

PRESS RELEASE

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VI 71st Emancipation Celebration to Start with Torchlight Procession

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The Virgin Islands commences its 71st Emancipation Celebration with the Traditional Torchlight Procession followed by the official opening ceremony of the Neil Frett Festival Village, later today.

The torchlight procession will begin at 7:30 p.m. from the Noel Lloyd/Positive Action Movement Park. The traditional event has been a part of the Territory's Festival celebrations, since its inception in 1935, and continues to unify the community in the annual celebration of emancipation.

Persons are asked to dress in All-White as customary, and groups are permitted to dress in attire that will identify them as groups. Participants are asked to have their own torchlights, as the supply of torches are very limited. Torches are also only for participants that are 13 years or older.

The Elmore Stoutt High School Drum Corp and a motorcade will lead the procession from the Noel Lloyd/Positive Action Movement Park to the Neil Frett Festival Village.

The parade of lights from both torches and lanterns will move from the Waterfront Drive to the Festival Village where the official opening ceremony will be held.

Junior Minister of Culture, and Tourism, Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith stated that the Torchlight Procession will be dedicated to the former Legislator and Cultural Icon, Ms. Eileen P. Parsons OBE, who recently passed away.

Honourable Hodge-Smith said, "We dedicate the torch light procession in honour of all she has done for culture in the Territory, but more in festival in shaping its development, bringing it to what it is to be."

Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development Mr. K'Mari Fahie said, "Tasked with this year's traditional observances, we are happy to be able to bring together two time-honoured institutions, the torch light procession and the coronation of a new queen. Bringing them together in this way, for the first time, is a great opportunity to combine culture and history in extraordinary ways."

Following the motorcade which was recently added to enhance the historical effect on the emancipation celebration in the Virgin Islands and torchlight procession, there will be the official opening ceremony of the Neil Frett Festival Village. At this ceremony, Ms. Donyelle De'Asia Hodge will be crowned Ms. BVI 2025, Mr. Recardo Palmer and Ms. Kaijaanique Hendrickson will be crowned Mister and Miss Junior BVI respectively.

Everyone is invited to participate in this year's festival, experience the spirit of emancipation and freedom and celebrate the resilience and history of the Virgin Islands.

This year's event aspires to be an unforgettable experience as the Virgin Islands' Community honours the legacy of Eileene L. Parsons, OBE, and the Territory's ancestors.

For more information on the Torch Light Procession, please contact the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable development at 468-2161.