



PRIME MINISTER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Tribute to Senator the Honourable Franklin Khan
June 18th, 1957 – April 17th, 2021

by

Prime Minister Dr the Hon Keith Rowley

Saturday May 8th, 2021

Aramalaya Presbyterian Church, Tunapuna
TRINIDAD

Members of the family of Frankie Khan, his colleagues, his friends, fellow citizens all, we gather to celebrate the life of a smiling gladiator, a giant with a caring heart.

There have been very few times when, in the course of my leadership of this party and country, I have had cause to regret the office I hold. Today's event is one such time, as it falls to me to say the necessary farewell to someone who has not only contributed significantly to this country's growth and development, but also to someone who was my dear friend, and with whom I have shared some of my brightest and darkest political moments.

Franklin Khan represented the best of what Trinidad and Tobago could produce. In him we found the rare combination of wisdom, humility, integrity, love for country and gratitude, all embodied in the one person who smiled through it all. And so, on behalf of a greatly indebted party and country, I extend sincerest thanks to his family; to his devoted wife Laura, his children Khara and Kheron, and his grandchildren Braeden, Amelia, and Liam whom he simply adored. Especially to his grandchildren, I say that while your ages might prevent you from grasping fully the enormity of

today's event, know that your grandfather was a pillar of this country's growth, and will forever serve as an inspiration to all of us who are called to serve at any level.

Your grandfather believed that in all of us, there exists the capacity for great courage, resilience, a willingness to love all people, and to extend to them their God-given rights to dignity and respect. And it's because he saw the best in all of us, even as we continue on that long journey toward a more perfect country, that we can exclaim "O Death where is thy victory! O Death where is thy sting!"

Frankie's political career spanned almost 26 years, having served variously as the Member of Parliament for Mayaro, a Minister of Government in the Ministries of Works and Transport, Rural Development and Local Government, and finally in Energy. He also served as Chairman of the People's National Movement on two occasions: from 2003 to 2005 under the leadership of my predecessor former Prime Minister Patrick Manning, and from 2011 to 2018 alongside me. Throughout it all, I was there with him. He showed how to handle defeat. He showed me how to appreciate victory through amazing self-belief and perseverance. He suffered and overcame the worst poison arrows shot from the evils of the political quiver but even then he was a teacher to the weaker ones.

Throughout Frankie's stewardship he lent his support for far-reaching changes in the party which many predicted would either never occur, or if they did, certainly not in our lifetime. Among these changes were the removal of the party tie in Parliament, and the introduction of the "one man one vote" system for internal party elections. His mettle was tested, but on every occasion he, and the institutions he served, emerged stronger and more resilient under his calming demeanor and guiding hand.

Even now, it is difficult to speak of Frankie in the past tense, but I will long cherish the relationship we shared. Through my relationship with Frankie, I have come to understand that friendship is one of the greatest gifts a human being can receive. It is a bond beyond common goals, common interests, or common histories. Friendship is being with the other in joy and sorrow, even when we cannot increase the joy or decrease the sorrow. It is a unity of souls that gives nobility and sincerity to love. Friendship makes all of life shine brightly. Even our scriptures remind us that blessed are those who lay down their lives for their friends.



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Frankie was always prepared to lay down his life, politically, economically, socially, and spiritually for us, those sons and daughters in whom he believed, and in whom he saw the promise of a better, brighter Trinidad and Tobago. He loved Mayaro and always spoke lovingly of the people who raised him there and in Sangre Grande.

Frankie's decision to resign his Cabinet position, when his star was shining brightest, was another defining moment in our journey together. That decision, like all others he would make, was founded on a bedrock of honesty and integrity in public life.

While others might have thought otherwise, as Political Leader and knowing the man, I had no reservation whatsoever in supporting Frankie in his tenure as Chairman of the Party in 2011, and in recalling him to the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago in 2015. In so doing, I relied heavily on his advice and trusted his judgement immensely as I admired his inner strength even as his outer strength was failing.

Frankie was a good, kind and gentle man, and he believed in us, even when we didn't believe in ourselves. He was certainly a gift to all of us, and we are all very lucky to have had him walking with us for a while and showing us the way. May God bless this gentle soul, who pulled us closer to the promise of a bigger, better, and brighter Trinidad and Tobago.

May his trademark smile remain indelibly imprinted in our memories as we thank God for lending him to us.

May his soul rest in perfect peace.