



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



**PARLIAMENT OF  
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**2021/2022 SESSION**

**Wednesday**  
**21 April 2021**  
*(Pages 1-12)*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MP**  
**Speaker**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
SWEARING-IN CEREMONY  
WEDNESDAY  
21 APRIL 2021  
3:15PM**

**The Clerk:** We will now sing the National Anthem.

*[National Anthem sung by Rudy Myles, OMH, Cert. Hon.]*

*[National Song sung by Mr. James Geary]*

**PRAYERS**

**Reverend Dr. Yvette Noble-Bloomfield, Cert. Hon.:**  
Let us pray.

*Lord of our life and God of our salvation, star of our night and hope of every nation, hear and receive our humble supplication, Lord God Almighty.*

*You have indeed founded us upon the Seas and established us upon the Floods and Your mercies towards us, oh God, are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness in so many ways towards the people of the Cayman Islands. We remember Her Majesty the Queen on this day and pray that you would comfort her with your Holy Spirit.*

*You, Almighty God, are the source of all righteousness, justice and peace. Breathe your Holy Spirit over the Cayman Islands. Breathe Your Holy Spirit into this House of Parliament and breathe into our spirits. Grant that these Elected Representatives will have the courage and the energy to think and to act fairly, to seek the truth, to rectify personal desires and always to pursue that which augurs best for the greater good of the people of the Cayman Islands.*

*Give to each of them, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding. Together, may they provide conditions that will make for good and honest life for all the people of the Cayman Islands; may the hungry be fed, the diseased healed, the children and youth encouraged and enlightened, the defenceless protected, the lonely and disillusioned comforted and may those in positions of influence continue to direct their powers towards good.*

*We pray, Almighty God, that you would heal the fishers in the fabric of our society. Help us to forgive each other and enable us to think, speak, and act with kindness one toward the other. Enable us to seek peace and pursue it; grant that suspicion may give place to trust, and stridency to shalom and harmony so that there may be a true sense of unity. Give us understanding that we may seek service before privilege and public prosperity before private gain.*

*Help us not to boast, save in knowing that you are with us and that [inaudible] for the entire nation is loved.*

*Bless and sustain each Member of Parliament in their work. Support them in their anxieties. Give them joy in their service; due pleasure in their [inaudible] and the approval of a good conscience in all their endeavours.*

*Almighty God, bless the proceedings of this honourable House today and May all that is said and done bring honour and glory to your name.*

*Amen.*

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS  
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

We will now invite the Governor to administer the Oaths or Affirmations of Due Execution of Office.

*Administered by His Excellency the Governor,  
Mr. Martyn K. Roper, OBE*

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

**Deputy Governor**

**Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Cert. Hon., JP**

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:** I, Franz Ireland Manderson, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:** I, Franz Ireland Manderson, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Attorney General**

**Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, QC, JP**

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:** I, Samuel Washington Bulgin, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:** I, Samuel Washington Bulgin, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MP**  
Elected Member for West Bay West

**AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** I, William McKeeva Bush, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

**AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** I, William McKeeva Bush, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush, MP**

Elected Member for West Bay North

**AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** I, Bernie Alfredo Bush, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

**AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** I, Bernie Alfredo Bush, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP**  
Elected Member for West Bay Central

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks:** I, Katherine Ann Ebanks-Wilks, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks:** I, Katherine Ann Ebanks-Wilks, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks, MP**  
Elected Member for West Bay South

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** I, André Martin Ebanks, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** I, André Martin Ebanks, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew, JP, MP**  
Elected Member for George Town North

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew:** I, Joseph Xavier Hew, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew:** I, Joseph Xavier Hew, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan, MP**  
Elected Member for George Town Central

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan:** I, Kenneth Vernon Bryan, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan:** I, Kenneth Vernon Bryan, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. David C. Wight, MP**

Elected Member for George Town West

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. David C. Wight:** I, David Charles Wight, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. David C. Wight:** I, David Charles Wight, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, NP, MP**

Elected Member for George Town South

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly:** I, Barbara Elizabeth Conolly, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly:** I, Barbara Elizabeth Conolly, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP**

Elected Member for George Town East

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** I, Roy Michael McTaggart, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** I, Roy Michael McTaggart, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin, Jr., MBE, JP, MP**

Elected Member for Red Bay

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin, Jr.:** I, Alden McNee McLaughlin, Jr., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin, Jr.:** I, Alden McNee McLaughlin, Jr., do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner, MP**

Elected Member for Prospect

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner:** I, Sabrina Theresa Turner, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner:** I, Sabrina Theresa Turner, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. G. Wayne Panton**

