



# Bermuda Industrial Union Tribute to Sis. LaVerne Furbert

SEPTEMBER 1, 1946 - JANUARY 31, 2021

## IN OUR OPINION

### Brothers & Sisters

Life is a satisfying experience and a very challenging journey. In the midst of this journey we are fortunate to meet people like Sis. LaVerne Furbert.

Sis. LaVerne was different than most people, she was open-minded and unafraid to speak with conviction on issues and topics you and I would not touch. In the last few weeks since her passing many have paid tribute to Sis. LaVerne and have called her a warrior, fearless, a drum major and many other heroic names.

We the staff of the Bermuda Industrial Union (BIU), Sis. LaVerne's second family would like to talk about the well-dressed sister that pulled up to Union Square in that little blue car on a daily basis. Sis. LaVerne was not only the Executive Secretary, she was a friend, she was a cook for some, she was an advisor, she was a good listener and a confidant.

Sis. LaVerne was a union member from 2002 to 2021; she was hired



by the union as the Secretary to the Executives on April 12th 2004 under then President, the Hon. Derrick Burgess. Her special mix of secretarial, journalist, political and passion for human rights and justice made her the perfect fit at BIU. She also assisted in the preparation of the Workers Voice along with Bro.

Lionel Pearman and when he passed she took over preparing the paper along with the then Editor, the late Bro. Calvin Smith.

Trade Unionism opened the door for her to encourage persons to display their talents and abilities to express themselves. She was fearless in her opinions and demonstrated her ability to take our issues with a determination to make her point.

Working at the BIU truly was the perfect job for Sis. LaVerne. Her office sits right in the middle of the two titular officers, the General President and the General Secretary. Her role was to manage their schedules, organize press conferences, do their personal typing but no job was too small, she would drop them off to meetings and pick them back up as well. Having a secretary who was "in the know" and well-connected was a true benefit. Bro. Chris could call out to Sis. LaVerne at any time and say "get the Premier on the phone" or "call Minister so-and-so", this was right up her alley. She knew them well and on a personal level and the importance of that cannot be discounted. When members showed up unannounced to see Bro. Chris, Sis. LaVerne would come out and

(continue on page 2)





talk to them and by the time she was finished, they did not need to see Bro. Chris anymore. Her value to this organization was felt immediately when she passed.

Sis. LaVerne was at the forefront of assisting people experiencing personal challenges by using her many social and political contacts to correct all injustice. One could not tell the many times she helped her fellow Bermudians and others out of a firestorm of personal challenges. She did not have a problem calling anybody to tell them she had someone in need and if they did not offer some form of support the whole office knew. We would hear her shouting 'getting on my 'fackin nerves' and out the building she went to sit in her car and then she would come back and call whomever again until she got the right answer, she was persistent.

Sis. LaVerne was bold, she had a dog named *Two-J* whom she loved dearly, even to the point *Two-J* at one time slept in the bed with her. In 2007 *Two-J* died and to the astonishment of the Executive Board, Sis. LaVerne asked for compassionate leave to grieve his passing, and she was absolutely serious, she was told she could take a vacation day.

She even wrote a full page tribute to *Two-J* in the *Workers Voice*.

Everyone knows that the second House of Assembly is directly across the street from the BIU where the public bathrooms are located. Well, Sis. LaVerne felt the members needed to have something to sit on so she called up the Corporation of Hamilton and within two days two benches were put in place.

Sis. LaVerne was an immaculate dresser and everything had to be matching from her eye shadow to her earrings and she loved bright prints, especially pink and African prints. She would always compliment someone when they were dressed well and she really admired Bro. Chris for being a well-dressed man and he always smells nice she would say.



In one of her 'In My Opinion' columns Sis. LaVerne stated that one of her favorite text in the Bible came from the book of Ruth as follows: 'Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God'. All can attest that she lived by this text to the very end.

*(continue on page 3)*

## THE WORKERS VOICE

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*Staff members spoke of what Sis. LaVerne meant to them as follows:*

**Sis. Yvette** – Sis. LaVerne always showed up Monday morning with a meal for me but I will definitely miss her fishcakes this year, they were absolutely delicious.

**Sis. Melaine** – love you dearly, will miss you so much.

**Sis. Shawnee** – I love you and miss you.

**Sis. Pat** - a friend is never truly gone. Their spirit lives on in memories of those who loved them. The best of friends know that they were loved for who they were in life. Saying goodbye isn't for me. Instead, I will say that I look forward to seeing my friend again. It's been an honor knowing you, you will be remembered as a legend, rest in peace my friend.

**Sis. Renee** - at any moment any one of us in the office could have asked Sis. LaVerne for help and she would make herself available to us. Her

passion and presence is a big miss in the office, she truly was committed to what she was about. May her memory be a blessing.

**Bro. Scottie** – she was a trooper.

**Sis. Ronnie Burgess** – will miss your listening ear, popping into my office and asking 'what's happening' and our talks about the current events no matter the subject and working on the Women's Tea and other events. I miss you my 'Senior Friend'.

