

Beverly Manley's 'Manley Memoirs'

Candid, funny, poignant and painfully honest, the 'Manley Memoirs' by Beverley Anderson- Manley, is done at a period in her life when truth she said is refreshingly liberating.

The most sought after publication to hit bookshelves everywhere in recent times, the book is reminiscent of a modern day Cinderella story as it chronicles her life from the hardships of her early childhood to being elevated to the highest platform in the nation and beyond. Families both Manley and Anderson were out in their numbers along with well wishers and friends, some of whom were mentioned in the pages.

The launch was held at the beginning of June at Jamaica House, on the very lawns where her children played, adjacent to the home where she once share with her charismatic and iconoclastic husband Michael Manley, once the most powerful man in the island. Guest speaker Dr. Glenda Simms heaped praise on Beverley for ignoring the naysayers and finding the courage to tell 'her-story'.

'Each of us has a responsibility to speak our truth loud and clear in spite of efforts to keep us quiet and long suffering. History is really his-story, her-story and our story that must be told. If human societies are to be truly educated we must understand the totality of human experience.' She noted that for centuries, girls and women have learnt to be cautious in what they do and what they write when they record their thoughts. Thankfully some have broken the barriers.

Courageous women, she added, have no time to pretend to be someone they are not. 'Beverley, through your words you have given the Jamaican women the courage to take charge of their lives.'

With a copy of the book in her hand, Beverley attired in cool comforting white said at first that she just wanted to share her thoughts and not read from the book since it had a formal outing at Calabash the week earlier, but under 'duress' she eventually gave voice to the words on the pages. 'It was not easy for me to write memoirs with so many people still alive but I felt it was an example to show Jamaica that it's ok to have different ideas as its part of a process of maturation. Yes like Glenda says, it does take courage to tell the truth but then a great transformation takes place. You think about it and people encourage you and then you say 'do I really want to say this'? I prepared myself to write but was not prepared for the process afterwards when people had read it.'

She then spoke about her childhood which was challenging but she was fortunate enough to have both parents. Going into the 247 page publication she read excerpts about her amazing friendship with Fidel Castro and about her mother's strength and integrity. Chat-Bout sanctions the Manley Memoirs as a 'must read'