Church and worshipped there regularly while he was in good health. He was also a member of the Rotary Club of Tortola and was the first local Master of the St. Ursula's Lodge. In all these societies he carried out his duties faithfully and well.

In the service of his country, Brother Penn served without pretence and used his knowledge and experience for the benefit of all and sundry.

I would like on behalf of my family and the Government of the British Virgin Islands, to extend deep sympathy and sincere condolences to his widow, children and all his relatives and friends and pray that God will give them the strength and fortitude now at this time. The country has lost one of its outstanding sons. He will be greatly missed.

May his soul rest in peace and rise in Glory.

Ralph T. O'Neal
Premier



Office of the Deputy Governor
Government of the Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola, VG1110
British Virgin Islands

Mr Alford Penn commenced his Public Service career in these Virgin Islands in 1938, and joined the Federal Secretariat of the Colony of the Leeward Islands in 1946. In 1956 he was transferred to the St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla administration and served as a Senior Administrative Assistant to the Administrator and as Secretary to the Executive Council. Mr Penn later served as Senior Administrative Officer and as Secretary to the Cabinet in the West Indies Federation, headquartered in Trinidad. After the break-up of the Federation in 1962, Mr Penn moved to Jamaica as a Foreign Service officer of the United States of America. It was from Jamaica that Mr Penn was invited to fill the post of Chief Secretary, later renamed Deputy Governor, in which he retired in 1983.

The post of Chief Secretary was created in 1969 “to perform the functions of Chief Security Officer and Chief Establishment Officer both of which are becoming progressively more important as the Territory develops and the Civil Service expands.” As Chief Secretary, Mr Penn was directly responsible to the Administrator for all subjects, except Finance; namely, External Affairs; Defence; Internal Security, including the Police Force; the terms and conditions of service of persons holding or acting in public offices; the Administration of the Courts – subjects which now fall to His Excellency the Governor, constitutionally, under his special responsibilities.

What manner of Deputy Governor was Mr Penn? I asked a few of those who worked closely with him to attempt a tribute, in one sentence. Here is what they said:

Lorna Smith: “Mr Penn brought to the British Virgin Islands Public Service, from his experience as a Senior West Indies Federal public servant, the kind of knowledge and experience that launched the BVI as a world class Public Service.”

Elihu Rhymer: “Mr Penn’s gravitas was the gravity that held the Public Service together at a significant time of constitutional change in the Virgin Islands.”

Keturah Crabbe: “Mr Penn’s calm managing of matters averted much of the conflict that would otherwise have occurred in the Public Service.”

For my own part, as a member of the Public Service Commission from 1971-1978, I watched Mr Penn navigate the most contentious of matters with a consistent unflappability. More importantly, though, what remains indelibly with me is his phrase “in the exigencies of the Service.” Always for Mr Penn, it was the Service that mattered – holding aloft the big picture – and every recommendation he made to the Public Service Commission, whether the Commission agreed with him or not, had at its core the well-being and advancement of the Service.

Altogether Mr Penn gave almost thirty-two years of public service to this territory. These Virgin Islands in general, and the Public Service in particular, were fortunate to secure the services of Mr Penn, with his depth and breadth of administrative experience, to serve as the territory’s first Deputy Governor. Perhaps unequalled as an architect of the Public Service, Mr Penn’s imprint on the Service speaks unquestionably to his place in the history of these islands. No wonder Her Majesty the Queen honoured him with the award of the Most Excellent Officer of the British Empire!

On behalf of the Public Service of the Virgin Islands, I extend condolences to Mr Penn’s immediate and extended family, and in particular to Inez, his wife of fifty-seven years, David, his son, and Alicia, his daughter. The peace or the Lord be with you all.



V. Inez Archibald
Deputy Governor



OFFICE OF THE COMPLAINTS COMMISSIONER GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS (UK)

A Tribute

Mr. Alford Penn, who retired in the office of Deputy Governor in January, 1983, would have been declared Deputy Governor Emeritus if such a recognition had existed in Government service.