**Bro. Arnold** – Laverne with an "E" I guess for "Extraordinary" Her spirit was kind and giving. She was politically astute, a literary genius, a great defender for the



causes she championed. A mother, a grandmother, a sister and a friend. Rest In Peace, my friend.

**Bro. Ronnie Smith** – it's really hard to believe she is gone, just like that we are left with just the memories. I am going to be thinking about all the times I worked with her, I would hear my phone ringing and she would say 'Ronnie can you come here a minute please'. Guess you cannot take friendships for granted, life is but a vapor and then you are gone. I am going to miss her.

**Bro. Graham** – Sis. LaVerne has proven she was truly her brother/sister's keeper on a regular basis. She was not afraid to express herself in defense of anything she believed in that was deemed a violation of their rights. I will truly miss this giant of a Freedom Fighter. Love always. Rest In Peace.

**Bro. George** – an ever on guard Union Soldier always seeking to assist any person in need of assistance

*(continue on page 4)*

when needed. Sis. LaVerne was the person that listened to them union member or not.

**Bro. Collin** – she was a Sister and a warrior, I could depend on her to assist me especially with our Seniors Division. Rest In Peace.

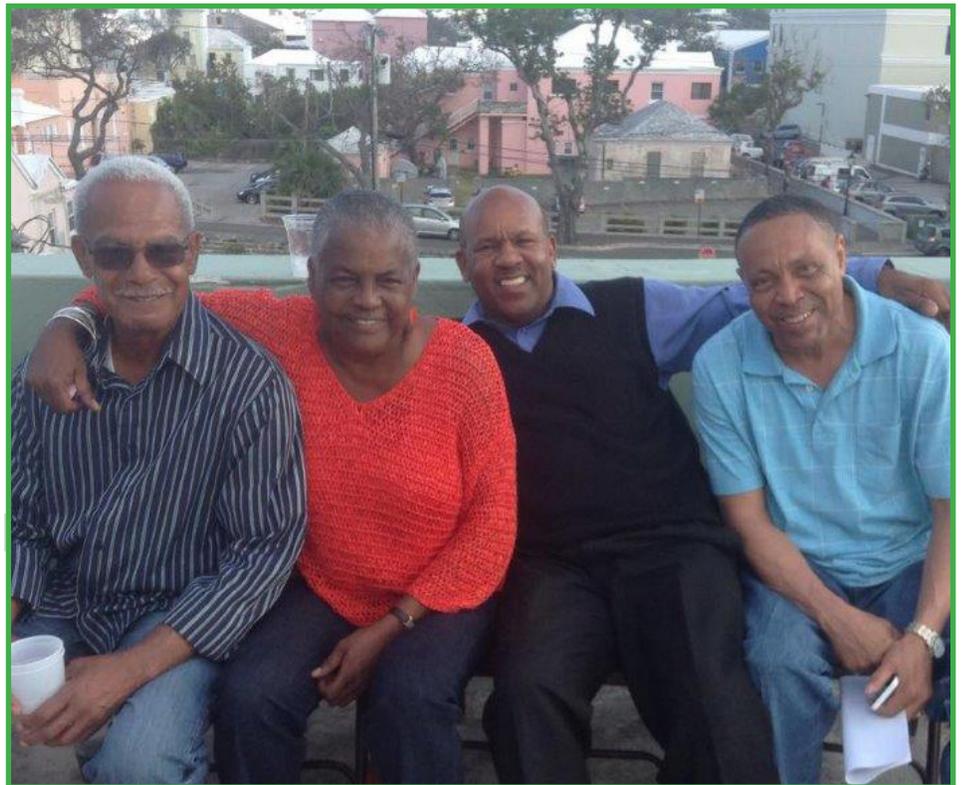
**Sis. Molly** – as General Secretary of the BIU I would like to express my gratitude to Sis. LaVerne for all the assistance she gave me during her years of service as my secretary. Also her dedication and commitment to the organization. Her loss will surely be missed here, she was a shining example of strength and integrity in our office. The Trade Union Movement and the political areas. ‘Gone but will never be forgotten may she Rest In Peace.

**Bro. Chris** - Sister Laverne will be sadly missed by ALL the BIU Staff and the members who she assisted over the years. As President of the BIU I will certainly miss her assistance in handling the different situations that arose day to day. I would like to say a sincere thank you to Sister LaVerne for a job well done, I LOVE YOU rest in peace.

The Officers, Staff and membership of the Bermuda Industrial Union express our condolences and love to Sis. LaVerne’s sons, Vanz and David, daughters-in-law, her grandchildren, sister Maxine and her special friend Eugene.

Bermuda has lost one of its most courageous and fearless women, a true warrior.

**Rest In Peace ‘Freedom Fighter’  
‘United We Stand –  
Divided We Fall’**



# A Tribute for my Fellow Trade Union Sister, LaVerne Furbert

All during the years I have written columns, opinions and comments; one of the sad tasks I have had to under take was to write a tribute for a fallen colleague or work mate. LaVerne, was not only a fellow trade unionist but a colleague in our role we played together in writing, in the cause of politics and the struggle of the workers and our country.

