



Memorial Service

Constable Sandy Rowe

28th February 2012

Sandy Rowe would not have known her life's journey would include the Bermuda Police Service. She may not have even known that policing was in her future. By the time she joined the Jamaica Constabulary Force at the age of twenty-nine, she had worked as a day-care assistant, a fashion designer, an elementary school teacher and an assistant supervisor at a service station. And then she became a police officer.

Harvey Mackay is an American businessman and author who writes, "Find something you love to do and you'll never have to work a day in your life." And it would be fair to say that Sandy loved policing. Her earliest reports from Jamaica speak to that. She is described in her appraisals as, "A focused and steady officer." "A hard worker who is always prepared to go the extra mile." "An active participant in the Police Youth Club." She was consistently rated at Grade A (Outstanding) in assessments on discipline, deportment, responsibility, reliability, punctuality and teamwork. In her last appraisal her supervisor wrote, "She is an excellent performer who should be considered for promotion to the rank of Corporal. Sandy was also the recipient of a Commendation for Best Performer in the Manchester Division of the JCF.

Fortunately, for Bermuda, in 2006 Sandy read an advertisement in The Gleaner inviting applications to join the Bermuda Police Service. And after five years and eleven months of policing service to her home in Jamaica, Sandy moved to Bermuda and was appointed as a police constable, five years ago today, on 28th February 2007. She had to temporarily leave behind a fiancée, who became her husband, and her two sons. But she brought with her the same energy, commitment and enthusiasm to policing that was more a part of her character and make-up than it was just based on training alone.

Sandy's file is impressive. She was consistently assessed as above standard in communication skills, professional and ethical standards, effectiveness, motivation and problem solving. Surprisingly, she was not rated for cooking or driving: I understand from Deputy Commissioner Mike Jackman that Sandy would have scored "Outstanding" on the former – especially for oxtails – and "Failed" on the latter. Mr. Jackman wrote on her last assessment: "PC Rowe needs to obtain a police driving licence as soon as possible in order to be more effective. But her oxtails are so good, I wonder if she has relatives in Barbados."

I embellished that last part.

Sandy's supervisors describe her as: a confident officer who serves as a positive example; calm and controlled in the face of the unexpected; attentive, respectful and highly professional. Her community background and natural skills drew her to the Community Action Team where her impact was made the most, and her loss

will be felt the worst. During 2010/11 Sandy worked as part of a team helping Bermuda's most affected neighbourhoods and communities to re-bound and re-build after being rocked by the largest wave of violence in recent times. Sandy was actively engaged in neighbourhood watch groups, town hall meetings,

To Earl, who I had the pleasure of meeting yesterday,

To Adrian and Alwyn,

To Sandy's family and friends:

On behalf of my senior colleagues, the police officers, support staff and cadets of the Bermuda Police Service and the Bermuda Reserve Police – THANK YOU for loaning Sandy to us for the last five years. We appreciate that it was no small sacrifice you each made for her to be here, and your sacrifice was Bermuda's gain. She served this community well and she is recognised for her significant contribution for helping to make Bermuda safer. Sandy represented her Police Service professionally and she has made her family proud. We will miss her; we will shed tears at her loss; and we will remember her lovingly.

My colleague James Howard describes Sandy like this: she was one of those officers that never showed any negative emotions. I don't know if she was ever in a bad mood or annoyed with anyone, but you would never have known because she only ever had one expression on her face: a smile.

In celebration of Sandy's life and the impact she made on us, I would like leave you with these words by David Harkins, an English poet:

"You can shed tears that she is gone,
or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back,
or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her,
or you can be full of the love she shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember her only that she is gone,
or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,
be empty and turn your back.

Or you can do what she would want:
smile, open your eyes, love and go on."

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