



A TRIBUTE TO DEBORAH SUSAN BODDEN

“However good a constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad. However bad a constitution may be, if those implementing it are good, it will prove to be good.” This sage advice, which was proffered by one of the founders of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, cautions that constitutions are not simply defined by their words, but by the people who give these words real meaning. It follows that it is the people, upon whom the burden of implementing a constitution falls, who ultimately make the difference between its success or failure.

Insofar as the modern Cayman Islands Constitution and the various Commissions that it conceived are concerned, it was Deborah Susan Bodden (“Debbie”) who was charged with the responsibility for their implementation; it was Debbie who gave them meaning; it was Debbie who made that difference; and it was Debbie who really and truly made them successful and good.

Of course, Debbie didn’t achieve all of this on her own. There were numerous Chairpersons and Members of Commissions and other public servants and private individuals, whose contributions were vital along the way; but it was Debbie who supported and nurtured their development; it was Debbie who protected the institutions when they were vulnerable; it was Debbie who filled the gaps and picked up the pieces; and, in the early days at least, it was Debbie who held them all together and made them tick.

The measure of this accomplishment should not be under-estimated. These Commissions were designed to play a crucial role in our Constitution; they are central to democracy, good governance, and the rule of law; and it took a person of rare talent, diverse skills, and immense dedication to bring them to fruition. It is no exaggeration to say that these institutions were literally brought to life by Debbie; and while Debbie’s passing is a loss almost as much to her country as it is to her family, Debbie’s mark remains indelibly etched into the fabric of all the Commissions that she championed, and her memory will live on through their continuing good work.

Vaughan Carter

Chair, Constitutional Commission

21 August 2023