I first became aware of LaVerne when we attended the old Elliot School in Devonshire she attended with her sister Maxine. She was a little older than me so I did not know her like that as one would say, but little did we know were our paths would cross.

We would later meet in a personal way when we worked together at the Hog Penny Pub where we had many talks on black history and books on black history, that was an early attraction, our common respect for books.

But much later we would find ourselves working together on newspapers; the Bermuda Times and of course the Worker's Voice, where she serves as an editor and co-columnists. LaVerne was not only a writer, a loyal trade unionists and a loyal supporter of the PLP for some forty years, but she would also consider herself a political advocate and what many don't know unless you had been helped by her, a social worker who helped many people.

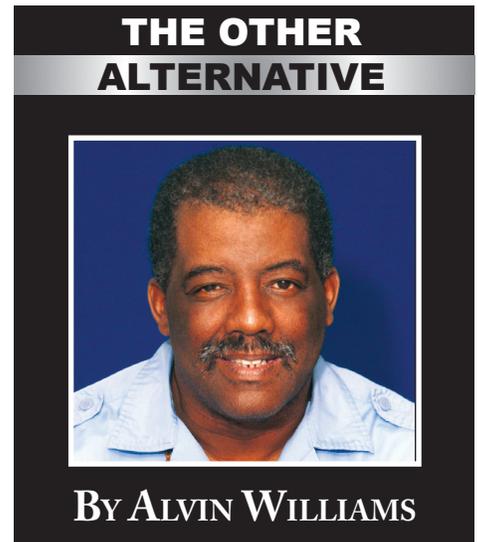
LaVerne was very out spoken, not only in her writings but on social media and the talk shows where a host gave her the name, The Great Defender. But not out of respect,

it was an attempt to insult her and she picked up on it and did not like it. Her name was Ms. LaVerne Furbert, and she let that be known.

Life is short, most of us don't really take note of that reality until we lose someone that is close to us or plays an important role in our lives. My last words with LaVerne was when she called me for my column for the Worker's Voice and later when I phoned her and asked when the paper is coming out, and she replied she would call me. I am going to miss those calls.

She has now joined the ancestors, the four of us Lionel, Doreen and LaVerne, The BIG Four, together we kept the Worker's Voice going, now I am the only one left.

Rest In Peace my sister, we shall meet again. ■



Pot Luck Donation



Pepper Spray - House of Assembly



Sister Shirley and friends



BIU Labour Day



LaVerne at PLP rally

# Tributes to Sister LaVerne Furbert

SEPTEMBER 1, 1946 - JANUARY 31, 2021



## Thank-you for the Relationships that were Built”

Sis. LaVerne Furbert, Executive Secretary of the Bermuda Industrial Union helped to set standards, for education, skill levels, wages, working conditions and quality of life for workers.

The work she done over the years I the history of tomorrow, making many changes for the benefit of workers in Bermuda. She remained true to herself and never compromised her integrity. Her job was her passion, always focusing on her

work and never allowing people to sidetrack her because they disagreed. Clearly fear was not an option for her.

**The Hotel Division** would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Furbert family and we want you to know that we are grateful for all of her sacrifices and time given to help make working conditions for many more suitable.

United We Stand –  
Divided We Fall

The Postal Division of the BIU would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of Our Dear Sister LaVern Furbert as well as Sister Kathy Landy. Sister Lavern was a great help to us no matter what we asked of her. Sister Kathy will be remembered for her vibrant personality and her out spoken voice during our general council meetings. In the hearts of the people, their legacy will always be an inspiration. They will surely be missed.

**From The Postal Division**



**TRIBUTE**

**For**  
**Sister La Verne Furbert**  
**Stalwart and Veteran Trade Unionist-**  
**Advocate for Worker's Rights and the Community**

**My Fondest Memories of Sister La Verne.**

La Verne touched the lives of many people including mine. I got to know her when I was President of the Bermuda Public Services Union and she was a Member of the Union. She was employed at the Health Department Clinic on Victoria Street, Hamilton and was always an active member.

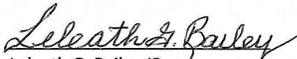
I remember that La Verne served as the Executive Secretary to PLP Leaders in particular under Dame Lois Browne Evans when the Opposition Leader's Office was located in the old Town Hall Building on Front Street, Hamilton, opposite the Cabinet Office.

As an advocate for women's affairs La Verne organized the International Women's Day Tea each year at the Bermuda Industrial Union and I looked forward to attending. This was a popular event with a guest speaker and drew together women from sister trade unions, seniors, and female Parliamentarians.

The annual PLP Banquet is another memory that I have of La Verne because she made sure that a certain group of members from the Progressive Labour Party's Hamilton Parish Branches went to the PLP Banquet. Each year she would hire a Minibus to transport us to the Fairmont Southampton Princess Hotel. We had lots of fun up and back laughing at MP Derrick's jokes.

