



MONTSERRAT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Meeting No. 6 of the 18th Parliament
Tuesday, 15th April 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room, Montserrat Cultural Centre, Little Bay

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. Prayers
2. Welcome Remarks & Tribute by The Honourable Speaker
3. Tribute by The Honourable Premier
4. Tribute by The Honourable Deputy Premier
5. Tribute by The Honourable Leader of The Opposition
6. Tributes by Other Members of The Legislative Assembly
7. Adjournment

MONTSERRAT
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING

Minutes No. 6 of the 18th Parliament
Held on Tuesday, 15th April, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room, Montserrat Cultural Centre, Little Bay

PRESENT:

Honourable Marjorie Smith	Speaker
Honourable Reuben Meade	Premier/Minister of Finance & Economic Management
Honourable Veronica Dorsette-Hector	Deputy Premier & Minister of Buildings, Utilities, Infrastructure, Labour, Transportation, Energy, & Ecclesiastic Affairs
Honourable Ingrid Buffonge	Minister for Education, Health, & Social Services
Honourable John Osborne	Minister for Agriculture, Land, Housing, Environment, Youth Affairs & Sports
Honourable Crenston Buffonge	Parliamentary Secretary
Honourable Paul Lewis	Leader of the Opposition
Honourable Donaldson Romeo	Opposition Member of Parliament
Honourable Nyota Mulcare	Opposition Member of Parliament
Honourable Sheree Jemmotte-Rodney	Attorney General
Honourable Kenya Lee	Financial Secretary (Ag)

ABSENT:

Honourable Dwayne Hixon	Parliamentary Secretary
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1. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Honourable Madame Speaker.

2. WELCOME REMARKS AND TRIBUTE BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER

Madam Speaker said:

Good morning and welcome to everyone. Just over one week ago, we were in this very room bidding farewell to someone who was leaving, but that we were aware of. Today, we are here because one has left without warning, and so, we have come to do not only what is expected, but what is noble, and that is to recognise the life and the service of the late former Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly, Ms. Teresina Bodkin. Thank you, Honourable Members, for agreeing to do this. She has passed away suddenly, leaving behind many aching hearts.

Miss Bodkin was an educator and chief statistician in the Montserrat public service for many years. Her contribution to the Montserrat community was not only reflected during the years that she taught or while she was a public servant, or even in her cultural exploits. I hear some place that she was a drummer, but her commitment to service was also displayed at the time she courageously took charge of this Honourable House. She was the first female Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly and served during the period 6th April 2010 to 8th October 2014 and again from 17th December 2019 to 22nd December 2020.

This is a role that I have come to realise could be quite demanding. I was able to ascertain from words and phrases not directly spoken that, through it all, she was keen to see the advancement of Parliament, that she understood and purposefully undertook what she was required to do as a Speaker. But equally important, she was a family member, colleague, teacher, friend, mentor, confidant, and so much more. To each of us, she was at least one of those things, and perhaps all of those things to some. Although I knew about her as a teacher, I was never taught by her in a classroom setting. I was, however, fortunate to have worked with her in the Development Unit between the years 2001 to 2005. Whenever we met away from work, we would engage

in polite pleasantries, but that was pretty much the extent of our interactions. In spite of that, I found beneath her quiet demeanour an individual who possessed solid morals. It is no wonder that some adjectives associated with her general nature suggest intelligent, kind, friendly, pleasant, extremely supportive, and forthright.

In the days leading up to my own election as Speaker of this Honourable House, my excitement was mixed with obvious apprehension. The promise I had made to myself to seek guidance for the role from Miss Bodkin continued to be hindered, but with only one day to go before the big event, it was impossible to persist with the postponement. So, I showed up at her office and indicated my reason for being there. With her usual cheerful smile, she said, Ms. Marjorie, if you didn't come, I was going to call you. I felt an instant calm, and I wondered, where did the apprehension go? Her expressed willingness demonstrated her desire to be of continued service to Montserrat and its people. Our interactions became more regular since then, and I will be eternally grateful to have benefited from the knowledge, advice, and encouragement she freely extended to me.

