

# Dateline: UVI



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## UVI Graduates Told to Create Their 'New Chapters'

Spelman University President Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum wondered how her life would be different if the University of the Virgin Islands existed in 1907, when her grandfather Victor Daniel left his birthplace of St. Thomas to pursue higher education at Tuskegee Institute. Dr. Tatum was the keynote speaker at UVI's Commencement Ceremonies on May 12 and 13 on St. Thomas and St. Croix, respectively.

Because UVI did not come into existence for another 55 years, Daniel moved ahead to create a new chapter for himself. Dr. Tatum urged UVI graduates to likewise create a new chapter for themselves now that they are leaving UVI.

"Listen for that still, small voice within that will lead you to your true calling," Dr. Tatum said, adding that finding a calling is not enough. Hard work and dedication are needed to fulfill a calling, she said. Dr. Tatum asked graduates to put aside their fears as she referenced a message in a paperweight that she was given as a gift: "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?"

Dr. Tatum was given a UVI honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, along with Virgin Islands surgeon, philanthropist and humanitarian Dr. Alfred O. Heath. V.I. Congresswoman Dr. Donna M. Christensen was given a UVI honorary Doctor of Laws.

The real stars were the hundreds of students who received degrees. On St. Thomas 227 degrees were awarded. On St. Croix 136 degrees were awarded. Marcia Bruno and Gail Alexander on St. Thomas, and Danielle Christian on St. Croix became the first female graduates of UVI's ROTC Program. Both were commissioned during each Commencement Ceremony.

St. Thomas campus commencement speaker Sondria Pemberton said the class had come through blazing storms but made a wise decision to invest in education. "We have made an investment that will give us sure returns again and again," she said. Desiree K. Golden was the commencement speaker on St. Croix.

V.I. Governor John P. deJongh Jr. challenged the members of the class to use their degrees to: make the world a better place, never stop learning, cherish the relationships made,



Top: Marcia Bruno, left, and Gail Alexander take an oath at the Commissioning Ceremony held during Commencement on the St. Thomas campus.

Below: On St. Croix UVI Professor Dr. Gabriel Ogunmokun turns the tassel of Shamoï Garcia at the Albert A. Sheen Campus Commencement Ceremony.



live according to spiritual values and give back to UVI.

UVI President Dr. David Hall said one of the University's proudest accomplishments is the more than 7,000 alumni who are making a difference around the world. "Today you will join this honored group," he said. "Be thankful that the journey does not end here," Dr. Hall said, noting inevitable "mountains and valleys" that the graduates will encounter along the road to success. "We hope that UVI gave you the tools to traverse any terrain you may face."

### Events Calendar

June 2	RTPark Board Meeting	STX
June 4-6	Energy Assessment	STX
June 4-7	Alumni Phonathon	STT
June 21-July 27	Summer Session II	STT/STX
June 21	Agriculture Forum	STX
June 24	Land Grant Celebration	STX

## Service Awards Honor Employees

During this difficult economic time, when the University of the Virgin Islands was required by legislation to temporarily cut salaries, UVI thanked employees at the 38th Annual Service Awards for their years of service and enduring the challenges. Employees on the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix were honored on April 10. At the St. Thomas campus ceremony on April 12, UVI's Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development Bettina Miller congratulated employees for their staying power and dedication to the University "during the good times and the trying times."

UVI President Dr. David Hall echoed similar sentiment. "This is our moment to say to the world that you are special and what you can give to the world is special," Dr. Hall said. Even though employees are being asked to do more and compensation may not match up, he said, employees realize that helping to meet the University's mission is greater than individual tasks. "Words are insufficient to convey our appreciation," he said. "We honor you today because you are too humble to honor yourselves."

Employees on both campuses were recognized for their years of service in five-year increments. Retirees and employees with perfect attendance were also honored. On St. Thomas the longest serving employee to be recognized was Professor Dr. Vincent O. Cooper, for 35 years of service. On St. Croix the longest-serving employees to be recognized were Yvonne M. Horton, Coreen D. Hughes, Evannie A.E. Jeremiah and Yvette I. Taylor for 30 years of service each.

The keynote speaker for both events was Dr. Valdemar Hill, chief

negotiator of the VI Office of Collective Bargaining. "Your achievements speak volumes about you, not only as an employee but as a person," Dr. Hill said, noting employee characteristics such as dependability, integrity, loyalty and work ethic. "Because of you UVI has a bright future," he said. "You are special not because of the award you will receive, but because of what you have done to achieve it."

The usual highlight of the Service Awards is the announcement of the employee of the year – which is kept secret until the very end. Adam Weis was selected as employee of the year on the Albert A. Sheen Campus. Weis, a research analyst at the Agricultural Experiment Station, was described as a team player who works after-hours, on weekends and holidays to get the job done. He was also described as a friendly person who can communicate with people on all levels.

On the St. Thomas campus Paulette Stevens was selected as employee of the year. Stevens is an administrative assistant in the College of Science and Mathematics. She was described as the "backbone" of her area, a "model for competent and congenial interfacing with other departments and units on campus," and a "consummate professional."

Both were honored during the Government of the Virgin Islands Annual Public Service Recognition Week.

"Let us, during this jubilee year, remember that we can make the next 50 years greater than the first," Dr. Hall said.



**Dateline UVI** is UVI's monthly newsletter produced by the UVI Public Relations Office. Photos by Gary Metz and Tina Henle. For more information contact Editor Nanyamka Farrelly at (340) 693-1056 or nfarrel@uvi.edu.

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