

SIR FLORIZEL'S 80 YEARS

An extraordinary journey

TO TRAVEL this trying road of life for eighty years, landscaping it with significant national milestones is an extraordinary journey. To celebrate the eightieth year of life in the splendour of Kings House as its Chief Resident is a crowning achievement.

No wonder then that there was a sense of awe even among the top names in our land as they waited in line on Monday evening to be formally received by His Excellency, The Most Honourable Sir Florizel Glasspole, along with Her Excellency, The Most Honourable Lady Glasspole, smiling and radiant, and the Right Honourable Michael Manley. Mr. Manley's presence harked back to the close friendship between his late father National Hero, The Right Excellent Norman Manley and fellow PNP pioneer, Sir Florizel.

Not that there was any trace of partisan politics on Monday evening. The graciousness of Kings House permeated the atmosphere — Government Ministers, Opposition parliamentarians and Senators mingled with easy warmth. Relatives of Sir Florizel including his brother, Dr. Theo Glasspole, diplomats, friends dating back to his schooldays at Wolmer's all joined to offer this grand and beloved gentleman their best wishes on his eightieth birthday.

'1909 Club'

His bright and beautiful daughter, Mrs Sara Lou Mena, granddaughter Kristina whom His Excellency declares to be "the light of my life" and son-in-law Dr. Adolfo Mena charmingly put guests at ease.

It was Sara Lou who told me about the "1909 Club" formed by four venerable gentlemen born that year: Sir Florizel, Honourable Robert Lightbourne, Honourable Wesley Powell and Dr. Theodore Sealy. All four were together on Monday evening; 1909 was a very good year!

Any speculation about Lady Glasspole's health was quickly addressed by her lovely appearance. Her strong voice and ready smile were reassuring. Her Excellency's yellow Indian silk gown was outstanding — and even more noteworthy is the fact that this gifted lady made it herself.

Over a thousand guests — people associated with the many facets of Sir Florizel's life, were present. The majestic strains of the Military Band and soloist Pat Gooden's renditions echoed over the brightly lit and exquisitely decorated lawns of Kings House. The lavish fork buffet was turned out by the talented staff

By JEAN LOWRIE-CHIN

In the Kings House kitchens supervised by former Kings House staffer Mrs. Janet Taylor and was enhanced by ice carvings from the Pegasus Hotel. Joyce Shaw's floral arrangements and silvery balloons from Beautiful Flowers Limited added to the festive mood.

His Excellency was as effervescent as ever — kissing the ladies, shaking hands, cracking jokes, his eyes a-twinkle with obvious enjoyment of the evening. His youthful appearance belies the eighty years, most of them filled with hard work, which he has lived on this earth.

Gruelling

The sixteen years which he has served as Governor-General have been challenging and trying. Behind the everlasting social rounds is gruelling work — papers from the Services Commission and the Privy Council to be read and signed, projects to be scrutinised before patronage is granted, research for the many speeches to be given. His Excellency replies to every letter he receives.

Twenty years after the generally accepted age of retirement Sir Florizel is tackling tight schedules and packed files with the gusto of a mid-thirties businessman. Indeed he outwrites, outspeaks and outdances many executives half his age. His punctuality is legendary.

Indeed the greatest gift is not one which he received for his birthday, but the one he has given to us, the Jamaican people. His life, his work as trade unionist, politician, Minister of Government and Governor-General is the utmost incentive. It is a gift of hope to even the humblest of our people: Sir Florizel's 80-year-strong life reminds us that, by the grace of God, we can use the power within to uplift ourselves and our country.

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THE GOVERNOR GENERAL offers Lady Glasspole a slice of his birthday cake. Sir Leslie Ashenheim looks on.



A RACE was devised to cut the cake. Sir Florizel with the help of his granddaughter, Kristina Mena and Mrs. Ruby Martin, wife of Dr. John Martin, Custos of St. Andrew are on their marks. Carlton Scott, G.G.'s secretary acts as starter.



PAT GOODEN sings.