

STATEMENT BY THE RT. HON. PERRY G. CHRISTIE ON THE PASSING OF THE HON. NEVILLE WISDOM

Immediate Release

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My wife, Bernadette, and I are deeply saddened by the passing of our dear friend, former parliamentary colleague and former Cabinet Minister, the Honourable Neville Wisdom.

I received the sad news while attending to CARICOM Eminent Persons Group business concerning Haiti. I have since spoken with Neville's wife, Manita, to express our profound sorrow and extend our deepest condolences to her and the entire Wisdom family.

Neville and I shared a relationship that extended well beyond politics. We were friends before, during and after our years in government. I came to know him as a man of conviction, loyalty, profound honesty, strong views and a deep commitment to the development of young Bahamians.

Our families also shared a special bond. Bernadette and I will always remember the warmth and generosity with which Neville and his family opened their home to our children, Adam, Stefan and Alex. That kindness reflected the deeply personal nature of our friendship and will never be forgotten.

Neville's life of service began long before he entered Parliament. Through athletics and his work with the Bain Town Flyers, he helped to guide and develop young Bahamians who would go on to distinguish themselves at the highest levels of international competition. He understood that sport could shape character, discipline and confidence, and his contribution to Bahamian athletics will remain an enduring part of his legacy.

When I had the privilege of serving as Prime Minister, it was a profound honour for me to appoint Neville to my Cabinet and to see him assume the distinction and responsibilities of the Honourable Neville Wisdom. He served first with responsibility for Youth, Sports and Culture, and later for Youth, Sports and Housing. He carried that honour with dignity and brought to public office the same passion he had demonstrated throughout his life: a belief that young Bahamians should be given every opportunity to develop their talents and fulfil their potential.

I valued Neville's counsel, his candour and his willingness to speak plainly about the issues in which he believed. Like all enduring friendships, ours was shaped by moments of agreement and disagreement, but it was always grounded in mutual respect and genuine affection.

The passing of a friend with whom one has shared so many years inevitably causes reflection. Public office is temporary, and titles eventually pass from us. What remains is the measure of the lives we have touched, the service we have given and the relationships we have built along the way.

By that measure, Neville lived a life of consequence.

His contribution can be seen in the athletes he coached, the young people he encouraged, the constituents he represented and the country he served.

I will remember him most personally as a dear friend and colleague with whom I shared an important chapter in the life of our country. I am grateful for those years, for our conversations, for our work together and for the friendship between our families that endured long after our time in office had ended.

To Manita, their children and the entire Wisdom family, Bernadette and I extend our deepest sympathy. We pray that they will find strength and comfort in their memories of Neville and in the knowledge that his life and service touched so many.

The country has lost a former parliamentarian and Cabinet Minister. Bahamian sport has lost one of its most dedicated builders. Our family has lost a cherished friend.

May Neville's soul rest in peace, and may his family find comfort in the knowledge that he gave so much of his life in service to others.

The Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie
Former Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas