

NCTU To Honour Veteran Trade Unionist During Labour Week



Leroy "Duke" Hanna

The National Congress of Trade Unions (NCTU) announced Thursday that it intends to honour union trailblazer Leroy "Duke" Hanna during the upcoming labour week celebrations.

Speaking at a press conference at the Bahamas Entertainers and Musicians Union Building on Thursday, NCTU President John Pinder said honouring such a man was the least he and the umbrella union body could do.

"Having the labour week (May 31 to June 6) dedicated to this giant of a trade unionist is only a small token of appreciation that the NCTU executives can give for the many years of committed and dedicated service given to the growth and development of the Bahamas," Mr. Pinder said.

Mr. Hanna, who was a the founding president of the NCTU, was also a past president of the Bahamas Musician and Entertainers Union, a position he held for over 29 years.

"Brother Duke's service as a unionist, as a senator, as a community activist and as a Bahamian leader is legendary and is a good example for trade unionists of today to emulate," Mr. Pinder said.

Mr. Hanna is scheduled to speak at the annual NCTU Labour Day rally alongside Minister of Maritime Affairs and Labour Senator Dion Foulkes, Chairman of the NCTU's Women's Branch Helena Cartwright and Mr. Pinder.

Mr. Pinder said the NCTU made efforts to work with the Trade Union Congress for a unified Labour Day Parade, but he claimed the TUC wants two umbrella unions and the NCTU wants one.

"It is their view that the country is big enough for two [umbrella unions]," he said. "That's their view, but again the NCTU's view is that if there is a need for just one congress let it be done the democratic way. Let the workers decide who they want to lead the congress and which congress they want to be a part of."

He said the NCTU is the recognized voice to the government for labour in the country and it is its job to plan all national labour related events.

However, Mr. Pinder said he does not wish to leave any union out and stressed that Labour Day is for all workers and not just unionized workers.

"Randol Fawkes fought for all workers of the country, not just unionized workers," said the NCTU president, referring to the late trade unionist, who is widely regarded as the father of the labour movement in the Bahamas.

He said he enjoys a cordial relationship with the TUC and added that the two groups have worked together on many issues, including amendments to labour laws, specifically the Employment Act.

Activities slated for labour week include: a boat cruise on the Island Link on May 31 at 7pm; the annual Labour Day Church Service at Living Waters Kingdom Ministries on Warren Street at 9am on June 1; a Display of History at the Mall at Marathon on June 3 and June 4, and the Sir Randol Fawkes Labour Day Parade which begins at 8am on June 6.

The NCTU parade starts at Windsor Park and ends at the College of the Bahamas.