



Carrolle Perry Devonish
Executive Director of the Anguilla Community Foundation

Carrolle Perry Devonish is considered by many to be an unsung heroine of black philanthropy who for more than 40 years has tirelessly advocated for black communities and mentored dozens of people from diverse backgrounds in the field. A contemporary, mentor or counselor to most of the previous James E. Joseph awardees, Carrolle is well known throughout philanthropy as one of the “quiet elders” who rarely seeks recognition for herself but instead selflessly works behind the scenes to bolster the community and opportunity in the field.

Ms. Devonish is currently the Executive Director of the Anguilla Community Foundation (ACF), the first and only charitable foundation established in Anguilla, a small impoverished territory of Great Britain in the Caribbean. In addition to setting the Foundation’s vision, she is largely volunteering her time to establish all of its systems, recruit board members, and develop programming for the region.

Ms. Devonish began her work in the Caribbean after a distinguished career with the Philadelphia Foundation (TPF), first as assistant director in the 1980s and then as its CEO in the 1990s. During her tenure, known as “the Perry phase”, TPF was recognized nationally as being one of the most diverse and progressive community foundations in the country (National Center for Responsive Philanthropy) and continued its “empowerment grantmaking” strategy, which attempted to ensure that its grants not only supported direct services but promoted social justice particularly for minorities, women and other under-represented groups. Additionally, while under her leadership, TPF created an endowment fund with the historic Mother Bethel AME Church, one of the first community foundations to collaborate with a black church in this way. Ms. Devonish walked the talk of diversity ensuring that the entire community was represented at every level of the foundation’s internal operations as well.

Ms. Devonish’s leadership in the field of philanthropy does not stop with foundations. In the 1970s she was an executive with the United Negro College Fund, where she successfully cultivated resources to support black educational opportunity. She is a former ABFE and Council on Foundations board member, and was asked by James Joseph to chair the Atlanta Council on Foundation Annual Conference in 1987. She was also active in planning the first annual James Joseph Lecture and staff development programs in Mississippi. Furthermore, Ms. Devonish has served on the Regional Board and the Social Principles Fund of Wachovia Bank.

Lastly, Ms. Devonish has been a foundation trustee for many years, most currently with the Douty Foundation in Philadelphia. She is currently chair of the newly formed Association of Caribbean Foundations and is active in strengthening grassroots philanthropy across the Caribbean, building alliances among black, Latino and other communities in the region. As a complement to her work in the Caribbean, Ms. Devonish organizes philanthropy tours to South Africa to introduce Black Americans and others to opportunities to strengthen black communities there.

Carrolle Perry Devonish
2008 James Joseph Lecture
May 3, 2008

“A Philanthropic Safari”

I am very, very flattered to receive this honor. It comes at an important juncture in my time in philanthropy having served for 13 years with The Philadelphia Foundation, the last seven years as President and I as I take steps to leave the Anguilla Community Foundation in the coming months. I feel so privileged to stand before you this evening and on the shoulders of those who have gone before me to receive this tribute. I am especially grateful to Jackie Copeland Carson for her warm and wonderful introduction and for her support and friendship over many years. It is a blessing to be here.

Safari is the Swahili word for JOURNEY and I feel I have been on a philanthropic journey for many moons now. I think, too, because I have been traveling to South Africa for the past eight years, I feel this word describes my personal journey through the highways and byways of philanthropy. It is ironic as I begin to take steps to leave the formal part of my work with foundations that I am here this evening talking with you. For from the beginning, ABFE has been an important part of my work, an important part of my journey -- in this unbelievable community of giving and givers.

