

May 17, 2020

## **BCJ Deeply Grieved by the Passing of Oliver Clarke**

The Broadcasting Commission is deeply grieved by the passing of the Honorable Oliver Clarke, O.J.

Mr Clarke was one of Jamaica's most successful and visionary businessmen. He, along with the late J. Lester Spaulding, was the main architect of the industry-reshaping merger of Radio Jamaica and the Gleaner Company. These two diverse media operations were combined to form a regional powerhouse that set the benchmark for the future of journalism and media in the Caribbean. Mr Clarke was one of the first to see that the industry was being completely disrupted by social media, streaming services and shifts in consumer behaviour, and that swift and decisive action was needed in order to ensure that real journalism could remain economically viable.

His wisdom and business talents made him much in demand. He was one of the founders of the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica and in addition to serving as the Chairman of the RJRGleaner Communications Group, Mr. Clarke also served as the Chairman of the Jamaica National Building Society, JN Bank and was Chairman of the Jamaica National Group up to the time of his passing.

He had a life-long commitment to the improvement of Jamaica, was deeply distressed by the level of violence in the country, and founded the Peace and Love in Society (PALS) organisation to try to prevent bloodshed.

Perhaps his greatest contribution, however, is that he was Jamaica's most tireless and fierce champion of press freedom. During his four decades of leadership at the Gleaner Company, he fought for the media to remain free so that they could fearlessly serve the public interest by exposing corruption and wrong-doing, by speaking to truth to power, and by providing citizens with the facts so they could make better-informed decisions and participate fully in the life of a democracy.

His passions were real, but he also had a superb sense of wry humour. He could gently insult the powerful and pompous with such wit and style that even they would laugh.

Oliver Clarke leaves a legacy which may never be matched.

The Commission Broadcasting extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, colleagues in the private and public sectors and the global media community.

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