



CARIBBEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

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Tribute by CCJ President, the Honourable Mr Justice Adrian Saunders on the passing of the Honourable Mr Justice C. Dennis Morrison OJ CD KC

It is a noble tradition that colleagues in the law are sometimes afforded opportunities to bestow accolades upon a deserving judge or lawyer upon their achieving a significant milestone. So it was that three years ago, several of us fulsomely eulogised Justice Morrison and celebrated his extraordinary service as he demitted office as President of the Court of Appeal of Jamaica. In his presence, and that of his wife and his children, we were able then sincerely to express what an exceptionally fine gentleman he was, how he enriched the lives of so many, and the vast extent of his unparalleled contribution to the development of our Caribbean jurisprudence.

At the time, Dennis was an esteemed member of the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission and I noted then how blessed I was, as Chair of that body, to be able to call on his skills and experience to assist the Commission and me in discharging our responsibilities, benefiting as we did from his affable temperament, his wisdom, his learning, his unimpeachable integrity and his ability to resolve the most intractable problems without undue fuss.

At that sitting, in 2020, we fully anticipated that the occasion was, for him, no ride into the sunset but instead a celebratory send-off, perhaps to greener less demanding pastures. And now, we all experience this indescribable pain, this unfathomable sense of deep loss.

The tributes have been pouring in. They vary in length, emphasis and emotion, but they speak with one accord, affirming what we all know; the untimely death of Justice C. Dennis Morrison is a grievous blow to the legal and judicial community in Jamaica, and throughout the Caribbean and beyond.

What made Dennis so highly regarded was not just the rare combination of professional excellence and modesty, but more so, his generosity of spirit, his determination to place his tremendous skills at the service of law students, attorneys, judges and governing bodies. Precious few Caribbean jurists have sat with distinction on as many different appellate courts as he has, not to mention his service on various governance institutions. And invariably, he served at the highest levels whether as President or Chairman of this or that Court of Appeal or other Council.

I repeat what I said in 2020. Jamaica has every right to be justly proud of and to revere this most distinguished son of the soil. Equally, we in the rest of the Caribbean feel entitled also to claim him as one of ours. His service to the entire region has been immeasurable and profound. He embodied greatness. And greatness among us must appropriately be recognised, defined and lauded so that succeeding generations might learn about the heights of which we as a people are capable and to which we must continually aspire.

I extend my deepest condolences to his widow, Janet, their children, his siblings and loved ones. This is another of those occasions where your grief is not shared. It is multiplied.

Adrian D Saunders