



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST MEETING OF THE 2026-2027 SESSION

First Sitting

STATE OPENING AND THRONE SPEECH

Friday
19 June, 2026
(Pages 1-33)

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Financial Services & Commerce
Hon. Gary B. Ruddy, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of Tourism & Trade Development
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, JP, MP	Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, MP	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister of Social Development & Innovation and Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage
Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, JP, MP	Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs
Hon. Michael S. Myles, MP	Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, CBE, Cert. Hon., JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon. Reshma Sharma, KC	<i>Acting Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West
Ms. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Savannah
Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, JP, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town Central
Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for George Town West
Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Red Bay
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town East

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac East
Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, KC, JP	<i>Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
STATE OPENING AND THRONE SPEECH
FIRST MEETING OF THE 2026 - 2027 SESSION
FRIDAY
19 JUNE, 2026
1:57 PM
First Sitting

[Hon. D. Ezzard Miller, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: I now invite Pastor Ormond Williams to offer prayer.

PRAYERS

Pastor Ormond A. Williams: Let us all pray.

Eternal God and Father, we thank you that you continue to call men and women into your service to be your hands and feet in a broken world, to love with your heart, to show mercy, to love justice and to walk humbly with you.

We thank you God for this Parliament, here to discharge your work amongst your people, and we pray Almighty God that you will pour out your spirit upon all those who serve. We pray God that they will look to you the author and finisher of their faith, that they will find in you, wisdom and discernment, knowledge and understanding. We pray God that you will remove from their minds any sense of false pride, but that they may seek after the things that will bring you honour and glory.

We come today, oh God, recognising that you are holy. We have fallen short of your expectations and if we want the healing of the land, if we want progress and prosperity, if we want to see your favour, we understand that you're calling us, first, to humble ourselves and pray; and so today, we pray for your forgiveness, we pray for your cleansing, we pray God that your will, and your will only, be done.

We declare Almighty God that this ground that we stand on is a holy place because your presence is here; and so, God, may everything that is said, everything that is done, bring you honour and glory, and will seek to advance your kingdom here in these Cayman Islands. Now, oh God, for this Session of the Parliament we pray that you will pour out your spirit as you have promised in the last days, that we will understand your call in our lives and that we'll go about your business to serve your people.

Bless this Parliament, every Member, and every person who serves in this House. Bless the families that they represent. Bless these Cayman Islands, oh God, and may we serve you and you alone as the Lord and King of all creation. We commit this time into your hands as we commit ourselves and we pray that your will, and your will only, be done.

We ask these things in Jesus' precious name. We all say, Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

**PROCLAMATION SUMMONING THE
FIRST MEETING OF THE 2026-2027
SESSION OF PARLIAMENT**

The Clerk: PROCLAMATION NO. 3 OF 2026 BY HER EXCELLENCY JANE OWEN, 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, Jane Owen, Governor of the Cayman Islands, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by section 83(1) of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands HEREBY PROCLAIM that a session of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall be held at the House of Parliament, George Town, Grand Cayman and begin at 2 p.m. on the 19th day of June, 2026. The session shall continue to be held at such places, on such dates and times 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 20TH DAY OF MAY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-SIX IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: All Members, please stand.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: I, Reshma Sharma, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, His Heirs and Successors, according to law. So help me God.

OATH FOR DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: I, Reshma Sharma, do swear that I will well and truly serve His Majesty King Charles III, His Heirs and Successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands in the Office of Ex-Officio Member of the Parliament. So help me God.

The Speaker: Ms. Reshma Sharma, Acting Honourable Attorney General, having been duly sworn, I now invite you to take your seat next to the Deputy Governor.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

MOTION FOR THE SUSPENSION OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services & Commerce, Elected Member for West Bay South: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: I move that this honourable House do suspend to invite Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen, to deliver the Throne Speech to the Parliament.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House do suspend to invite Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen to deliver the Throne Speech to the Parliament.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.
The Parliament is suspended.

Agreed: The House is now suspended to invite Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen, to deliver the Throne Speech.

Proceedings suspended at 2:04pm

[Long pause]

ARRIVAL OF HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: I now invite Her Excellency the Governor Jane Owen to deliver the Throne Speech.

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Premier, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Chief Justice and all the honourable Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great privilege to stand before you once again to open this Session of Parliament. We come together one year on from the First Meeting of Parliament since the election and the formation of the NCFC Government. I congratulate the Honourable Premier and all members of the National Coalition For Caymanians on completing this milestone. In this address, I will take the opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved, and to look ahead to the Government's plans for the coming year.

First, I want to acknowledge the important role this Chamber plays in ensuring scrutiny and discussion of the policies put forward by the Government, and the role played by you, Mr. Speaker, in managing the business agenda of Parliament and ensuring that fulsome democratic debate is flourishing here in Cayman. I also want to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and to recognise the contributions of all Members of the Opposition, who work assiduously to understand the business of the day and often provide a lively commentary. In all this, it is clear that our parliamentarians all share one united aim, which is to improve the lives of Caymanians and ensure that these Islands continue to flourish to the benefit of all who are fortunate enough to live and work here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the work you have devoted to the Standing Orders of this Parliament which have contributed greatly to its smooth running and efficient operation. I note the ongoing work to adopt a Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians, which remains a gap in our governance structures. I hope this House will be able to reach agreement on the Code and that it can be published within this Parliament.

Now, let me move on to share some observations on the Government's Strategic Priorities as set out in the Strategic Policy Statement (SPS) with the accompanying budget provisions:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that Cayman's economic position remains strong. Moody's has reaffirmed Cayman's credit rating at Aa3, placing us in the distinguished company of the UK, France and Hong Kong - a signal of confidence we should not take for granted. It is the product of years of careful stewardship, and this Government's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of financial prudence is essential to maintaining it.

As the world faces the challenges of new technologies and AI, I am pleased that the Government also aims to greatly increase innovation and digitisation, including across our public services, enabling better sharing of information and a more seamless customer

experience. I know that this aim is shared by the Deputy Governor and indeed the Deputy Governor designate, who will be leading the implementation of several new programmes. The introduction of the My eID programme is one example of this transformation, and I hope and expect that all Members of this House have their new ID cards in their pockets.

The financial and professional services industry remains the cornerstone of Cayman's economy (and government revenues). It cements our international reputation, and we continue to benefit from the Honourable Premier's leadership of this important dossier. All the numbers point to growth as Cayman expands into new markets, and deepens its activity in areas such as reinsurance and family offices. The confidence that drives this growth is hard-won and it must be carefully maintained. I therefore applaud the Government's continued vigilance in meeting and indeed exceeding global regulatory standards as the country prepares for the forthcoming evaluation by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2027.

Cayman's cross-government partnership approach to both policy and enforcement has been recognised by international bodies, and I welcome the commitment from the Honourable Premier to continue to evolve Cayman's regulation in areas such as sanctions compliance, anti-money laundering and virtual assets. Our "legitimate interest access" regime which enables approved enquirers to receive data on beneficial ownership, has improved transparency, and I am pleased that Cayman is in discussion with the United Kingdom about more streamlined access to the register for law enforcement.

Under the leadership of the Honourable Deputy Premier, Gary Rutty, our tourism sector has seen record growth, with visitor arrivals in the first quarter of 2026 reaching the highest quarterly total in our Island's history. New airline routes and increased capacity continue to bolster this success. As we continue to benefit from economic growth across the board, we acknowledge the contributions made not only by the financial and professional services industry, but equally by private sector leaders in hospitality, development, healthcare and entrepreneurship as our economy continues to diversify.

Turning to immigration and workforce development: the Government's landmark Caymanian Protection Act represents a significant step in promoting opportunities for all Caymanians and managing the pace of population growth. In tandem, the National Workforce Plan, developed in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, will create more efficient processes and checks in our work permit system, aligning immigration policy with the needs of the economy, as we all benefit from living in a country where there are vastly more jobs than people. The Honourable Minister, Michael Myles has taken the right path in this complex area — consulting widely as legislation is formulated, and I know this will continue to be his approach.

The Government has also recognised the importance of education and skills development in ensuring that all our young people finishing school, vocational training or university have a clear path to employment. I am delighted to see the Civil Service playing its part by welcoming this year a record number of over 200 summer interns to our ranks. The Honourable Minister, Rolston Anglin has also focused on improving access to early years education through the Early Childhood Assistance Programme — giving our youngest citizens a boost at the start of their school years. This is an investment that will pay dividends for the next generation.

As we gather here today, Mr. Speaker, we are all too aware of the pressures that weigh upon our residents in terms of cost of living, housing and traffic. The Government has recognised the need for short- and longer-term solutions to these challenges.

The introduction of Cayman's first housing policy is an important commitment led by the Honourable Minister, Jay Ebanks to addressing one of the most pressing concerns facing families on our Islands, making home-ownership more accessible and helping us make our existing housing stock more sustainable and therefore cheaper to run, and in better repair. The Government's infrastructure plans focus also, quite rightly, on improving the transport network and easing congestion so that all our population can get to work and school more easily. Evolving plans for public transport solutions will be a game changer in this area.

In addition, the Government and I have all heard loud and clear the public outcry against negligent driving and are considering ways to improve enforcement of our rules against driving under the influence of drugs or drink, distraction by a mobile device and excessive speeding. I believe we are united in our determination to make all our roads safer.

I could not address this honourable House without speaking to the matter of health and wellbeing. Under the leadership of the Honourable Minister, Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, the Government is expanding mental health services for young people. I urge the Minister to continue her "whole-of-society" approach to mental health, which includes developing the Poinciana Rehabilitation Centre into the world-class residential facility our community deserves. Meanwhile, the Government continues its focus on further streamlining and improving primary and tertiary healthcare and ensuring that insurance options are sufficient to cover the needs of all our residents.

Sport is a key component of health and wellbeing, and Cayman's prowess in many disciplines continues to impress and to propel our reputation for excellence internationally. I'm sure you all join me in congratulating our many outstanding sportsmen and women, and look forward to Cayman's participation in the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow next month. For my part, I did the Flowers' Sea Swim in 55 minutes last week — not the fastest, but I was proud to

support the Swim Free programme which aims to make our children safer, while promoting the important relationship Cayman has enjoyed with the sea for centuries.

Mr. Speaker, Cayman's natural environment is one of our greatest assets and one of our most important responsibilities. The designation of six new areas for environmental protection, the advancement of an anti-litter law and the single-use plastics ban are welcome steps. I am also glad that the Government has announced its plan to maintain Little Cayman's airport at its current site and to carry out the upgrades which will be necessary to meet international safety standards. Cayman's bid to have Little Cayman's marine protected areas designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site continues to have the strong support of His Majesty King Charles, who remains keenly interested in all our conservation efforts.

As we contemplate the Government's agenda, I also wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the partnership that we enjoy between the Executive and the private sector and our many charities. I have the privilege of being patron of several organisations, and I know that the money they raise and the work that they do has real impact, for example in cancer support, Meals on Wheels, protection of vulnerable people in our society, education, inclusion and support for animals and the environment. I know that this Government is committed to developing these partnerships further so that we can all benefit from the large pool of expertise and commitment that the whole Cayman community represents.

Mr. Speaker, as we contemplate with confidence the growth and development across our Islands, it is wise to consider the crucial role played by our uniformed services in ensuring that residents, businesses and visitors enjoy a very high level of safety, with relatively low levels of serious crime compared to many places in our region and indeed the world as a whole. It is easy to take this for granted, but it is only made possible through the leadership of Police Commissioner Kurt Walton, in partnership with many others, including Coastguard Commandant Robert Scotland, Customs & Border Control (CBC) Director Bruce Smith, Prison Director Daniel Greaves and Fire Chief Randy Rankin.

I note that the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS) detection rate for violent crimes stands at over 50 per cent — this is the kind of ratio that most jurisdictions aspire to, or should I say, dream of. Most strikingly, over the past 18 months, 28 dangerous offenders were all convicted and sentenced to a combined total of 400 years in prison — a clear demonstration of our mantra that violent crime will not be tolerated in Cayman.

I know that all honourable Members of this House will join me in paying tribute to all of our uniformed and emergency services who serve every day, often putting themselves at risk to keep us all safe. In

the same vein, and as we gather together at the beginning of hurricane season, Cayman continues to prepare and plan for handling crises — whether natural or man-made. We applaud the efforts of all the staff and volunteers at Hazard Management Cayman Islands, the Cayman Islands Regiment and our "Gold, Silver and Bronze" leaders who manage our strategic and tactical response.

We know we also face some pressures in the security arena, including the volume of cases moving through the courts, overcrowding in our Northward Prison, and the potential inflow of migrants from neighbouring countries including Cuba. The Government, and the Honourable Minister, Nickolas DaCosta in particular, are making steady progress in mitigating all of these risks.

Another area where the Government has recognised the need to make progress is Safeguarding of our children and vulnerable adults. The Honourable Minister, Isaac Rankine and his team have established a working group to revise legislation to better protect our communities, including from online harms. I hope we will also have a Children's Commissioner in place before the end of 2026.

As we look ahead to the parliamentary agenda and the Government's policy choices over the coming year, we can also be confident that good governance and the rule of law will continue to guide our decision-making. I am grateful for the work of the independent bodies that oversee public life in Cayman — the Attorney General and his Chambers, the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Director of Public Prosecutions and, of course, our Judiciary under Chief Justice Margaret Ramsay-Hale.

We also benefit from the quiet but significant work of our independent Commissions, which all play a role not only in ensuring compliance with, for example, international human rights law, but which also reach out to explain and educate our students and the wider community in, for example, how the Constitution works. The Commission on Standards in Public Life and the Anti-Corruption Commission will be launching a campaign next month to remind us all how we can best satisfy the high standards of transparency and accountability which have won Cayman respect and confidence on the international stage.

As we mark over a year since the last election, I would also note the Honourable Premier's stated intent to reform our elections law, including as it pertains to campaign financing rules — an issue raised by both the international and the domestic observer missions following last year's election. A new Electoral Boundary Commission will be announced shortly with the aim of reporting in the spring of 2027, providing enough time for this House to review our constituency borders in good time for the next election.

None of the work of government would be possible without the dedication of our civil servants, who are responsible for implementing the decisions made

by the Government and by this Parliament. They are often unseen, but we all benefit from their policy skills, customer service and project management. Today, I want to mark a moment of particular significance: the forthcoming retirement of the Deputy Governor and Head of the Civil Service, and my friend, the Honourable Franz Manderson.

[Desk thumping]

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: Our Deputy Governor has led the Civil Service with distinction, professionalism and integrity; his commitment to making lives better for the Caymanian people has defined his long and remarkable career. On behalf of all who have had the privilege of working alongside him, I know the whole House will join me in extending our congratulations and respect, sir.

[Desk thumping]

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: I am equally delighted to extend my congratulations to Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon, who will become our new Deputy Governor on the 8th July!

[Desk thumping]

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: I have every confidence that she will lead the Civil Service with the same excellence and dedication that has characterised her whole career, and I look forward to working with her in the months ahead.

