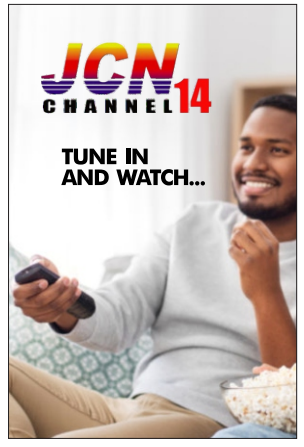




# The Bahama Journal

Quo Vadis, Bahamas?



FRIDAY, MAY 29TH, 2026

Choose **CASH N'GO** CASHNGOBAHAMAS.COM

- Pay Bills
- Pay Insurance
- Purchase Airline Tickets
- Send Money & More

Download the CASH N'GO Mobile Wallet App Today

# BUDGET FOR PROGRESS



Hon. Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS  
Bahama Journal News Editor

Seeking to build on the economic growth achieved in its last term the government unveiled its 2026/2027 budget that sets out the government's fiscal framework, revenue measures, and expenditure priorities for the coming fiscal year as the Davis administration as it begins its second consecutive term.

In an 82-page presentation newly appointed Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis said the government received the trust of the Bahamian people who voted on May 12th to return the Progressive Liberal Party to continue the progress.

He said, "They gave this Government a renewed mandate to protect the gains already made, deepen the recovery, widen opportunity, and ensure that growth reaches more homes, more businesses, more communities, and more islands. This Budget answers that mandate."

The government estimates \$4.4 billion in revenue collections versus some \$4.1 billion in expenditure, with the debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio expected to fall to 59.9 percent by the end of the fiscal year.

The government is anticipating \$3.7 billion in recurrent spending and \$415.8 million in capital expenditure for 2026/2027.

As for the somewhat controversial prediction of a \$448.2 million surplus for 2026/2027, the government has been forced to revise its projection to \$223.1 million for the 2026/2027 fiscal year, which begins July 1 st . The official Opposition has been skeptical of the government's budget surplus projections citing loose spending and extensive borrowing trends.

Meanwhile, according to the Finance Minister while the fiscal deficit stood at \$157 million in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the government still expects to achieve a surplus when the final numbers for the full year are tallied.

Halkitis explained that part of the reason for the reduction in the surplus projection is based on circumstances beyond the government's control as the global environment remained uncertain.

He said, "Across the world governments are managing higher borrowing costs, geopolitical tensions, supply chain risks, energy volatility, climate events, food price pressures, and slower growth in major economies. As a small island developing state, The Bahamas feels these pressures quickly, as we import much of what we consume."

See Story Cont. Pg. 3

## GOVERNMENT PROMISES TRANSPARENCY OVER U.S. INVESTIGATION

BY ALEXANDRIA RECKLEY  
Journal Staff Writer

Since the May 12th arrest of alleged drug trafficker Jonathan Eric Gardiner who was allegedly found with \$30,000 in Bahamian currency with a Bahamian politician's name on the package, Bahamians and members of the Free National Movement (FNM) have been eager to learn the identity of the person dubbed as politician #1.

Gardiner was rescued from plane crash in waters off Vero Beach, Florida after the pilot was forced to ditch the airplane during a flight from Abaco to Grand Bahama on election day.

Allegations of who the politician is continued to swirl. The FNM is applying pressure to learn who the politician is that allegedly met with drug traffickers in the House of Assembly to reportedly discuss moving millions of dollars in cocaine from South America through The Bahamas into the U.S.. Yesterday Keishla Adderley, Press Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister said the government is following proper procedures and will be transparent in the matter.

