

Fifty-Eighth Annual Commencement



ST. THOMAS

Thursday, the Twelfth of May
Two Thousand and Twenty-Two
One O'clock in the Afternoon
Sports and Fitness Center
Orville E. Kean Campus
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

ST. CROIX

Friday, the Thirteenth of May
Two Thousand and Twenty-Two
One O'clock in the Afternoon
Albert A. Sheen Campus
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

President's Message

It is such an honor to welcome you to the University's Commencement Ceremonies for 2022. This is the first in-person Commencement Ceremony the University has convened since 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic changed this important annual ritual and milestone in a dramatic manner. The University was able to adapt to this challenge and convened very engaging and meaningful virtual ceremonies. Yet, certain intangible aspects and values were absent. I missed the pomp and circumstances, the bright array of regalia and the electricity of excitement in the air. I also missed shaking the hands of each graduate, handing them their degrees, and witnessing the smiles and joy etched on their faces. Fortunately, this year all those moments will return.

I want to thank our graduates of the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 for their understanding and resilience. They missed out on these precious moments mentioned above, but they did not lose their joy or their achievements. The University applauds them again for their determination and dedication.

However, this year belongs to the resilient, inspiring, and proud Class of 2022. Their perseverance has paid off and they now stand at the edge of their new life as a college graduate. They have endured two years of COVID-19 challenges and restrictions, and some were also affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Despite these forces, today they celebrate this momentous achievement with their families and friends.

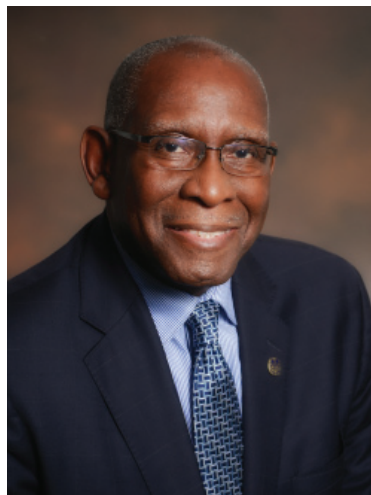
We are honored to welcome Dr. Robert Franklin, Jr., former President of Morehouse College and Emory University's Distinguished Professor of Divinity, as our keynote speaker this year. He is an eminent scholar, academic leader, and theologian who spent a portion of his sabbatical with us at the University and delivered the keynote address on our 60th Charter Day Anniversary.

Though we all hope that COVID-19 is behind us, we are using these Commencement Ceremonies to also recognize various leaders who guided us through this maze on a local and national level. Commissioner Justa "Tita" Encarnacion and her team at the V.I. Department of Health provided critical leadership, advice, and service to the Territory throughout this pandemic. Virgin Islanders were tested, vaccinated, and supported earlier than other communities in the nation, and certainly in the Caribbean. The University partnered with the Department of Health on numerous occasions throughout this crisis and we benefitted greatly from this partnership. On the national level, Dr. Marcella Nunez Smith was selected co-chair of the Biden-Harris Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board and chair of the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force in the Administration. Her leadership helped ensure that a comprehensive plan and strategy could be developed to curb the rising and deadly incidences of this disease in the United States and the world. Though there were challenging moments with various variants since the creation of the Task Force, the nation is benefiting today from her leadership and insights along with those of so many other leaders and individuals. It is inspiring to have a Virgin Islander chosen for this important and lifesaving role.

Commencement is never the end, but just a new beginning. As our graduates launch the next stage of their careers, I am confident they will contribute greatly to their families, community, and the world. They have not only been prepared at a high level, but they have also overcome numerous obstacles. We would never wish for these challenges in their lives, but these forces have made them stronger, more resilient and determined individuals. They are the leaders that life and this institution have fashioned for the future.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University Community, we commend the Class of 2022 on your accomplishments and wish you Godspeed. The University is extremely proud of you and we look forward to celebrating with you. We encourage you to remain engaged with your alma mater, and remember that you will always be ambassadors for the University of the Virgin Islands.

