



**Premier Alden McLaughlin's  
Welcoming Address to Governor Helen Kilpatrick  
in the House of the Legislative Assembly 6 September, 2013**

Your Excellency, Madam Speaker, Ministers and Members of Cabinet, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Honourable Chief Justice, Acting, not acting anymore, he's reverted to Deputy Governor Franz Manderson, all of the other invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

Your Excellency it is my honour and privilege on behalf of the government and the people of the Cayman Islands to warmly welcome you to these Islands and to congratulate you on your appointment as our first female governor.

I am not superstitious man, by nature, but today happens to be my birthday and today is also the 100th day of this Administration in office and of course your arrival and swearing in as our Governor. So I can hardly ignore the confluence of those events and to say that I believe that that portends much good and I take it as a very good omen on behalf of the Cayman Islands and indeed on behalf of this Administration.

Your Excellency will have noted that your second oath, the one for the due execution of office, made specific reference to your being and serving the people of the Cayman Islands as Governor. That is a new provision included in the 2009 Constitution order. It was put in there quite deliberately and we believe that it is very, very important that those who serve in the office of Governor do fully and truly understand and appreciate that while they are Her Majesty's representative, they are also the Governor of the people of the Cayman Islands and do hold a real and sacred trust on behalf of the people of these Islands.

Your Excellency will also have noted, because I know having met you before, that you are one who does quite a bit of research and did do quite a bit of research about the Cayman Islands, will have noted that the relationship between the Cayman Islands and the United Kingdom Government has

been strained at times and has been particularly strained over periods in the last four years or so. Tensions are inevitable in any relationship, but I believe and this Government, which I have the honour and privilege to lead believes, that if we view the nature of the relationship as a partnership we will be better able to manage those tensions and that together we will do what is in the best interest of the Cayman Islands while ensuring that the interests of the United Kingdom are carefully guarded as well.

I believe, as one who played some role in the development of the 2009 Constitution order, that we should view that document as our partnership deed and if we all respect the various roles which we are assigned by that Constitution, if we are able to understand what it is that the Constitution and the framers of the Constitution were seeking to achieve, we will not only be able to work together and have a good relationship, but we will also advance the interests of these Islands in a way that has never really occurred before.

I am happy, your Excellency, to note that Prime Minister David Cameron also believes that a partnership is the best way to frame the relationship between the Overseas Territories and the United Kingdom Government and has referred to it in the UK White Paper recently. Your Excellency, I believe that in all relationships, communication is the key. I have striven over the course of the past three months plus, since we have been in office, to work very hard on building relationships and building communication between the team. Your predecessor in office, Mr. Duncan Taylor, really did a great job in welcoming the new Administration and in welcoming me on board as Premier and we forged in a very short time a very good working relationship. I am certain, having met you on two occasions, that you share the same determination to make this relationship work and I am looking forward immensely to that happening. I have striven with the Ministers in my Administration and the Councillors to also work on communication with them. I meet with, or I attempt to meet with my Ministers at least once a week in addition to the regular Caucus because without that relationship, without understanding exactly what is going on within each Ministry, it is very difficult for me as Premier to know whether or not the business of Government and the objectives of the Government are being pursued in the way that they need to be.

Actually, your Excellency, the Constitution, Section 49 of the Constitution, requires that the Governor and the Premier confer on a regular basis in relation to whatever is transpiring in the business of Government and for the Premier to advise you about the policies that are being pursued by the Government. Section 32 of the Constitution imposes on you as Governor the concomitant responsibility to advise the Premier about your areas of special responsibility under the Constitution;

defence, the public service, internal security. And so the Constitution itself is based on a premise of a partnership and on proper communication between the Premier, the Cabinet and the Governor.

Your Excellency, I assure you that whatever has transpired in the past, I have no interest in fighting. I have fought enough battles in my career to not want to be further exhausted by pursuing vainglorious. I look forward, your Excellency, to your getting to know what I believe is a very special Cabinet and to working with you in that role as Chairman of the Cabinet. Although the Governor is no longer a member of the Cabinet, your role as chair is very important, not just in terms of keeping order, because my boys are very well behaved, but because the elected members of Cabinet benefit from the advice, the guidance, the insight and the perspective brought to bear on the matters that are being discussed and debated and decided upon by the Governor who sits in the Chair and indeed by all of the official members of the Cabinet who, though they have not a vote, certainly have a voice.

Your Excellency also has a very important role under the Constitution to promote good governance. That has been brought into stark relief in recent times. Although we are pursuing as a Government and as a Cabinet a number of measures to bolster good governance, we do hope that the issue of good governance will be something that recedes from the prominence that it has held in recent times.

Your Excellency would have seen, I know, the 99-Day Report, which our Administration produced yesterday. There will be much more time for us to talk about that report, but I would be bold enough to say that I think we have made good progress and while there is lots more work to be done, I think we have gotten off to a good start.

Your Excellency, there is much work to be done, as I've said. There is a very short verse that I listen to in my head quite regularly and it goes this way: We are not here to play, to dream to drift, we have work to do and loads to lift. Shun not the struggle. Face it. It is God's gift, be strong.

There is much to do and much work to be done. But we are not going to insist that you have to work today. Today we want you to celebrate this momentous occasion in your life and a major milestone in the Cayman Islands as our first female Governor takes office.

Although women did not get the right to vote or stand for public office until 1959, and there is a monument outside these Chambers which marks that occasion, we are very used to women taking major leadership roles in the Cayman Islands. The Hon. Sybil McLaughlin, who is our only living

National Hero, was the first woman in the Commonwealth to hold the office of clerk of any legislature in 1959. She ultimately became the Speaker of this House. Since then we have had two Speakers of this House, the late Hon. Edna Moyle and the current Hon. Speaker, Mrs. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, who has held that role twice, and has also incidentally been Premier.

So we are not unused to women in senior leadership roles and we do welcome you as a woman setting the bar higher and higher for our young girls in the Cayman Islands.

I want to conclude, your Excellency, by saying that you will find the people of the Cayman Islands a most warm, hospitable and welcoming set. Cayman has made immense, almost miraculous strides in my lifetime. When I was born the population of these Islands was barely 6,000 people. And sometimes on a day like today when I mark another year, I look back in absolute wonder at how far we've come and from whence we came. We now are peopled by more than 130 different nationalities who live together in relative harmony all contributing immensely to Cayman's growth, development, cultural diversity, cuisine, you name it. As one who has travelled the length and breadth of the Caribbean, even though I perhaps am a little biased, Cayman is an incredibly blessed place. I know nowhere else like it.

I know that you will do as your predecessor in office did, spend time in our community, talk to the ordinary people, understand their aspirations, their concerns, their fears and I do believe if you are to follow that model, you, when your time to leave does come, will leave as beloved as Duncan Taylor did and that I believe will be one of the greatest legacies that you could possibly leave.

I welcome you again on behalf of the people of the Cayman Islands. I wish you well. I look forward to working with you. I am sorry that I will not be at your first Cabinet meeting for I leave for Gibraltar tomorrow, but leave you in very, very capable hands with the Deputy Premier Mr. Moses Kirkconnell and I know all will be well.

Thank you.