

Reflection on the Tenure of Sir Dennis Byron

The Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron's tenure as President of the CCJ ended on July 3, 2018. His tenure at the Court began on September 1, 2011, when he was sworn-in by the Governor-General of St. Kitts and Nevis as the second President of the CCJ.

Sir Dennis's judicial career spans over three decades where he left an indelible mark on each of the three judiciaries over which he presided, both as a judge of high distinction and as a judicial reformer.

Biography

The Right Honourable Sir Charles Michael Dennis Byron is a former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice and a former Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC). As President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), he was responsible for the overall management of that international tribunal. He left that role to join the CCJ in 2011.

His judicial career began in 1982 when he was appointed as a High Court Judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. In 1999, Mr. Justice Byron acted as Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court for two years before being appointed to the role.

Sir Dennis read law at Cambridge University and was called to the Bar of England and Wales at the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple in 1965. He distinguished himself in private practice as a barrister at-law and solicitor throughout the Leeward Islands from 1966 to 1982, with chambers in Saint Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla.

He was knighted in 2000 and was appointed a member of the Privy Council in 2004. In 2004, Sir Dennis was appointed an Honorary Bencher of the



The Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron

Honourable Society of the Inner Temple and holds the first Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law at Dalhousie University. In 2010, Sir Dennis was made an Honorary Fellow by his alma mater, Fitzwilliam College of Cambridge University.

He had a transformative influence on the judicial, administrative and technical operations of the CCJ. His leadership was rooted in a desire to achieve excellence at all levels of the operations of the Court through a continuous process of assessment and improvement. He also served as Chairman of the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute (CJEI) and is a renowned keynote speaker, trainer and guest lecturer at events

Reflection Continued

and conferences across several continents.

Selected Achievements

The following represents a selected listing of some of Sir Dennis' more notable achievements during his tenure:

- The creation of APEX, a non-profit agency, dedicated to advocating for the use of technology to strengthen the justice systems of the region and improve the efficiency of court-related services.
- The deployment of the Curia e-Filing and court management suite within the CCJ, including a performance tool-kit and mobile application, which has enabled the Court to transform its day-to-day judicial and registry functions.
- The application of comprehensive case management techniques to the judicial workload of the Court resulting in the current statistics of most cases being disposed of within nine months of the date of filing and the absence of any pervasive case backlogs.
- Oversaw the biennial revision and amendment of the CCJ's Rules of Court for the Original and Appellate Jurisdictions.
- Pioneered approaches to judicial and administrative functions that promote a paperless environment within the Court and which reduce the financial and environmental costs associated with sustained paper dependence.
- Led the development of the first Strategic Plan for the Court for the period 2013 - 2017 and initiated the process for the development of the CCJ's second strategic plan, placing emphasis on stakeholder engagement and sensitisation activities.
- Commissioned a distinguished group of jurists and academicians for the publication of *The Caribbean Court of Justice: The First Ten Years* which compiles perspectives on the first ten years of the CCJ's judgments and operations.
- Oversaw the implementation of the Judicial Reform and Institutional Strengthening (JURIST) Project, a five-year regional Caribbean judicial reform initiative funded under an arrangement with the Government of Canada, on behalf of the Conference of the Heads of Judiciary of CARICOM.
- Supported the development of the Caribbean Community Administrative Tribunal (CCAT) aimed at finally providing a mechanism for resolving disputes between employees and their CARICOM institution employers that enjoy immunity from civil suits.



Lady Norma Byron (3rd from left), poses here with her gift from the Judges of the Court after a farewell luncheon hosted in her honour.