It is with a divine joy and personal pride that I welcome everyone to these Commencement Ceremonies and wish nothing but blessings for these celebrations and our collective futures.



David Hall, S.J.D.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Hall, S.J.D., President

Keynote Speaker: Robert M. Franklin, Jr., Ph.D.

Preminent Scholar of Theological and Moral Thought, Riveting Speaker, Consummate Leader of Educational Institutions, Advisor to U.S. Presidents, and A Reservoir Of Hope

Dr. Robert Michael Franklin, Jr. is the James T. and Berta R. Laney Professor in Moral Leadership at Emory University (Atlanta). He is a Senior Advisor to the President of Emory University.

In 2013, he was a Visiting Scholar in Residence at Stanford University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. He is president emeritus of Morehouse College where he served as the tenth president of the nation's largest private, four-year liberal arts college for men from 2007 through 2012.

Franklin graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Morehouse in 1975 with a degree in political science and religion, and earned an M.Div. at Harvard Divinity School in 1978. Franklin continued his education at the University of Chicago, earning a Ph.D. in ethics and society, and religion and the social sciences in 1985. He also undertook international study at the University of Durham, UK, as a 1973 Merrill Scholar and English Speaking Union Scholar. His major fields of study included social ethics, psychology and African American religion. He is the recipient of honorary degrees from Bethune Cookman University, Bates College, University of New England, Centre College, Hampden Sydney College and Swarthmore College, Ursinus College and Washington and Jefferson College.

Franklin is the author of four books: *Moral Leadership: Integrity, Courage, Imagination* (2020); *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (2007); *Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis* (1997); and *Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in African American Thought* (1990). He has co-authored (Don S. Browning, et. al.) a volume titled, *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate* (2001). He also penned the foreword to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, reprinted by Trinity Forum in 2012.



Robert M. Franklin, Jr.

Franklin worked with three U.S. Presidents on various initiatives (President Clinton's "One America" Initiative; President Bush's "Faith Based Advisory Committee"; and President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative). He is a board member of the Centers for Disease Control Foundation, and the Princeton Theological Seminary.

Active in a range of organizations, Franklin has served on the boards of the Human Rights Campaign, the Atlanta Falcons Community Advisory Board, the National Advisory Board of the Salvation Army, the CNN Dialogues Advisory Committee, and NASA's 100-year Starship Project Advisory Board directed by former astronaut and high school classmate, Dr. Mae Jemison. He also served on the boards of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Public Broadcasting of Atlanta, and Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (Kappa Boule). He is also a member of the Downtown Atlanta Rotary Club; 100 Black Men of Atlanta; the 1999 class of Leadership Atlanta; the Leadership and Sustainability Institute Working Group (of the Open Society Foundation); and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. He has served on the boards of the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE); the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (Executive Committee); the White House HBCU Capital Financing Advisory Board; the Atlanta Business League. In 2000, Mayor Campbell appointed him co-chair of Atlanta 2000, the city's official coordinating committee for Y2K activities and celebrations. And, in 2019, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms invited him to serve on the Mayor's Task Force for the Promotion of Public Trust.

Franklin is married to Cheryl Goffney Franklin, MD, an OB-GYN physician who earned degrees at Stanford University (B.A.), Columbia University School of Public Health (MPH) and Harvard Medical School (MD). He is the father of three children and two grandchildren.

UVI HISTORY

The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) was chartered on March 16, 1962, as the College of the Virgin Islands (CVI) – a publicly funded, coeducational, liberal arts institution – by Act No. 852 of the Fourth Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to that law, UVI's cornerstone objective is to provide for "... the stimulation and utilization of the intellectual resources of the people of the Virgin Islands and the development of a center of higher learning whereby and wherefrom the benefits of culture and education may be extended throughout the Virgin Islands."

