

HON. ERIC ANTHONY ABRAHAMS - MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, EASTERN PORTLAND - MINISTER OF TOURISM 1980 - was born on May 5, 1940. He attended Jamaica College before entering the University of the West Indies (UWI) where he studied Economics, History and English.

At the UWI, he was Chairman of the Students' Union and President of the Debating Society, representing the University of Students' conference in Europe and the Middle East.

A Rhodes Scholar, after leaving the UWI, Mr. Abrahams went on to Oxford University, where he was elected President of the Union Society.

Working with the BBC - TV, as a producer and reporter, in 1965, he covered the Ghana Coup, and also interviewed President "Papa Doc" Duvalier of Haiti.

Mr. Abrahams returned to Jamaica and was appointed Administrative Assistant to the Director of Tourism at the Jamaica Tourist Board on March 5, 1967. He moved up through the ranks of Assistant Director, Acting Director, to become the youngest Jamaican ever to be appointed Director of Tourism, a post he took up in April, 1970.

As Director of Tourism, he pursued three fundamental policies in the overall responsibility for the Board's operation; more aggressive and imaginative marketing to promote travel to Jamaica; improvement of the quality of a Jamaican vacation at prices and on terms which are competitive, internationally; and a move to gain the social acceptance of tourism and integrate the industry in the mainstream of Jamaican life.

He introduced a planned and research approach towards the development of Jamaica's tourist markets, and substantially re-structured the overseas offices of the Board to take greater advantages of markets previously untapped. Mr. Abrahams also restructured the Board to include a Special Projects Department to deal with the establishment of visitor attractions and to expose visitors to the culture, history, and rural beauty of Jamaica.

Mr. Abrahams created a Planning, Research and Statistics arm which permitted the Board to undertake its own in-depth research into the industry. He introduced a new division of Product and Industry Affairs to deal with maintaining and co-ordinating in-service training of hotel staff.

Spearheading a drive to improve relations between visitors and the local populace, he organised a "Meet the People Programme" which swept the Caribbean. He also designated October "Tourism Month".

Regarded as having very detailed knowledge of international airlines affairs, Mr. Abrahams was a member of the Jamaican Government Air Policy Committee and a member of Bilateral Air Agreement negotiating team which concluded the air agreements now in existence between Jamaica and the United Kingdom, the USA, Germany and Italy.

He has served on the Public Passenger Transport Board and was Chairman of the Jamaica Hotel School, 1975-76, Executive Director of the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica; 1977-78, member of the Jamaican Senate; 1978-79, Director of Multi-National Tourism Programme of the Organisation of American States. He became Minister of Tourism after having won a seat in Parliament for ^{the} constituency of Eastern Portland.

Mr. Abrahams, who is divorced, has two children, Eric Jason, and Tara Elizabeth. His hobbies are people, squash, swimming and badminton.

AGENCY FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION (JAMAICA)

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