Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, Q.C., (right) is being sworn in as the new Premier at the Government House on the 14th December 1964.

In London, before Independence. From Left are Neville Bissember, Winifred Gaskin, Llewelyn John, Forbes Burnham, Eugene Correia and Mr. Hugh M.E. Chomondeley.
PNC - A Proud Legacy of Achievement in Government

In his inaugural speech after the elections of December 1964, the newly elected Premier of British Guiana, Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham addressed a fractured nation. "This Government (the PNC Government) holds that all the people of this country are equally important. Whether they belong to a large group or a small group; to us (the PNC) the Amerindians are important; to us the Chinese are important; to us the Portuguese are important; to us the Europeans are important; to us the Africans are important; to us the Indians are important. In short, all Guyanese are important and valued members of our community. We cherish them and consider that as a Government it is our duty and privilege to guard, protect and further the real interest of all."

The People's National Congress has a proud legacy of achievement as the Government of Guyana over the period 1964-1992. It was our Government under the leadership of Forbes Burnham that calmed racial tensions. It was under the People's National Congress that the National Army, the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) was formed in 1965 and Guyana became an Independent Nation on 26th May 1966, and achieved Republican status on 23rd February 1970.

It was the PNC that built the major infrastructure to promote development; the entire coastal roadways from Corentyne to Essequibo, the Mahaica-Mahaicony Agricultural scheme, the extension to the Tapakuma and Black-Bush Polder drainage and irrigation schemes, the Demerara Harbour Bridge and the Linden Highway just to name a few.

It was the PNC that ensured respect and recognition for all religions and significant religious observances; when we celebrate Phagwah, Deepavali, Eid-ul-Adha, or Youman Nabi it is an occasion to remember the PNC and Forbes Burnham. It was the PNC in Government that built all the monuments in recognition of the struggles of our ancestors; when we see the 1763 monument, the Damon monument, or the Enmore Martyrs monument it is an occasion to remember the PNC and Forbes Burnham.

It was the PNC that guaranteed workers security through the establishment of the National Insurance Scheme (NIS). It was the PNC in Government that recognized the important role of our youth, reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 and expanded educational facilities all over the country, while ensuring that relevant institutions were built to facilitate their development. When we think of the Guyana National Service (GNS), the University of Guyana Turkeyen Campus, the Critchlow Labour College, the Cyril Potter College of Education, the Multilateral schools and the provision of free education from Nursery to University, the free scholarships to children of the poor and our indigenous brothers and sisters to develop their talents and promote development; these are all occasions to remember the PNC and Forbes Burnham.

It was the PNC Administration that built the President's College that this PPP/C Administration is making persistent efforts to destroy. It was the PNC that constructed a modern international airport and named it Timehri in recognition of our indigenous Amerindian people, and it was the shameless PPP/C administration that renamed it the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. It was the PNC that originally gave out titles to the Amerindian villages in Guyana that constructed and named it in recognition of our indigenous Amerindian people, and it was the shameless PPP/C administration that renamed it the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. It was the PNC that originally gave out titles to the Amerindian villages in Guyana and in the first decade in office built more than 18 interior airstrips and dozens of hinterland schools.

The first decade 1964-1974 was a period of unprecedented development in Guyana, under the stewardship of the PNC. New Nation remind you of these achievements not to boast, but because the PNC has a great legacy and a proud record in office. The contributions of the People's National Congress Government and our Founder Leader, Forbes Burnham, to the development of Guyana, can never be erased.
## PNC Accomplishments in Government

### Republic Day, 23rd February 1970
- Arthur Chung - President and Head of State
- L.F.S. Burnham - Prime Minister, Head of Government

### Economy - Period of Socialist Thrust

| Nationalisation | - Demerara Bauxite Company (DEMBA) (1971) | - Reynolds Metal Co., Kwakwani (1973) |

| NEW FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED |
| - National Insurance Scheme (NIS) |
| - Guyana National Co-op Bank |
| - Guyana Agricultural & Industrial Development Bank |
| - Guyana Co-op Mortgage Finance Bank |
| - Guyana State Corporation (GYUSTAC) |

### Infrastructure Development

- Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme (MMA)
- New Airport Terminal Building (Refurbished run-away and all related air traffic control facilities at the International Airport - Timehri.)