The first campus opened on St. Thomas in July 1963, on 175 acres donated by the federal government. The first Board of Trustees took office in August 1963. In 1964, the college founded a campus on St. Croix, on 130 acres also donated by the federal government. At a ceremony on March 24, 2011, the St. Croix campus was named in honor of the late Albert A. Sheen, Sr. Also in March of 2011, UVI opened the St. John Academic Center in Cruz Bay, with interactive classrooms and computer facilities. In 2015, UVI entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of St. Martin (USM) to establish an extension campus of UVI to be located on the campus of USM and to be called "UVI at USM" to offer quality academic and career education that will provide students from St. Maarten/ St. Martin and other locations across the region and around the world the opportunity to build a solid foundation to enter the workforce in their homeland, across the wider Caribbean or abroad. UVI offers 46 degree programs including 37 undergraduate degrees and nine graduate degrees through six schools and colleges: Agriculture, Business, Education, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Nursing, and Science and Mathematics. Six new degree programs began in Fall 2016: PhD in Creative Leadership for Innovation & Change, now housed under the School of Graduate Studies, BBA in Accounting, BBA in Management, BBA in Marketing, Master of Accounting, and Executive Master of Business Administration. In Spring 2018, UVI launched its new Online Division and offers 15 online degree programs nationwide. Four undergraduate certificates are also available: Entrepreneurship, Music Industry, Psychology, and Teaching English as a Second Language. In addition, there are four special programs: Honors Program, Secondary Teacher Preparation Program, Early Medical School Selection Program at Boston University School of Medicine, and Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps (SROTC). Classes are offered in the fall, spring, and summer. Academic advising and learning assistance including tutoring and supplemental instruction are available in UVI's Center for Student Success.

In 1972, the College of the Virgin Islands was awarded land grant status by the U.S. Congress. This allowed for the establishment of an Agricultural Experiment Station and a Cooperative Extension Service. Since then, many other programs and services have been added. These include the Reichhold Center for the Arts, the Eastern Caribbean Center, the William P. MacLean Marine Science Center and the UVI Sports & Fitness Center, among others. In 1986, the College of the Virgin Islands was renamed the University of the Virgin Islands to reflect the growth and diversification of its academic curricula, community and regional services, and research programs. That same year, the U.S. Congress named UVI one of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). It is the only HBCU outside the continental U.S., and the first to offer an undergraduate degree in marine biology. Dr. David Hall began his tenure as president of the University of the Virgin Islands on August 1, 2009. He succeeded Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster, who was named president in 2002.

Dr. Orville Kean was named president in 1990, succeeding Dr. Arthur A. Richards, who became president in 1980. Lawrence C. Wanlass served as the first president of the College of the Virgin Islands from 1963 until 1980.

Today, UVI enrolls approximately 1,700 full-time and part-time students on its two campuses. It continues to offer a high-quality, affordable liberal arts education in a culturally diverse environment. The University boasts more than 10,400 alumni who have gone on to excel as doctors, lawyers, judges, university and government administrators, teachers and other professionals including the present governor of the US Virgin Islands, Albert Bryan Jr. Among the many accomplished alumni are two Rhodes Scholars, the winner of a Pulitzer Prize for Journalism and the former Premier of Nevis.

The National Student Exchange (NSE) program operates on both the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. Each semester approximately 25 students from the U.S. mainland enroll through NSE. In addition, UVI continues to admit students via memoranda of understanding with the State University of New York at New Paltz, the College of Charleston, Emory University, Savannah State University (social work completion), Columbia University and Washington University in St. Louis (engineering), UNINTER (Universidad Internacional de Cuernavaca, Mexico) and the UNICA Caribbean Exchange Program.

The University of the Virgin Islands is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. Because of its dedication to educational excellence and improvement through peer evaluation and accreditation, UVI schools also hold accreditation with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN), the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). UVI also has Community Engagement Classification status from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This prestigious national designation is an evidence-based documentation of deep community engagement and the University's commitment to improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing its civic and academic missions.

UVI also has Memoranda of Understanding with several other institutions, including The Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica; Buffalo State University; Fielding Graduate University; Nantong University; Yangzhou University; Anguilla Community College; H. Lavity Stoutt Community College; T. A. Marryshow Community College; Sir Arthur Lewis Community College; University of Puerto Rico System; St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College; and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Existing Memoranda of Understanding continues with the University of St. Martin; Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College; Nevis Sixth Form College; and Dominica State College. Additionally, there are transfer programs in pre-engineering, pre-pharmacy and pre-medical technology for students who wish to begin their studies in these fields at the University of the Virgin Islands before transferring to a specialized institution to complete their degrees.

