

Leave of Absence

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

SENATE

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The Senate met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS

[MADAM PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have granted leave of absence to Sen. The Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith for the period November 13, 2003 to November 29, 2003.

SENATOR'S APPOINTMENT

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I have received the following correspondence from his Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By His Excellency Professor GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

/s/ G. Richards
President.

TO: MRS. MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH

WHEREAS Senator Dr. Lenny Saith is incapable of performing his duties as a Senator by reason of his absence from Trinidad and Tobago:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE MAXWELL RICHARDS, President as aforesaid, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, in exercise of the power vested in me by section 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, do hereby appoint you, MAGNA WILLIAMS-SMITH, to be temporarily a member of the Senate with effect from 18th November, 2003 and continuing during the absence from Trinidad and Tobago of the said Senator Dr. Lenny Saith.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the Office of the President, St. Ann's this 14th day of November, 2003.

CONDOLENCES**(SEN. ARNIM SMITH)****Sen. Wade Mark:** Madam President, in Matthew, chapter 5: 3, 10, it says:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Madam President, a great civil rights leader once remarked:

Service to humanity is service to God, and to serve one does not need a Ph.D or even a first degree. All one needs is a heart full of grace and a soul full of love.

This statement epitomizes the life of our dear friend, colleague and Senator, the late and great Arnim Smith. He was an ordinary man who made an extraordinary contribution to his community, his country and his nation. He was and will always be remembered as a soldier, a warrior and a genuine fighter.

Arnim Smith, for us, should be remembered as a man who devoted his entire life to serving others; a man who tried in his brief life to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to give a voice to the voiceless, to visit the imprisoned. Arnim tried to give hope and love to the oppressed and the dispossessed in this land of our birth. Some people criticized him even without knowing or meeting him. He was severely lambasted for merely exercising his freedom of choice and freedom of association. What we know of the man is that he hated and despised poverty; he hated and despised injustice, discrimination, oppression and exploitation of the people. He was about to embark upon another phase of the struggle this week to ensure that there was equity and justice in the Unemployment Relief Programme. For him, everyone must live regardless of one’s race, ethnicity, religion or complexion. This was the measure of the man. He simply called a spade, a spade. Today in this august Chamber, we pay tribute of respect to a humble, simple yet towering human being who spared no effort in championing the cause of the poor, the dispossessed, and the oppressed in this great land of ours.

He entered the stage of history on November 17, 1947, and in the brief years that he was privileged to act on the mortal stage he played his part exceedingly well. Now the curtain falls, he moves through the exit; the drama of his life comes to a close; he will shortly be committed to that eternity from which he came and to which we must all go one day.

Madam President, Arnim may not have lived long but he served his country and his nation like a true patriot. The quantity of his life was disturbingly short, but the quality of his life was extremely rich. Arnim Smith could never easily be replaced. Indeed, his passing has undoubtedly left our honourable Senate and our country poorer. No one can ever replace Arnim Smith. Only Arnim could replace Arnim.

Arnim Smith rose from rags to become a Member of the highest law-making honourable Chamber in this land. That was not an easy feat to achieve. Here was a man who grew up in extremely poor and oppressive surroundings. A man who fought as he told us over and over in this honourable Chamber, with the corbeau in the dump or what we call the “La Basse” in order to eke out a living; a man who worked in the abattoir for a mere 25 cents a day; a man from “behind the bridge” who never forgot his roots and his origins. Yet, in spite of all his trials and tribulations, Arnim soared to great heights. Not only did he become the Executive Director of the Unemployment Relief Programme but he was also a director of operations of the third largest poultry producing company in Trinidad and Tobago.

Arnim Smith became president of Pan Trinbago in 1976 and vacated that office in 1988. When he became president there was a breakdown in discipline in the movement as we were told sometime ago and meetings were disrupted. He changed this mode of conduct; he introduced a system of bargaining power. Pan Trinbago, under his leadership, began to present budgets to the relevant carnival committee. Under his leadership they selected adjudicators, they gave results as quickly as possible after panorama, they provided bands with score sheets within reasonable time and he sought employment for the pan men and pan women.

In order to increase their rate of performance from \$500 to \$5,000 appearance fees, Arnim led a boycott of the 1979 panorama. He stood up in defence of pan men especially those faced with eviction notices. Arnim used his personal funds to finance and to operate the Pan Trinbago office on a year round basis. He also abandoned his job of ten years’ permanent service with the National Housing Authority in order to struggle for pan men and was prepared to go without his salary in the interest of the steelband movement.

Champs in Concert was his brainchild. He introduced the school steelband music festival. It was under his leadership that Pan Trinbago received two national awards, the Merit of Gold and the Trinity Cross, this nation’s highest award.

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Arnim Smith brought a new level of democracy, accountability and respect to the movement bringing with it a new image. No other organization, it is recorded in Trinidad and Tobago, be it culture or otherwise, has achieved what Pan Trinbago has achieved under his leadership. This was recorded in a document entitled *The Power of Pan, 1994, Pan is Beautiful*. That world steelband festival paid tribute to his sterling contribution.

Madam President, in his brief period in this honourable Chamber, I have begun to compile what I call some famous quotes of Arnim Smith in order to honour his memory. I vividly recall his contribution on Constitution Reform. He said and I quote: "People must respect people for who they are and for their contributions and not for their papers, and do nothing with them." In another debate he said: "When I am in this Senate I am here for the betterment of this country whenever I stand to speak." In yet another quote he told us: "In this country we have too much double standard." And a final one I want to leave with you, Madam President, he said: "One of the worst crimes that any government can commit against people of a country is to make them cowards not to try to develop themselves." Whilst his words were brief, his contributions were profound and had great substance.

Arnim Smith was a family man. His proudest moment as a father was when his daughters graduated in the United States at the university level. We must never forget that Arnim was the founder of the Blue Diamond Steel Orchestra and also Jewel 22. Blue Diamond was founded in 1964 and Jewel 22 in 1979. He was the manager of Carib Tokyo. His love and dedication to the youth was manifested in the construction of a boxing gym at Clifton Street in Port of Spain South from where the youth went on to Carifesta games, the Commonwealth games and did us proud.

As we mourn his passing, it is the first time in my 14 years of service in this Parliament that a colleague has died during regular sittings. At times life is hard as crucible steel but through it all, God walks with us and we must never forget that the Almighty can lift us from fatigue of despair to buoyancy of hope.

I extend on behalf of the United National Congress, the Opposition in the honourable Senate and the honourable political and Opposition Leader, hon. Basdeo Panday, our profound condolences to his wife, his four children and the entire Smith family in their hour of grief. As we mourn his passing, let us continue to celebrate his brief, yet magnificent life. May Almighty God shower his richest blessings on our departed senatorial colleague, the late Arnim Smith.

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Goodnight warrior and soldier of the oppressed and dispossessed.