Sir Dennis Byron Through the Years

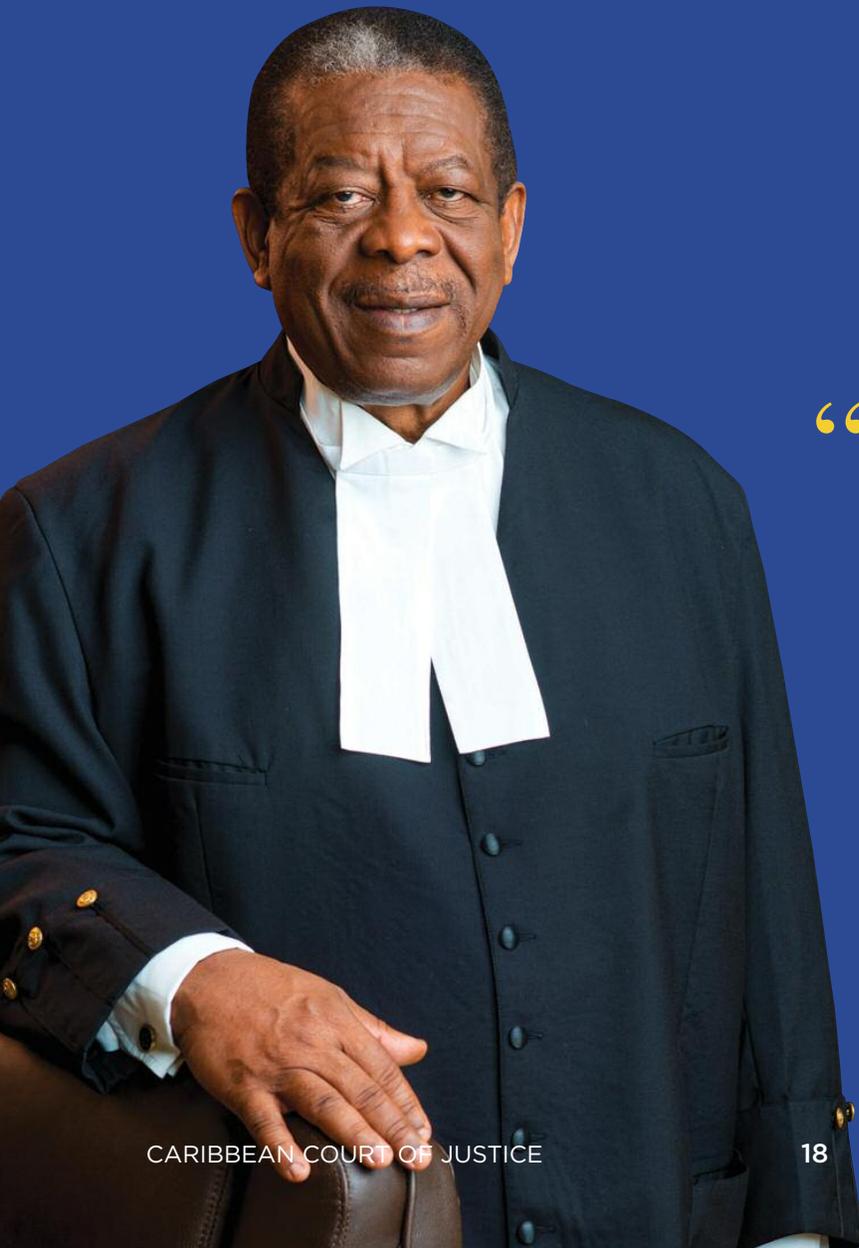
Sir Dennis epitomizes Caribbean excellence. Not only is he a widely-renowned jurist, but he is also a consummate storyteller, a lover of the arts and a generous friend and mentor to many. In this pictorial, we honour and celebrate the many moods of this great leader.



Selected Tributes to Sir Dennis Byron

“Dear Chief, with joy in our hearts, we the stakeholders of Caribbean jurisprudence and judicial development must now thank you for the achievements of the Byron era and celebrate where you have led us. It is amusing, in light of your enduring humility, to consider that for these many years you persisted in being a reformer, you gave no thought you would end up a hero.”

The Honourable Mr. Justice Denys Barrow
Judge, CCJ



“How many gatherings have been made memorable because of his wonderful talent of storytelling? What a great actor he could have been! You have a creative original mind, very humorous and have a driving need to identify and overcome challenges.”

Judge Sandra Oxner
Founding President, CJEI and Retired Judge

“Sir Dennis, from the vantage point of the regional integration movement, we who are the toilers in that vineyard can speak your story in superlatives. We can cite your 16-year toil in the private legal field in St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla. From there, your personal narrative is indelibly inscribed with stellar attainments and its trajectory has brought honour and distinction to the Caribbean narrative of erudite legal luminaries who have set the standard for international excellence in the arena of justice.”

