



Reference Biography Service

HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON. ARTHUR DION HANNA GOVERNOR-GENERAL

His Excellency the Hon. Arthur Dion Hanna is the seventh Bahamian Governor-General of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, having been sworn into office on Wednesday, February 1, 2006, at Government House.

Mr. Hanna succeeded the retired Dame Ivy Dumont, who served as the country's sixth and first female Governor-General from January, 2002 to November 30, 2005. The Hon. Paul Adderley acted as Governor-General from December 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006.

A native of Pompey Bay, Acklins, Mr. Hanna was born on March 7, 1928, to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Albert Hanna.

He attended the Government High School in Nassau and following graduation pursued legal studies in England, earning a L.L.B degree from the University of Bristol. He was called to the English Bar by the Inner Temple and in 1955, was admitted to The Bahamas Bar as counsel and attorney.

The following year he joined the fledgling Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), and was elected to serve on its executive board. In March, 1956, he was nominated, along with the late Samuel White, to contest a Cat Island seat in the general election. They both lost that election.

Always an ardent supporter of trade unionism, Mr. Hanna got an opportunity to use his skills in the 1958 general strike, giving union leaders freely of his time and counsel and taking an active part in the tedious negotiations that eventually led to victory for the workers.

As a direct result of the strike, Sir Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited The Bahamas to investigate the grievances advanced by the unions and the Opposition PLP. Mr. Hanna played an important part in the negotiations between the PLP and the Secretary of State.

As a member of the Opposition, he was constantly at war with the ruling United Bahamian Party (UBP). His candor and courage in debate led to his suspension from the House on April 17, 1965, during a debate on boundary changes. He refused to leave when ordered out, and had to be evicted bodily by the sergeant-at-arms. It was an unprecedented act in the 236-year history of The Bahamas Parliament. Four days later Mr. Hanna was readmitted.

Re-elected in the 1962 general election, Mr. Hanna was appointed to the delegation that represented the PLP at a constitutional conference in the United Kingdom.

In the 1967 general election, he competed for a seat representing St. Ann's- a new constituency. He was re-elected in 1968, 1972, 1977, 1982 and 1987. He was defeated in 1992. In total, Mr. Hanna served as a Member of Parliament for 32 years.

In 1967, following the attainment of Majority Rule, Mr. Hanna was appointed Deputy Premier and later Deputy Prime Minister, a position he would continue to hold without interruption until his resignation from the Cabinet in 1984. Mr. Hanna is a former Deputy Prime Minister and Government Leader in the House of Assembly from 1967 to 1984, and Member of Parliament from 1960 to 1992.

He is one of the earliest and most persistent advocates of Independence and played a leading role in bringing national sovereignty to reality in 1973.

Mr. Hanna also enjoys a position of unique historical importance of his close association with the instrument of state policy that came to be known in the late 1960s as Bahamianisation.

Mr. Hanna is also justly renowned as one of the pre-eminent figures in the shaping of the modern Bahamas.

During his tenure as a member of the Cabinet, Mr. Hanna successively held important ministerial portfolios, most notably, as Minister of Education, Minister of Trade and Industry, Minister of Home Affairs (with responsibility for Immigration), and Minister of Finance, (with added responsibility for the Public Service).

Mr. Hanna was married to the late former Beryl Church of Bristol, England, and they have five children.

Mr. Hanna's hobbies are those of nature, fishing, boating and tending the fruit trees on his seven-acre farm.