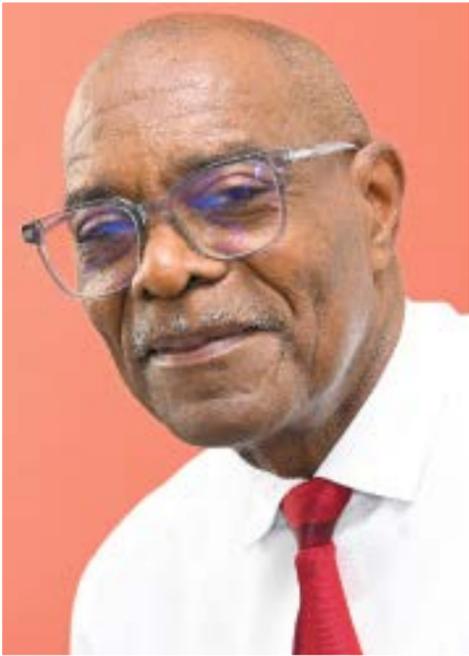


Your heart deserves your attention



NIGEL WHITEHALL, President of the Heart & Stroke Foundation. (SLD)

Message from Nigel Whitehall, President of the **Heart & Stroke Foundation**, to mark its 40th anniversary.

Some organisations start with a business plan; however, 40 years ago, ours at the **Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados** began with a promise to save lives, educate our people and give Barbados a fighting chance against heart disease and stroke. Forty years later, that promise still holds.

I have only recently stepped into the role of president, but already, I feel the weight and the wonder of what this Foundation stands for. It's more than blood pressure checks or CPR classes. Rather, it's about being present in homes, in schools and within the community when people need support, knowledge and hope.

This anniversary is more about the lives we have touched rather than the years we have counted. So from the mother who caught her hypertension early to the family

who found care after a stroke changed everything, that is what we are celebrating. This, without a doubt, is why our work continues sharper, braver and more focused than ever.

In the years ahead, we are doubling down on community outreach, especially in areas where health services are harder to reach. We want more Barbadians to understand how heart disease can be prevented and managed. Not with fear, but with knowledge and support. We are also getting to the root of the issue, such as working with schools to promote healthy habits from early, so that our children don't grow up facing the same health battles we see today.

And because we know mental wellness is deeply tied to heart health, we are integrating emotional care into our programmes too. In addition, technology is opening up incredible possibilities, and we at the Foundation are not sitting on

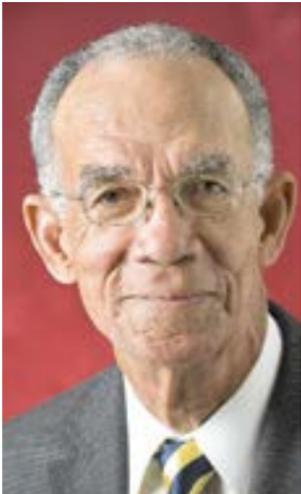
the sidelines. We too are exploring tools that put power in people's hands, but we are also making sure these solutions are realistic, accessible and tailored to our local context, because fancy apps don't help if no one can use them.

While the Foundation is in celebratory mode, we are not excluded from facing new challenges. So, with issues like rising diabetes, obesity, long COVID-19, and the hidden impact of stress, we are shifting with the times, guided by research, data and the voices of the people we serve.

Celebrating 40 years is a milestone and if there is one message I would like to send with the next generation, it's this: your heart deserves your attention. Don't wait for a scare to start caring for it. Start now, with small, daily choices. And know this: the Foundation is not just here for emergencies. Rather, we are here for the long haul to walk with you, teach you, fight for you and, yes, celebrate with you.

Foundation's mission rooted in saving lives

Stories by **DOMINIQUE TOPPIN**



DR TREVOR HASSELL, founding father. (FP)



H. (DRU) SYMONDS, founding father. (FP)

FORTY YEARS AGO on April 18, 1985, a quiet, yet powerful, movement began in Barbados. Born from a vision shared by civic-minded pioneers and medical professionals – specifically H. (Dru) Symmonds, then Chair of the Health and Social Services committee of the Lions Club of Barbados South; and Dr Trevor Hassell, Cardiologist, and Head of Department of Medicine at the QEH, the **Heart Foundation of Barbados Inc.** emerged as a non-profit organisation with a mission that is rooted in saving lives and promoting heart health. That mission has since grown and adapted, and now as the Foundation celebrates its 40th anniversary, its impact resonates more deeply than ever.

It all started with a sense of urgency. Heart disease was silently claiming lives and there was little public dialogue around prevention or proper care. From day one, the Foundation rolled up its sleeves and faced the tough unglamorous challenges head on. This included creating awareness campaigns and pushing for public education to

• Continued on next page.

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We celebrate this momentous **40th anniversary** milestone of service to the people of Barbados

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