See Story Cont. Pg. 2



Cabinet Ministers prepare to enter the House of Assembly

# OPPOSITION LEADER REVIEWS BUDGET



FNM Opposition Leader, Michael Pintard

BY: MAKEIRA TUCKER  
Bahama Journal Staff Writer

After the Finance Minister Michael Halkitis presented the 2026-2027 Budget Communication in the House of Assembly on Wednesday, Leader of the Official Opposition Michael Pintard branded it as inadequate to meet the needs of the Bahamian people. "One thing is true every single day Bahamians arrive at the gas pump or go into the grocery store or go to any other place where they have to pay bills, they have a particular experience and that experience we believe has not been captured by this budget," he said.

Pintard stated, "For many of the Bahamians you and I know, their experience is one of anxiety because of the challenges they face and the high cost that they experience every day."

The opposition leader claimed that working people know the economy is not a statistic but a lived experience that is about what people feel they can achieve with the resources they have.

"Sadly, the answer for too many of our people is that they don't have enough to meet those demands," said Pintard. He expressed that there are several key issues that the budget does not speak to and seems to avoid. As an example, he claimed that the Minister of Finance, Michael Halkitis, did not give a direct explanation on how the government went about spending 200 thousand dollars for certain communities in Abaco just before the general election.

He said, "Having those funds leave the

Ministry of Finance and end up in Abaco in the form of vouchers used to aid the political campaign in Abaco." Pintard continued, "That appears very clearly to be and illegal act of misappropriation." The Opposition Leader believes that Halkitis should have advised the country on the status or any investigations into how public monies were moved from the treasury to advance a political campaign.

"The past and present Minister of Housing still has not explained how they have been able to provide 40.2 million dollars of the people's money to the housing project 'renaissance' through the Carmichael Village Project." Pintard continued, "This is a matter that we hope to discuss during the course of this budget, have you been able to produce 10 million, 20 million or 40 million dollars' worth of homes in that development?"

The Opposition Leader also questioned whether the Minister of Finance ever served as the President or Director of Top-Notch Builders. Pintard said, "If his answer is yes, is this the same Top-Notch Builders involved in the Eight Mile Rock government building project under the PPP deal? Is it the same Top-Notch Builders connected to Jonathan Eric Gardnier in custody?" Pintard claims Halkitis must explain and declare his involvement if it existed.

The Opposition believes the budget was built on concealment and not transparency.

Story Cont. Pg. 3

# GOVERNMENT PROMISES TRANSPARENCY OVER U.S. INVESTIGATION

Story Cont. Pg. 1

She said, "Let me just say briefly that while the government understands and respects the public demand for information concerning this matter in question, it's also important to note that maintaining due legal process is just as important."

According to Adderley, "The government continues to monitor developments, continues to stay engaged with authorities in the U.S. requesting information and liaising with all the information that is available; we are committed to transparency and will provide a formal update on verified information. It is not fair for us to respond to conjecture or social media posts or anything of that nature. Again, when verified information is available it will be provided to members of the public."

On Wednesday members of the Opposition led by party deputy leader

Shanendon Cartwright and former Senator Heather Hunt protested outside parliament, demanding to know who is politician number one.

Meanwhile, inside Parliament FNM MPs led by party leader Michael Pintard wore badges that read "not politician #1" suggesting that it is a member from the government side.

The U.S. has not released the name of the politician, similar to another indictment last year where it was implied that drug traffickers were aided by high-ranking government officials who have not yet been named publicly despite requests by the government of The Bahamas.

The FNM has expressed concerns that the government's silence on the issue has brought reputational damage to the government and people of The Bahamas.



Keishla Adderley, Press Secretary in the Office of The Prime Minister



## Cleaner Country. Brighter Future.

Bahamas Waste is proud to sponsor **Operation Love Your Country 2026.**

We're committed to helping keep our islands clean, safe, and beautiful for today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



- Reliable waste collection for commercial or residential properties.
- Waste compactors & containers.
- Portable toilet services & rentals.
- Medical Waste Treatment and Disposal.

Gladstone Road North, P.O. Box N-4827, Nassau Bahamas

Tel (242) 361-6841 | Fax (242) 361-6842 | [www.bahamaswaste.com](http://www.bahamaswaste.com)  

# BUDGET FOR PROGRESS

Story Cont. from Pg. 1

We remain exposed to global fuel prices, tourism trends, international financial conditions, and the growing cost of climate resilience.”

