



PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency the Most Honourable
Sir PATRICK LINTON ALLEN,
Member of the Order of the Nation,
Knight Grand Cross of the Most
Distinguished Order of Saint Michael
and Saint George, Commander of the
Order of Distinction, Knight of Grace
of the Most Venerable Order of the
Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Governor-General of Jamaica.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL

P. Allen

WHEREAS, it is manifestly the practice in Jamaica to memorialise important moments in the history of our country, including such moments marked by in-depth grief, trauma and sorrow due to disasters of such magnitude to require that such moments be accorded rituals of memory, such that these moments may never be forgotten but remain etched in the memory of our country;

AND WHEREAS such moments of mass suffering and gruelling pain may have been recorded in the annals of our history as among the 'worst of' or the 'most heinous of' or the 'most painful of' circumstances, never to be forgotten for the impact of the vast shared pain and grief experienced, a pain made even more immense because of the untold sufferings experienced by those who were victims, both those who died and those who survived, stories of which continue to encompass the nation;

AND WHEREAS the Eventide Home Fire which occurred on the Twentieth day of May Nineteen Hundred and Eighty, at the "*Myers Ward of the Eventide Home for the Aged*" is one such event, which impacted the life and psyche of an entire nation has been expansive, being now remembered and described as one of the worst tragedies in Jamaica's social care history;

AND WHEREAS the appalling tragedy of the Eventide Home Fire disaster in which over One Hundred and Fifty elderly women lost their lives, fosters a compelling need to honour the memory of those who perished, with dignity and acknowledgement of their humanity and contributions, thereby ensuring they are not forgotten;

AND WHEREAS such moments of national disaster need not only be constantly and permanently positioned within the memory of our people, but also given prominence in ways that allow for its people to never forget such a moment of national angst, of shared disaster;

AND WHEREAS it is manifestly the policy of good governance in situations of national shared disaster and calamities in our history, that, in the promotion of what is just and right, good governance must seek to ensure that a nation never forgets those moments as part of the process of non-repetition, but also as part of the promotion of national solidarity and compassion which must be the standard of our people as we together face the challenges that we must constantly confront in a world where disasters of many types and in many forms have become part of our natural and national circumstances;

AND WHEREAS it is deemed fitting that the Government and people of Jamaica create a special day for the memorialisation of the Eventide Home Fire disaster, so that on such day our people would pause to remember those Jamaicans who lost their lives, and ultimately encourage national reflection on the treatment of vulnerable groups and foster a greater sense of social responsibility;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, the Honourable Desmond McKenzie, Order of Jamaica, Commander of the Order of Distinction, Member of Parliament, gave notice of the intention to establish a day of remembrance for the victims and survivors of that fateful day of the Eventide Home Fire disaster to recall and promote the attitudes of solidarity, caring and compassion among our people in occasions of national challenge, and that the Twentieth day of May being the day of Eventide Home Fire disaster, would be appropriate for such a purpose, but should not be a Public General Holiday.

NOW THEREFORE, I PATRICK LINTON ALLEN, Member of the Order of the Nation, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Commander of the Order of Distinction, Knight of Grace of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, Governor-General of Jamaica, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM and MAKE KNOWN that the Twentieth day of May shall be observed annually as the "National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Eventide Home Fire".

Given under my hand at King's House this 14th day of May in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-six.