

Eulogy - Orville Sholto Fox
August 6, 1954 – October 6, 2010

The Fox family, the DeWeever family, friends, and other well-wishers – my name is Victor Moses and I was requested to eulogise my best friend and confidant, Orville Sholto Fox. My first reaction was one of panic as I was not sure that I would be able to marshal my emotions to construct and deliver a fitting tribute. I recovered enough to accept the request since I felt confident that I can deliver a fairly accurate biographical sketch of someone that I have known for approximately 50 years. It is my privilege, so bear with me.

Sholto, my dearest friend, made his transition on the 6th of October, 2010. I received the news about 1030 the same day that he was admitted to hospital the night before and that he was critical. I was devastated as I had only sent an e-mail to him at 0923, not knowing that he was engaged in the biggest challenge of his life. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever expect that Sholto's life would so unravel.

Some 3-4 weeks ago, Sholto and I had a long conversation during which we reflected on the passing of several Buxtonians. I concluded that aspect of the conversation by saying "Shady, if you know 100 persons from our time, I gauge that 20 of them will die between ages 50 and 60; another 60 will die between 60 and 70". I never considered that Sholto may not be around to validate that statistic or that he would fall in the first category.

Shady was his false (nick) name and he readily responded when it was assigned to him. All Buxtonians have false names and it was no different with our core group – Sholto, Michael Younge, my twin brother Edwin, my other brother Handel, Jerome Williams, Donald Culley, and me. You will have to wait for another occasion for the other false names and the story behind them. Today is Sholto's day! We, the group, were "tight, tight". With marriage and geographical dispersion we are not so "tight, tight" but we will always be "tight".

Sholto and his brothers were born in St. Phillip, Barbados to Siegfred and Margaret Fox. His mother was a Bajan although I learnt early enough that she was actually born in Ghana. His dad contracted his skills as a Pan Boiler in Barbados and is from true Buxton stock – a descendant of one of the emancipated men who contributed to the purchase of Buxton. He obviously was doing more than sweetening sugar in Barbados. They came to Buxton in 1958; Sholto was born on August 6, 1954. I started frequenting Sholto's yard 2-3 years after his arrival and do not recall him having a Bajan accent. His mother retained hers to her last breath

Sholto's parents opened their house to us and allowed our child group to develop. We had an excellent template from Sholto's older brothers – Stanny and Emerson (Allan) – who were in a group with George Culley, Barry Robinson, Bruce Elcock, Stanley Wilkinson and a few others. That group was dynamic, diligent at school, excellent role models, and well respected. Mothers naively trusted their daughters to go to the parties that they held. I later found out that our junior group made more of a mark in Buxton.

My yard was the focal point and we each honed our skills at cricket, table tennis, high jumping in a yard space that looked large at the time. You name it and we played it. We had 3 pitches in that yard – Bourda, Old Trafford and Leeds – each being about 12 -14 yards and a grounds man among us who knew to get the game going in short time after a rainfall. His false name is Sam, after the legendary Sam Mohammed who took care of Bourda. We broke some windows and infuriated my dad but we never stopped playing. We mastered the art of quickly retrieving the ball from the nearby trench or squeezing through a missing paling stave to save a run. We

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tried with Sholto but couldn't get him to straighten his arm when bowling. Well, he had other skills as you'll learn, he was a founder member of our group, and he was always ready for the call. That was what mattered.

Sholto first attended the Anglican primary school in Buxton and was in its Cubs. My brothers and I were Methodists and were in Methodists Cubs and Scouts. I remember trying to get Sholto to switch to the Methodist troop for several reasons: (i) the Anglican Cub troop was small; (ii) the Methodist troop was larger, had drums and we marched better; (iii) and more important, it would allow us to spend more time together. I later surmised that he never made the switch since he was by then an altar boy in the Anglican Church.

He did however switch to Bedford Methodist School to prepare for Common Entrance along with classmates Denise Agard and Myrna Boxhill under the guidance of C.V. Simon. It was a joyous day when he passed the 1965 Common Entrance for QC, winning the Buxton scholarship in the process. He succeeded in following the footsteps of his 2 brothers who also attended QC.

It was during our early high school years that the relationships in the group went into high gear. We travelled on the train, had shiny bicycles, started to find girls fascinating, and began going to day parties. With all that though, we never lost track of the fact that our school work was paramount. In fact, we saw academics as a gateway to getting respect. We designated our bridge as "Parliament" where you were expected to provide a report on your relationship and progress with the girls, explain why you "baked pone" (did not dance) at a party, and to develop a thick skin to tantalize (teasing).

I'd like to share a funny discourse that survives to this day. At age 10-11, Sholto, my twin brother and I had a shoe size that was the same or more than our age. We each wore 11s; Sholto was ½ size larger on account of his big toe that extended way beyond his other toes. That big toe used to render a Clark's useless. We were very conscious of our shoe size and were very careful not to enter Bata if there was a crowd inside the store. Upon getting into Bata, the salesman would ask – "what size?" We would say "8". Inevitably the salesman would say "Nah man, that look like 11s to me", thus providing us with the opportunity to say "OKAY, let me try that". Well, it is so different today; it is now good strategy for a man to publicize his shoe size.

