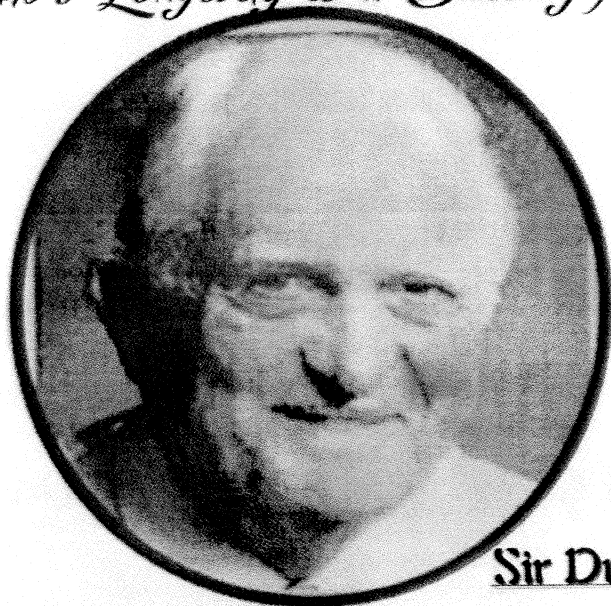


## *Sir Durward's Longevity is a Blessing from Heaven*



**Sir Durward Knowles**

There is nothing patronizing at all about the view here that the longevity of Sir Durward Knowles is a blessing from heaven.

I truly believe that. The grand gentleman celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 2, 2012, and it is exceptionally good that he is still with us to pass on his advice and to be that ultra role-model on an ongoing basis. It is understandable that many, who hear the name Sir Durward Knowles, connect him to his international sailing prowess. He is indeed an international sailing legend of Star Class fame, but an icon in many other ways. From the civic perspective, he is head and shoulder above most and has been as significant as any other in driving charitable causes.

He was the first sporting world champion in the history of the Bahamas (1947 along with the crew Sloane Farrington). He won the first Olympic medal (1956 Bronze, again with Farrington) and he captured the first Olympic gold medal for his country (1964 with crew Cecil Cooke). There have been many other international sailing accomplishments for the Duke of "Out East". His presence at the helm of the Bahamas Sailing Association (BSA) for many years kept the national program solidified.

There is so much more to Sir Durward however. Sailing has been the big passion for his entire life since he reached the age of reasoning. Interestingly enough though as the years passed, his devotion to the development of the "entire" national sports program has been obvious. In truth, his focus for sailing expanded to cover the overall sports landscape. I have had the pleasure of interviewing and, simply chatting with Sir Durward for well over 40 years now.

On many occasions, he opened discussions about other sporting programs. It became clear to me a long time ago, that this man wished, equally, for national sports growth. He is modest about it, but countless leaders of sporting programs outside of sailing have solicited assistance from him through the years and gotten favourable responses.

I have often wondered about his capacity to give. Yes, on the surface, he is as caustic as ever. His communicative language is often biting, sarcastic and severe. Beneath that exterior nevertheless, is a heart of gold. His willingness to serve his country's needs and to help others seems boundless. Such is the mettle of the man.

We are blessed to still have him, vibrant, engaging, and with a critical eye as he guards the Bahamian heritage. Enjoy your 95<sup>th</sup> Sir Durward! May God continue to bless you and your family!

The government has designated the period beginning November 2, 2012 for the 40<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary celebrations, leading up to July 10<sup>th</sup> 2013. It is with great pleasure that I salute Sir Durward Knowles as one of the sporting heroes of the period, prior and forever.