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ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE BAHAMA JOURNAL

**THIRTY YEARS AGO**, *The Bahama Journal* carved out a niche in the newspaper business, providing a different perspective to events in the Bahamas. As a compelling weekender at the time, it contained a number of articles written by columnists from all political persuasions and professional backgrounds. They brought fresh insights to a plethora issues facing the Bahamas. In this way, they spoke truth to power. The then government headed by Sir Lynden Pindling often quoted from these articles in the Parliament. What was most exciting for us, was the yearly assessments of the stewardships of Cabinet Ministers, who were graded on their performances. Some would argue that the political education of the electorate improved markedly as a result of the contributions. Indeed there has been a rapid change in governments over the last 30 years. In this commemorative edition of *The Journal*, the Publisher invited a number of the former and current columnists to give their views on the progress of this newspaper and to comment on our evolving democracy. **(See the contributions inside.)** Our success as a newspaper is due in large measure to the Editorial staff, the Administrative staff, our Advertisers and most importantly our loyal readership who have all supported us over three decades.

# Congratulatory Remarks

## The Bahama Journal 30th Anniversary



BY GODFREY ENEAS

The Bahama Journal is the third oldest daily newspaper in The Bahamas. It is the new boy on the block, as the other two dailies have been around for more than a century each. Despite its youthfulness, The Bahama Journal has been able to hold its own in an industry where newspapers are facing the challenge of the Internet, social media and smart phones, as these technologies have negatively impacted newspapers generally by taking away advertising and subscribers.

Newspapers survive because they appeal to a specific readership for various reasons. The Journal's survival has been based on its objectivity, its balanced reporting and its editorial consistency. Over the years, The Bahama Journal has distinguished itself

by not falling prey to yellow journalism or to sensationalization by becoming a supermarket type tabloid filled with gossip and innuendo. The Journal has remained above the fray.

Despite the changes in the marketplace, The Journal has maintained the tenets of good journalism. A newspaper reflects the editorial policies of its publisher or editor. The Journal is no exception. In the biography of Joseph Pulitzer, the newspaper icon for whom the Pulitzer Prize was named, was described as someone who "worked at his desk from early morning until midnight or later, interesting himself in every detail of the paper." That description aptly applies to Wendall Jones, The Journal's Publisher and Editor-In-Chief. Wendall is hands-on owner and he is involved in every detail of The Journal.

Jones has been a journalistic pioneer as he revolutionized news reporting by developing a model which oriented his reporters to write for newspaper, radio and television. In conjunction with his model, he has adhered to journalistic principles which are reflected in print and broadcast.

The great media men like William Randolph Hearst, who built his empire around information and entertainment; and Rupert Murdoch who established a global media conglomerate operating 800 companies in 50 countries. Wendall Jones has developed perhaps the number one privately owned media com-

pany in the Caribbean. The Bahama Journal was the nucleus for the tripartite organization, Jones Communications Limited. For the past thirty years, The Bahama Journal has etched its presence in the Bahamian public, gaining validity and credibility by presenting the news in an objective fashion - in essence,

calling a spade a spade.

One of the strengths of The Journal over the years has been its variety of columnists, some of whom like Sir William Allen, have gone on to national importance. Many of its reporters, like Candia Dames, have risen to great heights in the field of Journalism in our country and

others have manned the press in our country after receiving their initial exposure to Bahamian journalism as a result of their employment at The Bahama Journal.

The Bahama Journal has national symbolized itself as being a professional and dependable news medium.

### "An Evolving Democracy - A tribute to 30 YEARS of the Bahama Journal and 23 YEARS of JCN"

BY ALLYSON MAYNARD-GIBSON



I extend hearty congratulations to Wendall Jones and his team on the 30th Anniversary of The Bahama Journal and 23 years of JCN.

Most Bahamians, especially Bahamians of colour, had grandparents or great grandparents who were born into humble circumstances. Then, the community was involved in raising children. Wendall's community, Englerston, included men like the legendary Sir Clifford Darling - the freedom fighter who became Governor-General. Wendall's Mother, Jerlean, is still today a hard working woman and devout Christian. She was determined to ensure that her children were imbued with Christian values, got a good education and every opportunity to "get a good job" so they could make their contribution to The Bahamas. To top this all off, Wendall grew up at a time when the Bahamian soul was stirring to show the world the manner of its bearing - through internal self-government, Majority Rule and Independence. Our forebears were visionary and courageous and scores of people, like Wendall's Mother, are the unsung heroes.

See TRIBUTE TO 30 YEARS OF THE on PAGE 7...

*Congratulations to the Bahama Journal on your 30th Anniversary!*

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# OUR EVOLVING DEMOCRACY

BY WENDALL K. JONES  
Publisher

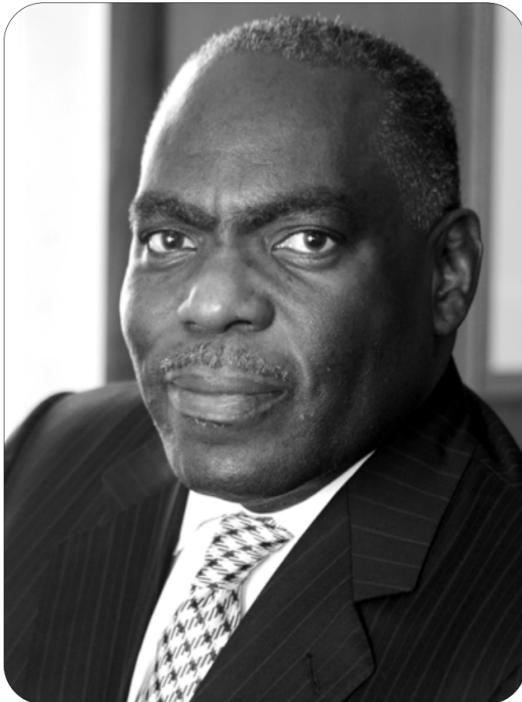
There is a very old hymn of the Church called, "A Charge to Keep and a God to Glorify." It came to mind as we reflected on the last 30 years of The Bahama Journal as we gave thought on the charge we had for ourselves and as we thank a merciful God on how he has sustained us for three decades.

We have gone through many changes as we have sought to give the reading public our best. Indeed, the entire newspapering industry is different.