Miss Bodkin went to great lengths in helping me to prepare for my first sitting of the Assembly in January. I felt like a student once again, having to undertake and report on exercises, studying the notes she provided, and discussing the Standing Orders that govern this Honourable House. We must therefore agree that she will continue to indirectly serve this Parliament, since what she has imparted to me will be used in the rendering of efficient and ethical service, as long as I occupy this chair. Death is inevitable. It is a road we are all destined to travel, and it favours no one over the other, but the passing of Miss Bodkin is something I never expected.

I include in this tribute the sentiments of the Rt. Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP of the British Parliament, and it says, *“On behalf of colleagues of the House of Commons and the wider UK Parliament community, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to all those who knew and loved Teresina, her family, friends and colleagues from across the Legislative Assembly.”* To her family, close friends and acquaintances, on behalf of the entire Montserrat Legislative Assembly, as well as the staff of the Legislature Department, please accept heartfelt condolences as you try to manoeuvre this incredibly difficult

period. My thoughts are with you, and I pray that you find comfort and strength in the love and memories you shared with Miss Bodkin. May God's righteous right hand continue to hold you up.

3. TRIBUTE BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier said:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, when I look around at the current legislators, I realise that my good friend and colleague, Teresina, or Terry as we more affectionately know her, I'm the only one who can speak about a longer past with her. We both went to a little school in Plymouth called Wesley School. We started out there as five-year-olds; we went through Wesley School; we went on to the secondary school as colleagues and friends; we went on to the Cave Hill campus together, but however, I moved from Cave Hill to Mona. But coming back to Montserrat, we then ended up working together, herself in the statistics department and myself in the Development Unit, before I left again to go back to Barbados. Through it all, Terry has been a wonderful friend and colleague to me over all these years.

Life as we know it is a journey, and I like to look at it as a journey. Too many of us spend our time dying rather than living, and I think Terry spent her time living and focusing on living. Her death, though sudden, and it caught me very much off guard because I was in Antigua at the time, transitioning back to Montserrat, when I got a note indicating that Terry was not doing well, and before I was able to board the flight, I heard that she had died. I don't believe in this passing thing. You die, or you don't die. Terry was a member of our community called Montserrat. She was a member of the Methodist Church. She was a member of her community. Little known, but an excellent drummer, and she believed in her African rhythms and the drumming, which she did many persons were surprised when they realised that she had that competence as well. Terry will be missed by all of us.

It's sad when our friends leave us and leave some of us in the departure lounge waiting for our time to be called. We will cherish her

memories. She was indeed the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, after a very long stint by Sir Howard and Mr. Meade before her but she took on the job through very challenging times, including some challenging legislators whom she had to indicate that the rules of the House are the rules of the House, and she stood firmly by her belief that she will govern without fear or favour, and to be in a position to adjudicate fairly without taking sides. And for this, we appreciate the service which she provided. Unlike you, Madam Speaker, or like you, Madam Speaker, she also had a mentor in Sir Howard, who continued in the post for about six months before Terry took up the post as Speaker, but once she grabbed that role, she did it very excellently. And I don't use excellently very easily, but I thought she indeed performed her function as Speaker of this Honourable House in an excellent manner. We will miss her.

To her very dearest friends, and I will not name any of them, but to her very dearest friends, I wish you all the very best as we all grieve her passing. We all grieve her loss, but let us remember the journey which she travelled and the memories of that journey and the milestones which she accomplished over that journey and let that be the lasting memory we have of her. May God continue to bless her soul, and may God continue to bless all of us as we have this special sitting to celebrate the loss of our Speaker. In closing, she will be the third Speaker to have died. We had Honourable Meade first, then Honourable Fergus, now our first female has gone to join them and may her soul rest in eternal peace. May it please you, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

4. TRIBUTE BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY PREMIER

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Minister for Buildings et al said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it takes a village to raise a child. She was one of the persons who raised me. Our lives intertwined when I entered the Montserrat Secondary School. My yellow geography for the Caribbean is in front of me on my desk. She never left me when I left school because my eyes were ever toward

heaven, and I think of her whenever I did so, trying to determine whether these were cirrostratus clouds, cumulus clouds, which she taught us. I always identify them. I would see her, Madam Speaker, when I look at the hillsides, freshly cut, revealing the different strata, also the different strata of life.