### Telecommunication
- Earth Station built and commissioned.

### Roads
- Soesdyke/Linden Highway
- East Demerara/West Berbice Highway
- East Berbice/Corentyne Highway
- West Demerara Highway

### Bridges
- Demerara Harbour Bridge
- Canje River Bridge
- McKenzie/Wismar Bridge

### Sea & River Defences
- Throughout Coastal Guyana
- Building of Ships & Barges: Steven-N; MV Jaimeto; MV Torani; MV Malali

### Education and Culture

- Turkishen Campus, University of Guyana
- Cyril Potter College of Education (Teacher's Training College)
- National Cultural Centre
- National School of Dance
- Burrowes School of Arts
- Cyril Potter College of Education (Teacher's Training College)
- Turkeyen Campus, University of Guyana
- Cyril Potter College of Education (Teacher's Training College)
- National Cultural Centre
- National School of Dance
- Burrowes School of Arts

### Restructuring our education system to meet the challenges of Independence and Republican status:

- Multilateral Schools
- Community High Schools
- Primary Schools (Curriculum Development)
- Guyana National Service
- Guyana Festival of Arts (GYIFESTA)
- CARIFESTA 1972
- President's College (School of Excellence)

### F.C.H. Programme (Feed, Clothe & House)

### Towards Local Self Sufficiency

(a) Production and use of Indigenous Food (fruits, vegetables, fish)
(b) Use of Indigenous materials (clay)
(c) Cotton production at Kimbia

### International Relations

- Membership of Non Aligned Movement (NAM) (Hosted first NAM Foreign Ministers Meeting in Western Hemisphere, 1972.)
- Twice elected to membership of UN Economic and Social Council.
- Also elected to membership of UNESCO executive Board and the Board of WHO.
- The Georgetown Accord in 1975 led to the formal establishment of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries, (ACP).

### Agriculture

- Dairy industry revitalized - higher yielding species, introduced artificially insemination encouraged.
- Deep sea fishing and shrimping.
- Agri-Research intensified resulting in higher yielding varieties of rice, sugar cane, legumes and species of livestock realized.
- Inland fishing intensified and more and better trawlers involved in deep sea fishing and shrimpimg.
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### CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION MOVEMENT

- Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) - 1967/1968
- Treaty of Chaguaramus establishing the Caribbean Community & Common Market (CARICOM) - 1973
- Constitution approved by referendum after Constituent Assembly process.
- L.F.S. Burnham elected First Executive President.

### The Constitution provided for the following Supreme Organs of Democratic Power:

(a) The Parliament;
(b) The National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (NCLDO);
(c) The Supreme Congress of the People
(d) The President;
(e) The Cabinet

### Our Indigenous People: As a result of the work of the Amerindians
- Lands Commission, the Government of Guyana in 1976 awarded land titles to Amerindian villages as ancestral lands to be owned and worked collectively by our Amerindian citizens for their and the country's benefit.

### National Holidays: The recognition of Religious (Holy Days) for Hindus and Moslems as National Holidays.

### National Defence: In defence of our territorial integrity. Establishment of the National Army - Guyana Defence Force; People's Militia; Guyana National Service.