In 2021, the St. Thomas campus was named the Orville E. Kean Campus, in honor of UVI's third president.

Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change

The University of the Virgin Islands' first Ph.D. program launched in Fall 2016. Fifty doctoral candidates were a part of the first cohort who embarked on their journey to earn their Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change. The candidates were a diverse group of life-long Virgin Islanders, U.S. mainlanders, international students from around the Caribbean and beyond.

UVI President David Hall and the Board of Trustees had already determined that the creation of a Ph.D. program was inevitable for the University; but in what area? After attending a powerful conference on creative leadership, Dr. Hall became convinced that – given the territory's need for a new generation of strong and insightful leaders who possessed the skills to drive positive social and economic change – creative leadership would be the perfect interdisciplinary field for UVI's first Ph.D. program in which not just one, but all departments could participate.

Dr. Hall met with UVI Provost Dr. Camille McKayle, who received the idea with great enthusiasm. She then recruited Dr. James Maddirala, who gladly stepped up to become the primary architect of the program. Together, Dr. McKayle and Dr. Maddirala reached out to other institutions, eventually finding partners in Buffalo State University and Fielding Graduate University for the first Ph.D. of its kind.

A substantial portion of the degree requirements for UVI's doctoral program is completed at a distance, but residencies are required each semester. The program is unique in that traditional classrooms and lectures have been replaced with flexible workstations and master practitioners who will work with adult learners as peers. During the weeklong residency sessions, students will connect with the game-changers of a global world to jointly explore possible futures and exciting ideas.

The Ph.D. program, accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, will prepare learners in the field of leadership by offering an extensive study of relevant leadership knowledge.

Specialization Tracks

The Ph.D. in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change requires that all admitted students enroll in an approved specialization track. The following three tracks are proposed with the initial program:

Creativity and Leadership for Change (CLC) Track
Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands and a graduate certificate from Buffalo State University.

Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) Track
Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands and a graduate certificate from Fielding Graduate University.

Educational/Academic Leadership for Change (ELC) Track
Graduates receive a Ph.D. from the University of the Virgin Islands.

College of the Virgin Islands Class of 1972
Celebrating 50th Anniversary

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE

College of the Virgin Islands

Rae J. Armstrong • Victor F. Banks • Doris C. Battiste † • Hilary A Behan
Adelle Victoria Belle-Barry • Thomas P. Betzala † • Angel (Bryant) Boschulte
Monica Boyd-Richards • Lucy Bruney • Kathleen Y. (Bryan) Christian
James Burch Jr. • Laura T. (Hodge) Chesterfield • Ruth M. (Christensen) Nielsen
Denis E. Clarke • Luna I. Claxton† • Caryl Stanley Connor
Vincent O. Cooper • Peter A. Croes • Karen M. Daniels • David D. Davis
Glenn Davis • Yvette H. P. DeLaunabque • Maria H. Donovan
Norvel G. Donovan † • Bernice (Turnbull) Francis • Leonard B. Francis, Jr.
Wayne E. Francis • Rudolph Garfield † • Judith M. George †
Rosetta A. Georges • Winona V. (Gittens) Joshua † • Guilford R. Gumbs
Howard E. Gumbs • Bernice E. Harrigan • Ronald E. Harrigan
Norman O. Henderson • Emmeth D. Hendrickson- † • Oliver E. Hendrickson
Harold G. Horsford • Laurence P. E. Huntley • Barbara A. Isaac
Eurania M. Jurgen • David K. Karr • Joseph H. Lake, Jr. • Ruby J.E. Lake
Edith M. Leerdam • Cheryl G. Mason † • Juel D. (Meyers) Daniel
Sonya D. Nelthropp † • Glenda C. Nelson • Neville A. Paul
Klaus H. E. Priebe • Angela J. A. (Riley) Krigger • Charles E. Rogers
Dorcity A. (Rogers) Phipps • Janice L. (Ross) Grant • Laurel A. Sewer
Kwame O. Motilewa • Pauline L. Sewer • Keith C. Simmonds
Linda M. (Smith) Navarro • Anne Oudyn Stephey • Urla E. (Stevens) Wiltshire
Edwin M. Thomas, Sr. † • Jaime Velez • Alice A. Venzen † • Elise Vialet†
Austin J. Walters • Sinclair L. Wilkinson • Gerald A. Williams
Joan J. Williams† • St. Claire N. Williams

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE

College of the Virgin Islands

Raymond C. Andrews • Anita L. Bailey • Linda M. Barone • Percival E. Clouden
Clovis E. Emanuel • Acia (Ford) Francis † • Leon A. George • Sylvia M. Gibbs
Anne K. (Gilhooly) Urpanil • Cheryl P. Gunthorpe-Penn • Daniel C. Haines
Cyril C. Harrigan † • Sharon M. (Henry) Brown • Janice V. (Hodge) Rohlsen
Winston C. Industrious † • Edmond J.A. King • Eunice L. Morris • Jean V. Moses
Margaret A. Mroz • Lecia E. Nibbs-Rubaine † • Eileene L. (Stevens) Parsons
Clifford R. Powell • Klaus H. E. Priebe • Cresida (McClellan) Raimer
Norma I. Huntley • Edna L. Wigley • Bernice A. Robinson • Horace V. Rogers
Rehenia (Thompson) Romeo • Lorna (Watson) Smith † • Raymond O. Thomas
Eurice Turnbull • Dorothy (Sewer) Walcott •
Jacinta M. Weekes † • Patricia M. Williams • Loretta Wilson

Legend: † = Deceased

PROGRAM - Orville E. Kean Campus - St. Thomas

**Celia Nurse, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Nursing
COMMENCEMENT MARSHAL**

***PROCESSIONAL**.....“Pomp and Circumstance” (Elgar)
UVI Concert Choir, Dionne R. Donadelle

***INVOCATION**.....George Francis II, Class of 2022

***NATIONAL ANTHEM**.....“Star Spangled Banner” (Key)
UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle

***VIRGIN ISLANDS MARCH**.....“Virgin Islands March” (Adams)
UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle

OFFICIAL WELCOME.....David Hall, S.J.D., President

KEYNOTE ADDRESS.....Robert M. Franklin, Jr., Ph.D.

AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES.....President Hall

2022 HONOREES.....Robert M. Franklin, Jr., and Marcella-Nunez Smith, MD MHS

MUSICAL SELECTION.....“What a Wonderful World” (Weiss & Thiele)
arranged by Kasem Thompson, Jr.
UVI Concert Choir, Jeanette Rhymer

ADDRESS.....Kasem Thompson, Jr., Class of 2022

MUSICAL SELECTION..... “Lovely Day” (Withers)
UVI Concert Band, Dionne R. Donadelle
UVI Concert Choir, Jeanette Rhymer

REMARKS.....Henry C. Smock, Esq.
Chairman, UVI Board of Trustees

The Honorable Donna Frett-Gregory
President of the 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

The Honorable Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor, United States Virgin Islands

MUSICAL SELECTION.....“Total Praise” (Smallwood)
Arranged by Damon H. Dandridge
UVI Concert Choir, Jeanette Rhymer

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES.....Camille A. McKayle, Ph.D., Provost

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change • Master of Business Administration
Master of Arts Accounting • Master of Arts in Education • Master of Arts Educational Leadership
Master of Arts Leadership • Master of Arts School Counseling • Master of Arts in Psychology
Master of Public Administration • Master of Arts Counseling and Guidance
Master of Marine and Environmental Sciences • Bachelor of Arts • Bachelor of Business Administration
Bachelor of Science • Associate of Applied Science • Associate of Arts • Associate of Science

INDUCTION INTO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.....Mitchell A. Neaves
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

***ALMA MATER**.....“Alma Mater by the Sea” (LaMotta)
UVI Concert Choir, Jeanette Rhymer

***BENEDICTION**.....Sarai Hutchinson, Class of 2022

***RECESSIONAL**.....“Ceremonial Procession” (Elgar)

*Audience is required to stand.

Every effort is made to ensure that this program is accurate; circumstances beyond our control may have resulted in unintentional errors.

PROGRAM - Albert A. Sheen Campus - St. Croix

Conrad Spencer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics
COMMENCEMENT MARSHAL

- *PROCESSIONAL.....“Pomp and Circumstance” (Elgar)
UVI Concert Band, Erick Willie
- *INVOCATION.....Karon S. Reynolds, Class of 2022
- *NATIONAL ANTHEM.....“Star Spangled Banner” (Key)
UVI Concert Band
- *VIRGIN ISLANDS MARCH.....“Virgin Islands March” (Adams)
UVI Concert Band
- WELCOME.....David Hall, S.J.D., President
- KEYNOTE ADDRESS.....Robert M. Franklin, Jr., Ph.D.
- AWARDING OF HONORARY DEGREES.....President Hall
- 2022 HONOREES.....Robert M. Franklin, Jr., and Justa E. Encarnacion, R.N.
- MUSICAL SELECTION.....UVI Concert Band, Erick Willie
- ADDRESS.....Rex Cazaubon III, Class of 2022
- REMARKS.....Oran C. Roebuck
Vice Chairman, UVI Board of Trustees

The Honorable Donna Frett Gregory
President of the 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

The Honorable Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor, United States Virgin Islands

- MUSICAL SELECTION.....UVI Concert Band, Erick Willie
- PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES.....Camille A. McKayle, Ph.D., Provost

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change • Master of Business Administration
Master of Arts Accounting • Master of Arts in Education • Master of Arts Educational Leadership
Master of Arts Leadership • Master of Arts School Counseling • Master of Arts in Psychology
Master of Public Administration • Master of Arts Counseling and Guidance
Master of Marine and Environmental Sciences • Bachelor of Arts • Bachelor of Business Administration
Bachelor of Science • Associate of Applied Science • Associate of Arts • Associate of Science

- U.S. ARMY OATH OF OFFICE.....CPT John Morabito
Assistant Professor of Military Science
- INDUCTION INTO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.....Mitchell A. Neaves
Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- *ALMA MATER.....“Alma Mater by the Sea” (LaMotta)
UVI Concert Band, Erick Willie
- *BENEDICTION.....Shari Lewis, Class of 2022
- *RECESSIONAL.....“Ceremonial Procession” (Elgar)
UVI Concert Band, Erick Willie

*Audience is required to stand.

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Justa E. Encarnacion, RN, BSN, MBA/HCM

Doctor of Humane Letters

Justa E. Encarnacion, affectionately known as “Tita,” is no stranger to the U.S. Virgin Islands nor to healthcare. A St. Croix native, Commissioner Encarnacion began her career in healthcare at the Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital as a volunteer in the Nursing Education Department at the mere age of 14-years-old. This experience set the stage for her career as a healthcare professional. She currently serves as Commissioner for the Virgin Islands Department of Health and Chief Public Health Officer.

During her time at Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital, her interest in pediatric nursing blossomed. She continued her career in Cleveland, Ohio at Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital. Her two beautiful and bright children, Bobby and Stephanie Thompson, were also born in Cleveland.

She received her Associate of Science in Nursing from the then College of the Virgin Islands. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Barry University and received her Master of Business Administration in Health Care Management from the University of Phoenix. Commissioner Encarnacion is a pediatric nurse by trade.



Justa E. Encarnacion

She has over 30 years of experience in healthcare with 15 years of experience leading staff in inpatient and outpatient settings. Encarnacion has served in a number of capacities in both the private and public sectors, leading a number of projects. She was the first Health Services Supervisor and assisted with opening the first health center on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix at the University of the Virgin Islands. As the Health Services Supervisor, she also hosted various campus-led youth symposiums focused on women’s health issues and served as part-time faculty. Other roles held include Assistant Chief Nursing Officer, Vice President of Out-Patient Services, Vice President of Strategic Planning and Chief Nursing Officer at the Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center (JFL). She also collaborated with other leaders on improving the quality indicators of the Dialysis and Inpatient units and assisted in successfully regaining full Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) certification in both areas of the JFL hospital. Commissioner Encarnacion also served as Clinical Advisor at Case Western Reserve University Francis Payne Bolton School of Nursing. She has developed policies, implemented process improvement initiatives, headed transitions, and conducted strategic planning.