Minister Halkitis noted that in such an environment the country needs “steady leadership, a credible fiscal plan, policy consistency, public investment that supports growth, reforms that improve how government works and above all, it needs confidence in the Bahamian people, their skills, their work ethic, their creativity, and their capacity to help build the next stage of national development.

“A country that earns confidence is better able to attract investment; a country that protects its credit standing is better able to finance roads, airports, clinics, schools, energy reform, and national resilience at more manageable costs. The message of this Budget in the simplest of terms is: We will protect the recovery. We will build confidence. We will invest in people. We will support economic expansion. We will strengthen the fiscal position of the country. We will prepare The Bahamas for the risks and opportunities ahead.”

Minister Halkitis the Government’s policy framework remained anchored in four priorities: Security, Opportunity, Affordability, and Reform.

Breaking each down he explained “Security means safer communities, stronger borders, better emergency response, and a country prepared to protect its people and its economy. Opportunity means pathways to jobs, training, entrepreneurship, education, investment, home ownership, and upward mobility.”

Continuing he said, “Affordability means easing pressure on households where responsible and practical, especially in food, energy, healthcare, housing, and daily living costs. Reform means improving public administration, strengthening accountability, expanding transparency, and delivering better service to the Bahamian people.”

Meanwhile, some of the features in the budget included attention to healthcare and home ownership in addition to a number of tax breaks in various sectors.

In healthcare Halkitis said the government has allocated \$11.6 million for the construction and upgrading of clinics on Exuma, Eleuthera, Abaco, Andros, Acklins, Long Island, the Berry Islands, and Crooked Island.

Additionally, despite criticisms from both local and international individuals and organizations the government is moving full speed ahead with building a new specialty hospital on New Providence with an initial investment of approximately \$20m alongside international financing arrangements including from the China EXIM Bank.

In housing, for first-time homeowners the government is expanding zero-rated value added tax to include duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes where at least one unit is occupied by the first-time homeowner. The tax relief will apply to the entire building rather than only the owner-



Hon. Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis

occupied portion, reducing upfront costs for qualified buyers or those building from the ground up. The new policy will allow the first-time home owners to generate rental income. According to Halkitis the new policy measure takes immediate effect.

Additionally, the government will also raise the first-time homeowner exemption under the Real Property Tax Act from \$500,000 to \$600,000 and broaden exemptions available to eligible first-time homeowners.

On the other hand the government has also take steps to improve revenue in the housing sector with the introduction of a two-tier Real Property Tax system distinguishing between Bahamian-owned and foreign-owned property. The new category of foreign-owned property will attract a rate of 0.625 percent, with a maximum cap of \$200,000.

The system will no longer be based on whether a person spends at least 180 days in The Bahamas, but on whether the property is used as a residence or rental.

Additionally, the finance minister explained that businesses earning more than \$175m annually will face a 0.25 percentage point increase in the business license rate, bringing it to 1.5 percent annually. He explained that it is the government’s position that “the country’s largest businesses have benefited substantially from the economy’s improved performance and has the capacity to contribute more to national development.”

In other sectors the government will remove the 45 percent duty on chair lifts designed for elderly people and persons with disabilities, while duties on human hair and wigs will also be reduced and reclassifications so they are no longer grouped with cosmetic items in an attempt to assist people with cancer, alopecia and similar conditions.

Parliamentarians will begin debate on the budget on Monday June 8th.

# OPPOSITION LEADER REVIEWS BUDGET

Story Cont. from Pg. 2

Pintard explained that “One of the things we view as a central flaw in the budget is what it leaves out.” He continued, “The government wants Bahamians to believe debt is falling and the public finances are finally under control, but when we look past the speeches in government’s own report a very different picture emerges.”