May the flight of angels take thee to thy eternal rest.

May you forever rest in eternal peace.

You are an apostle of love.

Madam President, may I, in closing, inform this honourable Senate that the funeral service for our departed colleague, friend and hon. Senator, will take place on Thursday, November 20, 2003 at the Marvin Lee Stadium, Macoya at 3.00 p.m. The body will lie in state at the Marvin Lee Stadium from 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, November 20.

Thank you very much.

Sen. Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie: Madam President, let me go back to last Tuesday and see whether that will help me to compose myself a bit. Last Tuesday, when we were here, Sen. Smith normally turns his chair facing you, and so he faces me all the time. Sen. Smith and I had a “thing” going between us and you would remember distinctly in my budget contribution that I congratulated him very warmly and sincerely on what I thought was his best ever contribution. And I made sure that I said it when I said how much we learn from each other in the honourable Senate. We share our experiences and how much I learnt from him and at that stage I said how much I gained from Sen. King also. I looked at his face and he was beaming with joy.

When the session was adjourned I spoke with him and I said, “Arnim, you know, it is the best contribution you have made. You were articulate; you had your contribution in a nice sequence; you were good. You could see that you were well prepared.” He said, “Coming from you, I know that you are telling me the truth.” He felt very good.

It was only when I read the papers yesterday, I recognized that he had put so much effort into his preparation because he wanted to do a good presentation, not for Arnim Smith but to let the world know that someone with the background from pan could come to the highest forum in the land and do justice to their appointment. Every time we met we would talk about pan. I did say in my contribution that I am his friend but he evades me, and now I will explain why I said that.

He always knew when something was happening in pan in Tobago and every time something was going to happen, he would say, “Eastlyn, Redemption

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Soundsetters having ah ‘ting’ you know, ah coming up.” And I would attend and I would ask every human being there and nobody would see Arnim. I would come back to the honourable Senate and say, “Boy you set me up”, and he would have a fantastic excuse. The second occasion he would say: “Well, this time is not Redemption Soundsetters is Our Boys and I ain’t letting you down this time, ah coming.” And I would go and I would ask everybody because I go to all the steelband things. I like them. I spoke with Patrick Arnold and he would say: “Boy I ent know what happen to your boy nah, but yuh boy ent come.” Patrick would call him sometimes on the cell and talk to him and so on.

So last Tuesday he said to me. “This time yuh ent getting away you know. We have Pan Ramajay at Our Boys, ah coming up. Ah say good. I say this time I holding you to your words.” He said yeah! So on Friday night Pan Ramajay and Our Boys. “Ah” tired but I said Arnim is coming and he must not have the edge on me this time, so I went to Pan Ramajay. I took my seat and I looked around. No Arnim.

After half an hour because there were plenty people, I said let me start to ask. I went to Marshall. I said: “Marshall you see Arnim?” He said, “Arnim Smith? Me ent see Arnim Smith for the night.” I saw Patrick Arnold, so I went to Patrick. I said: “Patrick whey Arnim?” “Me ent know where Arnim, Arnim say he coming but me ent see Arnim no way here boy.” You see, this time I am not talking to Arnim again. I carrying “me catapult.” I say “all yuh” in Trinidad does call it sling shot and he does sit down facing me in the Parliament and “ah aiming me catapult and ah hitting one in he forehead. So when you talk to him tell him ah coming to Parliament Tuesday with me catapult.” So he say: “Me ent waiting till Tuesday nah, let me take out meh cell.” He took out his cell phone and called Arnim. He say, “Arnim, yuh girl here and she promising to kill you in the Parliament Tuesday, so you better talk and see if you could get yourself out of the death threat.” So Arnim speaks with me. He say, “Look, ah really coming but you know the bomb threat thing in the airport and all this confusion here, I could not take on the confusion.” I say, “Okay boy, dat ent prevent me from bringing me sling shot Tuesday, ah bringing it for yuh.” He said: “We go make that up on Tuesday”, and then Patrick spoke with him. And the rest is history.

But on Tuesday, when we were leaving after the adjournment Arnim, myself and the Clerk of the Senate, the three of us left together and walked down the corridor. We went downstairs together. The Clerk went to her office and Arnim and I sat sort of together and we had a little clique. Brothers Robin and Danny Montano, Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan and then Sadiq came in after. Forgive me

for calling hon. Senators by their first names today, but today is not an ordinary day and we cannot behave as if nothing has happened. We sat and we chatted. We were convincing Danny that he is the right man for the post. We were talking to Robin and we said, “Robin yuh know sometimes you “sacri salop” yuh know, but you have a heart of ice cream” and we were talking and having a good time and we were saying what we thought. We say well, this week, new Attorney General. Arnim say, “Ah know the fella yuh know. The fella look like a nice fella, he remind me like he in the mold ah Enill. So we “pong” them little bit; we “pong” them in a nice way. Not no bad pong, nice pong” and we said well, we hope the “fella” nice as he look and then we discussed and we chatted.

Then I went to him and told him a little secret in his ear that “I cannot tell nobody.” Arnim laughed and Arnim laughed so much. He laughed and he laughed and when I gave him the “little thing ah run and leave him so nobody ent know who make Arnim laugh so.” Arnim laughed and he laughed and he laughed and everybody wanted to know what I told Arnim. “I ent know if he tell Sadiq” because he came back after. But Sadiq “ent go tell you if he tell him or not because he cannot tell nobody way Arnim tell him.”

But, Madam President, Arnim and I always had nice conversations not only about pan; about our background of poverty and where we had come from and the fact that we were in this type of forum without applying for a job here. Arnim was extremely proud of his children.

2.00 p.m.

Madam President, I missed him at the Senate because you had given him a day's leave. When he came back, I said: “Arnim boy, I miss you.” He said, “Listen, man, I went up to New York. My daughter graduated with honours.” You could have seen the pride in his face and heard the pride in his voice when he was talking about his daughter's achievement. He said, “You know something, I invested in the education of my children. I am proud of my children. I love my children and I want them to know that if I, the father, can reach where I reached, they, with the education they have and my support, must get further than I got.”

I want to say to the children, wherever they are—I know sometimes his son comes here—I want to tell him that he has a legacy, not only to himself and the country, but also to a father who gave his all for him. I say to his daughters how proud a father he was of them.

Madam President, as Sen. Mark said, I have been here from 1995 and it is the first time that a sitting Senator, in my experience, has passed away from one

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Tuesday to the next. I am happy that at times we all forget the hard grind of party politics and are civil to each other. I feel extremely proud and happy that at the last sitting we walked and talked together in a nice way and that our memories are happy. I want us to encourage each other that whenever there is something nice to say, we say it. Arnim heard it when we said it. He could have appreciated it and knew that we meant it. No matter what we say today, he would not hear it. Never let an opportunity pass to say good things.

