

## **Eulogy to Anthony “Jericho” Greenidge**

**Monday, November 14, 2011**

**National Stadium, St. George’s**

**Delivered by Tourism Minister Peter David, MP for the Town of St. George**

We are here today to pay tribute to a man as Grenadian as they come; a man with a voice and an opinion, but most importantly, a bigger heart and the greatest sense of community that you can find in anyone.

Anthony “Jericho” Greenidge was born on the 13th of July 1961 to Gerald and Beryl Greenidge. At birth and for the first years of his life, he was Tony. We’ll come to how he later was rechristened, Jericho. It was shortly after Kitchener, the late Trinidadian calypsonian, released his song with the hook line: “They searching for Jericho, Jericho ain’t dey.”

But for now, let’s talk about Mr. and Mrs. Greenidge’s bouncing baby boy they called Anthony or Tony for short. He attended the St. George’s R.C. Boys’ School for a brief period, but was later transferred to the St. George’s Methodist School, where he completed his primary education.

On passing his Common Entrance Examination, Tony moved to the Grenada Boys Secondary School. Well, Tony often joked about never understanding why GBSS was chosen and not Presentation Brothers’ College, which was only a stone’s throw away from his home. As a GBSS Old Boy, I want to thank whoever made the decision to send Tony to GBSS. He was an asset to the school; he loved GBSS and GBSS loved him right back.

Tony grew up on Upper Grenville Street in the area that back in the day, we referred to as “Town.” Today, the area is commonly called “Four Roads.”

As was customary with boys living in Town, Tony immediately became involved in a number of sporting activities such as football, cricket, marbles, athletics and basketball, just to name a few. The community’s rich tradition in sports was exhibited in the performances of players who represented Grenada in football, cricket, basketball and netball. Town was in represented in the GFA soccer league

by Honved, and in the Tanteen Soft Shoe Football Competition by Blue Room, Dazzlers and Hiltons.

Tony followed in the tradition. Like those before him, and in keeping with the practice of the day, he and his peers honed their sporting skills by playing cricket in the main road, with either gospo, lime, windball or 'Compo', a ball made from burning plastic.

Bet your bottom dollar, you could have always have found Tony in a game of road cricket.

Tony was part of races that were ran around the block – meaning from Four Roads Junction up to Bell Hill, down Williamson Road and ending by Miss Sandiford's Shop. Some races involved further distances, such as from Four Roads, over Bell Hill, down Church Street, down Market Hill and back up Grenville Street.

That was athletics and cricket, but the boys in the community also loved playing football in the road; notwithstanding the many occasions when somebody would kick the ball and break a pane of glass, either in Coard's house or Miss Keppel's or Miss Scott's house. Complaints and flogging of the young footballers would not stop them. They would return to the street the following night to kick, shoot and dribble whatever object they called their football.

And Jericho was also in the center of that.

Another of the favourite past-times of Tony and his friends was skating in the road. In those days, there were no fancy skate boards with wheels. Skate boards were locally made; home-made contraptions, principally put together using a "jooking board" that was rubbed at the bottom with candle wax.

When skate boards were ready, Tony and the boys will gather at the top of Bell Hill. They will race down Bell Hill, to as far as Maloney Street, sometimes having to hurry out of the road, to avoid a head-on collision with a moving vehicle. Hmm, dangerous indeed, but the fellars mastered the skill of skating and of escaping being hit in vehicular traffic. And Jericho was in that also.

But there was another kind of skating that was equally thrilling for boys who found enjoyment in the outdoors, before the age of sitting in front of computers playing games or tweeting on Black Berries.

This skating took place in the gutter amongst the “lar-lee” after a heavy downpour of rain. The skating was fun. But afterwards, the skaters would be plagued with sores popping up on their feet. The sores were called “bo-bo.” Tony was a part of that experience and he had his share of “bo-bos”.

Now everyone knows that the Fish Market and the sea are just about two minutes away from Four Roads. It was a ritual for all boys in Town to bathe in the sea. Wharf boys had their beach in Tanteen that they called “The Spout.” Town boys had theirs and they called it “Miami Beach.” You couldn’t call yourself a real Town boy or a real Wharf boy, if you couldn’t swim.

