



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1932 Storm Survivor Revisits Childhood Home Where Shelter was Provided During the Storm

21 August 2023 – Mr. Phillip Eldemire, (93) of the Eldemire family dynasty hailing from Cayman Brac visited the home where he and his family, as well as many others in the Cayman Brac community, braved the infamous 1932 storm that killed over 100 residents on this tiny Island.

During his visit, Mr. Eldemire was met by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands' Historic Programmes Manager, Mr. Stuart Wilson and Pastor Thomas French. Mr. Eldemire told the story of how a 'catboat' was used to transport persons stranded by the storm's damage to high ground on the bluff, "We had to bring the catboat around to the back of the house and the water was so high. We loaded everyone into the boat and then took trips back and forth, making our way to the bluff." Mr. Eldemire said the house was a rallying point for the community after the storm and revealed that the structure used to be closer to the road before being pushed back by the storm's fury.

Built in 1928 by Cayman Brac labourers utilising local and imported materials, the home was the dwelling place of Mr. Philip Charles Eldemire, his wife Georgilla and their children, Melrose, Merrick, Delaware, Dorson, Benson, Coburn, George and Bruce.

Only four years after, the Storm of 1932 struck Cayman Brac and devastated the island, destroying all, except 11 homes in its path.

The Eldemire House was one of the only homes in Cayman Brac to survive and though the house was washed off its posts, it remained standing after the storm's passage because it had been wedged against the cistern and kitchen, saving the lives of the 34 people who took shelter there.

The home was also the site of a community dentistry. It was bequeathed to the National Trust for the Cayman Islands in 2005 and received further damage in Hurricane Paloma in 2008, only three years after.

Pastor Thomas French is leading the second restoration of the home, the first taking place in 2012 when the home underwent extensive cosmetic and structural restoration efforts, thanks to contributions from Seth Arch and Jim Scott, and with financial assistance from Maples, Jacques Scott and William Reid.

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) would like to thank the Dart organization, who donated a substantial sum toward this restoration as well as Island Heritage, whose 'Island Heritage Charity Drive' allowed the NTCI to raise the funds for the current restoration project.

Please subscribe to the NTCI Youtube Channel and Follow us on FB for more content.



Caption: (L-R) Historic Programme Manager Stuart Wilson stands with Mr. Phillip Eldemire at the Eldemire House in Cayman Brac.

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About the National Trust for the Cayman Islands

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-governmental organization whose mandate under the National Trust Law (2010 Revision) includes the preservation of the historic, natural and maritime heritage of the Cayman Islands for present and future generations.

About the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme

The Blue Iguana Recovery Programme began in 1990 with only 30 dedicated Blue Iguanas and the primary goal to restore the wild population to 1,000 Blue Iguanas, encouraging viable population in the long-term. Having met its primary goal in 2018, the initiative formally transitioned to the Blue Iguana Conservation Programme in 2019 with a new focus of sustainably conserving the native species of Grand Cayman.

About the National Trust's Environmental Programme

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The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' environmental programme was founded on the concept that the protection of native plants and animals is best achieved by protecting the natural areas in which they depend.

About the National Trust Conservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands' conservation programme strives to protect Cayman's native species and the habitats in which they live, and includes the endemic Blue Iguana of Grand Cayman, the Sister Islands Rock Iguana and Cayman's native bat species.

About the National Trust Historic Preservation Programme

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands introduced the launching of its *Historic Preservation Fund* at its Annual General Meeting in September 2021 for the purpose of inviting increased support of its continuing efforts to encourage the preservation and protection of historic homes and buildings for present and future generations of the Cayman Islands.