On January 22, 2019, Encarnacion was appointed by Governor Albert Bryan Jr. as the Commissioner Nominee for the Virgin Islands Department of Health and sworn into the position on June 16, of the same year. This position required a shift in focus from in-patient care to public health service. Her experience with the in-patient arena, and work with outpatient agencies at the University of the Virgin Islands and medical group practices prepared her for the role as the lead Virgin Islands, Public Health Official. She comes with a strong regulatory background and is committed to improving health care in the Territory and as a result, implemented the Division of Regulatory Services in the Department. In March of 2020, Commissioner Encarnacion was also designated as the Incident Commander to lead the mission to protect the U.S. Virgin Islands public’s health during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Commissioner Encarnacion embraces and respects the responsibility of her appointment. She believes in community and collaboration and that community begins with public health. Commissioner Encarnacion holds team building as a means for success. She utilizes the nursing process as her basis for process improvement, as she is convinced that it can be matched with any process improvement methodologies in creating sustainable changes.

Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS

Doctor of Humane Letters

Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS. is the C.N.H Long Professor of Internal Medicine, Public Health, and Management; Inaugural Associate Dean for Health Equity Research; Founding Director of the Equity Research and Innovation Center (ERIC); Director of the Center for Research Engagement (CRE); Associate Cancer Center Director for Community Outreach and Engagement at Yale Cancer Center; Chief Health Equity Officer at Smilow Cancer Hospital; Deputy Director for Health Equity Research and Workforce Development at the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation; Core Faculty in the National Clinician Scholars Program; Research Faculty in the Global Health Leadership Initiative; Director of the Pozen-Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Health Equity Leadership; and Co-Director of the Doris Duke Clinical Research Fellowship.

Dr. Nunez-Smith's research focuses on promoting health and healthcare equity for structurally marginalized populations with an emphasis on centering community engagement, supporting healthcare workforce diversity and development, developing patient reported measurements of healthcare quality, and identifying regional strategies to reduce the global burden of non-communicable diseases. Dr. Nunez-Smith has extensive expertise in examining the effects of social and structural determinants of health, systemic influences contributing to health disparities, health equity improvement, and community-academic partnered scholarship. In addition to this extensive experience in primary data collection, management, and analysis, ERIC has institutional expertise in qualitative and mixed methods, population health, and medical informatics.

She is the principal investigator on many National Institute of Health (NIH) and foundation-funded research projects, including an NIH/NCI-funded project to develop a tool to assess patient reported experiences of discrimination in healthcare. She has conducted an investigation of the promotion and retention of diversity in academic medical school faculty and has published numerous articles on the experiences of minority students and faculty. Funded by NIH/NIMHD, she established the Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network (ECHORN), a research collaborative across four Eastern Caribbean islands, supporting several chronic disease research projects and enhancing health outcomes research and leadership capacity in the region; the flagship ECHORN Cohort Study recruited and is following a community-dwelling adult cohort to examine novel chronic disease risk and protective factors. She recently received NIH/National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) funding to build upon this work by recruiting children into an expanded intergenerational ECHORN cohort, inclusive of a biorepository. She is also Principal Investigator on one of five NIH/NIMHD-funded Transdisciplinary Collaborative Centers on Health Disparities focused on Precision Medicine, which leverages the ECHORN infrastructure to conduct collaborative research on hypertension and diabetes.

