

Gables Man Wins British Citation for Bahamian Work

By JANICE GREENE

A long-time Coral Gables resident has been awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, usually given only to British citizens for his work with crippled Bahamian children for 17 years.

Arthur Finnieston, 2806 Granada Blvd., was honored for his work in a twice-yearly clinic in Nassau, run by the Bahamas Crippled Children's Committee.

Finnieston, president of a Miami brace concern, has fitted thousand of underprivileged youngsters for braces and artificial limbs.

He has worked closely with Dr. Charles Burbacher, also of Coral Gables, who was honored by the British in 1959 and 1964.

Finnieston said that, while vacationing in the Bahamas 17 years ago, he and Dr. Bur-

bacher saw many underprivileged crippled children.

"No one was taking care of them," he said, explaining how his volunteer work started.

The award will be presented formally by the governor at an investiture ceremony in the Bahamas, sometime after Queen Elizabeth II's birthday on April 21.

By ETIENNE DUPUCH

DR CHARLES R Burbacher has been named to the University of Miami's Hall of Fame for his voluntary services as physician to the University's athletic teams for 41 years.

This news should not surprise Bahamians who will recall the 19 years during which he headed a team of Florida doctors who took care of all the crippled children in the Bahamas free of charge.

This is a story of unsurpassed service to Bahamian children by a group of foreign doctors that should be passed down from generation to generation of the Bahamian people as evidence of the fact that love still exists in the hearts of many men ... and women ... too ... in a world that is now being torn apart by suspicion and hatred.

I was privileged to be associated with the doctors in this great work of mercy and so I am qualified to retell the story for the benefit of new readers of *The Tribune*.

One day the mail brought me a letter from a Public Service Nurse in Florida informing me that a Bahamian child was a patient in the Children's Variety Hospital in Coral Gables. It was a severe case of post-polio. Funds provided by the State, she said, were confined strictly for the care of American children. His parents had no funds. Someone, she said, had told her that if she wrote to me I would do something about it.

What could I do about it? I did the only thing I am capable of doing. I wrote a story in this column that seemed to have wide appeal because the next day money started to pour in. Most pleasing fact was that children came to *The Tribune* to bring their lunch money to help the little boy who lay stricken in a foreign land surrounded by new-found friends who were deeply concerned for his welfare.

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He brought Arthur Finnieston, Miami's leading brace maker, with him. After the clinic he said that this had been a new experience for him. He told me he held clinics regularly in Miami. The mothers took his work for granted but he saw something in the eyes of Bahamian mothers that made him feel they needed help ... and he wanted to help them. Any community,

The Tribune Limited

NULLIUS ADDICTUS JURARE IN VERBA MAGISTRI
Being Bound to Swear to The Dogmas of No Master

LEON E. H. DUPUCH, Publisher/Editor 1903 - 1914

SIR ETIENNE DUPUCH, Kt.,
O.B.E., K.M., K.C.S.G., (Hon.) LL.D., D.Litt.
Publisher/Editor 1919 - 1972
Contributing Editor 1972 -

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Painful story of ingratitude

he added, that responded so generously to helping a child deserved a great deal.

If I could raise the money to pay for hospitalization and braces needed by polio victims, he said, he would hold two clinics a year in Nassau and take care of all the crippled children in the colony.

I agreed to try. As the work grew he recruited two more outstanding doctors — Dr Walter Jones, III and Dr John Kilpatrick — to join him in this service to Bahamian children.

The community responded magnificently to this appeal and I feel that special mention should be made of Mr Alexis Nihon, Canadian multi-millionaire, who donated two first class motor cars every year to be raffled for the benefit of this fund.

His generosity made it possible not only to take care of the children but also for the committee that joined me in this work to provide limbs for adult amputees and also to provide special treatment in the US for adults who could not afford this costly service.

Every clinic was a tremendous experience for the doctors who also brought with them each time a different volunteer doctor from a hospital in Miami for the experience because they said they came across cases here that never arose in the US. But, alas, the time came when it was no longer so pleasant. Just before an election mothers came to the clinic wearing big PLP badges ... and their eyes were full of hatred. The doctors noticed the change in their attitude, but this did not dampen their enthusiasm. Dr Burbacher told me one day that he might retire to Hawaii, but wherever he went nothing would stop his work for Bahamian children.

