

**Remarks by**  
**Rt. Hon. Hubert A. Ingraham**  
**Official Opening**  
**Harry C. Moore Library & Information Centre**  
**College of The Bahamas**  
**8 April 2011**

**Introduction & Acknowledgements:**

I am very pleased to participate in the official opening of the Harry C. Moore Library & Information Centre which will also serve as a de facto national library.

Such a milestone is the work of many people over many years. I wish to begin by acknowledging a number of key individuals and organizations who have made today possible including:

Current and former College Councils and Chairs;

Current and former College Presidents and Administrators;

The Members and officers of the Lyford Cay Foundation;

The Moore Family;

The Royal Bank of Canada;

Sir Lynden Pindling Foundation and Family;

Government Officials, and particularly the Ministry of Education;

The Library and College Faculty and Staff;

Architects Leslie Johnson and Jackson Burnside;

Project Managers;

The Contractor;

and the many sub-contractors, and landscape designers.

I also wish to thank the students, alumni, and many other Bahamians who have contributed to the realization of the dream of this centre of learning, research and innovation.

### **What the Harry C. Moore Centre Represents**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The ongoing development and nurturing of public institutions is critical to our national development and national identity. In due course, the National Museum of The Bahamas will join the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas as another centre for the preservation and showcasing of Bahamian heritage and history.

Today, we celebrate the opening of this public institution, critical to the advancement of Bahamian

scholarship and national development. We also celebrate a compelling milestone for the College of The Bahamas (COB) as it continues to prepare itself to achieve university status.

The architectural vision and sweep of the Harry C. Moore Centre serves to unify COB's campus with entrances facing the entire College complex and surrounding neighbourhoods.

This newest addition to the Oakes Field area complements the ongoing development of the surrounding communities that already include the Headquarters of the Customs Department, the Ministry of Education, the CID Headquarters which is about to undergo a million dollar renovation and upgrade, and the Queen Elizabeth Sports Centre - home to the Kendal Isaacs Gymnasium and the Betty Kelly-Kenning Aquatic Centre and the soon to be completed new Tommy Robinson National Stadium. The proximity of such a complex and stadium augur well for the future of the College of The Bahamas.

For its part, the expansive wings of the Harry C. Moore Centre are suggestive of its mission of outreach and inclusion, inclusive of COB's neighbours, including the historic Bain and Grant's Towns, Big Pond, Yellow Elder and Black Village, and Oakes Field, Rock Crusher Road and other communities.

Innovation is a core part of the Centre's mission. I am pleased therefore to learn of the excellent partnerships which the College has developed with corporate citizens, civic organizations and individuals toward creating innovative and experiential learning programmes. And, I hasten to encourage even further expansion of such partnerships. This is particularly important as we seek to attract more of our boys and young men toward a life that includes the joy of reading, a passion for knowledge and the delight of life-long learning.

We are all concerned, for example, that males now comprise only 15 percent of COB's graduates. The imbalance between the number of female and male graduates speaks to a deeper and broader national problem of male educational achievement. The subject is ripe I believe, for study and research by the COB as we seek to develop innovative and practical ideas on how we may address the gender gap as it begins to manifest at the primary and secondary levels of our school system.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The architecture of this national library and information centre, with entrances facing both the college and the surrounding community points to a mission of outreach to surrounding neighbourhoods and also to a broader mission; one suggested by its technological capacity.

This Centre is host to a virtual library which is to connect and unify our far-flung island chain while also connecting the Bahamian archipelago to the world. The Library will provide more than cutting-edge technology. It will help to preserve, inspire and advance the Bahamian imagination in every field of endeavour and scholarship. Indeed the virtual library will significantly assist in the historic challenge of developing an archipelagic nation such as ours.

