

From left: Human Resources Director at Elegant Hotels, Ian Gooding-Edghill; Elegant Hotels CEO Sunil Chatrani; students Areanna Bradshaw and Phillip Cumberbatch; honouree Gayle Talma; Chairman of the Barbados Rewards and Recognition Committee, Bernard Connell; and Principal of St James Primary School, Ingrid Prescod.



Gayle Talma honoured

by Kobie Broomes

Hotelier Gayle Talma has become the 35th honouree of the Citizens of Barbados Rewards and Recognition Committee, for her outstanding career and contribution to the country's hospitality and tourism product.

At a surprise ceremony at the St James Primary School yesterday morning, chairman of the committee Bernard Connell said they were not only paying tribute to "a remarkable Barbadian", but celebrating the principles on which she served the sector for over 25 years.

Speaking directly to Talma, who is Group Operations Director of Elegant Hotels, Connell said: "Your passion to build strong teams and vibrant organizations and, in the process, create unforgettable memories for every single guest to the Elegant properties, is one of the resounding comments persons close to you have repeatedly shared with us."

"Your work exemplifies that of a true industry executive and, to my mind, you have raised the profile of the tourism industry. You are a great ambassador for the tourism industry and I know the industry is in good hands," he added.

Talma thanked the committee for bestowing the honour on her.

"This award comes as a pleasant and wonderful surprise to me. I really am humbled."

She told the students that her interest in the industry began when she was a child.

"When I was just eight years old, my father took me to Heywoods for lunch. From there, I decided that I was going to work in hospitality. I told my dad then that I wanted to be a hotel manager and from there I never looked back," she recalled.

Talma encouraged the children to consider the hospitality industry a first career choice and to work towards that.

"If you want to be in hospitality, education is important. Don't take it as a secondary choice for a career," she said. (KB)

Students of the St James Primary School.



From left: Gayle Talma with her husband Kenny Hewitt.