So, not surprisingly, Tony Greenidge – as a real Town boy – developed a passion for the sea and swimming. He loved to stay on the side of the Government Dispensary, run across the road and jump over into the waters of Miami Beach. It was perhaps how he grew into becoming one of Grenada’s best long jumpers.

But young Tony’s antics would cause his mother “nuff” stress. She would admonish him by saying: “Tony, you playing you like the sea; you go stay in the sea one day.”

Apart from playing sports and attending school and church, Tony had an adventurous side to his life. Often times, Tony’s parents thought he was playing in the road with the other boys – like Peck Edwards, Harold Flash Williams, Fergie Boy, Bull Bakes and Little Bell, just to name a few; or Gerald and Beryl Greenidge thought their son was on the basketball court with Bessy and Fliers Redhead, Tiggis Bernard, Squingy, Brim Lewis, and Bug and Bob Belfon. But no, Tony was neither in the road playing nor working out on the basketball court.

Instead, Tony frequently would quietly slip away and roam all over the place. When evening came and his parents began looking for Tony, no Tony could be found. The absence of Tony would force his parents into mobilizing friends to go looking for him. Missing Tony and the frequent searches for him were the genesis of the nickname, Jericho, based on the Lord Kitchener calypso with the refrain, “They looking for Jericho, Jerry slip away.”

The song was so appropriate for Tony. The name stuck, became legendary, and remained with Tony until death.

The life of Anthony ‘Jericho’ Greenidge was always full of color and memorable events from early childhood. One would recall his parents, especially his mother,

organizing carnival events at their home. Yes, the Greenidge's house was a venue for Queen Shows, Beauty Pageants and Christmas Parties. There were steelband competitions too; not with panmen playing oil drums but beating small juice cans. Miss Greenidge also hosted Auntie Kay-style competitions in singing, dancing and poetry-reciting for children. No wonder why Jericho was so versatile in life; he lived culture.

However, Jericho, like so many of us, also had his close calls and unpleasant experiences growing up. Jericho had a daring in him and this resulted in a near miss as a youth. Here's an account of the incident.

No one knows how Jericho and Carl Bob Marley and the gang got hold of a gun owned by the Bell family of Grenville Street. But they landed on this gun. And as children, they proceeded to play with the weapon, treating it as toy received on Christmas morning. All of a sudden you heard BLOWDOWN! Gun went off. And what do you think happened? Jericho was shot. Fortunately, he took the bullet in his leg. But you could imagine what could have happened; he could have lost his life. But the Lord had a bigger purpose for Jericho and so he was spared.

Jericho also had lots of humor in his life. Just Imagine.

One time his mother sent him to the barber and Jericho came back with his head shaved clean. In those days boys used to carry a muff with a part in the middle. Naturally, his mom was upset and told him he was not going to matinee show at Empire Theatre, where his father worked, with his head shaved like that.

Jericho said nothing. But he had already made up his mind that he had to go to the movies by the hook or the crook. Having had all his good clothes locked away, Jericho proceeded to dress himself in what he thought was the best thing he could find. What do you think that was? It was his pajamas. Yes, Jericho put on his pajamas and went to meet his dad. He was the joke of the town, but at least he got to see his movie.

As we all know, Jericho was actively involved in sports, in particular athletics and basketball. He played B-ball for various teams and was a top athlete at GBSS, making a significant mark as both runner and jumper. He represented Grenada as a basketball player and also as a member of the national team to the CARIFTA Games.

After his GBSS and national sporting years, Jericho migrated for a short while to New York, where his career interest in broadcasting grew.

He didn't want to be any old broadcaster and commentator on radio. He wanted to be the best. He knew that to be the best, he needed to have both theoretical and practical training. It is for this reason that Jericho enrolled in broadcasting school. His path to a career, a successful career, is a model and an example for every young Grenadian boy and girl. Do not just settle for a job. Strive to become the best in your field of endeavour; work and study hard.

In a classic case of "You can take the man out of Grenada, but not Grenada out of the man", and in spite of many luring and family pleadings, Jericho was determined to leave New York to return home and give of his best years.