Through this Centre a student as far away as the Inagua All-Age School may learn more about the history of our southernmost island and why Mathew Town should be spelt with one “t” and not two. Also through this Centre, an entrepreneur on San Salvador providing eco and heritage tours may connect virtually with other Bahamians developing similar tours in Grand Bahama, Andros, Cat Island and indeed throughout the entire Bahamas.

And, through this Centre, a young girl from Exuma may learn more about the life of Sir Lynden Pindling from the online component of the permanent exhibit here dedicated to the first Bahamian Prime Minister.

Someday, because of what will be made possible by this Centre, that young girl in Exuma or a young boy in Eleuthera may become an entrepreneur in the field of aquaculture, a novelist, or a lecturer at the University of The Bahamas.

This Centre will help to preserve, inspire and advance the Bahamian Imagination in every field of endeavour and scholarship.

## **Centre of Excellence: Learning, Research & Innovation**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am advised that the circular design of this Centre is purposeful, evoking the idea that the quest for knowledge and understanding is an ongoing human enterprise.

And, the expansive wings of this building are joined at the centre by a circular atrium which also evokes the notion of continued education and learning.

In essence, the Harry C. Moore Centre promises to become a centre of excellence, a centre of learning, research and innovation, dedicated to the perpetual quest for understanding and knowledge.

At the heart of all excellence in learning at an educational institution, is good teaching. From ancient times and into our present day, technological innovations augment the learning process, but are no substitute for good teachers and quality instruction utilizing creative teaching methods.

Throughout the world, colleges and universities are constantly seeking to improve the quality of teaching especially at the undergraduate level. In offering

baccalaureate degrees in a number of academic fields, a new University of The Bahamas will want to ensure that the quality of instruction is of paramount importance.

As a centre of learning, this new institution will greatly assist the full time and adjunct faculty of the College in the preparation and dissemination of creative learning modules and entire courses utilizing various audiovisual and social media.

For example, in the teaching of Bahamian history, there are many novel ideas and interactive media and technology which can be employed to teach about the history of slavery and emancipation, and the development of a modern independent Bahamas.

In teaching geology or archaeology, lecturers at COB may through this centre help students across The Bahamas learn more about our world-renowned blue holes. From the resources of this institution, a student can access information on the human and animal fossils found at Sawmill Sink in Abaco or watch a video presentation on the Lucayan pottery found at Samana Cay, near Acklins.

Utilizing smart boards and other technology a high school teacher at one of our schools in Grand Bahama may connect online with this centre to teach a class on how global climate change is affecting Bahamian coral and affecting sea levels.

In the virtual world and global commons, the exchange of ideas and information is two-way and interactive. Through this new library and information centre the teachers and students of N.G.M. Major in Long Island can share with other schools their 2007 film on conserving the Nassau Grouper.

The great promise of this Centre is the utilization of cutting-edge technology to make access to information and library resources, particularly on The Bahamas, easier and more direct for every island and community in The Bahamas.

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The possibilities provided by the Harry C. Moore Centre are boundless. They include expanded distance learning connecting students at COB with universities around the world and integrating communications technologies in various academic disciplines.

Some of the most innovative websites today are a collection of contributions from others. Likewise, the great success of this library and information centre

must include the contributions from others who will add to its collection of print, photographic, audiovisual and other material.

One other area I wish to briefly address is the importance of this Centre working in tandem with the International Languages and Cultural Centre in the promotion of intercultural understanding which is essential in our global community.

I invite both Centres to collaborate in promoting the study of foreign languages. Such language skills are increasingly critical to our economic development.

In particular, we need more Bahamians who are proficient in Spanish, Mandarin, Portuguese, French, German, Italian and yes, Creole, if we are to compete successfully with other jurisdictions in tourism, financial services and other industries, and if we are to ensure that a foreign language barrier is not permitted to splinter our national unity.

### **Centre of Research:**

One of the primary roles of a college/university is as a research centre. Your capacity for research is now significantly advanced with this new research facility.

The quality of human advancement in general and national development in particular is contingent on the quality of research by various institutions, including, historically, by the colleges and universities.

Such research includes the theoretical and the practical and the relationship between both, as well as cross-disciplinary research. By way of example, this new Centre is critical to the success of various programmes at COB such as the Small Island Sustainability Programme.

That programme and this Centre hold the promise of research that may provide scientists, engineers, business people and public policymakers with ideas and information on the urgent question of alternative energy solutions and greater food security for The Bahamas, among other challenges related to small-island states development and sustainability.

In areas from social development to heritage preservation to health care, good research is needed to inform public debate and the decisions of policymakers. That the Harry C. Moore Centre may provide an actual and virtual space for Bahamian and international researchers to collaborate on various research projects is indeed another milestone in our national development.

The role that the COB and this Centre must play in informing public policy and improving the quality of national debate and the life of the mind, scholarship and critical thinking cannot be denied. Indeed, enhancing the intellectual life of our country is at the heart of COB's mission, and at the heart of that is good research.

In addition to quantitative research, the importance of qualitative research in various fields is critical to preserving knowledge. In particular, I urge the COB and this Centre to partner with others in significantly enhancing the development of the College's oral history programme.

We have already lost too much in terms of the wisdom and experience of many of our ancestors and forebearers. As a matter of priority we must better preserve the voices and life stories of more of our people, especially older Bahamians who remember from whence we came.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Male achievement in education, an area about which I wish to say a bit more, is one of the more urgent challenges facing our country. Male achievement touches on areas of national life from family life to crime prevention to economic development to public health.

By its very nature, this great national challenge -- indeed crisis -- requires innovative and cross-disciplinary responses from fields such as sociology, social psychology, education, criminology, economics and other disciplines.

If ever we needed to find innovative solutions to a critical national issue, we urgently need to do so on

the challenge of boosting male achievement and reducing the level of criminality by young men.

Even as the country turns to government and others for responses, it also increasingly turns to the institutions of higher learning to provide the research and ideas for innovation that will help us to collectively address this great challenge. As learning and research begins with critical questions, may I suggest a few for your study?

What is the mix of teaching and experiential learning methods that are needed to expand male achievement? What are the public health interventions and social intervention programmes that are needed to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour by young men? What insight might the field of behavioural economics provide?

Such cross-disciplinary collaboration blending rigorous science and community outreach and service is part of the important work of the College of the Bahamas, work that will be advanced by this new centre.

## **Conclusion:**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Like many young people of my age growing up in Cooper's Town, Abaco, or Abraham's Bay, Mayaguana or elsewhere across our island chain, I

could not even dream of having access to a facility such as this teeming with information and knowledge.

But what I and many in my generation could not dream of is today a reality. What a wonderful dream made real that young boys and girls in every settlement and community in our Bahamas can access not only a world wide web of knowledge. Now, because of this Centre, these young boys and girls will have at their fingertips and access a remarkable store of knowledge about the history and heritage of our Bahamas.

And not only will they become better consumers of information and knowledge. They will also use that knowledge and information to write a screenplay about Pompey's slave rebellion, to offer a novel solution to arresting the invasive onslaught of the lion fish, or to create an online petition to preserve wetlands in their community.

This Harry C. Moore Library and Centre is more than a building filled with books and information. It is a public commons and platform for the exchange of ideas. It is, like the Internet, a space for the flowering of the human imagination, and in particular the Bahamian Imagination.

We are so fortunate that our children, grandchildren and their progeny will have such a fine physical space and virtual library to learn about and help advance the Bahamian story.

I thank the late Harry C. Moore, his family and the Lyford Cay Foundation, the Royal Bank of Canada and all those other important donors and sponsors of the development of this Centre for their important choice to support this vision of Bahamian educators. I wish this Centre and the emerging University of The Bahamas every success in the years to come. I am honoured to declare the Harry C. Moore Library and Information Centre officially opened.