Elected Member for Newlands

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. G. Wayne Panton:** I, Gurney Wayne Panton, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. G. Wayne Panton:** I, Gurney Wayne Panton, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Ms. Heather D. Bodden, MP**

Elected Member for Savannah

**AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Ms. Heather D. Bodden:** I, Heather Dianne Bodden, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty

Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

#### **AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Ms. Heather D. Bodden:** I, Heather Dianne Bodden, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP**  
Elected Member for Bodden Town West

#### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** I, Christopher Selvin Saunders, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

#### **OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** I, Christopher Selvin Saunders, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP**  
Elected Member for Bodden Town East

#### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I, Dwayne Stanley Seymour, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

#### **OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I, Dwayne Stanley Seymour, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of the Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks, MP**  
Elected Member for North Side

#### **OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks:** I, Johany Stephan Ebanks, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

#### **OATH OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks:** I, Johany Stephan Ebanks, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen

Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament. So help me God.

**Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, MP**  
Elected Member for East End

#### **AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Isaac D. Rankine:** I, Isaac Douglas Rankine, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

#### **AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Isaac D. Rankine:** I, Isaac Douglas Rankine, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

**Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, JP, MP**  
Elected Member for  
Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman

#### **AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell:** I, Moses Ian Kirkconnell, III, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

#### **AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell:** I, Moses Ian Kirkconnell, III, solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

**Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP**  
Elected Member for Cayman Brac East

#### **AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:** I, Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

#### **AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE**

**Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:** I, Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the office of Member of Parliament.

[Pause]

**The Clerk:** Statement by His Excellency the Governor, Martyn K. Roper.

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE GOVERNOR,  
MARTYN K. ROPER, OBE**

**His Excellency, the Governor, Martyn K. Roper:** Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

I am greatly honoured to be taking part in this Swearing-in Ceremony on what is Her Majesty the Queen's 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday and I know everyone here will join me in sending Her Majesty our best wishes, albeit in the sad circumstances following the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh.

My congratulations go to all Elected Members of Parliament as they take their seats today. I particularly congratulate those Members who have taken on the responsibility of serving our people as an elected representative for the first time, and I would also like to thank those candidates who were unsuccessful for their invaluable contribution to our democratic process. The turnout in the elections was a highly respectable 73 per cent, continuing Cayman's strong track record for high voter participation and comparing very favourably internationally.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic still affecting international travel, we were unable to invite the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to oversee the conduct of this election in person. They did, however, carry out a remote audit of the process. I am pleased we were able to appoint a team of nine domestic observers who worked diligently in-country to augment the work of the CPA and provide additional reassurance to the general public about meeting international standards for democratic, genuine and transparent elections.

In their statement on the 15<sup>th</sup> April, I am very pleased to say that the spokesman for the local observers confirmed that they had full confidence in the integrity of our elections process. I look forward to receiving in due course, both the report of the local observers and that of the CPA. We should carefully consider recommendations for improving the process for future elections. There are some areas that need addressing, including I believe, election finance, to enhance our good governance. It is my hope that the incoming Government will make this a priority in the early part of its term.

The supervisor of elections, Mr. Wesley Howell, his Office and the many volunteers that supported the elections process are to be congratulated on their efforts in getting us to this point, especially given the reduced time table under which they had to operate after the elections were called early. I also thank them for the additional measures that they had to introduce to

ensure that any voter in quarantine was able to exercise their democratic right to cast a ballot; we are very fortunate to have such a capable and dedicated elections team to rely upon. They have earned and enjoy strong trust and confidence from our community. Yet again, they have demonstrated that Cayman has much to be proud of in holding free and fair elections.

I would also [*inaudible*] police service and special constabulary who as in previous years, turned out to ensure electors felt safe and secure as they cast their votes on Grand Cayman and in the Sister Islands.

Elected Members of Parliament, you are privileged to have been chosen by our people to represent them. You will have four years in which to justify their faith in you and I'm sure you will wish to fulfil your leadership roles with integrity, passion and energy; above all, I urge you to have the best interests of the people of these wonderful islands firmly in your hearts and minds. There are likely to be many challenges facing the Cayman Islands during your term in office, particularly as we move to reopen our borders and build back better, in the midst of this global pandemic.

I am confident that you will face these challenges head on and do your utmost to lead these islands to a brighter future. I believe one of the messages the public clearly sent in these elections is about the great importance attached to the integrity and behaviour of elected Parliamentarians, Ministers and Senior Officials. I therefore welcome the incoming Government's announcement it will agree a Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians. I hope we can also agree a Code of Conduct for Cabinet Ministers.

The UK-Cayman relationship is in very good shape. I look forward to continuing to play my part to strengthen it further. Where UK technical expertise can be helpful, I will continue to do my utmost to secure it. One area of major concern is climate change and the environment; an existential priority for our entire planet and highlighted by the public and many of the candidates during the campaign. The UK is open to assisting the new Government on analysing the risks of climate change, renewable energy, biodiversity and any other areas that would be helpful.