He started out in the late 1980s, early 1990s, as a volunteer with Spice Capital Radio and then worked his way up. He also worked with YFSM Radio and the then Grenada Broadcasting Corporation – GBC – where among other things he hosted a popular carnival television show called "Talk And All That".

For more than a decade, Jericho was not just a voice of a nation, but something closer to its conscience. Jericho was a voice for the voiceless; and he provided a psycho-social service that would have been the envy of many professionals trained in psychology and social worker.

A fierce competitor, Jericho hated to lose; but one of the good things about Jericho was that he was a fellow with an endearing sense of humor; he could still make fun of his own failings.

This proud son of Four Roads, of Upper Grenville Street, of Town, became the brother of an entire nation. Every morning, as the host of his popular morning show on WEE FM, he became the best friend most did not even meet.

The phrase, "Did you hear what Jericho say this morning", would have been the tag line for many conversations on the bus stops or in the offices.

Sadly these past few weeks, Jericho said nothing.

But this grateful nation has returned here today, to say thanks for the memories.

After a decade of taking him into our homes via the airwaves; today Tony – we take you into our hearts.

Grenada has a rich broadcasting tradition dating back to the 1950s. There would have been greater voices, and others more well-known beyond these shores; but none pulled off being counselor, comedian and commentator – all wrapped in one package, as Jericho did.

His jocular style borne out of his cherished childhood roaming the city, and cultured by a Grenadian psyche that can be both serious and given to ‘picong’ all in the same breath, is what inspired one of his lasting legacies – the “Informal News.”

But we must also say something about Jericho, the singer. He began singing calypso – starting out with Croqueta and Allan G – in the church youth sponsored tent in Vendomme. His calypso singing was an extension of his broadcasting -- biting, caustic, scolding, counseling and humorous all in one vein.

Jericho didn’t just stop at calypso. He went on to also be a very prominent parang singer, and his annual Christmas time journey to Carriacou made him a headliner there, especially as the driving force behind the group, MEN FROM THE MAINLAND.

Jericho had a zest for life – a life he lived to his fullest for half a century.

But his endearing mark on this country will be the impact he had as the most popular announcer on WEE FM – some will argue in the country period.

He saw his work – not as a radio DJ – but an activist who just managed to be on the radio.

Jericho could speak out easily against errant politicians as he did about shoddy consumer services; while at the same time lending his voice to worthwhile causes and meaningful plaudits.

He was tough on all of us; but never mean.

And he was always willing to give back – whether to mobilize for some community activity at Four Roads or render free services to national sporting organizations, calypso associations and the Media Workers Association of Grenada.

As we say farewell to a son, a brother, a friend and a comrade – we must remember his family – his wife and children, his sister, cousins, nephews, nieces and other relatives.

Jericho gave unselfishly. We must find creative ways to build a legacy of which his wife, children and other family members could be proud.

Many of you know that there is an ongoing effort to establish a community centre on Melville Street, where the former Back Street School used to be and where Jericho and others played basket. As a fitting tribute to Jericho, I want to propose that when the future Melville Street Community Centre is officially opened, it should be named after Anthony “Jericho” Greenidge. In fact, about two months ago, Jericho was invited to join me as part of delegation from the Town of St. George on a visit to China. One of the aims of the visit was to seek funding for the proposed Melville Street Community Centre. Unfortunately, Jericho fell ill and had to cancel the China visit.

I also believe that we should give serious thought to formally establishing Jericho’s “Duke Foundation” that he spoke so frequently about on radio, although it was merely a dream. We should make that dream a reality. I want to propose that the work of the Duke Foundation should be incorporated into the operations of the Jericho Greenidge Community Centre. The Centre and the Foundation should carry out the legacy Jericho established in sports and culture; and in helping youth and the elderly.

Together we mourn today – but let us all be comforted by the fact that Anthony Jericho Greenidge lived his life to the fullest and shared it with all of us.

Personally, I have lost a friend and brother.

Grenada has lost a cherished son.

Walk good, Jericho. Walk Good!

And as you would say – table knock!