

## ***"NURSE LEILA'S LEGACY"***

On Friday afternoon, May 12, 2023, under a clear blue sky with at least one hour and a half left before the sun would set, the **West Bay District Committee of the National Trust (WBDC/NT)** presented an outdoor concert in the yard of Nurse Leila's home at 60 W. Church Street in Central West Bay. Dubbed '**Nurse Leila's Legacy**', the life of Nurse Leila Yates was told and celebrated through narration, songs, poetry, and instrumental pieces. The programme featured an impressive line-up of talented West Bay artistes who shared either their own original compositions, or works written by other local composers, as well as a number of other familiar compositions by well-known international artistes. Musical performers included: Dr. Curtis Barnett & Mrs. Christine Barnett; Mr. Arek Nicholson; Pastor Alson Ebanks; Drummers- Eden Hurlston and Randy Chollette; the Family of Mrs. Lilah

Ebanks accompanied by Nicholas Johnson. Poetry readings featuring: Dr. Curtis Barnett; Mrs. Sarah Orrett and Ms. Kimberley Owens.

The event was well attended with a wide cross-section of persons (from seniors to toddlers – plus two RCIPS Officers keeping us feeling secure) from West Bay, George Town, Prospect and even Bodden Town. The cool of the yard, framed by a number of shade trees, provided the perfect backdrop for the event, and gave those in attendance a delightful alternative to a typical Friday afternoon many of whom remained on site to express how much they had enjoyed the evening. One member of the audience - Ms. Allison Hidalgo - wrote a beautiful *Facebook* post, a portion of which we are privileged to share:

*Just got home from an enchanting evening with my son at Nurse Leila's cultural event! It was nothing short of magical - a true celebration of Caymanian culture.*

*From the soothing rhythm of live Caymanian music, to the touching verses of local poetry capturing the essence of being a Caymanian, every moment was a tribute to our rich heritage. The National Trust opened [the yard of this historic site] to us, recounting her incredible journey.*

*Her stories were woven with strength and determination; they carried us through her life. How she began her career and became West Bay's midwife, walking through West Bay offering her services and delivering most of the community of that era, the*

*heartache of losing her neighbors at sea, and the courage it took to transform her life in retirement, finding a new purpose in journalism.*

*As we sat under the glow of the sunset enjoying the lively music, touching stories, and shared memories, I understood how precious this experience was for both me and my son. Even though Nurse Leila's charming wattle and daub (a traditional Caymanian method of processing coral to make a cement like material to build homes with) Caymanian cottage is now surrounded by a fancy new development, like a rose growing through concrete, we felt deeply connected to our history and culture tonight.*

*We didn't just listen to stories; we became part of a living testimony to our shared past, despite ongoing development threatening our cherished landmarks.*

*A big thank you to the National Trust for inviting us to her home and sharing her remarkable journey. It was an unforgettable evening of community, culture, and connection that only a place like the Cayman Islands can offer.*

*To all my fellow Caymanians, let's continue to celebrate and preserve our unique heritage. Tonight reminded me of the power of community, the strength in our stories, and the spirit of our talented and resilient West Bayas.*

Once again, the creativity and talents of Cayman's own scriptwriters, songwriters, poets and musicians who actually live within the district of West Bay, or, if living elsewhere, are "family to" those who live there, shone very brightly as they shared their serious and comedic skills and treated the audience with notes and melodies that brought the voices of the likes of *Bocelli* and others to mind. The audience even had a chance to join in a sing-along of "**Munzie's Boat in the Sound**" to the beat of drummers Eden and Randy and Nicholas on his guitar. Aunt Julia Hydes would have been not only justly proud of their musical and singing skills, but that Randy had made and was keeping the

beat on a replica of her drum! As night was beginning to fall, the concert came to an end with the WBDC/NT cast and crew and the audience joining in the finale singing ***“Go Light Your Candle”***, and then proudly standing for the singing of ***“Beloved Isles Cayman”***.

As their first attempt at having a variety concert on the grounds of ***Nurse Leila’s House*** went so smoothly and was well received by the public, the WBDC/NT are already thinking of arranging similar events at this venue in the near future. The goal of such events will be not only to raise funds to complete the restoration of this site, but to continue to inform, educate and increase the knowledge and awareness of Cayman’s youth and the wider general public of the rich heritage and culture of the Cayman Islands.

Thank you for your financial and other support so far. However, there is much that still needs to be, and can be, done to protect, preserve and restore Cayman’s built heritage – but to do this, your continued kind and generous support is needed and much appreciated.

