

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO BISHOP C. HOPETON CLENNON

FROM: THE CALABAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS OF 1976

DATE: SHARED ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL - 7 JANUARY 2025

The Calabar Class of 1976 fully endorses the previously expressed sympathy from our classmate, Albert Edwards sent to you, in January 2024, from his residence in South Africa.

We take this opportunity to share the following memories to honor and celebrate, our beloved classmate, Bishop C. Hopeton Clennon.

We will recall some significant interactions with Hopeton over the past fifty-two (52) years which led us to some positive about his diverse personality.

Vaz Preparatory to Calabar High School - Jamaica

Hopeton was a gifted student and Club Scout at Vaz Preparatory School. When he transitioned to Calabar High School for boys, you may not imagine what was most significant for us as 11–13-year-olds leaving primary schools. It was that we had ‘graduated’ from wearing short pants, sometimes revealing some really skinny legs, to wearing long pants at high school/We were BIG boys now!

Over the next five years, Hopeton matured and developed into a well-balanced 15-year-old 5th Former. His teachers took keen notice and appointed him the cherished position of Prefect.

Conclusion #1:

Hopeton had become a disciplined, responsible 5th Former.

Only those students who had passed a minimum of five Cambridge University General Certificate of Education (GCE) exam subjects were qualified to enter the post graduate 6th Form. This came with the added honor of disposing of our shoulder epaulettes in favor of our school ties. We were considered even

BIGGER boys now! Hopeton had been academically bright enough to be one of the few students given the unusual opportunity to do up to four GCE exams subjects in 4th form, instead of the usual time at 5th form.

He passed seven subjects in 5th form, with one distinction and three credits. When adding those passed in 4th Form, he had acquired a total of possibly 9-11 subjects, doubling the minimum requirement.

Conclusion #2:

Hopeton had become an outstanding student at 16 years old.

He was known to have carefully followed all the news on the most popular sports of his day – athletics, football, cricket and basketball. The school magazine records that he had keenly complied many sports, statistics in his mind. This totaled so many that, his classmates considered him ‘a vehement debater who confounded the unlucky devil who got into an argument with him! His famous words were: *Last year, him do 10.8 seconds in the 100 meters.*

Conclusion #3:

Let us do some positive conclusions

Hopeton was so passionate about sports, he was willing to do the research and recording work, to become a notable sports authority.

Over the next two years of 6th Form, Hopeton was not only focused on his science studies in Advanced (A) Level Cambridge in Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology, he was also surprisingly committed to a diverse array of extracurricular activities. Indeed, the school magazine jokingly recorded that he ‘holds the inter-school record for person on the most committees!’.

Undeterred by some who may have been a little envious of his diverse talents, Hopeton defiantly and proudly displayed all of the club badges daily on the chest area of his school shirt.

His impressive array of activities and achievements included:

- a) School Magazine Sub-committee
- b) Assistant Secretary, School Council
- c) President, Science Club
- d) President, Photographic Club
- e) Head Boy nominee
- f) Champion Inter-School Debating Team Member

The debating team had beaten Holy Childhood High School for girls in the finals. They received their championship medals at a prize giving ceremony at the Immaculate Conception High School for girls.

Hopeton's fellow champion debating team member, Walter Scott, recalls that the medal presentation was made by the then Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Most Honorable Michael Manley, who shook their hands afterwards.

Walter was so enamored by this handshake that he did not wash his hands for the rest of the day!

But was Hopeton equally enamored by the Prime Minister shaking his hand too? Maybe so

But we suspect that Hopeton, being then a tall man, handsome 18 year-old young man, from an ALL BOYS school, would have been far MORE ENAMORED with the kind of enviable access his shared debating victory had given him to legitimately bypass the security guards at the gates, to meet pretty girls at not one, but two, ALL GIRLS schools : Holy Childhood High and Immaculate Conception High!

Conclusion #4:

Hopton's high school debating excellence prepared him to not only meet national leaders, but also for excellence as a researcher, analyst, speaker, preacher in the ministry of the Moravian Church, locally and internationally.

Our last verbal and therefore most cherished conversations were recorded in our class of 1976 WhatsApp group chat in October 2023, coinciding with a visit to Jamaica.

He not only experienced traffic disruptions from a major non-lethal earthquake on his way then to Christiana. He also could not fulfill his plans to meet a fellow classmate, Emile Finlay. However, he was successful in fellowshipping with his debating partner, Walter Scott, (now a distinguished senior lawyer) via having dinner with his family and watching an NFL game on TV on October 29, 2023.

Conclusion #5:

Hopeton was loyal and committed to maintaining his relationships with his classmates, even after fifty-two years (52)!

Pennsylvania - USA

Our penultimate memory of Hopeton fortunately is shared photo taken on Labour Day, September 4, 2023. It records Hopeton visiting his former 92-year-old English Literature teacher, Mrs. Beryl Russell in Pennsylvania. He was accompanied by his Mathematics teacher from Jamaica, Ms. Patricia Reid-Waugh and another Pennsylvania resident and classmate, Robert Gabay.

(Both Robert and Owen Lee, one of Hopeton's United Theological College of the West Indies/Calabar classmates, attended the thanksgiving service to represent our class of 1976)

Conclusion #6:

Hopeton proved to the very end that he was not just a loyal former student who wished to show appreciation to his teacher for her vital contributions to his communication skills.

Hopeton was also a committed Pastor who was diligent in his duty to visit and comfort the sick and elderly.

Conclusion

Calabar High School was founded by two Baptist Ministers in 1912 on deeply spiritual values. It is reputed to be the High school which has produced the most church ministers across all denominations in Jamaica.

So our school crest includes a Bible, along with the school motto, 'The Utmost For The Highest.'

Our school song includes the words, 'So we answer, near or far, at the call' - 'Here Sir!'

We believe that God, in His wisdom, also came to a possible conclusion:

***Hopeton, Well Done!
'You have been A Good and Faithful Servant'.***

**And then God may
Have made the call,**

***'Come Home to Higher Service
Hopeton, it's the right time':***

**If so, Hopeton may have replied,
'Here Sir!'**

Rest in Peace Hopeton.

All of your classmates in the Calabar Class of 1976 will miss you dearly.

You have indeed done your Utmost For The Highest.

(This tribute was originally prepared in February 2024)