This Journal started in September of 1987, at a time when journalists in the Bahamas were not in possession of personal computers and when our publishing company called Miliwen struggled to afford its first comput-

er. We had typewriters and an old Itek Machine for the development of copy, but we were determined to succeed. Today, as we are housed in new headquarters on University Drive in New Providence, in a multi-million-dollar complex with 52-thousand square feet at our disposal, we continue to reflect on the wonderment of God.

From the halcyon days of the formation of The Journal, we have developed a strong and dynamic Media organization called The Jones Communications Network, employing scores of professionals in many aspects media to serve our public with the addition of Radio and Television facilities. In this regard, we express gratitude to those employees past and pres-



ent who have given yeoman's services in assisting in the institutionalization of The Bahama Journal.

## NEWSPAPERS IN OUR DEMOCRACY

There is no doubt that

for more than 170 years newspapers have played a significant role in our democracy. It was on 7th August, 1784, that The Bahamas Gazette, the first newspaper was published by Loyalist John Wells. The pace and development of the country now is such that the daily newspapers are able to survive, even while newspapers in North America are closing their doors. It must be noted that our Journal started as a weekend newspaper devoted mainly to news analysis and commentary. It evolved to a daily in 1995. With the impact of Social Media, we must hold on to the old tenets of ethical journalism and devote more pages for the in-depth examination of the Bahamian society. Our responsibility in this democracy is to pay more attention to civil society and to the many forces and people who move events independently of government and politicians. As we move forward, we recognise the need for the Press to recognise that the forces of information for the deepening of the democ-

racy are bursting through the conventional bounds, beyond the control of the established media.

Our responsibility as Media in the democracy must be about sifting out truth from falsehood, fact from propaganda and sentiment from argument. In his era of New Media, we must be about shaping thought where it is necessary and of challenging those who might otherwise go unchallenged.

## OUR EVOLVING DEMOCRACY

Some 288 years ago, on 8th September 1729, the then Governor of the Bahamas, His Excellency Woodes Rodgers, issued a proclamation after receiving instructions from the King of England to call a General Assembly to consist of 24 persons who were to be the representatives of the Free-holders, Planters and Inhabitants of these islands of the Bahamas. That for many people was the beginning of real democracy in our country.

See DEMOCRACY / page 5...



► Publisher Wendall Jones meeting with Religious leaders, including a representative from the Vatican (center).



► The Bahama Journal was one of the sponsors of the Love Games. L to R: Mike Sands, Wendall Jones, former Governor General Sir Orville Turnquest and former cabinet minister Zhivargo Laing.

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# The Journey To Democracy

BY MIKE SMITH

*It was early Sunday morning -- May 10th, 1980 about 8:00 a.m. when I got the call from my colleague Lionel Dorsett who was the senior reporter on duty in the ZNS newsroom. I was his supervisor at the time and he was most upset. He had heard from very reliable sources that our newly commissioned Defense Force craft had been attacked in the southern Bahamas by Cuban MiG jets.*

I rushed to the newsroom from my home in Cable Beach, and we began to work the story. We intended to broadcast a bulletin about it and contacted the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. A.D. Hanna for a comment. The Prime Minister Sir Lynden Pindling was in London. Not only did he not give us a comment, but he made us hold the story until the next morning. Can you imagine how frustrated we were as zealous newsmen, especially as the Florida stations were carrying the story from around midday.

In another incident during our tenure, The Bahamas Union of Teachers staged a national strike, crippling the public school system. I prepared a story for the 1:00 p.m. News. The Hon. Kendall Nottage who was Minister responsible for Broadcasting demanded to see it before it

aired. He edited it and in our opinion, it contained inaccurate information, but we had to carry it.

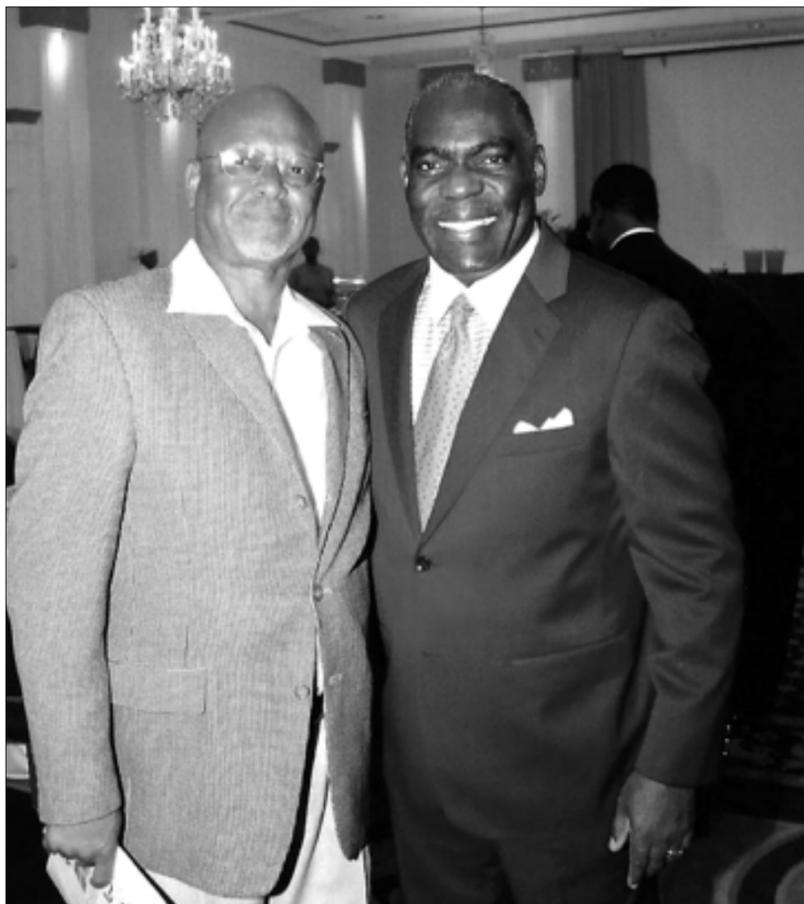
It was incidents like this that made us realize that The Bahamas needed an accurate, reliable and investigative source of news. Captained and guided by Wendall Jones, who had also had his disappointments with the ZNS news system, we set out on our own course, and thus the Bahama Journal was born.