There are two things I hope would come out of Arnim's passing. One is: I read in the newspaper of the coming together of friends, party, family—everybody—to try to get the best medical care, hoping that Arnim would have survived. It brought to the fore—Madam President you would know—something we have been dealing with in our Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive about medical care and insurance for all Members of Parliament. The confinement of medical care to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or Members of Government is not good enough because the quality of contributions made does not come only from the people in government—whichever government it is. Everyone tries.

We read how much Arnim tried to make his contribution to the budget debate a good one: to get people to critique it and give him ideas and to say it is good; everyone puts a serious effort into what he presents to this Senate. I hope that out of this, both Government and Opposition would come together and ensure that the people who serve in places like these would be well taken care of medically, just as the population should be well taken care of medically. Nothing should be spared to ensure that everyone gets the best health care possible and no lack of financial strength should debar one from getting the best possible medical attention be it locally, regionally or internationally. We do not have all the resources whether human, physical or whatever and we must ensure that provisions are put in place almost immediately, so that if tomorrow something happens to anybody, medical care could be given. Let us count the cost after. That is my first wish.

My second wish comes from Sen. Prof. Deosaran's motion, which we are debating at this time. I hope that all Sen Smith's contributions in the Senate, some of which were quoted by Sen. Mark, could be put on a video cassette and given to his family so that his grandchildren would look at their grandpa and be inspired by who he was and what he did; by the way he stood for the poor, the weak, the oppressed and neglected, so that something tangible comes out of it.

We are going to discuss the motion later on and this was one of the ideas I had. If we had live broadcasts, even though someone is not at home, technology is such that one could leave one's video to tape it at a certain time and one can store up one's own archives. If this Parliament can do anything for Sen. Smith's family—his children, grandchildren and whoever comes after—a video—I know they are going to prepare all the *Hansard*. That is easy. He must have had all his at home; but to see him, if we had live broadcasts, our Information Division would have had something like that and then we would have been able to do a contribution.

Madam President, let me say that I am saddened by the death of a very good friend—a genuine person. Let me say also that I am happy about the life he led, so we celebrate his life; but we mourn his death. My deepest condolences go to the wife and children.

This morning I visited the home and saw a little young lady and I said: “Who are you?” She said, “I am his god-daughter, but I does call him daddy.” So, there we see, he has an extended family. To all of them, I send my deepest condolences. I say, as Lord Bacon says on life:

“The world's a bubble and the life of man less than a span.”

I end with just two lines of Keate's *Ode to a Nightingale*. This is how I feel about the passing of Sen. Smith. Keate says:

“My heart aches and the drowsy numbness pains my sense as though of hemlock I had drunk”.

May the soul of our dear brother, Arnim Smith, rest in peace! There is a balm in Gilead. Thank you.

The Minister of Community Development and Gender Affairs (Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams): Madam President, there are times when it is totally inappropriate for us in Parliament to make mention of the fact that there is a division between those on one side and those on the other; between Government and Opposition; between upper and lower; between ages, genders, races, classes, colours and creeds. Such a time is now, when the only matter that divides us is whether we are here in the space that the Creator allotted us to prove ourselves or whether we are in the place that the Creator has prepared for us to improve ourselves.

That is where there are no divisions, no differences, no detractions and no destruction. There is where, finally, we are at peace with ourselves and with each

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other: where we shall achieve what the late, great Arnim Smith was working for us to arrive at on this tiny piece of land called Trinidad and Tobago—the love of our fellow creatures and the separation from them.

Throughout his life, he was clearly a man who understood what was meant by “Together we aspire; Together we achieve”. He sat on the opposite side and he literally gave us as good as he got. He sat on the government side and he never forgot.

He was born into poverty, but he never gave up. He climbed through rubble through lack of every resource a person could want for success, but he never seemed to think of failure. He lived the little poem:

Two men looked through prison bars;

One saw mud and the other saw stars.

Arnim Smith, for the larger part of his life, was forced to look through the bars of deprivation and saw the mud; but also he saw the stars. He was a realist. He lived a real life and so he knew that mud and stars existed side by side. He knew that what was more important was the one he kept staring at and the one that made him focus. He was a strong mixture of realism and reality and he brought to this Senate the realism of his roots, the reality of those who suffer and strive, but also those who persevere and prosper.

Arnim Smith. As we hear the name and think of the person, allow me to diverge a bit. It has always been a kind of comic reference for us to say our name is “Smith”. It is considered tantamount to saying that you are either Mr. Everybody, or worse, you are Mr. Nobody Special. My name is John Smith. Never mind the name “Smith” may have been derived from the blacksmith and that the blacksmith was quite an essential part of village life. It was a professional service that provided expertise in handling the heavy metals of the day; the heavy business that required, not just intense strength, but also intelligence skills.

Madam President, I want to ask you to give, not just your memory, but your attention to the name of “Smith” and politics. That became famous in 1939—64 years ago. If you remember, the then young Hollywood actor, James Stewart made a movie entitled “Mr. Smith goes to Washington”. It was about a grassroots politician who went to the US capital to fight for the cause of decency and honesty in politics. I wish to quote one part of that movie in which the Hollywood Senator is saying something that the Laventille Sen. Smith may well have said to us. I quote:

“You see, boys forget what their country means just by reading ‘the land of the free’ in history books. Then they get to be men and they forget even more. Liberty is too precious a thing to be buried in books. Men should hold it up in front of them every single day of their lives and say, ‘I am free to think and speak. My ancestors could not. I can and my children will.’ We ought to grow up remembering that.”

We are all aware of the basic biographical record of the late, great Laventille Sen. Smith. Over the next few days, we will see it played out even further and in more graphic detail. Most of it will please us; some of it will make us wince; but more than likely a lot will surprise us.

When he was born 55 years ago, Arnim Smith came into a Trinidad and Tobago that was not only a British colony, but also a little place that was like the rest of the planet reeling from the ravages of World War II. In 1945, what could have been our future? In those days we only knew what we did not want, what we wanted to get away from and what we were willing not to go back to.

In the early 1950s Arnim himself tells us that he was literally scavenging for a living. He used to search with the discarded and derelicts of the “La Basse” for things to eat and sell; things to save and restore for the use of his family and for those around him. By the mid-1950s, he must have been one of the hundred of thousands who had caught the fever of independence—the process of finding ourselves through the organized quest for our nationhood.

As you know, Madam President, the people of Arnim Smith's Laventille began moving away from the bars and began seeing the stars. Laventille at times appeared to be the hill from which Gabriel's trumpet could be heard calling on our people, whom some thought to be just a dead colony, to rise up and take a new life. Arnim Smith, in the 1950s, clearly responded. He was determined to live and he understood fully that to live was to struggle.

Madam President, I consider it important to point out to this honourable Senate and, indeed, to the length and breadth of this country as one diaspora, that no one from Laventille in those days was fearful. They took on the struggle and, in the case of Arnim, they learned to fight not by the illegal means of violence and vandalism; not by the desperate means of abandoning their education and their sense of doing the right things, but particularly in Arnim's case, by the roles of the Marquis of Queensbury and by an innate sense of decency and honesty.