He says, “What we see is not genuine reform, what we see is debt and risk of being shifted out of sight. Accountability is being weakened and the basic legal obligations ignored.”

Pintard’s says that it’s not the Opposition saying those things but those are warnings coming from the government’s own independent watch dog.

“The fiscal responsibility council which have repeatedly raised concerns about missing information, undisclosed risk and liabilities that are not being properly captured in the National Accounts,” Pintard said. He claimed international institutions have echoed the same warnings making it clear that hidden liabilities and off budget commitments represent serious threats to fiscal sustainability.

The opposition expressed that the government engages constantly in unauthorized borrowing. He said, “The government’s complete failure to explain why the spike and annual borrowing plan last year that clearly stated that there will be no new borrowing, the government in fact did the opposite,” said Pintard.

He claimed the government’s own official reports show that public debt increased by approximately 600.89.2 million in just the first nine months of the year. Pintard stated that those figures came directly from the government’s own Public Debt Statistical Bulletin. “Bahamians are therefore entitled to ask a very basic question. How has the government been able to borrow hundreds of millions of dollars without returning to parliament for necessary borrowing resolution approval?” said Pintard.

The opposition leader highlighted that the nearly 700-million-dollar borrowing was only short-term borrowing, and we already know that this increase in debt is going to become long term debt well beyond the current fiscal year. “This reflects a pattern by this government. They consistently evade parliamentary oversight and parliamentary authority in order to run up significant debt outside the transparent and lawful framework required by the law,” said Pintard.

He claims, “It is not accidental and a deliberate approach that undermines accountability weakens parliaments control over the public purse and erodes trust in the governments claim in fiscal discipline and responsibility.” Pintard expressed that debt does not disappear no matter how much you change the timelines.

Story Cont. on Pg.4

**COMFORT SUITES PARADISE ISLAND**

**MAGNIFICENT**

# May

## SALE

STARTING AT  
**\$145.00** per night  
PLUS TAXES & FEES

(Single/Double Occupancy)  
**VALID MAY 2026**

Special rate is subject to limited availability  
Blackout dates apply

**Call 363-3680 or 605-6300 or WhatsApp 557-8483**  
for pricing that includes taxes & fees

**FOOD & BEVERAGE CREDIT**  
**Up to \$25.00 per day**  
(Maximum of \$50.00 per stay)  
Vat & Gratuity not included  
with food & beverage credit

Available for use at CSPI Splash Pool Bar,  
& Crusoe’s Restaurant only.

**ALL THE PERKS OF COMFORT SUITES**  
**ALL THE PLAY OF ATLANTIS**

- Free access to all Atlantis facilities including AQUAVENTURE Waterpark
- 4th night free plus fees with minimum 3 paid nights
- Free daily full American buffet breakfast
- Kids Stay, Play & Eat Free.

sales@comfordsuitespi.com  
(242) 605-6300/363-3180/363-3661/363-3680/363-5536 or  
US Toll Free 1-888-638-0504 / 1-877-494-8770 / 1-877-520-5078  
or Canadian Toll Free (888) 281-0437  
Comfort Suites Local Residents Page   
WhatsApp us for further information at 55-SUITE (242-557-8483)

**Comfort SUITES**  
PARADISE ISLAND, BAHAMAS  
Comforting Days & Suite Nights

**34** YEARS  
ANNIVERSARY  
A LEGACY OF 34 YEARS - UNFORGETTABLE STAYS

# NATIONAL LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE TO SUPER VALUE FOUNDER RUPERT ROBERTS

TYNIA BROWN  
Journal Staff Writer

Tributes poured in from around the country on Wednesday following the death of veteran Bahamian businessman Rupert Roberts, who passed away early Thursday morning surrounded by family and friends.

Roberts, founder and owner of the Super Value grocery chain, was widely regarded as one of the country's most influential businessmen and a strong supporter of Bahamian entrepreneurship, agriculture, and community development.

