

PRESS RELEASE



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Caribbean Law Libraries Association Conference Opens in Grand Cayman: Taking Regional Legal Resources to “the Next Level”

The Caribbean Law Libraries Association (CARALL) conference opening in Grand Cayman this morning (Monday, 8 July), with its theme “Taking Caribbean Law Libraries to the next level,” a goal that suggested, said Cayman’s Chief Justice Anthony Smellie, utilising technology to integrate and make accessible legal resources across geographic boundaries.

Attending the 28th annual conference, hosted by the Cayman Islands Law School, are Caribbean legal librarians from all sectors of regional courts, attorneys general chambers, and law schools.

Speaking to the delegates gathered in Grand Court 1 for the formal opening ceremony Monday, Keynote speaker Attorney General Samuel Bulgin said: “You alone have the ability to bridge the vital information gap that can make the difference between winning and losing, scoring good marks or failing to make the grade in the lives of law professionals and law students alike.”

The Attorney General said that the law librarian’s role continued to be vital despite the growth of the Internet: “You are the guardians, the custodians of the repositories and of the knowledge base established from the time of English law....” The Attorney General added that it was a “proud moment that the [law] school should be hosting [this] conference.”

The Attorney General’s address was followed by remarks by Chief Justice Anthony Smellie. The Chief Justice said that since its inauguration 29 years ago, CARALL had “developed into a regional body that enjoys the respect and support of the legal profession across the Caribbean.” He said that members of

the association have served some of the preeminent regional law institutions whose “graduates and practitioners have come to take their place in positions of leadership in all spheres of life in the countries that they serve.”

The Chief Justice added that implicit in the conference’s theme “From Place to Platform: Taking Caribbean Law Libraries to the Next level,” was the “idea of the use of technology to make our libraries accessible across geographical boundaries.” It was only through the use of technology that “library resources [can be] integrated, maintained, and made accessible across the seas that separate our island states.”

Presiding over the opening ceremony was Mr. Thomas Borkowski, Chairperson and President of CARALL. Speaking to a key goal of the conference, Mr. Borkowski said: “We, as information professionals, must seriously reflect on the implications raised by the information-orientated processes in our libraries,” adding: “The Internet and communication technologies have fundamentally changed the economics of knowledge.”

In spite of these dramatic changes, Mr. Borkowski said, the role of the librarian remained the same, though the challenge was to determine how best to apply new technologies: “We hope this conference will go some way to aid you in identifying those tools, to give you ideas to take away with you or reinforce an idea you may have had, and to show you that you are not alone in facing some of these challenges.”

Participating in the opening ceremony also were Mr. Brett Basdeo, Treasurer of the Cayman Bar Association; and Mr. Kevin McCormac, Court Administrator, Cayman Islands.

Speakers paid tribute to Mrs. Beverley Speirs, librarian for the Courts, who was the on-the-scene organiser of the conference on behalf of the association.

See photographs below

Law librarians join Cayman Islands legal and judicial officials following the opening ceremony: from left -- CARALL Keynote speaker Attorney General Samuel Bulgin; Lynette Isacc, CARALL Vice-President (serving with the Attorney General's Chambers in Trinidad and Tobago); Janette Bailey-Powell, Secretary (Supreme Court of Jamaica); Chief Justice Anthony Smellie; Janice Jhinkoo, Treasurer (Industrial Court, Trinidad and Tobago); Beverley Speirs (Cayman Islands Grand Court); Thomas Borkowski, CARALL President; and Kevin McCormac, Court Administrator, Cayman Islands.



Chief Justice Anthony Smellie addresses the CARALL conference during the opening ceremony.



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