She was never a loud teacher, nor a boisterous teacher. She encouraged, supported, and fanned the flame for my love for God and creation through our lessons, gentle, firm. She taught and gave instructions with clarity, every word carefully enunciated. Her eyes always encouraging us to soar higher. Madam Speaker, I did not even think of our volcano erupting, but when it did, I knew the parts of the volcano, the magma chamber, was nothing new to me because of Miss Bodkin's classes. Her smile, her unique laugh, Madam Speaker, and her eyes followed me, wanting the best for me when I entered the political arena. The platform I hated, many would not know, but still, the teacher she guided, she encouraged, she kindly corrected on speed and volume, and she applauded when she thought I did very well. Those same minced but dignified steps followed me into this Parliament, a place I heard of but, to be honest, I did not dream of as a child.

With dignity and pride, I watch her preside, Madam Speaker, with excellence, with control, never losing sight that this House was an Honourable House. Madam Speaker, our lives intertwine. The late Teresina Bodkin, I pay tribute to her for her contribution. And I will never forget that, not only as a child, as I've said, but now as a woman parliamentarian. When things got rough in the political journey, her keen eyes and heart for people picked it up, and she called me for a visit. Can we speak? I would like to speak to you. Eyes filled with compassion, this is the woman I knew. Her steady eyes, but gentle, questioning, encouraging, helped me to be strong, to persevere, and to endure. But Madam Speaker, her compassion also extended to the people, and she had a very special place for the elders, encouraging me to pursue programs and services, always offering to go the way of a ready and steady partner. It is therefore fitting that we take a few moments to remember and celebrate the life and contribution of this formidable woman, yet gentle. Her election to the Assembly, as we heard, was historic in that the honour of being the first female Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly, in a manner of speaking, she opened the doors of the speakership so that others like you, Madam

Speaker, could enter. And Madam Speaker, as we are aware that we have had three other female Speakers in this Honourable Assembly.

Through her appointment, the public was able to see and understand that females are quite capable of fulfilling the role of Speaker. Her appointment has gone down in the annals of history as a significant plank in the bridge to equal access, as she expressed in her acceptance speech. You would have heard she had the privilege of serving for two separate periods. Throughout her tenure, Honourable Bodkin had a keen interest in ensuring that the rules of the Legislative Assembly were followed. As you know, Madam Speaker, it is important, for it governs the conduct and maintains the dignity of this House. She ensured that the rules were followed and, as the Honourable Speaker said, without favour or ill will. Indeed, she has been a champion for the Legislative Assembly and its advancement, and she has worked with dignity and with grace at all times.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Bodkin was quite approachable outside of the formal meetings of the Legislative Assembly. She had an open-door policy, which meant that the Honourable Members could meet and talk with her about the work of the Assembly when necessary. She was also very cognizant of the need to increase the relevancy of the Legislative Assembly to young people of this country, and so, the Legislative Assembly was open to them on special occasions. This, of course, provided exposure to some of these young people, and her hope was that many of them would develop an interest in the Legislative Assembly and its workings from an early age. It was her desire that Montserratians, regardless of gender or socio-economic upbringing, could look at persons in the esteemed offices of Parliament and be confident that they too can command this space. I am moved at this time to tip my hat in memory of a ground-breaking Lady Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly who pioneered the way for those who would follow, and I note that she did so skilfully and with the integrity for the betterment of the Legislative Assembly.

The drums rolled as she played in church, calling us to worship. I will seek to uphold the dignity of this Honourable House as she did, to do whatever I can for the elderly and keep her legacy alive. A few days before she parted, we had a conversation, again encouraging in the work that she had seen and the views. When I left her presence, I felt

stronger, renewed, ready to go on, not knowing that she was going to go on. There was much more I know she wanted to do, especially for the elderly. But perhaps she changed her mind when she saw the beautiful flowers on the other side, when she saw the ancestors waving and the drums calling her to rest a while.

