First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Knolly Henderson

H.B.M

Administrator

Inducted in 1995

As Trinidad and Tobago entered its first Olympic Games as a newly independent nation, its new flag resplendent as its new status, Knolly Henderson was the man in charge of a team that would celebrate its participation in the best way – with medals and standout performances. Having the competence and experience of such an administrator was crucial for those 1964 Games and to set the tone for future Trinidad and Tobago teams.

Henderson earned his administrative stripes by taking part in officialdom from the ground up. In the 1940s he was a football linesman, then became a referee. Familiarizing himself with one sport was not sufficient for Henderson, and in the following decade he began umpiring in lawn tennis, rising quickly to become an executive in the Lawn Tennis Association by the mid-1950s. Henderson was providing administrative service for tennis at a national level before doing the same at regional level. He then progressed to the highest level available, the Davis Cup, a tournament in which Trinidad and Tobago first took part in 1954 during Henderson's tenure.



He had also become a fixture at the big local games, such as the Tesoro Games held every March. His tall figure, often wearing dark sunglasses, would be seen patrolling the running track or under a judge's tent. By 1960 he had joined the National Olympic Committee where he helped with the transition from Trinidad and Tobago athletes representing the British West Indies, as they had done at the 1959 Pan Am Games and the 1960 Olympics, to being clad in the red, white and black following Independence in 1962.

When the Trinidad and Tobago team went to the 1963 Pan Am Games in São Paulo, Brazil, Henderson travelled as an official, expanding his knowledge, which would prove invaluable one year later. Dr. Horace Gillette had served as President of the Trinidad & Tobago Olympic Committee (TTOC) for the two years from Independence up to 1964. When the post became vacant, Henderson put himself up for election and was installed as the fifth TTOC President.

His first call of duty was to accompany the team to Tokyo as the Chef de Mission. He maintained open relationships with the athletes under his remit, and if there was a special requirement that a competitor wanted, then Henderson was accommodating in that regard, understanding it was in the athlete's interest…such as the Japanese masseuse that Wendell Mottley sourced for his time in Japan, to help get him through all the 400M rounds (individual and relay). He also openly praised the athletes' professionalism, sounding off publicly about Edwin Roberts' stellar attitude and focus while he represented his nation.

During the remainder of his TTOC Presidency, Henderson liaised with the relevant entities to coordinate Olympic and Pan American Solidarity Programmes to aid with the progress of local administrators, coaches and sports doctors. He was a regular attendee of the numerous conferences and gatherings of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), contributing as the movement took great leaps forward with the inclusion of new sports, expansion of female competitors and increased marketing through extended television coverage. He was at the helm of the TTOC when Hasely Crawford brought home the country's first Olympic gold in 1976.

Henderson resigned as President in 1981. One year later he was awarded the Hummingbird Medal (Gold) for his services to sport. In 1984, the IOC presented him with the Olympic Order (Silver) bestowed upon individuals for their services in the cause of sport and for being faithful to and upholding the Olympic ideals. Then, in 1995, Knolly Henderson was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.