

On the legislature's Honoring of Bernice A. Turnbull

When I joined the staff of the Office of Management and Budget in 1981, I immediately became aware of my counterpart Bernice A. Turnbull in the Treasury Division at the Department of Finance.

Ms. Turnbull at the time was Deputy Director in that Division. Ms. Turnbull, her department and the Office of Management and Budget worked closely to constantly receive updated information for allotment control and release based on revenue collections. The Bureau of Internal Revenue had recently separated from within the Department of Finance.

By the beginning of Governor Turnbull's administration in 1999 the government had to face the hurdle of how to cover its payroll the first payday within days of the newly sworn in Governor Turnbull's administration. That critical situation persisted until about Easter of that year when the payroll had to be postponed a few days until the following Tuesday to cover NET payroll. Nonetheless, working together, always respecting each other's role in times of crisis always produces amazing results. Treasury management at the Department of Finance was most critical to the continued operations of this government. No sooner had the situation begun to improve than we had to address and develop a solution to the looming Y2K predicted catastrophe when it was feared the computers would no longer carry the correct date related calculations. Our offices worked to overcome that by using the government's documented assets to secure the funding of upgrades to ALL essential computer equipment, including those operated by our hospitals.

Around that time no stone remained unturned for this government to fashion solutions out of whatever was legally available it.

Commissioner Turnbull and other Financial Team members were off to entice bond buyers in New York, Boston, and San Francisco to purchase V I Government Tax Exempt Bonds. Franklyn Fund buyers indicated that the government needed to issue its financial statements in a timely manner for it to continue to buy our bonds. It was our cue to the issuance of timely financial statements at all costs.

Commissioner Turnbull and I worked to convince the Department of Interior to invest in the Insular Areas government financial and procurement officials so we

can be exposed to best practices in government operations. It quickly became clear that not just department heads, but second line officers needed to be equally exposed to those best practices for sustainability going forward. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) thus became our annual continuing on the job training source.

The uncapping of the prior year obligation amounts to a higher level became necessary as cash flow did not always permit timely payments within the fiscal year.

Commissioner Turnbull and other government departments diligently tracked expenses so that Office of Management & Budget could provide documentation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that the \$188 millions cancellation was justified as this government had requested, instead of the \$18 million previously offered by FEMA.

Finally, with the GFOA exposure to best practices it became apparent to government officials, including Commissioner Turnbull, that an updated centralized financial system would allay our woes, especially for the U S Department of Education. A GFOA representative assisted us in the procurement of that system, to ensure that it met all necessary requirements for current and future needs. Instead, the U S Department insisted on a Third-Party Fiduciary which was to have lasted 3 years. It is now 10 years.

I could not close without indicating that trusting God who knows the future always works as we depend on him. Additionally, ***“there will be no cavalry coming to save us. We must be the cavalry.”***

Commissioner Turnbull is justly deserving of the honor bestowed on her today for her many years of dedicated service to this government.