



New York City: JIFI~NYC – “The People’s Ball”, Celebrating Jamaica 61st Independence.

This year Jamaica proudly celebrated its 61st anniversary of Independence and the **Jamaica Independence Foundation, Inc.**, (JIFI~NYC) a 501(c)(3) accredited non-for-profit organization hosted their 2nd annual “**The People’s Ball**”, fund-raising gala under the theme “*Out of Many, We Are One*”. The event was a tribute to the 1960’s decade of Jamaican style & fashion, and music with emphasis on the *Rock Steady* genre.

The Grand black-tie Ball (Cocktail, live auction, dinner, awards and dancing) was held on **Saturday, August 5, 2023**, at the luxurious **Terrace on The Park**, located at 52-11 111th Street, Queens, NY 11368.

Invocation was given by **Elder Haydn Smith** and the event was hosted by the incomparable Ms. **Juliet Bodley** *aka “JulieMango”*, with entertainment by the big band sound - **True Tribute Organization Foundation**, and performances by **Dr. Thomas Cowan** *aka “Tommy Cowan”* who surprised the audience with a duet performance with his daughter the very talented **Naomi Cowan**. “Richie Innocent” performed a heartfelt poem titled the “Good Old Days”, and **DJ Roy of Road International** had the crowd rocking from start to finish.

Our **Honorary Patron** was **Ambassador, Hon. Dr. Basil K. Bryan, O.D.**, and **Keynote Speaker – Dr. Annabelle Manalo-Morgan, PhD.**

President, **Ms. JLexy Brooks** gave a moving and compassionate introduction of the mission and vision of the organization and thanked and introduced the Board of Directors, Committee members and volunteers who for their commitment, dedication, and passion for the cause. She asked the attendees to help support their 2023 charities which includes, **Team Jamaica Bickle, Union of Jamaican Alumni Association (UJAA), USA and Lions Clubs International**. Net proceeds from the event will support these charities. She continued to highlight the organizations that benefited from last year’s event which includes **Safe Horizon, Mustard Seed Communities, and the Rose Town Foundation** (Jamaica).

Team Jamaica Bickle (TJB) was represented by Vice Chair & Chair of Labor of Love, **Mrs. Karen Wilson-Robinson, Esq.** She brought apologies and greetings on behalf of CEO and Founder, **Mr. Irwine Clare Snr.** She spoke of the journey of TJB over 26+ years, with growth from a small operation to where the organization is today.

President of **UJAA, USA**, Mr. Donovan Wilson, brought message of hope and aspirations for his organization and stressed the importance of supporting our upcoming generation to stay ahead of a competitive stem and robotics research in a fast-growing robotics world.

Lions Clubs International (Kingston), President, Mrs. Michelle Sadler, brought message of a Club that is making a global impact for the betterment of underserved communities.

Ms., Brooks further expressed gratitude to the sponsors for their support with special thanks to **VP Records, Ms. Pat Chin, Mr. Chris Chin, Mr. Randy Chin, Caribbean Food Delight, VIP Connected Entertainment, Terrace on The Park** and all who contributed to the success of the event this year.

Ms. Jacquie Jones represented and spoke on behalf of CEO of **Caribbean Food Delights**, Ms. **Sabrina HoSang-Jordan**, and the entire HoSang Family. She spoke on the humble beginnings of the organization and how they started and operated a small Food truck to what is now one of the largest and respected Caribbean Food service companies.

Our 2023 Awardees

Amb., Dr. Basil K. Bryan, O.D. – *Lifetime Achievement Award for Service Excellence and Leadership*

Morgan Heritage Band – *Universal Impact Award in Reggae Music*

Dr. Annabelle Manalo-Morgan – *Lifetime Achievement Award for Discovery in Scientific Application*

Dr. Thomas Cowan – *Living Legend Award*

Wilburn T. Cole pka Stranger Cole – *Living Legend Award*

Roy Walters pka DJ Roy of Road International – *Excellence in Media Award*

Juliet Bodley – *Daughter of the Soil Award*

Garfield Clarke - *The Community Service & Business Development Achievement Award*

In addition to the awards, the Honorees received Proclamations from **Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke's Office**. Congresswoman Clarke brought a message of accomplishment to a country that strives to be its best self. Also in attendance was **New York Senator Kevin S. Parker's**, who also brought greetings and presented the Honorees with Proclamations from his office. Representative, **Mr. Hercules Reid** brought greetings on behalf of the **New York City Mayor, Hon., Eric D. Adams**.

The Silent and Live Auction boasted fabulous deals to include Vacations, Jewelry, Fashions, Art and more.

Donations and Contributions to the Jamaica Independence Foundation, Inc are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by New York State and federal law.

Contact us by email at info@Jifinyc.org or visit www.Jifinyc.org for more information on how you can help support the cause.