It's impossible to convey in the limited space of a single article the tremendous work these men did for the Bahamas. I will tell you just one story. On one occasion a hurricane was approaching the Bahamas. It was due to strike Nassau the day set for a clinic. The sky was dark and the weather was threatening. I phoned Miami desperately trying to reach Dr Burbacher or Mr Finnieston to say I was cancelling the clinic. *The Tribune* was ready to go to press and I had been unable to find them anywhere. I decided to cancel the clinic. But just then the phone rang. Dr Burbacher was at the other end of the line.

"Great God, man," I exclaimed, "I have been trying to find you all over the place. Where are you?"

"Where in the devil did you expect me to be?" he asked, laughing. "Don't you know we have an appointment with the children. We'd never let them down. Arthur and I are at the British Colonial Hotel and if the weather's good enough, we'll have our clinic tomorrow."

"All the planes have been grounded, how in the devil did you get here?" I asked.

"We drove to the airport, left our cars parked in the street and caught the last flight to Nassau. It was a hell of a bumpy flight. I didn't think we would make it but we had a good pilot and he landed us safely in Nassau. And that's all that matters."

During the night the hurricane veered northward, missing Nassau and striking Miami. The clinic went on as usual. In the middle of the clinic Mr Finnieston was called to the phone.

"My damned place has been badly damaged," he told me after his telephone conversation. "I was in such a hurry to catch the plane I didn't have time to secure it properly."

He must have seen concern in my face because he added: "Don't worry, it's insured."

The whole spirit of this work was extraordinary. Sometimes Mr Finnieston would take children to the clinic in Coral Gables. Other times we sent a nurse with them. On one occasion my wife and I took a group to the Variety Children's Hospital.

"Dr Burbacher's children are here," nurses shouted on our arrival. The news spread quickly through the hospital and white nurses came running from all directions to shower love on these black children and make them feel that they were among friends. I had never seen anything like this in all my experience, before or since.

And then a terrible thing happened. The daughter of the firm of which Dr Burbacher was a partner came to Nassau with her husband for a short visit. She was pregnant. Not anticipating any trouble her father did not inform her to contact me if she needed help.

One night the child started to come. They knew no one here. They couldn't find a private doctor and so her husband rushed her to the Princess Margaret Hospital.

This was at a time when racial hatred had been fanned to fever heat by politicians. It had spread everywhere. Suffice it to say that this poor mother was badly used at the hospital. The child died.

Incensed by what had happened to his daughter and her baby the doctor felt it was his duty to come to Nassau and report the case to the proper authorities. The Hon Milo Butler (later Sir Milo, Governor-General) was Minister of Health. The case finally reached the floor of the House of Assembly. Instead of sympathy, the father received only abuse from the government of a people whose afflicted children his firm had served so unselfishly.

I thought that this would surely be the end of this work for Bahamian children. Not so. The doctors decided that children should not be allowed to suffer for the behaviour of their government.

The work went on. Her Majesty the Queen honoured Dr Burbacher ... first with an MBE and later with an OBE ... in recognition of the work his team had done for the Bahamian people. Although Mr Finnieston was paid for his braces it is impossible to describe all the other things he did to make his operation a success. For his devotion he was honoured by Her Majesty with an MBE. I had hoped to get some recognition from England for Dr Jones and Dr Kilpatrick but the time came when I left the Bahamas and the work was continued by another committee. Dr Burbacher and his associates were quietly informed that their services were no longer needed!

And, believe it or not, these men were allowed to part company with the Bahamas without a single word of thanks from the government of a people they had freely served beyond the call of duty.

I am pleased that Dr Burbacher has now received an award from his own people whom he had felt took everything for granted. Some terrible things have happened in the Bahamas in recent years and so I find it impossible to see good in the men who have been chosen by a free people to shape their destiny.

It stands to the credit of the Lucaya Club of Freeport that they gave a dinner in honour of Dr Burbacher and presented him with a Paul Harris Foundation Award, the highest honour that can be conferred by the International Rotary Club; and to the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce who gave a dinner and presented a plaque to Dr Burbacher and each of the members of his team expressing appreciation for their services. But only abuse in a sad case of unnecessary brutality from a government who are supposed to be the spokesmen, especially for the black people of the Bahamas in a case where over 90 per cent of the people were black Bahamians!

This is sad because it suggests that there must be something lacking in the character of these people.