I look forward to working with all of you for the remainder of my time as Governor. I will continue to respect the autonomy of the Cayman Islands for domestic affairs and seek to exercise my responsibilities including for good governance in the spirit of partnership, mutual trust and collaboration that have marked my first two and half years as Governor.

I pay tribute to the outgoing Premier for his contribution to our islands over the last eight years, particularly steering the country so successfully through the global pandemic and I pay tribute to his Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries for their public service and commitment to the people of these islands.

I recognise it has been a hard-fought election campaign and the last week has been a tense, and at times challenging one, for everyone in our community. I hope we can now put this behind us, come together

as a community and support the new Government and the official Opposition as they start work. While fully accepting everyone's right to express their opinions, I continue to urge everyone to treat everybody else in our community with courtesy, dignity, respect and fairness at all times.

The Civil Service and I, ably led by our Deputy Governor, look forward very much to working with the new Government to deliver your programme. These islands have so much to be thankful for and positive about, and I wish all elected Parliamentarians the very best of luck as you embark on a new journey.

God Bless the Cayman Islands.

**The Clerk:** Please stand.

*[Departure of His Excellency the Governor]*

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

### PROCLAMATION No. 3/2021

**The Clerk:** Cayman Islands Proclamation No. 3 of 2021 by His Excellency Martyn K. Roper, Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor of the Cayman Islands.

**“WHEREAS Section 83(1) of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands provides that the sessions of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall be held at such places and begin at such times as the Governor may from time to time by Proclamation appoint;**

**“NOW, THEREFORE, I, Martyn Roper, OBE, Governor of the Cayman Islands, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by the said section 83(1) of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands, HEREBY PROCLAIM that a session of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall begin and be held at the House of Parliament in George Town, Grand Cayman, beginning at 3pm on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2021 and shall thereafter continue on such date and time as the Parliament may adjourn thereto.**

**“GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE PUBLIC SEAL OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS AT GEORGE TOWN, IN THE ISLAND OF GRAND CAYMAN, THIS 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-ONE, IN THE SEVENTIETH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II.”**

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT TO PRESIDE OVER THE HOUSE

**The Clerk:** I now call for nomination of a Speaker for this honourable Parliament. Nominations are now open.

#### NOMINATION OF HON. W. MCKEEVA BUSH, OBE, JP, MP

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks, Elected Member for North Side:** Madam Clerk, I beg to nominate the Elected Member for West Bay West as the Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

**The Clerk:** There is a nomination.  
Is there a seconder?

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Elected Member for West Bay Central:** Madam Clerk, I beg to second the nomination.

**The Clerk:** There is a mover and a seconder for the Elected Member of West Bay West to be the Honourable Speaker of this Parliament.

Does the Honourable Member accept the nomination?

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West:** Madam Clerk, I certainly do.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations?

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks:** Madam Clerk, I move that nominations be closed, please.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations?

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East:** Madam Clerk, I beg to nominate Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly as Speaker of this honourable House.

**The Clerk:** There is a nomination for the Elected Member for George Town South to be the Speaker. Is there a seconder?

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Elected Member for George Town North:** Madam Clerk, I rise to second the nomination.

**The Clerk:** Does the Elected Member for George Town South accept the nomination?

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Elected Member for George Town South:** Madam Clerk, I humbly accept the nomination.

**The Clerk:** Are there any other nominations?

*[Pause]*

**The Clerk:** If there are no other nominations, can I have a motion that the nominations be closed?

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks:** I beg to have the nominations closed, ma'am.

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**The Clerk:** Is there a seconder?

*[Pause]*

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks:** I second that the nominations be closed.

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**The Clerk:** All those in favour of the nominations being closed please say Aye; those opposed, No.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

**AYES.**

**The Clerk:** The Ayes have it; nominations are now closed.

*[Pause]*

**Agreed: Nominations closed.**

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

**The Clerk:** As there is more than one person being nominated for the Speaker of the Parliament, we will have to proceed by way of ballot; therefore, we would ask that we be given a couple of minutes to prepare the ballot papers. Everyone please remain in your seats.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

**The Clerk:** Honourable Members, the ballots have been prepared and the ballot box is here. Serjeant-at-Arms, if you can just give the Members an opportunity to look in the ballot box and show that it is free and clear.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

**The Clerk:** The ballot papers will now be distributed and I ask that you vote for no more than one person for the position of Speaker of the Parliament.

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

*[Pause]*

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**The Clerk:** All ballots are in. I ask the Deputy Governor to unlock the box and hand me the ballots.