ABFE HAS BEEN MY SAFE HOUSE, my SAFE HOUSE. When I joined The Philadelphia Foundation in December 1983, I was told about ABFE and by January 1984, I was a card carrying member. Over the years it has given me a collection of wonderful experiences including our Mississippi retreats (remember when we did Outward Bound there?) and our awesome trip to West Africa. But the most amazing and extraordinary part of my ABFE experience has been the friends and colleagues I have gained -- those who have been with me through thick and thin. Jim Joseph has been our leading light. I was pleased to be part of the planning of the first James Joseph Lecture. I was especially delighted that he asked me to chair the Council on Foundations Annual Conference in Atlanta as he was leaving the Council. Our lives have intersected over the years, most recently in Philadelphia. Thanks to Linetta Gilbert of Ford, along with traveling buddy Etha Henry, we had the wonderful opportunity to travel to South Africa with Jim and Mary as our hosts. They gave us a great introduction to South Africa and I caught the bug. Since that trip I have personally organized two trips to South Africa with a third in the planning stages. I also want to recognize Emmett

Carson whose friendship I cherish. He has been a fellow traveler along these byways and I admire his rise to be a star in our field. And Handy Lindsey too. Both Emmett and Handy came to Anguilla to check on me and to make sure I was doing OK and being treated well. In addition, the collegial support of Lynn Walker (joke teller extraordinaire) and wonderful Jackie Burton, Pat Smith, my smart young lawyer as I always call her and Lynette Campbell. I am pleased to acknowledge my foundation friends from Anguilla who are here tonight, Rhona Richardson who guided the new Anguilla Community Foundation with sensitivity, skill and great commitment and Dr. Delroy Loudon who I hope will be working to take up the foundation challenge in Anguilla and Mrs. Louden. Thanks to all of you. You have all been fabulous guides and coaches. The ABFE circle is wide and encompassing ...there are many, many more folks that have made my time with foundations the most exciting of my working life. I feel embraced by ABFE to be here with you this evening.

I want to share with you my most recent experiences and some lessons learned in my foundation work during my time in Anguilla, a small island in the British West Indies.

When I was asked to help Anguilla start a community foundation, I jumped at the chance to take this great concept to Anguilla. I did a small study and talked with a number of key leaders about the community foundation concept. I feel strongly about the power of community foundations in working to build community. I am keen on the process of engaging people in a defined geographic area to become involved in the support of community issues through the community foundation prism. Community foundations can be a powerful force in working to improve community life. I felt it would work well in Anguilla. The lessons which I took with me to Anguilla from my work at The Philadelphia Foundation included an openness to learning the history of the island and the giving traditions, learning and understanding local issues and the willingness to start with where the community is -- These values helped provide a basis for a useful and important beginning in Anguilla. Although I was not terribly wrong, I don't think I thought deeply enough about island practices. By this I mean that the American model does not always fit like a perfect glove. It had to be massaged to fit within the context of the island. For example, there is no tax structure to encourage giving. There has been little talk of endowments and giving through the creation of individual and family funds. The NGOs operating in Anguilla are mainly volunteer efforts. There are very few staffed NGOs on the island, the majority are all volunteer. There is no requirement that you be registered as an NOG as in 5013c status here in the States.

In addition, as a standard of practice, the history of giving must always be understood and built upon. This is a real lesson from The Philadelphia

Foundation where African Americans were seen as recipients of giving and not necessarily the givers. That is a myth that is and continues to be.

First let me say that Anguillians have a history and tradition of giving. I think in many ways it is similar to traditions of giving in the African American community in the States. I was reminded when reading Jim Joseph's "Remaking America" where he talks of growing up in bayou country in Louisiana. "We were poor, but when we were hungry we shared with each other. When we were sick we cared for each other. We did not think of what we gave to others as philanthropy, because sharing was the act in which both the giver and the receiver benefited. We did not think of what we did for others as volunteering, because care was as much a moral imperative as an act of free will."

In Anguilla, this same tradition of giving is called JOLLIFICATION. My board members tell me of a time when the island was much smaller and when Anguillians lived a very simple life. In order to support each other, as money was in short supply, neighbors often came together to help one another. One example of this kind of giving is that if your neighbor needed to pour the foundation for a house or help to install a roof, the community came together to assist. The women came and brought their big pots for cooking, the children ran in and out running errands and playing. The men did the heavy lifting. This example of giving and sharing, JOLLIFICATION, remains a revered part of Anguillian history.

