



## Our History

2022 marks the BPSU's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To celebrate our proud history, the following articles highlight the hard work, dedication and achievements collectively accomplished since the formation of the Bermuda Public Services Union.

### Inside this issue

1960s—1970s see article 1

1980s—1990s..... 2

2000s—2010s see article 3

2022 & beyond see article 4

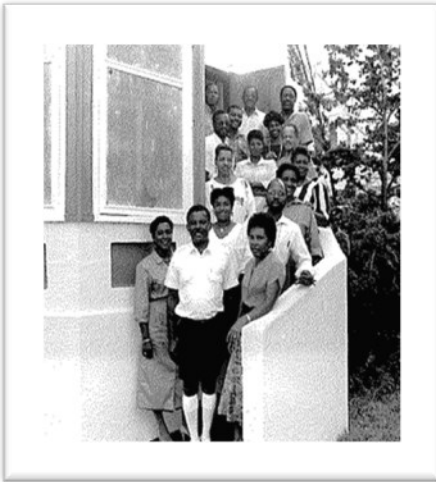
### Special points of interest

- photos and images that reflect our history
- Special thanks to all contributors



***“Onward and  
Upward  
together”***

## 1980's to 1990's



The 1980s are widely considered to be the decade that cemented and built a momentous legacy for the Union as it pertains to collective bargaining agreements, improving Trade Union rights and legislative protection for workers. These new BPSA's initiatives were a direct result of networking with global Trade Unions in Canada, Britain, United States and European Trade

Unions.

Those global Trade Unions benefits negotiated by the various BPSA negotiation teams, positioned BPSA as a leader in the western hemisphere on workers' advances to improve the quality of life for Union members. Some of the major worker benefits are highlighted below.

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***"The more you learn, the more you earn and the more self-confidence you have." by Brian Tracy.***

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### Inside Story Headline

**To continue with the highlights of the 1980s:**

The BPSU's membership in the private sector increased, new bargaining units were:

- ⇒ Bermuda Telephone Co.;
- ⇒ Cable & Wireless;
- ⇒ The Bermuda College; and
- ⇒ The Bermuda Housing Corporation.

## BPSU in Action

### The 1981 National Island Wide Workers' Strike:

All registered Bermuda Trade Unions joined in the 1981 National Strike with the Bermuda Industrial Union ("BIU"), where the cost of living had risen on over 20%. Take-home pay was insufficient to cover food costs; housing and utilities were high. Workers were unable to save any extra disposal income. The BPSA negotiated a wage/salary increase ranging from 22.5% to 25% for its various bargaining divisions.

A membership drive netted over four hundred (400) new Members. Further key accomplishments saw:

Collective Bargaining agreements being standardized for all 15 divisions of the Union.

The elimination of the thirteen (13) Civil Service Clerical and Administrative salary steps which were amended to three (3) PS progressive salary steps.

## Accomplishments Continued:

- ⇒ ***The required work hours per week was decreased from 40 hours per week to 35 hours for Civil Servants; the first ever reduced work hours per week for any group of workers in the Western Hemisphere.***
- ⇒ This followed with a stepped reduction in work hours per week from 37.5 hours, then 36 hours and finally 35 hours per week was agreed with employers of the private sector and quangos.
- ⇒ The formal introduction and extension of the Superannuation Pension offered to non-government agencies.
- ⇒ Further amendments were made to offer GEHI coverage to workers employed at the Government Quangos and the Bermuda College.
- ⇒ The formal introduction of Joint Grading System schemes.
- ⇒ The formal introduction of performance appraisals to all divisions of the Union.
- ⇒ COLAs became the norm for all Bermuda Trade Unions' Collective bargaining agreements.
- ⇒ Vacation entitlement increased for all bargaining units.
- ⇒ Sick leave benefit increased for all bargaining units.
- ⇒ The BPSA was the first local Union to negotiate increased paid weeks for maternity leave and adoptive leave.
- ⇒ The introduction of premium pay for unsociable hours.
- ⇒ Paid compassionate leave was introduced.
- ⇒ Redefining the meaning and compensation for overtime work became the norm in collective bargaining agreements.
- ⇒ ***The BPSU flag was unveiled containing four (4) stars representing Members working for the Government, the Communications Sector, the Hospitals, and the Private Sector.***
- ⇒ Major compensation for tenured lecturers at the Bermuda College through negotiations.
- ⇒ Proof that the Government started to draw pensions from the Superannuation Fund before it was fully vested was uncovered by then General Secretary, Bro. Eugene Blakeney.
- ⇒ The BPSA sought the services of a renowned actuary who made nineteen (19) suggestions to ensure that the Superannuation Fund would be fully vested by 1997, although all governing parties have not been able to reverse the increasing pension liability.
- ⇒ The Civil Service Medical Review Board became active and similar in-house Medical Review Board for employee referrals in the private sector.
- ⇒ The formulation and introduction of the Employee Assistance Programme ("EAP") started with Bermuda's Trade Unions.
- ⇒ The expansion of health insurance coverage for employees, unemployed spouses and children was introduced.
- ⇒ To assist Members to save money, a pilot Members Savings Scheme (BPSU Savings Scheme) was introduced.
- ⇒ Bermuda's Trade Unions joined global Trade Unions campaigns to eliminate the atrocities of the South Africa's Apartheid system.
- ⇒ The Union singularly fought to have the Human Rights Act bound to protect all Civil Servants without success. In 2000 the Government amended the act to include Civil Servants.



## Inside Story Headline

### A Heartfelt Vote of Thanks

The Union will always be indebted to all the Brothers and Sisters from 1952 to 1989 who worked tirelessly, unselfishly and wholeheartedly, by embracing the doctrine of volunteerism to ensure the Union's growth was strengthened for the benefit of the membership and Bermuda.

***The Union formed the first Women's Committee and sent a delegation of twenty-four (24) Sisters to the United States of America to learn and partner in a global campaign to eliminate direct discrimination against women as sexual slaves, wage and salary inequality, poor working conditions, child and maternity leave and general conditions affecting the dignity and worth of woman workers.***

## BPSU Flag

***The BPSU flag was unveiled containing four (4) stars representing Members working for the Government, the Communications Sector, the Hospitals, and the Private Sector.***



## Least we forget

The Union had worked extremely hard in the preceding years. The focus in the 1990's now transitioned to strengthening its labour relations and membership.

The BPSU Youth Wing was formed.

Amendments were made to the Labour Relations Act.

The Labour Disputes Act was made law.

Further diversification of the Union's membership occurred, with the joining of such workers from the two major airlines servicing Bermuda, as well as the membership of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers.

The BPSA participated in the Bermuda Government Civil Service Review. There were three (3) further studies.

Bro. Edward Ball Jr., along with the Director of Human Resources for the Bermuda Government, were invited by the United Kingdom School of Government to visit several UK Government Departments and observe processes and procedures.

The Civil Service introduced a new performance appraisal instrument.

***Paternity leave was finally introduced; however, it was granted as unpaid leave and eventually a paid benefit was passed.***







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