As I draw to a close, I invite you all to reflect on Cayman's position in the world and our relationship with the United Kingdom. This year we witnessed increased fragmentation of the global order, and a significant deterioration in the international security and governance architecture. The Cayman Islands will need to quickly pivot to shield ourselves as best as possible from these impacts. I am pleased that the Government has had the support of this House in taking swift interventions to insulate our residents from the shock of fluctuations in fuel prices due to global geo-political events, which is a major driver of the cost of living locally.

The United Kingdom continues to guarantee Cayman's external security, offering the benefits of Britain's strong relationship with the United States, and the UK's global reach at the United Nations (UN) including as a permanent member of the Security Council.

I was delighted to see the UK's Blue Belt environmental programme expanded in Cayman this year, providing finance for a research expedition into some of our deepest waters, which unearthed one or two hitherto unseen creatures from those depths. The UK will continue to support Cayman as we approach sea border negotiations with our neighbours, and as we continue to battle against the flow of drugs and weapons in our region.

Over the past year we have welcomed visits by our Minister for the Overseas Territories, Stephen Doughty; The All-Party Parliamentary Group made up of representatives from the British House of Commons and House of Lords; and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, who attended the Overseas Territories Speakers' Conference last month — very ably organised by you Mr. Speaker and your staff.

On his visit to the United Kingdom last autumn for the Joint Ministerial Council, the Honourable Premier and his delegation engaged with the top levels of the British Government including Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, and a meeting with His Majesty King Charles III at a special small reception at Buckingham Palace, where we were able to admire the splendid room behind the famous balcony at the Palace. These visits — and there are more besides — demonstrate the high level of engagement between our governments, and the respect and commitment that lies behind that.

Tomorrow, I travel to the United Kingdom for our annual meeting of Ambassadors, Governors and High Commissioners around the world — there I always find a high level of appreciation and interest in Cayman, not just as a financial centre but increasingly as a strong Caribbean island whose influence continues to be felt beyond our borders. I believe there is also a recognition that the way in which Cayman manages its relationship with the United Kingdom as an Overseas Territory, through partnership and through respect, is a beacon for others to follow, bringing significant benefits to both sides. On a personal level, I am particularly grateful to all Members of the Government (present and past) for their patience and friendship to me, as we work together.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the honour and privilege of serving as Governor of these extraordinary Islands for three years now, and every time I stand in this honourable House, I am struck by the same sense of pride in what Cayman is and what it aspires to be. The people of these Islands display strong resilience, a generosity of spirit and a determination to build something good for future generations — and that is truly inspiring.

To you Mr. Speaker, and to all the honourable Members of this House, thank you for your service, your dedication and your commitment — it is a privilege to serve alongside you.

God bless this House, and God bless these wonderful Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: All, please stand for the departure of Her Excellency the Governor.

DEPARTURE OF HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Procession departed in the following order:

The Serjeant-at-Arms

The Honourable Speaker

*Her Excellency the Governor
The Governor's Aide-de-Camp
The Chief Justice, Hon. Margaret Ramsay-Hale
Pastor Ormond A. Williams*

Proceedings resumed at 2:44pm

The Speaker: This honourable House is back in session.

Please be seated.

VOTE OF THANKS TO HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: This honourable House does record it's grateful thanks to Her Excellency the Governor for delivering the Throne Speech to this Parliament.

MOTION TO DEFER DEBATE ON THE THRONE SPEECH

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Good afternoon again and thank you Mr. Speaker.

I do rise and beg to move the deferment of the debate on the Throne Speech as follows: BE IT RESOLVED that the Throne Speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen be debated and that debate be deferred until Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026.

The Speaker: The question is that the Throne Speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen be debated and that the debate be deferred until Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The debate on the Throne Speech deferred until Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker: I have apologies from three Members of Parliament: honourable Chris Saunders, Honourable Samuel Bulgin, [and] Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly.

MOTION FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to move two motions.

First, Mr. Speaker, I rise to move to suspend Standing Orders 11 and 14(1) to allow the House to sit on Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026 and commence at 10am, rather than 2pm.

Suspension of Standing Orders 11 and 14(1)

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Orders 11 and 14(1) be suspended to allow the House to meet on Tuesday, 23rd June at 10am.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Orders 11 and 14(1) suspended.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I therefore move that this House do stand adjourned until Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026 at 10am.

The Speaker: The question is that this House do stand adjourned until 10am, Tuesday.

Before I ask for the votes, we heard the Governor announce that the Honourable Deputy Governor, Mr. Franz Manderson is retiring and it is likely that this will be his last sitting of Parliament, so I would like to give the opportunity to all Members to give their accolades to Mr. Manderson. I will start it off and then I'll call on the Premier, followed by the Leader of the Opposition, followed by the Deputy Premier, followed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, followed by the Deputy Speaker of the House and then all Cabinet Ministers and anybody else after that.

TRIBUTES TO HON. FRANZ I. MANDERSON, CBE DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS AND HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor (DG), it is sad in some ways but I am also pleased that you have reached that point of retirement and that you're willing to exercise that option, because my very best friend keeps telling me that retirement is not a bad job if you can get it. Well, you have an opportunity to retire, and I think it is well earned.

You and I, our relationship goes back at least four decades. I mean, I think I saw your mama, Miss Jenny, dragging you around and in many ways she was

my mentor for my short period in the civil service. I really got much closer to you as a young man when you joined as an immigration officer and you teamed up with my cousin Dean Miller to make an enforcement team for immigration. I have listened to some of your stories and I will tell you, if you ever get a chance to engage him in a conversation about those days, it will be confirmed that it was probably the most effective, efficient and adventuresome team we have ever had.

Then, as time went on, I had the privilege to serve for a short period of time as Chairman of the Immigration Board; at the time you were Chief Immigration Officer, and I think we worked well together and made some improvements to the whole process.

Then, when I got re-elected in 2009 and I was elected Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I started to read the files and I was astounded. When I left in 1992, the accounts were basically up to date, but then I found they were some 5 years behind in 2009 when I came in. We had a very controversial and trouble-making Auditor General at the time, but I went to meet him first and during the conversation with him I stopped him after about 10 to 15 minutes into his diatribe and told him I think we needed to start over. He asked why and I said, *because I think you have the impression that I work for you. I want to make it clear that you work for me.*

[Laughter]

The Speaker: To say the least, that relationship didn't start off on a very good note, but the very next person I called was Franz Manderson.

We had a discussion about it and he gave me a commitment that he would join me and make sure that the civil service committed to getting the accounts in order. He went further than giving me that private commitment; he came and sat in a chair right over there in a Public Accounts Hearing and gave that commitment publicly.

With that public commitment and the pressure and the cajoling that he and I managed to put on the financial teams in the various government departments, I think we eventually got them all cleared up; and I enjoyed the pride with which he was beaming when the accounts for 2025 were tabled in March, as is statutorily required. Big accomplishment on your part, DG.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: I have found you in all our interactions to be a man of integrity, honesty and a man to your word. When you gave me a commitment, I never doubted. I didn't need to check back — and those of you who know me, know that I like to check on the check, to check on the check, to make sure the check is being done, right?

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I think Mr. Manderson that it is fair to say that you are leaving the civil service much better than you found it. I know, because you and I have not always agreed on things, and I was probably one of the few politicians who always showed up at the invitation of you and the Governor and your HR staff to talk about changes in the civil servant and improvements in the civil service, et cetera. My argument with you was always, you're not doing enough; but I think it is safe to say that you have moved the civil service a long way.

I admire your commitment to the employing of Caymanians, but more importantly, to the provision of training and educational opportunities for Caymanians and your determination to make sure that every Caymanian joining the civil service saw a career path for lifetime employment. I congratulate you.

I congratulate you on your CBE. I think it is well earned, well deserved.

I'll have some more to say at the reception tonight.

Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, it's kind of hard to imagine that this moment has come. Since the announcement, the DG and I have had plenty of moments where we said, *you know this moment is going to come*; we've had times to potentially say goodbye, [but] *no that's not it, that's not it, we'll save it for later, we'll save it for later*. Then when I saw him here this afternoon, he said, *I'm starting to feel it now, it's kicking in*. It's a proud moment.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, when I woke up this morning, my overall impression could kind of be captured in four clips, like in a YouTube short or an Instagram short. The four clips I think signify the impression he's had on my life, and each one of the clips is a characteristic that I think makes him, in my opinion, the person that he is.

Clip one is when we were in law school together; he was three years ahead of me and I was in year one. In those days—picture this Cayman—the Law School was a quarter of the fourth floor of the Tower Building. There were no electronic searches for legal documents and cases, we used to be on the floor scouring the books, and here would come in this jolly fella with his uniform on and you'd ask him, how are you doing? *Fantastic!*

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Which was disgusting because you were there trying to scramble to find the cases. You know this is hard work; you know he's working full time and you're a student. What that told me was commitment. If he could get up every day at a top-level managerial job in the civil service, go to

school, do his job and still get through, I must be able to do year one. Commitment, sir.

Clip two - the first week that I joined as a civil servant. Leaving with about five to six years post-qualified experience (PQE) from Walkers, coming into the civil service—and at that point my wife outranked me—going down to the cafeteria on week one and I was still not sure in my professional life if this is the right decision. Plenty of people told me that it was nuts. Then there was the Head of the Civil Service in the cafeteria with everybody else in the line and he looked at me and smiled and said, *you know you made the right decision*. He said, *look at the amenities! You get to go to work with your wife, lunch is in-house and everybody is friendly and we are majority Caymanian. What could you want more than that?*

That melted away any doubt that I had that I made the right decision, but what that told me was kindness. He must have somehow sensed—and I think every one of us has had this experience—that there's something not quite right here, I need to say something to this individual to make them feel better. He has a sort of sixth sense radar to zone in and make you feel that little bit better, each day.

Clip three - the London Office. There's a very small percentage of the Caymanian civil service population who's done a tour away; Chief Officer Eric Bush has done it; sitting next to Laura Knight, you did a secondment overseas. You feel distant; because, number one, you're half a day ahead, or depending on where you were, behind, and you don't know if you're really connected to the service still, to the country still.

I knew he had to come up for one of these DG Conferences in London. There was no reason for him to stop at the London Office. That's a busy week for him. He still took time out of his day just to check in and greet every member of staff and sat down in the Office and just said, *André, how you doing?* It's a practice that I watched him do throughout the civil service that he will go to chief officers' offices, he'll go to Heads of Departments' (HODs) offices, he'll go just to check on you and say, how you doing? That's a leader.

Clip four - July last year, I get a message from my PA, the DG wants some time with you. This is routine, so I say, you know, *tell him I'm busy today, maybe on Friday*.

No, he's saying you need to speak now.

Okay, what's this about? My heart's in my throat. I said, *all right, tell him to come now, I got five minutes*. He came in two minutes! It made me think, oh my gosh, what's happened now?

He sat back in his chair and he just said, *look, I think my time has come. I think it's time for me to get out of the way, move aside. I think I've left the civil service better than I found it and it's time for me to move on, but I'm gonna do this in an orderly fashion and it won't be until next year*.

That characteristic, which you could apply in other aspects of his life, is his farsightedness. To be

able to spot what's coming around the corner. To be able to see that his post and his impression are so large that it was going to take a year to do it in orderly fashion. It was going to take time to find a successor. It was going to take time to make sure that successor and everything was in place so that he wouldn't leave the good ship Cayman on a lurch.

That commitment, that leadership, that thoughtfulness and that farsightedness is what I think embodies the person who we call DG. I told him I will struggle to call the next person DG because it just seems to always be Franz. We're going to have to come up with DG Glo, or something—

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: —because he's just always going to be DG.

Closing this, sir, since I'm on about YouTube shorts, I saw one about two years ago and it was from Kobe Bryant. He said that he had been so driven to be the best and he was always getting up every day to smash statistics, smash opponents, but he realised after he retired that that's not what made greatness. What made greatness is the impression that you have on people's lives; how you've made their lives better, that was true greatness and legacy.

I think all of us in the Chamber, all in the gallery, all listening at home, all at Government Administration Building (GAB) and all the surrounding offices and the residents of Cayman, if you even look at the DG's 5K, he's left his legacy because he's made so many of our lives better.

God bless you, sir. Enjoy your retirement. I still saved a few lines for tonight at Grand Old House, but let's give him a rousing knock of the table for an outstanding life of service, DG.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town North: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for this opportunity to congratulate my friend, DG, and to thank him for all that he has done for us. Like yourself and the Premier, I'll have an opportunity tonight at the reception to say a few words on behalf of the Opposition, so today I'd like to make it a little more personal as the others will have an opportunity to speak.

My relationship with the Deputy Governor started long before politics and government. It started playing cricket on Mary Mollie Hydes Road, Slippery Edges, and later on, football. It was in the later days the DG—although he doesn't look it, he's just a couple of years older than I am—came from a class of young men at the time who were exemplary mentors for us younger ones coming up.

The early indications of my friend Franz's leadership was when I had a couple of years with Scholars International. They would have meetings at his uncle, Mr. Jimmy Powell's house, and I could see his humbleness and his leadership. There were several big personalities in those meetings, whether it was talking about upcoming matches, planning our annual five-a-side or the Christmas Day, there'd be many egos; and then there was always Franz who would step in and offer perspective and a level-headed contribution that would get everyone to calm down and come to a resolution.

It was no surprise to me when I got elected and had an opportunity to work with him closer. I found what I absolutely expected — a gentleman with integrity, a gentleman with a heart who cares for his country, and a gentleman who always looks out for his people, whether they're his employees, his members of government, or his people at home.

The only surprise I did get was how well he bakes a pineapple upside down cake.

[Laughter]

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: And lemon pie, yes! I knew about his barbecuing skills, but the baking skills, I was not aware of.

He has done more than just developing a world-class civil service. He has, over his years through the Head of the Civil Service, but also as a West Bayer growing up in West Bay through sports and other organisations, mentored many, many young men that he's probably not even aware of.

We had choices, growing up in West Bay. We had the guys under the trees smoking ganja, and then we had the guys like Franz and those who would let us come out on the football field and play with them and without even knowing it, mentoring us into the gentlemen and young men that we became. I want to give that context to thank him, not only for what he has done in the civil service, not only for the men he has mentored in the civil service, but what you've done your entire life, sir. Thank you.

Also, to say congratulations to you on your career as the Head of the Civil Service, the largest service organisation in the country. I can't imagine. I'm a businessman. I know what happens when somebody's place doesn't get cleaned or when somebody's goods don't get delivered. Your job, your telephone... Everybody's children in schools, your responsibility. Every pothole, your responsibility. Everybody's garbage being picked up every morning, your responsibility. Every building that the government owns to be repaired, your responsibility. Everybody's work permit application—you name it, it's all your responsibility. We all take it for granted until our garbage isn't picked up, until the streets aren't clean or there's a big pothole, until we're

not getting the level of service that you've promised us all and have delivered. From that perspective, I want to also say thank you and I hope that you enjoy a well-deserved retirement.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism & Trade Development, Elected Member for George Town South: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for the opportunity to recognise the stellar career of an exceptional leader who has clearly demonstrated the utmost dedication and service to our beloved Cayman Islands — our Deputy Governor, Mr. Franz Manderson.

