

Finlayson's donates \$2M to scholarship trust



SCHOLARSHIPS- 23 persons were presented with scholarships from the Trustees and Governors of the Sir Lynden Pindling and Archdeacon William Thompson Memorial Scholarship Trust on Tuesday night at a ceremony held at the British Colonial Hilton.

By JIMENITA SWAIN

Twenty-three persons were on Tuesday night presented with scholarships from the Trustees and Governors of the Sir Lynden Pindling and Archdeacon William Thompson Memorial Scholarship Trust.

This first time event, which is expected to continue annually, was held in the Victoria Room of the British Colonial Hilton Hotel.

A donation of \$2 million from Gareth "Tiger" Finlayson and Mrs. Rowena Finlayson made the scholarships available to the deserving students.

The awards were divided into three categories with persons being able to attend high school, the College of The Bahamas and to study abroad.

Of the 23 awards granted 16 persons received scholarships from the Sir Lynden Pindling award while seven received scholarships from the Archdeacon William Thompson award.

Persons on hand for the event along with scholarship recipients and family members and friends were Bismark Coakley, chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr. Leon Higgs president of COB, Rosemarie Thompson, Mr. Finlayson, Marguerite Lady Pindling, Mrs. Finlayson, and Vincent A Peet, Minister of Labour and Immigration.

"This awards ceremony this evening, is evidence of the commitment that concerned citizens like yourselves have toward promoting and rewarding excellence," Mr. Peet in his keynote address stated.

However, he informed the recipients that they have to take responsibility for "pursuing and achieving their studies." He urged them to "burn the midnight oil" and to be properly prepared for major examinations.

The minister told the awardees that they must avoid the symptoms of mediocrity and to be "willing to pay the price for success."

He said that Androsian Mr. Finlayson was greatly inspired by the lifelong commitment of Sir Lynden and Archdeacon Thompson.

"This inspiration led to the establishment of a Memorial Scholarship in the memory of these noble gentlemen," he said.

"The Sir Lynden Pindling Scholarship named in honour of a remarkable Bahamian, is intended for individuals who are natives of Andros or of Andros descendants, the birthplace of Lady Pindling and Sir Lynden's former constituency," Mr. Peet explained.

He highlighted that Sir Lynden was the first Prime Minister of the Bahamas and viewed as the father of the nation.

With regard to Archdeacon Thompson he said that the scholarships were named in honour of the 'Prince of the Church' and intended for deserving Bahamian students except Androsians.

Mr. Peet said that the archdeacon's life spoke of his commitment to excellence as he stated, "he (Mr. Thompson) demonstrated that integrity does not hinder performance- it is performance."

Further he explained that "these scholarships have been awarded to three categories of students: Four students received scholarships to attend high school, 16 are attending the College of the Bahamas, our premier institution and five are studying abroad."

He urged the students to take advantage of the opportunity before them and he thanked the benefactors for their contribution.

Lady Pindling handed out awards along with a book of her husband's life to Sir Lynden scholarship recipients while Mrs. Thompson handed out the remaining awards.

In a brief interview with Mr. Finlayson after the presentation he said: "You have to understand that the two people I am doing it in honour of, they were two very close persons to me. They were very instrumental in the success that I have today, so I thought that the best way to honour them was do the things what they liked."

He said, "Canon William Thompson gave away half of his salary to send people to school and Sir Lynden is the father of the nation." Mr. Finlayson explained that Sir Lynden was responsible for education and he wanted to continue it in some way.

Mrs. Rosemarie Thompson also shared her feelings on the first annual event, which jointly honored her husband's memory.

"I am particularly pleased that this day has come to fruition," she said, "we have been working quite a few weeks to get the scholarships off the ground." She said that a lot of work has gone into the organization of the awards in honour of her late husband and the late Sir Lynden.

"I am thinking that in the midst of sadness there are shades of joy and this is a joyful time particularly for these young people who have been awarded the scholarships," she said.

She noted that the recipients ranged from high school students straight up to tertiary level students. Mrs. Thompson expressed slight disappointment in the fact that all the scholarship recipients were women only and no men. "There were no boys," she said, "and this is not a good sign. We need our young men to know that education is very important. I don't want them for a moment to think that they should just sit on the blocks and not feel that they don't need education."

"I am also happy that Sir Lynden Pindling book was given to the awardees," she said as she noted that she had recently read an e-mail, which alluded to a point that black people do not read. She said, "This myth has to be dispelled."

Awardees must maintain a 2.5 grade point average for the continuance of the scholarship, however the award amounts were not revealed.