Let us continue the work that she loved dearly. Let us uphold the dignity of this House. Let us encourage other young people to follow in her footsteps and let her legacy live on in whatever we do in this Honourable House. To her family and friends, her church family and the entire community, family and friends, please accept our heartfelt condolences and may the beautiful soul of our Speaker, our friend and our sister rest in peace. I thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to address the House to celebrate the life of a wonderful woman.

5. TRIBUTE BY THE HONOURABLE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Paul Lewis said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, today we come together in show of compassion to express our thoughts on the passing of my neighbour, former Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly, Miss Teresina Bodkin, who recently passed this life. Speaker Bodkin was a truly distinguished daughter of Montserrat. She was an embodiment of dedication, resilience and commitment to public service. Speakers before me have spoken of Speaker Bodkin's exceptional qualities as she worked to build a better Montserrat, something that we all aspire to. She may have been a quiet soul, not prone to exuberance and spotlight, but she was tireless in wanting to see a better day for our homeland. She was a stern supporter of the plight of workers and the trade union movement. My personal experiences in this regard, when I was president of the Montserrat Civil Service Association, she always come around in asking of me how things were progressing with various initiatives or concerns we were seeking to address. She was always ready to give advice and suggestions on how

we can further improve and work towards achieving our aims and objectives as a union. I valued her input greatly.

Speaker Bodkin's pursuit of excellence led her to serve as Montserrat's Director of Statistics, a position she held with unwavering dedication and exemplary service for 15 years. In April 2010, history was made when Miss Bodkin was appointed the first female Speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly, as others would have indicated, breaking barriers and paving the way for greater representation of women in the political landscape. She never had the pleasure of serving as Speaker in a dedicated House of Parliament like her predecessors, Sir Howard Fergus, and former Speaker Joseph Meade did. But I am certain that she would have been ecstatic to have seen a dedicated House of Parliament constructed and dedicated to conducting the business of governance and accountability in our blessed land, Montserrat. We will continue this quest, Madam Speaker, as it is a requirement.

Speaker Bodkin's tenure as Speaker of our Legislative Assembly was characterized by fairness, integrity and decorum. She served with distinction from April 2010 until September 2014 and was again reappointed in 2019 for a brief period. It was this brief period that I was fortunate to serve in the Assembly. Her ability to preside over this Assembly with impartiality and poise earned her the respect and admiration of Members from all sides of this Honourable House. Teresina Bodkin's contributions extend far beyond her professional accomplishments. She exemplified the highest standards of public life, always demonstrating genuine compassion, unwavering integrity and steadfast dedication to our beloved Montserrat. Her loss is deeply felt not just by her family and close friends but by every Montserratian who benefited from her exemplary service and leadership. Madam Speaker, as we mourn her passing, let us commit ourselves to carrying forward Miss Bodkin's legacy within our public service duties. May we always remember her as a beacon of inspiration for the current and future generations of leaders.

On behalf of the Opposition, and indeed all Montserradians, we extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, loved ones and all who cherish her. May her soul rest in peace. Rest in peace, neighbour.

6. TRIBUTES BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Minister of Education and Health.

The Minister for Education, Health and Social Services said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are here today to honour Miss Teresina Bodkin, the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Montserrat, previous teacher of many subjects and previous department head for the Department of Statistics. In her role as Speaker, Teresina Bodkin paved the way for future generations of women to participate in positions of political leadership. She led the Legislative Assembly with pride, with authority, with dignity, and with fairness, and in her role served as a model of leadership and empowerment for women in Montserrat politics. Madam Speaker, our time today spent honouring Miss Bodkin is time spent honouring the elements of what she represented. In her personal life, she was kind; she was a kind and fair woman who, to the core, believed in honesty and righteousness. In honouring her, we honour the essence of women in leadership roles. We inspire ourselves to believe that authority, integrity, fairness, and compassion can exist as integral parts of one person. To honour this strong Caribbean woman is to inspire all girls on our island and to have them believe that anything is possible, warranting determination and belief in our potential.