I sat last night into early morning putting this speech together. It would take me 44 years to talk about all the good things that you've done, but I'm going to wrap it up in about 440 seconds.

[Laughter]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Manderson has had many names and titles over the course of his life. Those who had the pleasure of growing up with him know him as Cobblah; then there was Officer; his loving wife calls him honey; later he was Dad; then Deputy; Acting was also many times; Attorney-at-law; boss, chief, Franz; and most recently, CEO, which I'll get to later on.

[Laughter]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: I had the privilege of meeting Franz one afternoon about 50 or so years ago, about 6 years before he started at Immigration, when I was invited over to our mutual friend Philip Hyde's house in West Bay. Through the years we crossed paths as teenagers, and those paths took us to career destinations later on.

About 25 to 27 years ago, we reconnected once again in West Bay at Grace Christian Academy—I may have to think about moving to West Bay, good things come out of West Bay.

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: You better believe it!

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: —as Franz Jr. and my eldest daughter started preschool together in the same class. Since that day, Franz has become one of my best friends. I've found Franz to be one of the most inspiring and focus-driven individuals that I've ever met.

Mr. Speaker, Franz Manderson had every opportunity to get off the tracks, but he stayed the course of success and respect. He was raised by a single mother, affectionately known to all of us as Miss Jenny, but he was also blessed to have his Uncle Jimmy and Captain Eugene help guide him and provide fatherly advice, which I know he's forever grateful for today. Franz has been a respectful son; a loving husband to his dear wife Nuvia; a caring and protective father to his wonderful children, Alyssa and Franz Jr.; and a pillar of support for his sister Paula.

Outside of his love for his family, he has been a true leader and role model for our country, a loyal friend and a respected boss. Throughout the years in the civil service, Franz has served with dignity, integrity and honesty. He always showed the same face no matter what and was always available to assist and provide advice.

I remember about 15 or so years ago, I was asked by the Honourable McKeever Bush to serve on the Work Permit Board. I immediately called Franz and told him about my appointment and asked him what he thought. He said *excellent! We need people like you, but leave your heart in Frank Sound*. So I said, *leave my heart in Frank Sound?* He said *yes, I know how you are and you want to help and please everybody, but make your decisions according to what's written in black and white, called the Cayman Islands Immigration Law*.

As I attended meetings, I always reminded myself of that advice and appreciated what he told me. Another piece of advice he provided, and I still use every day is: when in doubt, say no.

[Laughter]

Hon. Gary B. Ruty, Deputy Premier: That is in my mind every day and has helped me on many occasions.

Franz is a humble man and holding one of, if not the most powerful position on Island, he never made it get to him nor did he ever abuse that position. Watching him interact with the civil servants and the respect that has flowed both ways is a true testament of the leadership qualities that he possesses.

Being able to call Franz a friend is a privilege and an honour for me. We have had many trips and personal experiences together that I will forever cherish as wonderful memories. When I decided to run for office, one of the deciding factors was being able to work alongside Franz and help make a difference for our people. His mentorship and guidance as a colleague and leader over the past year has been an invaluable experience. I am fortunate to have been in his company and to have learned team leadership skills from him.

Franz, as I see you walk from floor to floor in the Government Administration Building, stopping at each workstation and office, interacting with each and every person, the respect that is given to you is like what my good friend the Leader of the Opposition said,

"world class civil service". That is what you've helped create and develop for these Cayman Islands.

Franz has worked tirelessly and always had his goals lined up to achieve. He went through law school and was called to the Bar several years ago, but his true calling was service to the people of these beautiful Islands where he decided to come back to government and work his way up to Deputy Governor.

Just a few weeks ago Franz and I were on a trip and we met some people who were sitting next to us. They asked where we were from. I replied, *we're from the Cayman Islands*. One of the gentlemen replied, *Cayman Islands, what do you all do there?* I responded, well, my friend Franz here is the CEO of a small firm with about 6,000 employees, and I'm on a Board of Directors with about 90,000 employers.

[Laughter]

Hon. Gary B. Ruty, Deputy Premier: The look on Franz's face was priceless as these gentlemen were trying to comprehend what I had just told them.

Mr. Speaker, as I bring my tribute to a close, I would like to thank and congratulate my near and dear friend for all he has done for this country and our people. I also thank him for the loyal and sincere friendship that he has provided to me over the years.

Franz, enjoy your mom, your wife and your kids, but also enjoy your life and time. I pray God will continue to bless and protect you as you go off into your retirement enjoying time with your family and your dear mom. You have dreamed big and worked hard and accomplished an outstanding successful career and deserve every bit of your retirement.

Live life to the fullest, buddy. Much love and respect, and I hope that God will bless you and your family, but I have one more request. I know our good friend over there who travelled with us as well, the Leader of the Opposition, has talked about that lemon pie. I'm asking you to pass on that recipe or I'll go to Miss Jenny.

[Laughter]

Hon. Gary B. Ruty, Deputy Premier: I also want to thank my father who is 94 years old for coming here today to support you in your retirement. God bless you, sir.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm starting to not like this order of speaking after the new Minister of Tourism; his speeches are getting better by the minute.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Very good job, Mr. Deputy.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Thank you, my friend, thank you.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, first let me start by saying that I'm truly honoured to have been born in 1980, that we are now in the year of our Lord 2026, and that I've had the opportunity to cross paths with the Honourable Franz Manderson.

Mr. Speaker, I had a long plan to write this amazing speech. I was like, oh yeah, this is going to be the time to shine and highlight my good friend. However, every time I tried to write down something I couldn't get to express the relationship that I've been able to build with him, so I just decided to tell my story of who I know.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected in 2017 and before that I just knew about this person who was doing so many great things in the civil service, not even understanding how significant the civil service was. I got elected and then I started to hear all kinds of different perspectives— *yeah, Franz don't want to do this, this and that*; and, *oh, Franz is amazing!* You get all kinds of different viewpoints. As I grew and I learned more about the role and the balance that he had to keep... I'm still trying to find out what his mother taught him to make him able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, he had to deal with people complaining every day, politicians wanting to blame him for everything. I'm certain that he probably had somebody say, *Mr. Manderson, why didn't the sun come up at 6:35 this morning? It came up at 6:36.* Yet, he always seemed to do it with a fantastic smile on his face. I'm not even sure if that's plausible. To be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, at first, I thought he was faking; and then he kept on doing it. Every day! *I'm fantastic, Kenneth! How are you doing?* For those who may not know him personally, it is so real. I must say on record to his mother today, you must be the proudest woman on the planet for what you have instilled, because it is from his heart. I know he has to be a man of faith in order to be able to have that characteristic.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the Honourable Franz Manderson as people were speaking and I wrote down what I saw in his eyes. I saw a person who is struggling because I know he doesn't want to leave. He's leaving something that he has given so much to and that he loves, but I know he understands that he has to, because with him taking the steps to transition he opens up opportunity for different growth, time for a different angle to take shape in the civil service, and a time for his family to get back the tens of thousands of hours that they sacrificed for him to do the honourable job in the role of service to the Caymanian people.

Mr. Speaker, to his family, his wife in particular, I thank you so much for allowing him to serve us because Cayman is a better place because of him. Many people don't quite understand the role of leadership to this magnitude of being a Member of Parliament, but in particular, being the Head of the Civil Service. He has that delicate balance of—and he has to say this, by the way of the Constitution his service is to the Caymanian people and to the Crown. That is not an easy task, to make sure you make the UK happy, but sometimes the people in Cayman don't want what makes them happy. He [makes it look like] such an easy job, transitioning that with such grace; I would be pissed every day, to be honest with you. I'm not going to tell you a lie. I don't know how he did it.

However, I found he has a skill and I even used it yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you may recall I was rather happy yesterday, wasn't I? *Hi, everybody, how you doing? Everybody good?* You know where I learned that from? The Honourable Franz Manderson. He speaks it into existence, every morning, even if a day is hard. I asked him about it, he said, *Kenneth, I make myself fantastic.* That's the suppression of his own pains and sorrows, Mr. Speaker. We know about many issues that he has recently had to go through with his family—and I ask God to bless his wife, his family and his kids to stay strong and in good health—and even through that difficult time he still never crumbled, he still served the people of this country and all of his civil servants who look up to him.

Mr. Speaker, I asked myself, what do you say to a man like that? What do you ask of him when he's given everything? The only thing I can say is: You inspire me, sir. You inspire me to be a better person. I look up to you almost like an uncle. I'd rather think of you more as a big brother because that way we can still be basketball friends for the Lakers, even though... We got next season, don't worry. I'm happy that I know that even when you are retired, we're still going to be hanging out talking about our Lakers.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to allow me to offer a symbolic motion today. Mr. Speaker, as I was just going through the halls of this House, I noticed that... Before I say that. He's a Member of Parliament. The Attorney General is [also] a Member of Parliament. You will see in the halls there are past governors who were sent from the UK; and you see, rightfully so, there are Elected Members of Parliament, but I do not see any deputy governors or attorneys general who have been Members of Parliament, on our hallowed halls.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, which I will bring formally at another time, if you would allow me from a symbolic perspective to move a motion in this House to ask all Members to support that every past Deputy Governor of this Parliament, when retired, their portrait be put in these hallowed halls. He has served decades to the people, in this House as a Member of Parliament, and should be remembered.

All those in favour, please say Aye!

AYES.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I will formulate that appropriately at the next Meeting of this House, but I think it's important that it be remembered.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I know I've gone way past five minutes, but I want to highlight something that I'm quite sure my good people of George Town would be happy about. The last Deputy Governor, Mr. Donovan Ebanks was from North Side; and then this current Deputy Governor (up until the 6th or the 7th July) is from West Bay; but Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say he's leaving it in the quality hands of a good George Towner, Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: If I know her well, she has watched you very closely for decades. Matter of fact, the first trouble I gave *unna*, she was in the meeting there, if you remember.

Mr. Manderson, I thank you. I wish that they had something like a Purple Heart to give to you. I think the CBE isn't adequate, and I hope one day if I am alive and you are alive and the good Lord sees it fit, I think you should be called 'Sir', because you've given service to this country and we are definitely better off. Thank you for your service and may God bless you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, Deputy Speaker, Elected Member for George Town West: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable Deputy Governor, I'd originally hoped to deliver these remarks from the heart but when I consider the challenge of finding the right words to honour someone as significant as you while also managing my responsibilities and ensuring my voice was heard on matters affecting my constituents, I decided it was best to put my thoughts into writing.

I sent you a text late last week expressing how proud I am of you and how much I regret that I will no longer have the privilege of working alongside you in Parliament. Those words conveyed my admiration but they could never fully express what's in my heart. What you may not see is that every time your name was mentioned in meetings, in Parliament or elsewhere, my heart filled with pride at the remarkable individual you are and the tremendous contribution you've made to our country and community.

You've always understood the importance of family, particularly the role of your mother. Mothers play a pivotal role in shaping who we become. I was

reminded of this during my own mother's 87th birthday celebration when your mother was invited to share a tribute. In many ways I am who I am because of the contribution your mother made to mine. She always saw my mother through a thoughtful, caring and compassionate lens. Those acts of kindness one will never forget. The respect, friendship and care she extends to my mother left a lasting impression on me and for that I will always be grateful to you and your mother.

That same spirit extended to our relationship as well. Although our time working together was relatively brief, I will always remember a conversation we had in early March where I truly felt seen and valued by you. During that conversation I expressed how profoundly happy I would be if a woman were appointed to be the Deputy Governor of our country. You were quick to respond that we would have to wait and see. Yet, I left that conversation with a strong sense that you believed that no one was more deserving than Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon. I arrived at that conclusion not because of what you said but because of the respect with which you spoke of her and the values she constantly demonstrated. What resonated with me even more was that you took the time to share what you continue to strive for — a first-class civil service that serves the people of this country with excellence, integrity and professionalism. The respect and admiration you showed were evident and that meant more to me than you'll ever know.

Beyond that, there was never a time that I called or sent you a text that you did not respond promptly, graciously and with the utmost respect. Regardless of how busy you were or the demands on your time, you always made me feel seen, heard, acknowledged and appreciated.

In public life people often see the titles, the positions and the accomplishments, what I saw was the person and that is something that I remember most. That quality is not learned in a boardroom or acquired through a title, it is rooted in character, nurtured by values and often first taught at home. In your case, it is clear that that lesson instilled by your mother helped shape the man that you are, the leader and the public servant that we honour today. It would therefore be remiss of me not to encourage you as you enter retirement to spend precious time with her and to ensure she fully appreciates the extraordinary person she raised, the individual we proudly know today as the Honourable Deputy Governor.

Of course, I also encourage you to spend time with Adrian, your childhood friend, your lifelong friend and someone who has waited patiently for this moment alongside your family as well. As we all know, family and true friends are what keep us grounded in this ever-changing world. They're among life's greatest blessings, second to God.

For many years you answered a higher calling to serve the people of this country, and you answered that calling exceptionally well. You did so with dignity, humility, integrity and unwavering commitment to public

service. Your contributions have left a lasting impact on our community and our country and on the many lives you have touched throughout your career. Now, I believe the good Lord Almighty is calling you for another important chapter, to spend time with your family and spend it well, to create memories, to cherish moments and to enjoy the blessings of those who have supported you and loved you throughout this remarkable journey.

Thank you for your service, for your leadership and the example that you have set for all of us. Thank you for your dignity, respect and humanity you brought to the public service and to every interaction along the way. Should you ever find yourself bored in retirement, please come and visit us in Parliament. I'm quite sure that a few of us will keep you entertained, as we often do. However, I suspect it will not take long before you're reminded exactly where you're happiest, surrounded by family, your friends, and the people who have walked through this journey alongside you. You may no longer have to sit through our debates, but you will always have a seat amongst us.

I wish you every happiness, good health, and abundant blessing in the next chapter of your life. Congratulations on your retirement and may God continue to bless you and your family. From one West Bayer to the next: stay well and happy, Deputy Governor.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to just say how beautiful of a tribute the Deputy Speaker just provided to our DG. I rise too to share a few of my personal experiences with the DG as we take time today to honour the leader who has served our civil service for many years with integrity, compassion and professionalism.

My relationship with the Deputy Governor started many years ago when I worked in the private sector, he evolved into a mentor many days, making himself available for coffees with me so that we could have important discussions about matters that concerned me as a Caymanian. Many of those matters at the time were around immigration and DG was instrumental in shaping my understanding on some of those important issues.

Later, I transitioned into the civil service, and I was able to become more familiar with the type of leader that DG was. He was always accessible, providing support that made all civil servants feel valued and appreciated. What I admire most about DG is the time that he made for everyone. Back then I was on the very bottom of the org chart as a civil servant; however, the moment I sent DG a message, he would say, *you want to meet in the canteen for a coffee?*

An Hon. Member: Yeah.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: I couldn't believe how quickly he would arrange his schedule just to hear what my concerns were. I'm sure you probably know, DG, but I want to let you know that those little moments really made such a huge difference.