Like his 2 brothers, Sholto dominated track and field at QC. He was the Junior Champion and to this day his performances are still associated with Moulder "G" house. I was particularly saddened by the passing of his dad in 1969 and distinctly remember my mother allowing us to spend longer hours at his house in the days leading up to the funeral. His mother migrated to the USA, requiring him and his sister Angela to move to Georgetown to continue with their education. That relocation took something away from the group but Sholto made sure that he visited Buxton on a regular basis.

I was fortunate to join Sholto at QC and to be his 5th form class mate and to do A-levels together. We studied and spent lots of time together, and were the 2 Senior Prefects for 1972-73. We left school in 1973 and our career took a similar path with him teaching the sciences at Central and me teaching Math at Cummings Lodge. As you know, teaching provides lots of

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after school and weekend time and we exploited this to the fullest. Sholto also had a stint at the Ministry of Finance.

The group experienced its first major trauma when Mickey Chanderbhan died in 1973 in an auto collision. Chandi, Gareth Edward, and Robert Sam had joined the group long before then. Chandi's death slowed us down for quite some time.

Sholto and Donald migrated in 1974 to the New York and Montreal, respectively. I made one of the best decisions of my life and chose to study in Canada. This provided me with the opportunity to be close to both of them. So naturally, at the end of my first semester, Donald and I hopped on a Greyhound bus and travelled from Montreal to spend time with Sholto. New York City, here we come! We spent about 5 days "catching up", partying, and visiting friends. We also took in some "peep" shows and these allowed us to confirm that we had 20-20 vision in both eyes.

I will not labour you with the details of those university years but suffice it to say that we'll each be angry if our kids were to do some of the stuff that we did. Sholto graduated from the Pre-med program at Hunter's College in 1978. He then worked for 25+ years for JP Morgan Chase.

During my visits to New York, I witnessed the tenderness between he and his mother; his love for her was absolute. Sholto loved cooking and baking, and Angela says he cooks as well as their Mom. Sholto was the quintessential big brother to Angela. Somewhere around age 15, with the 2 of us alone on his bridge, I made the point that it was a bad idea to hustle a good friend's sister. Without skipping a beat, he agreed with me. That set the moral tone for the group. Angela told me that none of his friends were allowed to speak to her; some did not even know he had a sister.

Sholto was particularly thrilled with the birth of his son, Sholto Jnr, in May 1991. I knew all along that he had a strong paternal instinct and that his son would provide the opportunity to showcase that aspect of his personality. I hope to be in a position one day to elaborate to Sholto Jnr the relationship and experiences I had with his father.

Sholto maintained contact with his boyhood friends but had skilfully widened his orbit with other alumni who preceded him at QC – Gordon Williams, Lance Chase, Morty London, Larry Boxhill, Alfred Granger, Renny Caleb to name a few. One could not talk about Sholto without mentioning that he relished a good "Lime"; never one to seek the limelight but you'd notice him. It is a tribute to Sholto's personality that he managed to make us feel that we each had his attention and loyalty. As I perused Sholto's facebook friends list, I was struck by how many distinct sets of friends he had.

I do not wish to speak today on anyone else's behalf. I speak for myself as I cannot possibly know what others felt or what each of you saw in our friend. I only know that Sholto was a true friend to me and that I will miss him dearly. We experienced so much together all leading to being closer friends.

There are only a handful of people who come into your world, and leave a lasting impact. I vouch, Sholto falls into that category. For me, the litmus test to our relationship was when I

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spent the first 8 years of my married life in Barbados. During that time we only spoke 2 or 3 times per year and only saw each other when I came to the USA on business or educational courses. But those times were special and it was like continuing where we left off. Put differently, we grew separately without growing apart. With true friendship, lapses are immaterial.

Even in death Sholto has taught me about life. His final lesson was to show the people you love that you love them now, because life is short. He graced my life more than he will ever know. Although what I've lost is tremendous, what he gave me is immeasurable.

The number and quality of the sentiments expressed over the last few days are testimony to the warmest, kindest, most generous human being that any of us have had the pleasure and privilege to know

I dedicate the words of a poem, "To Those I love", by Isla Paschal Richardson to all Sholto's buddies:

*Grieve not,
Nor speak of me with tears
But laugh and talk of me
As if I were beside you.*

To his surviving companion (June), son (Sholto Jnr.), brothers (Allan and Stanny), and sister (Angela) – I could only say "I feel your pain". The pain will subside but our memories of him are already etched. I leave you the words of a poem from an unknown Author:

TO THOSE I LOVE AND THOSE WHO LOVE ME – Unknown Author

*When I am gone, release me, let me go,
I have so many things to say and do.
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears,
be happy that we had these years.*

*I give you my love.
You can only guess
How much you gave me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you have shown,
But now it's time I travel on alone.*

*So grieve a while, if grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part
So bless the memories within your heart.*

Sholto, we know this is not a real goodbye, as you will be watching over all of us and continue to live in our hearts – FOREVER.

My wife and I wish to extend deepest condolences to the Fox and DeWeever family.