



Sir Frederick Nathaniel Ballantyne, B.C.M.C., M.D.

Chancellor, Frederick Nathaniel Ballantyne was born on July the 5th, 1936, the anniversary of the celebration of independence of Venezuela from Spain, and a day after the anniversary of the independence of the USA. So for those who are suspicious of the mysteries of astrology, take note of this truly independent achiever, who has done so many things in a life time of celebrated independence of mind and spirit. **Cancerians are said to be loving and loyal, passionate and protective, romantic and nurturing – and perhaps not surprisingly Sir Fred shares his birth sign with Henry the Eighth and Nelson Mandela!**

Young Freddie proceeded from the St. Vincent Grammar School to Howard University, the alma mater of our own first native Governor General Sir Winston Scott, and he graduated Magna Cum Laude in Chemistry. He entered SUNY - the State University of New York at Syracuse, and graduated in Medicine in 1963, serving as President of his class – **solid training for a political career that did not materialise!** This was followed by training in Internal Medicine and Cardiology, equipping him to return home in 1971, where, as the first and only specialist physician, he was made Medical Director of the Kingstown General Hospital.

At that time St. Vincent had unacceptably high infant mortality, maternal mortality, infant malnutrition and the dreaded beri-beri, much infectious disease, rheumatic fever and the beginnings of the epidemic of chronic diseases. Dr. Ballantyne tackled the lot – first decentralising medical care from hospital to local clinics, promoting family planning, preventive medicine and breast feeding; and organising cardiac surgery in the USA for children in need. In all of these efforts he gives credit for loyal support from dedicated junior staff and nurses.

Another of his initiatives was to start a Visiting Specialist Programme, exploiting his network of medical connections in the USA. Now while in Barbados eminent doctors are often famous for their political passions, and in the USA doctors are famous for addiction to golf, Sir Fred is a doctor with a fine touch for tourism, and he is part owner of one of the world's most famous five star resorts – The Young Island Resort! And so his loving, nurturing spirit allowed him to provide free accommodation to any specialists who would donate their skills and services to the hospital, to treat patients and to teach the juniors, who had no formal postgraduate training programme. And Young Island is a paradise within Paradise, so it was an offer few could refuse. **(Here, Chancellor, I must publicly state that I am not the marketing office for Young Island Resort)**

During his last ten years with the Government Sir Fred was Chief Medical Officer, and he focused on upgrading facilities and allied health training, expanding immunization and bringing health care to the poor. He also served for five years as Assistant Dean to the Kingston branch of the St. George's University. But the list of his many roles, as President of the Medical Association, Chairman of the Medical Board, Chairman of the Welfare Fund, etc etc., goes on and on. In his spare time he sponsors sports, guiding and scouting – has started a National Art Collection, housed at Government House.

He funds secondary students and sources scholarships for University. In this context I would urge Sir Fred to source a scholarship for a bright Vincentian to our new full five year Medical Programme at Cave Hill, as the needs of St. Vincent provided one of the many incentives for upgrading our Medical School to a full faculty!

Sir Fred was appointed Governor-General and knighted by the Queen in 2002. After a life time of fighting infection, he now has the golden opportunity to infect others with his love, loyalty and nurturing spirit. And he does so with the same drive that he brought to his work. He has not gone quietly into retirement.

I am indebted to my oratorical hero, Professor Eddie Baugh, for a quotation from Charles Lamb on the subject of retirement: "I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating with no settled purpose ... I have done all that I came into this world to do...."

This is absolutely NOT Sir Fred Ballantyne! His motto of service goes on; and so, Chancellor, I invite you to recognise this son of the soil of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who has loved and nurtured our nearest neighbours for almost 40 years, and by the authority vested in you by the Council and Senate of this University, to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.