My last memory and actual contact with Sister La Verne was working together as members of the Hamilton Parish Council. With her knowledge and experience she brought a lot to the table. She saw that everyone that did not have transportation got to the meeting. Due to the Pandemic we had to revert to Zoom Meetings. My last physical Council Meeting with La Verne was in October 2020 at the Lyceum in Bailey's Bay. I did not see La Verne after that and sadly learned about her accident and untimely death. Her absence will create a void on the Council.

"May she rest in peace".

  
Leleath G. Bailey JP  
Past President  
Bermuda Public Services Union

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We send our condolences to Sister Laverne Furbert. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and offer our prayers and may the soul of your Mother be at peace with our Heavenly Father.

Sincerely,  
Vector Control Staff

Dear President Furbert,

On behalf of everyone at the Bermuda Broadcasting Company I wish to send our heartfelt condolences to the Bermuda Industrial Union over the passing of Sister LaVerne Furbert.

On Friday afternoon I received an email from Ms. Furbert and was encouraged by this as it meant she was back in Bermuda after her medical trip to the US. So it was a great shock to learn the very sad news yesterday.

We led our radio and TV news today with the very sad news about her passing. I hope we did her memory justice today.

Please could you pass on our condolences to your colleagues at the BIU.

Sincerely,  
Patrick Singleton  
Bermuda Broadcasting Company

Good morning Ronnie and Chris,

Really sorry to read about passing of Laverne, a stalwart in your organization. You guys have had your share of deaths, hang in there. I am certain Laverne will be missed by many, may she be in a better place and rest in peace.

Regards,

JP

JP Martens  
Grotto Bay Beach Resort  
General Manager



February 2, 2021

Bermuda Industrial Union  
 49 Union Street  
 Hamilton  
 Bermuda HM11  
 Attn: Mr. Chris Furbert, President

Dear President Furbert,

On behalf of the Mayor of Hamilton, the Rt. Wor. Charles R. Gosling, JP, the Council, Management Team and Staff of the Corporation of Hamilton, we extend to you and the BIU membership our deepest sympathies and condolences on the passing of BIU stalwart Ms. Lavene Furbert.

We know that Ms. Furbert was an integral part of your organization and we recognize her power as an advocate for Union Rights and Civil Rights. Ms. Furbert stood for principle and she was not concerned about popular opinion she was motivated by the principle of simply doing what was right. We recognize her shoes will be very difficult to fill and we are thankful for the service that she rendered to our community and our thoughts and prayers are with you, her colleagues, her family and friends.

Yours sincerely,

Dwayne A. Caines, JP  
 Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

City of Hamilton P.O. Box HM 1175 Hamilton HM EX Bermuda  
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 441 292 6918  
 info@cityhall.bm  
 cityofhamilton.bm





Patron: Her Most Gracious Majesty  
Queen Elizabeth II

OFFICE OF THE MANAGER

P.O. BOX HM 894  
HAMILTON HM DX  
BERMUDA

February 1, 2021

Ms. H. Molly Burgess, JP  
General Secretary  
Bermuda Industrial Union  
49 Union Square  
Hamilton HM 12

Dear Molly:

On behalf of the staff and I here at the Club, please accept our deepest and sincerest condolences on the sudden passing of Sister LaVerne Furbert. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family, including all her beloved colleagues at the BIU. She will be sadly missed by so many.

Yours Sincerely

David J. Furtado  
General Manager  
Royal Bermuda Yacht Club

Telephone: (441) 295-2214

Facsimile: (441) 295-6361

E-Mail: manager@rbyc.bm

Good day colleagues,

Please accept condolences on behalf of the BTUC during this very difficult time. Laverne Furbert was much more than a colleague I'm sure. She will be missed in the office, the building, the radio and in the community.

Her passing is of personal loss to my family. So I will mourn with you.

Regards,  
Dwight D Jackson - BTUC

Good morning,

I am so sorry to hear this she will be truly missed. On behalf of the Printers Division and The Royal Gazette we send our heartfelt condolences to Sis Laverne's family and the BIU family. You all are in our prayers.

Sincerely,  
Sis. Flo Washington - Royal Gazette

Good afternoon President Chris,

I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Ms. Furbert. Our deepest sympathies to you, the BIU team and to Ms. Furbert's family for this great loss. May she rest in peace.

Sincerely,  
Tim Morrison - Hamilton Princess  
General Manager



# Tributes to Sister Kathy Landy

OCTOBER 23, 1954 - JANUARY 28, 2021

## Legacy of a Trade Union Officer Sister Katherine (Kathy) Landy Trade Unionist – Freedom Fighter – Friend

The Officers and Members of the Bermuda Industrial Union, extend their condolences to the family of our Sister Kathy Landy, a dedicated and loyal member of the union for 22 years in the Bus Operators and Allied Workers Division of the Bermuda Industrial Union.