*[Pause]*

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Deputy Governor:** Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

*[Pause]*

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

*[Pause]*

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

And the last ballot—Honourable William McKeever Bush.

*[Pause]*

Honourable William McKeever Bush.

**The Clerk:** The result of the ballot is:



Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, 12 votes.  
Ms. Barbara Connolly, 7 votes.

The Honourable W. McKeeva Bush has been elected as the Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

We now await the arrival of his Excellency the Governor.

**The Serjeant-at-Arms:** His Excellency the Governor.  
Please rise.

## OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MP**  
Speaker of the House of Parliament  
*Administered by His Excellency the Governor,  
Mr. Martyn Roper*

### AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** I, William McKeeva Bush, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the Office of Speaker of Parliament.

*[Pause]*

**The Clerk:** We will take a short suspension to allow the Honourable Speaker to prepare himself for the Speaker's procession.

Please remain in your seats.

## SPEAKER'S PROCESSION

*The Serjeant-at-Arms  
The Honourable Speaker  
The Clerk  
The Deputy Clerk*

*[Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Speaker of the House, presiding]*

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Before we carry on, can I call on the Member for Newlands to suspend Standing Orders 10(2) in order to carry on business after the hour of 4:30 p.m.?

### Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)

**Mr. G. Wayne Panton, Elected Member for Newlands:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Standing Order 10(2) that we move past the hour of interruption.

**The Speaker:** The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended in order for business to be conducted after the hour of 4:30p.m.

All those in favour, please say Aye; those against, No.

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it; the House continues.  
**Agreed: Standing Orders 10(2) suspended.**

## STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, years ago, serving with Doctor Roy Bodden, if he was opposite me, I had to come prepared with two speeches. If he was nice, I would use the short one and if he went long I would use the long one. Unfortunately, I have to use the long one but I will endeavour, Mr. Leader, to be as brief as possible in this very important time.

Honourable Members, today is another momentous day in the life of our country. Democracy once again has been tried and tested and our democracy remains intact. No guns boomed.

As the Speaker you have chosen, I thank you. I welcome and congratulate all of you on your successful campaign. The campaign is over. We have a tremendous responsibility before us to serve our people.

Firstly, I want to thank Almighty God for all of his mercies to us; to thank our churches for their steadfast prayers, and for us to know that our churches operate with us and for us; that our pastors operate for us.

Before I continue it is important that this is the first time this honourable House has been called since its dissolution; since that time His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, passed away. It is important for this honourable House to record it and pay our respects in a moment of silence to Her Majesty the Queen and the entire royal household. Therefore I will ask all of us to stand in a minute of silence.

**Moment of Silence**  
*to reflect on the passing of  
The Duke of Edinburgh*

**The Speaker:** Pleased be seated. Thank you all very much.

I want to thank those who stood by me over the years. I am certainly mindful of, and miss those, who have gone to their heavenly rest. Many, far too many, have gone. This country has lost many good citizens in this year already, much less in the over 36 years I have been here—may they all rest in peace.

I want to thank my family, particularly my good wife, and my son and his wife. My campaign committee, chaired by Mr. Waldo Parchment and Ms. Eva Tomlinson, my cousin; and my West Bay West enhancement council chaired by my cousin, Captain Ashton D. Oscar. That committee, and my council, and other volunteers worked very hard and took the load with dignity, pride and a sense of patriotism. I want to thank my two nominators, two decent West Bay ladies, Mrs. Gladys Williams Ebanks and Mrs. Dorothy Parchment—two mothers and grandmothers—decent West Bay ladies who never took to the platform, but were there for me in the worst bouts of criticism.

Now, my dear colleagues, it is on to the work we are elected to do. This is a new Government led by a capable lawyer and businessman, husband and family man, who has served in this Honourable House before. None of us are infallible and all of us know that we have work to do. He has my complete control in the House; I will work with him so that he will control us for the betterment of our people.

Our Deputy Premier is no stranger to this House or to finance and financial services. As capable young men, they will lead. He too is a family man. They will lead. They will lead the Cabinet with the Member from Cayman Brac East as a very capable veteran of Cabinet; and the younger and energetic Member from George Town Central has shown, and his constituency has acknowledged, his abilities to lead and represent his people.

Other Cabinet Members are successful in their business world, in the civil service, and as a Member of this House and in their communities. This Cabinet is as good as any that I have seen. They must be given the chance to do the work that they were elected to do and with the manifestos of all of us and the demands and needs of our people, we have enough to do, to accomplish, for each other. I am a worker. As Speaker I have asked, and it has been agreed, that I will work wherever I can to help them.

As my Deputy I will have a young, intelligent new Member, who is keen to learn and do the work; who will also be a Member of the Parliamentary Management Council—the Member for West Bay Central. I am confident she will be a huge asset to the team. She is committed. I am confident through the challenges that we have, we will succeed. They are great. The world is still in a flux.