He was the first to be appointed Deputy Governor, and served in the position with distinction for 14 years (including the period when the post was styled "Chief Secretary"). This capped a meritorious regional civil service career, and it was quite an achievement for the Government in 1969 to secure the services of someone as experienced as Mr. Penn to anchor the still fledgling BVI public service at a time when growth in the service and the economy were rapid, the ferment over the Wickhams Cay and Anegada Agreements was still bubbling and social upheaval sometimes seemed threatened. With different Governors, Attorneys General and Financial Secretaries, among other senior officials, going and coming, changing often, he was a rock of stability and continuity at the top of the bureaucracy.

Mr. Penn's personal style and qualities were the source of much admiring discussion and much wonder. In particular, his unflappability under great pressure was legendary. The quest to find someone who saw him angry or display bad temper on the job ended fruitless when he retired. His coolness under fire was due in part to his personality, but much came also from the depth and breadth of his service experiences elsewhere in the Leeward Islands, the Federal Government in Port of Spain and in Jamaica where he lived through momentous events and crisis. It came, too, from knowing how to tackle problems administratively with confidence. These characteristics made him the right person for the time.

Mr. Penn put on no airs as some do in elevated positions. He was a genuinely humble person, approachable and available to the most junior civil servant who sought to see him. He loved a good joke and a good laugh.

Mr. Penn's strong sense of duty and propriety lived on in many of us who worked with him. His leading role in the development of the Territory's public service is clear to see, and that fact will ensure his place in our history.

On a personal level, I was greatly appreciative of the confidence that he showed in me, which helped to clear the way for me to succeed him as Deputy Governor, and of his readiness to advise whenever approached.

May he rest in peace.

Elton Georges CMG, OBE

Mr. Alford E. Penn, OBE.
A Tribute

At a very early age, my father sent me to board with friends at East End, so that I could attend the East End Elementary School, which was under the headship of Mr. Willard Wheatley, one of our leading headmasters of the day. It was during my time at East End, that I first met Mr. Alford Penn while on one of his home visits to see his parents. "Miss Leisha", as his mother was affectionately called by most of the children as well as adults in the area, ran a small shop that provided most of the immediate necessities required by the small community. I used to welcome being sent to the shop, because Miss Leisha was such a friendly and engaging lady, always concerned about how one was doing, especially at school. She was what one would term a real "community mom".

I suppose it was that connection from my childhood that enabled me to appreciate the sound quality of leadership that was present in Mr. Penn's management of the public service. In him, I always saw that unruffled patience so evident of his mother's countenance. I can recall one incident in particular that drove home his management style. Although I was working as an administrative officer in Chief Minister Wheatley's Office, my permanent appointment was as a history teacher at the Secondary School. This fact significantly affected my salary to my disadvantage.

I decided to take up this matter with Mr. Penn. I duly obtained an appointment and presented my case. Mr. Penn listened to everything I had to say, even though many of my words were not carefully chosen, he never interrupted me. When I had exhausted myself, a subtle smile crossed his face and he said, "Mr. Rhymer, I have heard all you have said, now I would like you to put it in a letter to me, but you do not have to state in your letter all the things you have said". I looked at Mr. Penn, he smiled again this time somewhat fuller. I returned his smile and left. In so few words he had said everything.

Mr. Penn was called upon to manage the civil service at a point in time when the BVI was undergoing substantial change. It was a time when the old guards were being replaced by an exuberance of youth, with somewhat better academic credentials, but little experience.

Mr. Penn was able to manage this change, because of the depth of his experience and knowledge, combined with a loving family upbringing and a quiet but abiding sense of caring.

*These Virgin Islands on shoulders broad have risen.
Their golden glow even now reflected by a rising sun.
Let not those sons who stood as lofty pillars,
Be soon forgotten when their day is done.*

Sincere condolences to the Penn Family

Elihu Rhymer