It would be difficult for the current generation to appreciate what a leap of faith this was, but we submit it was one of many factors that shaped the defeat of the PLP government after 25 years in power, especially after a front page article featuring the Hon. Hubert Ingraham declaring that "Pindling Can Be Beaten".

The Journal was well received by the Bahamian literate community, at first as a weekly. Citizens would sometimes wait at depots on Saturday mornings to ensure that they got their copies.

Great care was taken by our editorial team to feature stories of significant import to the political and social development of The Bahamas. It also became a tool for students abroad, and assisted them with Bahamian current events.

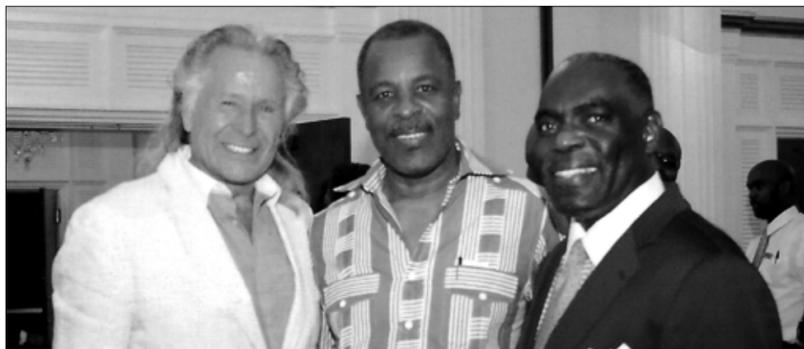
Fortunately, The Bahamas is now listed by the United Nations as having a totally free press. I believe The Bahama Journal played a part in this achievement.



▶ Mike Smith and Wendall Jones



▶ L to R: Rogan Smith, Sarkis Izmirian, Macushla Pinder and Wendall Jones at a Bahama Journal Awards ceremony.



▶ At the 25th anniversary of The Bahama Journal, l to r: Fashion Mogul Peter Nygard, Sir Franklyn Wilson and Publisher Wendall Jones.

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# The Deepening of Our Democracy

BY LESTER TURNQUEST

On the occasion of the Bahama Journal's thirtieth anniversary it would be interesting to reflect on certain of the developments during that time. An examination of the extent to which our democracy has deepened would undoubtedly highlight an effort in which the Bahama Journal has played a significant role.

Together with its sister company (Love'97) (another creation of Jones Communications) the publication has been on the vanguard of the "free press movement". Through it all the Journal has fostered an examination of all aspects of our national life, and thereby directly contributed to the deepening of Bahamian democracy by showing no fear or favour.

I share the view that modern mores have led to a coarsening of social values, and that modern communications through television, telephones, cell phones, and the internet have desensitized all of us.

The unquestioned beneficiary however, has been the deepening of our democracy. The speed of information exchange, and the broad availability and access to the information "highway" has meant that the Bahamas, (indeed the world) sees things as and when they happen. Furthermore, anyone who has access to a smart phone or computer can comment, inform, agitate, and put a case on line (political, social or otherwise).

Every citizen regardless of



resources can be fully informed, educated, and drafted into service on national issues. The various protagonists must determine the "sweet spot" of course.

The pedigree of the Journal has spawned a radio and television group, which avoids shallow, cheap journalism in favour of inquisitive analysis of what is good and bad about our country. The journal has set the pace, and maintains a standard which is enjoyed and respected by those with enquiring minds.

Democracy thrives when there is a free exchange of ideas on critical issues, in-depth analysis is always an aid to national development.

I believe that we all accept that democracy runs deep in our land. How do we conclude this? Consider

the following:

- *Independence was achieved by the ballot not by the rifle.*
- *Governments are changed with regularity these days with the process being essentially free from violence and intimidation..*
- *Job security is rarely impacted by election results except for the obvious appointments. Civil Servants do not fear election outcomes. They simply soldier on.*
- *Governance, (legislation, and policy implementation), take place within parameters and through mechanisms that are known, accepted, and predictable. We may quarrel with a policy, but our citizens generally make their views known and know how to impose their will Up to and including the removal of those whom they have concluded have strayed from the assigned tasks.*

■ See THE DEEPENING / page 6...

## OUR EVOLVING DEMOCRACY

■ Continued from / PAGE 2...

Democracy may be a word familiar to most, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused. Yet the power of the democratic idea has evoked some of history's most profound and moving expressions of human will and intellect: from Pericles in ancient Athens, to Havel in modern Czechoslovakia, from Thomas Jefferson's declaration of Independence in 1776 to Barak Obama in 2016. Note here that the Bahamas organised an Assembly of representatives some forty-seven years before the Declaration of Independence in the United States.

Democracy is government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them, or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. In the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government "of the people, by the people and for the people."

Freedom and democracy are often used interchangeably, but the two are not synonymous. Democracy is indeed a set of ideas and principles about freedom, but it also consists of a set of prac-

tices and procedures that have been folded through a long, often tortuous history. In short, democracy is the institutionalisation of freedom. Democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. In a democracy, government is only one element coexisting in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political parties, organisations and associations.

As former U.S. President Barak Obama said in Ghana, "democracy is not only about elections, but what happens between elections." Democracy everywhere is based on majority rule; but that rule is always conditional on the fair treatment of minorities. Majority opinion is susceptible to manipulation by demagogues who whip up emotions which often find an outlet in the persecution of minorities. Majorities can also harm minorities out of simple indifference or ignorance. A true democratic regime therefore incorporates safeguards to protect minorities from majorities rolling over their rights.

The world would be a better place if politics were always straightforward, but democracy in practice rarely approaches perfection. Those who pretend that it is perfect — who talk about the sacred and inviolable traditions of democracy and the like — will usually be found to be defending some loophole in the system which favours their interests and which others want to change. Far from being perfect, democracy is, as Winston Churchill once said, the worst political system yet devised — except for all the others. In the wrong hands, it lends itself to ruthless ambition, power lust and greed. And the master American politician Al Smith caught the idea of democracy when he declared: "The cure for all the ills of democracy is more democracy." Surely there is no jurisdiction in the world that would not benefit from more democracy, provided it is of the constitutional kind that incorporates judicial safeguards for minorities.

