

RURAL NEWS

St. Mary loses 'Big Three'

RICHMOND News Correspondent — During the past month and a half, the parish of St. Mary has lost three of the men who for more than ten decades (among them) contributed immensely to the development of the parish.

The "big three", as they may be aptly described, were C.L.A. Stuart, L.E.A. Francis, and the Rev. Henry Ward. All three in their own way, have left their marks on the development of St. Mary, that will be hard to equal, much less surpass. It is maybe unfortunate that all three

The last of the "Big Three", the Rev. Henry Ward like Mr. Stuart, was more nationally known. For his contribution to this parish, and the country as a whole, he chose the fields of education and religion, reaching the very apex of



WARD



STUART



FRANCIS

passed on in such quick succession, and their passing must be clearly seen as the end of an era certainly in the development of St. Mary.

Much has already been written and said about Mr. Stuart and especially the way he died, burnt to death by burglars who robbed his Bagnolds Spring home on the early morning of April 25. His vast contribution to the agricultural, political and social life of the country and St. Mary in particular, are well known.

Already, both the St. Mary Parish Council and the St. Mary associated branches of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (JAS), have made moves to have a monument established in his memory.

Mr. Francis who passed on May 28, made his contributions to the development of the Parish in the fields of politics and medicine. A very witty and humorous man, he was for several years a leading pharmacist in Highgate. For his contribution in this field, he became known as "Doc. Francis".

It is difficult to determine in which field his contributions were more recognized. Whether as a pharmacist or as a local politician however, "Doc Francis" has earned a coveted place among the stalwarts of the early developers of this parish.

both fields. He was head of the Jamaica Union of Teachers, (forerunner of the Jamaica Teachers Association) as well as moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman (now United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman).

While he excelled to the national level in these two areas, Rev. Ward also made more than a valuable contribution as a social worker, and as a member of the old Parochial Board (now Parish Council). Rev. Ward also pioneered the early Credit Union movement in St. Mary, and was responsible for the setting up of the Islington Co-operative Credit Union, one of four which were merged in 1975, to form what has now become the successful St. Mary Credit Union Ltd.

His long association with the United Church at Islington is also testimony to his contributions to religion. For the Community of Islington, Rev. Ward, more than any other man singlehandedly, waved an un-challenged influence over its moulding that will be hard to forget. So as the era of those three local giants ends the people of St. Mary salute them and seek to continue to build on their already sound achievements.