



UVI *Alumni Chronicles*

University of the **Virgin Islands**

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UVI First to Achieve Historic Alumni Participation Rate

The University of the Virgin Islands is the first Historically Black College and University to achieve an alumni participation rate of more than 50 percent. "I hereby publicly announce that the University of the Virgin Islands alumni rate for fiscal year 2012-2013 was 51.73 percent," announced UVI President Dr. David Hall to an excited flag waving crowd of alumni, faculty and staff on Nov. 25, at the "First to 50" Alumni celebration on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix. The event was video conferenced to the St. Thomas Campus, heard live on WUVI 1090 AM over the airways and online; and could be seen live online as well.

"History is not just something we find in books on the library shelf," said Dr. Hall. "History is the collective achievements that we remem-

ber, record and celebrate. Today we remember, record and celebrate the history making achievement that occurred through the work and sac-

If this level of giving continues, UVI will be one of the top ten colleges in the nation in regards to alumni contributions.

rifices of the people that are gathered here today, but also of so many others not gathered here today. Those who we truly celebrate and who this event is premised on are the thousands of alumni who could not fill these rooms today, but have filled our hearts through their generosity and sacrifice."

Dr. Hall continued, "If this level of giving continues, UVI will be one of the top ten colleges in the nation in regards to alumni contributions. There are only eight institutions in the nation that have a rate higher than ours."

The goal to increase the alumni giving rate came after UVI President Dr. David Hall and the Board of Trustees' Development Commit-

-Dr. David Hall, UVI President

tee set the aspirational goal of a 50 percent alumni participation rate. Smith led the institution's "50 for 50" fundraising campaign which aimed to raise the annual giving rate from 13 percent to 50 percent. UVI made it to 42 percent at the end of this challenge. In June, UVI's Alumni Association was named Alumni Association of the Year at the Third Annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities' (HBCU) Awards on the Jackson State University Campus, in Mississippi for achieving this rate.

"We at UVI are keenly aware of the importance of alumni giving," said UVI Vice President for Institutional Advancement Dionne Jackson. "This is their way of demonstrating their support and buy-in into the president's vision and the work we do at the institution.

This level of participation will go a long way in building UVI's efficacy and ability to fulfil this mis-



Congratulations, Mighty Buccaneers!

FY2012-13 has truly been the year of the CVI/UVI alumni. First we received national recognition by achieving a participation rate of 42 percent, and then we made history by becoming the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to achieve a participation rate of 51.7 percent! The Alumni Affairs team thanks our students, alumni, volunteers and friends for joining us in placing UVI within the annals of history, while addressing the academic and financial needs of those we serve. UVI, being the youngest HBCU in the nation, honors our forefathers and stalwarts whom have paved the way to make education affordable and equitable to every person who believes in dreams.

Please enjoy the feature story of one of our very own trailblazers, the Honorable Eileene Parsons, '72 who recently made history by receiving the Order of the British Empire designa-



UVI alumni, staff and friends cheer at the "First to 50" Alumni Celebration on the St. Thomas Campus.

continued on next page

continued on page 3

continued from page 1

sion. Congratulations to all UVI alumni on this major success.”

The UVI Board of Trustees honored UVI’s Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Affairs for their work toward achieving an alumni participation rate of 51.7 percent during an Oct. 26, board meeting. UVI Board of Trustees Chair Alexander Moorhead presented UVI Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Affairs Linda I. Smith with the UVI Board of Trustees Recognition Award. Alumni Association representatives Marthious Clavier and Jacqueline Sprauve also received an appreciation award.

“Everyone has been so supportive from day one and they continue to be,” said Smith. “I really and truly am proud to see the amount of support that we received from the greater community—especially our alumni.”

Smith said she was grateful to those who gave throughout the world “Schools like to issue challenges and campaigns, but I think what makes UVI so unique is that we stand by what we believe in - Historically American, Uniquely Caribbean and Globally Interactive,” she said. “That mantra holds true.”

The Board also honored the UVI Institutional Advancement Component for its work in achieving the 51.7 alumni participation rate.



ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHT:
Eileene Parsons

It has been 39 years since former Deputy Chief Minister of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) Eileene Parsons, ‘72 roamed the halls of the then College of the Virgin Islands (CVI), but she remembers it like it was yesterday. Parsons was not a traditional student. In 1965, she found herself working for former U.S. Virgin Islands Commissioner of Education Dr. Arthur C. Richards. When Richards became the dean of CVI, he insisted that his secretary, Parsons, join him.

Today, Parsons has many years of public service under her belt and her dedication did not go unnoticed. On June 14, she was awarded the Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth II for her services to education and to the community in the BVI. “When I was told that I had the OBE, yes I was very pleased and I was honored because it wasn’t something that I expected,” said Parsons. “I was not doing what I was doing looking for any honor. I get more enjoyment out of what I do. My interests in making sure my people advance cannot be duplicated.”

Parsons’ political career began in 1995 when she became the first woman to be elected to an at-large seat on the BVI Legislative Council. In 1997, she was appointed

Alumni Spotlight: Former Deputy Chief Minister Eileene Parsons

Minister of Health, Education and Welfare, becoming the first female minister in 30 years of Ministerial Government. She retained her seat in the 14th legislature, polling the fourth highest number of votes as territorial candidate in the general election of 1999. She was the first female minister of Education, Culture and Sports; Health, Welfare and Social Development; and Labor and Natural Resources in the British Virgin Islands Party Government.

Throughout her career, she continued to advance herself through education and redefined herself many times in her professional life. “One of the best things that happened to me in the world of work was working with Arthur Richards,” said Parsons, who decided to attain an associate’s degree. “I was

The more education you get the better your earning power.

