George Richardson was one of the pioneers of the Vincentian Diaspora in this part of the world. Like many of our countrymen and women over the years, he followed the Vincentian tradition of emigration in search of personal development.

Many have left our shores thus. Most have contributed materially to the welfare of those at home. Indeed this is a historically indispensable feature of our domestic economy, not always adequately captured in much-vaunted economic statistics. Many have cut a path for others to physically follow. George Richardson, members of his generation and others, including Kerwyn Morris, George Glasgow, Theo Gilbert, Noel King, Monty Sandy, Hermus Liverpool, Laurette Solomon, Jean Cambridge, Jack Dear, Alfie Roberts, Maurice and Christobelle Conliffe, Arnhim Eustace, Viola Daniel, Donat Rose, Osborne Allen, and Thomas Austin, have worked tirelessly to institutionalize the Vincentian presence in Montreal.

The fundamental reality then, as it is now, was that if Vincentians are to live in this city and be counted, they must organize for the protection, support and advancement of one and all. Those who have been involved in the organization of our nationals, at home or abroad, know very well what a daunting and sometimes thankless task that is. In 1965 George Richardson was among the founding fathers of the St.Vincent and the Grenadines Association of Montreal Inc. (SVGAM). Kerwyn Morris was the founding president. George Richardson served in that capacity on three separate occasions, 1973-74, 1984-87, and finally 1993-94. The organization is alive and well, thanks to the dedication engendered
by the founders. The task of organizing our nationals in this part of the vineyard, as elsewhere, is a work in progress.

Today the SVGAM is one of the most vibrant Vincentian national organizations abroad. It continues to make significant contributions to the growth and development of our country. Your material and other offerings continue to ease the pain of deprivation, which still afflicts many of our people. Your business investments constitute an important injection to the national economy, in an area of intense competition for scarce funds. In 2005 SVGAM, was involved in two projects to send much-needed medical supplies and accessories to the Milton Cato General Hospital in Kingstown. The initiative on the pension plan agreement between the governments of Canada and SVG, which was spearheaded by SVGAM, now facilitates the smooth transfer of pension benefits to nationals where they reside. All this is testament to the perseverance of those, like George Richardson, who cultivated the ethos of national commitment here in Montreal.

George was not a direct contemporary of mine, but he was a dear and respected friend. Our relationship started when I became SVG's first resident ambassador to the United States of America in 1990. George, a schoolmate of Prime Minister Sir James Mitchell, Dr Kenneth John, Othneil Sylvester, Q.C, et al, sought me out and extended the hand of friendship and cooperation. He told me pointedly that although not accredited to Canada, I must not forget our nationals there, and that he would be keeping me posted on developments in the Vincentian community over the border. Like in most things, George was true to his word. We have been in constant contact ever since, discussing world and Caribbean affairs in relation to the well-being of our people. This continued until a few days before his final illness.
One of the highlights of my last sojourn to Montreal, in October 2006, was a visit to George on Sunday 28th. Maurice Conliffe, "Cracky" Stephens, and I, joined him for over three hours at his home that afternoon. Afflicted and inhibited in his movements as he was, it was all vintage George. As if foreshadowing the fact that this was to be a terminal visit, we had a tour-de-force of past, present, and future considerations, and George, the consummate entertainer to the end, ensured that appropriate beverages were available. Sadly, shortly after returning home, I called his house, only to be told by his brother that he had been hospitalized with what turned out to be his final ailment.

George Richardson was a pure diamond. He integrated well in his adopted country, and was fully engaged in civic and community affairs. George may have physically left his beloved homeland many decades ago----- but, alas, he never spiritually left. He was the quintessential Vincentian, a true “Leeward Man.” He never lost his “Vincentianess,” and deep concern for the advancement of his country and people. He will be dearly missed by those who knew him----- and to those who did not, I say, "whenever you experience a Vincentian community event in Canada, please remember that the seed from which all this sprung was planted by George Richardson, and others of his ilk!"

My family joins me in extending profound condolences to his family, friends, associates, and members of the Vincentian community in Montreal, whom he loved so much.

H.E Kingsley C.A. Layne, C.M.G