

# Special Olympics award

# Sir Florizel receives

# top honour

JAMAICA Special Olympics honoured its patron His Excellency, the Most Honourable Sir Florizel Glasspole at a special award ceremony at the Jamaica Pegasus Ballroom on Monday, February 12, 1990.

The beautifully decorated ballroom provided a fitting ambiance of what turned out to be a very emotional and touching evening. The function was attended by leaders of the private sector, the Board of Special Olympics, persons associated with the programme and the athletes. An interesting display was mounted to highlight the achievements of Jamaica Special Olympics at home and abroad.

Mr. Gerry Dudley, in his opening address, said it was the first time that Special Olympics had had a function such as this and was appropriate that it was being held for the Governor General who had been their patron from its inception. He asked for the audience's support, both in spirit and in kind, as well as for their keen interest in the programme.

The strains of the Olympic March ushered in the athletes led by Mrs. Carole Mitchell to the applause of the audience. She presented the athletes to the audience: Carl Anderson, Omar Vassell, Lincoln Blair, Fitzroy Anderson, Theresa Gayle, Claudette Dooland, Rowena James, Angela Mitchell, Karen Palmer and Lorese Williamson.

## Notre Dame Games

Dudley spoke of the founding of Special Olympics by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. He explained that all the athletes had some degree of mental retardation. The International Games, namely the Winter and Summer Games, he continued, was a once in a lifetime experience. In 1987 in Notre Dame, 5,000 special athletes from countries from all over the world participated. The Jamaican athletes were the toast of the games and there were always television interviews of the Jamaican athletes. The name of Jamaica was well represented at those games and the athletes had done a super job.

Explaining the running of Jamaica Special Olympics in financial terms, he stated that there was one paid employee who is part-time, that is Mrs. Delores Henry, executive director. All the money goes towards the athletic programme and the needs of the athletes.

In competition, the individuals are separated based on their levels of skill. The objective is not to develop better athletes, but to find retarded people in Jamaica and bring them into the programme. Many parents have retarded children and do not let the public know as they are usually hidden in the back room of the house. Jamaica Special Olympics restores pride and dignity of these individuals with the skill of the coaches changing the lives of both athletes and parents. All who have been involved with this programme have benefitted.

Dudley then saluted the athletes and their parents and said that he was honoured to call them his friends.

Rowena James, in her message to the audience, thanked Jamaica Special Olympics as they have given her a chance to be a winner. She attended the Lopez Adult Centre and won gold and silver medals in roller skating.

## Equestrian sports

Mr. Danny Melville of Chukka Cove Farms and managing director of Tropical Battery spoke on the development of equestrian sports in Jamaica Special Olympics. He said that not too many years ago, whenever he saw a handicapped person on the street, he drifted to the other side. He spoke of his experience in training the team for the International Games at Notre Dame in July.

He praised the hotels on the north coast for providing funds for the team's participation. The Jamaica Special Olympics Equestrian team won one gold, two silvers and a bronze and Jamaica was the only Third World country represented in equestrian sport. This, he said, was the turning point in his life, with regards to his outlook on retarded people.

In Special Olympics everyone is a winner, he continued. Our celebration of their effort is our greatest reward. Unless you have experienced the joy of seeing a child formerly hidden in a back room, looking down on ordinary people from the saddle of a horse, you cannot know the feeling. He explained that he and his wife, Yvonne, have been involved in Special Olympics for four years and it has been an unbelievable experience. He appealed to corporate Jamaica to volunteer money to Special Olympics and assured them that they would find the benefits rewarding.

He went on to inform the audience that ABC Wide World of Sports came to Jamaica to film the horse racing at Chukka Cove and Special Olympic children were included. This film, he explained, will be reaching six million households across Canada. He closed his address by stating that it is hard to make the first step, but once made it will never be regretted.

His Excellency, Glen Holden, Ambassador of the United States of America to Jamaica also addressed the audience. He stated that his position was to talk about talent and the execution of one's talent to the extent of one's ability.

He paid tribute to Herb McKinley, who was in the audience. He said that we all have a place in Special Olympics, not just the athletes, the parents and the coaches — everybody has a place. He emphasized that many of us would not be where we are if there were not people to build the organisations and the tracks to utilize our talents.

"Tonight", he added, "we are

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Fay Wright, director of Special Olympics and two athletes making a presentation to Sir Florizel Glasspole.



Rowena James, Special Olympics athlete student of Lopez Adult Centre, represented Jamaica in roller skating last November, in Philadelphia and won gold and silver medals, giving an address, as Fae Ellington listens intently.

asking the private sector to carry out all their responsibilities to themselves." He closed by stating, "I have always been a winner with Special Olympics," and said that he was been associated with Special Olympics for a long time. The first step one may question, but once involved, you will love it. He made an appeal to the audience to be a part of Special Olympics, and to bring a friend.

A pledge form was then introduced which is to be mailed to the Executive Director, Jamaica Special Olympics Foundation Limited, 9 Marescaux Road, Kingston 5.

The Governor General was presented with a beautiful plaque with the Special Olympics medal framed within by Miss Fay Wright, a director of Special Olympics and two athletes. She praised the Governor General for being a motivating force to the Board of Special Olympics.

In his response, the Governor

General stated that he had been associated with Jamaica Special Olympics since 1982 when the first national games were held at the National Stadium. This, he told the audience, he had enjoyed tremendously. It was the first time that he saw athletes who were not fit and normally formed.

### Excellent work

Sir Florizel spoke of the collapse of the former Special Olympics organization and praised Mr. Dudley for restoring the organization since he had taken over as chairman. He stressed that he could not speak in sufficient praise for Dudley and his associates for the excellent work that they had done. He also praised Mr. Dudley for getting the Jamaica Constabulary Force to engage in a Torch Run to raise funds for Special Olympics in 1987. He congratulated Commissioner Herman Rickets for his accomplishment.

The Governor General continued that no nation can claim to be

civilised until it can claim the responsibility of taking care of its children and senior citizens. In addressing Jamaica Special Olympics board and athletes, he said, "Today you have done me great honour. All I have done was part of my duty as Governor General. The nation wants more inspiration from the people who can assist in every possible way. Times may be hard but there are people who are exploiting the situation. Helping the children cannot be a losing game — help the young people who are in need. I give my thanks to all who have helped Special Olympics and I urge you to continue as you will not go unrewarded."

Entertainment was provided by "Touch of Elegance" and the programme was concluded by a soul stirring song, 'Give Me a Chance', sung by John Jones accompanied by 'Touch of Elegance'. The song was presented for the first time in Jamaica and had a most moving effect on the audience.