### Agriculture: The base of survival and economic development in Guyana.

- Announcement of the policy of national Self Sufficiency in Food.
- The restriction of imported non-essential food items.
- Experimentation and creativity in local food production encouraged.
- Increased Government expenditure and investment in this sector authorized.
- Agricultural Co-operatives in Crops and Livestock, processing and marketing established.
- F.C.H. programme launched.
- Incentive schemes for farmers granted, e.g., duty free importation of Stockfeed ingredients - agricultural machinery; spare parts; tools; fertilizers; pesticides.
- Increased expenditure on Sea and River Defences - pumps, D & I schemes and roads.
- Agri-Training Institution upgraded & new institutions established.
- Agri-Research intensified resulting in higher yielding varieties of rice, sugar cane, legumes and species of livestock realized.
- Inland fishing intensified and more and better trawlers involved in deep sea fishing and shrimpimg.
- Dairy industry revitalized - higher yielding species, introduced artificially insemination encouraged.
- Agri-Diversification given new priority.
- National plan for Agri development reviewed and reshaped.
- Urban agriculture given new prominence.
- Constitutional changes giving Land to the Tiller.
- National Agriculture Research Institute established.
- Oil Palm project at Wauna (NWD) San Juan (Dem. River) coconut plantation at Hope Estate, E.C.D. reactivated.
- Cotton cultivation reactivated.
- Attractive incentives to coffee and tobacco growers.
- Farmers Association promoted.
The Monument symbolises those who gave their lives for the liberation of Southern Africa. It was built in less than a week to commemorate the visit of the Council of Namibia in 1978.
"Comrades, for more than half of my lifetime you and I have walked together, worked together, lost together, won together. Have we not now the Will to conquer?"  
(Forbes Burnham, Will To Survive, August 15, 1983. Address to the 5th Biennial Congress)

Apart from Tyrone Ferguson's book, "To Survive Sensibly or to Court Heroic Death - the management of Guyana's Political Economy 1965-1985," there has been no attempt by the academic community or the society at large to objectively determine Burnham's true role in the political development of Guyana from his return in 1949 to his death on August 6, 1985. Between 1964 when he became Premier and 1985, Burnham initiated major changes in the politics and society of Guyana.

Scholar
Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham was born to a Headmaster father and a devout Christian mother on February 20, 1923. His scholastic career is one of the outstanding features of his life. He went from Kitty Methodist School to Central High School and then to Queen's College where he won the coveted Guyana scholarship. The war prevented him from proceeding to University overseas and he therefore went to University of London for a degree from London University. After the war, he proceeded to read Law at Guyana University, winning the best speaker’s cup in the process. But the Law could not hold him. Politics was in his blood. Several Caribbean Leaders, especially Errol Barrow of Barbados had testified how Burnham and others “tired the sun with talking” on all subjects political. The destiny of Guyana and the Caribbean Region claimed his attention. Left wing politics seduced him and soon Burnham was involved with the youth arm of the Communist party of Britain and the politics of the Caribbean students.

Chariot
When Burnham returned home therefore in 1949 he had clear ideas as to where he wanted to go politically and ideologically. When Jagan, who had returned home earlier, invited him to form the People’s Progressive Party in 1950, he grasped the opportunity with both hands. He passed over Ashton Chase for the chairmanship of the party and soon became its intellectual motor, Jagan deferring too him on many issues on public occasions. But Jagan and his wife knew what they were doing. Not only did they seek to harness Burnham’s impressive academic qualifications to the banner of the party but more particularly they recognised there was a need for “dual charisma” as the PPP was weak in the urban areas. This is an important point. Ms. Jagan has recently admitted in the PPP’s organ, the Mirror, that racial tension and friction occasioned the need for two leaders. One must remember at all times that Burnham was originally invited by Jagan to become leader of the PPP on his return to Guyana but this was dishonoured at the first congress of the party.

New Party
Burnham has confided to many of his close colleagues that while he could respect Jagan’s charm and the down-to-earth nature of his character, he was less enamoured of his abilities. He therefore found it galling to play second fiddle to Jagan after the historic PPP win in the 1953 elections. After the suspension of the Constitution later in 1953 and the holding of a congress by Burnham at the Metropole Cinema in February 1955, relations between Burnham and the Jagans hit rock bottom. Burnham and his supporters were expelled from the PPP and by 1957 Burnham had formed the People’s National Congress (PNC). Defeats at the 1957 and 1961 elections persuaded Burnham to seek alliance both internally and externally. In particular they recognised there was a need to change the system of representation. Jagan’s goose was cooked. Burnham emerged as Premier after the elections of 1964.

