

Remembrance/Lifestory

Claudia Anthony Johnson (nee Bachelier Carasco)

(February 19, 1936 - November 13, 2022)



Claudia Anthony Johnson (nee Bachelier Carasco) was the eldest of three children born to Francis Joseph Bachelier Carasco and Marie Antoine Nestis Beryl Carasco (nee Lawrence). That union also produced two other siblings Hilary Francis Bachelier Carasco (now deceased) and Nahdja Rose Bailey (nee Bachelier Carasco).

After the sudden passing of Claudia's mother when she was 10 years old her father married Nita Lawrence, sister of Beryl Lawrence and that union produced three daughters Charmaine Gardner (nee Carasco), Beryl Alleyne (nee Carasco) and Peggy Eames (nee Carasco).

Claudia attended St. Joseph's Convent in Castries from early childhood until graduation. During her time there she was actively involved as a Girl Guide, Prefect, Captain of the netball team, Captain of St. Theresa's House, and later Head Girl. At graduation from the Convent at the age of 17 she was awarded the coveted La Rosiere Award presented to the student who through her integrity, honesty, and desire to serve has made an outstanding contribution to the school community and has best represented the ideals of St. Joseph's Convent.

For her post-secondary studies Claudia was inspired by St. Lucian Nobel Laureate, Sir Arthur Lewis, to pursue a degree in the field of economics. She was awarded the prestigious Sidney and Beatrice Webb Scholarship to study at the London School of Economics and Political Science. This scholarship was given to an outstanding commonwealth female scholar based on their high school performance. In 1957 she graduated with an honours bachelor's degree and became the first female St. Lucian economist.

Claudia was offered a position as Chief Planner, Science and Technology at the National Planning Agency for the Government of Jamaica during which time she worked in the office of then Premier Norman Manley and with the renown G. Arthur Brown. Whilst there Claudia was instrumental in establishing a Science and Technology Unit for the Jamaican Government and she sat on the Economic Advisory Council of Jamaica. She represented Jamaica at numerous international conferences on development planning and technical assistance including at the Organization of American States (OAS), The World Bank, the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations. She was also responsible for co-ordinating all volunteer service programmes operating within Jamaica such as the U.S. Peace Corps and Canadian CUSO.

It was in Jamaica through the Alliance Francaise that Claudia met and married the love of her life Hugo Johnson; they both shared a love of languages including French, Spanish and Latin and were avid readers. In 1959 they married and had two daughters Katrina Johnson and Peta-Gaye Matousek (nee Johnson).

In 1978 Claudia was hired as Resident Tutor of the University of the West Indies Extra-Mural Department and School of Continuing Studies and returned to live in St. Lucia. Whilst there she co-authored a book called "Implications of A Science and Technology Education Policy for St. Lucia with Special Reference to the Agricultural Sector". Additionally, she wrote and proposed a concept paper for an integrated Community College which was then endorsed by the St. Lucian Government and led to the expansion and development of the Morne Education Complex into the fully-fledged Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

In the 1980's Claudia was hired as a Senior Project Officer - Technical Co-operation for the Caribbean Development Bank in Barbados where she continued to work until her retirement. In this capacity she worked on numerous development projects throughout the Caribbean and South America. Her work included representing both CDB and CARICOM countries at the regional and international level giving speeches, attending conferences, and sitting on various boards. On retirement she was recognized by the bank for her almost 20 years of distinguished service.

Her lifelong accomplishments were recognized also in St. Lucia. Claudia was featured in an exhibition at the National Archives of the 100 most prominent St. Lucian Women. She has also been included in the books written by two St. Lucian authors, Margot Thomas' Book "Pioneers and Forerunners - Saint Lucia's First Ladies (2012) and the book by A.L. Dawn French "Profile: St. Lucian Resident Tutors" (2015).

After retiring Claudia returned to live in St. Lucia with her husband Hugo. Later on she joined her daughters in Canada and after becoming ill, resided in retirement care. Claudia was happily married for 53 years until the passing of her husband. Throughout the years she remained actively involved in the retirement home and even with failing health she continued to bring her contagious smile, sparkly personality and generous spirit to everyone with whom she came into contact. Claudia was awarded the Leisure World "Living Art Award" which is given to a retiree resident who best personifies "that life is an expression of the timeless inner beauty of age."

