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Remarks by  
Mr. Cleviston Haynes, Governor, Central Bank of Barbados  
at the  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Awards

Courtney Blackman Grande Salle  
Saturday, January 6, 2018  
at 6:00 p.m.

Members of the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment;

Ms. Sharon Johnson, Senior Cultural Policy Officer, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs;

Management and staff of the Central Bank of Barbados;

Members of the Collymore family;

Awardees;

Specially invited guests;

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good evening and welcome to the Courtney Blackman Grande Salle and to the 2017 Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Awards Ceremony. Today we celebrate a major milestone in the history of this competition: our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary – almost half of the lifespan of the Bank itself. This is a remarkable accomplishment, and I thank all those who contributed firstly to its inauguration, and secondly to its success. Permit me therefore to commend our fourth Governor, Mr. Winston Cox, who established the Endowment and the Awards, for his foresight, thoughtfulness and vision. I would wish to recognize also the members of the Endowment Committee, both past and present, our partners, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Central Bank employees, who have delivered yeoman service in fulfilling the Bank's mandate for this

competition, and nurturing it from its infancy. Finally, thanks to all the writers, without whose works, the competition would not exist.

The Bank established this competition with three objectives in mind:

- To honour Barbados' most celebrated poet, Frank Collymore;
- To bring prominence to Barbados' best writers, while rewarding them tangibly; and
- To fulfil the vision of our first Governor, Sir Courtney Blackman, who entreated us always to engage in projects that augmented the prosperity and quality of life of all Barbadians.

Twenty years later, we are satisfied that the competition has facilitated the enhancement of the body of indigenous literature. We have witnessed seasoned writers competing alongside newcomers and this augurs well for the sustainability of these awards. Aspiring writers have used this vehicle to practise their craft, to develop their skills, to make their work public and to realise their self-imposed responsibility of defining who we are as a people and as a nation.

I am therefore delighted to participate in this celebration and I pledge the Bank's commitment to the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment, its support for writing and writers through the sponsorship of scholarships and assistance to writers groups and writers' workshops, and, of course, these awards, as our finances allow.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my fervent wish that, as we augment our national literature through this competition, the Frank Collymore Literary Endowment Awards will contribute to the improvement of writing and unearth literature of the quality of the works produced by our own internationally acclaimed authors such as Austin "Tom" Clarke, Kamau Brathwaite and George Lamming.

The evolution of local literature is intrinsic to our national development and needs to be encouraged. While the Bank is playing its part in this regard, we need other champions to support our poets, playwrights and other writers, champions who can recognize talent and, through assistance in publishing, expose indigenous superior penmanship to the Barbadian society.

While many of our writers may be motivated simply by the joy of churning out good writing with interesting plots and themes, some of the graduates of this competition have gone further and have published their works. I firmly believe that this is important as we need to find avenues to make literature commercially viable for its exponents. One intriguing prospect is that as Barbados seeks to develop its film industry, opportunities will emerge for some of our writers to have their manuscripts converted into film scores. The synergy between these two art forms should be encouraged as a means of enabling our writers to profit from their talent.

If we can accomplish this, we would set creativity and imagination as basic national values. Let this be our immediate mission, so that whoever stands here in 20 years, can extol a significant body of national literature, and a cadre of renowned Barbadian writers as this competition's biggest accomplishment on the occasion of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A word to writers. If you did not win this year, I encourage you to persevere. To the winners, congratulations. I hope that these honours tonight will be some small recompense for what you have given to your often very lonely art, what you have offered from the deepest part of yourself, and I encourage you and all your peers in Barbados to persist. You have illuminated our lives through your understanding, your vision, your thoughts, and your pens. Thank you for this service and in the words of William Shakespeare, "Write till your ink be dry."

On behalf of the Board, management and staff of the Central Bank of Barbados, join me in congratulating the Endowment for another successful year and for assisting in the emergence of a new generation of writers over the past twenty years. Committee Chairman, Mr. Antonio 'Boo' Rudder, Mr. Andy Taitt, Dame Patricia Symmonds, Ms. Esther Phillips, Ms. Christine Matthews-Rocheford, Mrs. Ellice Collymore, Professor Mark McWatt, Ms. DeCarla Applewhaite, Ms. Dana Gilkes, Mrs. Ayesha Gibson-Gill, Ms. Francine Wickham-Jacobs, Professor Jane Bryce, and the Secretary, Ms. Lafleur Cockburn, we say thank you.

As Committee members you have borne your responsibility to the Bank as sponsor and to the development of the art form very proudly and resolutely, with an insistence on the achievement of high standards as the basis of granting of these awards.

Today, we sadly bid adieu to four Committee stalwarts. Mr. Rudder, Professor Bryce, Mrs Matthews-Rocheford, and Professor McWatt served on the Committee from inception and have each donated 20 years of service to the FCLE. They have determined that they should pass the baton to the next generation of judges. On behalf of former Governors and Boards, and on my own behalf, I extend warmest gratitude for your selfless dedication and commitment to the Endowment. You have bequeathed a rich legacy of discipline, support for writers and Barbadian literature, rigorous scrutiny and exemplary productivity to future writers, judges, the Bank and the lovers of literature. Join me in thanking them.

We are pleased that Dr. Nicola Hunte, Dr. Karen Lord and Dr. Yvonne Weekes, have accepted our invitation to join the Endowment Committee and bring fresh perspective to the development of the art form. May your experience be gratifying, enriching and rewarding. Welcome! To the new Committee Chair, Ms. Esther Philips, may your stewardship be successful, productive and fulfilling.

And to all assembled, thank you for your indulgence, enjoy the rest of the evening and I extend to you wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous 2018.