New Nationalism
An important phase in Burnham’s political career had begun. He sought to establish mutual respect for all cultures, all religions and customs by revising the system of national holidays, visiting communities and practising what he termed “participatory democracy”. But as time passed it was clear that he was uncomfortable with the coalition with D’Aguiar. By 1967, the PNC and the UP parted ways. The PNC won the 1968 elections and Burnham immediately signalled that he wanted to transform Guyana. After the inauguration of the Republic in 1970, he took a number of important measures which ended with 80 percent of the economy coming under state control. A programme of national self-reliance was put in place and luxury items were banned. All of this was matched by a brilliant foreign policy, emphasising the importance of Initiation and which saw the recognition of China in 1971, Cuba in 1972 and unremitting support for the Liberation struggle of Southern Africa. By 1978 Burnham had taken steps to revise the 1968 Constitution and a new constitution was promulgated.

Hostility
But the economic crisis which started in 1973 had a serious impact on the economy and this caused Burnham to take a number of critical measures, which were far from popular. Among the most notable was the ending of his career as President of the Republic Burnham had to battle a declining economy, the hostility of the western powers and an opposition which did not conceal the fact that they intended to overthrow him. In the end the mighty heart was still and death came on August 6, 1985.

But Burnham had left a nation that was more self-confident, more respected by the regional and international community, its infrastructure enhanced and agriculture expanded, among other things. This was more than sufficient for one political life.

By Oscar Clarke
On the assumption to the Office of Premier of British Guiana in December 1964, Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham,Former Leader of the People’s National Congress promised to bind up the wounds which were inflicted on the population by the machinations of British colonialism, with their divide and rule policies, which resulted in racial strife between our two major racial groups, the descendants of African slaves and of East Indian indentured labourers.

It launched out on a crusade which took him personally to every village and town throughout the length and breadth of Guyana preaching the need for “Peace Not Conflict”, with the promise that “Government, like God, will help those who helped themselves.” This was the slogan with which he launched the self-help movement in Guyana, a movement which caught the fancy and became synonymous with the people’s struggle for a better life.

During this period the Government partnered with the people in their villages to build something which they identified as important for the development for the village or community. Later this community self-help idea was to become an important adjunct in the national programme to boost community self-help idea was to become an important adjunct in the national programme to boost development of Cooperatives in the various sectors of the economy; and death came on August 6, 1985.

The choice of the Cooperative as the economic vehicle for making “the small man a real man,” in keeping with the “Socialist Thrust” which was popular among developing countries around the world during that period, the overall policy of “Self Reliance” leading to the national programme to Feed, Clothes and House ourselves utilizing our own resources in the process. Also the “Be Local, Buy Local” campaign was launched to encourage the use of locally produced foods and other products of all kinds.

Another important development of this strategy was the identification of the cooperative as the economic vehicle for making “the small man a real man,” in keeping with the “Socialist Thrust” which was popular among developing countries around the world during that period, the overall policy of “Self Reliance” leading to the national programme to Feed, Clothes and House ourselves utilizing our own resources in the process. Also the “Be Local, Buy Local” campaign was launched to encourage the use of locally produced foods and other products of all kinds.
ACHIEVEMENTS - Buildings; Housing Schemes

The National Cultural Centre was officially opened on the 16th May 1976 after the decision to erect the center was arrived at since 1971.

The University of Guyana moved into its permanent and fine new buildings in September 1968.

The Umana Yana was built by the Waiwai’s in 1972 for the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers Conference in Georgetown, Guyana.

On September 29, 1969, the National Insurance Scheme (N.I.S.) commenced operations as an agency within the then Ministry of Labour and Social Security under the guidance of Labour Minister, the late, Mr. Winslow Carrington. Under the PNC Government and the visionary Leadership of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, this social security scheme was launched with the aim of providing benefits for all workers of Guyana.