We now say that the Anguilla Community Foundation is an embodiment of JOLLIFICATION -- JOLLIFICATION IN THE 21st Century. When we started the community foundation this concept was part of our Declaration or Mission Statement which reads in part: "***...the history of Anguilla and its people embraces both a fierce spirit of pride, independence and self reliance and a deep concern for each other's welfare and well-being. Free people giving freely of themselves to help their fellow citizens and doing so in a spirit of joy Nothing better captures this remarkable dynamic than JOLLIFICATION, the unique term by which Anguillians describes the celebratory action of coming together to help neighbors. The formation of the Anguilla Community Foundation signals and confirms that the spirit of jollification has found yet another way to express itself...***"

Anguilla is a small island of 12,000 (and the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean). It is an overseas territory of England and is governed by English law. It has a governor from England and in just the past several years, a Deputy Governor who is an Anguillian. There is a seven member local elected House of

Assembly which includes the Chief Minister, the highest elected local political official.

The history of Anguilla includes “the Revolution,” which separated Anguilla from the governing body which included St. Kitts and Nevis. This is an illustrious part of Anguilla history because of the perceived indifference of St. Kitts, the capitol of the Federation; Anguilla wanted nothing to do with St. Kitts. It broke away from the Federation and has since that time preferred its overseas territory status with the United Kingdom. There is some talk about independence and recent discussions about variations of independent status. Anguilla has a scrappy history of independent thinking and action and until very recently, was quite insular. It is known to a small and loyal group of tourists, mostly American and it has remained a small piece of paradise in the Eastern Caribbean. One of its major strengths and the source of island pride is that the land is owned by Anguillians. But this issue has been impacted by high end development, the implications of which could be an entire lecture by itself.

Organized philanthropy is fairly new to Anguilla. There is the Social Security Board which has a grants programme and there is corporate giving on the island. Business support comes from the island’s four banks (of which the two indigenous banks are the largest and strongest) and is joined by hotels, communications companies, hotels, supermarkets and small businesses. Individuals make contributions to community efforts, including a lot of support going to churches. There is a very strong church community in Anguilla. There is not a lot of collaboration between those making grants (the community foundation is the only entity that uses this term) and giving local support. The business community funds a range of local programmes from the senior citizens home to services for children to tourist events like the annual jazz festival (which incidentally happens in mid-November. We urge you to join us). The giving and leadership of the service clubs and the church are important factors in giving on the island and on many other Caribbean islands. Service organizations include the Optimists, a group of young professionals with youth as a focus, the local chapter of the Soroptimists who have developed day care services and the Rotary and Lions Clubs who collectively support community projects with money and time. Some business and government entities also have employee groups that raise money to support community needs. As an example, the National Bank of Anguilla’s staff group regularly raises money to support community programmes. Although most communities have similar organizations supporting community causes, in Anguilla they provide a backdrop for strong philanthropic activity in the absence of a collection of philanthropic organizations such as foundations.

The Social Security Board does have a grants programme. A small percent of each employee's social security contribution goes into a Social Development Fund. These funds provide support to a myriad of community programmes including, thank goodness, the Anguilla Community Foundation. Periodic support from the Social Security Board has given the Foundation funds for administration and the Board gave the Foundation its first Endowment grant -- \$75,000 USD to seed the Endowment Fund. ACF in turn has consulted with the Board on ways to make their grants programme more effective. One suggestion is that all grantees should receive a letter outlining the purpose of the grant and the responsibility of the grantee to report back on the use of grant funds. This is not required from the organizations giving contributions to local groups. In the past we have received grants or contributions to the Foundation which have included just the check in an envelope or we have gone to pick up a check. So we have encouraged Social Security to increase its effort to communicate with the organizations getting their support to ensure accountability. So on tiny Anguilla we have two major organizations, in addition to business support, making grants. Are we both needed on such a small island? The director of Social Security has said that we do. I agree. Social Security has a pool of money dependent on social security contributions but the community foundation has the ability to grow over time and therefore, provide increasing support to the island and its NGOs.

