

The West Indian American

Serving the Caribbean/American
Communities of Connecticut

www.wianews.com

Volume XXXI

JULY 2023



The Bahamas, Celebrating Its 50th Year Of Independence

The Bahamas became a fully independent nation on July 10, 1973. Bahamas' separation from the United Kingdom led by Sir Lynden O. Pindling, earned him the name "Father of the Nation" of the Bahamas. He was pivotal in the independence of the country. July 10, 2023, commemorates the celebration of the 50th year of independence.

The Bahamas is located within the Lucayan Archipelago of the West Indies in the North Atlantic, occupying 97% of the Lucayan Archipelago's land area and is home

to 88% of the archipelago's population. The Bahamas is a nation of 700 islands of which only 30 are inhabited. The capital of the Bahamas is Nassau. The Bahamas is known for its turquoise waters and resilient West Indies island-nation people with infectious, amicable spirit.

Brief History: The Bahamas has a very long and rich history that started with the Lucayans inhabiting the islands between 500 A.D. and 800 A.D. The Lucayans reached the Bahamas after crossing the ocean from Cuba by

canoes. The Lucayans were a branch of the Tainos from the Caribbean islands at the time. For many centuries, they lived on their own without foreign interference until 1492. Christopher Columbus discovered the Bahamas during his journey to the New World. And soon Spanish ships followed him. They enslaved the native population, resulting in the island becoming deserted in 1513; then English colonists started settling on the islands in 1648.

The shallow water of the

islands made them difficult for large ships to reach. But provided easy passage to smaller ships. Pirates took advantage of this geography, and as a result, the place became a haven for pirates. Nassau on New Providence Island was the stronghold of a loose confederacy of pirates between 1706 and 1718. The British took harsh measures, and the Bahamas became a colony in 1718.

Further migrations happened after the American Revolutionary War. Thousands of American loyalists received land grants in the Bahamas and settled there. They also brought with them forced laborers and established plantations, and enslaved African people populated the Bahamas. In time, the Bahamas became a haven for the freed slaves when it abolished slavery. Today, 90% Afro-Bahamians

make up the island-nation.

Politically, Bahamians have had considerable control over their affairs since the first assembly in 1729. In May 1963 a conference was held in London to consider a new constitution for the islands.

It was then agreed that the colony should have full internal self-government, the governor retaining reserved powers only for foreign affairs, defense, and internal security. The new constitution came into force on January 7, 1964, and constitutional advances in 1969 brought the country to the verge of complete self-government.

Party politics had emerged in 1953, when the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) was formed by Bahamians of African descent to oppose the group in power, who in 1958 responded with a party of their

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Colorful performers in Independence Day parades showcasing culture and heritage marking the country's Golden Jubilee Celebration

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

BOBBY GIBSON

PROUDLY SERVING THE 15TH DISTRICT
BLOOMFIELD, WEST HARTFORD



Happy Independence Day, Bahamas! On July 10, 1973, Bahamas became a fully independent nation. We wish our Bahamian friends a peaceful and prosperous independence day!

If you have any questions or would like to reach out, don't hesitate to email Bobby.Gibson@cga.ct.gov or call my office at (860) 240-0472. To stay up to date on everything I'm doing at the Capitol, please visit my web page and like my official Facebook page.

Sincerely,
Bobby Gibson, State Representative

Bahamas' 50th Independence Celebration

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own, the United Bahamian Party (UBP), controlled by British-descended politicians. As the political battle progressed, the PLP raised the cry for majority rule.

The climax came after the general elections of 1967, when the PLP, under the leadership of Lynden Pindling, was able to form a government with a slight majority. In general, the PLP advocated stricter government control of the economy, increasing Bahamian ownership of business enterprises and the replacement of foreign workers by Bahamians.

Although the move toward self-government received bipartisan support, some factions advocated that total independence should come later than 1973, the year targeted by the PLP government.

In 1969, the name Commonwealth of the Bahamas Islands was adopted, but upon independence, on July 10, 1973, the official form became The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The PLP maintained its position as the majority party after independence.