One of several housing schemes built by the PNC administration in the 1970s.
ACHIEVEMENTS - Roads, Bridges, etc

The 2 Lane Linden/Soesdyke Highway was constructed between 1966 and 1968. It was officially opened in 1969.

The Demerara Harbour Bridge (floating bridge) was officially declared opened on 2nd July 1978.

The Canje Bridge, located at Fort Canje, Berbice, was officially declared opened in 1978.

MMA - Trafalgar/Union Pump Station and Sea Sluice. Declared opened 17th August 1983.

National recognition of religious holidays

Islam

Hinduism

Christianity
CULTURE

CARIFESTA 1972

Conscious of its responsibility to initiate a deliberate programme of cultural activity involving the mass of the people in the promotion of the Guyanese genius in the arts to develop the national sense of pride and self-worth and promote national unity, the PNC Government established a broad-based agency, the National History and Arts Council in 1964.

The most important cultural event in Guyana and the Caribbean during the first ten years of the People’s National Congress in Government was the 1972 Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts (CARIFESTA). Over the period August 25th to September 15th 1972, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana was host to more than one thousand artists, actors, and dancers from twenty eight Caribbean nations. More than ninety events held at sixteen venues constituted a glittering, inspiring and entertaining pageant of dance, music, art, sculpture, poetry, drama, photography and book displays. In order to present these cultural riches to as many Guyanese, sixty-eight presentations were made at Mabaruma, Lethem, New Amsterdam, Uitvlugt and Corriverton. The National School of Dance was established in February 1974.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

From disaster to prominence

In December 1964, Guyana was a country which had been torn apart by racial strife, a country often mentioned in the world Press as a place of riots and other disorders, with little prospect of achieving Independence. It was a country with few friends. The other English speaking peoples of the Caribbean viewed us with a mixture of dismay or suspicion; they wished to have no part of the chaos that was Guyana.

In the first ten years of the PNC in Government, Guyana achieved a position of leadership in the Caribbean and the rest of the developing world. Guyana under Forbes Burnham played a decisive role in the regional integration movement. In recognition of this, the Caribbean Community Secretariat (Caricom) was sited in Guyana, Guyana in the first decade under the PNC became a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement, a leader so highly regarded that the entire Latin American group unanimously endorsed Guyana’s candidature to the United Nations Security Council.

In sharp contrast to our poor image before the People’s National Congress came to office in 1964, by 1974 Guyana commanded the respect of people everywhere. Several of the World’s most distinguished leaders visited and major international conferences were held in Georgetown. Under the PNC in one decade Guyana moved from a country on the edge of disaster to the achievement of an honored place in the councils of nations.

“My Government subscribes to the Charter of the United Nations. It has faith in this organisation of which it hopes to be an active rather than a sleeping member. It also hopes for and will work towards the United Nations being as truly representative as possible of all peoples of the world, regardless of ideological and mythological differences.

(Excerpt from Forbes Burnham’s Speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the occasion of Guyana’s acceptance as a Member Nation, New York, 20th September 1966.)
The Duke of Kent read a throne speech on behalf of the Queen, after which on behalf of the sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, he handed over to Premier L.F.S. Burnham the constitutional instruments designating Guyana an independent nation. This event took place during the mid-morning of Thursday 26th May 1966 in the Parliament Chambers. On achieving Independence, Guyana became the 23rd member of the British Commonwealth.

The Duke of Kent being introduced to Premier Forbes Burnham at the airport by Sir Richard Luyt, Guyana’s first Governor General.

Embrace between Forbes Burnham and Cheddi Jagan before the hosting of Guyana’s new flag, the Golden Arrow Head. This event took place at the Queen Elizabeth II Park (National Park), May 1966.

