

SENATOR ALEXANDER MAILLIS, NASSAU, BAHAMAS

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Alexander Pericles Maillis Former Senator Alexander Pericles Maillis was born on Aug. 14, 1916 on Virginia Street, Nassau, Bahamas. He is the third son of the late Pericles J. Maillis and Kalliope P. Maillis, one of the early Greek sponge merchant families who came to The Bahamas in the early 1900s.

His family has been in the sponge business for generations, and distinguished themselves in the politics of their ancestral island, which has been the world's centre for the sponge trade since Roman times. Discovery of sponge beds in the New World and political unrest against their family who had invested in new sponge diving technology, caused the family to send his parents to The Bahamas with sufficient capital to get started in the sponge buying business.

He graduated from Queen's College where he served as Head Boy. At QC, he won the Eliza Young Prize for best GCE results and was granted exemption from matriculations by the University of Cambridge.

University and army Alexander's father died in 1926 when he was 10, and his widowed mother, with five children, had to struggle at a time of depression and hurricanes. He took a night job as a bus boy/bartender at the St Moritz Hotel in New York while he attended New York University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Economics. He then went on to law school in New York.

As a Bahamian-born, a British subject, working in the United States during World War II, he was drafted under the Anglo-American Treaty, into the U.S. Army where he was trained as a Paratrooper. He studied the German language at the University of Indiana, before going to Liverpool and then to Normandy, France where "the Bahamian Sergeant " was attached to General Patton's U.S. 3rd Army Air Corps Intelligence where he was much liked. He was with the Army through Northern France and into Germany and after V-day was given an in-service Army scholarship for six months at the Sorbonne University in Paris as prizewinner of a U.S. Army essay on "Reconstructing Europe. " After serving five years, he returned home to The Bahamas.

Because the British Legion and the R.A.F. do such a good job in organised memorials of those who fought for our freedom directly under the British Flag, modern Bahamians forget that many, many Bahamian boys ended up, one way or another, in other allied armies - all were heroes - the generation that won the greatest and most terrible war - and preserved our modern freedoms. Alexander Maillis he was one of them. He came home from war with nothing but pride, memory, knowledge and experience.

Return home

After returning home in 1946, Alexander did not resume his studies - but used some time to sow wild oats - for a few years, before he and a brother went into the restaurant and night club business - the Imperial - within the premises of his father's mansion which had been converted to a hotel at his father's death. In his Imperial nightclub days he distinguished himself in many ways. "Cracked Conch " - was invented, named and marketed for the first time. Blind Blake, George Symonette and Peanuts Taylor, all famous Bahamian entertainers started their successful careers with him.

The dream in war - A farm by the sea & marriage

In the late 1940s he began buying land at Adelaide, which was added to in pieces over time ... now a beautiful farm by the sea - his family's home and one of the best mango orchards in the country. In 1949, he married Cally Simeon of Tarpon Springs, Florida and remains happily married. They raised four children, all university graduates who themselves continue to work and serve our country. There are nine surviving grandchildren.

Back to law

In 1958, he resumed his legal studies under Articles in Nassau - eventually becoming an Attorney in July 1967.

Politics again

He involved himself in the politics of the times when the winds of change were blowing throughout the British Empire and in The Bahamas. He ran for Parliament unsuccessfully as an Independent in 1956. Later, he became a founding member of the United Bahamian Party and the organiser of the Labour and Capital movement, which featured in the 1962 election.

Later, and in keeping with promises made to the Labour and Capital movement and disillusionment at the coming in of casino gambling and other injustices of the time, he became a member of the Progressive Liberal Party losing his job for having openly campaigned and voted for the party three days after the Jan. 10, 1967 poll.

In 1968, and again in 1972, he ran, unsuccessfully, for Parliament as a member of the Progressive Liberal Party, for St. John's, Spanish Wells and Harbour Island, one of the most hostile districts to the then government, and he went on to sit within PLP circles in its National General Council, and as a Senator from 1972 to 1978.

Other service and contributions Senator Maillis was one of the founders of the Bahamas Society for Christian Unity which evolved into The Bahamas Christian Council, and served as its Secretary for about 10 years. He also served as a Church Trustee and for a term as President of his Church Parish Council.

He has been a member of The Bahamas Association for the Mentally Retarded, various musical organisations, The Bahamas National Trust, among others.