GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

STATEMENT

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ON THE PASSING OF MS. EILEENE LUCIA PARSONS, OBE

Release Date: 22 June, 2025



With deep sorrow, I extend heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Government and people of the Virgin Islands on the passing of one of our most distinguished daughters, Ms. Eileene Lucia Parsons, OBE.

Ms. Parsons was a trailblazer, a cultural icon, and a patriot whose legacy is woven into the very fabric of our society. As the first woman to serve as a Government Minister, Deputy Chief Minister, and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative, Ms. Parsons was a pioneer who shattered barriers and opened doors for future generations of women leaders.

Along with Ms. Ethlyn Smith, she was one of the first women to serve in the Legislative Council, a groundbreaking achievement in the political history of the Virgin Islands. She was among the first at-large members ever elected, further solidifying her legacy as a political pioneer.

She served the Virgin Islands with passion, distinction, and unrelenting commitment throughout her long and vibrant life. From her early academic pursuits in Puerto Rico and New York to her studies in hospitality management at Florida International University, Ms. Parsons consistently equipped herself to serve with excellence. Her professional and political career marked her steadfast dedication to health, education, and cultural preservation.

Most notably, Ms. Parsons earned the revered title of “BVI Cultural Icon” for good reason. She founded and led the BVI Heritage Dancers and countless other initiatives that celebrated and preserved our traditions. She was the first Government Minister to ensure that local cultural groups travelled internationally, proudly representing the Virgin Islands and showcasing the richness of our heritage abroad. Her love for culture and festivals was unmatched, and she dedicated her life to keeping our traditions alive for future generations.

Beyond her official duties, Ms. Parsons had a deep and abiding love for softball and horse racing, reflecting her vibrant spirit and connection to the community.

In 2013, Ms. Parsons was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), a fitting recognition of her extraordinary service to the Territory. Today, her name lives on in many ways—including the Eileene L. Parsons

Auditorium at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, a space dedicated to learning, creativity, and community.

Ms. Parsons lived a long and remarkable life, reaching the age of 94 just under two weeks before her 95th birthday. Virgin Islanders will miss her voice, presence, and contributions at home and abroad. We are forever grateful for her service, strength, and the indelible mark she has left on this Territory.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Gallery