Claudia is deeply missed by her loving daughters, Katrina and Peta-Gaye, son-in-law Pavel, granddaughters Chantalle and Berenika and her memory will live on in our hearts forever.

Opposition Leader Failing in his Duty to the People -PM Pierre

PRIME Minister Philip J Pierre has chastised the opposition for failing to adhere to regulatory parliamentary procedures pertaining to the order of presentation by members of parliament (MP) to the Laying of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in the Lower House of Parliament.

The debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year 2023-24 commenced on March 28, but there was some dispute as to the order of delivery for the Opposition Leader.

PM Pierre noted that it was important to respect the House of Assembly conventions to preserve the integrity of Saint Lucia's most august decision making chambers. According to parliamentary procedures, it is customary that the Leader of the Opposition delivers his presentation immediately following the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's presentation of the Laying of the Estimates and the Budget Summary to the House.

Over the past decades this speaking sequence has been the regulatory procedure implemented in the lower house. However, the norm for this procedure was changed in 2017, when the United Workers Party (UWP) administration took office.

Subsequently, five years later, in 2022, the current administration restored the procedure to normalcy. Reports indicate that each MP was provided with a copy of the document at least five days before commencement of the debate.

"The convention of this Honourable house is that when the Minister of Finance delivers the Estimates (of Expenditure) ...the Leader of the Opposition responds the day after," PM told legislators, Wednesday.

"That has been the convention of this House ... this year, the estimates were given three to five days before the meeting of this Honourable House, which is not what happened before," he explained. "Before, the estimates were given on the weekend, Saturdays ...and we debated on Tuesdays. And the Leader of the Opposition always responded."

Referring to vacant seats on the opposition side of the Lower House for this matter of national significance, PM Pierre contended: "It has never been the convention of this House for the Prime Minister's speech to be circulated, because the speech is based on the Estimates and not the policy of the government."

"When the government's policy is going to be discussed in April, the speech is made



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available immediately after. It has never been the convention ...so, to use the excuse that there is no speech available ...the leader of the opposition is failing in his duty to the people of Saint Lucia, he is failing in his duty to the tax payers of Saint Lucia and it must be noted that these games with the people's finances must stop," Pierre said.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the House Claudius Francis weighed in on the matter, stating that there are differences in the presentation of the Throne Speech, as opposed to the debate on the Estimates of Expenditure.

Said Francis: "There seems to be a misunderstanding about the Throne Speech, the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. The Appropriations Bill in the Estimates is what we normally refer to as the budget. There's nowhere in the constitution of our laws that the word budget is used, it's really the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, which is debated first."

He said, when this motion is passed in the Lower House it gives rise to what is called the Appropriations Bill.

"So, the Estimates when they are passed is the amount of money that the government is authorised to spend in a financial year," Francis explained.

He added, "The Appropriations Bill gives the Minister of Finance the authority to start using that money."

The Francis further stated that the Throne Speech heralds the new opening session of parliament.

"So you open a session of parliament with the Throne Speech, whether immediately after a general election or following the proroguing of parliament," noted Francis. "The Constitution in section 54 does not tell you the length of a session. What does tell you is that when a session is prorogued, the next sitting of the house cannot be later than 12 months after the last prorogation. There is nothing that says the Appropriations Bill must be done in the new session or the old session."

[R.A.]

NIC Takes Social Security Message to Schools' Island-wide

THE National Insurance Corporation has taken its message of social security to schools across St. Lucia.

The schools' education campaign dubbed, Your Future Starts Today commenced in February with the NIC visiting 13 secondary schools on the island.

The campaign targeted fifth form students, many of whom are preparing to enter the world of work, by empowering them with information about the way NIC works and the benefits available to contributors. Students were also given an opportunity to register for their National Insurance numbers for the first time.

Your Future Starts Today was originally launched in 2019 but was suspended in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We are very excited to have resumed this important campaign to empower Form Five students since many of them will be entering the workplace soon. We are educating them on the concept of social security, so they have a better idea of what to

expect once they become NIC contributors themselves," said NIC Communications Manager Shervon Alfred.

"The campaign has been hugely successful, and we are amazed at the intelligent, thoughtful and probing questions coming from the students," Mr Alfred added.

Your Future Starts Today campaign reached approximately one thousand, two hundred and twenty (1220) students. The programme will continue in the new academic year.