Over the decades, Super Value became one of the most recognized grocery brands in The

Bahamas, with Roberts helping to shape the country's retail food industry through periods of economic growth, recession, and national hardship. His stores became known for providing affordable groceries to Bahamian families while employing hundreds of workers throughout the country.

Many also credited Roberts with supporting local farmers and small business owners by purchasing and promoting Bahamian-made products and produce.

Before the budget communication in the House of Assembly on Thursday morning, Prime Minister Philip Davis and Opposition Leader Michael Pintard paid tribute to Roberts while extending condolences to his family.

Prime Minister Davis reflected on his personal connection to Roberts, recalling his teenage years working as a packing boy at City Market, where Roberts served as a supervisor and later store manager.

"It has just been brought to my attention this morning that The Bahamas has lost one of its most prominent and successful businessmen," Davis told Parliament.

Prime Minister Davis described Roberts as a man who rose from humble beginnings during a difficult period in Bahamian society to become one of the country's leading businessmen through determination and hard work.

"He became my favorite supervisor," Davis recalled, noting that Roberts often gave him opportunities to work at other store locations where he could earn better tips.

Davis also spoke about Roberts' journey after leaving City Market and eventually building the Super Value brand into a major Bahamian business success story following Majority Rule.

"But he did not allow that disappointment of that separation to keep him down," Davis said. "He and all Bahamians had the ability to move and excel and invest their talent to be whatever they wished to be in this country."

Prime Minister Davis praised Roberts for remaining connected to ordinary Bahamians despite his business success, particularly through charitable efforts and quiet acts of generosity that often went unpublicized.

"His philanthropy, his assistance in social matters for this country, is legendary," Davis said. "He did much for our inner city and people in the inner city that I'm aware of."

Davis said Roberts' life demonstrated that a person's beginnings do not determine their future.

"It's not how you start in life or the circumstances in which you find yourself that determine your destiny," he said. "That is the perfect model in the life of Rupert Roberts."

Opposition Leader Michael Pintard also delivered an emotional tribute, highlighting Roberts' longstanding support for Bahamian farmers and local producers.

Pintard said one of his strongest memories of Roberts was his partnership with veteran broadcaster Charles Carter in promoting agriculture and national food security initiatives.

"He was committed to Buy Bahamian," Pintard said. "You produce it, he was prepared to purchase it."

Pintard recalled that while serving as Minister of Agriculture, Roberts supported initiatives to ensure Bahamian produce received priority placement in grocery stores across the country.

He also praised Roberts for assisting many small businesses, particularly entrepreneurs from inner-city communities, often without seeking public recognition.

"I learned of his generosity," Pintard said. "He did not allow politics to cloud his judgment in terms of what was in the best interest of the country."

Pintard noted that Roberts was willing to support political organizations financially while also criticizing government leaders when he believed decisions negatively affected Bahamian businesses and economic growth.

"He was very candid in his opinion," Pintard said. "Whether it was PLP or FNM, he was consistent in holding government officials accountable."

Both leaders agreed that Roberts' contribution to Bahamian business and national development extended far beyond the grocery industry.

As news of his passing spread on Wednesday, many Bahamians remembered Roberts not only as a successful businessman, but also as a strong advocate for Bahamian ownership, local agriculture, and community upliftment.

## MINISTER GLENYS HANNA MARTIN LEADS BAHAMAS DELEGATION TO UN TOURISM ENGAGEMENTS IN PARAGUAY



Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Minister Hanna-Martin

Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Glenys Hanna-Martin, is leading a delegation of The Bahamas to two United Nations Tourism engagements being convened in Asunción, Paraguay, from 28–29 May. This mission underscores The Bahamas' continued commitment to multilateral cooperation and its active role in advancing global tourism policy dialogue.

The programme of engagements commences on 28 May, with Minister Hanna Martin participating as a featured speaker at the high-level forum, "The Future is Female: Shaping the Tourism of Tomorrow." The forum brings together international stakeholders to examine leadership, innovation, and the critical contributions of women in shaping the future trajectory of the tourism sector.

