

## A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER

My father, Wilfred Fitzpatrick Bathersfield means, different things to different people—to some: a tailor, policeman, counselor, innovator, lodge man, confidant, humanist; to others: disciplined, honorable, and steadfast. He was an exquisite dresser for all occasions—hat, suit and tie with tie pin, matching shoes, socks, clean shaved. Later he had a flare for colors and as a promoter he designed his outfits—synchronizing colors to suit the occasion. He danced well and commanded attention when asked to demonstrate steps to calypso, reggae, cadence, zouk, merengue and the electric slide.

Even though I do not share his philosophy about life, I made an in depth analysis of my father critically and this determined the qualities I wanted to emulate and those I wanted to avoid.

My father was born on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1918, a Wednesday and he got married on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1945, a Saturday. His children were born toward the end of the month or early in the month. To him this was significant because “he had cash on hand for these occasions.” In 1918, John Simmons—bassist, John Handee—tenor saxophonist, Joe Williams—vocalist, were born, just to name a few. Ironically, my father could also hold his own as a baritone, which he demonstrated as a member of the police male voice choir. Notably, he was a tailor by profession but he joined the police force in 1947—squadron 4777. His ranking could be measured by compassion and cherished relationships he has cultivated throughout his tenure. In 1969 he retired in order to acquire retirement funds to facilitate his children’s formal education. For this we, his children, have commended him. What foresight in spite of the prevailing and prevalent negativism! His mind set was the ‘universal set’ elevating, motivating, and uplifting the human spirit of those he came in contact with daily, demonstrating behind the scenes how they could make

ends meet through creative and innovative methods: his cake shop—Flamingo Parlor; his private car turned into one for hire—HC 842; bicycle rental on the pavement at Demico House; Juke Box—Flamingo; El Bingo square at Linden fair, or his other promotions and investments “under cover”. During Colonial times, the Police could not own property—as I understand it. But he continued to create a way for himself and others for the common good. His additional ventures included the feeding of the elderly, the children’s fair, parties, and scholarship donations, Rock Stone community development project, fund raisers: political, religious and social. He also tried a drug store and writing calypso, but I do not know who was the singer.

If you entrusted him with something, you were assured that it was safe by “Officer/Policeman.” It was only lately that he started to lapse and unscrupulous individuals assumed control of his affairs.

His creativity was enhanced by traveling and as he acquired ideas he implemented them to further his promotional techniques. He had numerous opportunities to migrate to the Caribbean islands, Surinam, England, and the U.S.A., but he vehemently refused. He had a way—his way. If you purchased a drink for him at a party, he took it and in some way he passed it to someone else. I guess business and liquor do not mix—you dig!

He did not initiate political discussions with me as I did with him. He did not understand my personal and political stand in 1975 but later he did, but I got the word through a friend of his. That’s his way. I respected it then and love him in spite of his ideology.

We salute your “Being”

For wisdom, vision, commitment, tenacity, candor, and  
perceptiveness.

Your footprints cannot be measured—they are near and afar...

A hero to some—because you created a way...

A stalwart to many—because you kept the faith with dignity and  
pride...

Guyana is for Guyanese...

Am “I” alien?

We salute your “Being”.

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