Cayman, opportunities now to do better than we have been are unlimited, but Caymanians must pull together; there is no time to bicker and to plot and certainly, from my position here, I will keep the necessary order as best as the rules allow me to and so my friends, my colleagues, and Honourable Members, God has given us a chance to be better and if we help others, that is to me, a first step in our success. We cannot, must not, row over fire ants while elephants trample us. Let us as a Government fulfil our manifestos.

I am confident then our communities—and I was struck I must say, by the theme of Savannah and

Newlands of community—our communities will be served, families stabilised, schools re-tooled and strengthened. Our youth trained, business opportunities realised and ready for the new Cayman and our economy will be booming; jobs, jobs, jobs.

For me, as I have said these last 36 years plus:

***The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep***

I love Frost; very meaningful.

Honourable colleagues, I am positive. ***Too positive, to be doubtful; too optimistic to be fearful and too determined to be defeated***; I know you are too—on to the work before us.

I thank you for the confidence you have reposed in me. I have promised, and as we are all humans, we will continue to change the things that are needed, not only for others but also in our lives. We will work those instruments that we will prepare. God has been good to us. Mistakes are in the past. We move forward now. ***We move forward, ever upward and onward.***

*[Desk thumping]*

## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

**The Speaker:** Nominations are now open for the position of our Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks, Elected Member for West Bay South:** Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The Member for West Bay South.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the Elected Member for West Bay Central as the Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Is there a seconder?

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush, Elected Member for West Bay North:** Mr. Speaker I beg to second the Motion.

**The Speaker:** The nomination for the Member for West Bay Central has been made and seconded.

Are there any other nominations or can we say nominations are closed? The Member for George Town East:

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the Member for George Town South as Deputy Speaker of this Honourable Parliament.

**The Speaker:** Is there a seconder?

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

**The Speaker:** The nomination for the Member for George Town South has been made and seconded.

Can I ask the Member for West Bay Central if she accepts the nomination?

**Mrs. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks:** Mr. Speaker, I humbly accept the nomination.

**The Speaker:** Can I ask the Member for George Town South if she accepts the nomination?

**Ms. Barbara E. Connolly, Elected Member for George Town South:** Mr. Speaker, I humbly accept the nomination.

**The Speaker:** As before, Honourable Members, the ballot papers will be prepared and the ballot box is here.

It will take just a few minutes for them to prepare the ballots and so we will suspend for a few minutes, but please remain in your seats.

*[Pause]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, the ballots have been prepared and the box is here. I am going to ask the Serjeant if he would ensure that all Members have an opportunity to examine the ballot box and ensure that it is free and clear—although it did not go anywhere.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** While he is doing that, we are also going to have two scrutineers, the officio Members of the House; we are going to ask the Honourable Deputy Governor and the Honourable Attorney General to come and take their positions, please.

Once the Serjeant has completed his exercise, the ballot papers will be distributed and Members may vote for no more than one Member for the position of Deputy Speaker. Once you have done that, I would recommend that you fold your paper and as the ballot box comes back around, place it in as to maintain the secrecy of the ballot, if that is your desire.

The box has now been locked and the ballots will now be distributed.

*[Pause]*

**The Speaker:** Gentlemen, collect the ballots.

*[Pause]*

**The Speaker:** The process of opening the ballot box is being carried out.

**Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Deputy Governor:** Mrs. Katherine Ebanks Wilks.  
*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Mrs. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

*[Pause]*

And the last ballot—Ms. Barbara Elizabeth Conolly.

**The Speaker:** We wish to thank the Honourable Deputy Governor and the Honourable Attorney General for their assistance in this ballot process.

*[Pause]*

**The Speaker:** The results are:

West Bay Central—Katherine Anne Ebanks-Wilks: 11 votes.

George Town South—Barbara E. Conolly: 7 votes.

It is my duty to announce that the Member for West Bay Central, the Honourable Katherine Anne Ebanks-Wilks has been duly elected the Honourable Deputy Speaker of this honourable Parliament.

*[Applause and desk thumping]*

## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF THE PREMIER

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, we will now begin the process of electing our Premier; I call for nominations.

Nominations are open, the Elected Member for Savannah.

**Ms. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to nominate the Elected Member for Newlands as the Honourable Premier of the Cayman Islands.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Is there a seconder for this nomination?

**Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan, Elected Member for George Town Central:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I move to second this motion.

**The Speaker:** The Elected Member for George Town Central. Nomination seconded.

Are nominations closed at this point?

*[Pause]*

**Mr. Johany S. Ebanks:** I beg to close the nominations at this point.

**The Speaker:** The question is that, nominations—

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Out of an abundance of caution let's take a second for that closure of nomination.

**Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan:** Mr. Speaker, I move the Motion to second the second motion.

**The Speaker:** The Motion has been moved for the closure of nominations, there being—

I think that was a moot point but the question should be, whether the Honourable Member from Newlands accepts the nomination?

**Mr. G. Wayne Panton, Elected Member for Newlands:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that I accept the nomination.

*[Applause and desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** The nomination is accepted, nominations are even closed.

There is nothing else to say, but that the Member for Newlands is now our Premier.

*[Applause and desk thumping]*

## MOTION TO INVITE HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR TO PRESENT INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENTS

**The Speaker:** I will invite the Honourable Deputy Governor to move the Motion.

**Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Deputy Governor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move a motion to invite His Excellency the Governor to present the instruments of appointment to the Honourable Premier and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**The Speaker:** All in favour?

The Motion is to invite His Excellency the Governor, Martyn Roper, OBE, to present the instruments of appointment to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

All those in favour, please say Aye; those against, No.

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

**Agreed: Governor invited to present the Instruments of Appointments.**

**The Speaker:** Of course, the Motion has been passed.

Please rise to wait on the Governor.

**The Serjeant-at-Arms:** His Excellency, the Governor.

**INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENT  
TO THE PREMIER AND  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

*[Administered by His Excellency the Governor,  
Mr. Martyn Roper, OBE, through the  
signing of the relevant documents]*

**His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Martyn K. Roper:**  
I now invite the Honourable Premier to come and receive this historic appointment.

**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Thank you very much; I appreciate it.

*[Applause]*

**His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Martyn K. Roper:**  
I now invite the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Roy McTaggart, to come and collect the Instrument of Appointment.

*[Applause]*

*[Governor departs]*

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

We will take a suspension at this time for the swearing-in ceremony which his Excellency the Governor will conduct. We will administer the Oath of Allegiance and Oath for Due Execution of Office to the Ministers and Members of Cabinet outside the precincts of

the Parliament. We invite you to witness this historic occasion.

The House is now suspended.

**Proceedings suspended at 5:24 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 7:30 pm**

**The Speaker:** Please be seated; proceedings are resumed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10:00am, the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2021.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this honourable Parliament stand adjourned until Friday, 10:00am. All those in favour, please say Aye; those against, No.

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

This honourable Parliament now stands adjourned until 10:00am, Friday morning.

**At 7:30pm the House stood adjourned until Friday, 23 April, 2021.**

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**INAUGURAL SPEECH**  
**by**  
**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton**

**Wednesday**  
**21 April 2021**

*The Premier's inaugural speech was given on the steps of the House of Parliament after the Swearing-in of Members of Cabinet*

## THE PREMIER'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

[21 April, 2021]

**The Premier, Hon. Gurney Wayne Panton:** Protocol having been established, let me say good afternoon—probably nearly evening—to all of you. It is a wonderful afternoon to be here with you.

As I accept this awesome privilege of addressing you, the beautiful people of our Beloved Isle Cayman, as your new Premier, I can honestly say to you that your love, encouragement, words of support and unwavering belief have both humbled and inspired me through what has been one of the longest weeks in my life.

I wish to offer, firstly, sincere congratulations to all of the 18 Members of Parliament; each of us represents the will, aspirations, hopes and dreams of our respective constituencies and the people thereof and as you have taken your solemn oaths and affirmations, let us pledge, to never take our people for granted.

The Caymanian people have spoken loudly and clearly; we are charged with being their voice, their advocates and their representatives. I think of the words of former US President Franklyn D. Roosevelt who once remarked, “Let us never forget that Government is ourselves, and not an alien power over us; the ultimate rulers of our democracy are not our Presidents and Senators, and Congressmen, but the voters of this country.”

I also want to thank God for the many blessings that he has bestowed upon the Cayman Islands. I want each of you to know that it is my honour and privilege to serve you as the Premier of our country, the Cayman Islands. It is also my honour and privilege to lead this Government, which will represent all of the people of the Cayman Islands. Similarly, it is my honour and privilege to specifically represent the wonderful people of my home constituency of Newlands. Thank you—for your trust and confidence.

I must also recognise my family today. My wife Jane, my son Cody, foster child Isaias and my mother, Cecile; my brothers and their families; and at this point I would also to recognise and thank another family member who, although not a blood relative, is family nonetheless—Leonora Smichael, otherwise known to us as Ms. Rose. You see, ladies and gentlemen, she is the CEO of the household; she is a Head zookeeper with five dogs, one cat, one parrot and an assortment of goodies to be responsible for. I say to all of them and all of you, that I will never be able to pay them back for those long, sleepless nights, or to thank them for being there in the front row of my meetings.