As a tourist island, another source of funds has been tourist visitors and expats who are residents coming to make the island their home in the winter. Most come from the United States and many know the community foundations serving their home communities. Several have developed funds at the Foundation and have given generously in other ways to the community foundation. I was defined an expat although I must admit when people used the term I rarely thought of myself as an expat since I looked like the residents of the island. But the overall governmental definition of my status was that of a non-belonger which is the term they give those who come and stay but do not have permanent status. I am now a Belonger, after appearing before the Belonger Commission and I have the rights of citizenship, but I am not an Anguillian which is a factor in all deliberations in Anguilla. This is also a lesson learned. But I do feel grateful that I have been supported in the efforts to develop the community foundation in Anguilla.

We have made a place for the Foundation in the life of the island. I feel we can now look to play a more active role as a community convener around local issues. I see ACF as providing a strong collaborative role in the months and years to come. There are opportunities for partnerships with the Social Security Board and the local service organizations. I see this as the next developmental stage for the Foundation. Preliminary findings from the study on Caribbean Giving being

conducted by Etha Henry and funded by the Ford Foundation indicate that service clubs and corporate leaders would welcome a strong convening and partnership role with the community foundation,

There are six community foundations in the Caribbean. Those in the US Virgin Islands are the oldest and most developed. Foundations in St. Lucia, Anguilla and Tortilla are emerging. I have felt isolated from efforts in the US, except when friends and colleagues have come from the States and shared their wisdom and time with me and our foundation board. We would welcome and learn from your experiences stateside. Efforts have been made to create an Association of Caribbean Community Foundations with support from the Ford Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation and WINGS (Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaking Support) yet maintaining the association and generating international support has been a continuing challenge. There are ongoing efforts to generate a regional body on behalf of organized philanthropy. Etha's efforts which place the community foundations in a broader context of Caribbean giving should provide the data and platform for increased regional and global collaboration and partnerships. ABFE has had many interests and I would encourage you to look at the Caribbean region as a focus for some development work. Bring some of your skills to the region. We need your interest and support there. There are real challenges ahead and philanthropy can be a part of the dialogue and action as we move forward.

Most see the Caribbean through the lens of a region known for its compelling scenery, beautiful beaches, great music and lots of rum punch, all of which is true. But the Caribbean is facing real challenges as development and outside forces come to bear on cultural and economic issues. In Anguilla our resident historian puts it clearly. He says that in the past decisions on Anguilla were made when folks from the villages came together and made decisions affecting the island. The Revolution is a good example. Now he says, increasingly decisions will be made related to development and by business interests and not necessarily through the collective voice of the people.

There is great movement among the islands. Many of the smaller islands are restricting some of this movement in part to hold on to island specific mores and traditions. Anguilla now requires visas from residents of Trinidad, Jamaica, Dominica, Guyana and the Dominican Republic. Crime and the fear of changing cultural norms are part of the underlying reason for these restrictions, which does not always fit Bob Marley's One Love theme. A recent article in The Economist explored the sharply rising crime rates in the islands, especially on the larger islands. Even in little Anguilla, a place where 10 years ago folks rarely locked their doors or cars, things are changing. The main force driving higher rates of

crime and violence has been the impact of regional drug trafficking. It has impacted criminal behavior, increased property-related crimes and underpinned a steady increase in the availability of firearms, a phenomenon unheard of Anguilla just a few years ago. All of the islands feel the impact of increasing crime which has a direct impact on foreign investment, now such an important economic link in the islands. For many of the islands tied so closely to tourism as their most important economic resource, this has long range implications. Through the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, many of the island governments are seeking to unify the Caribbean economically to strengthen its potential in the global market place. The question is whether philanthropy can play a role in this effort.

Philanthropy should also be given recognition in the value that Caribbean communities put into giving back to their island communities. Through diaspora giving in the US and other communities with Caribbean nationals, the movement it is alive and well. Most Caribbean communities in the States, England and Canada have organizations which support causes back home. Dr. Jackie Copeland Carson has done extensive research on the diverse practices of philanthropy being introduced by today's African immigrants. Her scholarship and her hands on work in the Minnesota area provide important research on the growing role of philanthropy for new African citizens in the US. She promotes a notion that has implications for Caribbean communities in the US as well, as a more expansive view of Black philanthropy. "We promote a notion of an African diaspora in the United States composed of diverse ethnic groups. These diverse groups have different histories but may have mutual interests derived in part from their shared African ancestry and experience of racial discrimination or oppression in the Americas. This more expansive notion of identify can provide the conceptual foundation for a more inclusive black philanthropy that appreciates diasporan cultural diversity," writes Copeland-Carson.