That was Laventille. That was Trinidad and Tobago. That was the Laventille the then newly independent government sought to give a gentle hand, Madam

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President, Arnim Smith fought his way through life's circumstances and added a chapter to his book of life. He saw a vehicle for advancement through the rough and tumble in the melodious business of the music maker of that day, the steel pan. It was the steel pan, a phenomenon that bespeaks melody and harmony, that bespeaks orchestration and organization, that bespeaks sweetness and light. It was that instrument to which Arnim Smith turned. He got involved; he moved to the front and led the way. While many of us just heard it and enjoyed listening to it on the radio, buying a record or two, dancing at a party or shuffling in a J'Ouvert band; going overseas and telling our foreign friends what a wonderful invention we have, inviting them here to marvel while we stood by in pride; all the time Arnim Smith was working to have young men and women come together to form a band; to have these very bands come together in unity; form an association, Pan Trinbago; lay out their rights; develop their responsibilities; stand up and be counted; make a joyful sound while they are at it; men and women fighting for their place in our society, but using the most novel enchanting and uplifting means a developing people could find.

After some 12 years of learning experience, Arnim got into politics at community level, politics at work, politics at party level, politics on the streets and politics in this august Parliament. While it is true that he sat on that side, it is also true that his presence spilled to all sides. Madam President, you will admit he was heavy on his feet as he was weighty in the seriousness with which he stood before us. He was slow in his movement forward as he was deliberate in the concerns he put forward, even as he would vigorously attack those whom he felt was bringing the heavy hand of oppression down unto the poor man. He would meet with us to negotiate just as passionately, the ways we could use the muscled arm of authority to uplift the people who needed help. He was out of the mold shaped by the fighting and helping genetics of Rudolph Charles and Morris Marshall, the elders living and dead; all of the brigade of the boys and girls from the "behind the bridge" past, present and future.

Just before his untimely passing, Arnim and I were making plans and proposals for various projects, such as his Laventille playground, his pan theatre and many other efforts he would submit as ways to better the community he had nurtured. Laventille was his life and his life was Laventille even though his place and way of living may have changed somewhat.

Last night I went to his home and said to his still shocked and grieving widow that I was putting at her disposal the availability and assistance of the Ministry at a time when there is only so much that anyone could do to bring relief. She, together with the children of Arnim present, responded with the dignity and

independence to the late Arnim Smith. She told me that she would let me know. She was for that moment tending to the things that Arnim would have wanted her to. She was busying herself preparing for when family and friends and other well-wishers came by to pay their respects. As always, in all of the life around Arnim Smith, there was the attention to what came first—the people of his life and the circumstances he was able to share with them; and so, it pleases me, even as it saddens me, that we must do these things.

I wish to put on record the sentiments of the People's National Movement, the Government and those of us on one side or another. We applaud Arnim Smith, the man, for making of his life a testament of the true spirit of independence. We commend Arnim Smith, the community figure, for teaching us the art of reality. We recognize Arnim Smith for the successes he registered and the legacy he has left for the high and mighty, the average and the dispossessed to inherit, to adopt and adapt. We stand ready to respond appropriately and we invite this honourable Senate, through you Madam President, to join with us in saluting Arnim Smith, the legend of Laventille; the man who like the village smithy stands with large and sinewy hands under a spreading chestnut tree, a mighty man was he. Our condolences to his family, his friends and to the pan fraternity in Trinidad.

I thank you.

Sen. Prof. Ramesh Deosaran: Madam President, as you know the usual practice is to have Sen. Dr. McKenzie speak on behalf of the Independent Benches but in this moment of distress and sadness, I think it overwhelms the usual protocol.

It is in that spirit that I rise to share condolences and to bring to the attention of this honourable Senate my own knowledge and impressions of a friend of long standing. In doing so, I am quite sure I will share the sentiments of many of my distinguished colleagues who may not wish to speak on this occasion.

It might be very ironic, Madam President, for me to say, having listened to Sen. Smith where he sat in seat No. 30 whenever he spoke his heart always seemed to be in the right place. Several times, my distinguished colleagues would remember, I commended him because no matter the divisions in the Senate, Sen. Smith spoke on behalf of those he cared very dearly about. He did it with passion and great sincerity.

I have known Sen. Smith, then Arnim Smith, for many years. Before I went abroad to university I knew him a young steelbandsman following George

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Goddard in the steelband movement. I myself emerged from the steelband movement. I am still emerging because for the last 10 years I have been trying to play the steel pan, the first pan. I am an emerging steelbandsman.

I say so because it was quite coincidental a month ago that I was discussing with Sen. Smith my deficiency in the art and he promised to bring a friend—I forgot the guy's name—to my home. When Sen. Dr. McKenzie said that whatever good things we have to say about people that we know, we should not save it for tomorrow, it rang very loudly in my ear because I should not have procrastinated. I should have taken him and his friend to my home. That heavy commanding voice in seat No. 30, we shall hear no more. It is the destiny to which we ourselves shall enter, maybe tomorrow; who knows when? It is with that consciousness that I speak resonating what my colleague, Sen. Dr. McKenzie said about caring for the sick and especially Members of Parliament. I can do no more to support her appeal and I hope it reaches the right ear.

Madam President, Arnim Smith's death should give to the people, especially the young people of Laventille, the message that they seem to need so badly. His rise from Laventille should be an example; it should remain an example; it should be institutionalized as an example possibly in the way Sen. Dr. McKenzie indicated. I ask, not only for the people of Laventille, the district from which he came, but the whole country on this very solemn occasion: When, oh when, will we ever begin to realize that money may be necessary, but not sufficient for a good and decent life?

2.30 p.m.

Why is it that every community that is in distress, including Laventille, it seems that the only cure that they can fall upon is based on money, money and more money? That is the spirit that Sen. Smith should leave upon us: money may be necessary but not sufficient for decency, good ambition and life's many other fulfilments. The life and times of Arnim Smith—I would want to suggest with respect—should be put in the form of a book for the young people of Laventille and the Morvant area primarily. Let them learn the lessons of what a good life is about, especially one that emerged from hardship and destitution. Arnim Smith proffered upon us a kind of pride and confidence that was synonymous with his own size—larger than life, as it were.

I believe that his pursuit of community service and the way he continued after George Goddard to oversee the rise of the reputation of the steelband movement, its artisans and its players, I think he has left us and the people of Laventille an

honourable legacy. I believe he has lived a life that brings to life the words in the Holy Book: “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” I say so because Arnim Smith gave his life to public service and community service. For those of us who knew him, he could have been a much wealthier person. I think that is the example that should be left especially for the young people of Laventille.

