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The Contribution of Julian Ernest Sinclair Phillips Hall to the Bermuda Legal System

In honor of Black History Month, the contribution of this fascinating hero to the Bermuda legal system has been echoed over the years during his life and after. Julian Ernest Sinclair Phillips Hall was known to be young, gifted, and black. That is an inspiring phrase to hear because it made me want to learn more about this man who many feel was prominent and important in our history. He was regarded as one of the best legal minds in Bermuda.

Another detail about Julian Hall's life that interested me was that he was born into one of the biggest known families in Bermuda, The Dill Family. This intrigued me because, my family also descends from the Dill family tree. His ancestral line, just like my maternal family includes Peruvian Indians, African Bermudians, and Portuguese descent. This interesting heritage leads me to believe that his past and his experiences allowed him to be an equally interesting person. Julian Hall won a scholarship to the Berkeley Institute before going on to university in Canada. Initially he was interested in medicine – biology and chemistry, he eventually obtained a degree in psychology, and also studied law, graduating in 1970, before studying further at the London School of Economics. When he returned home to Bermuda, he was called to the Bermuda Bar in 1974 and started his legal practice with Conyers Dill and Pearman. He was one of the first black lawyers to join a large Bermudian law firm. This helped open doors for many young black aspiring lawyers, and also inspired many black aspiring lawyers who were interested in joining a large law office. He was very articulate and driven, and he advanced in his career as a lawyer. He eventually opened his own law firm.

Julian Hall also was successful in becoming a Minister for Legislative Affairs in 1985 with the PLP and contributed to the important legal matters at that time as a minister of parliament. When he joined politics, he was also known as an eloquent and persuasive speaker. This was because he spoke so well and so convincing, and because of his brilliant, powerful, and entertaining style of speech in and out of court, and because of his influential and commanding ability as a legal scholar and advocate. His speechmaking skills were said to be incomparable in court or the House of Assembly. He made people interested in the legal system, both in the court and in politics. He was controversial and very challenging in debates, but he was still admired for his ability to change

the way a subject was being debated, in his favor. He was said to be a legend with many high profile cases, because of his linguistic skills, and his known charisma. His style would influence so many other lawyers and non-lawyers to adopt his flair of debate and speech.

After the notorious murders of Governor Sir Richard Sharples, his dog, and his aid-de-camp in 1973, Julian Hall would help defend the two men who were charged with the murders. He had assisted Lois Browne Evans (later known as Dame Lois Brown Evans) in the appeal of the murder trial, and had argued that some parts of the trial were not unconstitutional – not lawful. However, despite their declaration of innocence, the two men, Buck Burrows and Larry Tacklyn were convicted and were sentenced to be hung (executed by hanging) in 1977, causing three days of rioting. This seemed to cause Julian Hall's decision to switch political parties from the United Bermuda Party to the Progressive Labour Party. Although the loss in this case was said to be a setback that had him receive a lot of criticism, it was said the case was argued well. Julian Hall has said to have lost only two trials by jury in his career and continued to do well contributing to the legal system.

The historic immigration court case of "Fisher" further established Julian Hall's status as an advocate of social justice and he was respected and admired in the courtroom. He took this court case all the way to the Privy Council in the UK fighting the Bermuda government at the time. He won his fight to have the children in this case become eligible to have Bermuda status. This win was also a win for children of mixed nationality families for years to come, because lawyers and judges would look at this case as an example to use in similar immigration cases across the Commonwealth. This is called case law. Many of Julian Hall's cases are examples of case law used by judges and other lawyers to help fight or win a decision in court.

Julian Hall had faced difficult professional times. He was accused for stealing from a client and was made to go to trial because of the charges against him. He brilliantly fought the case defending himself as his own attorney with the help of a young new brilliant lawyer, Charles Richardson. The high profile case ended in Julian Hall being unanimously acquitted – being found not guilty for stealing. He was said to be a "master of the law" by Charles Richardson, who has said that he adopted some of Julian Hall's courtroom style as his own. Julian Hall impacted many aspiring legal minds and contributed to their motivation to join the legal system. It is even said that his friendship years ago with Bermuda's Chief Justice Narinder Hargun played a part in the Chief Justice coming to Bermuda as a lawyer, to live and work and excel, also contributing to our legal system. Julian Hall also experienced hard financial times and would be declared as bankrupt. A law had been passed that did not allow bankrupt people to practice as lawyers. Years later, in 2008, another law was passed by the government at that time that allowed bankrupt lawyers to practice law. Because of this, Julian Hall was able to practice law again in 2009, regaining his legal certificate.

All of these are examples of how he played an important part in the legal system, by helping to pass laws and uphold the Constitution and the legal system of Bermuda, as a politician in the legal ministry, causing laws to be updated, providing legal services with justice, and using laws to as a defense lawyer, and even as a defendant of the court.

Julian Hall also helped advanced workers' rights by representing the Bermuda Union of teachers and the Bermuda Industrial Union on many occasions.

I read that lawyers form the support and strength of the legal system, connecting it to society in many ways. They work to represent individual people and companies in civil trials, and to promote justice in criminal trials. Julian Hall contributed to promoting justice in the legal system, helping those who needed to be defended, and inspired many others to become lawyers or become a part of the legal system. He also helped pave the way for black lawyers. He also contributed to the effective and determined style of debate for others in politics and the legal system.

When he passed away in 2009, the Royal Gazette declared Julian Hall a "Colossus of Parliament and Courts" and called him "Bermuda's rock star". His colleagues said that he left behind a legacy of being the best lawyer in his generation. His contribution was really great, and many people wondered what more contributions he could have made if he hadn't had to deal with all of those difficult times. Overall, his legacy lives on, in legal, in political, and in union settings. His legacy also lives on in the aspiring minds of law students and young lawyers and for those people who valued his powerful presence and talents. Born on March 4, 1950 and passed away on July 18, 2009, Julian Hall, with his outstanding intellectual abilities for three decades, was a hero, a lawyer, a politician, a labor activist, a true contributor to Bermuda's legal system.