

Edward E. Thomas, Sr.

Exemplary Public Servant, Outstanding Business Leader and Anchor for Economic Development
Doctor of Humane Letters

Born and raised on St. Thomas, Edward Elroy Thomas, Sr. is best known in the community for his prominent roles as Director of the Internal Revenue Bureau (IRB) and President, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board Chairman of The West Indian Company, Limited (WICO).

Thomas graduated from Charlotte Amalie High School in 1961 and attended Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Business in 1966. Long intrigued by numbers and analytics, Thomas began his career as an IRB agent with the Tax Division of the Department of Finance where he moved up the ranks to become the Reviewer-Classifier after completing the Revenue Service Appeals Manager training. In 1991, Thomas was nominated by Governor Alexander A. Farrelly, confirmed by the Legislature, and sworn into office as the Director of the IRB. As Director, he reformed the Stop Tax Evasion Program, fully automated the tax processing capabilities to include an automated billing system and secured agreements to have the IRB and IRS coordinate their efforts in the “cover-over” procedures.



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In 1992, Thomas was appointed by Governor Farrelly to chair a team tasked with concluding negotiations with the East Islandia Corporation for the acquisition of its shares in WICO. After arduous negotiations, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands passed the acquisition bill and on Transfer Day 1993, Governor Farrelly signed the Bill into law as Act No. 5826. The final chapter of this series of historical events took place on June 30, 1993. As a result, the VI Government took possession of WICO, the Government Employees Retirement System purchased the Havensight Mall, and any rights that the Danish Company had to develop the Charlotte Amalie Harbor were extinguished.

In 1994, Thomas entered into an initial five-year contract with WICO to serve as its President, CEO and Board Chairman. His tenure lasted an impressive 17 years. Under Thomas' leadership, the WICO underwent a significant transformation including expanding its operations, attracting major cruise lines to the Territory, and solidifying the U.S. Virgin Islands as a major player in the Caribbean tourism industry. His vision and strategic planning were instrumental in making the Havensight complex the number one cruise destination in the Eastern Caribbean. Of particular importance, Thomas also completed negotiations with Andrew Farkas and the IGY Marinas group to lease them significant acreage to construct retail shops, apartments, and dining facilities to complement the overall redevelopment of the world class Yacht Haven Grande facility, which serves as an impressive array of the world's finest mega yachts as well as sailing, sport fishing, and pleasure crafts in St. Thomas.

Equally notable is Thomas' long record of community service, having shared his expertise on numerous Boards throughout his distinguished career, to include serving on the Foundation for the University of the Virgin Islands. He also served on the Investment and Development committees until August of 2009 when he was confirmed as a member of the UVI Board of Trustees, serving as Finance Committee Chair for several years. He is currently a Trustee Emeritus.

In June of 2016, Governor Kenneth Mapp appointed Thomas to the UVI Research and Technology Park Board where he currently serves as Chairman. Thomas has also served on the boards of the St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce and the Community Foundation of the VI and is currently an Honorary Director of the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association Board. In 1994, he was named “Person of the Year” by the Rotary Club of St. Thomas II. In 2001 he was a Chamber of Commerce “Community Service Award Recipient” and in 2010 he was inducted into the Charlotte Amalie High School “Wall of Fame”.

Thomas is an active member of the Memorial Moravian Church assisting the church with financial management while serving on the Board of Stewards.

He is married to Lucia A. Martin-Thomas, and they are the proud parents of Dr. Edward Thomas, Jr., Dr. Lia A. Thomas and Denise Thomas-Ford; and grandparents of Edward Gary Thomas, Maya Thomas and Lilah and Zoe Levesque.