Celebrating Guyana’s Independence - Forbes Burnham and Queen Elizabeth II

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### Foreign Exchange Rate

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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Sell</th>
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<td>EUR European</td>
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<td>GBP Great Britain</td>
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<td>BZD Belize</td>
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<td>TTD Trinidad</td>
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Exchange Rates as at 2014-11-24
A NEW ERA OF HOPE

REFLECTIONS

By Rashleigh Jackson

In order to fully appreciate the achievements of Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham and his Government during the first ten years in office, one needs to have a clear understanding of the situation which was inherited. Although the Government headed by Forbes Burnham held a majority of the seats in the National Assembly as a result of the 1964 elections, Dr. Cheddi Jagan adopted the slogan "cheated not defeated", and he refused to demit office as Premier. He had to be removed by an Order-in-Council by the British Crown. This behaviour was preceded, while Dr. Jagan was Premier, by violence, racial strife, labour disputes, and ideological polarization. And Dr. Jagan left the Treasury bare.

The priority policy objectives were made clear by Forbes Burnham. They can be described as follows:-
- The security of the country and its people;
- Healing the racial wounds, reconciliation and peace and structured national economic and social development;
- The application of the process of decolonization internally involving inter alia the restoration to the people of their dignity, self-respect and sense of self-worth;
- A foreign policy which would advance the national interests and accordingly facilitate the achievement of the abovementioned objectives.

It is in respect of the last names objective, that of foreign policy, in which I was deeply involved, that I will focus my comments.

Before he became Head of Government, Forbes Burnham had by his statements indicated certain critical foreign policy prescriptions. Two examples are illustrative. Firstly, in 1958, Burnham introduced the Legislative Council a Motion calling for Guyana to enter into negotiations to join the West Indian Federation. The Motion was opposed by Dr. Jagan's Government and was, therefore, not approved. Secondly, addressing the Trades Union Congress in the early 1960's, Burnham explained that the Union administration under him would be "no pacific or East or West". These examples were harbingers of Burnham's commitment in the first instance to regional cooperation and in the second, to his conviction that an independent Guyana should eschew bloc entanglements and pursue a foreign policy which was geared to the advancement and protection of Guyana's national interests. A necessary task in this respect was acquiring the infrastructure, including importantly appropriate skills, to effectively carry out and implement the policy assignments to, and responsibilities of, the Foreign Service. Recruitment of staff of a high caliber and their training were undertaken.

Very early in his tenure as Head of Government, Forbes Burnham outlined characteristics he expected of a Guyanese diplomat. He also specified some cardinal foreign policy objectives. In addressing a Diplomatic Training course in January 1966, he opined that a Guyanese diplomat would not have "armies, navies, air forces or nuclear weapons" to add persuasion to his words. The diplomat also had he said "no deep purses with the contents of which he can buy friendship, support..." What this pointed to was the need for advocacy skills and capabilities which indeed became a hallmark of the Foreign Service.

As regards foreign policy objectives, Burnham said to the diplomats in training that one was "to regale Guyana into the Caribbean region..... and the projection of the Caribbean personality on the international scene".

During a debate in the National Assembly in 1967, Burnham explained that at the philosophical level Guyana's foreign policy was "motivated by a desire to play an important role in the achievement of permanent peace .... and putting an end to the exploitation and enslavement of man by man". He also dealt with the wisdom of exercising independent judgment on any international question, that is, the pursuit of an independent foreign policy.

Looking back on those early years, it is remarkable how successful Guyana's diplomacy was and how adroit were the advocacy skills and competencies of the foreign services. On the substantive side the achievements were manifold. There was the flowering of the Caribbean Project - CARIFTA, CARICOM, CARIFÉSTA, the benefits of Alliance Building - ACP; for example: Territorial Integrity issues (Venezuela and Suriname), projects promoting social and economic development, among others. Guyana then punched above its weight and commanded great respect in the world.

I end with the following observation of Jocelyn Dow:-

"Guyana was then, in the early 1970s, a country that was overflowing with imagination, possibility and vision. We were a front-line state in the non-aligned movement, fighting hard at the United Nations on the decolonization of Namibia, hosting the African Caribbean and Pacific meetings in Georgetown, and were at the heart of inter-governmental processes at the UN. Life was about the building of a national culture that would redress and transcend our colonial past. It was the beginning of the end of foreign domination and Western oppression. Guyana's foreign policy was activist, forward-looking and committed to the war against injustice. One was proud to be Guyanese and associate with this international solidarity'.