During this period of Union Membership, Sis Kathy developed a keen sense of wanting to demonstrate her abilities to serve the Union Membership. Her leadership roles within her tenure as a member of the BIU were Divisional Secretary, Divisional Vice President and Divisional President.



Sister Kathy was also the Recording Secretary and member of the Executive Board of the B.I.U. responsible for the recording of the minutes of the Executive Board, General Council and General Membership meetings a Union Historian.

During her active membership and in to her retirement Sis. Landy served on the Credit Union Board as a Director, as a key person responsible for the day to day management of Bermuda's only Credit Union.



She was elected by the International Transport Federation to sit as a member on the Overland Transport Committee and on the women's committee, which has a global responsibility for safe working conditions for transportation workers.

She trained at the University of the West Indies Mona College in 2006 for 4 weeks in the area of Trade Unionism & Industrial Relations. She also attended the George Meaney Labour College – USA training in Industrial Relations – Employee Involvement in the workplace



For the Bermuda Industrial Union she participated in numerous educational seminars on various topics. Sis. Kathy was a community activist who assisted workers and members of the public on the issues of substance abuse and the reasons why we should revisit the use of substance on a regular basis.

**A Pioneer in the area of Transport/Unionism”**

Sis. Kathy was short in stature but big in heart. Fully committed to the progress of members and growth. She met a diverse group and never felt there was a hill too high to climb. She commanded attention in meetings whether there was a small or large group of people. She loved her job without reservation or judgment and any difficult times she endured, the membership supported her, she was truly a stalwart. We know she always done her best and there are many who will always be thankful for all her efforts.



Bermuda lost a champion for the health and safety of the workplace, an ambassador Bus driver and an International Trade Union representative.

**United We Stand – Divided We Fall  
Bermuda Industrial Union**



**The Hotel Division** would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Landy family and know that our thoughts and prayers are with you. ■

**United We Stand – Divided We Fall**



# IUF Moving Hotel Workers Forward



As Marriott continues its expansion in the Caribbean, IUF affiliates from across the region – including Unions from the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Guyana, and Jamaica – met to coordinate their organizing, bargaining, and strategizing to ensure that Marriott hotel workers in the region move forward.

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Those workers also deserve to

be treated well. They deserve workplaces free of discrimination and harassment; they deserve decent working conditions; they deserve a living wage.

And they deserve to be able to form and join the trade unions that will help them secure these rights.

We are the trade unions in the global hospitality industry, reaching out to you and responsible travellers like you, so that together we can advance

a vision of Just Tourism around the world.

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# Tributes to Brother Glen Simmons

## JUNE 18, 1952 – MARCH 3, 2020

The BIU Officers and members and staff of the Bermuda Industrial Union (BIU) were extremely saddened on Tuesday, March 3rd 2020 after learning of the passing of our beloved 1st Vice President, Brother Glenn Simmons after a short illness.

Brother Glenn was a very active member of the BIU, serving in various capacities. Until the time of his retirement three years ago, Brother Glenn was the President of the Bus Operators and Allied Workers Division. Prior to holding the position of 1st Vice President of the Bermuda Industrial Union, he served as 2nd Vice President. Brother Glenn served as a member of the BIU's Government Negotiating Team, the Government Employees Health Insurance Board, and the Public Service Superannuation Board. Brother Glenn sat as a Director of the Bermuda Credit Union Cooperative Society

Brother Glenn spent many hours at BIU Headquarters and was like a big brother to some of the staff and a younger brother to others. Once he retired from his position as a Bus Operator and became a full time taxi operator, he became the Union's unofficial transportation provider, he would pick up any visiting guest that the BIU and the Credit Union had coming to the island. By the time they reached union headquarters Brother Glenn had taken them for a quick tour in the 'real part of town' as he would say and made sure they had a Bermuda fish sandwich from



Seaside Grill in particular and a Rum Swizzle. The visitors loved Bro. Glenn and were also sadden to hear of his passing and send condolences.

Brother Glenn was a regular fixture at BIU Headquarters, so much so that some people thought that he was an employee. He would however fill in when needed such as when our Custodian was on vacation or out sick, he also would help out at the gas station when needed, he enjoyed that and was the greatest gas attendant. Brother Glenn loved the BIU so much that during his last days

it was not unusual to find him either filing in the Secretariat or assisting in the Accounts Department or he would attend meetings and still offer his opinion. He just wanted to be busy and we all tried to accommodate him.

Brother Glenn was a no-nonsense trade unionist and if you crossed his path or rubbed him the wrong way, he would say to that person "You are lucky I know you, because I would burn you in a minute."

He was always telling somebody 'I  
*(continue on page 15)*



would go in your chops' which we would laugh because we knew it was just words. We usually heard Bro. Glenn before we saw him, he would just always be making a lot noise, just ask the ladies at Supermart on Front Street, the staff at Soul Food, Yardie Kitchen and the list goes on. Bro. Glenn liked to eat although he could be a bit fuzzy about what he ate, when the BIU, the PLP and St. Paul's AME church started the feeding program, Bro. Glenn would walk in and say I have to eat first before serving. Bro. Glenn would sometimes be the only man helping out and he was a great help, he had no problem cleaning and he was good at it.