I have sought to define democracy in great detail in order to offer some thoughts on the quality of our democracy in The Bahamas and the responsibility of Media in not only deepening the democracy, but our role in safeguarding the rights of minorities. We are operating in an era that has seen the evolution from Old Media to New Media.

As you would appreciate, we live in a time when there is constant change in Media. In this country, there is a crisis in Media. Good Journalism as we know it has reached meltdown proportions. In the Radio business, scores of licenses have been awarded, the vast majority of them to people who have no experience in broadcasting.

■ See EVOLVING / page 6...



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▶ Some members of the then Bahama Journal staff posing with former Governor General Sir Arthur Foulkes.



▶ A part of the audience attending the opening of The Jones Communications complex on University Drive, Oakes Field earlier this year which houses The Bahama Journal.

## The Deepening of Our Democracy

■ Continued from / PAGE 5...

We have just finished the first Bahamian election ever fought in cyber space. Everyone had a voice, and blows were thrown with clicks and keystrokes. As much computer time was logged as shoe leather was worn out. The ferocity and dedication that the internet warriors showed equaled that of the canvassing teams. This battle of ideas was enhanced by the internet because it went on twenty-four hours a day. You can't knock on doors at all hours, but you can send texts, emails, attachments, and other propaganda at all hours. If the recipient is asleep when it arrives, it is accessed when he or she opens their device of choice as they yawn themselves awake.

Truth be told Bahamians have evolved in their expectations, and have raised the bar on transparency and accountability. The shrinking of the globe through technology means that debates of all kinds are seen understood, and engaged in by Bahamians. Ask those internet commentators which have incurred the wrath the Bahamian praetorian guard who respond to any negativity espoused about us on the internet. We swarm them like bees leaving them begging for mercy. SMILE or I guess the new term is LOL?

Our democracy is deep, and safe. We are all participants and that is a good thing.

The fruits of the Bahama Journal are harvested by us all every day, and that fruit is sweet and succulent. Our children have good seeds for future harvests. They simply need to guard the grain house with diligence and probity.

## OUR EVOLVING DEMOCRACY

■ Continued from / PAGE 5...

So, these commercial licences are used mainly for owners of Radio systems to earn money, often without regard to the tenets of good journalism. Once ago, the main objective in the industry used to be to "educate, inform and entertain." Today, less emphasis is placed on the educational component and more emphasis is on entertainment.

In our country, while it is clear that the democracy has been enhanced with the proliferation of Radio Stations, it is sad to report that while we now have quantity, the quality is sadly lacking. Over forty years ago, when I was hired as a News Reporter, the only Radio

Station in the country ensured that all On-Air persons were properly trained, that elocution classes were available and that the public was well served with a level of professionalism in broadcasting which was world-class. Today, standards have been thrown out of the window. As one old-timer in the industry now laments, "we are now narrowcasting, not broadcasting."

Now New Media fora may have a democratic effect, but we all see the lowering of barriers and yes, the lowering of standards. New forms of communication create different kinds of public discussion, and even different publics. Talk Radio, for example, where listeners phone in their questions and comments, is

healthy in a democracy. That's not the problem, the problem is the hosting of Talk Shows. I am sure there is much disappointment among the intelligentsia of our country on the quality of many shows and the demagoguery which passes for intelligence.

The anonymity of the radio talk show format provides an occasion for many who might not feel comfortable speaking up at a public meeting. And the pressure on callers as well as the radio host to be clever, knowing, and perhaps cynical to many issues often draws out a kind of exchange unheard elsewhere. However, the question is whether the common-good and the people of the Bahamas are always well served.



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# “An Evolving Democracy - A tribute to 30 YEARS of the Bahama Journal and 23 YEARS of JCN”

Continued from / PAGE 2...

This story – the story of the Bahamian indomitable spirit – is the story of most people of Wendall's generation. The challenge is for young people to treasure our democracy and to fully appreciate that noble heritage – which is theirs, as inheritors of the Bahamian patrimony.

I was there with Wendall in 1987 when, courageously, he decided to pursue his vision of enhancing democracy through a strong Fourth Estate - by owning a newspaper rather than being a stellar reporter. It is important to note that had he stayed at the Broadcasting Corporation he could have become the CEO.

The Bahamas then, thanks to Sir Cecil, Sir Kendal and others had a well-established Opposition – essential to democracy. The young nation's tourism was setting records – visitors, revenue, and the establishment of mega resorts like Resorts International and Crystal Palace. Bahamians were bank managers, hotel man-

agers, and owners of successful businesses. It was a heady time. The thriving democracy enabled tremendous economic growth. The Bahamas was well respected in the international arena – her diplomats and her media saw to it.

From then, often through trying times, fearlessly, Wendell Jones called it as

he saw it. He held fast, as he still does, to his belief that a strong democracy requires a responsible, independent and trusted Fourth Estate. The record will show that from that day to this The Bahama Journal has upheld those values.

Respecting those upon whose shoulders he stands, he did not rest on his laurels. The Bahama Journal evolved from a weekly to a daily newspaper and now – meeting today's demands, it is online. He has maintained the trust reposed in the Bahama Journal by never stooping to titillating tabloid journalism. Articles are well researched and well written. Teachers may, and do, use them in their classes - from English to social studies and all in between. Importantly, The Bahama Journal remains an excellent training ground for reporters. Again, the University of The Bahamas can attest to this.

In 1994 again, Wendall took a valiant step to own a radio station and a TV station followed shortly thereafter. The Bahamas' democracy was in full bloom. There had been a peaceful change in government when, the PLP, headed by the Father of the Nation, lost for the first time. The strength of our democracy was showcased when life in The Bahamas continued without skipping a beat. The Bahama Journal was there – upholding free and fair elections, free speech and embracing change.

Wendall continues, skillfully, to use media to keep the public informed and educated – call in shows, Jones and Company and many others come to mind. Through changes of government, recessions, socioeconomic challenges, the establishment of most of our institutions, the holding of referenda, winning gold medals at the Olympics, Bahamians meeting Nelson Mandela and so many more landmark moments – The Bahama Journal and JCN was there, upholding the highest standards.