Madam President, it is a pity—as I listened to Sen. Mark’s own expression of condolence, my colleague, Sen. The Hon. Joan Yuille-Williams and Sen. Dr. McKenzie—that the talents of Sen. Arnim Smith became unduly diminished by the adversarial system on which our Parliament is structured.

I would wish to see the day—I take this opportunity with regard to the solemnity of the occasion as well—when the talents of all in Parliament and the best amongst us in the country can come together and not be unduly disturbed by artificial barriers, if only because this is our country as Arnim Smith has shown so deliberately, except that there was a barrier; something that is an invisible line drawn between, in the middle of Parliament. It is my very fervent wish, my heart’s desire—I am quite sure I speak for almost all citizens of this country—that the time will come when the Parliament should have one purpose; using the talents of all of us.

It is therefore with those brief remarks that I rise to extend my own condolences to his family and friends and to underline the fact that a great soul has left us but his inspiration would always live amongst us.

Sen. Sadiq Baksh: Madam President, I join the entire nation in extending condolences to the family of the late Arnim Smith. The late great Indira Gandhi once said: “There are moments in history when brooding tragedy and its dark shadows can be lightened by recalling moments of the past”. Today I would like to take this opportunity to do just that: to remember the greatness of someone whom I considered my very dear friend, the late Sen. Arnim Smith.

The passing of loved ones unites us together to celebrate their lives. We can all celebrate Arnim’s life as a nation, by emulating the qualities which he would fondly be remembered for: generosity and the consideration for others regardless of colour, creed or race. What I can tell you about Arnim Smith is nothing more than what we already know. During his lifetime he elevated the dreams and expanded the hopes of countless persons throughout the East-West Corridor in general, Laventille in particular and others throughout many parts of the country and was a true leader of the grassroots community of Trinidad and Tobago.

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He displayed genuine qualities in his fight to empower the less fortunate. His vision was not based on patronage, political affiliation or any other condition; it was unconditional. His faith and sense of commitment to the grassroots gave him the courage to speak out against oppression and fight for the rights of people to rise above poverty levels.

As the implementer of the Employment Training Programme, Arnim believed in hands up instead of hands out. His goal was to equip people with the necessary training so that they would be able to take responsibility for themselves, their families and their communities. He wanted to make them recognize the importance of their skills, instead of relying on sympathy and sorrow of others. He was a firm believer in “work fair”, not welfare. I am proud that I had the opportunity to be part of his life and I know that his soul will rest in peace after toiling so tirelessly for the less fortunate amongst us. Thank you very much.

Sen. Brother Noble S. A. Khan: Thank you, Madam President. Firstly, in our tradition we say when someone passes away, surely we are God’s and to him shall we return. So it is against this background that I share a few words on our dear departed brother who has gone to the great beyond. We have heard it said that he was a soldier, a warrior and a fighter. I too endorse all these comments. I am sure we could spend quite a long time giving credence to what he had symbolized, both by his practice, his belief system—whatever we may have understood of it—and generally his contribution to our nation, his community, our community and also this Red House.

There are some features, though within the lives of great people—great people do not necessarily mean that people would have to know him or he is well publicized. When we think in terms of the elements that make greatness—I would mention a few here—the concept of truth—I would think that he symbolized that in what we know of him and what he practised, what he believed and shared with us. Truth is a very important aspect. Some may say that because of its rarity in today’s *vae*, this might be responsible for many of the ills that we are faced with. A gem that he was, as far as the expression of truth is concerned, is one that we could possibly draw from the lessons he had taught us. He had given us hope with dignity and respect. This has been symbolized in a faith, which he obviously had with the creator and in himself. I would like to think that self I am speaking of is not a selfishness, but one that would be on the outward side. The converse is that he was very selfless in the sharing of himself.

Perhaps his initial experiences as a young person, a boy growing up, the struggles that he had, the success that he had—obviously there would have been

reverses—may have helped to fashion those virtues that could be well expressed in the elements of justice. I would like to also mention the element of love. It is a quality which all the great traditions placed great hope that we could really imbue ourselves with and practise that is the sharing of himself, of what he believed in and also on the grassroots. If there is one thing those who knew him could say was his respect and to some extent an element of fear. I would think that fear was one that emanates out of the love which he shared. These are important aspects, the concept of truth, justice and love. To see them welded into someone would obviously have been a great experience.

One quality, I think we would like to remind ourselves that Arnim shared with us, was the question of freedom. All of us know he was from humble beginnings. I strongly suspect many of us from humble beginnings will always have an element of restraint in expressing this concept of freedom. It would have our living experience to overcome that and also coming in contact with other people. That element of freedom was that he was able to break the chains which the society—when I speak of Laventille, we have, very often, to speak of a Laventille syndrome. You could spread this syndrome to the entire country of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean—I take that liberty in breaking into that freedom. Perhaps I can best symbolize that freedom which he had achieved by one of our great prophets of the Caribbean, Bob Marley, when he said to free ourselves from that mental slavery. I think he may have achieved that. I genuinely feel that Arnim would have achieved that freedom of breaking away those shackles which have bound and held us for so long. Regrettably, we see so much of that expressed in places where it ought not to be, maybe even in the highest forum of our expressions. If he could think in terms of his having achieved that freedom of breaking out of those narrow bounds and recognize that, in our meeting, in a simple prayer which I think would wrap up everything he had symbolized. I have just drawn on these five parameters of truth, justice, love, freedom and prayer. Let his life be a prayer which he had shared with us.

To this end I would wish that he achieved what God Almighty has kept for those whom he loves and are near to him. We know for a fact that he was very close to a tradition to which I belong. I am sure, by extension, his sharing of himself, all the great traditions of the land could identify with aspects of his life.

To his family, on behalf of my family and myself and for whomever I may take the chance of representing, I extend that sympathy that is definitely needed now. In all traditions we always say rely on prayer, patience and perseverance. There is much healing in seeking that reliance and that faith and belief in our

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creator. As he has gone to the great beyond, may he march in triumph as a true soldier. We know what a true soldier is like. For those of us who have come from the ground, particularly the area from which he has come, he would continue to be one of these who have been added as our heroes, from which we could draw strength. I too would like to add my bit of, may he rest in peace. Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Dr. Jennifer Kernahan: Madam President, allow me to express, along with my colleagues, my deepest condolences to the family, wife, children and close friends of the late Sen. Arnim Smith who was a friend and a colleague *par excellence* and who had an impact on my life out of proportion to the time that I have known him over the last three years. Although Arnim did remind me that we had a common thread in that he was a pupil of St. Phillips Government School of which my father was the head master. We had that common thread.