Bro. Glenn had formed special bonds with all the staff at the BIU and the



membership as a whole, he felt he was Bro. Chris's protector and would always tell him he has his back, Sis. Molly and him share a special bond, as a matter of fact Bro. Glenn would tell people he is the son she left at the hospital. Bro. Glenn and Sis. LaVerne were almost like a sister and brother team, he being a very irritating younger brother at times, but they share a special time and when Sis. LaVerne was off island she trusted Bro. Glenn to check on her house. Sis. Ronnie and Bro. Glenn had a very close relationship, they got along truly as a brother and a sister.

Brother Glenn and Bro. Collin sat side by side on the Executive Board and it was not unusual for him to lean over to Bro. Collin and ask for guidance when he needed assistance. Bro. Glenn respected the other officers who sat on the Executive Board. Many times Bro. Collin would say things to encourage

him to follow through and to let his leadership skills come to the surface and shine.

Whenever the Union was demonstrating on issues of social justice, Brother Glenn and Bro. Collin would be right up front leading the march. At one time they were both recovering from personal illnesses, he was wearing a boot and using a cane and Bro. Collin was using a cane as well. Neither of them let their personal physical ailments prevent them from demonstrating. They were two trade unionists prepared to represent the rights of workers.

Bro. Glenn will certainly be missed by his BIU family and all that knew him he will be talked about years from now as one of the true Trade Unionist of the twentieth century, may his soul rest in peace until that great getting up morning.

The Bermuda Industrial Union extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Maxine, his daughters Mahogany and Glennice, his son Maxon, his two sisters Diane Hunt and Donna Smith, his brother Carlton and the entire Simmons family. May you find peace and know that Bro. Glenn was a man of the people.

**United We Stand – Divided We Fall**



# Tributes to Brother Cal Smith

JULY 7 1933 - AUG 21 2020

## Tribute to a Freedom Fighter

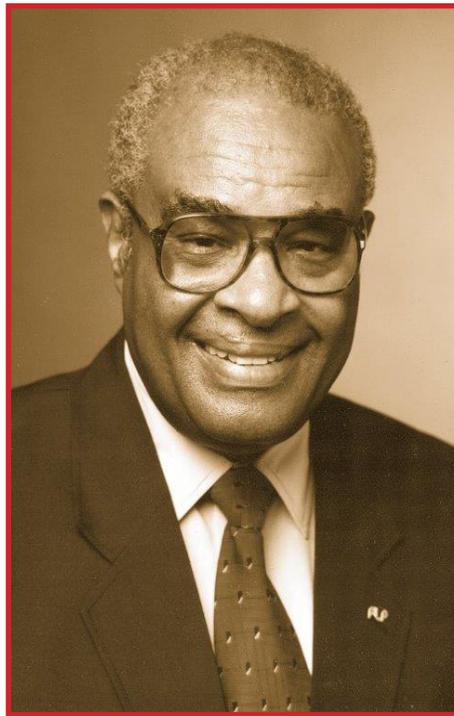
**Bro. Calvin James  
McDonald Smith**

The Officers and Members of the Bermuda Industrial Union, express their heartfelt condolences to Bro. Calvin Smith's widow, Sis. Jeanine, his two sons – Bro. Chris and Bro. Steven and their families.

## Freedom Fighter - Trade Unionist

Bro. Calvin Smith was born from a long line of Freedom Fighters and people with a vision on leading the Bermudian people to a better future. A descendant of Peter Smith of the Caves and Smith Tribe of Tucker Town, Bro. Cal is one of the members of this tribe who continued to serve Bermuda in a number of key positions and demonstrated excellent professional leadership skills.

He returned to Bermuda in 1965, in time to experience the rebirth of the labour movement and the explosion of workers joining the Trade Union



Movement. These events awakened his fighting spirit as some of his best mates, like Brothers Oattie, Arthur, Eugene and Walter were some of the principal warriors in the battle for social change and better working and living conditions for the Bermudian workforce. Retirement from his Government leadership role allowed him to be recruited by

the Trade Union Movement, in the following key positions:

- 1983-2001 General Manager of the BIU Members Credit Union (18yrs) successfully participating in building a workers financial organization
- 2002-2014 Research Officer for the Bermuda Industrial Union (12 yrs). Bro. Cal was an integral part of the BIU and was instrumental in helping us form policy as a result of his extensive research experience.

