

**BCJ Tribute
to
Mrs Rosemarie Vernon,
Educator Extraordinaire and Broadcasting
Commissioner
presented by
Professor Hopeton Dunn,
Chairman, Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica
at
Thanksgiving Service for her life,
Kingston, July 23, 2016**

Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, Minister of Education Youth and Information, Other Distinguished Guests, Family Members, Children, Friends All, Good Morning.

Greetings from the Broadcasting Commission

One of the distinctive features of Mrs Rosemarie Vernon, is the warmth of her greetings, every time. Whether on the phone or in person, you could

expect, among other cheerful salutations, the words: "The Peace of the Lord be with you!"

This was a deeply spiritual woman, who brought sunshine and joy along with her Christian values wherever she went.

Today, we join with her family, especially her husband Neville, her son Ricky and the grandchildren, and all well-wishers, in celebrating the life of an exemplary leader who was respected and beloved in equal measure.

Even before she became a Broadcasting Commissioner Mrs Vernon was an outstanding educator, a leader of the Jamaica Teachers' Association and the celebrated Principal of Alpha Primary. We also know that despite retirement she never stopped being all these things!

It was against that background of professional eminence that Mrs Vernon was first appointed by the Governor General as a Broadcasting Commissioner in January 1999.

She remained on the Commission, through successive re-appointments, for these past 17 years, right up until the time of her death. Over this period she would have attended well over 400 meetings of the Commission and of its sub committees. But her dedication and commitment to the work of the Commission and to the public interest are better measured by the quality of her unwavering service and by her unquestioned integrity.

She served as Chair of the Commission's Monitoring and Compliance Committee for 13 years. It is this Committee that looks into all complaints relating to broadcast or cable breaches. And it is this Committee that recommends to the full Commission the 'remedial actions' to be taken where warranted.

She therefore played an integral role in the Commission's on-going drive to clean up the airwaves and to ensure licensee compliance with our content standards regulations. She carried out this responsibility with fairness, firmness and always with a good sense of humour.

This week Thursday, Commissioners met and paid tribute individually and collectively to Mrs Vernon for her outstanding service, her balanced and sensible contributions to debates, her calm disposition and her penetrating interventions.

On a personal note, her long tenure in the service of the Board of Commissioners ran in parallel with my own. As her colleague Commissioner for her full tenure, and her Chairman for the last 9 of these 17 years, she was to me a solid advisor, a sounding board and a true friend. She would never tell me just what I may have wanted to hear but what **she** really thought. And I admired her for this quality of frankness and truth.

Other Commissioners also gained from her, fresh insights that only Rosie could provide. She was someone in a discussion who quickly identified points around which contending voices could reconcile.

Although her role was that of a Board Member of the Commission, her caring approach was not confined

to the circle of 9 Commissioners. For members of the wider Commission staff, at all levels, she was a mother figure who knew most of them by name from the day they started to work there. She would ask about their children and the well-being of their families with keen and genuine interest.

For many of us, the end of her earthly sojourn came somewhat unexpectedly. But this was someone who lived a full life, not for herself but for her family, her profession, her community and her country.

And so, today as we both mourn her passing and celebrate that life, I close by re-directing her own favourite words and say to her with new meaning, and for the last time: Dear Rosie, THE PEACE OF THE LORD BE WITH YOU!

Thank you!