On 29 May, The Bahamas will participate in the 71st Meeting of the United Nations Tourism Regional Commission for the Americas (CAM), a principal platform for policy dialogue and regional coordination. The Commission will bring together Member States and international partners to deliberate on critical priorities shaping the tourism sector across the hemisphere, including sustainability, connectivity, investment, innovation, resilience, and strengthened regional cooperation.

The meeting provides an opportunity for The Bahamas to advance its national priorities within a global framework, while contributing to collective efforts to promote sustainable tourism development that is inclusive, resilient, and responsive to evolving global challenges.

The engagements mark Minister Hanna Martin's first official international tourism mission since assuming the portfolio and reflect The Bahamas' steadfast commitment to international tourism dialogue and regional cooperation.

"The Bahamas remains committed to strong international engagement and meaningful collaboration as tourism continues to evolve globally," said Minister Hanna Martin. "These meetings provide an important opportunity to strengthen relationships, exchange ideas and contribute to discussions that will help shape the future direction of tourism."

Minister Hanna Martin is expected to engage with tourism leaders, government officials and international stakeholders throughout the programme, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships and advance cooperation across key areas of the global tourism sector.

The delegation includes Latia Duncombe, Director General, along with senior tourism officials who will participate in a series of meetings and working sessions held over the course of the programme.

"The Bahamas' continued engagement with UN Tourism underscores the country's commitment to contributing constructively to international tourism dialogue, while advancing initiatives that promote innovation, sustainability and long-term growth," said Director General Latia Duncombe. "These engagements provide an important platform for collaboration and the exchange of ideas on leadership, entrepreneurship, digital transformation and the future of the sector."

This mission builds on The Bahamas' expanding participation within the UN Tourism framework, including its recent hosting of the Sustainable Islands Innovation Challenge and Forum in Nassau, in partnership with UN Tourism.

As one of the world's leading tourism destinations, The Bahamas continues to advocate for strengthened international cooperation and the development of policies that support innovation, sustainability and resilient, long-term tourism development.



Rupert Roberts

## OPPOSITION LEADER REVIEWS BUDGET

Story Cont. from Pg. 3

Pintard continued, "So, when the government boasts about reducing debt Bahamian people should ask a simple question, reduced where? Increasingly public debt does not sit transparently on the government's ballot sheet instead its being pushed into state owned enterprises disguised as loans buried in long term contracts and packed in financing arrangements."

"Most of these financing arrangements they don't show up in the budget numbers presented to parliament," Pintard stated. He thinks this makes it harder for the public to see how much the country truly owes and how much future taxpayers will be required to pay.

The opposition leader expressed that the government hides the true cost by entering into private public partnerships and not disclosing the terms. "They have essentially entered into loan arrangements that are not reflected on the book," said Pintard.

He stated the government claims to achieve a surplus ignores unpaid bills that they are obligated to pay. "The government's claim of a budget surplus deserves serious scrutiny by all of us. The fiscal responsibility council has warned that these surplus figures really are not in fact what the government represent them to be," said the opposition leader.

He believes that the government's surplus figures rely heavily on ignoring bills that are owed but not yet paid. "Families know the reality you do not improve your finances by pretending the bill do not exist. A surplus built on unpaid obligations is not a sign of strength, it's a sign of delay and deferral."

Pintard concluded by asking the government to be honest about the finances. Stating that Bahamians deserves how much the country truly owes and where the real fiscal risks lie and what commitments are being made on their behalf. "Transparency is not optional, it's the price for public trust," said the opposition leader.

