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Editorial

## **Invincible motherhood**

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The term "Invincible Womanhood" in The Bahamas has become associated with the Women's Suffrage Movement and more specifically is remembered as part of the famous speech by the late Dame Doris Johnson to members of the House of Assembly in 1959. The description of motherhood in this manner is only appropriate insofar as it speaks to the strength, fortitude and courage of mothers across the globe.

A celebration of motherhood, Mother's Day, which was recently celebrated, is a most celebrated and highly anticipated day on the annual calendar in so many countries. It is a time when many reflect on, honor and appreciate the love, sacrifice and benevolence of the mothers and mother figures. In the days leading up to Mother's Day, children are guided to make special little gifts for their mothers, families attend church together and fathers often purchase flowers and special items for the mothers in their lives.

The origin of Mother's Day

The origin of Mother's Day celebration in The Bahamas does not seem to be very well documented; however one can assume that the actual historical genesis of this celebration is closely connected to and derived from the United States of America.

History records that in 1907, Anna Jarvis, a member of a Methodist congregation in West Virginia, gave away white carnations in church to commemorate her mother's life who had passed on. In 1908, she lobbied for the day to be recognized as a day to honor one's mother.

President Woodrow Wilson would later sign Mother's Day into law in 1914.

The objective of early proponents

Political and social history connects the history of Mother's Day to Julia Ward Howe, who wrote a poem titled "A Mother's Day Proclamation." Howe had originally called for a "Mother's Day of Peace" challenging women to resist the political will of war and demand peace. Howe and Anna Jarvis' mother were considered to be enlightened and progressive minded women who agitated for social change in the best interest of women, children and those who were less fortunate.

The American history of this annual event tells a story of women, who understood the vital role that women play in building society, nurturing and catering to the needs of others.

### Motherhood in today's Bahamas

Today, our society is filled with so many social ills, the end product resulting in a crime problem that seeks to threaten our peaceful existence, our way of life and our economic prosperity.

Against this backdrop, the mothers and women of today must rise up to the challenges that our Bahamaland faces. The oft referenced urgency of now beckons invincible motherhood.

Equipped with the traits and characteristics that engender living life in peaceful harmony, mothers must confront with a view to curing the decadence which ails us. As we take a look at our society, the social degradation of communities fueled by a loss of and divergence from our social, spiritual and moral values that have guided us in times past are apparent. The breakdown in the family structure continues to plague us as many children are left to raise themselves, being taught and mentored by all forms of media ranging from television and radio to the Internet. Our children – the future of our country – are bombarded with perils that oppose our core value systems.

### Unplanned motherhood

The statistics show a disturbing number of young women continue to give birth to children out of wedlock, oftentimes being wooed by older men in certain instances. Sadly, many of these young ladies are left to fend for themselves after being abandoned by the father of the child and rejected by close family members. It is unfortunate that in some of these cases, the grandmothers-to-be may unconsciously express their disappointment through disengagement of any form of relationship with their errant children. The end result is usually the case of children raising children.

The challenges that females thrust into unplanned motherhood face in furthering their education to improve their standard of living and quality of life are enormous. Indeed significant determination and perseverance are key attributes of mothers who have succeeded under such circumstances. Nevertheless, a continuous pattern of this nature is bound to increase the level of social degradation, poverty and an uneducated class who may in one form or the other become a burden to society.

### The mothers in the village

The old African adage that "it takes a village to raise a child" must be invoked in the hearts and minds of women everywhere. Women of every class and strata must band together to agitate for social reforms, particularly in our inner cities that will raise awareness and lead to the implementation of parenting classes, counseling centers and community associations that will focus on the continued education and development of women and children.

All and sundry must answer a clarion call to address the social ills

All and sundry must answer a clarion call to address the social ills that plague our nation to our peril and detriment. Civic and religious organizations must become more active in this social war that we have been weaved into. The women's and youth ministries in churches must do more to reach out to the communities in which they find themselves to bring about physical, emotional and mental healing to many of the hurt mothers in our communities. More importantly, women must seize this opportunity to unite knowing that there is strength in numbers to bring about the desired social and economic change that will empower women to enhance our communities and ultimately our nation.

The lack of mentorship and proper succession planning continue to create a vacuum in our society. The Bible speaks of the older women being present to provide guidance and wisdom to the younger generation. It is evident from the scriptures that the latter is dependent upon the former to navigate successfully. Mentorship is essential from the home perspective to the workplace, public life and places of worship for at some point in history changing of guards must occur.

### Motherhood and Integrity

It is imperative that we witness the re-emergence of integrity among women in today's society; our Bahamas calls for women that are worthy of respect to be emulated by the upcoming generation of females. Integrity remains at the core of nation building. Our children must be able to see and identify living examples of honorable people in our homes, churches and workplace. Women and mothers must display honor and behavior contrary to what is being paraded before their eyes through the media or peer pressure.

A true mother's love must be intolerant of any form of wickedness, evil or injustice even if the perpetrator is her child. We must no longer condone dishonesty and immoral behavior by our children. It is fitting that invincible motherhood raises her head and mothers realize that we live not unto ourselves, but we are the custodians and guardians of the path to success of someone else's future. Our children are crying for help. We must therefore rise up to the task, the responsibility is ours and the moment is now. Happy Belated Mother's Day!

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