



BUSINESS

Chamber honours business leaders

THE owner of Checkers Cafe, Gus Cartwright, was named Outstanding Businessperson of the Year as the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce paid tribute to leading Bahamian business leaders at its 38th annual awards ball on Saturday.

The highlight was the presentation of the 2009 Annual Business Awards and the Lifetime Achievement Award, which went to George Myers, chairman of the Myers Group of Companies. More than 350 business, government and industry leaders were in attendance.

Dr Wendy Stuart received the Developing Entrepreneur of the Year Award for her successful body-care business, Botani Bath.

Two Bahamian businesses had the distinction of being heralded as Outstanding Business of the Year, which is awarded for two categories - businesses with over 50 employees, and those with less.

In Category A, businesses with more than 50 employees, Furniture Plus was presented with the Outstanding Business Award. The Plait Lady, (Clare Sands) received the designation for Outstanding Business of the Year for Category B (less than 50 employees).

Receiving the Chamber's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, Mr Myers thanked his team and the many individuals he has worked with over the course of his 40-year career.

Keynote speaker for the evening, Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, minister of tourism and aviation, gave a colorful account of his journey and friendship with Mr Myers, having worked closely with him over the course of his career in the tourism industry, beginning in 1982 at Resorts



THE BAHAMAS Chamber of Commerce presented its 2009 Annual Business Awards at their 38th annual awards ball. The evening's winners are pictured with the event's keynote speaker, Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, minister of tourism and aviation, the Chamber president, Khaalis Rolle, and Philip Simon, the Chamber executive director

International.

Acknowledging that he could think of none more deserving than Mr Myers, the minister reflected on how much he had learned from him and called him, "the smartest man in the world".

Mr Vanderpool-Wallace also encouraged the business community to become active stakeholders in the tourism sector, noting that it will take more than promotions to stimulate the industry.

The development of infrastructure needed to grow and diversify the Bahamian tourism product was essential. Mr Vanderpool-Wallace stressed that the accessibility factor was just as crucial an ingredient to success as reducing the cost of the destination to competitiveness.



THE BAHAMAS Chamber of Commerce gave its Lifetime Achievement Award to George Myers, chairman of the Myers Group of Companies. Pictured (L-R) Khaalis Rolle, Chamber president; George Myers; Dr Sophia Rolle, chairperson of Chamber week 2009.

Philip Simon, the Chamber's executive director, acknowledged Mr Myers' achievements, saying: "Having played an integral role in the success of the Bahamian tourism industry, Mr Myers is undoubtedly deserving of the Chamber's prestigious 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award for his immeasurable contributions to the growth of tourism and business in the Bahamas. His body of work speaks for itself."

The Chamber of Commerce also bid farewell officially to outgoing president Dionisio D'Aguilar, recognised for his outstanding work and service to the organisation and the business community over his two-year term.

Mr D'Aguilar was presented with a commemorative photo collage of some of his highlights as president.

Newly-elected Chamber president, Khaalis Rolle, said of all the finalists: "They are all indeed outstanding finalists, and the selection of winners was no easy process."

As for the winners, he added: "They represent the success stories of the Bahamian business community. They are market leaders, who have demonstrated their commitment to ethical business practices and are actively contributing to the overall development of the Bahamian economy and community."

Although they did not go home with the top award, the Chamber recognised the outstanding achievements of the other finalists. In the category of Outstanding Business Person of the Year, finalists Dr Charles Diggiss, pres-

ident of the Med-Net Group of Companies and chief medical officer at Doctors Hospital, and Chris Mortimer, president of Galleria Cinemas and Bennigan's Grill & Tavern, were commended.

Kenwood Kerr, president of Providence Advisors, and Farrell Goff and Deran Thompson, principals of Bahamas Woodworking Studio, were finalists for the Developing Entrepreneur Award.

The Mall at Marathon and Bahamas Waste were recognised as finalists in the very competitive Business of the Year '50 employees or more' category.

Caribbean Civil Group and Bahamas Orthodontic Centre were saluted in that category for businesses with less than 50 employees.