Madam President, I admired Arnim because of what I perceive to be his powerful intellect. He had a phenomenal memory. He would relate things that happened 10—15 years ago in detail with dates and places. He had this powerful memory and intellect. He used this intellect and memory with love and compassion to change his environment. I think this is where he stood out from other people, in that he was able to use his God-given gifts to change his environment and not just accept his environment. I think this is part of the enigma of Arnim Smith; that he was able to overcome all the difficulties, drawbacks and setbacks of a depressed community. He was able to rise above that and achieve his personal goals as a father, a colleague and a friend to so many people, to rise to the point where he represented his nation in the highest forum of the land. This was the strength of Arnim.

Madam President, I believe his legacy to the people that he loved and cared about so much and represented every time he came to this Parliament—not only the people of Laventille but all oppressed people all over Trinidad and Tobago and by extension the world. As our colleagues said before, Arnim was a man who hated advantage, oppression and all forms of it. He attacked and condemned it wherever he saw it. He was an international soul, an international spirit that fought against the darkness and always fought for light to bring more light into this world.

Through his life, he came into this world and he left it a better place than he found it. I do not think you can ask more of a man than that. He was a good father, a good colleague, a good friend and a good citizen. He fought tirelessly

and relentlessly for whatever causes he believed in. He was never afraid to stand up against injustice, whether it be on the street in oppressive situations—wherever he found injustice and advantage, Arnim fought against it. He told me so many anecdotes about instances like that. He stood up against the police in the streets. He told me of one time when he stood up to the police on Nelson Street for arresting a man. Arnim felt that the police was unfair to arrest the man at that moment for allegedly having marijuana, because the person did not have the marijuana on himself. He did not know the person but he was—He saw what happened and he spoke to the police. He was instrumental in getting the police to free the person. That is the man Arnim was. He was prepared to give his life at an instant, to defend the cause that he believed in. I think that was the essence of Arnim also. He was prepared to give up his life. He always said so. He said if you are a man, it is not worth living if you cannot live in dignity to fight injustice. This is the sort of man Arnim was.

He related to me an anecdote when he was in one of the steelbands from Belmont, I think it was Pandemonium. The band was being put out from its panyard and he went in with a hammer and broke the chains of the place from which they had been locked out. He started to put the pans back in and when he looked back, all the supporters started to put the pans back in. He was prepared to die at that moment. There were tons of police around with jeeps and guns and Arnim confronted that situation head-on and very positive. He did what he had to do and was not afraid. This is the legacy that he has left his children: his son, his daughters. It is a very proud legacy of fearlessness, fighting for what you believe is right and being able to give up everything that you have in an instant for what you believe in. There is no greater love than he who lays down his life for his brother. This is part of the essence and enigma of Arnim Smith. As I said before, you can ask no more of a man.

Although we will be self-indulgent and mourn his passing, we know that he is in a better place. He is at peace. He has lived his life. He has run a good run. He has fought a good fight. His life has meant something. He has touched lives all over Trinidad and Tobago and internationally. Last night people from all over the world were calling in and expressing their condolences on the passing of Arnim Smith. We can ask no more of a man than he had done. May he rest in peace.

Sen. Rawle Titus: Madam President, I took note of the fact that Sen. Brother Noble Khan referred to Bob Marley. I do not believe he was seeing my thoughts. I decided that I would take the opportunity to pay open tribute to Sen. Arnim Smith. I decided that I would start with a quotation from something Chris

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Blackwell said about Bob Marley. He said: “To have risen from Trenchtown”—Trenchtown is a Jamaican ghetto—“to be a millionaire many times over had to take some doing.” Today I stand to pay tribute to a man who not only has been a colleague, but even better than an acquaintance, he was a friend.

We saw Arnim Smith just last Tuesday in this Senate and basically over the weekend we heard of his passing. What struck me most of all was the quick rate at which he passed on. I think that would have struck most people.

I first met Arnim Smith sometime in the late 1970s. I had a good laugh with how we met, because there I was playing pan and Arnim Smith was saying, “good calypso”. I had a real good laugh about it because I expected him to be surprised that I was “beating” pan. He was very active in the steelband movement. At that time I knew very little about him. After getting to know him and having conversations with him, I realized that he came from very humble beginnings. I realized that he did not know where he would go. I also realized that he left everything—that is his destiny I am talking about—in the hands of the Almighty. He always referred to his spiritual beliefs. I knew this man had something more to him than we were just hearing about the steelband movement and all that.

One day, one of the statements he made to me—knowing that I was actively involved in culture and I still am—is culture is about life. I laughed because when he said that I had just finished doing cultural anthropology. I said: “Hey, this guy is saying to me something that many people who are involved in culture do not even understand.” Until this day, I do not know why he said it like that and exactly what he meant, but he was right.

He always tried to be a friend to everybody. I never knew that he was politically inclined until recently when he actually got involved with his party and came into the Senate. He always made a contribution from a position, which I called “down-to-earth”. He never tried to give the impression that he was anything but down-to-earth. I think he stands out as an example of one who was down-to-earth, but never down in the gutter. He demonstrated concern for all people, as you would have heard previous speakers, especially Sen. Wade Mark, say he had concern for everybody and he was very proud about what he could do for others. His proudest moment being when he saw the graduation of his children. He was very, very fierce in defence of what he believed. If it had to cost him, he would make a contribution just to see that whatever he believed in came through.

I think he educated himself along the way because Arnim Smith was no fool. He was very streetwise, by that I mean he kept his feet on the ground and tried to

keep in touch with everything that was happening to the “small man”. He sought betterment for all.

I am glad the point was made that under his stewardship, Pan Trinbago received two national awards, the Chaconia Gold Medal and the Trinity Cross. I laughed because, with all his contributions and for all that he did, he did not get those awards. It dawned upon me that for his efforts, he touched so many lives, now that pan is worldwide and everybody knows the name Arnim Smith, I think we could register/record his contribution to that movement and to culture as a whole. I want to join with my colleagues and wish his family—well, his wife and kids and all their relatives—sincere condolences and may his soul rest in peace.

3.00 p.m.

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Sen. The Hon. Conrad Enill): Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I simply wish to place on record my deep appreciation for Sen. Smith’s advice and counsel during the time that we met. He was one of those who basically sought me out after our deliberations and basically told me what I was doing right, what I was doing wrong, and he also made it a point to tell me that I was with the wrong party, to which I told him we will disagree on that particular matter.

He sat opposite me, and, the last time we met, we were having a discussion—Sen. Dr. McKenzie talked about it—and we were really, at that time I think, forging a bond that will help us to promote some of the work that we do. I think that Sen. Smith, in his own way, allowed me to understand that sometimes we should not shoot the messenger, we should simply listen to the message, and he was always able to do that and allow me to reflect on the messages that he and those on the other side bring to us from time to time, although in some instances they are clouded.