Integrity, Madam Speaker, is to align one's values and actions with ethical principles, with truthfulness, with transparency and accountability even when experiencing challenges and temptations. Madam Speaker, integrity is an unwavering commitment to doing what is right regardless of external pressures. Integrity in leadership is essential for building trust and for building credibility. It is essential that as leaders we gain the trust of the population we serve, the trust of our funding agents, the trust of those who are desirous of investing in our island. Integrity is essential for inspiring loyalty, Madam Speaker. It is essential for building a fair society in which no one is left behind. In going forward, as we move through the next 4.5 years and beyond, the message that I would like our United Alliance team to remember is

that the best way that we can honour Miss Bodkin is through ensuring that we act with integrity, with fairness, and with kindness.

To the family and friends of Miss Bodkin, please accept my condolences, and also please accept my thanks for the love and the support you provided to this true heroine of Montserrat and the value which you added to her life. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Do we have any others? Recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay a brief tribute to former Speaker of this Honourable Assembly, Miss Teresina Bodkin. As has been mentioned before, Miss Bodkin has etched her name in the records of this Honourable House. She's a trailblazer, being the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in Montserrat. I had the privilege of serving as a Member of the Assembly when Miss Bodkin was Speaker from December 2019 to December 2020. She always kept command of the Assembly and always ruled on Points of Order raised by Members with quiet confidence and an even tone. I cannot recall any instance where she ever lost her patience with a Member of the Assembly. She was clear on her role as Speaker. After all, it is the Speaker's Assembly. The dignity of the House must be maintained. The Speaker must be impartial and we heard about her impartiality already from some of the other Members of this Assembly. Miss Bodkin was au fait with the rules and procedures of the House, and no one dared to challenge her rulings.

Madam Speaker, death is a path that we all must walk one day. Whether it is expected or it is sudden, it is always sad. Miss Bodkin's passing is a great loss for Montserrat, but we are thankful that she has been a part of Montserrat's tapestry. She is woven into many parts. She has left a legacy as a Speaker of the Assembly, as a teacher, a statistician, a contributor to the arts. On behalf of the staff of the Attorney General's Chambers and on my own behalf and that of my family, I'd like to extend my condolences to Miss Bodkin's family, friends, colleagues, students, all who knew and loved her. I pray that

God will grant you all comfort during this difficult time. May her soul rest in peace. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Mulcare.

Madam Speaker said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on this solemn occasion to pay tribute to Miss Teresina Bodkin, whose death has left an indelible void in our hearts. It is both an honour and a privilege to stand and offer these words of remembrance and reflection. I had the distinct pleasure of working with Miss Bodkin during the period 13th October 1997 to June 2001 within the then Development Unit. At that time, she served as statistician and moved on to chief statistician in the Statistics Department, which formed part of that unit. I was a young officer then, new, energetic and passionate, and she quickly dubbed me as feisty. She believed quite firmly that that energy and assertiveness were urgently needed with the Montserrat Civil Service Association, MCSA. Miss Bodkin saw many qualities in me and encouraged me to serve. True to form, she didn't just encourage, she insisted. I soon found myself thrust into the role of insurance administrator within the MCSA, and that journey eventually led to my tenure as president, a path along which she remained supportive and steadfast.

In those early days, she was the lone officer manning the Statistics Department. There was always much to be done on the development side, but once my tasks were completed, she would rope me in to help with statistics and census projects. It was in those moments that my appreciation for data, figures, formulas and research began to blossom. While she never succeeded in fully luring me over to her beloved Statistics Unit, to her great disappointment, I continued to assist when and wherever I could, and pulling along Mrs. Eleanor Hussey and others until the unit regained its full staffing. Those moments with her remain some of my fondest professional memories. There are two things I will never forget about Miss Bodkin. One, she insisted that I once physically lifted and moved her to the side out of harm's way. And two, her love for good, tasty food. She would say to me with a grin, feed your brain, Nyota, with finger-licking food, and you will see how quickly you can work those figures. That was the woman.