Most recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shed national attention on the health and healthcare disparities of marginalized populations, she was called upon to serve on the Governor's ReOpen CT Advisory Group and to chair its Community Committee. She served as an Advisor to the Biden-Harris campaign, and subsequently named co-chair of the Biden-Harris Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board and will serve as chair of the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force in the administration. She also received NIH funding to leverage ECHORN to improve the COVID-19 testing cascade in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Dr. Nunez-Smith has mentored dozens of trainees since completing fellowship and has received numerous awards for teaching and mentoring. She is board certified in internal medicine, having completed residency training at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital and fellowship at the Yale Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program, where she also received a Masters in Health Sciences. Originally from the US Virgin Islands, she attended Jefferson Medical College, where she was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society, and she earned a BA in Biological Anthropology and Psychology at Swarthmore College.



Marcella Nunez-Smith

President's Cabinet

Dr. Camille A. McKayle

Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

David Wuinee

Associate Provost
for Enrollment Management

Shirley Lake-King

Vice President
for Administration and Finance
and Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Haldane Davies

Vice President
for Business Development
and Innovation

Mitchell A. Neaves

Vice President
for Institutional Advancement

Hedda Finch Simpson

Dean of Student Affairs
Albert A. Sheen Campus

Sharlene Harris

Vice President
for Information Services
and Institutional Assessment

Verna Rivers

Dean of Student Affairs
Orville E. Kean Campus

Nereida Washington

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The Mace

The mace of the University of the Virgin Islands is the symbol both of presidential responsibilities and authority. Carved on the island of St. Croix from the wood of a local mahogany tree, one of God's most enduring symbols of life, the mace says that the responsibilities of the president are without end. It also says that the president cannot discharge those responsibilities without authority. The mace is a 3-foot-long mahogany cylinder 1.5 inches in diameter topped by a four-inch mahogany ball into which a sterling silver reproduction of the University logo is set. The sterling silver logo was crafted on the island of St. Thomas.

Academic Regalia

The wearing of caps, gowns and hoods at graduation exercises is one of the oldest and most democratic of collegiate customs. It originated in the Middle Ages when the first universities were founded as clerical institutions. Besides distinguishing the wearers from laymen, the costume served a very practical purpose in the unheated churches and cloisters of the time. It often added grace to the individuals and impressiveness to the ceremonies in which they took part. Its chief virtue, however, was that it eliminated undemocratic differences in dress which might otherwise have marred an essentially democratic occasion.

Under the intercollegiate system adopted in 1893, the Oxford cap or "mortarboard" is worn for all degrees, but the doctor is entitled to a gold tassel and optional velvet cap. The sleeve of the master's gown is distinguished from the bachelor's by a half-moon cut at the end. The doctor's gown has faced-down fronts, and round bell sleeves with bars of velvet. The master's degree hood is longer than the bachelor's and the doctor's is longer than the master's. All hoods are lined with silk showing the official colors of the institution that conferred the degree.

The doctoral, bachelor's and master's degree candidates at the University of the Virgin Islands wear hoods lined with Caribbean blue and white, the school colors. The hoods are also trimmed with the various colors outlined below to signify the degrees earned and areas of study. According to the Academic Costume Code, at most U.S. institutions the color of velvet trim indicates the following academic disciplines: agriculture/maize; economics/copper; education/light blue; engineering/orange; fine arts/brown; home economics/maroon; law/purple; library science/lemon; music/pink; nursing/apricot; philosophy/dark blue; physical education/sage green; public administration/peacock blue; public health/salmon pink; science/golden yellow; social science/cream; social work/citron; speech/silver gray.

Alma Mater By the Sea

Words & Music by Wilbur "Bill" LaMotta

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
Beside the blue Caribbean calm
Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
'neath sunny skies and whisp'ring palm

Proud we are to tread thy ways
Loud and true we voice our praise
Open door thy every portal
'mid sand and sea and golden days

Long the ties that will endure
Strong in heart and memory
Faithfully we'll always honor
Our Alma Mater by the sea

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
For guiding stars so brightly shown
Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
How wide the bound'ries we have flown

Sing we now of bright tomorrows
Yesterday we never knew
Walking down thy halls of wisdom
The towerin' heights are all in view

Here to us on islands famed
Dear to us thy name will be
University of the Virgin Islands
Our Alma Mater by the sea.

