

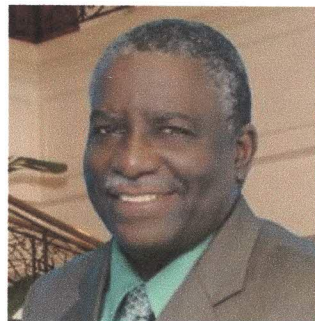
The Caribbean Writer

The Literary Gem of the Caribbean

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

APRIL 20, 2011

“Poetry is Relevant” says Lieutenant Governor Gregory Francis



Lt. Governor Gregory Francis is Crucian to the bones, born and reared here. He attended Central High School, which is where he was first exposed to poetry. He said, “reading poetry was part of English class in 10th grade.” After graduating from Central High School, Lt. Governor Francis elected to join the U.S. Army, where he worked himself up through the ranks serving as a Command Program Support Specialist, Supervisory Military Personal Specialist and Recruiting and Retention Manager for his 27 years tenure. While serving in the army he had the opportunity to live in Germany, Puerto Rico, as well as his homeland, the Virgin Islands.

His favorite poet is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the poem that echoes in his mind is, “A Psalm of Life,” the first two stanzas of which mirrors the Lt. Governor’s outlook on life:

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou are, to dust thou returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

It was always the Lt. Governor’s intention to make something of his life and to leave a legacy. The final stanza of this poem serves as its own motivation.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Lt. Governor Francis says poetry is, “very relevant,” and helps people to express their feelings and explore ideas.

Lt. Governor Francis commitment’s to St. Croix is unquestionable and he is a firm supporter of education. He attended UVI, from where he received a certificate from the paralegal program. He states emphatically, “poetry should be taught in the schools.” He wants children in the Virgin Islands to understand how crucial it is for them to complete their education and excel in order to compete in the 21st Century. He urges them to achieve as much as they can as there are more opportunities available to them than when he was a boy.

Similar to his favorite poet, Longfellow, who was “a devoted husband and father with a keen feeling for the pleasures of home,” Lt. Governor Francis, happily married for 32 years, is a proud father of a son and three daughters. He relishes spending time with family and friends. He finds poetry “relaxing,” and hopes one day to have the time to write more poetry, but for now he offers you his first attempt.

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