



## **Durante Charlow**

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle”. Dr. King’s words have truly touched the hearts of those fighting for equality and those who were against it. In The Bahamas, a voice for the oppressed rose up in the form of Sir Etienne Dupuch, a champion of civil rights. Dr. King’s dynamic words have truly inspired many of our great leaders to fight for those who were the majority but treated like minorities.

As a young Bahamian, I’ve heard stories of the struggles my forefathers endured and the impact they had on the lives of all Bahamians. This has catapulted me to wage my own battle against injustice and inequality today. For me, a champion is an advocate for peace and a trendsetter. Champions are determined to change the world, especially in the areas of discrimination in the work place, education, sexuality and religion. I can truly say that I am a champion because I am determined to make a change in society. Dr. King started the fight for equality in the world, and we must continue this fight.

Sir Etienne Dupuch, like Dr. King has inspired me to stand up for the rights of others. He believed that all men were created equal. During his historic speech in the Bahamian Parliament, he expressed his distaste for the way black Bahamians were treated. He faced the toughest moment in his life when he fought to end discrimination in Bahamian society. On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1956, his dream was realized when he pushed an anti-discrimination resolution through the House of Assembly. This resolution was able to allow blacks to enter public places in the Bahamas. This valiant act has indeed impacted my life tremendously. I cannot imagine where

our country would be without audacious man like Sir Etienne, who challenged the “old guard” and the many social ills blacks encountered.

It is fitting to note, that a year before Etienne’s historic resolution, Dr. King was instrumental in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. With his help, blacks were provided with integrated seating on buses. Additionally, King was also influential in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, where southern blacks obtained the right to vote. Dr. King’s successes showed me that no matter ones ethnicity, we are all of one body formed by God and we should be treated equally. Similarly, Sir Etienne’s resolution had a vast impact on Bahamians. With the resolution passed, black Bahamians were now able to enjoy many freedoms as their white counterparts.

As an agent of change, I continue to mold the minds of my peers to accept persons based on the contents of their character. I concur with Sir Etienne who stated, “The day is passed when classes and races can be divided by some invisible line. Every day I ensure that no line will ever separate us as a people. In my school, I have a voice and I will continue to let Dr. King and Sir Etienne’s dream live on.