DG certainly has been a compassionate leader and offered tremendous support to me, especially when I was dealing with one of the biggest crises in my life when I was navigating my husband's illness. I know that I can speak for many civil servants who have faced similar vulnerable situations, whether it's ill health or even grief, DG's empathy made a profound difference. I can distinctly remember the words he said to me the afternoon that I called him. DG said, *focus on your husband and don't worry about work. The civil service will be here to support you.*

DG's support continued as I transitioned to a Member of Parliament, and what I've enjoyed watching is how consistent he is with his responsiveness. I know it's been said here a couple of times today, but DG hears requests from many of us. Long before I was a Minister, DG navigated through many requests for me to help my constituents, and his responsiveness is what really demonstrates his commitment to serving our country.

What I see in DG when it comes to his leadership qualities is that he's a compassionate mentor and leader, he is empathetic in times of crisis and that he's a visionary leader. One of the things that I have been able to really appreciate DG's vision with has been the establishment of the Second Chances Program, which has changed the lives of many Caymanians, providing them with opportunities for growth and hope. I know that many of our people who have made poor choices, but they're still our people, are now in positions where they're benefiting our country.

When we speak of visionary leadership, I want to say too, how I admire how he approaches not just work, but he often shares with us how practical he has been about his own personal life with his mindset of being visionary. From discussing and sharing with us how he planned to build a house before he married his bride and now emphasising quality time being spent while he's still able to enjoy it with his mother, Miss Jenny; his wife, Miss Nuvia; his sister, Miss Paula; and his two beautiful children, he exemplifies what it means to live life with intention.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I would like to say on behalf of the people of West Bay Central, of West Bay and the entire Cayman Islands, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, DG, for your service, for your mentorship, for making sure that we always have every reason to be proud of our DG. As you step into retirement, I would like to wish you joy and fulfilment with your family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance and Education.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training, Elected Member for West Bay North: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so much has been said, but the fact is when you have had a legendary career you literally could talk all day. Not me personally, but all of us collectively.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I'll start with my first memory of Franz. As a young boy growing up in Northwest Point, I heard my older siblings talking about "France Manderson" and I always thought wow, what a strange name. How come you're named after a country?

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Then of course, you get a bit older and it's all about the West Bay parlance. I got to become knowledgeable of who this incredible human being was, but then as life would have it, I didn't have any real reconnection until I got elected to this Parliament.

In those days, sitting on the first immigration review team with the then Chief Immigration Officer, Mr. Connor, and of course seeing the breadth and depth of knowledge that the Deputy Governor has around that subject was something that struck me, but what struck me more was the fact that he was so locked in on working with us, recognising the great and mammoth task it was to change something that had been talked about for decades at that time, and the amount of work and effort that he poured in to ensure that we got good information to make great decisions.

As life would have it, as I got to know him more the thing that struck me right out the gate was the relationship he has with his mother. I always say, a great measure of the internal character of a man is the relationship that he has with his mother. I watched and I listened and I just kept growing in how impressed I was at that relationship. It just continued to tell me that Nuvia, the children, and Paula were blessed to have this incredible man as part of their family. As we heard him talk of retirement it was no surprise when one of the first things he mentioned was this being a new season of life so that he could spend more time with his mom while she was alive, and with his wife. That is something.

We can talk about world class civil service, that's important and I'm going to come to that in a minute. We can talk about great Chief Immigration Officer, great childhood friend — none of that is possible without the Franz Manderson who was raised by a

good West Bay woman and became an incredible West Bay man, and all rounded into shape by a good George Town girl.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: As I got to know Mr. Manderson over the years and as I watched him as he moved and he shaped the civil service, it was quite interesting to have left this House 12 years ago and know what the state of play was then, and then to return and to see the results of much hard work and effort that Mr. Manderson, the Deputy Governor, has put in. It's not easy to change any organisation, but it is incredibly difficult to change the public service. Mr. Manderson doesn't have the benefit of CEOs in large corporations who at a snap of a finger can downsize and at the snap of another finger can decide, well, this is going to be how we move, this is how we're going to shape, this is how we're going to direct the way of traffic to create and change culture. He's done that in the most difficult of settings in the largest employer by far in our country.

I think many of us as Caymanians look on and we don't appreciate the mammoth task that he took on and delivered upon. Mr. Manderson, that legacy is one that will earn you a wonderful place up next to former attorneys general and chief secretaries who existed in our Parliament, because you will be the most shining of examples out there. Every time I walk across, I see the older statesmen that are there, and now I'm starting to say to myself, one of us, one of our generation is now going to be added and added with distinction. I don't know what we can do in terms of the little plaque that we put on those things for you, but we'll have to think of something.

Mr. Manderson, you have earned it. You've earned it the old-fashioned Caymanian way. You've earned it through dedication, professionalism, integrity, hard work, but most importantly, how you treat people. If there's another lesson, another nugget that we can take from watching you as a life lesson, not just for us in this Chamber and those who listen, but for young people in this country, how you treat people is so incredible. For a person like me, when I look on and I see your level of patience... I'm just going to say, every once in a while, I will WhatsApp you so you can send me a little patience.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: You exemplify the sort of leader that is able to shape and direct by the way you carry yourself, by the way you direct traffic, but most importantly, as the Honourable Minister of Health and the Premier so eloquently put it, by taking time to come down to the cafeteria and ensure that all those who you lead see that you are one of them.

Ms. Gloria, I hope that you're taking notes.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: We know that you're going to be a wonderful new Deputy Governor, but there is one thing that great leaders can do: take nuggets from others; and many nuggets have been dropped here today.

Mr. Speaker, I thought about this over the last couple of days, and as I reflected on the fact that I was absent from these Chambers for 12 years. I took the liberty to write a couple of former Members, because your retirement is a coincidence, we just happen to be the 19 Elected Members who are here now. What if you had retired five years ago? What if you retired eight years ago? Mr. Speaker, I think it would be remiss of us to not capture some of those thoughts in the official Hansards of this House.

Mr. Anthony Eden says: *"He was a good and dedicated civil servant and easy to work with during my almost 30 years of politics. I wish him all the best in his retirement."*

Mr. Speaker, [from one of the] two Members who are unavoidably absent, the Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly says: *"Thank him for his many years of exemplary service in the civil service and for being a servant leader in all three Islands. His determination and dedication to ensuring the Cayman Islands have a world-class civil service was very much appreciated. Wish for him and his entire family God's richest blessings and a most enjoyable retirement."*

The Honourable McKeeva Bush, the first Premier of the country, says: *"I had his support for many years in the service. From dealing with issues such as the damaging effects of Hurricane Ivan, to Gulf Wars, and doing what it took to get us off the various blacklists that the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] put us on, to the instability of times in the Middle East, as is now; and don't forget the many times that we were in budget troubles and getting the economy back to a vibrant position and getting investor confidence—Mr. Manderson was there. From pushing for pension and labour reform, Mr. Manderson was there. He is a good civil servant. He showed sympathy even when we had to endure cuts—[A lot of us forget about those days, Mr. Manderson.] But he affected the civil servants and he understood that leadership meant making tough decisions during tough times. I wish him all the best in the years ahead and I say to him:*

'The woods are lonely [sic], dark, and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep.'

Mr. Christopher Saunders says: *"Tender my apologies [which the Honourable Speaker has already done], but say to him that I intend to make mention of him in a motion that I am leading next week."*

Finally, one from a former colleague of yours: *"Today marks the final day the Honourable Franz Manderson sits in Parliament, closing an extraordinary*

chapter of service to the Cayman Islands. For me this moment carries deep personal meaning. I had the privilege of working with Mr. Manderson long before he became Chief Immigration Officer, back when we were simply immigration officers doing work side by side. I watched him rise with purpose, discipline and humility, advancing to Chief Immigration Officer and ultimately, Deputy Governor of the Cayman Islands. I want to thank him for giving me an opportunity that shaped my life and career. He motivated me, supported me and believed in me long before titles ever mattered. There are so many stories I could share and even more that will stay tucked away in the heart, but I can say this—his caring, supportive and encouraging spirit has never changed. Even to this day he continues to uplift and inspire.

Mr. Manderson, congratulations on a well-earned retirement. Thank you for your leadership, your kindness, and your unwavering support. I wish you nothing but the very best as you step into the next chapter. May you enjoy it fully, one barbecue spot at a time."
—Sabrina Turner.

Mr. Manderson, I thought it would be important to offer a flavour of former Members so that you might remember and history might record the lengthy service you had to this country and the fact that the indelible footprint that you have left is one that will never be replaced.

Mr. Speaker, for the Deputy Governor to be a man who entered in his teens at an entry level position at the Department of Immigration and to culminate his career to be the Deputy Governor of the Cayman Islands is one that all of us should be just proud and every single Caymanian child should be able to read and have knowledge of because it is inspiring and it is what we all say all too often: You can be anything that you dream of. You can begin at the bottom. You can make it to the top.

Miss Jenny, Nuvia, I just say to you all, take good care of our good friend, we know you will. Paula, I see you beaming as a sister oft should. Kids... We thank you for having selflessly, patiently endured these many years of service of your son, husband, dad, and brother. We now give back to you the Honourable Franz Manderson.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, with deep respect and a full heart, to recognise a Caymanian whose service to these Islands deserves the gratitude of this honourable House: the Honourable Franz Manderson.

Mr. Speaker, everybody kind of started off with how they met Mr. Franz, what they knew about him, how they grew up with him; unfortunately, I didn't grow up with him, but what I can say is before I was elected, even though he may not have known me and I would not have known him that well, I would always get a "Hello?" when I called. I was like, *Wow, the Deputy Governor answered the phone*, and he would text you back saying he would call you back—that's better than the politicians then!

One of the biggest things was the day that we got elected. We walked into the building and coming out on the fifth floor right by the elevator, the first person I met was Mr. Manderson. Mr. Manderson said, *Follow me, sir. This direction, I'll carry you right there*. We went around the corner and he said, *this is my office right here. I'm gonna keep you close, you're right next door. This is where the infrastructure office is*. I said, okay.

I've had a great, lovely relationship with Mr. Manderson. Whether it was late nights with a telephone call—and as everybody always said, any time you saw him in the morning, it was always, *Wonderful!* He was happy. Even the mornings when I thought I was wonderful, he always outdid me and said, *I'm wonderful!* I'd say, boy, I gotta catch up on the coffee that he's on now. That was just the type of person that Mr. Manderson was.

Not only that, but Mr. Manderson was always the one person who would come around and check on you, just pop in on your office. Some people who have been in my office know that I have a little couch in there, so it's probably the most comfortable office. He would pop in, just stop in and talk with me for a couple of minutes, sometimes it would end up being an hour. The relationship [built] and how much that meant when you came into the office sometimes and you heard that the Deputy Governor just stopped in to say hello to you and see how you were doing, or, if I had a problem and I called to on him, *Oh; well sir, my office is right next door, come on in*. I could go there and have that chat and get advice and guidance from him all the time.

I even remember one of our first Cabinet meetings. Sitting there as a new person, you're just there learning everything, and he said something. I was sitting next to Ms. Juliana O'Connor. He said, *Don't worry. That lady, she'll carry you through and teach you everything you need to know*, and that's why I stuck alongside Ms. Julie, to learn everything I could too — that's why I ended up calling her my auntie after a while.

There was one point in time when he and Mr. Bernie Bush were always in an argument about who makes the best pie. Bernie was always saying that he was the best pie maker, and I think Mr. Manderson probably doesn't know that one day Bernie decided to switch the pies to see. [He] said, *I'm gonna switch these out and see if Mr. Manderson is going to love my pie today*. Just sitting there, not paying attention, I heard Mr. Manderson murmur, *hmm, my pie might be off a little bit today*.

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: I went back to Bernie and said, I think Mr. Manderson realised something wrong with the pie.

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: He said, *what happened?* I said, well, he said he believes the pie is off today. He said, *this is probably not my best one*. So, I said, Bernie just leave it alone, I think you lost.

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: I don't think anybody ever knew about the whole pie problem that went on in that little kitchen back there with the switching of the pies just to prove a point: Bernie wanted to see that his pie was better than Mr. Manderson's. Without knowing, Mr. Manderson said, *Hmm. Boy, I didn't do too good with the pie today*. I said, all right, well, fair enough. The man knows his pies.

Mr. Manderson, it has been a pleasure working alongside you, getting to know you; all the feedback you have always given, always having that connection with you, sir. Always being there for me to answer the questions I've had, and many people may not even know the hard times we had. I remember an argument we had — probably the first that Mr. Manderson and I had. At the end of that day I said, *man, I really feel bad about it*; and I was going over to Mr. Manderson's office and he was coming out the door to come see me at the same time — so good minds think alike. He said, *oh, you know, sir, I think we got off on the wrong foot*. I said, *I was just coming back to apologise to you about it, too, sir*. We ended up going to my office, sitting down and having a great chat. That is just the type of person that he is. Even though we had that argument that day, a few minutes later it never got in between our next conversation about what we had to do and I really, really appreciated that about Mr. Manderson. I really appreciate it.

Sir, I know you're sailing off, and I keep asking you the question. What is it that you're going to do when you retire, because you come from running a country... I mean the doors of Parliament are always open for you, right?

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: For you to come back and even sit down and just enjoy some of us. I keep asking you that question, what does retirement look like for you because I don't see you as a retirement man. I just can't find you... You don't have that. You are a hardworking individual. You're there first thing in the morning, you're there late at nights.

Miss Gloria has large shoes to fill, but I know Miss Gloria will do her best and I know that you also know that you have left the country in good hands with Miss Gloria.

Mr. Manderson, as someone said about the DG, I don't remember who — but that's how I got you in my phone, as "DG". I think someone said they had you named DG Go [sic]. It was the Premier who said DJ Go [sic]. That might stick to you today, I don't know. It is always calling you Deputy Governor, Deputy Governor.

For me, sir, you will always be there as the Deputy Governor and I know I can rely on you, even in your best times. You might pick up farming; I don't know. That might convince some more of my people that we need more money for farming, too, because I see many of the people who retire seem to go into farming.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: DG: It has been a pleasure to serve alongside you. From my family to your family, from the lovely people of North Side, sir, we really appreciate everything you have done for this country.

From one of the best, most recognised Ministries, the hardest working Ministry, the Planning Ministry: It was a pleasure to have worked under you, sir, and I know my team is really sad to see you go, but also understand that you have decided it is your time to sail on and enjoy your life with your family. Your family has shared your vision, your life with everyone else, and it would be selfish of us to try to hold you back from them any longer for you to enjoy it, sir, so I really appreciate it.

Again, all the best, sir.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Social Development.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Social Development & Innovation and Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not too sure how much the rest of us can say about the Honourable Franz Manderson — I don't think there's much left to be said. Certainly, we initially came here for a state opening, but we are also here to honour a Caymanian whose life of service is measured not just in years, but by the commitment he made when he started working as a civil servant and that person is the Honourable Franz Manderson, Deputy Governor of the Cayman Islands. DG: On behalf of myself and the constituents of East End, we want to say thank you.