This was a total of 30 years of leadership that Bro. Cal provided to the members of the BIU which included some of his best advice gleaned from his years of experience in the fields of Statistics and Trade Unionism. Thanks to Bro. Cal for a job well done and may he rest in peace. ■

UNITED WE STAND  
DIVIDED WE FALL



# A Tribute To Another Gone Too Soon From The Golden Generation of Freedom Fighters



**IN MY OPINION**, the alignment and subsequent fusion of conditions that gave rise to who Sister Laverne Furbert was and what she was driven to do will not likely arise again in the near or far future. Born into a Bermuda that was racially segregated in most areas of society and raised during the ‘storm in a tea cup’ years that would see formal racial segregation dissolved only to be replaced by a more subtle yet perhaps more psychologically damaging racially stratified society, Laverne like other Bermudians of African-descent in her generation would have no choice but to both confront and absorb the lessons that the inevitable trauma of her environment would have on them. For those of us who know history, particularly that which occurred in this tiny but dynamic, world-influencing island that we call home, Laverne would not be

the only one cooked to perfection in a ‘pressure pot’ of converging social, political, historical, cultural and economic conditions. Her contemporaries, from her early days as a student at the Berkeley Institute to her last days as a dedicated servant for the Bermuda Industrial Union, numbered many like her that were equally shaped by what she would call “the two Bermudas” and many also, like her, would go on to work to effect the change that they saw was needed to bring about a new day that the generations of today enjoy... and quite frankly most not being aware from whence and whom that comfort and freedom came.

These personalities forged in fires of injustice and oppression were also empowered with a new world that was waking up to these realities and, at the same time, enabled through

the development of technologies to share their truths and bring about further ignition of any fires of protest, fights for freedom and justice across space and time. Who were these personalities? With the passing of elder statesmen such as Dr E.F. Gordon, out of these ashes would see the second half of the 20th century give birth to some of Bermuda’s most iconic freedom fighters, both those in positions of leadership and those less seen but working diligently in the background. Figures such as Mose Allen, Dame Lois Browne Evans, Freddie Wade, Roosevelt Brown, Dr Barbara Ball, Ottiwell Simmons, Dr Eva Hodgson, Ira Phillip, Julian Hall, Ewart Brown, Dale Butler and of course, controversial figures such as Mel Saltus, Larry Tacklyn and Buck Erskine Burrows, just to name a few.

*(continue on page 19)*

# Paget Primary P5 Students Interview Bro. Ottie Simmons for Black History Month

Paget Primary, P5 Smith, students Malyah Burgess and Saire Simons came to the Bermuda Industrial Union to interview, President Emeritus, Bro. Ottiwell Simmons for their Bermuda Black History Virtual Museum.

The two students were very articulate and comfortable, sitting with the longest serving former President of the BIU. They asked him several questions relating to his 22 year presidency at the BIU, the BELCO Strike of 1965, what were his fondest memories of being president of the BIU, the changes that were made that benefitted unionized workers and his many accomplishments.

Bro. Ottie was just as comfortable as the students and delighted to be in their presence, after the interview he presented the students with History Book of the BIU and the book he wrote on Dr. Barbara Ball 'Our



Lady of Labour'. Sis. Malayah let Bro. Ottie know her Nana said hello and that she had played a part in the Labour Movement and Bro. Saire let Bro. Ottie know he knew one of his grandchildren. It was a very delightful interview and both Bro. Ottie and the students were quite pleased with the interview.

We would like to say thank-you to P5 teacher Ms. Monica Smith and Ms. Monique Paul, Learning Support Teacher and Mrs. Riche Robinson Para-educator who accompanied the students as well as Mr. Jason Burrows Custodian who recorded the interview. ■





Sis. LAVERNE FURBERT

Whether you agree with the politics or actions of the aforementioned figures, there is no denying that the conditions that shaped them all are unlikely to happen again, at least not in the same way and with the same resulting powder keg reverberations as what existed from the 1950s to the 1980s.

For Sister Laverne, it would be both action and words by which she wielded her big stick that she would subsequently carry as a result of this genesis and by the time she moved fully into writing as her chief form of activism, she had already been well hardened on the battle fields of the local civil rights movement of the 1970s, social and community

activism amongst the most forgotten and oppressed of society and grassroots political activism across the decades including running for parliament several times unsuccessfully.

One of her earliest guest editorials in the Workers Voice (January 14, 1994), possibly her first but definitely not her last, was titled “How long will we depend on foreign experts?” Typically hard-hitting as was her nature when she put pen to paper, Sister Laverne pulls no punches in this editorial for her commitment to the upliftment of Bermuda and its people as well as to the calling out of injustice, especially that which was founded on false assumptions based on perceived inadequacies of Bermuda’s native workers. She writes “If the United Bermuda Party government had any foresight at all, Bermudians would already be prepared to operate the airport. As long as the powers that be insist on using foreign expertise as opposed to Bermudians, the island will continually be run by foreign “experts.”” Almost three decades and countless articles, editorials and “In My Opinion” pieces later, both her hard-hitting style and her com-

mitment to standing at the ready to defend Bermuda’s workers and their capabilities, to call out any baseless attempts to defame them and to laud the potential of the island and especially its young people, all would remain as an essential part of her authorship. For me, as her son, and for many others as her friend, colleague and kindred spirit in the political and trade unionist spheres, her passing would always be that of “gone too soon”. However, for this island and our world, with her passing and that of many others in this golden generation of freedom fighters, activists and grassroot foot soldiers who worked so tirelessly in the trenches, the loss of yet another great one is akin to seeing the curtains fall on an era that was truly remarkable for the fires of change it swept in. Will we ever see something like it again? In my opinion, no, but I am sincerely humbled and filled with gratitude for all that was done and likewise for being a product of those who brought it about. Thank you, Sister Laverne Furbert, for all that you did and all that you were!

