

SAC Distinguished Alumni Legend - Cleveland LeRoy Peter Mitchell

Born on July 28, 1930, Cleveland LeRoy Peter Mitchell lived on the neighbouring Dorchester / Heathfield Street just north of St. Francis Xavier Church in the city of Nassau, New Providence, The Bahamas. He was privileged to play on the Priory grounds that also had a basketball court. It was here that he honed his athletic prowess and met the Benedictine monks who lived in the Priory. They became his mentors.

It was in the early 1940's LeRoy Mitchell was the benefactor of the strict yet spiritual and well-rounded teaching of the monks from St. Johns Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. These determined priests were instrumental in building the 1st Catholic secondary school - St Augustine's School on the northwest corner of the church grounds. The new all-boys high school was housed in the two storey building called "The Niche". In 1945, it was Fr. Brendan Forsythe, OSB together with Fr. Frederic Frey, OSB - the first headmaster of the school, that enrolled LeRoy as the 1st student of the inaugural class of St. Augustine's School. LeRoy was also there when the school subsequently was relocated to the newly constructed Monastery, Bernard Road, Fox Hill. Back then, school was from 8:00 am – 8:00 pm!

This historic spot known as the Priory Grounds was the hub where many sporting, social and liturgical activities took place. Fr. Brendan Forsythe, OSB and Fr. Marcian Peters, OSB eagle eyes took LeRoy under their wings. They quenched his thirst and willingness to learn and serve, by developing his innate sporting talent and spiritual growth. He was an original "Priory Rat". He played for several basketball teams and was the first captain of the powerhouse St. Bernard's –A Team from 1949 – 52. He was also a national High Jump champion, played softball and cricket.

The Monks became an integral part of LeRoy's life even in pairing him with his wife Paula Louise (nee Albury). He became involved in everything: the church, the school, sports and the social clubs that were connected to St. Francis. At St. Augustine's College he ensured that each of his children attended his beloved Alma Mater. In the 1970's he served as President of SAC PTA. During his term(s) he led the charge of getting students to school safely by establishing the first island-wide school bus service. He was also instrumental in establishing the Scholarship Endowment to assist deserving students /parents that may've needed assistance with tuition. He was also a lead and founding member of the St. Augustine's College Alumni Association (SACA) where the intent was to keep graduates and school attendees involved and connected to the institution.

As an excellent student of the Benedictine teaching and philosophy, sports to him, was the key to bringing people together in a wholesome social environment. As such, he was the Founding President of The Bahamas Volleyball Association after bringing the sport to the country. During his tenure the sport was introduced in the curriculum of the Ministry of Education Schools.

As a focused and dedicated liturgical churchman, C. LeRoy served as the official Diocesan Master of Ceremonies assisting the bishop(s) and priests whenever called upon. He ably assisted in the ceremonies of the Papal Visit of Pope John Paul II (now St. Pope John Paul II) to Nassau, Bahamas in 1979, as well as in the Quin-centennial celebrations. Mr. Mitchell's trademark was his keen eye for detail, reverence and discipline while serving on the altar. Our parents served as pioneers for many of the Family and youth enrichment programs, namely, Christian Family Movement (CFM), To Encounter Christ (TEC) and Cursillo.

The consummate sports legend, C. LeRoy P. Mitchell was honored by the Bahamas Government as one of 1st Class of Bahamas Basketball Hall of Fame. In 2013, "Mitch" was also inducted in Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture's Bahamas 40th anniversary Hall of Fame Class for his unselfish work ethic as an athlete, administrator, advocate and champion in promoting sports in The Bahamas. He served as President of

the Savannah Sound Community, and also as President of the Perpall Tract/Ferguson Manor Neighborhood Association for decades. He also chaired the Diocesan Bazaar committee for many years. The professions throughout his life were: Artist, Architect, Insurance Agent, Real Estate Agent, Contractor and Appraiser.

“LeRoy C” continued being a ray of hope in our community - illuminating all via the principles of Christianity imposed by his beloved Frs. Frederic Frey, Brendan Forsythe and Marcian Peters. In paying it forward and using the mantra “The Lord is My Light”, he too became “The Beacon” that lit the way as a mentor to many.

Cleveland LeRoy Mitchell transitioned to be with the Lord on August 25, 1998. To God be the Glory!!