The main opposition was formed by the Free National Movement (FNM), established in 1972 through a merger between the UBP and alienated anti-independence PLP members calling themselves the Free PLP. The government embarked on programs to improve economic development, increase the standard of living, and halt the rising unemployment rate. The Bahamas is a member of the Caribbean Community and



Independence Day Parade performers

Common Market [Caricom] (1983), the United Nations (1973), UNESCO (1981), the Organization of American States (1982), and the Commonwealth (1973).

Alleged collusion with drug traffickers by members of the government became a major issue and threatened PLP power in the late 1980s. Another serious, and ongoing, problem has been the periodic arrival of waves of legal and illegal immigrants from Haiti, placing a strain on social and economic resources.

In the August 1992 general elections, the FNM swept into power, winning 31 of the 49 seats in the House of Assembly. The party increased its majority in the 1997 elections, winning 35 of the

40 seats. The PLP regained ascendancy in the 2002 elections but was again swept out by the FNM in 2007. The PLP then won a landslide victory in 2012, and its leader, Perry Christie, replaced FNM leader Hubert Ingraham as prime minister.

Most of the country's economy is driven by tourism and offshore finance. The Bahamas' tourism-dependent economy was hit hard

when the Coronavirus pandemic reached the islands in 2020. The government's handling of the public crisis was the central campaign issue when Minnis called a snap election for September 2021 (by which time more than 500 Bahamians had died of causes related to COVID-19, the disease brought on by the virus). Minnis's bid to be the first Bahamian prime

minister to be returned to office in more than two decades was rejected by the voters, who handed a landslide victory to the PLP, whose leader, Philip Davis, became prime minister.

(Source: This article drew from multiple sources including Encyclopedia, books, posters illustrating timeline of the Nation, historians, and journalists).

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Hartford Adult Education Center: Graduation June 2023



Mauvine McDonald, a student from CURET, delivering graduation speech. She is one of three student speakers. They shared individual stories epitomizing persistency in spite of the many challenges they endured; however, they remained steadfast, committed with a focused purpose, and attained the goal—earning their high school diploma.

By Henry Haye

As we highlight another year of graduation exercises, the spotlight is on the Hartford Adult Education Center graduation. June 8, 2023, witnessed an evening filled with pomp and circumstance as

forty-five graduates, an increase of ten when compared to last year, marched up their school's auditorium to receive their high school diploma.

Dr. Gordon, the director

of the institution, charged the graduates to stay confident and to take responsibility not only for themselves but for society as well. She further stated that the graduates should continue to embrace the qualities that contributed to their

success.

The keynote speaker, introduced by Mauvine McDonald, shared that she had to overcome challenges as well to earn a high school diploma. She went on to earn

a bachelor's and master's degree. She is currently a teacher in the Hartford Public School System and was 2020 Hartford Public Schools Teacher of the Year.

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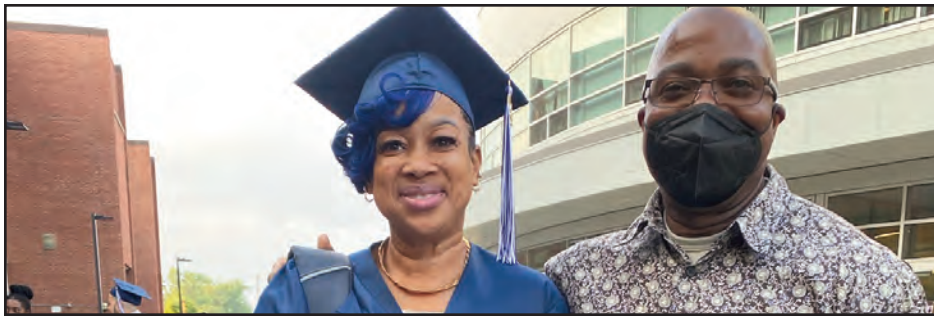
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Mauvine McDonald with Dr. Henry Haye, her teacher when she was a student in the CURET Adult Education Program

Hartford Adult Education Graduation June 2023

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Superintendent, Dr. Torres, of Hartford Public Schools was also among the guest speakers. She lauded the

Hartford Adult Education Center for their hard work, and she was very happy for the increase in graduates. She expressed her love for Hartford

Adult Education Center yearly graduations and publicly stated she has never missed one. The event was well attended.

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