Practical, witty, and full of charm. Her dedicated service to the Montserrat Public Service was unwavering. Beyond her professional role, she also gave of her time and talents in other meaningful ways, most notably as an executive member of the Montserrat Civil Service Association, a judge in our local Calypso competitions, and later, with great distinction, as the Speaker of this very Legislative Assembly.

Miss Bodkin was unassuming in her manner, but always forthright. She never hesitated to offer me her honest opinions, which I deeply valued. Authentic, wise, and always real. That was the woman. In her latter years, she affectionately began calling me Lady Nyota, and depending on her tone, I always knew what kind of conversation was about to unfold. Those conversations I will miss dearly. Miss Bodkin kept in touch with the staff she was close to back then. Mrs. Eleanor Hussey also recalls her as being quiet, friendly and loving a good laugh. That was the woman. On behalf of myself, my family, Mrs. Eleanor Hussey and her family, and the Montserrat Civil Service Association, I extend sincere condolences to her family, loved ones, and all who held her dear. We are forever grateful for her service, her mentorship, and her friendship. As we remember her life and legacy, may we find comfort in the transposed words from 2 Timothy 4, chapter 7. She has fought the good fight. She has finished the race. She has kept the faith. May she rest in eternal peace. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Crenston Buffonge.

Mr. Crenston Buffonge said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Colleagues, visiting friends, good morning. They say you never forget your first in many different things. So, for me, Madam Teresina Bodkin was my first Speaker. Today I wanna join with the rest of Monserrat in mourning the passing of a true daughter of the soil. A woman whose legacy is woven into the very fabric of this island's history and indeed our hearts. It was stated before, but she would have made history when she became the first female Speaker in this very Assembly. It was a proud defining moment not just for her, but for all of us who saw in her her strength, her clarity, and the confidence that leadership demands. Madam Speaker, you have a huge role to fill, as she did not just sit in that chair, but she

brought honour to it. She presided with fairness, intellect, and an unshakable sense of duty, setting a powerful precedent for women in leadership. A woman who had to tolerate some of us, some of the Members of this House, in some ways, not pointing in a direction. Some of us would have written her up and stuff like that, too, but not going there today.

But before politics, Terry served us as a director of statistics, it was said before, for over a decade, leading with precision, discipline, and integrity, some words that are associated with the role of director of statistics. She understood the value of facts and how behind every number was a story, a policy, a life, or a future to be shaped. It was that same analytical brilliance that made her a force within the movement for change and prosperity, where she was not just a member, but one of the founding members and also a guiding light of that institution. When I joined, she became, well, she welcomed me as a mother would her son, and she became that sure voice that would have scolded me on occasions and also gave me my compliments when they were due. As a matter of fact, that love extended long before politics. It extended when I was lifting bags and checking in people, and delivering cargo as a young man in the airline industry.

She was not just a public servant; she was my friend. She was a woman of spirit, of culture, and of rhythm. She had a laugh, as Honourable Mulcare said, that would uplift the room, and a sense of humour that would cut through any tension, like a drumbeat through silence. Many of us remember her not from behind the podium or a desk but behind the drums with her wide-open heart, grounding us in who we are as a people of Montserrat. Her love for Montserrat wasn't only political; it was deeply personal and profoundly cultural. There is something very special about poetry when it's being done to the beat of any drum, well, a particular type of drumming, like the African type. I remember when she was drumming for the Cocoa Tea and Plate Tart poetry reading the other day, to the words of people like Ann Marie and of course, Myrle. And when you hear that sort of thing, you can only be inspired. And that much I would have gotten from her. It was one of her last moments of public appearances, and it said everything about who Teresina was. She was deeply rooted in our culture, always ready to support, and was never far away from the beat of a drum.