This part of cultural philanthropy -- a focus and interest on issues at home and in US settlements is a continuing West Indian theme. Money from the States, Canada and England flow from organized groups into home countries for needed services on all of the islands of the Caribbean. But Caribbean citizens are also supporting issues and programmes in the places they have settled. They are strong Caribbean communities in New York, New Jersey and Atlanta to name a few which are having impacts on local areas in which they have settled. Caribbean Diaspora giving is also a component of the proposed strategy for the work being developed by Etha Henry. Because of the growing numbers of immigrants from Caribbean shores, this cultural philanthropy is one in which organizations like ABFE can assist to encourage and grow.

To quote Dr. Carson: “Recapturing the roots of these giving traditions through inclusion of the contemporary diversity of all people of African decent in America can help revitalize and strengthen black philanthropy for all.”

During my time with The Philadelphia Foundation our support of advocacy and organizing and our work to develop new donors in communities of colour and unrepresented communities were touchstones of my work at the Foundation. Although TPF had a history of funding in communities of colour, during my tenure we placed an emphasis on expanding new donors in communities of colour including organizational endowments in the Black community. I will not forget attending what seemed to be hundreds of trustee meetings at Mother Bethel AME Church, AME’s Mother Church, to encourage their endowment fund development (200 years after their founding by Richard Allen) and the work with sororities and fraternities to encourage their use of foundation services for their giving. On the day that I left the Foundation, a member of one of the sororities who had come into the Foundation to work with our committees and become a donor, thanked me for helping her to see her role as a philanthropist in our community. This from an individual who worked to help raise millions in scholarship funds for Black students. These were the issues personally important to me at TPF: Embracing a larger and more diverse community of potential donors, encouraging the involvement of people of colour and underrepresented groups in every aspect of the Foundation’s work, working closely with the community were all important elements in our work and mission. Bringing more people of colour to our many tables at the Foundation was a part of my continuing focus at TPF and part of the reason I felt I was there at that particular time in the life of the Foundation.

It was always my goal to encourage openness at the Foundation and to reflect diversity as we served grantees, donors and the wider community. It was my effort to make less mysterious the workings behind frosted doors -- my symbol of foundations, as places of mystery -- to make the Foundation more accessible in the communities we served. I felt it important that our staff manage our grant making and our fund development and our community leadership closer to the community. This enabled us to understand issues at the neighborhood level. It also helped identify community leaders who could help us make more informed grants and leadership decisions and to offer our donor services to a wider group of potential donors. I wanted our sense of caring to be reflected as soon as you opened the door -- in our response to visitors to the Foundation, in our artwork, and in the make-up of our committees and in our use of vendors -- every aspect of our work. We reached out in a very deliberate way to the Black community and other communities of colour as part of our effort to better serve.

As I leave the field, well, not exactly leave as I will continue to serve on the board of Philadelphia's Douty Foundation, I hope that ABFE will look at ways to contribute to building the link between Caribbean giving and global philanthropy. Our challenges for the future lie in our ability to listen closely to our communities and to take on some leadership tasks quietly. The communities we serve can be complicated but they are ever deserving of our focus and commitment. I do feel our special interests are in good hands. I have been very impressed with the work of ABFE and others. Last year when I attended a Giving Circles conference sponsored by Darryl Lester of Hindsight, I was so impressed with participants: young and older -- new donors using their resources to have an impact on their communities. The stellar leadership of Emmett Carson, Jackie Copeland Carson, Handy Lindsey, Linetta Gilbert and many others will continue the important focus and work of ABFE and for that I am thankful.

A few weeks ago I watched a PBS special on Zora Neale Huston entitled Jump to the Sun. This is what I want to say to you:

JUMP TO THE SUN, ABFE AND CONTINUE TO TAKE OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COMMUNITIES WITH YOU.

Thank you.