Mentoring young reporters was one of Wendell's dreams at the inception of The Bahama

Journal. He has never wavered from that goal. Many of today's top reporters have passed through Wendall's hands. Importantly, he continues to demonstrate the importance of courage in the fabric of nation building. Amidst threats and inducements, he has led the way in The Bahama Journal and JCN holding fast to truth. No one should underestimate the extent to which this good example helps to shape the national discourse and ultimately the national psyche. If anyone compares the post 2017 election headlines and news stories of other "mainstream" and tabloid media with those of The Bahama Journal they will see Wendall Jones leading the way. He was determined, as he always is, to give accurate information and encourage rational thought so that Bahamians can make up their own minds and promote peaceful nation building.

Admirably, his family, especially his daughters (Kim, Kristi and Kristin), have worked with him to build the JCN. This is a case study in succession planning.

The annals of the Bahama Journal have been the source of many "coffee table books", such as "Bahamian Legends", "One Hundred Most Outstanding Bahamians" and "the Parliament of The Bahamas" - photojournalism – recording the wonderful history of The Bahamas.

Our democracy has changed. The Bahama Journal has changed. JCN has changed. As Founder and CEO, Wendall Jones' adherence to truth, free speech, excellence, courage, hard work, patriotism, community development and nation building has been constant. Democracy evolves and thrives when these qualities flourish. Thank you Wendall Jones – you have constantly upheld the values that enable democracy to thrive and grow no matter the changing circumstances. May God enable you to continue, for at least 30 more years, to participate in creating our evolving democracy.



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ANNIVERSARY





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**The Bahama Journal**

**FELIX BETHEL: THE ROUGH CUT**

# One Man's Confession

As in the case of tens of millions of right – thinking people around the world, I, Felix Frederick Bethel believes as does The Bahama Journal's editorial that:-



tion of the death penalty in The Bahamas.

At this juncture, then, I would venture to add that: Wendall K. Jones has been a major influence in and of my public and professional life in the Bahamas is a proposition that can neither be exaggerated nor easily diminished or refuted.

And so it goes in these times of great stress, achievement and promise, I thank this great Bahamian man and his team for the great things that allowed them to achieve in the name of all that is holy!

*Human rights do matter; and so does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

*Clearly, then, the right to life should be considered and described as the world's number one right thing owed by every human person; regardless of gender, age, social condition, faith, creed, race or disability.*

closer to home – we pray for the soon-coming realization of our hope which tells us that, we should and must work with all who would in the first instance, obtain a legal moratorium on capital punishment and thereafter, work for the aboli-

This is why – and here

■ See CONFESSION / page 11...

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# One Man's Confession

■ Continued from / PAGE 10...

But yet – if on this extremely auspicious occasion, were I allowed but one full chance to add a word or two on my own behalf. I would note, recognize and admit that the work I do in the University of The Bahamas in this sad period has a direct correlate with the work I have been attempting as I have sought to help nudge my colleagues on that vast road of endeavour where- as it were Word not only suggests the deed that must be done; but which – when the dust is settled – suggests that the thoughts, words and human action are inextricably linked as they struggled to make real that on-going effort and search for bread, freedom and justice in our land, region and world.

And so, let it be known that it is my belief and deeply held conviction that the Jones Communications Network of business enterprises- inclusive of the Bahama Journal, Love 97 and the Jones Communications Television Service- has been true to their word when two decades plus a clutch of years, they did stand and they did deliver – and so it goes in this time of bitter-sweet reflection.

But do let me confess that with my mind made a tad queasy by a current medical challenge – [READ:- FEAR ON THE HOOFF]:- I dare say that when called upon to deliver, I stood with the goods in hand.

Also note that:- As more and more nastily-dread news flows in concerning the number of people who have been murdered; so grows that raucous cacophony of voices crying out for capital punishment. And as this barbarous claque froths and bays for its share of human blood – the troubles on our streets and in our homes and in our minds continue apace.

In truth and in fact: Capital Punishment is no panacea for the ills we face; and so, I would argue that the ills and troubles we face are themselves deeply rooted in policies that routinely fail the masses of the Bahamian people.

In addition, there is no gainsaying the fact that some of our religious who know better and who could therefore teach more about what they know and believe concerning the dignity and value of human life are themselves highly delinquent in their public min-

**And so, let it be known that it is my belief and deeply held conviction that the Jones Communications Network of business enterprises- inclusive of the Bahama Journal, Love 97 and the Jones Communications Television Service – has been true to their word when two decades plus a clutch of years, they did stand and they did deliver – and so it goes in this time of bitter-sweet reflection.**

istries.

And so, their light – as Christians – does not shine in these times that are so shadowed by blood, destruction, pagan worship and death.

This is both shame and disgrace to all who would know the truth concerning the inherent dignity, worth and value of each and every human person; this because each of us is made in the Image and likeness of God Almighty.

Happily, this message is finally getting through; and so today, we can tell you that more and more countries are abolishing capital punishment.

But note also that: – fifty seven countries still adhere to the practice.

And world-wide, there are some 20,000 people under threat of death by this or that state authority.

Sadly, some who now languish in this tormented state are born and bred products of states and peoples in our region.

Sadder yet, there remains a hue and cry from Guyana and Trinidad in the south to the Bahamas in the north for the resumption of this barbaric practice.

But yet [and notwithstanding the blood-curdling cry for blood coming from the lips of hundreds of Bahamians, we remain confident that – when all things are said and done – this barbarism will be brought to an end.

We are also confident that, those who now run things will – sooner rather than later – join in with that growing majority of mankind who has decided to put an end to this vestige of utter backwardness and depravity.

We remain ever optimistic.

And yet, the truth remains which so ably demonstrates that Bahamians from practically all walks of life have been transfixed by what they describe as a so-called crime wave.

Most of these people are becoming more and more appalled by the spiralling rate of murder, rape and other instance of carnage and social mayhem.

But as bad as these things now seem, they pale in significance to what we would deem the real crime menace in The Bahamas.

Here we are convinced that the real menace we face has to do with the widening reach of that social rot which now provides the ground for the efflorescence of those offences that grab public attention, matters like murder, rape and bloody robberies.

But as the street-wise among us know so very well, some of the most successful criminals are those wily ones who specialize in the trade in guns, drugs, other contraband and in certain highly valued counterfeit goods.