# ISSUES OF TODAY

MONDAY - FRIDAY  
11:30AM - 1PM

WITH **KHRISTIAN JONES** LLB(HONS)

# AVIATION LEADERS FIRST MEETING WITH NEW MINISTER, HON. JOBETH COLEBY-DAVIS



Leaders of the Bahamas Aviation Sector met in their first conclave with the new Minister of Energy, Utilities and Aviation, the Hon. Jobeth Coleby-Davis at Margaritaville Beach Resort on Tuesday, May 26, 2026. Minister Coleby-Davis affirmed her support for the aviation professionals and their implementation of the government's mandate for this important domain. Director of Aviation, Dr. Kenneth Romer expressed confidence that the aviation industry will continue to soar to new heights under the leadership of Minister Coleby-Davis. Aviation Stakeholders represented at the Conclave were the Bahamas Department of Aviation, The Airport Authority, Bahamas Air Navigation Services Authority, Civil Aviation Authority Bahamas, Freeport Airport Development Company, Nassau Airport Development Company, Nassau Flight Services, Bimini Airport Development Partners, Islands Airport Development Partners and Air Operators Committee. (BIS Photos/Anthon Thompson)



# MEMORIAL DAY: U.S. EMBASSY HONORS BAHAMIAN AND AMERICAN SERVICEMEN

TYNIA BROWN  
Journal Staff Writer

In 1954, servicemen in the line of duty off the coast of New Providence died in an explosion, and the last Monday of May marks Memorial Day, a holiday in America dedicated to honoring the memory of those who have died in service. The U.S. Embassy on Monday, May 25th, 2026 held a wreath-laying ceremony at Clifton Pier.

In addition to the ten U.S. Navy servicemen that passed away, the event made honorable mention to two Bahamians, Bahamian Army Sergeant Errol McKinney and Bahamian Private First Class Norman Darling. Both men were enlisted in the United States Army. Errol McKinney was 33 years old in 2004 when he was involved in a traffic accident in Texas. Norman Darling died in Iraq following a 2013 bomb incident in South Baghdad at the age of 22 years old.

Navy Commander Victor Lange, US Ambassador Herschel Walker, Minister of National Security Myles Laroda, Commander of the Defence Force Floyd Moxey, families of the victims, and community members attended the ceremony.

Commander Lange mentioned one of the members of the operations and explained the tragedy, stating, On May

7th, 1954, 300 yards south of this point, 10 valiant young men in the United States Navy gave their lives while on a mission designed to improve U.S. defenses against enemy submarine attacks.

One of the first responders on the scene of the crash that fateful morning of 1954 was local Bahamian businessman Mr. Alexander Maillis. In honor of Alexander Maillis service as a witness and first responder, a tribute was shared on his behalf by his son Pericles Maillis.

Mr. Maillis recalled his memory of his father, sharing, My father and his brother Anthony, who was also a World War II veteran on a destroyer.

He also shared what memories he has of the day, noting that he was only two years old at the time. They were on their way fishing, and they saw the search plane and the blimp, and there was some kind of signal, and they were here and they helped dive up the bodies. I was here as a baby, two years old.

Alexander Maillis camaraderie led to a discovery that made history, and this became a moment for the country to pay homage to the fallen men through a monument that sits 300 feet away from where the crash took place.

Don Cornish, the Director of the National Museum of The Bahamas, emphasized the importance of this monument and how the organization's



role is to protect and maintain it. What that means is that all public spaces are basically subject to our control and our management, he stated. "Therefore, their participation in the event was a special extension of private efforts that highlights a monument managed by the museum," he added.

This gives the institution the opportunity to work alongside the U.S. Embassy to ensure that the work is done with attention to the complete story. Mr. Cornish stated, We are now in dialogue with them about how we could learn from them, not just what is happening from the American side, their commemoration of 1954, for instance.

Cornish continued saying that the national and international exposure helps develop the truth of the history captured through artifacts. What we are hoping to do is to plan with them a proper, fitting memorial to show the importance of these kinds of moments, he emphasized.

Mr. Cornish said he is dedicated to pursuing more special private efforts with

the U.S. embassy, Nassau to increase the appreciation and support around what has occurred in our history with the National Museum of The Bahamas.

The ceremony concluded with remarks from Minister of National Security Myles Laroda, who spoke on behalf of the Bahamian Government, honoring the fallen men.