Your own words tell the story best. Forty-four years. That's what I think about: forty-four years. You started on your birthday, on your 16th birthday on the 7th

July, 1981, and to give some context to that, I think I was getting ready for the summer holidays then — mangoes in the sea in East End, transitioning from 3rd Form to 4th Form, so I do have vague memories of you as one of the big boys in High School. I certainly remember your sister Paula because I think she went to school with my sister. Leaving on your birthday, 7th July, 2026, it is a good solid forty-four years of service, DG, so from a schoolboy taking up public service to the head of the civil service that is a full, full circle.

It's been mentioned that you started as a young immigration officer working the front lines. You rose through the ranks, stepped away for a year to work in the private sector completing your Articles, then you returned to take up the role of Chief Immigration Officer before answering the call to become our second Caymanian Deputy Governor in 2012 — and DG, that journey matters because you proved that [with] integrity, discipline, and learning every young Caymanian starting at an entry level position can rise to lead. You helped pave the way and you walked it with distinction.

For those forty-four years you've been a steady hand, the calm voice when decisions weighed heavy, the one asking the hard questions many times so that sometimes the ones in this House could make the right decisions. You've been the bridge between the elected government and the civil service, and you held it with principle, always putting the country first every single time.

On a more personal note, when I came to this House as a not-so-young parliamentarian, I reached out for guidance on multiple occasions, and when you were asked by me, *DG, do you have a minute?* You were always responsive, always listening. You gave counsel without judgement and without delay, and there were many times when you shared stories, and in those stories, there were some very valuable gems, and those lessons don't make the *Hansard*, sir. They never make the *Hansard*, but they helped shape me into the parliamentarian I am now, five years later — so thank you. As you retire on your birthday, you will finally be getting some time to do what matters most to you now, and I do know that you said you planned to take some time to travel with your lovely wife and a distant relative of mine.

Just let me correct the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on something he said earlier. He said, Ms. Gloria McField, George Town, but I want him to know that George Town by way of East End.

[Laughter]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: I know you want to spend some time with your precious mother — and I do have good memories of her when I would walk into the Glass House as well. She, the woman who sacrificed for you and your sister so that today we are here honouring you for the service that you provided to this country.

I know you have other things, and the Minister before me said that he doesn't know what you're going to do; you're *gonna* do as a retired man [does], but we do know that there's a fowl coop *waitin'*.

[Laughter]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: I'll say it plainly, you now have time to either complete it or upgrade it so, I hope, sir, it's going to be as strong as the foundation you've built here for forty-four years.

DG: East End and all of Cayman are grateful so, thank you for your service, your example, for raising the standard of public service. This being your last State Opening as Deputy Governor as you retire, I know that your wisdom won't retire. I want to wish you, your wife, your mother, your family: health, peace, and joy in this next chapter.

Thank you for all you've done, sir.
Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of District Administration.

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to rise with colleagues this afternoon to pay tribute and respects to the Deputy Governor and I mean privilege being in this hallowed Chamber because had I not been here, it would have been just a random social media post; but now my sentiments to you, Deputy Governor, will be forever recorded and I count it a real privilege.

Mr. Speaker, it's not every day that we get to speak about someone who has served the Cayman Islands in the capacities that Mr. Manderson has, at the very highest levels, who has helped steer the civil service through change, challenge, crisis, and recovery and has somehow managed to do all of that while remaining one of the most approachable, good-humoured and recognisable people in public life.

In fact, I suspect that for many people across these Islands, Franz Manderson is not just the Deputy Governor, he is simply Franz. For this little boy from Cayman Brac with "*broughtupsy*" he is Mr. Franz — and that says a lot. It says something about the way he has carried the office. It says something about the way he treats people. It says something about a leadership style that has always been professional, always dignified, but never distant.

Mr. Speaker, every great personality has a title, and we've heard a theme emerge this afternoon. If you watch TV, Shark Tank has Mr. Wonderful, Shaggy has Mr. Boombastic. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say that in the Cayman Islands Civil Service, and

indeed this honourable House, we have, through the Deputy Governor, through Franz Manderson, Mr. Fantastic.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: You've heard it already this afternoon, but anyone who knows Mr. Franz knows that when you ask him, *how are you doing, sir?* There is only one answer. It is not, good; it is not, fine; it is not, getting by; it's not even, not too bad. It is "*fantastic*". You know, I tried to emulate that as well and somebody even asked me, *well, Minister, how are you so happy in the morning?* I said, *well, you know, it's all downhill from here, so —*

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: DG, I'm almost there, almost there.

Even on days when the inbox is full, even when chaos arises, even when meetings are long, the issue's complicated and the pressure's high, Mr. Franz has a way of answering "*fantastic*" as though it is not just a response but a personal policy position and maybe that is part of his leadership. It is indeed part of his leadership because over the years, Mr. Franz has reminded us that attitude matters, encouragement matters, energy matters, and sometimes in the middle of serious work the simple decision to show up with optimism can make a real difference.

Mr. Speaker, many people in this Chamber have and will speak about Mr. Franz's public service record, and rightly so. They will and have spoken about his time in immigration, his leadership across government, his role in strengthening the civil service, and his steady presence in difficult moments; but I want to begin with a slightly different memory because I didn't go to school with Mr. Franz, clearly not. I didn't work with Mr. Franz, clearly not. He served 44 years and I didn't have that many birthday candles on my cake.

My first introduction to Mr. Franz was after Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Now, Mr. Speaker, Grand Cayman was recovering from one of the most difficult periods in modern history. There was debris everywhere, homes decimated, lives being rebuilt. The whole country was trying to find its footing again and in the midst of all of that national recovery, a young Nicholas DaCosta had a very serious matter of his own to navigate.

Let's just say, Mr. Speaker, that at the time I had sent flowers to a certain someone closely related to him. I won't go too far into details because some matters are best left to the historical record and perhaps out of the Hansards completely; but, Mr. Franz, being Mr. Franz, has never let me forget about it. Every so often, with that unmistakable Franz Manderson smile, he will remind me of those flowers not in a heavy-handed way, not in an intimidating way, but in that classic Franz way: warm, mischievous, and with just

enough humour to let you know that he remembers everything.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this publicly: at that time in my life, chaos abound, I had no thinking about Cabinet, Parliament, public service, or constitutional responsibility. I was thinking about flowers.

[Laughter]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: However, looking back, Mr. Speaker, looking back, that was perhaps my first lesson in accountability, because when you send flowers to a certain someone related to Franz Manderson and he knows about it, you learn very quickly that some decisions follow you throughout your entire life—

[Laughter]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: —and Mr. Franz has carried that story with the same humour and good nature so many of us have come to appreciate, and that to me reflects something important about the man.

He has held serious offices; he has held serious responsibilities. He has dealt with matters of national importance, but he has never lost the ability to connect with people on the human level. He can speak to senior officials, governors, premiers, ministers, and international representatives, then turn right around and speak to a young civil servant, a student, a community volunteer, or someone on the street with the same respect and ease, and that, Mr. Speaker, is a gift. A gift that I admire greatly.

Mr. Speaker, public service is not easy. Leadership is not easy and leadership in the public sector is especially not easy. You must balance law, policy, politics, public expectation, resources, personalities, pressure, and sometimes criticism from people in every direction, and yet throughout his career, Mr. Franz has been a steady presence. He has been a champion for the civil service. He has reminded us often that behind every department, every policy, every programme, and every service, there are people. Dedicated public servants who want to do good work and who deserve to be supported, encouraged, and led well; and as Minister, I have seen first-hand the importance of that message.

You see, our civil service is the government's engine room. It is where ideas become implementation. It is where Cabinet decisions become practical action and where the public experiences government most directly. Mr. Franz has spent his entire career reminding us that people in that engine room matter, and that was actually one of the first messages I brought to my Ministry right after taking office. He has advocated for professionalism, innovation, wellness, leadership development, and a culture of service. He has understood that a strong civil service is not just about structure or process. It is about morale. It is about purpose. It is about people who feel valued and that may be one of his lasting contributions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Franz has also served through times when the country needed calm, capable leadership. He has seen hurricanes, economic challenges, constitutional development, changing public expectations, global uncertainty — even up to this week — and the pressures that come with a growing, modern Cayman Islands. Through it all, he has remained measured, thoughtful, and committed to the public good.

Even when one may not agree with him on every matter (Minister Jay), I am sure he would admit that Ministers and Deputy Governors may occasionally see the world from slightly different angles; there has always been respect. Franz has always understood the importance of institutions. He understands that government must function. He understands that relationships matter. He understands that often, leadership is less about who gets the credit and more about whether the work gets done and that kind of service deserves recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I think most importantly this afternoon, I want to acknowledge his family. No one serves at this level alone and public service of this kind requires sacrifice not only from the individual, but from those closest to them. Long hours, difficult decisions, constant demands, and the weight of responsibility are all shared in some way by family, so to you I say thank you, as well.

In every conversation we have with Mr. Franz he talks about what's coming next: the travels, the family time. [He] even shared a very precious picture from Miss Paula. Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Franz enters that phase, enters retirement, I imagine many civil servants will be wondering what government will do without his familiar voice, his weekly messages, his energy, his encouragement, and perhaps most of all, his ability to appear at almost every single function across all three Islands. I am not entirely convinced yet, maybe when he gets up and speaks, but I'm not entirely convinced that Mr. Franz understands the word retirement. I'm sure you all will make him understand.

However, I suspect that for Mr. Franz, like me, retirement may simply mean fewer official meetings, but the same number of public appearances, whether it be outside in the yard fixing that chicken coop, that is still in the public; maybe a little more walking, a little more wellness, a few more motivational messages, and knowing you, Mr. Franz, probably still checking in to make sure the civil service is all right. Whatever this next chapter holds, wherever your adventures take you, you, sir, have certainly earned it. You have earned the chance to step back, to enjoy your time with your family, to reflect on a career of meaningful service, and to know that you have made a lasting contribution to these Islands for which I am truly personally grateful.

Mr. Speaker, in public life we often speak about legacy. Legacies are not only found in titles held, offices occupied, or years served. Legacy is found in the people influenced, standards raised, institutions

strengthened, and the example left behind; and by that measure, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Franz Manderson certainly leaves a strong legacy. A legacy of professionalism, a legacy of service, a legacy of kindness, a legacy of humour, and a legacy of steady leadership; and for at least one Member of this honourable House, a legacy that includes a bouquet of flowers after Hurricane Ivan.

Today, as we honour and say thank you to the Deputy Governor; as we honour the man, Mr. Franz, and wish you well in your retirement, perhaps there's only one truly appropriate way to describe his service. It has been fantastic, and Mr. Franz, to us, you will always be Mr. Fantastic.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, my family, my Ministry and the people of Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman, I extend heartfelt thanks to the Deputy Governor, Honourable Franz Manderson. Thank you for your leadership, your example, your encouragement and your good humour. May God certainly bless you in your retirement and may the next chapter be filled with health, happiness, peace, and purpose and may you finally have time to enjoy all that you desire.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Minister of Caymanian Employment.

Hon. Michael S. Myles, Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration, Elected Member for Prospect: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address Mr. Manderson.

Mr. Manderson, I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much you've helped over the last year. Coming into government, I knew that one of the biggest challenges that we had in our country was immigration reform. I knew it was going to be very political. I knew it was going to be opinionated. I also knew it was going to be a struggle to try to get everyone on board, but I also knew that you had spent many years with this; and while I'm a newbie to immigration overall, what I appreciated most was the opportunities you took to pop into my office to remind me of what we were doing to set the stage; that I wasn't doing it alone; that I was carrying on the good work that had been done over the last couple of years and the work you had started probably over the last decade.

I also want to thank you for reassuring me that we would get it done. I know that you knew I would be moving this forward regardless, but it was helpful that you walked into my office on a regular basis to ensure that we were on the right road. I also want to thank you for the staff. I think behind Chief Officer Wesley Howell, you've created a wonderful team for me to assume responsibility for. Just when we're getting immigration sorted, obviously you are moving on, but I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the forty-four years that you spent in the civil service moving and shaking

barriers for folks like me to come through. I believe in the last thirty years of my service I've spent at least ten years in the civil service. I've worked in at least four different departments.

You and I have not always agreed on many things, but something I can appreciate about what you've contributed is that you've always listened. I would come in sometimes disagreeable and very strongly opinionated and you would always listen, nod your head and reassure me that it was going to get better. Every time I would leave and come back, you would reassure me that it would get better; but I will never forget what you said when we first got in. You said, *I can leave now because I finally found a government that I can leave the civil service to.*

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: That did it for me. You've also reassured me multiple times that you have built a civil service of leaders which you believe will move the country forward, not just the civil service or the public service; a team of people who are willing to take responsibility and move the country forward. I appreciated it because for the first time I heard accountability. I heard you talk about how we're going to be accountable for the success of our people, and it wasn't just about the five or six thousand people within the civil service but the ninety thousand people we were serving on the island.

Thank you for demonstrating good leadership. I grew up playing football and I played for the country for many years, and we had a wonderful leader in Winston Chung [who] before every game would recite a poem in our changing room that would take my breath away at times before I went on the field. He taught me what it meant to serve, what the flag was meant for, what it meant to wear our flag on our hearts; and he would say to us all the time:

**"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."**

It took me years to understand fully what it meant, but you are really the epitome of that poem. You've distinguished yourself in what being a great man is. I never understood that. At times, when I spoke with you, I thought you were just being one-sided. Today, I understand the balance you've had to carry. I wanted so much more at that moment... You were playing the long game. I get it now. As a leader in this House — as a leader whereby people expect and demand certain things from me, I understand the load you've carried for forty-four years. I understand the load you've certainly carried for the last fifteen in your capacity.

I just want to let you know that in the last year I've gained so much more respect for your position but [also] who you are as a person because I do see the

"fantastic-ness" that you've brought to this. I never appreciated it as a young civil servant because I was always rushing ahead to just get things done when you just saw the bigger picture on how we could get it done together, so I want to thank you for that.

I also want to thank you for setting the standard for what civil service leadership should be because it is about accountability. It is about inspirational and aspirational things. I understand that you know that the goal of a world-class civil service is not today. It is an everyday thing and I think that's why every day for you was fantastic — because you knew that everyone was watching and you needed to be the leader everyone truly expected you to be. Therefore, I'm happy that you came in with the attitude of having those fantastic days because it has really set the tone for us as a government; for me as a young leader coming in, for the work that we've had to do over the last year.

I also want you to know that it's been fun. It's been a joy working with you. I don't know if it was because you were retiring and you felt, *well, I need to let my hair down now*, but in the last year, it has been a joy spending time with you after Cabinet meetings; just you and I hanging out and you telling me about what immigration was. The history of it. I didn't understand that. I didn't really have an appreciation for it because I came in to fix things, right? You shared the history of it, where it was coming from, the people who currently serve in it, and you reminded me that it could get better, and I was a spoke in a wheel that can help it get better.

I've also watched you show up at folks' offices. I've watched you walk around and do your rounds and it's enjoyable to see you do it, so I do it; because I see you do it, I do it regularly. I want to stop and talk to folks. I want them to understand that I care enough about them and not about the work because I've seen you do it, so I also want to thank you for demonstrating what it is to be the distinguished leader that you are, sir.

