



Constitutional Commission's Statement on National Heroes Day 28 January 2019

The 2019 National Heroes Day celebrations, which will take place on Monday, 28 January 2019, will honour the pioneers who contributed to the creation of the Cayman Islands' Coat of Arms. The Constitutional Commission joins in the celebration of these pioneers and would like to also take this opportunity to highlight how many of the symbols embodied in the Coat of Arms are reflected in our constitutional history and in our current Constitution.

For example, the gold pineapple that sits atop the Coat of Arms represents the historic ties, constitutional and otherwise, between the Cayman Islands and Jamaica. In this regard, it is notable that the Cayman Islands Government Law 1893, which provided constitutional guidance for the Cayman Islands prior to the first formal Cayman Islands Constitution in 1959, was in fact a law passed by the Jamaican Parliament.

Below the pineapple is a green turtle, which represents the seafaring history of the Cayman Islands. The importance of the seafaring history is also expressly noted in the preamble to the 2009 Cayman Islands Constitution, in which the people of the Cayman Islands affirmed their intention to be:

“A country that honours the sacrifice of its seafaring men who left the shores of the Islands to enhance the quality of life of their people, and in doing so established themselves amongst the finest within the global maritime community of that time and through their remittances, endeavours and experiences built the foundations of the Cayman Islands' modern economy.”

And:

“A country that honours and acknowledges the important contribution of Caymanian women who during the absence of the seafaring men of the Islands managed the affairs of their homes, businesses and communities and passed on the values and traditions of the Islands' people.”

At the top of the shield on the Coat of Arms is a gold lion walking with the further forepaw raised and the body seen from the side, a symbol which traditionally represents England. The Cayman Islands retains a constitutional connection with England and the wider United Kingdom to this day; but did you know that the 1863 Act, which formally recognised the Assembly of Justices and Vestry that had been unilaterally established by the people of the Cayman Islands in 1831, was an Act of the British Parliament?

Printed at the bottom of the shield are the words: “He hath founded it upon the seas”. This is a verse from Psalm 24, Verse 2 and acknowledges the Islands' ties to the sea and their Christian heritage. This is also exhibited in the preamble to the 2009 Cayman Islands Constitution, which

begins by affirming that the Cayman Islands to be a God-fearing country based on traditional Christian values, as well as a country that is tolerant of other religions and beliefs.

Both the Coat of Arms and the first Cayman Islands Constitution emanate from a pivotal period in the history of these Islands and there is as a result a strong correlation between the two. Continuing this association, the 2020 National Heroes Day has been designated as a celebration of the first Cayman Islands Constitution. The Constitutional Commission looks forward to the due recognition of this landmark and of the 10th anniversary of the current Constitution in the intervening year.

Further information about the Constitutional Commission and the Cayman Islands Constitution can also be found at www.constitutionalcommission.ky and persons interested in contacting the Constitutional Commission or accessing the Cayman Islands Constitution in written, audio and braille formats may email the Constitutional Commission at info@constitutionalcommission.ky or call 244-3685.

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