By Yvonne Harewood-Benn

Serving as a Minister in the Government of the People's National Congress and our Founder Leader, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, was a most rewarding experience, one that I will treasure and remember all my life. From his example, you understood that you should always strive for excellence as mediocrity was not tolerated.

I always was an avid supporter of the People's National Congress, but it was in 1968 when I returned from the United Kingdom (after completing my studies) that I really became more involved. A group of "Returnees" were invited to Burnham's Belfield Residence and after listening to the Founder Leader, we were all ready to work to help him achieve his vision for Guyana.

Forbes Burnham saw a country where every human being regardless of race can live a life of dignity, of meaning, of worth; where youth is given hope and unlimited opportunity. While serving as the Principal of the Watooka Day School in Linden, I was asked to serve as the Regional Chairman. This was a most interesting period in my life both as a person and as a party official. Self-help activities brought about a sense of community, a sense of responsibility; the Wismar Rockstone housing project became a reality, women were empowered; house wives surprised themselves when they made concrete blocks, did carpentry, worked as engineers and excelled at formerly 'men only' jobs, as they helped build each other's houses.

Representing Guyana abroad as Counsel General in New York provided an excellent opportunity to inform Guyanese of the work of the PNC Government. My 'cottage meetings' in the Tri-State area held during my service there are still remembered fondly.

Working in the Burnham Cabinet was an amazing experience, working with great minds like Mohammed Shahabudeen, Hubert Jack, Desmond Hoyte and Rashleigh Jackson made my Cabinet experience all the more memorable. Like most great leaders, Forbes Burnham always tried to give us opportunities to achieve our best; from him we learnt that in order for our nation to develop we needed to make an extra effort to improve our personal efficiency and effectiveness.

This was a great period in our country's history and I was honored to serve.
The period 1964-1974 can be described as a period of tremendous and unprecedented growth in education in Guyana. From 1962-63, there were only three Government Secondary Schools with 1,386 students. In addition, there were 14 Government-aided schools with 7,744 students and about 25 private schools with about 4,670 students. But under the People's National Congress by 1972-1973 there were 33 Government Secondary Schools with 15,179 students on roll, 13 Government-aided secondary schools with 9,349 students and an estimated 10,000 students still in private secondary schools.

In addition, in 1972-1973 there were about 35,000 students in the secondary departments of all-age schools. Under the PNC’s education policies enacted in the first decade in office some 70,000 or fifty percent of the 138,027 students in the nation’s 12 to 18 age group were receiving some form of secondary education. For the first five years in office the PNC's major thrust was geared to meet the growing demand for school places. This led to the provision of accommodation for over 40,000 school places at the rate of 60 places per month.

Under the PNC 'Bottom-House’ schools where many rural children received their education in insanitary conditions, were abolished. During this period, 36,503 primary school places were provided while the number of primary schools was increased from 358 to 398, a total of 40 new schools.

While the first five years of the People’s National Congress in Government was one of reconstruction and stabilization, the second five years period was characterized by a series of very significant activities. Looking back at the first decade of education in Guyana under the PNC Administration, it must be recognized that provision of basic accommodation for students was in itself a tremendous physical achievement, matched only by the efforts to increase the richness, relevance and scope of the educational experience.

"For us education is the corner-stone of equality, and one of the chief instruments for the abolition of snobbery, the removal of discrimination, the development of creative beings, and the production of a race of men and women who will never surrender to mediocrity or dictatorship of any kind." Forbes Burnham (A Destiny to Mould)
Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham’s life exemplifies the so often repeated statement - "walked with kings but did not lose the common touch".