I know that it has been an enormous weight, and I appreciate the forty-four years that you've given our country — that weight you've carried, and carried well, so, thank you for that.

I want to thank your lovely family, who is also my cousin, because Minister DaCosta is right: you don't do this job alone, you bring your entire family into it. I am still trying to find a balance with mine and I'm hoping that on occasions, you know, I can call you and we can certainly talk about how I can continue to find that balance. I want to thank your mom because like you, I grew up in a single parent home, and I am extremely proud of my mother as you are of yours.

For you to start off as a part-time civil servant and rise to the limits of where we are now gives my children hope that they don't have to stay in one position for forty-four years; that they can climb. I truly appreciate everything you've done in order to tell all the young people in our country that they can reach and they can climb for more, and they should want more out of their lives.

Thank you for your distinguished service. Thank you for everything you've sacrificed. Thank you for all the time that you have spent with us. Thank you for all the years that you spent toiling in and out of our buildings; for all the resources you've provided to the Cayman Islands government and, certainly, for all the responsibility that you've shared regionally and internationally to keep our country safe and stable.

I salute you, sir. I wish you the very best. I know that this isn't the end. You live in West Bay so it's not like you're going anywhere far, and I hope to continue to work with you as you retire but stay in touch with what we intend to strive for. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for West Bay West.

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter, Elected Member for West Bay West: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

It would be remiss of me today if I didn't join my other Members of Parliament and voice just how we feel about our esteemed DG.

DG, not many of us get to retire while we still have our moms with us. I sure didn't, so I know that's an awesome privilege, so to have made this decision, that it is important to take your retirement while your mom is still with you and you can spend valuable time with her and the rest of your family is, in itself, a testament of the kind of man you are.

Even though we both grew up in West Bay, I can't say that I really knew you well until I was elected. What I do know is that as a proud West Bayer, I was extremely proud when you became Chief Immigration Officer. I thought, *wow, Chief Immigration Officer*, and that respect only grew when you became Deputy Governor. I thought, *we did it; our own Caymanian, a West Bayer, holds the second-highest position on the island. What an accomplishment.* I was just so, so proud — and I'm still so very proud.

DG, it was when you got sick that I got to know how much you were loved and cherished, and I know you've talked about this before. It was like the whole island was mourning and praying for your recovery. Every single person felt it and we could literally feel the audible sigh of relief when we knew that you were out of the woods. I can really say that the whole island cared and prayed for you at that most difficult time.

DG, since being elected as a Member of Parliament, my admiration grew as I got to see first-hand how you operated as a leader, a friend, and as our esteemed DG. I saw how you handled difficult situations. I saw how you served with humility. I saw how you trained those around you. I saw how you tried your best to find solutions no matter how extremely difficult those situations you were put in, and I thought, again, *I am proud of him.*

DJ, when I see the many programmes that you have instituted — the Emerging Talent Programme, the Second Chances, the DG 5K, and so many more. These have changed lives for Caymanians. Well done. I am proud of you.

In closing, I would just say I will miss your stories.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter: The Honourable Speaker talked about how entertaining they are. You're a great storyteller. You don't seem to have forgotten any of them and your experience in immigration sure gave you many interesting stories. When I think of the one with the \$16,000 — Oh, I won't; I won't go into that today. Oh, but that's just one of them.

DG, so many accolades have been laid on you today and you deserve every single one of them. We are proud of you. Thank you for your stellar service to our Islands and for the great example you have set for all of us. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. Spend that quality time with your beautiful family that you often talk so much about, and know that you are loved and highly respected. We will always remember your service and I know that with the kind of person that you are, any of us that would reach out to you, I know that you're still only going to be a phone call away and I know that you're always going to answer, as well.

May God continue to bless you and your family always. From me, my family, and the good people of West Bay West: our heartfelt thanks to you, DG, for the many years of service, and again I want to say congratulations on a job well done.

To Miss Jenny, Nuvia, Paula, Alyssa, Franz Junior, and the rest of your close family: Thank you so much for supporting him and being here today for this wonderful occasion when we could pause and just let him, and you as well, know how much he means to us. Enjoy your time together as a family and may God bless you always. Miss Jenny: thank you for doing such a wonderful job raising Franz Manderson, Junior.

God Bless.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Elected Member for Red Bay: Mr. Speaker, thanks again for this opportunity.

Honourable Franz Manderson, we didn't have those childhood memories together; we didn't play cricket; didn't spend time on slippery edges. I knew your mom long before I knew you. Before I get into the words I prepared, I want to say something that has been on my mind for a little while now that I never ever shared with you.

I got to know you, sir, when we worked together over the eight years that I was head of the Office of the

Premier and I truly appreciated — I'm saying this to you now publicly, I truly appreciated the advice you gave when I asked for it. The mutual trust we had, the mutual respect that we had for each other, the conversations we had, and the friendship that we had. It meant a lot to me, and I will never forget it. I really appreciate it. My prepared words are not long, sir.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: No sir, no sir. Not so quick.

Honourable Deputy Governor, in his reflective poem, "A Psalm of Life", [Henry Wadsworth] Longfellow wrote:

**"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time..."**

As Winston Churchill once observed, sir, **"We make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give."**

DG, those quotations capture much of what has been said here today and what we honour. They remind us that a life of public service is measured not by the offices we hold, or the years we serve, but by what we give to others and the legacy we leave behind. Through your commitment, your contribution to these Islands, you certainly have left your footprints on the Caymanian sands of time from West Bay sands, George Town, Bodden Town, East End, North Side, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. You've made an impact across all communities on all three islands.

Deputy Governor, your legacy will endure in the institutions you strengthened, especially the civil service to which you devoted so much of your life's work. It will also endure, sir, in the people you mentored and in the nation that you helped shape. It will not be forgotten. Long after today's proceedings have passed into history, sir, and the words everyone has spoken here have been forgotten, the impact of your work will continue to be felt in the lives of all Caymanians and the strength of the public service you helped to build.

On behalf of the people of the constituency of Red Bay, on behalf of myself and my family, I extend our deepest gratitude to you for a lifetime of distinguished public service to these Islands; and I extend that gratitude as well, as many here have said, to your family — you do the service, but they do it alongside you.

We wish you, sir, and your wonderful family good health, happiness, and every success in the years ahead as you begin this new chapter of your life. Our Islands are stronger because of the contributions you've made, and our Islands, our nation will be forever grateful.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Member for Savannah.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to offer a few words to the DG.

Mr. DG, I think what you started about being fantastic is now echoing in the halls of this Chamber; as I stepped out just now, I spoke to the Premier's driver and he said he was "fantastic".

[Laughter]

Ms. Heather D. Bodden: Maybe now all of us will pick that up.

Sir, you have served this country with dedication and distinction; now it's time to enjoy a well-earned retirement. During lunch at the Governor's residence this week, you shared a few reasons for stepping away from public service: more time with family, more opportunities to slow down and enjoy life.

All of those [are] wonderful reasons, but what resonated with me was your desire to spend more time with your mom, Miss Jenny, a lady of such grace, fortitude, and beauty. You are truly fortunate to have her, and I completely understand why she features so prominently in your plans for this next chapter. Time is one of life's greatest gifts, and being able to spend more time with those we love is something to treasure.

Paula: you're getting your brother back. At lunch earlier this week he shared a beautiful, sweet photo of him pushing you in a wheelbarrow. We thought it was the most beautiful treasure. Hold on to it. That reason, more than any other, spoke volumes about the kind of person you are. It is heartfelt, admirable and deeply inspiring.

Wishing you every blessing, good health, and much happiness as you embrace this new season of life. You have more than earned it; and to Miss Gloria who's sitting right behind me, my friend Ms. Glo, I promise we will hold each other's hands through this journey. You are more than ready for this role, and I have every confidence you will serve with grace, strength and distinction. Thank you both for your excellent leadership, and to both of you I say: Congratulations.

To the DG's family who's been sitting so proudly upstairs, I say to you: You are deeply loved. God bless you all.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Newlands.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Elected Member for Newlands: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is one of these rare occasions in this Parliament when I feel completely at ease and justified in standing and saying that I want to be associated with every single remark that has been made this afternoon in relation to Deputy Governor Franz Manderson.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: It may never happen again, you're right; but it has happened this afternoon and I think we should celebrate that — and Minister, your comment about it being recorded forever... that's *gonna* go in there.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I don't know what I can say about my Deputy Governor, my friend, my schoolmate. I don't know. I want to say that the only disappointment I've had this afternoon, if I've had any, is that our colleague the Minister from Cayman Brac has a habit of singing tributes and comments and I was so disappointed that he didn't go into *Mr. Boombastic*, very *fantastic*.

[Laughter]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I thought he was going to do that but, you know what? In his own way, he did something that was absolutely perfect too.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to stand here and quote Longfellow or any other well-known poet. You weren't the only one who did it. I would rather quote some "Franzisms" and there's one... Oh God, he has a ton of them. I don't know whether it was Miss Jenny who taught him any of these things, or whether he just picked them up along that path of life of hard work and dedication, but one of them was he doesn't deliver bad news on Fridays; so, he ain't delivered no bad news today and he ain't heard any bad news from any of us. He's only heard truth and, Mr. Speaker, truth is one of those things that is the easiest thing in the world to tell because you know there's no pressure; you do not have to remember anything you've said when you're telling the truth.

Mr. Manderson, my friend Franz, my schoolmate, I want to say on behalf of our friends who went to prep school, our friends and schoolmates who are the Cayman Islands High School graduating class of 1981, that you have been an awesome schoolmate, an awesome friend and... Actually, before I go on let me just drop a bombshell here this afternoon. There are times, Mr. Speaker, when Franz Manderson has not been fantastic.

[Laughter]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: There are times he has not been fantastic. Would you like to know what he has been instead of fantastic? He has been awesome! Mr. Speaker, let me demonstrate how he communicates that: DG, how are you doing today? Fantastic? *No, sir, I'm awesome!*

[Laughter]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: It has frustrated me so many times that he could be that way. I can't tell you he was

that way in school, but he has certainly demonstrated that even when he's not feeling well, he's still awesome and fantastic and he has certainly set an awesome and fantastic bar for the next DG who shouldn't be sitting against the wall there. I think she should be sitting over there. I encouraged her earlier to move her chair, but she said she didn't want to be that presumptuous.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this gentleman Franz Manderson has planned so many things. When I came into the public service, I was a little bit, maybe a year, older than what he has served in this public service role and even back then I would say to him *DG, you have really contributed so much to this country; what's your long-term plan?* He said, *well, I promised my...* No, I will say it like you, sir: *I promised my mama one thing—*

[Laughter]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: —*that I would retire when I'm still able, and she says this is her dream. I would retire when I'm still able to go and enjoy life with her and my family.* Thus, I want to tell you all that Franz Manderson's success is no accident.

His commitment, his determination, his achievement, all of that, and his getting to this point now, when he's able to sit here and listen to all of these accolades and compliments and well-wishes in front of his amazing mother, Miss Jenny; his amazing wife, Nuvia; his amazing son, Franz Jr., I don't—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Oh. Oh! I almost said I didn't see her.

I almost said I didn't see the recipient of the flowers. I didn't say that.

[Laughter]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I can't imagine what it feels like for you, sir, to sit here in front of your incredible family; to have these people recount the incredible record of service that you have had. I hope that one day maybe I can feel that I've accomplished some tiny part of that, but it is awesome to sit here as your friend and listen to this. To sit here as your colleague in public service, to have had the benefit of your counsel, your guidance, your ability to navigate all these issues that you find in public service.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have probably been friends from the time we were five years old?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:
Yeah.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I'm not gonna say how old we are, but for those of you who are good at maths, you can work it out if I tell you we've been friends for at least 55 years, and I have been inspired by this man. Even

when he left high school and he went and put on that sharp uniform while I was doing A levels, I was thinking to myself, *Hm, what am I doing here? He's out there having fun and enjoying himself, working, earning a living.* I have been jealous of you at times. I've been inspired by you all my life, and I just think that it's so easy to lay it on thick here today.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there's too much more that can be said, and I can't... Words fail me, to be honest; so much has been said, and yet somehow it feels like it's not enough. It feels that way. For a man who has given so much to public service and I know he came in not in search of any kind of title but to do public good. I can think of another title that you should have that rhymes with that, sir, and I agree with the Member for George Town Central in that respect. Somehow it just seems inadequate in terms of the title you have, but thank you on behalf of the constituents of Newlands, thank you on behalf of my family, thank you on behalf of your other schoolmate who I happen to be married to. The lady who is from West Bay, too.

[[Inaudible interjection and laughter]]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: You see, Mr. Speaker, they like to talk things. I got my passport, I got my visa, I got everything to the North a long time ago.

Thank you, sir, for everything you have done and thank you to your family for allowing you to provide the service you have. Thank you for being the friend that you are. Thank you for being the role model that you are; and as you're able now to fulfil your plan and enjoy your time with your mama and your family, I hope that you will remember us — remember me, now and again, and if you find some new barbecue place somewhere just let me know. Send me a little invite and give me enough notice. I'll come and try to join you when I get a minute.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:
Deal.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I don't have... I can't think of words that can further express my appreciation other than simply: Let us thank this good man who has committed his life to public service, being a friend and a family man and demonstrating that you can plan your life and you can achieve. You can succeed and you can be that young man — no, I'm going to go back a bit further.

You can be that boy who grows up to make his mother proud; to have a degree, to become a professional, and contribute to life in this country — Deputy Governor knows what I'm referring to. I won't go any further, but you, sir, have proven that comment wrong and have demonstrated what it is to be committed to serving our people in this country that we love so much.

Thank you, sir.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Much has been said and when you leave the Official Opposition and join the southeast Opposition you get last lot.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: They say that people will forget what you said and forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Honourable DG, Mr. Manderson, you made me feel valued, supported, and inspired at every single interaction. Working with you hasn't just been a professional privilege, it has been a personal joy. You have this rare gift of being able to guide us through our biggest challenges with total confidence while still being one of the first persons to celebrate our wins or send a special WhatsApp note when we needed one from a friend.

I can say I watched you grow from 1985 into a man determined for success; a person who would do anything to ensure the Cayman Islands stayed in good stead. We worked at the same time at the airport, and at that time airlines, immigration, and customs formed a special bond. A special fraternity that can raise its head at any time, at any conversation, and it starts with, *remember when this and that happened?* Always reminiscing on these notable characters at the airport. I can also remember seeing you on that unenviable Eastern Avenue loading in any catchable suspect in sight.

DG, I sought your advice many times whether it was the Motion on Second Chances that is very notable now, you were there; or whether it was taking from your pensions and I had to save the day when you came and spoke to me privately; or the rollover policy for civil servants when I was there as Minister; and many other times.

DG, before being elected, I served on immigration boards. We had the same great relationship whether in Cabinet or in Parliament. It was the same respect and admiration we had for each other.

