

MATTHEW HILTON

September 28, 2008

Tribute given by ASAJ President on behalf of the ASAJ Family;

Matthew started his swimming career at Excelsior Primary School with Coach Prince Easton, he progressed very quickly through the Learn to Swim stages and soon after his start joined the Y Speedos Swim Club. In 2002 at age 12, Matthew made history by being the first primary school swimmer to be selected to the Jamaica National Squad, he also was selected to represent Jamaica in the 11-12 age group at the Carifta Swimming Championships in that year.

This was the beginning of a very successful swimming career. Matthew became known as one of the top Caribbean Beaststroke swimmers winning several medals at the Carifta Swimming Championships. 2007 was his most successful year when he won the 15-17 100 M Breaststroke and placed 2nd in the 200 M Breaststroke. His last medal for Jamaica was the 15-17 Medley Relay Bronze Medal won at the Caribbean Island Swimming Championships, just two months ago. Matthew represented Jamaica at the Carifta, CISC and CCCAN Levels and was recently selected to represent Jamaica at the Youth Commonwealth Games to be held in India next month.

At age 18, Matthew had become a leader on the National Team, not only for his performances in the water, but because of his values: well-mannered, respectful, honest, hardworking, his great sense of humor. A private person, Matthew took life seriously, but not too seriously. This summer, after Matthew helped Jamaica win the Caribbean Island Swimming Championships for the first time ever, the ASAJ held a pool party to celebrate and thank the volunteers for their contribution. I will fondly remember Matthew, all 6' 3" of

him, with a stupid grin on his face, sitting on the chair of the dunk tank with a dozen or so children, and me of course, throwing balls at the target – Matthew got dunked numerous times, and his grin only got bigger each time.

Matthew did not become the person he was by chance - he had an incredible role model – his mother, Angela Robinson. Parents take heed – if you were amazed by Matthew, you must also know that he was a product of a single mother who led by example, who spent quality time with her son and who volunteered to ensure that the environment in which her son spent so much time could support his needs. Yesterday, while I was going through a box of Matthew's trophies, I came upon one that had the words OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION in bold letters – on closer examination I realized that it was an award for Angela from Excelsior Primary. Angela, thank you for showing us how to raise a child.

Matthew will be remembered in many different ways. His passing will change the way that the Swimming Association provides medical care for its National representatives.

Each November the ASAJ hosts a Prep/Primary School Competition. The Primary School Champion Trophy will be called the "Matthew Hilton Trophy". Members of the swimming family have made numerous other proposals that will be considered by the ASAJ.

In January 2005 the ASAJ launched a learn to swim program called SwimJamaica. The goal of SwimJamaica is to "Get Jamaica Swimming" including children who attend Primary Schools across the island. You will remember that Matthew attended a Primary school. Matthew understood the need to read and do well academically, no wonder, his mother is a librarian. I am happy to announce that Matthew will live on through the Matthew Hilton Foundation, an charitable organization that is being created with the following goals: 1. To assist in the development of Primary School swimming through

SwimJamaica; 2. To encourage reading in SwimJamaica member Primary Schools by improving the schools library. Matthew's family will play a major role in determining the direction of the Matthew Hilton Foundation. Today you can make your first contribution to Matthew's legacy through today's collection.

The Aquatic Fraternity is proud of Matthew, his achievements and the great core values that he lived by. He will be missed, but because of the man he was, he will be a beacon light for every life that he touched.