A great deal was done by supporters of this work for the child for whom this undertaking was started. He has grown to manhood, still heavily braced from his ankles to his arm pits. Although severely handicapped he can get around on his own power. Everyone familiar with the case considers this a miracle. Happily, he has a good brain.

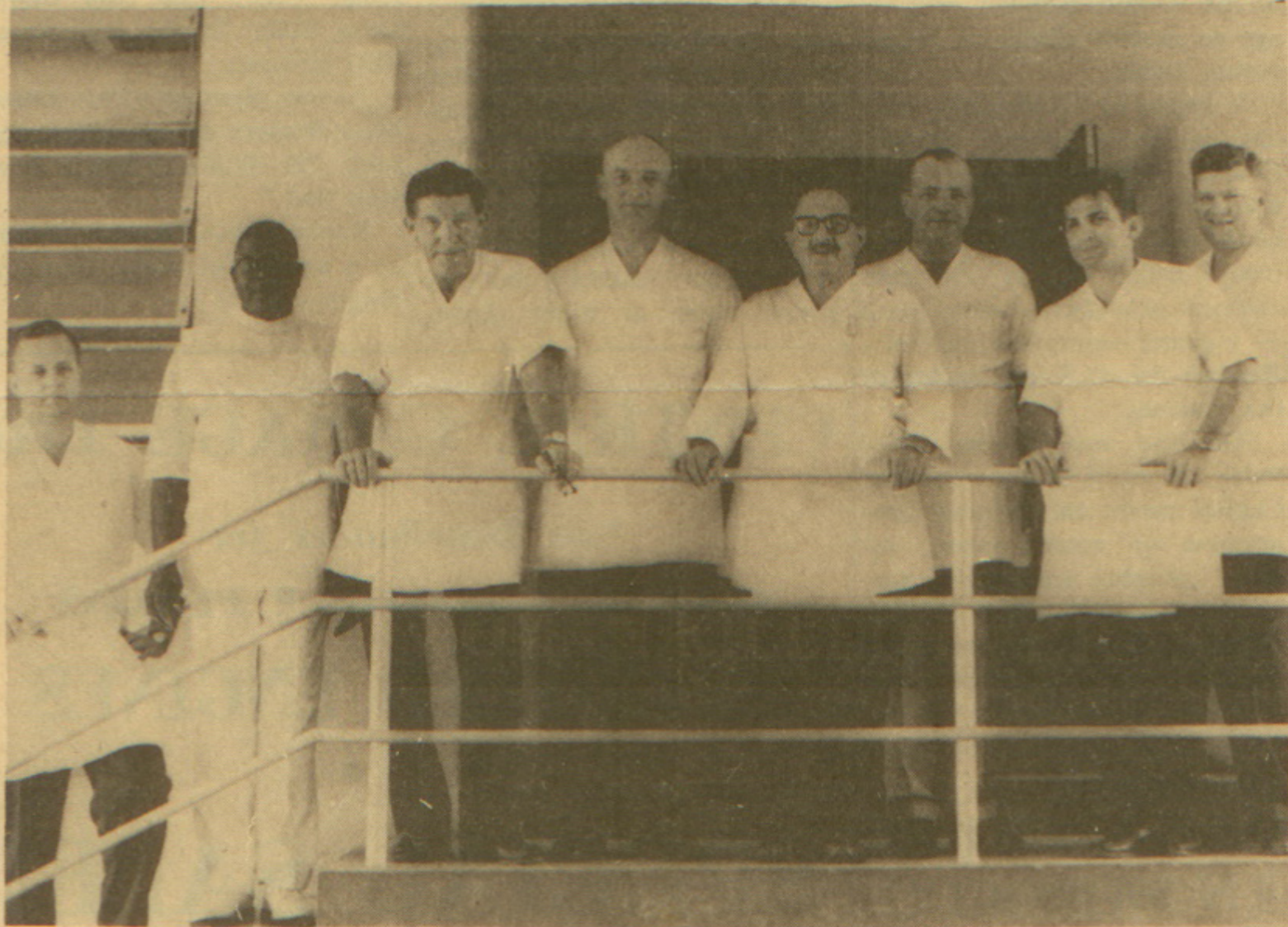
I can only hope he has not forgotten the love and kindness that was showered on him in the supreme effort that was made by strangers to save his life. It would be sadder still if he too has forgotten.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. That's the principal difference between a dog and a man. — MARK TWAIN.

