

Lady B launches book in Atlanta

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ATLANTA-

LADY GLADYS BUSTAMANTE, widow of the late National Hero of Jamaica Sir Alexander Bustamante, chose Atlanta as the first overseas stop on the promotional tour for her book "The Memoirs of Lady Bustamante".

Lady B, as she is popularly known, autographed copies of the book at a reception held in her honour last week by the Atlanta Jamaican Association and Air Jamaica. She was enthusiastically received.

Vin Martin, Consul to Georgia, John Olephant, Air Jamaica's district manager, and Ashton Leslie, president of the Atlanta Jamaican Association, each paid tribute to Lady B and welcomed her to Atlanta.

The book's publisher, Mike Henry, of Kingston Publishers, travelled to Atlanta with Lady B to promote the book.

According to Mr. Henry, Atlanta was chosen as the first overseas promotional venue because of its long association with Jamaica and what its people have done for the black race.

"Lady B wrote the book virtually by hand, in a diary form. She gave her secretary these notes, who would compile them in order and then after she (Lady B) had finished...everything, then we passed it to the historian to balance it and then added the editorial," Mr. Henry said. "So it really is her story."

The process took about two years and Mr. Henry credits Lady B's remarkable memory for the detail and realism in the book.

For the record

In responding to *The Sunday Gleaner's* query about why she wrote the book, Lady B was definite.

"I would like everybody to know what happened over the years, what we did over the years for poor people," she said.

"Jamaican history has to be exposed," said Mr. Henry "and

the memoirs are invaluable because she was actively involved in history-making events. There are some distortions of history which are put in place in the book."

Lady B said one of the main lessons young people of today can learn from the book and from Sir Alex's life is to be less violent. Reception attendee Terry MacIntosh echoed the sentiments of many Jamaicans who attended the reception.

"It is so wonderful to see her and hear her," MacIntosh said. "She is a national treasure of Jamaica and it is such an honour for us to have her with us."

Several people attending the function remarked on how well the 86-year-old Lady B looked and expressed disbelief at her age.

"I can't believe that she is really 86," said one observer, "she doesn't look a day over 60."

Lady B credits a "clear conscience and no drinking," for her longevity. She enjoys growing orchids, anthuriums, lychees and coffee at her home, "Bellencita",

in Irish Town, St. Andrew. She loves gardening because "you need a lot of patience," and it helps to "cool you down," Lady B said.

While her book chronicles much of her life with Sir Alex, in talking with *The Sunday Gleaner*, Lady B shied away from discussing such personal questions as how she and Sir Alex met and some of her own personal achievements.

She takes pride in having driven Sir Alex all over the island and in her outstanding speed as a stenographer/typist (150 words per minute). She and Sir Alex did not have any children, but she has raised several children over the years, including two boys she is currently taking care of, Chris 17, and Rico age six, who she describes as "the little one."

She declined to say what parts of Jamaica she likes best, but does admit to loving Irish Town, where she now resides, in the home she shared with Sir Alex.

Lady B will continue her promotional tour in July with book

signings in London, England during the Jamaica Expo. Proceeds from the book will benefit Lady B's favourite charities

for the young and old, the Bustamante Children's Hospital, of which she has been patron for many years, senior citizens groups, and FISH, the Foundation for International Self-Help, which provides medical help for the poor.

THOSE EARLY YEARS



■ Prime Minister P.J. Patterson (right), examining a copy of the book 'Memoirs of Lady Bustamante', presented by Lady Bustamante (left), who visited him recently at his new office located on the new Cabinet building at Jamaica House.