Dr. Didacus Jules
Director General, OECS

“With the advent of this Court’s second President, Sir Dennis Byron, in August 2011, the Caribbean Court of Justice became very dynamic in all aspects of its functionality in keeping with its vision of making justice accessible, cheaper and being very innovative in its processes. Under your stewardship, this Court utilised its itinerant function, making justice more accessible and cheaper, by using e-filing and taking its video-conferencing component one step higher. This tribute is from the Registry’s perspective for which we are forever grateful for Sir Dennis’ effective leadership, for making this Court so very dynamic and meeting the needs of the Caribbean people, for whom it was created to serve.”

Mr. Nandlal Hardial
Registry Supervisor, CCJ

Selected Tributes Continued

“Congratulations on a hard-earned and well-deserved retirement. Your remarkable contributions over your years of service have enhanced the public justice system in immeasurable ways. I wish you nothing but good health and joyous days ahead. Working under your leadership and guidance was truly an honour. May God continue to bless you and Lady Norma richly!”

Ms. Candace Simmons
Executive Assistant, CCJ

“Sir Dennis, the members of the JURIST Project team wish you excellent health and thank you profusely for serving as the Project’s first Director. Your leadership, intellect, strategic vision, commitment to judicial reform, engagement and energy contributed to the development and successful implementation of the Project. Best wishes.”

Ms. Gloria Richards-Johnson
Project Director, on behalf of the JURIST Team

“President Byron has legitimately earned the respect of all of his colleagues and peers as one of the greatest jurists from the CARICOM region and beyond. His legacy contained in a rich body of judicial pronouncements, together with an equal mix of court reform measures, is well memorialised and in every respect immortalised.”

The Honourable Dame Janice Pereira, DBE
Chief Justice, Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court

“Over three decades plus you’ve enriched Caribbean jurisprudence in myriad ways and for this, we, successors and inheritors of your bountiful legacy, are forever grateful. In particular, the last seven of those years at the CCJ, as the Court’s second President, has left an indelible mark on our road to excellence. I wish you and Lady Norma long life and a serene retirement.”

The Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders
President, CCJ

“Sir Dennis, I will never forget our first conversation. I had come to your Chambers to take a photo of you and some guests but, just as I was about to leave, you called me back and asked me with a very serious face, “Semone, why did you change your hair colour to red?” I was so surprised! As one of the most junior members of staff, I could not believe that the President of the Court had ever noticed me, much less take note of the colour of my hair. For you, it was a gesture of amiability but it meant so much to me at the time. This is so telling of who you are and what you stand for: you empower and you encourage.”

Ms. Semone Moore
Public Education & Communications Officer, CCJ

“It is with great pleasure for me, on behalf of my family and staff, to extend our sincere appreciation for the dedicated service which you provided to my beloved CCJ, with such humility, joy and the commitment to advance the organisation. In short, you will be deeply missed. We love you, all the best.”

Mr. Christopher Hoyte
Security Supervisor, CCJ

“Retirement is just another phase of your life. Embrace it as you did all the other phases in the past. All the best and God’s blessings to you.”

Ms. Susan Campbell-Nicholas
Human Resource Manager, RJLSC & CCJ

Sir Dennis' Farewell

The Court's gesture of gratitude to its second President was multi-faceted, much like Sir Dennis himself. There was a Special Sitting, held in Antigua and Barbuda; a champagne toast from the Judges on his final day and a farewell event filled with music, laughter and gifts with the staff of the Court.



During the Special Sitting held in Antigua & Barbuda to honour the Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron, the Hon. Steadroy Benjamin, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Public Safety, and Labour, spoke of Sir Dennis' years on the bench and his contribution to Caribbean jurisprudence.



The Hon. Mr. Justice Winston Anderson unveils a bust of the Rt. Hon. Sir Dennis Byron. The bust, created by Ms. Sherlan Peters, was a gift from the Judges in recognition of Sir Dennis' years of service.



Sir Dennis' friends and family were also honoured during the Special Sitting, in particular his wife, Lady Norma Byron (right), was singled out for special praise for her support.



The Hon. Mme Justice Charmaine Pemberton, a board member of the The Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), presents a gift to Sir Dennis Bryon on behalf of the organisation. CAJO created a commemorative newsletter honouring the retiring President.

Members of the current and past CCJ staff were delighted with the speeches and the entertainment during the party held to honour Sir Dennis' contribution to the CCJ.