In loving tribute,  
*Your Son Dr David E Chapman*

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If you knew LaVerne, then you knew doing crosswords was a hobby of hers! Every morning, before the rest of us are even up, at night before she slept or just when she had a spare, quiet moment, this would be her activity.

*We miss you LaVerne and we thank you for all that you did and all that you were.*

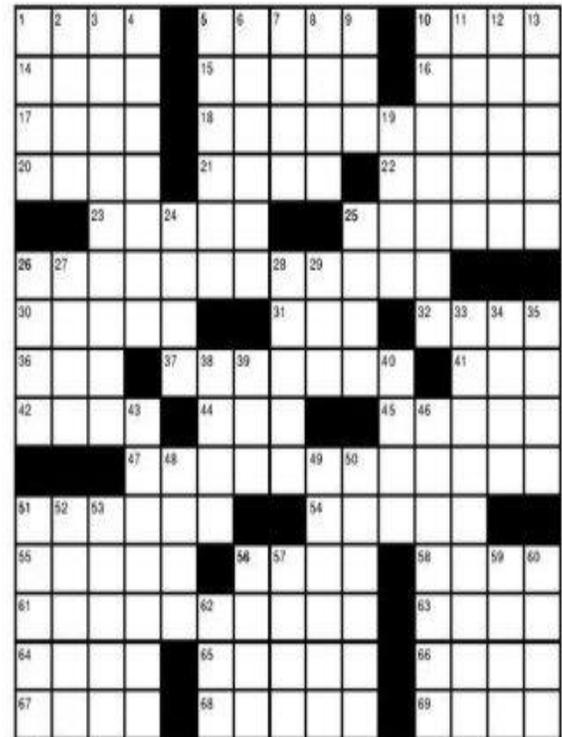


**Pink Slip**

**ACROSS**

- 1. River hazard
- 5. It aids commerce in Cancun, Kalamazoo, and Calgary
- 10. Left 21 across or 8 down
- 14. He's blue without his red or white
- 15. Offering from Google or Yahoo
- 16. He may be blue because he's in the red
- 17. Golden rule word
- 18. Princess in plum?
- 20. One might clean up at a Vegas hotel
- 21. Certain hand-outs
- 22. Coolpix camera maker
- 23. Fabric for a sundress
- 25. Creatures of clay
- 26. Share the stage with journalist Andrea?
- 30. See eye to eye
- 31. Lord's Prayer start
- 32. Blown away
- 36. Org. that sticks to its guns
- 37. Auto dealer's option, and a hint to this puzzle's theme
- 41. Greeting for Caesar
- 42. Congers and morays, e.g.
- 44. Keats creation
- 45. Novelist Joyce Carol
- 47. Caesar's boastful bon mot?
- 51. Like this clue
- 54. Pendragon of legend
- 55. Stock holding
- 56. Word with back or off
- 58. Tach readings
- 61. San Fran sportscaster?
- 63. "Piggies"
- 64. Caesar's challenge
- 65. One with grievances, perhaps
- 66. Classic Lotus model
- 67. Kind of waist
- 68. Strand in Rapunzel's rope
- 69. Oxford fellows

Robert Stockton



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**DOWN**

- 1. Like one leg of a triathlon
- 2. First of a famous sailing trio
- 3. Like AZT
- 4. "Well said!!"
- 5. Himalayan denizen
- 6. Worn magic item
- 7. McDonald's, e.g.
- 8. Certain hand-outs
- 9. Tide alternative
- 10. Silverback, e.g.
- 11. No longer napping
- 12. Asp's output
- 13. Moran and Brockovich
- 19. Hydroxyl compound
- 24. "...until \_\_\_\_ a man with no feet."
- 25. "It's Raining Men" singer Halliwell
- 26. Heroine of a classic children's reader
- 27. Man-eater of myth
- 28. Many a software engineer
- 29. Blue, red, or white
- 33. Sport with very wet horses?
- 34. What to get after an insult
- 35. He loved Lucy
- 38. Unchangeable storage
- 39. Stir
- 40. A bagel and lox, perhaps
- 43. Buttress
- 46. Kept at bay
- 48. Mouse manipulator
- 49. You'll find many in a pound
- 50. Pronounces
- 51. How good was it?
- 52. Tony-winning Rivera
- 53. Dennis Miller specialty
- 56. Evening on the Champs-Élysées
- 57. Land of the leprechauns
- 59. Like 27 down
- 60. Apr. 15 data
- 62. Wine container