

DOMINICA ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS WITH PERSONS DISABILITIES, INC. (DAPD)
35th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

PRESS STATEMENT

2018 marks an important year for the Dominica Association of Persons with Disabilities. It was on October 26, 1983, that a few brave, forward thinking and courageous individuals decided to change the status quo and begin a disability movement where persons with disabilities would have “A Voice of Our Own”.

The person who took the lead role was the late Reginald Rolle, and in observance of our 35th Anniversary, we found it fitting, worthy and necessary to pay homage to the Founder of the Disability movement in Dominica”. A Commemorative brochure is being produced in his honour, which we have the pleasure to present to members of the media as we launch activities that carries our Anniversary theme: *“DAPD 35 and Still Alive, Remembering Reginald Rolle the Trail Blazer.*

REGINALD ROLLE, THE TRAIL BLAZER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN DOMINICA

When the “late” Reginald Rolle returned to Dominica from Barbados in the summer of 1983, with the herculean task of establishing a national cross-disability, self-help consumer movement, hardly would he have foreseen how this would have impacted the lives of so many, thirty-five years later.

This ambitious mission, was placed on his broad shoulders by disability advocates who had assembled for a regional conference dubbed “Caribbean Encounter”. The invitation was extended to him by the then Executive Director of the Caribbean Council for the Blind (CCB) Aubrey Walton Webson, now Antigua’s Ambassador to the United Nations and one of the most forceful blind advocates in the Caribbean region.

By the last quarter of the year, he had convinced sufficient persons that such a movement was necessary and important, and on Thursday October 26, 1983, a group of persons with and without disabilities gathered at the Workshop for the blind in Goodwill and agreed to the formation of the Dominica Association of Disabled People (DADP). Among them were, the Manager of the Workshop for the Blind, Mrs. Alberta Christian, Roman Catholic Priest, Rev. Fr. Eustace Thomas, VSO attached to the Youth Development Division, Tony Kerwin, and persons with disabilities, Sylvanie Prosper, Nathalie Giraudel, Pauletta Prosper, Augustine Languedoc Rosemund Christopher, Eraline Bastien and Joseph Gabriel. A Steering Committee was formed with Reginald Rolle at the helm.

As the weeks and months progressed, mechanism for a legally constituted organization was put in place, and one year later, the Steering Committee was dissolved and the first executive body elected with Reginald Rolle becoming its first duly elected President and Founder of the disability movement in Dominica.

While Reggie, as he was affectionately called, was firm in his conviction and passionate in his endeavours, he encountered much opposition and disdain by those who had found him to be “too aggressive, too outspoken, too bold and too forthright”, hence becoming a very controversial figure. He however remained firm, determined, strong-willed, and focused in his desire to see the creation of a Dominica where persons with disabilities would no longer be treated as second-class citizens but enjoy all the rights, opportunities and status as any other citizen.

For twenty years, he championed the cause of persons with disabilities nationally, regionally and internationally. His awareness raising and consistent advocacy enabled many persons with disabilities to become empowered, grow in confidence, acquire a greater level of self esteem, and change the perception, mentality, attitude and treatment of many whom we refer to as, “non-disabled” towards these individuals.

As we commemorate our 35th Anniversary, we pay tribute to this disability icon and Trail Blazer to whom we owe so much, for the strides, progress and advancement that we, as persons with disabilities have realized.

We know that you are rejoicing to know that: *Your mission and vision did not die when you left us to return to your maker on Saturday, June 14, 2003.*

Loik Charles successfully went through mainstream education and is now is a student at a university in the United States. The first one ever.

Some schools now make provisions for mobility impaired persons to access their physical environment though limited.

The Government of Dominica ratified the U.N Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Some Public buildings have constructed ramps for easier access to their facilities.

The Multi-purpose Development Centre will soon be completed with the construction of the auditorium.

REGGIE! “YOUR LEGACY LIVES ON”

A TRIBUTE IN LOVING MEMORY OF DAPD’S FOUNDER

DOMINICA ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, INC. (DAPD)

Programme in Observance of the 35th Anniversary

Theme: *DAPD 35 and Still Alive, Remembering Reginald Rolle, The Trail Blazer*

Timeframe: October-December 2018

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, October 3	–	Media Launch at 3:00 PM
Sunday, October 7	–	Thanksgiving Church Service – St. Gerard’s Chapel – 9:00 AM
Thursday, October 11	–	World Sight Day
Monday, October 15	–	White Cane Awareness Day – Four Corners and Corner of Independence & King George V Street
Wednesday, October 17	–	Board and Staff Night-Lime at Bolo’s Bar, Anse de Mai
Friday, October 26	–	35 th Anniversary, Reginald Rolle Day (A Tribute to DAPD’s Founder
	–	A Display outside Prevo Cinemall
	–	A Day of Giving to DAPD
Monday, November 5	–	Community Day of Service – Construction of Garage for Accessible Vehicle
	–	Radio Programmes
	–	School Visits
Sunday, November 11	–	An Outing to the village of Laudat to include a visit to the home of DAPD’s Founder, and a Fun Day at the Fresh Water Lake (General Membership and Partners)
Friday, November 30	–	12 th National Dollar Day
Saturday, December 1	–	Fund Raising Dinner in the Dark
Monday, December 3	–	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
	–	Appreciation and Special Recognition of 35 Long Standing Social and Partners and Members
	–	Cocktail Party
Sunday, December 9	–	Church Service – Truth & Grace Fellowship Church
Thursday, December 20	–	Christmas Party