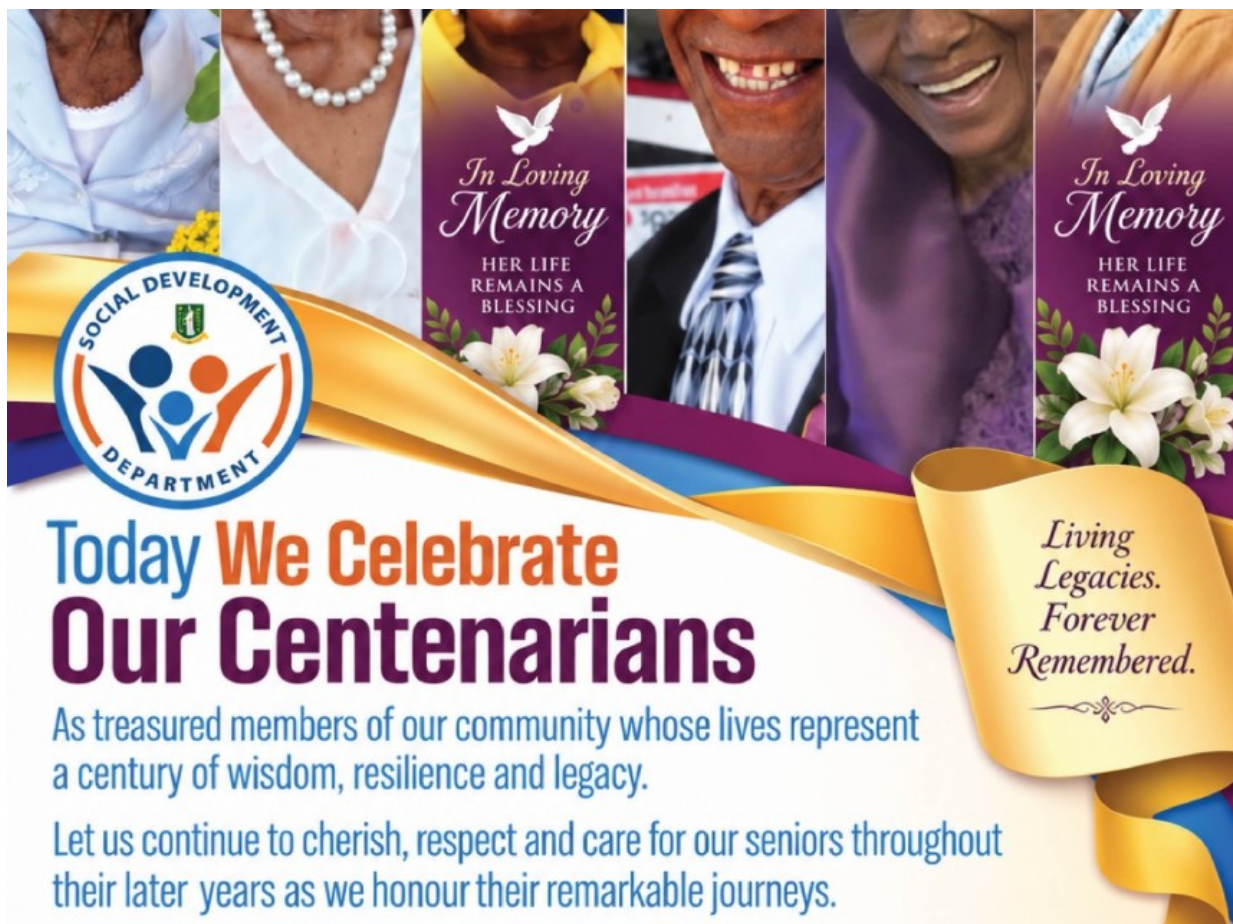


Community Encouraged to Honour and Care for the Territory's Seniors

Release Date: 22 September, 2026



**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Today We Celebrate Our Centenarians

As treasured members of our community whose lives represent a century of wisdom, resilience and legacy.

Let us continue to cherish, respect and care for our seniors throughout their later years as we honour their remarkable journeys.

*Living Legacies.
Forever Remembered.*

The Social Development Department is encouraging residents to show greater appreciation, care and support for older persons as the Territory observes National Centenarian Day.

The day will be observed on September 22 under the theme **“Then & Now...Through the Years.”** To mark the occasion, the Ministry will launch a short awareness campaign celebrating the Territory’s centenarians and their contributions to the Virgin Islands.

Programme Director for Aged Care Services, Social Development Department, Mrs. Trisha Smith-Gomes, stated that the Territory’s centenarians have witnessed the BVI then, a simpler time when community, family, tradition and neighbourly support were at the heart of everyday life. They have also experienced the BVI now , a changing Territory shaped by growth, technology and new opportunities.

Mrs. Trisha Smith-Gomes further stated that older persons hold an important place within families and communities, carrying with them decades of knowledge, experience, traditions and memories. “Our seniors are part of the foundation upon which our community was built. They raised families, supported neighbours, contributed to the development of the Territory and helped preserve many of the values and traditions we enjoy today,” Mrs. Smith-Gomes said.

She added that National Centenarian’s Day provides an opportunity not only to celebrate those who have reached 100 years and beyond but also to reflect on how older persons are treated and supported as they age. “Honouring our seniors must go beyond recognising a milestone. It is also about making sure they continue to feel valued, included, respected and cared for as they age,” Mrs. Smith-Gomes said.

The observance will also honour the late Mrs. Enelle Smith and Mrs. Esmie Estene Turnbull-Stoutt, two of the Territory’s treasured centenarians who recently passed away. Their lives and legacies will be remembered alongside those of the many older persons whose contributions have helped shape the Virgin Islands and strengthen the Territory across generations.

The Ministry is encouraging families and communities to be intentional about checking in on older relatives and friends, spending meaningful time with them, listening to their stories and ensuring their physical, emotional and social needs are recognised and supported.

“Our centenarians are truly a bridge between then and now, carrying our history, values, stories and traditions from one generation to the next. Their lives remind us of where we have come from and the importance of preserving our heritage for generations to come,” Mrs. Smith-Gomes concluded,

The Ministry of Health and Social Development, through the Social Development Department, remains committed to promoting the well-being of older persons and strengthening the support available to them and their families throughout the Virgin Islands.

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