I want to say thank you to your special wife Nuvia, who's my friend; your son, Franz Jr., your daughter Alyssa, and your mom, Miss Jenny — one of my special inspirations; we served on boards together and you know my love for her. Your sister Paula, for lending you to us for the last forty-four years.

You still found a way to stay calm, humble, and down to earth with such a high-profile job, even as Acting Governor. I can remember a family trip to Miami to watch the Los Angeles Lakers play Miami Heat. We had an awesome time as Lakers supporters (not sure if you're a Man United fan, though).

It's hard to summarise what you mean to us in just a few words. As a leader, you set the standard for what it means to be hard-working, strategic, and empathetic. As a friend, you've been one of my biggest cheerleaders and confidants. I can still remember, whilst I was the Border Control Minister, how you still paid attention to all the happenings.

DG, you leave massive shoes to fill, and the civil service will definitely miss your contributions, but I am more confident that your successor, Ms. Gloria McField-Nixon, will carry out even more successes as she was ably groomed by your good self. I also want to thank the good civil service for you with their leadership — it is most rousing. Again, thank you for your leadership, your wisdom and, most importantly, your friendship. I am going to miss you terribly, but I also can't wait to see all the great things you will do next. I just want to mention that I'm building a new party. Hint-hint.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I'll admit, when I first heard the DG was leaving, my first thoughts were, *wait, who's going to answer my WhatsApp messages at 11pm?* My second thought was just how incredibly lucky I have been to work with someone who was both a fantastic colleague and a genuinely great friend. You always knew exactly when to push me to do my best; you don't even know how the actions you took made a difference in my life. I personally know how much you want to spend time with your family, and I pray it brings fulfilment and happiness.

Thank you for being such an incredible mentor and an even better friend. We are so excited for your next chapter, and you better promise to keep in touch. We are absolutely losing a great leader, but I'm so grateful that I can get to keep a wonderful friend. Thank you for everything you've done for the country and for me. I wish you the absolute best in your next adventure and leave you with two scriptures:

"...God said to us, 'You have stayed at this mountain long enough. It is time to break camp and move on.'" Deuteronomy 1:6-7

"Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get side-tracked; keep your feet from following evil." Proverbs 4:25-27

May God continue to bless you and your family, my friend. From all the people in Bodden Town East: We thank you for your service to this country.

Walk good, Sir Manderson.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I think I'm probably the only one now standing between the people inside this Chamber and the real celebration that will take place this evening at the Grand Old House. I'm looking forward to being there and celebrating with you, Franz — I think this will probably be the one time I will not call you DG, but just call you Franz, and I hope you won't be offended by that.

Mr. Speaker, I got to be honest and say, for me, when we assemble here next Tuesday, it will be with a real sense of emptiness within me because for my entire political career that man has sat across from me, and I've sat across there with you, so he has been a fixture in this Parliament for my entire time here and I am going to have to say at the outset, Franz, that I am truly going to miss you. I know all good things must come to an end at some point, and this is just one, but I know it's not the end and I know that I'll be seeing you and we'll have other occasions to engage with each other.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't known Franz for the length of time that someone like Mr. Panton and others here have known him and engaged with him. I really first came to know a little bit about the man they called Franz when he became Chief Immigration Officer; that's when I stood up and took note of this man, and I said at that time, *he's going somewhere*. That he, at such a young age, would be able to stand up and take the reins of immigration in this country and lead it in the way that he did, said mounds to me in terms of his capability.

Mr. Speaker, I really came to get to know Franz when I became an elected Member of this Parliament and I've had 13 good years of working with him. I served four years in Cabinet with him — and Franz, I have enjoyed the interactions I had with you. You treated me with respect; you treated me as a friend, and I hope I reciprocated and showed you the same sort of friendship that you extended to me.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I've also served, I think it's like nine years now, either as a member of or Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and without exception, I don't think there's anyone who has appeared before that Committee more frequently than Franz Manderson. I have to say the professional way in which he approached the Committee and the commitment and frankness with which he engaged with us, whether answering our questions or making commitments to the Committee... and I have to say I can't recall a situation where he made a commitment and didn't fulfil it. He always did and within the timeframe that he agreed to do so.

I appreciate what you have done and what you did, Franz; the leadership you provided and the example you are leaving for others who come behind you. I wish everybody could be like that, and so I am truly grateful to have had these 13 years to work with you. I

just want to wish you every success and an enjoyable retirement.

So many people have said it; the one characteristic about you that stands foremost in my mind: *Morning, Mr. Manderson [or] Morning, Franz, how are you? What's the word?*

Some Hon. Members: Fantastic!

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Fantastic.

Franz, that has had a real profound effect on me, improving me and giving me a better outlook; and when I come into this Parliament and say good morning, and you give that kind of an answer, it just brings a bit of a hop and a step to your day and it makes it that much more enjoyable. Enjoy your retirement, Franz. I wish you all the very best I could ever do.

I can't see your mom and the rest of your family back there, but I know there must be some big smiles on their faces this evening as they have sat down here and listened to all the accolades that have been heaped upon you. I've run out of them. They've all been said, but as I conclude this evening, Franz, I hope for one thing: That when you walk out of this building this evening, you will walk out with Miss Nuvia under one arm, Mrs. Jenny Manderson on the other arm — surrounded by your children and you walk out together as one united family, much like you came in.

I wish you all the very best on your retirement. I love you, and I appreciate all you have done for the good people of the Cayman Islands, and I thank you for your contributions here in this Parliament because you've made it a better place and you're leaving it better than you came into it, so thank you, sir, with all my heart.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General.

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm conscious that we are a bit past the hour of conclusion, but I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak.

If I can just go back to first principles and we look at the Office of the Deputy Governor in the context of the Constitution, which is quite an important one, the ex officio appointment is significant, Mr. Speaker. It ensures the automatic membership of and ongoing representation by individuals whose expertise and experience in their respective fields are inextricably linked to the matters before this honourable House.

The Deputy Governor has therefore, over the years, provided the bridge between the civil service and the legislature, bringing his intimate knowledge, experience, and operational understanding of the work of more than 50 core government entities to the House, importantly, for the benefit of all honourable Members, regardless of the position in which he sits.

Much has been said this afternoon about the importance of family to Mr. Manderson — the love and deep affection he has had for his family members who are present with us today; but he's also regarded the civil service as his family and the importance of that sense of family, given the time that many civil servants would spend in the workplace. He was therefore committed, Mr. Speaker, to ensuring that people felt valued so that they could in turn perform at their highest level for their customers who, in his opinion, deserved nothing less.

He viewed the civil service as a collective body charged with one single mission: *making the lives of those we serve better*. Mr. Speaker, it is a simple but powerful statement of the reason for our existence as civil servants, but importantly, one that reflects the very unique privilege conferred upon all of us. It is the ability and the opportunity to bring about meaningful and impactful changes to the communities, the families, the experiences of visitors to the Islands, and the jurisdiction as a whole.

As part of fulfilling that mission, he was a firm advocate of collaborative working. He discouraged joining in what he termed “the chorus of complaints” — should they be made against one department, not to join in and echo those views but encouraged efforts to be part of a solution, because he very astutely understood, Mr. Speaker, that when the civil service did not perform or was perceived as not performing, we were all tainted and painted with the same brush.

Much has been said about what we call the “DGisms”, little sayings that he's had. Not to be outdone, I must add one. He would say, *we've got to look after the team* — and so he did, through an array of initiatives aimed at developing civil servants, his civil service families, particularly his senior managers. This was done through an expanded curriculum of learning opportunities; recognised management qualifications from various globally recognised institutions in areas such as project management, building better business cases for procurement, strategic planning, workplace mediation, investigative training, targeted leadership coaching. It also reflected his commitment to lifelong learning.

Civil service wellness: looking after the family, making sure the team was okay was obviously a key priority. He recognised that a healthy workforce was likely to be a more productive one and make a contribution to building a more resilient community as a whole. We've heard this afternoon about various initiatives, his legendary Deputy Governor's 5K. We've not heard much about his Sports Day, the pedometer challenge, which was an early initiative where he had us stepping.

In short, Mr. Speaker, he kept the civil service moving, literally and operationally, and we were much better off for it. His wellness committee worked tirelessly under his guidance to facilitate more cost-effective access to gyms and other fitness institutions,

making sure that we were as robust as we could possibly be; and then his wellness committee's remit expanded focusing on things like financial planning, retirement, nutrition, and mental health.

Keeping up with the times: Following the examples of the COVID pandemic, he recognised there was an opportunity for the service and so introduced policies for remote and flexible working, recognising, Mr. Speaker, that the unduly long commute was impacting the quality of many civil servants' lives but also, in some instances, their effectiveness. He recognised with great foresight that it was an opportunity for us to demonstrate agility in how we worked, changing the landscape.

He also championed comprehensive legislative reforms for terms and conditions applicable to civil servants, parental leave being one of those, increasing maternity and paternity leave; in-service death benefits, providing well-meaning support for civil servants in difficult circumstances. He also championed increases in annual leave and the minimum salary for all civil servants, raising that threshold to \$3,000, recognising the practical hardships and difficulties that were faced by his civil service family.

His engagement survey was also a source of pride, giving the civil service a voice, and he took on board their feedback, the good and the not so good, using it to make sustainable and informed, meaningful reforms. A testament to the Deputy Governor's leadership was the resounding 90 per cent of civil servants who indicated they were proud to be civil servants — understandably, this was a source of great pride for the Honourable Deputy Governor. These are but a few illustrations of how he took care of his family.

When we speak of the journey to world class, it is synonymous with the Honourable Deputy Governor. He reimagined the civil service. He didn't merely lead it, Mr. Speaker, and as we journeyed towards his vision of world class, we did so through strategic planning built around core goals such as outstanding customer service, governance practices, and a culture of accountability.

Perhaps one of his most pivotal contributions was his commitment to the government of the day, whatever that looked like, to deliver its priorities. He encouraged cross-ministerial portfolio collaboration and by aligning his personal drive with the government's agenda he facilitated the transformation of political objectives, whether that was economic or infrastructural development, into tangible, measurable results.

Looking outward, the Honourable Deputy Governor harnessed the talent of the civil service to drive positive change within the community. Much has been said this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, about initiatives (Second Chances). We've spoken about the interns, and this honourable House and Members have had the opportunity to meet some of them recently.

He introduced sustainability initiatives across the service, not simply on the environment, but on wider

focus areas such as wellbeing and development. He gave back; his 5K, twelve years in the running, contributed just under a million US dollars benefiting some thirty local charities. Significantly, his gratitude for those charged with protecting our community and the borders was constant. Always reflected in the prayers he would offer at the beginning of his meetings. Always thankful for their service, always seeking the Lord's blessings upon them for their protection and safe return at the end of their shifts.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the privilege of working with the Honourable Deputy Governor for twenty-one years plus, but in different capacities. He first began as a client to whom legal advice and legal representation was given. I remarked to him not too long ago that one of the very first cases I did in the Islands was defending one of his decisions: to refuse to permit entry to a well-known dancehall performer who had been convicted on some occasions for using profane language.

[Laughter]

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: I was told by the Deputy Governor, (then Chief Immigration Officer), *I've never lost a case yet; I've got a record to uphold.*

[Laughter]

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: We upheld it, Deputy Governor, we certainly did.

On occasion, in later years, he became one of my two managers, the other being the Honourable Attorney General, and on occasions such as this, I've had the privilege to sit next to him as an ex officio colleague. One of the many things that I've always admired was his view that while striving for world class he recognised that things would not always go the way we would want. There would be times when things would go wrong, and that in such an event we as a service would act. We would learn from our mistakes.

Significantly, he was not prepared to defend the indefensible, and that recognises his integrity as an individual. He sought guidance from others, never pretending to know everything, but always demonstrated an eager willingness to learn, to listen, and to receive. He was willing to modify his stance on matters as was appropriate — and that resonates with me, Mr. Speaker. It's easy to steer a course in calm seas under sunny skies and gentle breezes, less so amidst turbulent waters and storms. That says very much about the nature of the individual who's steering the course for us.

These highlights tell a story, Mr. Speaker. Much has been said about the legendary stories that come from the Honourable Deputy Governor. What do all of these things collectively say about this individual to my left? They tell a story of inspiration from those

leaders who preceded him on his journey, those who revealed to him a world of infinite possibilities; who inspired him to strive for great heights, but equally, to those whose hearts and minds he in turn has awakened. Those in this honourable Chamber who he has inspired in various ways. They tell of commitment to service by an individual who has treated public office as a sacred responsibility held on behalf of the people.

Bureaucratic agility — progress by inclusion: A listener to the lived experiences of those around him to ensure policy decisions that reflect real human needs. Visionary execution, shaped by the clarity to see a better future, coupled with the drive to construct the pathways needed to get there. This is perhaps the point in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, where I find a quote from a global leader or a religious figure or a sporting athlete, but I'd like to say that I found something far better than any of those, and I'll read in full:

“We pay tribute to those among us who embody the spirit of excellence... whose contributions have left an indelible mark on our organisation and the communities we serve. They are not just employees; they are catalysts for change, champions of progress, and ambassadors of our values.”

Those are the words spoken by the Honourable Deputy Governor delivered at the 2023 DG's Employee of the Year Award Ceremony in recognition of the civil servants who had performed to an outstanding level.

In that very moment, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Governor would likely have had no thought of how fitting and entirely appropriate those words would have been to him. Such was his humility. Such was, in the moment, taking the time to celebrate the civil servants there; but how very satisfying, Mr. Speaker, to be able to quote him right back to him this afternoon. I think if we make some very small tweaks to that quote they could not be improved upon any better for that.

I must recognise his senior leadership team who is here because through his leadership, the manner of engagement with us, he has inspired deep and abiding loyalty on the part of these very, very hard-working individuals. The positions of Chief Officers, Mr. Speaker, can be quite lonely. Their burdens are heavy, the demands upon them are onerous, and what the Honourable Deputy Governor has done was to always provide a very safe space to offer counsel when requested, guidance to lift and to carry all of us at the moments when we have needed that extra degree of support — and for that, I thank you, sir.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the legacy of the Honourable Franz Manderson is not what he did for himself, but what he set in motion for those who follow in his footsteps — the shoes will be a little bit different; the footsteps will be followed. To you, sir, I say thank you, in all sincerity, for your contributions, and all that you have done for me with the different hats that I've worn over the years.

I wish you many adventures in the days ahead, good health, happiness — and we return him to the safe custody and hands of his loving family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable DG, would you like to take the opportunity to respond, or...

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Absolutely, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have words. Fantastic is not going to do it today.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Oh my. I have to tell you, I have delivered many speeches and remarks in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, but this is going to be the most difficult one, sir, and I crave your indulgence.

Today has exceeded all of my expectations. I know how much I love my civil service. I know how much respect I have for all Members of this Parliament; but you know, I didn't find out how much the civil service loved me until I had a heart attack, and now it's confirmed how much respect you have for me when I'm leaving and I can't tell you what your words have meant to me.