We make this point in the same breath as we note that there is an abundance of evidence that strongly supports the conclusion that The Bahamas is home to tens of thousands of people who routinely flout the laws of the land.

These offences range from the crimes committed by those people who routinely smuggle goods into and out of The Bahamas to those offences that are routinely committed by rogue police officers and other thugs in uniform.

And so, things become ever more foul as the state gets in on those practices which – taken in their entirety – not only lead from deprivation that ends in poverty but which also conduces to producing criminals and any number of cut-throats.

Thence and thereafter the angry-barbarous cry that these people should be killed.

This is dreadfully wrong.

God bless you Mr. Jones.

May you continue to strive and thrive in the whirlwind of these challenging times; and may God continue to look over His own in this land he bequeathed us all.

*God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.*

**Sincerely, Felix F. Bethel M.S.Sc. [Social Studies and International Relations] - Associate Professor, University of The Bahamas**

## The Bahama Journal: Its Involvement In Our Democracy

BY GODFREY ENEAS

The Bahamas has the third oldest democracy in the New World; only Bermuda and Barbados are older. Democratic traditions have been an integral part of governance in the Bahamas.

Democracy in The Bahamas has never been threatened. It has, however, strayed away from the one-man vote concept. The variations have ranged from males only, with eligibility of a minimum age of 21 years and a property owner. Another variation was the company vote where companies were equated to males and could vote. Then there was a time when one could vote multiple times depending on property ownership because there were no general elections, just constituency elections. Prior to 1956, there were no political parties. Bahamian democracy has been a work in progress.

It is out of this combination of variations that the democracy we have today has emerged. In 1960 Universal Adult Suffrage became a reality as women obtained the right to vote and sit in the Legislature of our country.

Over the past thirty years, The Bahama Journal has been sometimes an observer, a critic, an evaluator, a judge and a commentator on our democratic practices.

It is through these mechanisms that editorial comments and stories in The Bahama Journal have questioned the role of democracy, particularly with reference to our performance with referenda. No referendum has been successful in The Bahamas. Women voted against themselves by denying themselves the right to pass on citizenship to their children. The Journal championed the rights of women in general and specifically in this case.

For years, The Journal has advocated debates at the constituency level and at the Prime Ministerial level. This past election was devoid of debates and The Journal questioned whether or not this was healthy for our democracy. Several years ago, The Bahama Journal and Jones Communications organized a debate in Malcolm Creek.

On gaining consensus on national issues, The Journal was involved in the organization of Symposia highlighting national issues like the economy, crime, education, social marginalization and other issues such as the development of heartland communities. The symposia were instrumental in sensitizing the electorate, firstly, about these issues and secondly by assisting in the identification of solutions to these issues. The Bahama Journal was practicing Civil Journalism.

The Journal has touted the role of civil society in the governance of our country. The Journal has editorialized on numerous occasions that The Bahamas is too is too government -centric and government does not have all of the answers to the challenges facing our country. Issues like the unbalanced economic growth leaving the southeastern Bahamas a national security risk. The islands are being depopulated because of the lack of employment opportunities; further, there are no investments taking place there. It is in our intent that these islands maintain a sizeable population and to ensure this, there must be economic development.

The Bahama Journal introduced the system of grading the performances of Cabinet Ministers. It was a fantastic innovation because it made Cabinet Ministers aware that their job performances were being evaluated. It was obvious that it fostered a high degree of transparency in government. Over the years, this initiative has lapsed and should be re-introduced in some fashion. It was good for governance.

The Journal has been loquacious in its call for Local Government. There is no doubt that a twenty-first century Bahamas needs Local Government, particularly in New Providence, Grand Bahama and possibly Abaco, Eleuthera and Exuma, as these are the main population centers of our archipelagic nation.

The Journal has been a strong voice in our democracy as it continues to fight for those who have no voice and require an entity or medium to speak for them.

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# Evolution of the Bahamian Democracy

BY SIR WILLIAM ALLEN

In this essay on the evolution of Bahamian democracy, consideration is given to the evolution of the institutional arrangements which provided for and enabled the election of government by a majority of Bahamians with equality of citizenship in an environment of political freedom, and where the rule of law is presumed to have been assured. This is the basic requirement of a true democracy, and it is taken as having been in place from the beginning of the independent nation, in



1973.

The coming into force of the Constitution of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas at Independence

provided for the fundamental rights of the individual which had been evolving over three centuries. The evolution of Bahamian democracy then has to do with the advancement of the quality of that democracy and necessarily of the institutional arrangements which enable it. And the period of this review is therefore the last 44 years.

The quality of democracy is generally felt to depend, to a greater or lesser extent, on several elements or co-incidental attributes which include: adherence to the rule of law; freedom for political

and civic action; responsiveness to citizens' preferences; accountability, both vertical and horizontal, for government actions; transparency and adequate sources of information; social and economic equality, and representative effectiveness. This list is by no means exhaustive and some of them flow into or overlap with others. But by and large they are all determinants of the quality of a democracy and so

reviewing their soundness and efficacy is very likely to lead to a reasonably sound assessment of the

quality of the underlying democracy.

In describing the evolution of Bahamian democracy, and in particular, describing movements in the quality of that democracy, I confess to having attempted absolutely no empirical measure of 'quality' and to proceeding on the basis that as The Bahamas at its beginning met the basic criteria as a democracy, any movements forward or backward from there are a judgement call of the author on the basis of his assessment of the characteristics which provided

for and sustain that democracy.

Throughout its short history The Bahamas has moved forward in advancing the quality of its democracy. There is no example of a backward movement, although there are examples where no, or only marginal, movement has occurred. And despite the examples where no forward action has taken place in the quality of its democracy, The Bahamas is clearly to be regarded as enjoying a rather robust democracy.

■ See BAHAMIAN / page 14..

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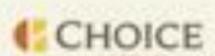
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# Evolution of the Bahamian Democracy

Continued from / PAGE 12...

Having said that, I would like to focus these thoughts on the few areas where, in my opinion, the opportunity was taken to advance the democracy as well as on an area where the opportunity, although clearly desirable, was not taken. This I would suggest could represent a reasonable reflection and commentary on the evolution of the Bahamian democracy since independence.

