



OECS BAR ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF SIR S.W. TAPLEY SEATON GCMG, CVO, KC, JP, LLD ON 29TH JUNE 2023

It is with deep sadness and a profound sense of loss that the legal fraternity and people of the region have received the very somber news of the passing on Thursday (June 29th) of Sir S.W. Tapley Seaton (Sir Tapley) at the still relatively youthful age of 72.

The OECS Bar Association joins the region in mourning the loss of Sir Tapley, a well-respected, well-admired and highly accomplished Caribbean citizen and native of St Kitts and Nevis (SKN). For more than 17 years, Sir Tapley served on the Council of the OECS Bar Association, with distinction and dedication, before his eventual elevation, in 2015, as Governor-General of the Federation of SKN – a most fitting climax to a long and distinguished career.

Sir Tapley the trailblazer

Sir Tapley has been a trailblazer on so many fronts. In 1975, he was among the first graduates of our home-grown regional law schools. He holds the rare distinction of attending both the Hugh Wooding Law School (in Trinidad) and the Norman Manley Law School (in Jamaica) in pursuit of his law school qualifications. In 1983, he became the first Attorney-General of an Independent SKN and one of the main architects of its new constitution.

A snapshot of Sir Tapley's illustrious career reflect 48 years of distinguished service as a lawyer; 15 years as the longest serving Attorney-General of SKN; over 17 years as a Council Member of the OECS Bar; and over 7 years as the fourth Governor—General of SKN. Earlier in his career he held various positions as High Court Registrar (Ag); Magistrate (Ag), and Crown Counsel. His armory of skills included legal drafting and public speaking.

Solid, steady, stable leadership

Sir Tapley solidly served the OECS Bar Association in many capacities, over many years, including as Vice-President, President and Immediate Past President. From the 1990's until his elevation as Head of State in 2015, he was a virtual fixture at OECS Bar Meetings and the later, much looked forward to, premier annual law conferences.

Disciplined and reliable, Sir Tapley provided calm, steady, and stable leadership to the OECS Bar Association. He was a consistent and dependable ally in the fight for improving terms and conditions for members of our Judiciary; for strengthening the administration of justice; for defending the independence of the judiciary; and for promoting the rule of law.

President
JEAN M. DYER

1ST Vice President
YVETTE WALLACE

2ND Vice President
DELANO BART, KC

Secretary
DIANA THOMAS HUNTE

Treasurer
DAHLIA JOSEPH ROWE

Immediate Past President
THADDEUS M. ANTOINE

13 FAIRPLAY COMMERCIAL
COMPLEX; PO BOX 390,
THE VALLEY, AI-2640,
ANGUILLA;
BRITISH WEST INDIES
Tel: 1-264-497-8111

Email: president@oecsbar.org
Website: www.oecsbar.org

Super solid foundation

It's upon the shoulders of stalwarts like Sir Tapley that the OECS Bar stands today on a super solid foundation, well entrenched and institutionalized, and mobilizing and organizing the army of lawyers throughout the sub-region to advance the justice system. That solid foundation has enabled us over the years to provide consistent continuing quality legal education to enhance the professional services rendered by lawyers to the public; to hold annual law conferences; to provide leadership and guidance to constituent Bars; to promote public legal education; to ensure the passage of Legal Profession Acts throughout the OECS; and to contribute significantly to regional integration.

Honours for outstanding work

Thankfully, the OECS Bar, on several occasions during his lifetime, has recognized and honoured Sir Tapley for his outstanding work and sterling leadership. His multiple awards and accolades, including from the OECS Bar, stand as testimony to our society's common recognition of his great achievements, multifaceted leadership, and consistent selfless service. The naming, in his honour, of the *Sir S.W. Tapley Seaton Annex*, housing court facilities in SKN (opened in 2021), and the conferring by UWI in 2019 of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws ((LLD) for outstanding public service to SKN, rank among his more recent recognitions.

Advocating for CCJ in memory of Sir Tapley

Sir Tapley believed in our regional home grown institutions, like the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the regional law schools which provided him with quality academic education and professional training. It is therefore no wonder that he was committed to the Caribbean Court of Justice as our final Court of Appeal, a cause which we must continue to advocate in fitting memory to him.

The OECS Bar once again salutes Sir Tapley on a life well lived in service to mankind. Simplicity and humility stood out as hallmarks of this gentle giant who carried and conducted himself with such grace and elegance to the very end.

We extend profound deepest condolences to Sir Tapley's family, close friends, colleagues, members of the SKN Bar Association - of which he is a former President - and to the Federation of SKN, a nation now in mourning. May his rich memories continue to inspire us as we strive to deepen regional integration and fully embrace our regional institutions.

May he rest in perfect peace!

Date: 30th June 2023

OECS Bar Association Inc

Contact: **Jean M Dyer – President**

1 264 497 8111