On a personal note, Terry was one of those rare people who told you the truth even when it was hard to hear. And somehow, even after hearing that hard truth, it was not. We were grateful, let's put it that way. We were grateful for the correction. She would have encouraged me on numerous occasions. She was even challenging me to do more as a politician. And she would never let me settle for anything less than the best. She was a friend who stood by you in the spotlight and just as firmly in the shadows, never afraid to let you know her thoughts, especially when it meant congratulating you. She kept saying she was proud of my growth, and I will miss her. And as we say goodbye, we say thank you. Thank you, Terry, for your service, for your friendship, for your wisdom and for your rhythm. You were a trailblazer, a mentor, and a fierce champion of this island and its people. May your memory continue to inspire. May your beat never fade. Rest well, my friend. And to the family and close friends, my sincerest condolences to all of you. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture, Land, Housing, et al said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I also join my other colleagues to table a tribute to Miss Teresina Bodkin, who served as the first female Speaker of this Honourable House, and if I'm correct majority, if not all, of the Speakers following have been female. She also served over two periods, the first one being in 2010 and then on a second occasion in 2019. So, her contribution to this Assembly must duly be recognised. Madam Speaker, I don't know her as well as my other colleagues, but I would always be greeted nonetheless with a smile or a wave whenever she would turn right to go into Virgin Islands or whenever she showed up to the gas station and her demeanour would make me actually come out and pump her gas for her because she was a very warm and kind person. Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleagues as they spoke, just so I can get a brief history of her, and what I realised is that perhaps her professional achievements and her community affiliation shaped her temperament and even her style when she presided over the sittings of this Honourable House, Madam Speaker. And I speak specifically of her meticulous approach and considered approach derived from being a math teacher,

as I learned and also chief statistician, I think I heard for about 15 years.

Madam Speaker, her role as Secretary of the Montserrat Civil Service Association, I think, may have also created the added dimension of being able to tactfully navigate through situations or even conflicts arising among legislators. In a nutshell, Madam Speaker, her soft-spoken but yet assertive nature, I think, resulted in a well-managed environment for the conduct of the people's business in this Assembly. Again, Madam Speaker, I am just going off of what I have heard today in the Assembly from everybody who knew her a lot better than I did. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Housing, Environment, Youth Affairs and Sports, and on my own behalf as a member of the St Peter's community where she resided, I would just like to say I offer my sincere condolences to Miss Bodkin's family and friends as we continue to mourn her death. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Romeo.

Mr. Donaldson Romeo said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, before saying anything, I would like to first express sincere condolences to the family and friends of the late Miss Bodkin, those present and those listening. I was very saddened and shocked when I was told of Miss Bodkin's passing.

Well, as most of you know, Miss Bodkin and I had a very lively and interesting relationship in the House during my first term in office, 2009 to 2014. What most of you may not know is that outside of the House, we had a very cordial relationship. I was able to approach her and discuss anything I needed to. But there was one day I learned something that I should never forget. It was the day that I decided to challenge her, even if it meant that she would send me out of the House. I pushed, but she didn't budge. She kept her calm, but little did I know that my son Daniel, feeling ill, had returned home from school and was listening. When I got home and my son approached me later, he immediately said to me, Dad, I was listening to you. That doesn't

sound like you. You were talking over the Speaker, and to make matters worse, or better, the next morning during worship with my two children, I chose Romans 13 as the scripture. I just happened to choose it, the Scripture that said, respect those in authority. Convicted and guilty, I admitted my failure to my son and daughter. And strange enough, my daughter, Carissa, age five or six at the time, said, Daddy, from now on, be yourself. Don't change. She was telling me to be more gentle, as I should be.

My little children led me that morning to pay more respect to the Speaker, to Honourable Speaker, Miss Bodkin, and that allowed me, allowed our relationship to improve significantly. But what clicked between both of us, that many may not know, was the fact that she learned that I loved the drum. The drum is my favourite instrument, and as you know, she was very involved in assembling youth to play drums. And I always enjoyed listening to them perform and would always congratulate her off, and we'd always have a chat. Whenever I think of her, I think of my youthful days in the 70s, when Dr. Irish and company had Montserrat bubbling with cultural activities, plays at the then cultural centre, Arts Centre in Groves, lively singing by the Emerald Community Singers. As children, we would wear our dashikis and our black power bands and have our afros, and so I was very involved as a child, my mother leading. Miss Bodkin was to me a symbol and reminder of that proud period of Montserrat's history. She was a diehard and avid student and promoter of culture, as you will have heard many mentions so far.

