GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry Honours Education Pioneers at Inaugural Living Legends Luncheon

Release Date: 10 April, 2026



The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports have honoured retired educators from the 1960s and 1970s during the inaugural Living Legends Luncheon.

The event held on March 30 at The Moorings formed part of the closing activities for Education Month 2026 and paid tribute to educators whose decades of service helped shape the foundation of the modern Virgin Islands education system.

More than thirty retired educators attended the luncheon, representing a combined centuries of service to the Territory's students and schools. To be recognised as a Living Legend, honourees must have served 25 years or more within the Virgin Islands education system.

Minister for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports Honourable Sharie B. de Castro delivered a poetic tribute during the ceremony, recognising the educators as pioneers whose dedication helped build the Territory's education system during a period when resources were often limited.

"You are the quiet architects of a loud and living legacy, the unseen ink in every signature of success," Minister de Castro recited. "We lead because you lifted. We stand because you stood — when standing was not easy, when resources were scarce, when recognition was rare, but responsibility was real."

The minister noted that the luncheon was held to ensure that the educators who laid the groundwork for education in the Virgin Islands are formally recognised and celebrated for their contributions.

Thirty-eight educators were honoured during the event, with several additional pioneers recognised in absentia. Due to limited historical documentation from that era, the ministry acknowledged that identifying every educator who served during the 1960s and 1970s remains an ongoing effort.

The Living Legends Luncheon will now become an annual event, providing continued opportunities to celebrate educators who helped build the Territory's education system.

The ministry is also inviting the public to assist in identifying additional educators who served during that period.

Residents are encouraged to submit nominations of retired educators from the 1960s and 1970s who served 25 years or more in the Virgin Islands education system so that they may be considered for recognition at the next Living Legends Luncheon scheduled for 2027.

2026 Living Legends Honourees

Altagracia Hodge, Belsadys Donovan, Beverly Braithwaite, Carren Mathavious, Caryl O’Neal Alexander, Cecily Malone, Debra James, Dr. Charles Wheatley OBE, Elmera Dawson, Elmore Stoutt, Enid Thomas, Erma Vanterpool, Ethlyn Ollivierre, Eugenie Donovan-Glasgow, Flosetta Harrigan, Gladys Scatliffe, Gracia Stevens, Geranium Stoutt, Josephine Callwood, Leona Hodge, H. Lynden Smith MBE, Yvonne Flores, Marva Martin, Medita Wheatley, Prudence Mathavious, Shirley Martin, Sylvia Adams, Ulric Scatliffe MBE, Wendell Stevens, Maruita Kupoluyi, Majourie Nibbs, Erlin Vanterpool, Irene Parsons, Margaret Ward, Elena Fahie, Ruben Vanterpool, Olive Vanterpool and Yvonne Nibbs Flores.

Honourable Mentions Recognized in Absentia

L. Adorothy Turnbull, Marion Levons, Huldah Parker, Dorothea Maduro, Dr. Esmeralda O’Neal, Cecelia Turnbull-Cline, Lillie Shirley, Glorice Malone, Irma Smith, Adel Frett, Beatrice Penn, Ivy Chinnery, Lyra Hodge, Yvonne Dawson, Claudia Kettle and Joseph Vanterpool.

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports expressed gratitude to all honourees for their lifelong dedication to education and their lasting impact on generations of students in the Virgin Islands.

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