

CARIBBEAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS' HONOREE FOR 2013



Dr The Honourable D Orlando Smith, MBBS, FRCS, OBE

Dr Orlando Smith is Premier of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), and surgeon *par excellence*. He was born on August 28, 1944 in Road Town, Tortola and attended the BVI High School.

With his parents and teachers recognizing his diligence and passion for hard work, this philomath was sent for further studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona Campus where he graduated with an MBBS degree in 1969. Not contented with a basic medical degree, he continued postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom and graduated in 1974 with the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons [FRCS] (Edinburgh).

Having the forethought of returning to the BVI where he would be required to have an extensive medical experience, he soon acquired a Diploma in Public Health and a Masters of Science in Community Health in Developing Countries (MSc DC). He then returned in 1974 as the first surgeon of the BVI – a son of the soil.

In order to fully prepare himself for the function as the only consultant in the BVI, he went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados in 1975 where he gained further experience in surgery as the Senior Registrar to Mr Cyril Nelson and Registrar to Dr Rochelle. After 18 months, he returned to the Territory and accepted the position of Chief Medical Officer which included primary and secondary healthcare

and environmental health management. This was the leading medical position in the BVI.

He also served as the only surgeon at Peebles Hospital for 19 years until his retirement. His surgical experience and practice was that of a true general surgeon involving all specialties of surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology. He managed all his patients who had burr holes, most of whom are still present in the Territory. At that time, there were only three doctors on staff at the hospital: an anaesthetist, a general practitioner and Dr Smith. He managed all obstetrics and gynaecology cases including deliveries, lower segment Caesarean sections, total abdominal hysterectomies and all obstetric and gynaecological emergencies, in addition to his busy hospital and community medical practice needs. There was also a demand for private care in the community, resulting in the establishment of his private practice which is still in operation.

He was the first Chairman of the newly formed BVI Medical and Dental Council which was quite active in promoting continuing medical education (CME) activities and international conferences in conjunction with a hospital in Michigan, the United States of America. In 2000, Dr Smith was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his outstanding and dedicated service in the medical field to the BVI community. Through his work as the Territory's top doctor, Dr Smith earned the respect, admiration and trust of his medical colleagues both locally and internationally.

In 1999, he entered the political arena, forming the National Democratic Party (NDP). He became the first Leader of the Opposition and then on June 17, 2003 emerged as the Territory's fifth elected Chief Minister of the BVI. Dr Smith is a charismatic politician, a luminary, a humble doctor and a son of the soil. He was elected as the second Premier of the Territory in the recently concluded general elections in November 2011.

He was never the Minister of Health, but under his government the new hospital was started and will soon be completed. Under his government, the first dialysis unit and intensive care unit (ICU) were established at Peebles Hospital, the first heliport was established in the BVI with others to follow later in Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke.

Dr Smith is married with two children and is a devout Seventh Day Adventist. His busy schedule as the Premier does not prevent him from still practising medicine at his private practice.