-Eileene Parsons, ‘72

allowed to grow in my job.” She said the only other employer that could compare was former BVI Secretary of Education Charles Wheatley. “Both of those men allowed you to stretch as far as you are able,” said Parsons. “They gave me guidance. They never discouraged me.” Dr. Richards became the University’s second president.

After leaving UVI, Parsons returned home to Tortola, where she took a position as an executive secretary for the BVI Tourist Board. In this post she traveled the world promoting the BVI and realized they needed much more than a secretary to take notes and “type like the wind.” The BVI govern-

ment sent her to Florida International University where she earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Hospitality Management and Destination Promotion in 1983.

Education has always been important to Parsons, who was hand-picked by former Chief Minister H. Lavity Stoutt to form the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. In January 1989, she took on the task of building the college by calling on Dr. Richards, Wheatley, former CVI Administrator Dr. John Wallace and UVI Professor Roy Watlington. HLSCC opened in 1990. “The more education you get the better your earning power,” said Parsons. She said when she graduated from the Charlotte Amalie High School a 12th grade diploma was top of the line. “Today that is no longer valid. I encourage the young

people to go to school. Don’t stop at high school.” In recognition of her efforts, the Eileene L. Parsons Auditorium at HLSCC was named in her honor. She is currently serving as deputy chair of the HLSCC Board of Governors.

Parsons retired from political service after becoming ill in 2007. She is still very active in the community.

UVI Alumni on Anguilla & St. Martin Host UVI President

The University of the Virgin Islands alumni on Anguilla and St. Martin reminisced about the past and considered the University's future during meet-and-greet sessions held on both islands. UVI President Dr. David Hall and Director of Annual Giving and Alumni Affairs Linda I. Smith mixed and mingled with alumni on Anguilla on Nov. 5, and on St. Martin on Nov. 6.

UVI Alumnus Timothy Hodge '92 coordinated the activity at the Anguilla Community College. Alumni met over light refreshments. Hodge was pleased with the visit and impressed with the initiatives being implemented at



University of the Virgin Islands alumni gather at a meet-and-greet at the Anguilla Community College.

but we are engaged alumni none the less." He said that there are a lot of family connections among the alumni, with cousins, mothers or sons being alumni. "UVI alumni are very proud of UVI," said Hodge. "This is demonstrated by the fact that a lot of those that

reactivate St. Martin's Alumni Association Chapter and to retrieve updated contact information.

Arrindell remains committed to UVI. He was among the first group of students in 1976 to attend UVI from St. Martin. Arrindell earned a degree from UVI in 1981, a bachelor's degree in education, and again in 1999, a master's degree in administration and supervision. Currently, he is the St. Martin Academy High School's education coordinator and advisor to the board. "I believe in a UVI education because basically you can reach anywhere with it," he said. "You have a strong background coming from UVI." His wife started at UVI. His son graduated in 2010 and his daughter graduated in 2009. Arrindell said many UVI alumni in St. Martin hold prominent positions and that this was an indication of the value of an education at UVI.

could not make the function were engaged in calling others to make sure that they came. That is evident that they are proud of UVI."

ST. MARTIN -

UVI Alumnus Roberto Celestino Arrindell '81, '94, coordinated the meet-and-greet at the University of St. Martin. He was pleased with the commitment of the alumni that were able to attend. "I think that is one of the highlights for alumni that they get involved in promoting

I believe in a UVI education because basically you can reach anywhere... You have a strong background coming from UVI.

-Roberto Arrindell, '81, '94

UVI and that the UVI Alumni Association does come out and share what is happening from island to island," Arrindell said. He added that there are plans in the works to

UVI alumni are very proud of UVI. -Timothy Hodge '92

UVI. He said one alumna brought her daughter to hear more about the University she plans to attend next spring. "Education is of the ultimate importance for me and it should be for anybody," said Hodge. "It's something which I think should be continued throughout someone's life – not something that you do and have done it." He continues to be actively invested in UVI. One of Hodge's daughters graduated in 2009 and another daughter is currently a student majoring in psychology. He recently visited UVI to make a presentation at a genealogy conference.

"I think it is important to maintain that contact and to know how the University is doing," Hodge said. "It is unfortunate that this engagement has not resulted in a sustainable alumni association here,

continued from page 1

tion by Queen Elizabeth of England. This is one of my personal favorite alumni stories and considered a wonderful and respected read!

This year FY2013-14, we are charged with maintaining this historic participation rate and look forward to your valued support. Enjoy!

Linda I. Smith '98, '03
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**ALUMNI
UPDATE
YOUR
CONTACT
INFORMATION
ONLINE**

Best of the Best

We asked UVI Alumni on Facebook to tell us what their favorite UVI cafeteria meal was when they were students. This is what they said:

"Oh boy. I still remember the grill cheese sandwiches and the oxtails." - Osvaldo Parrilla, BA 1986, Spanish Education, Albert A. Sheen Campus

"Cook-up for lunch on Saturdays back in 2010-2011." - Ciaran Phillip, BS 2011, Chemistry, St. Thomas Campus

"Stir fry!" - Lyssi Simon, BA 2010, Biology
"Either the oxtails or the mutton stew." - Chris La Barbera, AA 2003 & BA 2004, Marketing and Marine Biology, St. Thomas Campus
"Mr. Nibbs potato stuffing." - Ann Shireen Gumbs, BA 1984, St. Thomas Campus



Where are They Now?

Can you name the alumni in this photo, their attending years and where they are now?

Did You Know

Did you know that the University of the Virgin Islands now offers a Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management? This is a professional management program designed to provide students with the necessary academic and practical knowledge to manage various levels of tourism in the Virgin Islands and other markets. The program's mission is to empower a diverse and global population of student professionals who will develop into strong leaders within the hospitality industry through academic excellence, industry work experience, and community service.