I also want to thank the families of all those who were elected, for sharing your loved ones with us. Their time away from you, while serving their country, can never be replaced and the country owes you a debt that can never be repaid.

I want to thank the Governor, his senior management team and the entire civil service for their service to our Islands. I want to thank the staff at the Parliament and the Protocol office for organising this event today, and doing such a wonderful job.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must also recognise that we are still experiencing the miracle of life without masks—a gift that few around the world can comprehend. This is no doubt a precious gift, so we should forever be thankful to our former Premier, the Hon. Alden McLaughlin, for his steadfast leadership during this period of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the contributions he and his administration over the past two terms have made to our country; but most of all, I want to thank you, the Caymanian people for giving all of us a life of purpose and service.

It is the Caymanian people why we are gathered here today to witness the peaceful transfer of administration as required by our Constitution. This represents the collective will of the Caymanian people and everyone who that was sworn in today has the constitutional and moral responsibility to ensure that the will of the Caymanian people is reflected and respected in our policies and priorities over the next four years.

This event could not have been possible without you, the people, coming out by the thousands to exercise your democratic franchise and for that, all of us who contested the general election are very thankful for your participation. And despite the events of the past week, where there was certainty and uncertainty, this is how democracy works and more importantly, it is how democracy was designed to work. The modern democracy celebrated around the world today bore fruit from the American Revolution; it recognised that as a people, we will always have differences, disagreements, discord and dissent but it also recognises that we should have debate, discussions and dialogue to arrive at consensus. This event today represents that consensus.

The campaigning is over. It is time for us to work together to build consensus, build our community and build our country. The story of our country, and our people, was never about doing what was easy, but about doing what is right. It was about our abilities to overcome these challenges that made us who we are. And because of these challenges we are better people, better citizens and a better community. It was this better community that created our rich culture and our rich heritage. It is this better community that allows us to be neighbourly, friendly, and tolerant of others.

It was this better community that created the economy we have today, that makes the Cayman Islands one of the best places to live and work on this planet—an economy that we must strive to support and



continue to grow, in order to better serve our communities and country. In short, ladies and gentlemen—Community creates Country. The story of our country and our people is one that says we are too rich to be poor, too talented to be denied opportunities, too blessed to have the daily stresses we do and too proud to be disheartened without pursuing solutions.

As a rather sobering testament of our changing times here in the Cayman Islands, it is believed that this may be the first time in the history of our Parliament that there is no sitting Member within these Chambers who has ever served as a seafarer. There is no doubt in my mind that our parliamentary predecessors, who served at sea in that great Caymanian tradition, developed a unique perspective on Cayman's place in this world. I therefore wish to pay tribute to their invaluable contributions to our society.

So today, this moment, this time, belongs to all of us who believe their government should be, can be and must be People-driven, Accountable, Competent and Transparent (PACT). I wish to thank every one of you for your unending support and belief in the PACT Government. The initial uncertainty following the election a week ago, rather than being a paralysis, empowered democratic voices to be expressed in many forms and showed the community spirit that creates country.

As noted earlier though, the campaign and the uncertainty of government is over and the songs, memes, posts, photos, dances and rants that filled up our social media space during the campaign and shortly thereafter, must now cease.

We must always ensure, ladies and gentlemen, that our behaviour reflects dignity and respect even for those we may disagree with and this, this ladies and gentlemen, contributes positively to our national discourse. Fifty people stood in this election, and only 19 could be successful. The independent candidates won the larger share of the vote; but most importantly than the larger share of the votes is the knowledge that despite our policy differences, we are united in our desire to make a positive difference to the communities we serve. Public service is still a noble cause, and I pay tribute to those who have served, those who are currently serving and those who yet to serve.

Over the past several months many of the independent candidates have been discussing our vision for a better socially, and economically fairer, Cayman. There are matters that can be addressed while protecting and promoting a strong and more diverse economy. We are not the only country dealing with socially corrosive issues like income inequality and wealth disparity, but we must work to find-together-the solutions for these problems, as that is the way to build stronger communities and a stronger country.

As independently minded as we all are, we share a common purpose: to uplift and better the lives of every Caymanian and those who call the Cayman Islands home. We chose to focus on the 95 per cent

that we have in common, not the 5 percent in respect of which we differ. We chose to focus on what united us, as opposed to what divided us and the results are in today.

We have a Government that is led by independents. A Government that reflects the political will and wishes of our people; a Government that shows that despite the fact that we come from diverse backgrounds, like every Caymanian today and those that came before, we have the capacity to set aside our differences and work together to create a political community that will create a better Cayman and a better country.