His remarks were followed by the laying of wreaths at sea by the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and the U.S. Marine Corps. The event served as a solemn and meaningful occasion bridging Bahamian and American history. It highlighted the shared sacrifices of servicemen from both nations who gave their lives in service.

The continued collaboration between the U.S. embassy and the National Museum of The Bahamas promises to preserve and deepen the public's understanding of this history. Their joint efforts ensure that the stories of these brave men will not be forgotten by future generations.

# FIFTY-NINE NEW TEACHERS COMMISSIONED DURING UB'S SPRING 2026 CEREMONY



Fifty-nine new teachers were officially commissioned during University of The Bahamas' Spring 2026 Teachers Commissioning Ceremony at Loyola Hall on Thursday, as education officials highlighted the growing need for educators nationwide.

The ceremony celebrated graduates preparing to enter classrooms throughout The Bahamas at a time

when officials say the public education system continues to face a teacher shortage.

University of The Bahamas President Robert Blaine Jr. congratulated the graduates and praised them for choosing a profession centered on service and national development.

"I want to tell you that I am so incredibly proud of you," Blaine said. "You are embarking on a career that will truly transform lives."

Blaine acknowledged the challenges of teaching but encouraged the graduates to remain committed to supporting students and building strong educational foundations.

"There are many days that are frustrating," he said. "But we went back into the classroom the next day, and what they didn't get, I made sure that we put a new foundation there to make sure that they could get it."

Director of Education Dominique McCartney-Russell also expressed excitement about the addition of the new educators to the school system.

"It is a pleasure to be here this morning and to celebrate with the class of 2026," McCartney-Russell said. "And can I tell you, I am so excited because we need these teachers."

She encouraged the graduates to recognize the impact they will have on young people's lives and urged them to continue developing professionally throughout their careers.

"I want you to accept this responsibility of influence," she said. "See the potential of our children where others only see limitations."

McCartney-Russell also emphasized the importance of lifelong learning, encouraging the graduates to continue their education beyond their bachelor's degrees.

"Commit yourself to lifelong learning and reflective practice," she said. "Don't stop here at your bachelor's degrees. Keep learning."

She closed by thanking the newly commissioned teachers for choosing what she described as the "profession of professions" and for helping to shape the nation's future.

"Your commitment to shaping lives and communities is both noble and necessary," she said.

# BUTTERFIELD ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE CONTROL OF CIBC CARIBBEAN IN \$1.8 BILLION TRANSACTION



The Bank of N.T. Butterfield & Son Limited ("Butterfield") (NYSE: NTB | BSX: NTB.BH) has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire CIBC's 91.7% interest in CIBC Caribbean Bank Limited ("CIBC Caribbean"), a relationship bank with a

longstanding history serving communities across the Caribbean, to create a leading banking and wealth management platform in international financial centers and attractive Caribbean markets, with approximately \$29 billion in assets. The transaction

brings together two complementary banks with deep roots and established relationships across their combined footprint with heightened capacity, greater diversification and scalable growth to drive long-term value for all stakeholders. Butterfield and CIBC

Caribbean's expanded capabilities and scale are expected to provide enhanced corporate, personal and wealth management services across their combined client bases. Clients can expect greater ability to process cross-border payments, increased

consumer and merchant banking capabilities, and continued investments in technology and digital banking infrastructure. Butterfield will maintain both organizations' operational footprints, including CIBC Caribbean's regional headquarters in Barbados, ensuring continuity for customers and employ-

ees. Butterfield is also committed to its and CIBC Caribbean's philanthropic, financial education, and sustainability initiatives in each of their geographies, which will continue to provide outsized, tangible and mutually beneficial financial impacts for the combined company and its communities.

**MAKE YOUR  
MARKETING  
DOLLARS  
STRETCH FURTHER**

**ADVERTISE  
IN THE  
BAHAMA JOURNAL**

**356-2555**