Many of us say that they will never leave Montserrat. Some have said they'll be the last to leave Montserrat. Well, she as Crenston said, Miss Bodkin, Honourable Crenston said, Miss Bodkin was a true daughter of the soil. Miss Bodkin stayed the course and fought the fight to the end on her and our beloved Montserrat, which we love so much. May she always be remembered. I will always remember her. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Financial Secretary said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to give condolences to the family and friends of the late Teresina Bodkin on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, specifically the Statistics Department, where she worked for the majority of her civil service career. As Honourable Members of the House would have highlighted, she would have been a stalwart of that department to the point that at one point she was the only person in that department and if you understand anything about the importance of the Statistics Department, we would understand the importance of the work that Miss Bodkin would have carried out during that time. She would have mentored some of the island's greatest statisticians. She would have mentored the current country manager, Miss Angela Estwick, the sadly departed Katrina Ryan, and I know she would have worked with the Statistics Department even after she retired. She was always available to sit on a program, offer advice and just help the Statistics Department in any way possible.

I wouldn't just like the Honourable Colleague, Minister of Agriculture, I wouldn't have known Miss Bodkin in many of her various drummers, first female Speaker of the House, and I would have worked with her briefly when I joined the Development Unit when I returned from university. The various accolades have been expounded on by Members who knew her much better than I did, so I will speak from my memories of Miss Bodkin.

When I joined the Development Unit, I was very nervous. I was very young, and it was a... I was coming in as the economist, it was a big job, and, you know, I didn't know a lot of persons in the department. And there was this lady in the back room, the back office, and she welcomed me. And I think you don't get – a lot of people are welcoming in their own way. A lot of people, you know, it's polite, you do the mannersable thing, you do the polite thing, but Miss Bodkin was genuine in her warmth, and I don't dare that lightly. She was genuine in her approach to you. She had this smile and her eyes, I think you, her smile and her eyes, I think you would, I think everybody would remember. And post her leaving and retiring, every time she saw me, it was like she was happy to see you, you know? You always felt that she was genuinely happy to see you, genuinely happy to engage with you. And she always held my hand, asked me how I was doing, my forearm, not my hand, asked me how I was doing, encouraged me, and she, I mean, Miss Bodkin was a little bit older than I was, so she

would claim that it was always good to see someone else from George Street, which is where I was born and raised, progressing. I've never seen her in George Street. I don't know, she might have moved out before I was born or was raised, but she always claimed it was good to see someone else, progressing from George Street, and to remember that she blazed the trail for me. She said it a little bit more diplomatically, but that's basically what she meant. But she was a genuinely warm, genuine individual, and I'm going to miss seeing her driving past me and blowing, me blowing, she didn't blow me back. I didn't, I don't think she paid attention to me passing when she drives but when she saw me in person, she was always happy to see me and she just had a spirit that a lot of us should aspire to of just genuinely warm good person and I think that is a virtue that not many people have. Some of us pretend to have it, some of us aspire to it, but she had it, and personally, I will miss her. Thank you.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier said:

I rise to move for an adjournment of this Honourable House, but if I may, I must apologise for the absence of Honourable Dwayne Hixon, who is feeling unwell. I must also recognise that a former Minister of Government, her husband, died and will be buried today, and we wish to extend our condolences to her and her family. But I think, Madam Speaker, it would be very appropriate if all of us were to stand very briefly, through you, Madam Speaker, and with your consent, all of us, including those in the gallery, for a moment of silence on behalf of both of those individuals.

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Minister for Buildings et al said:

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the motion as outlined by the Honourable Premier, and that after, we will simply adjourn in respect also of Honourable Speaker Teresina Bodkin.

Madam Speaker said:

Before the question is put for the adjournment, I would just like to ask us to stand as requested for that moment of silence.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Madam Speaker said:

Thank you. You may be seated. It has been moved and seconded that this Honourable House now stand adjourned.

The question was put and carried.

Madam Speaker said:

This Honourable House now stands adjourned sine die.

The Legislative Assembly adjourned at approximately 11.09 a.m.

Clerk of Assembly

Dated this _____ day of _____ 2025

Speaker