I repeat, therefore, that it is my honour to be elected as Premier and to take us forward on with this new leadership, a leadership that will protect our greatest asset: you, our citizens; a leadership that will be kinder, yet unafraid to constructively address any vested interests that may be holding back our country. A leadership that will be creatively responsive to your daily concerns of rising inequality, stress on our quality of life, environmental concerns and rising cost of living.

A leadership, ladies and gentlemen, that will confront failure, liberate your aspirations and fight for opportunity for all; a leadership that will uphold our Constitution and promote the social and religious values that guide our islands; a leadership that will operate in the framework of good governance. A leadership that will collectively carve a path forward and work alongside the people to find employment and ensure affordable access to needed services.

This is our PACT to you, the people of the Cayman Islands, but as citizens, you too have responsibilities. We are only as strong as the weakest among us and our shared humanity must be the glue that continues to bind us together. (Clucking sound) Citizen chickens!

Over 180 nationalities, ladies and gentlemen, call the Cayman Islands home-and quite a few chickens.

*[Laughter]*

**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** The uniqueness that this brings to our Island is largely responsible for our success, and we should not give a platform to division by focusing on skin colour, accent or whether we are Caymanian by birth, or by choice. We are one Cayman, ladies and gentlemen, and must continue to build on that foundation going forward.

The actions of many pioneering men and women have taken our Islands from ones that time forgot to the one that many want to share in its success story; but as with all foundations, we must not forget who built them and I would like to therefore congratulate the record number of five women who were elected to Parliament in this elections cycle.

*[Applause]*

**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** I am proud that we have four strong and capable females pledging to work with PACT and know that the compassion that they will bring, will serve as a blue-print of improving the working and daily lives of women, especially mothers. We know, ladies and gentlemen, that mothers are our first teachers, and as government, our job is to ensure that from cradle to grave we instil and provide that necessary pathway for life-long learning. Education remains the only route out of poverty and the cure for the many injustices committed in the name of ignorance.

Like many other nations, we too must confront our own ignorance on many issues. Our stance on the environment and limited regard for living more sustainably must be adjusted. Our need to over-consume, and our dependency on imported products must be reviewed. Our carbon footprint is too high. Our need is to quicken the pace towards clean, renewable energy, which is essential, as is our need to ensure that climate change resiliency measures are considered and implemented in everything we do. This, ladies and gentlemen, is an existential threat to our way of life. The loss of irreplaceable mangroves or the extinction of our marine life is a price too high to pay.

Each generation owes the next generation owes the next generation a moral duty to be good stewards of, and minimise as far as possible, any harm to this planet we all share. As a famous poem goes:

**We build on foundations we did not lay,  
We warm ourselves by fires we did not light.  
We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant.  
We drink from wells we did not dig.  
We profit from persons we did not know.  
We are ever bound in community.  
May it always be so; this is as it should be.  
Together we are more than any one person  
could be.**

**Together we can build across the generations.  
Together we can renew our hope and faith in the  
life that is yet to unfold.**

**Together we can heed the call to a ministry  
of care and justice.**

**We are ever bound in community—  
may it always be so.**

May it also be so, that we remember the fragility of our mental and physical health, which was sorely tested during COVID.

The fact that we are one of the few countries that has not had to go back into any form of lockdown speaks to our resilience, discipline and patience as a people but when our borders reopen, they will only be reopened when they are safe to do so. We cannot revert to the stress of worrying about being one medical or emergency from destitution or poverty—access to good health care, ladies and gentlemen, is a human right and cannot be just for the privileged few.

Likewise, restoring our faith in the democratic process must also be a priority. There must be openness in the way Government business is done—that is the hallmark of good governance. You must not only be part of the process, but also know the actions being taken on your behalf or in your name. Proverbs 22:1 remind us that,

**“A good name is to be chosen  
rather than great riches;  
loving favour rather than silver and gold.”**

I can confidently say that every single member of the PACT Government will always choose to have your support and respect. I would like to say, ladies and gentlemen, that our best days are still ahead—our best life is still ahead.

Speaking of life, ladies and gentlemen, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge a hugely significant day in the life of one of our virtually iconic and wonderful, Caymanian women: Ms. Ethel Ebanks of West Bay, who is celebrating her 103rd birthday today, so Happy Birthday again, Ms. Ethel. Of course it is also especially poignant that she shares her birthday with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. She likes to tell you that often, too, so I hope that I can get to see Ms. Ethel soon, and offer those birthday greetings in person.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, and you will be relieved to hear me say “in closing”, since it is (laughter) nearly dark, let me say that the Government that I am privileged and humbled to lead, is committed to serving you—the people—through strengthening our community one person at a time if necessary, because we recognise that community creates country and it will be our honour and privilege to represent all of the people and always put your interests first for love of you and love of country; so good evening, again; may God bless you all and may God continue to bless our beloved Cayman Islands.

*[Applause]*

*Ends*