Born in Kitty on February 20, 1923, son of a headmaster, he received his early education at Kitty Methodist School. He entered Queen’s College in 1935 and one year later gained the Centenary Exhibition as well as a Government Junior Scholarship. In 1937, he won the Percival Exhibition Award and in 1942, he emerged as a Guyana Scholar.

**Brilliant**

In 1944, he was awarded the Bachelor of Arts Degree at the External Examination of the University of London. In 1947, he gained with honours, the Bachelor of Laws Degree from the same University. In 1948, at the age of 25, he was admitted to the bar of the honourable Society of Gray’s Inn, London. In 1949, he returned home and was admitted to the local Bar. By 1959, he had so established himself as a brilliant lawyer, that he was elected President of the Guyana Bar Association.

**Politics**

While a student in London, his keen interest in politics earned him the presidency of the West Indian Students’ Union in 1947 and participation as a delegate to the Students’ Congresses in Prague in 1947 and Paris in 1948. Upon his return to Guyana, he became a co-founder and Chairman of the People’s Progressive Party.

In 1952, he was elected to the Georgetown City Council where he served as Mayor on two occasions, in 1959 and 1964.

**Committed**

He was deeply committed to serving the working class. He served as first President of the oldest Trade Union in the Caribbean, the Guyana Labour Union. In October 1982, he was unanimously elected as President General, a position which he held until his demise.

**First Executive President**

In 1957, he founded our Party and served as Leader of the Opposition within the Legislature until 1964 when he became Premier at the Head of the People’s National Congress/United Force Coalition Government.

When Guyana became independent in 1966, he became our Prime Minister and with the advent of a new Constitution, he was elected the First Executive President on December 15, 1980, guiding the affairs of our nation until his death on August 6, 1985.

**International Respect**

This outstanding son of Guyana earned for our country international recognition and the respect of friends and foes alike for his articulation of commitment to the practice of Non-Alignment. He made it clear that he was not prepared to sacrifice Guyana’s right to determine its own path of political, economic and social and cultural development. He stood firmly for the dignity and independence of his country. He was also an indefatigable foe of apartheid and was repeatedly praised for the strong support to the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

**Cariffta/Caricom/Carifesta**

Within the Region, he was a Founding Father of both Carifta and Caricom and was regarded as “a Regional Leader of utmost importance and highest esteem.” His was the vision of a truly integrated Caribbean Community of independent people and he worked hard towards making that vision a reality.

In the quest for cultural independence, under his leadership, Guyana hosted the first Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts (Carifesta) in 1972.

As a committed integrationist, he always expressed our willingness to place the vast resources of our country at the disposal of the rest of the Caribbean.

**Women’s Rights**

At home, he was the healer of the nation after the disastrous sixties, the architect of a revolution for self-reliance and the defender of the disadvantaged.

He was a champion of women’s rights and ensured the passing of legislation which gave children born out of wedlock equal rights with those born of wedlock. A State Paper on Women in 1976 gave birth to three laws - The Equal Rights Act; The Family and Dependents Provision Act; and the Married Persons (Property) Amendment Act. These Acts ensured for women equal rights in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

**Concern for Youth**

His concern for youth was manifested in the establishment of the Guyana National Service (GNS) which was meant to give early school-leavers additional opportunities and to build in young people a spirit of nationalism and engender a zeal for service to the nation.

**Awards**

He received Guyana’s Highest award, the Order of Excellence (O.E.) in 1973. His work as an internationalist earned him the grand Cordan Dh’orde du Mil award from the Government of Egypt, the Jose Marti award from the Government of Cuba in 1975 and an honorary Doctorate of Law from Dalhouse University of Canada.

Three countries awarded him their highest awards - in October 1983, Brazil honoured him with the Cruseiro DoSol; in 1984, Bulgaria with the Star of Planinay; and in 1985, Yugoslavia with the “Order of the Red Star”.

Such was the person who had seen our Party from infancy to a mature, effective institution.

Such was the person who had guided our nation through independence to full pledged nationhood. In him all have been consumed. He is our Hero.