My mother keeps saying, *Franz, you say proud too much* — but Mum, I think this is a proud day, very, very proud day. I want to thank God, Mr. Speaker, for today. For giving me the health and strength to be here to enjoy this moment with my family.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging Messrs. Donovan Ebanks and James Ryan, who both have passed on; we're having Mr. Ryan's service tomorrow. It's because of those two gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, that I'm here. The confidence they had in me, the opportunity they gave me, and Mr. Speaker, every day I have tried to give others what they gave me: an opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, much of what has been said here about me is actually in my speech.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Let us see if I can get through this.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you with a grateful heart. After forty-four years of service to the people of the Cayman Islands, this chapter of my life is coming to an end. I began this journey in 1980 as an intern and in 1981 as a Clerical Assistant earning \$5,000 a year. I did not have a grand career plan; I did not have a dream of titles or positions...

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, I had one simple goal, sir.

An Hon. Member: I got you.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Thank you.

I had one simple goal: To make my mother and my sister proud and make their lives better. That was it. That was my purpose and, Mr. Speaker, every day since then, I've worked hard to honour that purpose.

Over the years I've learnt that one of life's most important lessons is never to confuse your purpose with your work. Work is what you do, purpose is why you do it. If you confuse the two, then once work ends, you will believe your life has lost its meaning; but if your work serves your purpose, then every day becomes a gift.

People often ask me, *did you ever imagine that you would be Deputy Governor?* The answer is no. I simply wanted to make a difference. I wanted to serve my beloved Cayman Islands; I wanted my mother and my sister to look at me and say, *he made us proud*. If that was my purpose, then I can honestly say today that I have never worked a day in my life. I simply fulfilled my purpose.

My mother is here today and before I go any further, I want to thank her in a way that perhaps I never fully have. As children, my sister and I could only ask for opportunities. We could only dream. We could only hope. She was the one who made those opportunities possible. She sacrificed quietly and consistently. She put our needs before her own. She taught us respect, integrity, humility, discipline, and faith — in other words, she raised us the Caymanian way.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: If I have achieved anything in life, it is because she laid the foundation upon which I stood. Today, with profound gratitude I say: Thank you, Mum, for your sacrifice, your prayers, your lessons, and acts of love. Whatever good I have done, has its roots in what she first planted in me, and I thank her every day.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Then, Mr. Speaker, my purpose grew because I met my loving wife, Nuvia. For forty-two years, Mr. Speaker, we've been together. Thirty years of marriage. She has been my greatest supporter, my rock, and the light that has guided me through every season of life — and if you know Nuvia and her family, when you marry her, you marry her family; so, Miss Jackie is here and Paula; and Paula's husband, Paul is here.

Mr. Speaker, a West Bayer marrying a George Towner, you know, there were some challenges but apparently, my green eyes helped a bit.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker, then of course, came my daughter Alyssa. She gave me an even greater purpose: to be the father I never had.

[Pause]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Alyssa, I'm so proud of the woman you have become.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: She lights up my life every day; all she has to do is ring the doorbell and before the doorbell finishes, I'm at the door.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Her presence makes my life better every day. Then came Franz, Jr. The son I wanted since I was twelve years old. I planned it all.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Franz, Jr., I could not be prouder of being your dad.

Alyssa, Franz, Jr.: Watching you both become remarkable human beings has been one of my greatest privileges ever. Of all the titles I have held, none has meant more to me than being your dad.

My family has been my greatest source of strength and perhaps their greatest gift to me was this: No stress. They created a home filled with love, perspective, laughter, and peace. I know being the wife and the children of the Deputy Governor was not always easy, but soon your husband, your honey, and your daddy will transition from the Deputy Governor to Franz full-time. Yay!

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: July 8th is going to be a super-fantastic day.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: I often say I'm a lucky man but then Nuvia tells me I am blessed.

My sister Paula, as mentioned here, sent me a photograph from when we were young. I was sitting in a wheelbarrow and she was right there with me and she wrote, *I can't wait to get my brother back*. Anyone who knows Paula understands loyalty, and I would caution you not to say anything negative about me to Paula. You will receive a healthy dose of what we call West Bay candour. Paula: thank you for your love, your honesty, your support — and Paula, Franz is coming, yeah?

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, over the years I've often asked myself, how do I want to be remembered? As a successful Deputy Governor or as a loving son, husband, and father; as someone compassionate, fair, dedicated; someone with the strength of character?

The answer has always been the obvious. The titles fade. Offices change hands, achievements eventually become footnotes in history, but character endures. Love endures. The lives we touch endure, and so retirement has come naturally to me because if we say family is important, then at some point we must demonstrate it. There comes a time to stop talking about priorities and start living them. That time has come for me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I retire with peace. I hand over the baton knowing that the civil service is in capable hands. I have every confidence in our new DG, Gloria McField-Nixon. An exceptional leader who has helped shape our modern civil service. I often say that everyone needs a Glo—

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: — because mine shines bright.

She leads with compassion when compassion is needed and demonstrates strength when strength is required. She understands that leadership is not a choice between empathy and accountability; the very best leaders embody both.

When my predecessor, Mr. Donovan Ebanks retired, he told me that he expected me to do the job better than he did. Those words stayed with me, Mr. Speaker. Today, I say the same thing about our Deputy Governor Designate. I expect her to do the job better than I did and I absolutely have no doubt she will.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yes.

Leadership is not about making yourself indispensable; it's about preparing others to succeed without you. It is about leaving an institution stronger than you found it. To our new Deputy Governor, I offer full

support, deepest respect, and the very best wishes. The best days of the civil service are ahead of us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can't thank you and all Members of this House [enough] for the farewell that happened earlier in this Chamber.

Premier, Leader of the Opposition and all honourable Members: Thank you for your moving tributes. They have warmed my heart. It's been one of the best days of my life and I'm so happy, Mr. Speaker, that my family is here to witness this incredible occasion.

I deeply value the relationship that I have built with all Members of this House. Relationships that will continue in my retirement, no doubt — Minister Anglin, I will hold you to the promise you made me about that trade, yes — but I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I intend to keep my mama happy, so I have no intentions of sitting down in these green chairs again. Yeah.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker, my sense of duty would never have allowed me to retire in times of crisis; however, I leave at a time when the good ship Cayman sails on calm waters.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: That gives me great comfort. The Premier and his government have fostered a strong and respectful partnership with the civil service; civil servants feel valued, trusted, and appreciated for the work they do on behalf of the people of these Islands.

Together we have navigated difficult challenges, embraced opportunities and delivered meaningful outcomes for our Islands. No government succeeds alone; behind every policy implemented, every service delivered, and every commitment fulfilled stand dedicated public servants working quietly and tirelessly to serve the people of the Cayman Islands.

I thank the Premier and his colleagues for the confidence they have placed in the civil service and for the respect they consistently show to the institution and to the men and women who serve within.

I also want to thank the Members of the Opposition for the important role they play in our democracy and for their support for the civil service over the many years too.

What has given me tremendous hope in recent times, Mr. Speaker, is the growing willingness of elected leaders to work together in the nation's interests. We have come to understand that progress is not about who receives the credit for an idea, whose name appears on a Motion, or who claims ownership of a solution — it is about the results. It is about improving the lives of the people of these Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I especially commend you, sir, for reminding us, amid political debate and differing viewpoints, that our focus must always be the people of the Cayman Islands whom we are privileged to serve. If we preserve this spirit of partnership and mutual respect, future generations will look back and say that this Parliament helped usher in a new era. One in which collaboration replaced division, respect trumped rancour, and the common good mattered more than individual recognition. That is a legacy worthy of this honourable House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I leave at a time when things are good; the waters are calm, the future is bright, and the good ship Cayman continues her journey with steady hands at the helm.

Mr. Speaker, people often ask me what I consider my greatest achievement — I've been around a long time; but Mr. Speaker, it's not a policy. It is not a programme, it is not a title. My greatest achievement is our civil servants. I have had the privilege to work alongside thousands of extraordinary public servants who care deeply about this country and its people. To all of them, I say: Thank you. Our country is stronger because of you.

To my senior leadership team, my Chief Officers: Thank you for believing in me, challenging me, supporting me. You're among the finest public servants anywhere in the world. Recently, facilitators from Harvard remarked they had never worked with a more talented and engaged group of professionals. That is Harvard, Mr. Speaker... but I was not surprised. I've seen your excellence first-hand.

Mr. Speaker, to my Chief officers: the DG loves you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: To my team in my office, the Office of the Deputy Governor, led by Ms. Mary Rodrigues who often exceeds all my expectations when I give her difficult assignments and has worked hard to make my life better. Deputy Governor Designate, you can have great confidence in the ODG team. They will also make your life better.

To my personal assistant, Tenisha, thank you for keeping me organised and ensuring that I was never late for a function or event. You kept the chaos organised.

Mr. Speaker, those who work behind the scenes rarely receive the recognition they deserve, but whatever success I have enjoyed has been made possible by their dedication and professionalism. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my career to serve alongside my team.

Mr. Speaker, people also ask me what are the moments I treasure most in my career. They are not individual achievements, Mr. Speaker. When someone received an opportunity, they never thought possible. In other words, it was when we made people's lives

better. When a young Caymanian discovered confidence, when someone found hope, when a colleague felt valued, when a family benefited because public servants cared enough to give their best. Those are the moments I remember and matter the most to me.

Mr. Speaker, let me share with you a few stories that demonstrate that, and as you have heard from people here, I have many stories — I could spend the rest of the afternoon telling you stories.

Mr. Speaker, a young man who has not held a job for years gets a job in the hotel industry. He has a conviction, [but] he didn't declare it to his employer. His employer says to him, *you're doing an amazing job, we're going to send you overseas for training*; but he has a conviction, so he can't get a waiver. He calls the office and says, *can you help me?* This was Friday, Mr. Speaker, he had to leave on Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, his record was expunged on Monday. He left on Tuesday.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, many years ago our Deputy Premier called me at 10 o'clock one night. *DG, we have a young child at the hospital, a few months old, diagnosed with stomach issues; they need to get off the island tomorrow.*

Remember the case?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, the child had no passport. The air ambulance was coming at 2 o'clock. We issued the passport in an hour. The air ambulance said, *we need a police record.* We said it's a six-month-old child — *but we need a police record.* The RCIPS issued a police record in 45 minutes; the child left. Six months later, I saw the grandfather and he showed me a picture of the child playing in the park. Those are moments I'm never going to forget, Mr. Speaker.

Six months ago, I met with a young man. His police record was pretty lengthy. He had not worked in three years. He wanted a second chance. I met with him. I wanted to see this man. He said, *Mr. Manderson, I am getting by supporting my family by selling bread-fruit trees on the side of the road. I want to work, sir. Give me a chance.* We enrolled him in our Second Chance Programme. We gave him three months to prove himself. Three months later, I got a report from his supervisor. He said, *he is one of the best employees I have; he's here every day and has never refused an assignment.* I will never forget that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago a former Member of Parliament called me. *DG, one of my former constituents woke up Friday morning — this was Monday, Mr. Speaker — and she can't see. She's losing her eyesight.* She had been to a couple of doctors and couldn't find out what was happening, what was wrong. Never had a headache. On Monday morning she went to a

doctor who told her, *if you don't get to Bascom-Palmer by Thursday, you will lose your eyesight.* She was a Caymanian who had never been naturalised. Naturalisation takes six months.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday morning, as I swore her in as a new citizen, she was struggling to sign her name; she was crying. I said, *Ma'am, why are you crying? We're helping you.* She said, *I never thought anyone would care about me like this. I didn't think my government would care.* She left. I don't know what happened, Mr. Speaker, but we did our part. Her passport was issued. Police record was issued; waiver was issued. She was on the flight in time to get her eyes checked.

Mr. Speaker, mention was made of our Emerging Talent Programme, which allows young graduates to come into the civil service without experience. Successive governments have funded the programme.

Mr. Speaker, when I meet with a young graduate and tell them, *you are now a permanent member of the civil service.* They didn't have to apply for the job, Mr. Speaker; our law allows us to just appoint those people. The look on their faces, that their government has provided them with this opportunity, I will never forget, Mr. Speaker. What connects these stories is that making lives better will always matter more than individual achievements, and those are the cases that I'm always going to remember. How we made people's lives better.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about my positive attitude — “Fantastic”.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: However, Mr. Speaker, I believe deeply in leading with positivity.

Positivity is not pretending problems don't exist. Positivity is believing that together we will solve them. It is choosing hope over despair. It is lifting others when it would be easier to criticise, so you know Franz is going to continue to be fantastic.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, as I wind down, I have to thank the people whom we serve — the extraordinary people of these Cayman Islands. Thank you for the greatest honour of my life.

For forty-four years, your unwavering support, feedback, and love have been my anchor. In your faces I've always seen the true essence of Caymankind. That beautiful, unique spirit that blends deep kindness and humility with our unbreakable inner strength. You held me accountable, and most of the time you did so with the warmth and grace that defines our people. You provided the ultimate meaning to my work and fuelled my purpose every single day. As I transition to this next

chapter, I look forward to walking among you simply as a fellow Caymanian who loves his home deeply.

Thank you for your trust. Thank you for your prayers and thank you for showing me the best of Caymankind through this incredible journey.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, allow me to leave you with one final thought: The Empty Boat Theory. Imagine you are driving your boat in the North Sound (Mr. Rutty) and another boat crashes into yours. Your immediate action is anger. You criticise, you blame; but as the boat drifts closer, you realise it's empty. Instantly your anger disappears. It has no one to blame. The situation hasn't changed, but your response has.

Many of life's collisions are like that empty boat. People are carrying burdens we cannot see. They are fighting battles we know nothing about. The empty boat theory reminds us to choose grace over anger, understanding over judgement, and compassion over resentment. Perhaps that's one of the reasons I have lived with what my family calls "no stress". I chose not to let bitterness occupy space in my heart. Instead, I tried to fill that space with positivity; to encourage rather than discourage, to celebrate others' successes because leadership is not about how many people work for you; it is about how many people are better because you choose to invest in them.

Mr. Speaker, forty-four years ago, a young man arrived with one goal: to make his mother and sister proud. Tonight, as I conclude this journey, I know I have done that. I know I've made my good wife proud. Alyssa and Franz, Jr. are proud. I know I have served this country with integrity, and I know I leave the civil service stronger than I found it. While none of us can fully control how history remembers us, I hope when my time here is recalled, people will not speak first about my title. I hope they will say: *he loved his family, he honoured the sacrifices of those who gave him the start, he loved his country, he believed in people, he believed Cayman is stronger when we work together, he lifted others; and he served with purpose.*

Thank you for the extraordinary privilege of allowing me to serve the Cayman Islands for forty-four years. It has been the honour of my lifetime, Mr. Speaker. May God continue to bless each one of you, and may God continue to bless these beloved Cayman Islands.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause and desk thumping]

[Singing of For He's a Jolly Good Fellow]

***"For he's a jolly good fellow,
for he's a jolly good fellow
For he's a jolly good fellow,
and so say all of us."***

[Applause and desk thumping]

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: The question is that this House now stand adjourned until 10am on Tuesday, 23rd June.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

The House stands adjourned.

At 6:07pm the House stood adjourned until 10am Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026.