

A TRIBUTE TO LOIS YVONNE HOLDER
FROM BHOSA
(THE BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL OLD STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION)

July 20 2007

Because she attended "The Bishops' High School" she was a member of BHOSA. Apart from periods of time when Yvonne was out of Guyana pursuing her career, she was an actively contributing member of this association.

*She will be remembered by all of us for her commitment, her service, her generosity, her sound ideas, her organizing skills, her sense of humour, her "we can do it attitude" her ardent devotion to a cause.... That cause in this case being her **alma mater and its products**.*

*The school was very dear to her heart so she readily agreed to stand for election for the post of President in 1998. At the end of the triennium, she was invited to remain for the Reunion Year 2002. (Every three years, the Association has an international reunion in the country of the host chapter. 2002 was to be a significant year for Guyana as the host chapter. The reunion was held in Guyana under the theme "**Salute the ties that bind**". It was a tremendous success, especially when we recall what the Guyana environment was at that time. Yvonne threw her all into this activity as*

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Convenor of the Public Relations sub committee, and with the active support of Jennifer Dewar as the convenor of the Reunion Committee we could only win. Scores of Alumni attended from our chapters in the U.K. /Europe, Toronto, N.Y. tri-state Chapter, Washington, California Barbados and Trinidad.

Yvonne herself wrote in her report at the end of this activity “the welcome banners have been taken down, the nerve medicines dispensed with, fingernails have been sprouting new growth; our overseas visitors have returned home safely. What we still have, are the lingering memories of have been tak en down, the nerve medicines dispensed with, fingernails have been sprouting new growth,; our overseas visitors have returned home safely. What we still have, are the lingering memories of a great Reunion and the certainty that the ties of friendship will always bind BHS alumni, no matter what part of the world we find ourselves”.

She remained anxious to get on with the recommendations that came out of the Reunion and the action plans that resulted after collaboration with the school’s headmistress.

Yvonne we loved you. We will always remember the passion with which you supported;

✓ The ground maintenance project of the class of '73 and piloted by Donna Ramsammy-James

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- ✓ *The programme for Senior Alumni.....the Christmas basket project actively supported by Terry Stuart and Patricia Gordon*
- ✓ *Magda Pollard's annual CARICOM project...(not only your passion, but your very generous contributions especially to the CARICOM project.*
- ✓ *Your adoption of the project "Operation Contact" a counseling project with the Lower Sixth Form, spearheaded by Janice Jackson, Vidya Kissoon and Magda Pollard.*
- ✓ *The current Mentoring Project for students in the third form and more recently with the first forms (another of the brain-children of Janice Jackson) A project that is now operated jointly with Tutorial High School.*
- ✓ *The IT project which the Toronto chapter has had with the school for many years now. Your active support of the donation of computers by Toronto and Susie Savory's annual visit to the computer lab for some Teaching sessions and general discussion, ably assisted by the ever active, ever efficient Terry Stuart.*
- ✓ *Your smiles and joy whenever you heard of the many contributions from the N.Y –tri-state Chapter or the California Chapter.*

Yvonne was an encourager, a stimulator of no mean order. She was a

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'pusher' of no mean order. She was a pusher of a special kind. We were

in 1996 trying to assemble a group to form a choir to do an item at the Reunion. Magda was trying with her voice training and exercises, but to little avail. Persons kept indicating that they would discontinue because “they could not sing”. When Yvonne heard this, she went to the group and said “Come on. Do not drop out. We must sing. I have been practising in my bathroom and my voice has improved. We must sing. We must have a choir. Let us try. We made one more try. The result was unbelievable. The choir suddenly turned the corner. We made a stellar appearance just because of that little extra push and encouragement from Yvonne. The applause was deafening after we had sung Cecile Nobrega’s “Twilight”. This set in good stead for our Reunion held here in Guyana, when we sang Josh Groban’s “You lift me up”, and then the popular “Umbrella Party”. We were on the road to stardom. Thanks Yvonne.

Yvonne we will remember your concern for people..... we’ll remember your concern for the welfare of the students.

*It was **Albert Schweitzer** who said:*

“There is no higher religion than human service.

To work for the common good is the greatest creed”

You worked for the common good. You have spent your life working for the common good. In every sphere of your life, you worked for the common good.

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we’ll remember your concern for the younger old student not just

becoming members of the association, but attending meetings as well and playing an active role. I include here a comment by a young “old student” speaking on behalf of the group of younger ones. It went like this:

*“In 2002 while Mrs. Yvonne Holder was President of the Bishops’ High School Old Students’ Association, there was an upsurge in the interest of the younger old students in joining this renowned organization. The young ones wanted to host a tribute in honour of former headmistress Maureen Massiah and former senior mistress Mavis Pollard. They went to Mrs Holder with the idea. She gave permission and every assistance that was required. The event was a resounding success and thereafter many of the younger set became more active in the association and even became executive members. Many attended the 2002 reunion. The entire body of past students held Mrs. Holder in great esteem and respect and is encouraged by her dedication to the association and the way she wore the mantle of stewardship with such pride and joy. She was a remarkable woman, a woman who exemplified the true meaning of grace stance, poise, excellence and vigour. She was the epitome of the school’s motto “labor omnia vincit””work conquers everything”
Rest in eternal peace.....true comrade and true friend”*

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DEATH OF A COMRADE

Death must not find us thinking that we die

Too soon, too soon

Our banner draped for you

I would prefer

the banner in the wind

not bound so tightly

in a scarlet fold -

not sodden sodden

with your people's tears

but flashing on the pole

we bear aloft

down beyond this dark, dark lane of rags.

Dear comrade

If it must be

you speak no more with me

nor smile no more with me

then let me take

a patience and a calm –

for even now the greener leaf explodes

sun brightens stone

and all the river burns

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Now from the mourning vanguard moving on

Dear Comrade I salute you and I say

death will not find us thinking that we die.

Martin Carter's Poems of Resistance

May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

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