When I heard of his passing, I was saddened because I felt that I had lost certainly a member of my family—this family—because, you see, despite what you may think, it is rather difficult to be here every week trying to do a particular job in the interest of the people of Trinidad and Tobago without in fact feeling for one another. I hope that in all of this we would be able to rise to the challenge and pay him the honour of agreeing to move forward on issues that are important to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

I believe, therefore, that he has impacted me in a particular kind of way and I would extend to his family, particularly at this time, our condolences on his passing. On my own behalf I know he would understand it because I really called

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him “big brother” because I think he was the only guy inside here who was larger than I. Madam President, he did well. I certainly respect him for what he did and I think that his loss would be felt by all of us. Thank you.

Sen. Dana Seetahal: Thank you very much, Madam President. Following from what Sen. Enill has said, I share his sentiments in particular. I think really that death is about those of us who are left behind and how we have to deal with it and that is consistent with my faith, that, really you have moved on, the people who have died, to a better place, and this mourning that we are doing and sharing reminiscences of what the person did and how we dealt with them are so that we can deal with it. Here we can deal with an empty seat where but last week we would have seen Sen. Smith turning around to hear better or to make a comment to you as to what you are saying. In my own regard, that is what I will miss more than anything else.

I never knew him before. I had heard the name so I actually thought he would have been a much older person really because I had heard of it so many years before. So when I saw this person with an earring in his ear and this big ring, you know, I sort of thought, well, God, this is a real “bad John” sort of person and somebody with whom you would have to be very careful, but it was not so. In fact, I remember once there was a newspaper picture with him standing and I was sitting and it read, “Eye to eye” and said that we engaged in heated discussion and he came the next day to say, “How they could say that? We never engaged in heated discussion! We always agree”, according to him and it was actually in fact more or less so because during his contribution sometimes I would be not exactly egging him on but I would be, “Yes!”, you know, encouraging him, verbally too.

So I would say that I think we all appreciate that Sen. Smith did not live in vain, that, in fact, he represented, as he saw it, the views of the disadvantaged. Sometime I remember him saying that he worked in the—not worked exactly—yeah, worked as a scavenger at Beetham. He was scavenging. I remember that vividly and, “I am not ashamed to say it”, and I totally agree with him. If you have come from there and you have managed to reach somewhere, why would you at all be ashamed? So those kinds of things I remember vividly because I, like him, felt strongly that no one should ever seek to be a dependent and this whole dependency syndrome was something we should attack with full force. I remember going with Sen. King on a programme and talking about that and the next day he came over and he said, “Yes, yes”, he agreed totally with what we were saying.

So those are the memories I have of him. Over time, of course, we will get accustomed to him not being here but it is of course initially hard, but, as I said at

the outset, death is really about how we deal with it and I think it would take some time for us to cope. We must extend condolences to his family who would have the most difficult time in coping with that, as well as his friends in the steelband movement such as Birdsong where I last saw him a week ago. The first time I actually conceptualized, in real terms, of his being a steelband person, was when I went to the reunion. I had not really put it in practical terms.

That is all I really wish to say, Madam President. Thank you.

Sen. Robin Montano: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, my colleagues on this side have said an awful lot about the history of Arnim Smith and I think the Senate generally has spoken about who he was and where he came from. I could not help but reflect this afternoon, what a life and how proud his family must be of him to have come from, if I could put the words in inverted commas, “the wrong side of the tracks”, and to end up here in the highest court of the land, a representative of the people and to hear the wonderful things that have been said about him genuinely and heartfelt from all sides this afternoon. What a wonderful life! What wonderful achievements!

You know, Madam President, a question needs to be asked—we all need to ask—are we human creatures here on the planet seeking spirituality or are we, in fact, spiritual beings come down to the planet seeking a human experience? I believe it is the latter. That is what my faith teaches me. Looking at Arnim and thinking about him, I cannot help but think that he has gone back home. What a fabulous experience he has had and what stories he must be telling now as he sits at the right hand of God, as it were, and tells him, “Well boy, you know what I did? I did this, that and the other.” I mean, what stories he must be having now.

For me, I do not believe in death. Death is a door through which you pass and go into another existence. As the poet said, “Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. To dust thou art, to dust returneth was not spoken of the soul.” I have a lot of memories of Arnim. We became good friends in the last two years. He was a good man.

To his family and his wife, his children, my deepest and sincerest sympathies, and, to Arnim himself, God bless you, brother. Wherever you are, I know you are having a ball. God bless you and thank you so much for sharing time with us.

Sen. Carolyn Seepersad-Bachan: Thank you, Madam President. I too join with my colleagues this afternoon and with the rest of the Senators in conveying my deepest sympathy to the members of the family of Arnim Smith. As my colleague, Sen. Montano, has just said, we know Arnim has gone and I am sure

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by now he is debating with everyone up there on the right hand side of God, if I know Arnim very well—[*Interruption*—yes, teaching everyone, teaching them probably pan by now.

Madam President, Arnim Smith was a man among men who never lost that common touch; a man who rose from one of the toughest ghettos in this land to become a business magnate and a Member of the highest law-making Chamber in this country, but he was able to reach this pinnacle of his life by sheer determination, commitment and competence.

I knew Arnim over the last 12 months. Unlike most of you in here I did not know—I only knew of Arnim Smith. The first time I met Arnim and spoke for any length of time in a conversation was when I think we were being sworn in as Senators, yet, by some divine intervention, I was placed to sit next to him and I feel now like if I did not know him just 12 months but I knew him 12 years.

In usual Arnim style, Arnim has that way of developing that bond. Today he is like your father, tomorrow your brother, the next day a friend. This was a man who was willing to play any role. He was comfortable in any role you asked him, whether it was the panyard or as a Senator. He was always willing to take up that baton and move on. He was probably one of the best team players that I ever came across—the real trooper.

Over the last year, there was one thing that I began to understand about Arnim and it was something that my father taught me, and that is, whenever you are about to make a decision, always make sure that that decision is based on some principle. It was on that basis that I was able to understand Arnim, because every position that he adopted, he was able to do so because it was based on a principle, and that is why he could have held such strong convictions. We have all heard how much he represented the poor man and stood for justice and equity because when he adopted those positions it was based on principle. This is why he could commend measures that fought for the rights of the poor man and equally chastise those measures that did not.

As I sat next to him in this Chamber, in caucus meetings and other meetings, I was amazed by his deep sense of passion. Whether it was for people or for issues, he was passionate about everything—passionate about culture, passionate about issues—and it has been a very long time since I had met a man, you know—and, no offence, but I always found that women tend to be the ones who are so passionate about issues but, Madam President, this man was equally passionate about issues and hence I identified with him.

At times we would sit here and, you know, we were always caucusing, and he was always there encouraging you to go on, to go beyond your limits, and this was one of the things that I admired about him, that determination. He always had this desire to learn, this insatiable appetite for knowledge. He was always willing to give advice but equally willing to take advice. This is why the man, Arnim Smith, without any letters to his name, was able to achieve some of the things that we all know about, of corporate businessmen similar to anyone who had attended Harvard Business School.