The first opportunity for expansion of the pillars of our democracy was the enactment of the Public Disclosure Act of 1979, five

years into our independence. This was done under a fair amount of pressure from the Official Opposition and heightened awareness of the damage crime and a growing drug trade were visiting upon our society. There was obviously a clear understanding by the Government that this legislation could be of benefit to its election prospects of 1982.

The Disclosure Act was clearly an attempt to mollify the electorate regarding the financial probity of members of government. How well it achieved this will be open to debate for quite some time. It did

establish the uncomfortable fact, for some, that a number of them were already millionaires. This action did, however, represent a deepening of one of the pillars of democracy: as an enhancement of transparency and as a basis for providing accountability. How well it is achieving its objectives is for another time.

It is regarded as democratic advancement when the decision-making apparatus of government is brought closer to the governed. Very often however the process of institutionalization which naturally occurs in governance as it

advances, has the effect in some circumstances of creating a sense of isolation from the electorate, indifference or bureaucratic dissonance in the polity. Some would argue, with some conviction, that this phenomenon is itself a handy explanation of Brexit and the United Kingdom's dilemma with Europe or more particularly, with the European Union.

The decision of the government in 1996 to establish local government within the Family Islands was clearly an advancement of the democratic process as it brought Bahamians in the Family Islands closer to governance. In fact it gave them a sense of participatory government. That it has not yet been extended to New Providence is the only regret.

This is an example of a development which crosses several of the pillars which enable and sustain our democracy. Responsiveness to citizens' preferences can surely be enhanced by this proximity to governance, so also would be political participation. Accountability and transparency are also likely to be beneficiaries of this proximity to governance.

Perhaps the most momentous individual action of government in the period was its expansion of the alternate sources of information. There was a time during the early days of our democracy when the broadcast press was frightfully narrow, confined as it was to broadcast by the government, which defined the news and 'layered' any public information in which it had an interest. This was especially debilitating during the period of political campaigning. The official opposition was obliged to be enormously ingenious, even risking arrest as it sought to avail itself of broadcasting facilities overseas.

When in 1992, early in its administration, the new government moved to license private radio stations and removed the monopoly of the official gazette from one newspaper, it had essentially 'freed' the Fourth Estate and added a previously unimagined depth to the process of our democracy.

There has since been an explosion in publishing and published material that would make us both proud and occasionally embar-

rassed as some participants of the free press test the tolerance of our civility and perhaps the resilience of our civilization. In point of fact, it would be quite understandable if we at times reflected on the words of C P Snow when he wrote, with apologies for my latitude, that '...our civilization is hideously fragile and what separates us from the chaos that lies just beneath is merely a thin coat of varnish ...'

I suspect that coat of varnish has become dangerously thin in some places and may have even disappeared in others, but we do have a free press now and that genie is never likely to be reintroduced to that bottle again.

The areas where opportunities were not taken are obvious, but the ones that seem to stand out most include a lack of responsiveness to citizens' preferences which may be related to a characteristic tolerance in Bahamian nature. Much of what is weak or lacking could be considerably enhanced by an effective Ombudsman which, if nothing else, could assist in the effective articulation of those preferences.

The most glaring example of this may be reflected in the public behavior of some commercial banks who seem to have a limitless capacity for devising fees, but who have a penchant for closing branches to improve economies of scale while most of New Providence congregates on the longest lines possible within the branches which remain open and where there never is a public restroom for this helpless captive audience.

And notwithstanding the innovative cheque clearing system which came at quite a cost, there is still unbelievable difficulty in securing cash or credit for an instrument which could hibernate for three days even while the outside world seems to have discovered the secret for faster check-clearing arrangements. There is an effective 'black hole' which holds the proceeds from cheques which have been deposited for three days after those proceeds have been removed from the writer's bank. It is not clear that this 'black hole' benefits anyone because of the overall inefficiency of the money market, but it continues to exist and wreak havoc on the system. Clearly an effective

Ombudsman could help here with time and patience and a powerful law.

Another area of democratic neglect is also related to the characteristic of responsiveness to citizens' preferences. There is, for example, the problem of drainage in what I refer to as much of 'the belly' of the country where when it rains for a day or more it becomes impossible to move from one house to another within these little communities or to negotiate the entrance or the exit for many of the properties without removal of the shoes and socks, and endangerment of life and limb to highway traffic. The navigation in some of these areas is almost painful to observe.

This is not a demonstrably major problem for a robust democracy as The Bahamas clearly is and that is the reason it could and should be mentioned here. There is, worldwide, a growing sense of disenfranchisement within electorates, which are fracturing with their extremities growing farther and farther from the centre, driven it seems, by a sense that their voices are not being heard by those who govern or that their well-fare is no one's concern.

The problem of drainage is not a consequence of the financial capacity of those who suffer most from it, although it unfortunately is a reflection of their financial capacity. How it could hugely or even subliminally effect the sense of well-being is no great leap however. And taken together with the other issues competing for the 'discomfort recognition' of an already under-resourced segment of the electorate, the sense of disenfranchisement or the politics of extremity may easily flow from this kind of phenomena.

Responsiveness to the preferences of Bahamians, especially since they already demonstrate a capacity for long-suffering, is one of the pillars of Bahamian democracy which governance should wisely be mindful of. The lesser the number of real grievances that could invade a political community and lead to fracturing within its politics, the easier it should be to achieve consensus. To do this effectively requires a high level of quality in a democracy.

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# The Nurturing Of Our Democracy

ED FIELDS

BY ED FIELDS

The original version of the CNN news programme "Crossfire" took place every Friday between 1990 and 1992 in the office of Bahama Journal Publisher Wendal Jones, when I hand delivered my column. There was no such thing as email. Godfrey Eneas, Mr. Jones and I argued for about 2 hours straight as we say. It was usually two against one, with me being in the minority, though Jones occasionally played moderator.

If you think about it, it was the perfect generational debate, with your truly being the youngest and Eneas the oldest. It was a great mock forum for all of the country's issues to be subjected to our analysis. The debate never deteriorated to animosity, rather a sense of anticipation to the next Friday.

