

Gov't Declares August 17 Marcus Garvey Day

The Government of Jamaica has declared August 17 as Marcus Garvey Day in honour of the nation's first National Hero.

Governor General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, read the Proclamation yesterday, August 17 at a wreath laying ceremony held at National Heroes Park in Kingston, to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Garvey's birth. In declaring Marcus Garvey Day, the Governor General noted that "from here on every year this time, all of us here in Jamaica will be called to mind to remember this outstanding National Hero and what he has done for us as a people, and our children will call this to mind also on this day." The Proclamation, in part, stated that "on the 13th day of August 2012 in the year of the celebration of Jamaica's Independence and the 125th anniversary of the Rt. Excellent Marcus Garvey's birth, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most. Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, ON, MP, after consultation with the members of the Cabinet decided that the 17th day of August each year, being the anniversary of the birth of the Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, is appropriate as the day to be set aside for the focusing of attention on the outstanding contribution of the Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, but shall not be a public holiday." The Governor General then went on "to proclaim and make known that the 17th Day of August in each year shall be designated as Marcus Garvey Day and shall so be observed". The announcement was met with huge applause by those in attendance, among them the son of the National Hero, Dr. Julius Garvey. Dr. Garvey, in an interview with JIS News, welcomed the move by the Government, saying that he looked forward to when the day will be declared a holiday. He also pointed to the teaching of Marcus Garvey's philosophies in schools, as part of the new civics curriculum, as another positive step in honouring his father. "As we look back on 50 years of Independence we have to look at the positive, but we also have to look at what we didn't do and it seems that we are starting to do some things. I look forward to bigger and better things," Dr. Garvey said. In the meantime, Minister of Youth and Culture, Hon. Lisa Hanna, in hailing the declaration, told JIS News that it was "long overdue". "Garvey has influenced the world through so many different people, I don't think the world and even some Jamaicans recognise the worth and impact of his influence and just through his sayings, how so many freedom fighters and world leaders have brought their messages of confidence to masses of people. As Jamaicans, we ought to be proud of our ancestry; we ought to be proud of our heroes...He was clearly ahead of his time," Minister Hanna said. The Youth and Culture Minister noted that the hero's prophetic utterances that "people of African descent will astonish the world, "has been proven time and time again, most recently by the national pride demonstrated by all Jamaicans to the world during our official Jubilee celebratory period and the sterling performance by our athletes at the Olympics". "Today, Marcus Garvey, aka Daddy Marcus, would be proud that we have played our part, as he put it, "on the great human stage of activity" and caused others to see us as equals to them in every sphere of international life. We sing his praise on this the 125th anniversary of his birth for his enduring vision of a great Jamaica and a future of prosperity for African people at home and abroad," she added. Among the gathering at this morning's ceremony were: Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change Hon. Robert Pickersgill, representing the Prime Minister; Cabinet Members; Mayor of Kingston Angella Brown-Burke; Opposition spokesperson on Culture, Olivia Grange; Members of the diplomatic and consular corps; heads of agencies; representatives of the United Negro Improvement Association; and members of the Rastafarian community. Several floral tributes were laid in honour of the hero, while there were performances from the Kingston Drummers and the Glenmuir High School choir. Source: JIS