I mean, I remember when this whole issue about Pan Trinbago and came up sometime ago. I do not know if you would recall, I think it was during the debate on Constitution reform and someone had asked, “What is this, why is he in this Senate? What qualifications does he possess to be in this Senate?” He brought out a little document. Sen. Yuille-Williams would remember this because we joked with her afterwards about it, and Arnim gave me this document and I said, “Arnim, do not worry, I am going to defend you on this” and when I read this—because I did not know much about Arnim and what he did at Pan Trinbago.

When I read this, I said, “This had to be someone who was educated at Harvard Business School or MIT Sloan School of Management” because here was a man who was able to implement financial systems, he was able to get audited statements, which was never done before in Pan Trinbago, he was able to implement new systems, change management, change processes, you know, things that I never thought about, but when you read this you saw it here, and, more so, he was able to take a movement that was not respected and was totally indisciplined and bring it to a level which was disciplined and a movement which gained respect from the public of Trinidad and Tobago. He was also able, if you read this document, to bring this movement to a point where it was independent, but, you see, this is what epitomizes the life of Arnim Smith. This is what he believed: “If I give you respect, you must give me respect.” So he taught the pan men about how to give respect, but, equally, how to demand respect.

As he moved from poverty to being a successful businessman, he never once asked for a handout. Even if, you know—and when you listen to Arnim, even if he had to take something and sell it on the side of the street, he would do that in order to make ends meet but he never asked for a handout and I think Sadiq mentioned that when he spoke about not reaching out—reach up instead of putting your hands out. He wanted to be able to lead by example and this is why I think he spoke passionately in this Senate. When he spoke passionately in this Senate he spoke about Laventille. He hoped that the youths were listening to him

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and were willing to take a similar path, a path in which they can become independent, in which they can achieve that sustenent livelihood, they can build their own self-worth.

This is why he was incensed when youths were encouraged to take handouts from social programmes, not that he had anything against the social programmes. He just felt that youths should be encouraged to take the same path that he took because here he was a living example of success by taking that path. So this is why, you know, he was so passionate about that and let us get them—you have heard Sen. Baksh saying, “You know, Arnim never wanted any part of URP, you know. Arnim said, “Listen, we will implement ETP because we want people educated and trained. We want people to be able to sustain their livelihood”, and I think it was very important.

I remember in one of the debates as well he was of the strong conviction in that debate—I think it was the first debate when we were in this Senate, it would have been the budget debate of last year—and Arnim—I vaguely remember his words but it was one of his first set of words that stayed with me and that is, “Give the people back their minds. Give them back their self-worth” and he was speaking directly to the people of Laventille and he was identifying with that. I remember when he said that, and I said, you know how important that is. I mean, from our perspective I have not had the opportunity to have the experiences he has had but from another perspective I say, “But that makes sense. That is how we get economies to thrive, when we get people to contribute to the development of wealth.”

Equally important, and I want to say this because it is very important that we recognize that when Arnim spoke in the Senate and he spoke passionately about people in Laventille and about the poor man and so on, what he was attempting to do was to give voice to those people who he felt never had a voice in this august Chamber, and he attempted to give that voice through his vociferous contributions in this Senate. Some may say Arnim spoke very simply. He had the ability to cut through all the fluff and get to the facts because he was a doer. He was a guy who implemented. He did not attempt at any point in time to renew Arnim Smith when he stood in this Chamber. What he wanted to do was to reaffirm the Arnim Smith who stood for the principles, to reaffirm those principles and values by which he stood, and that is what he attempted to do in every contribution in this Senate.

Madam President, whereas we may be saddened by his passing and we may think that this is a great loss, I join with others who have expressed that we must ensure that his presence on this earth—there was some value. This is why we

encourage everyone to ensure that Sen. Smith's legacy lives on forever, if we do not, we would have missed a golden opportunity and we would have done a disservice to his presence here on earth and, even more, a greater loss to all of us if we fail to take advantage of his teachings and this is what I know, his death must have some meaning. As I say goodbye to him, I know he is irreplaceable, I know we will continue his challenge. Thank you.

Sen. Parvatee Anmolsingh-Mahabir: Thank you, Madam President. I simply wish to join with my colleagues in expressing my condolences to the family of Arnim Smith. As you all know, in the Bhagvad Gita it states that the body dies but the soul cannot die. Water cannot drown it nor fire burn it. I know Arnim has moved on to a better place. I share the sentiments expressed by all my colleagues and I have found Arnim Smith to be a very genial and down-to-earth person. I believe his memory will always be alive in our hearts and we will treasure them. Thank you.

Madam President: Hon. Senators, I take this opportunity to join with the Government, the Opposition and the Independent Senators in extending condolences to Sen. Arnim Smith's wife and family, and to his party and colleagues. I got to know Arnim when he first joined the list of distinguished persons to serve in this august House. From his first contribution it was clear that he would excel in his own way. Sen. Smith was unique in his contribution to this Senate since he brought with him a genuine knowledge of and empathy with grass roots people. After his budget contribution this year and I saw him down in the tea room, I said to him, "Arnim, that was a good contribution", because I felt that he had given that contribution in an earnest and honest manner. He spoke from the heart, which was a reflection of his personal experiences through his various interactions with people and situations in all walks of life.

Arnim was polite, humble and respectful at all times. This was very evident in the manner in which he interacted with Members on all sides of the Senate, and we have heard that said here today by Members on all sides. He was very approachable. On those occasions when I met with him privately in my office and spoke of things in general, I was impressed with the great joy and pride he had in the achievements of his daughters and his son and again that has been emphasized so many times, and, also, the depth of his love for them; but I suppose the legacy of Arnim Smith may not be so much in his work within the Parliament. His greatest legacy, I believe, is his work amongst the pan fraternity and his grass roots people on the hills.

Tributes are coming from people who knew him longer and better than most of us in this Senate. His long involvement in the pan movement and his dedication

Condolences
[MADAM PRESIDENT]

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to pan will really be his epitaph. Let us hope that his untimely passing would cause us to reflect on the fragility of life and the necessity to make each day granted to us worthwhile in the service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

I again express condolences on behalf of my own family and myself to his widow, his children, his family and his friends. May almighty God give peace and comfort to his family and friends at this time. May he rest in peace.

Hon. Members, I have directed the Clerk of the Senate to write to the widow of Arnim Smith conveying the condolences of the Members of this Senate and of myself. I have also asked the Clerk of the Senate to get transcripts of the tributes paid today and have them forwarded to the bereaved family. Arnim will be greatly missed as his contributions in the Senate were always sincere. May he rest in peace.

I will now ask all Members to please stand for one minute of silence as a mark of respect for our departed colleague.

The Senate stood.

Madam President: Thank you.

Motion made and question proposed, That the Senate do now adjourn to Wednesday, November 26, 2003 at 10.00 a.m. [*Hon. J. Yuille-Williams*]

Question put and agreed to.

Senate adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 3.30 p.m.