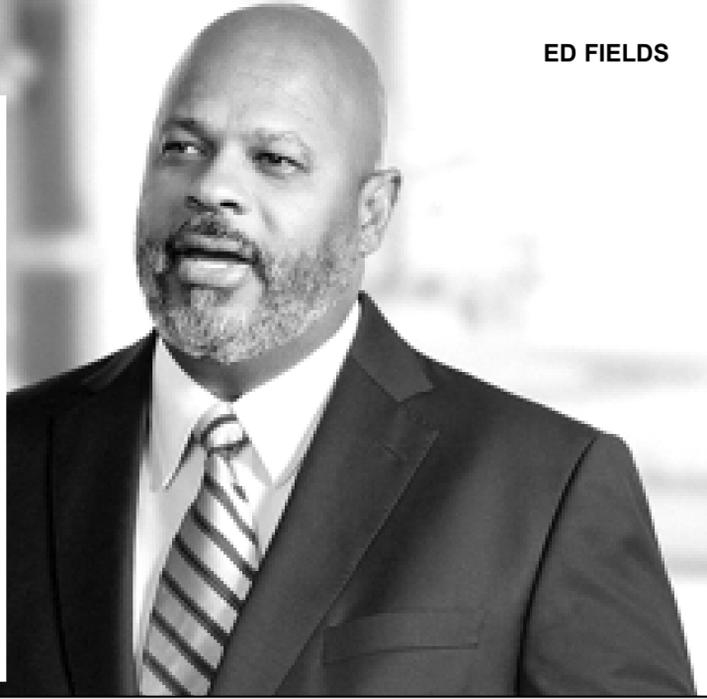
The Bahama Journal has etched its place amongst the Bahamian Fourth Estate by the sheer tenacity of Wendal Jones, who personifies survival in an environment that is hostile to tradi-

tional print media. Fortunately, for the health of our democracy this journalistic format remains intact, and allows us a place to reference fact and truth, both of which are largely questionable from that which we get on our "smart" devices.

If we are to grow, the extinction of those journalists that put their names to their published words must be prevented at all costs. The nurturing of our democracy through the inquisitive pen is the primary vehicle of accountability with respect to the actions of our public and elected officials. Hence, amongst us, there must be those media conservationists who do not allow for that species of journalist to vanish. Wendal Jones is such a conservationist.

It matters not whether you agree with his perspective or point of view; it is the maintenance of the medium that is critical which will allow different perspectives to be shared, so that truth will flourish.

Congratulations Wendal, as long as you are around we are sure that your refusal to give in or give up will prevail.



# The Bahama Journal's 30-year Contribution Has Led to A Wiser Evolution of Democracy In The Bahamas

BY CATHY ARCHER

Winston Churchill once said, "The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter."

The average voter the world over has long decided the direction of a country.

The choice is to either lament such unmitigated power entrusted to an ignorant populace or seek to change that level of ignorance. Since, as John F. Kennedy expressed, "the ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all", the choice

seems clear.

In 1987, the Bahama Journal was a newspaper whose time had come in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas especially in light of the events of the late 80s. Motivated by the need to educate the Bahamian public, the Bahama Journal

began its historic journey and became the source of news analysis and in-depth discussions on the issues impacting our democracy. The people's appetite for the analysis shared made the Bahama Journal a phenomenal success.

It's not enough to simply

hear the news and stay updated on current affairs; in addition to staying informed, citizens need to understand the implications of decisions being made on their behalf and the impact of these decisions on their lives. A deeper level of understanding allows for



fuller participation and informed decision-making on the part of Bahamians to be able to more effectively direct the course of the nation. Since its genesis, the Bahama Journal has helped the people of The Bahamas to ask the right questions and develop confidence in its Government when merited, and hold its representatives' feet to the fire when warranted.

The Bahama Journal experienced rapid growth in popularity. While working at the Bahamas Technical & Vocational Institute in the early 90s, we would look forward to copies of each publication. The analyses provided on current issues were always very clear-sighted.

It was fascinating to watch politicians devour the political perspectives provided each week and seek to adjust their thinking accordingly. I've even heard said by a politician that the Bahama Journal was a must read for him. Its creator should take great pride in the role it has come to play in our democracy.

The Bahama Journal's 30-year contribution has no doubt led to a wiser evolution of democracy in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Our nation has gone from a country where its citizens accept what has always been communicated as truth to a country in which 'Joe Public' is engaged and involved in discussions on the issues led by insights and enlightenment from Bahama Journal presentations.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once stated that 'Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely; the real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education'. The Bahama Journal has played a most significant role in the success of our democracy in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas through the political education of its people.

Kudos from a grateful public to the Bahama Journal, this giant of a newspaper, on its 30th anniversary and to its contributors who have helped to shape our democracy!

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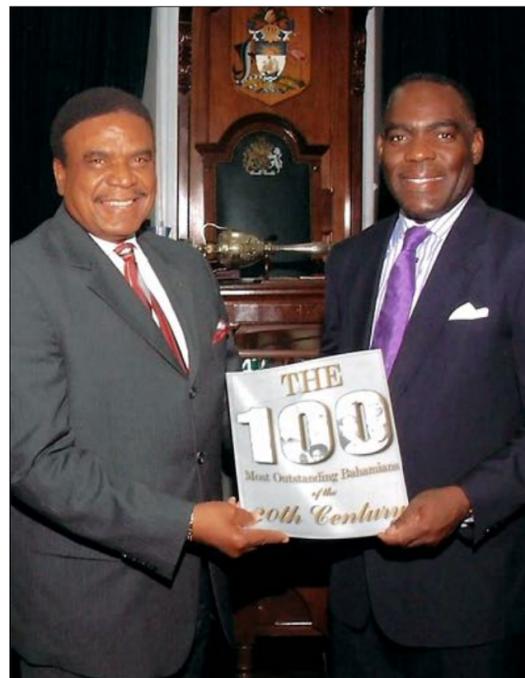
## 30TH ANNIVERSARY



## Everybody Wins



▶ Former Prime Minister Perry Christie presenting a JCN publication to Pope Francis at the Vatican.



# Congratulations to The Bahama Journal on its 30th Anniversary

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► Publisher Wendall Jones being presented a plaque by former Governor of the Central Bank Julian Francis for Outstanding Journalism in The Bahamas



► Tennyson Wells, Publisher Wendall Jones, Algernon Allen and Anthony Newbold discussing the Issues at a Round-table in 2001.



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