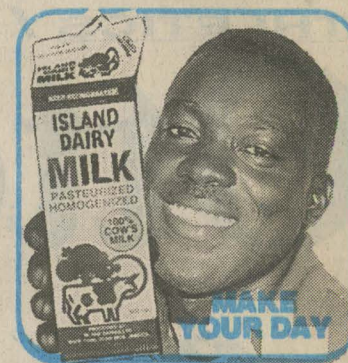




# SPORT



## Big welcome for Walsh

**A**MBASSADOR-AT-LARGE Courtney Walsh returned to the island yesterday to more adulation following his achievement of being the first cricketer to take 500 wickets in Tests.

Walsh who achieved his feat on Tuesday and stretched the figure to 504, stepped out of the airplane and on to a red carpet laid down by members of the Jamaica Defence Force. It was an honour fit for a king as the runway was littered with dignitaries and well-wishers.

Among those who turned out to greet Walsh were his mother Joan Wollaston, Minister of Tourism and Sport Portia Simpson Miller, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Sport Dr Wykeham McNeil, Carole Guntley Brady, director general in the Ministry of Tourism, and executive director of Insports Clayton Solomon. From the cricketing fraternity there were West Indies Cricket Board president Pat Rousseau, Easton McMorris and George Prescod of the Jamaica Cricket Association, former Jamaica captain Maurice Foster and captain of Excelsior's Grace Shield cricket team, Llewellyn Craig.

At a short media conference in the VIP lounge at the Airport Walsh was presented with a gift by Craig and Guntley Brady also presented him with a piece of art

"Mother and Child" which she said was fitting because of the close relationship the cricketer shared with his mother. Glowing tributes were also paid to Walsh.

"We are so proud of you and today and we thank you for keeping the flag of Jamaica flying high internationally," Simpson Miller said.

"As Jamaicans and West Indians we are very proud of you... your participation in West Indian cricket served as an inspiration to every Jamaican and every West Indian at home and abroad," the Minister added.

Rousseau saluted Walsh as a great Jamaican who learnt the characteristics from his mother to be the success that he now is. He likened Walsh's bowling record to that of batsman Don Bradman which no one has come close to breaking.

"There will be no bowler in the lifetime of anybody in this room including the distinguished young man from Excelsior in my

view who will live to see that record broken," Rousseau said.

In his reply Walsh said he was overwhelmed by the reception. On the question of retirement he said: "I am hoping to get through the series first. I have not made any definite plans as yet... I am looking to play if selected for the remaining Test matches and see what happens from there."

The loss, Walsh said, was disappointing but did not sour his moment of greatness.

Following the press conference he paid courtesy calls on Governor General Sir Howard Cooke at Kings House, Prime Minister P.J. Patterson at Vale Royal and the Leader of the Opposition Edward Seaga at his offices in New Kingston.

At King's House the Governor General praised Walsh for his humility and expressed the hope that when he was finished with playing he would visit the schools to further inspire children.



—Junior Dowie

*Ambassador-at-Large Courtney Walsh greets well-wishers on his arrival at the Norman Manley International Airport yesterday. Walsh became the first bowler to take 500 wickets in Tests when he bagged 6 for 61 in the second Cable & Wireless Test against South Africa on Tuesday. ■*