GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730
Official Government Website:
https://gov.vg

Diplomatic Leaders Honoured for Distinguished Service to the Virgin Islands

Release Date: 22 October, 2025



22 October 2025

Diplomatic Leaders Honoured for Distinguished Service to the Virgin Islands

(Territory Observes Diplomatic Week 2025)

Twelve past and present diplomatic leaders were formally recognised during a ceremony held at Scrub Island Resort on Tuesday 21 October 2025, as the International Affairs Secretariat, Premier's Office, officially launched Diplomatic Week 2025, under the theme "From Island Shores to Global Doors".

The honourees included Dr. Sandra Besson, Ms. Tracy Bradshaw, Ms. Najan Christopher, Ms. Dwynel Davies, Ms. Elise Donovan, Mr. Kedrick Malone, Ms. Sylvia Moses, Ms. Sherri Ortiz, Honourable Dawn Smith, Mrs. Hadassah Ward-Fraser, and Dr. Ricardo Wheatley – all of whom served the Virgin Islands with excellence in the diplomatic space from 2004 to the present.

Acting Director, IAS, Ms Dwynel Davis, said: "Diplomatic Week showcases and deepens our understanding of the vital work that goes into representing our Territory on the international stage. International relations and diplomacy are essential tools to build meaningful partnerships, advocate for our unique needs, and share our perspectives with the world."

In his remarks, Premier, Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley, acknowledged that while the Virgin Islands is small, the Territory's global footprint is significant. He said: "As an international financial center with connections that span continents, it is essential that we continue to represent ourselves and our interests in the global arena - not through others, but with our own voice – as we continue to do now with greater confidence."

Honourable Lorna G. Smith, OBE, who played a pivotal role in advancing the Virgin Islands' international relations and diplomacy at a time when the Territory's global

presence was still in its infancy, was presented with the Pioneer Award. From the early 1990s through 2008, she was instrumental in shaping the Virgin Islands' international relations and financial services sector. She led global engagement efforts across London, Brussels, Hong Kong, and beyond.

Honourable Smith, who serves as Junior Minister for Financial Services, Economic Development and Digital Transformation, said she is deeply humbled by this recognition. She tributed several persons for encouraging her to study international relations and for giving her the opportunity to broaden the Territory's footprint in the world.

Looking to the future for diplomacy in the Virgin Islands, Honourable Smith said: "These are very challenging times for us. We are seeing a situation where might seems to be right and we have to fight against that. Might cannot always be right. In terms of the future, the future for the Virgin Islands in diplomacy is bright." She lauded efforts in the Hong Kong and London Offices to prepare young diplomats for the future, but said she would like to see more of this in this part of the world.

Activities for Diplomatic Week 2025 also include the Territory's hosting of the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories Caucus Meeting from 21-23 October, a panel discussion on 22 October entitled "Our Place in the World: The Evolving Diplomacy of Overseas Territories", and school visits scheduled for 23-24 October.

###

About:

The Government of the Virgin Islands is committed to promoting good governance and the sustainable development of the Territory with a view to ensuring a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society. The Premier's Office serves as the focal point for coordinating cross-sectoral policies and programmes and promoting the sustainable development of the Virgin Islands to ensure a well-informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.

For Additional Information Contact:

Angela U Burns
Information Officer II
Premier's Office
Government of The Virgin Islands
Tel: +1 284 468 9445
Email: aburns@gov.vg
Website: https://gov.vg/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BVIGovernment/

Additional Documents or Media

- vf_diplomats_honoured.pdf