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Veteran Judicial Officer Retires

The symbols of the court are bewigged judges and lawyers on the forefront of justice. However, behind the scenes are employees such as Ms Ermyn Berry who have dedicated lives to supporting the smooth operations of the machinery of justice. Ms Berry, a quiet, unassuming civil servant, made her exit at the end of October after 40 years' service, amid accolades and enthusiastic reviews that were clearly deeply felt throughout the Judicial Administration at last week's farewell function.

"All of us are ... aware of what a dedicated, warm and lovely person Ms Ermyn is," said Chief Justice Anthony Smellie at the surprise farewell ceremony last Thursday (29 October), attended by Acting Governor Franz Manderson, judges and magistrates, administrators at all levels, and her colleagues from all across the Court Administration. "Speaking for myself, I have always been impressed by her kind and graceful disposition and will truly miss working with her here at the Courts," he said.

Not entirely out of sight of sectors of the public -- lawyers, relevant areas of the Civil Service, and persons directly engaged in their own pursuit of justice -- Ms Berry, retiring from her role as Administrative Secretary, has now registered her final appeal, recorded her last indictment, and concluded bundling of appeals' case files.

Deputy Clerk of Court, Ms. Cecile Collins (herself a long-serving member of the Judicial Administration team), said: "It's been great working with Ms. Berry. Having her on my team made a difference and I am truly appreciative for all she has done," adding: "Thank you, Ms. Ermyn, for being such a dedicated and valuable employee. I will truly miss your fleeting steps as you moved about the office, never delaying to deal with a task."

Her career in public service began some 40 years back, on 1 August 1975, with the Registrar of Companies, then located within the Courts' administration. She was later seconded to the Currency Board, and in 1988 she was promoted to Executive Officer and transferred back to the Courts where she remained. In 1997, her title was changed to Administrative Secretary, a post in which she has served ever since.

As a mark of the regard in which she was held, throughout her career she was called upon on many occasions to assist in other government departments, such as Agriculture, Finance, and Treasury. She also worked at the Credit Union in the evenings after work at the Courts.

Now some 40 years later, 27 at the Courts, she departs with many well earned accolades. Led by the Acting Governor and the Chief Justice at her farewell function, tributes poured in from across the Court Administration, both personally and in a video presentation.

In keeping with her commitment and dedication to her duties, attested to in tribute after tribute, Ms Ermyn had over the years diligently grasped opportunities for in-house training to ensure that her skills grew with the bustling court world. For her, that gravitation to training was already part of her ethos, having joined the government service equipped with a diploma in secretarial sciences from the International College of the Cayman Islands. Like many others, she had also taken advantage of the then-available offerings, including Sylvia Gill training and other opportunities such as the Dale Carnegie course in strengthening people skills.

In her usual reluctance to be in the limelight or to reflect on her accomplishments and career, Ms Berry says simply: "My time in government has been overall good; it was not without its difficult times, but I am thankful for the jobs that I had," adding; "I got along well with everyone."

Now she is looking forward to enjoying friends and family, especially taking care of her octogenarian mother Glennis Berry, and enjoying her granddaughter Kyannah. High on her retirement goals also is greater involvement with her church, the Bodden Town United Church. She is especially looking forward to some gardening.

And then, who knows? After gaining such a wealth of experience, there is even more to give, and, as usual, she will be open to opportunities.

Once she gets her garden thriving to her satisfaction and has caught up with her grandmotherly duties, one could not be surprised if some pressing need for a sterling employee comes knocking on her door.

As the Chief Justice said at her retirement function, "Throughout her career, Ms Ermyn has been regarded as a very dependable, efficient and well-respected employee....I wish for you, Ms Ermyn, a very long and happy retirement."

Photos below:



#71: Chief Justice Anthony Smellie leads the applause in recognition of inspiring service by retiring Court Officer Ermyn Berry.



#82: Retiring Court Officer Ermyn Berry is flanked by Chief Justice Anthony Smellie, who is presenting a gift, and Court Administrator Kevin McCormac.

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