Nothing more detestable does this earth produce than an ungrateful man. — AUSONIUS

U.S. Doctors At Crippled Children's Clinic



Five doctors and two Orthotics and Prosthetics specialists flew to Nassau from Miami last night for the Crippled Children's Clinic held at the Chest Wing of the Princess Margaret Hospital this morning. Left to right are: Dr. Walter Jones III, Mr. T. Darling, Dr. Charles R. Burbacher, Dr. William Jack, Dr. John Kilpatrick, Mr. Arthur Finnieston, Mr. Alan Finnieston and Dr. Rupert Schroeder. Mr. Darling is the physiotherapist at the Princess Margaret Hospital who has been associated with this work since its inception over ten years ago. An article on the clinic will be published in The Tribune tomorrow.

—Tribune Photo

Crippled children's clinic member is honoured by Queen

MR. ARTHUR FINNIESTON, a certified orthotists of Coral Gables, had the insignia of honorary member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Civil Division, pinned on him by His Excellency the Governor, Lord Thurlow, at an investiture at Government House yesterday morning.

The American, who has made braces for Bahamian children for the past 17 years, received his award in the Queen's New Years Honours list. At yesterday's presentation ceremony he was sponsored by Sir Etienne Dupuch, chairman of the Crippled Children's Committee and fellow American, Dr. Charles R. Burbacher, O.B.E., orthopedic surgeon, who has been twice recognized by the Queen for his work among the crippled children of the Bahamas.

The work of the Crippled Children's Committee was started in 1954 after Sir Etienne launched an appeal for crippled Whitney Mortimer. The fund raised to help 4-year-old Whitney was over subscribed by the public and it was decided that a committee should be formed to use the money to help other crippled children.

The committee was supported by Dr. Burbacher and Mr. Finnieston, who flew to Nassau annually to hold clinics for the children. The team of doctors was joined by Dr. John Kilpatrick and later by Dr. Walter Jones, III, who all donated their services at the clinics free of charge.

About ten years ago, they were joined by Mr. Finnieston's son, Alan, a certified orthotists and prosthetist. The clinics are now held twice annually.

HONOURED

The doctors and their wives and Mr. Finnieston's family flew to Nassau yesterday to be with him at the ceremony and at a luncheon given at the East Hill Club afterwards by Sir Etienne and Lady Dupuch in his honour.

Guests at the luncheon were Lord Thurlow and the American Consul General, the Hon. Moncrieff Spear and Mrs. Spear, and members of the Crippled Children's Committee. Toasts were proposed to the Queen by Lord Thurlow, the President of the U.S. by Mr. Spear, and to Mr. Finnieston by Sir Etienne.

Adriene Josephson, one of Mr. Finnieston's two daughters, and her husband Michael, flew in from Newport, Rhode Island, yesterday morning, and Ardis Heiman, his other daughter, arrived with her husband, Eugene, from Coral Gables. Completing the family circle were Mrs. Finnieston and their son, Alan, with his wife Kaaren of Coral Gables.

Saturday, October 30, 1971

MBE marks American's 17 years' clinic work here

AMONG THE 29 Bahamians honoured at yesterday's Government House investiture was American orthotist Arthur Finnieston. A member of the Crippled Children's Committee team of specialists, Mr. Finnieston was made an honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire, Civil Division.

Mr. Finnieston, an authority in the brace making profession, has flown from Miami to attend the twice-yearly clinics in Nassau for the past 17 years despite his heavy working commitments in Florida.

Working along with senior orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Charles R. Burbacher, OBE, Mr. Finnieston has constructed braces for numerous Bahamian children and was awarded the honorary MBE for "a unique contribution to health in the Bahamas."

The investiture was a happy occasion for the entire Finnieston family since Mr. Finnieston's wife and two grown-up children along with their families flew to Nassau to witness the presentation by the Governor, Lord Thurlow.

A number of doctors from the Princess Margaret Hospital who have worked with Mr. Finnieston over the years also attended the presentation ceremonies.

SECOND HONOUR

Mr. Finnieston is the second member of the Crippled Children's specialist team to be honoured by the Queen. In 1958, Dr. Burbacher received an MBE and was made an officer of the order (OBE) in 1964.

Painful story of ingratitude

By Etienne Dupuch

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