



# dateline: UVI

The monthly newsletter of The University of the Virgin Islands

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## UVI Gives Thanks to 'Founding Fathers'

As the University of the Virgin Islands nears 'middle age,' the resounding message from speakers at the Charter Day Ceremony was that the University must continue to strive forward in spite of obstacles.

"We have to ensure that UVI will be here far into the century," UVI President Dr. LaVerne Ragster said at the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual celebration.

Several speakers, including St. Thomas-St. John Administrator James O'Bryan, noted the University's successes despite many setbacks. The College of the Virgin Islands was founded in an atmosphere of public skepticism and currently faces a financial struggle along with the ever-present challenge of managing two campuses on two different islands. Still, UVI has managed to make a great impact on the lives of people.

"You know what I'm most proud of," Dr. Ragster asked. "That the vision we have now is absolutely along the lines with what Gov. (Ralph) Paiewonsky had for the University."

"We must continue to thank and acknowledge Gov. Paiewonsky for his vision and courage," President Ragster said



*Top, a child slides out of a bouncer at Afternoon on the Green, held on the UVI St. Thomas campus golf course. Bottom, Wallace Williams of the VI Pace Runners keeps the time as Carla Henry-Lewis crosses the finish line at the Queen Mary Walk/Run.*



of the former VI governor who chartered the College of the Virgin Island on March 16, 1962. "I wake up everyday being proud to be at an institution of place, making a difference in so many lives," President Ragster said.

The March 16 ceremony also included a video presentation, singing and a poetry reading. UVI alumna and business woman Yvette DeLaubanque also made remarks.

The ceremony was the climax of a series of activities that celebrated UVI's Charter Day. Events included Afternoon on the Green, which drew hundreds of people to the St. Thomas campus golf course and the Queen Mary Walk/Run that had almost 60 participants on the St. Croix campus.

There was also the Caribbean Inter-collegiate Debate that pitted the UVI debate team against four other teams from around the region. The UVI team came in third place with the University of the West Indies Mona Campus claiming the championship title.

Other events included a softball game and the Dr. Alfred O. Heath Distinguished Speaker's Forum.

## Bulbulla Named Farmer of the Year for Second Time

When Aberra Bulbulla won the 'Crop Farmer of the Year' award for the second time in three years he heaped praise on the University of the Virgin Islands.

"I want to give special thanks to UVI. That is where everything started," Bulbulla said while accepting his award at the 2005 Agriculture and Food Fair held in February on St. Croix. Bulbulla, who has been farming for the past 9 years, said he never planned on being a tropical fruit farmer – until he visited the UVI St. Croix campus.

"Most of what I have on my farm I saw on UVI's campus." He encouraged other people to take advantage of UVI's resources in developing their own farms.

Bulbulla grows 40 varieties of fruits and plants on his four-acre orchard in Estate Mountain. A research analyst at UVI, he previously won the 'Crop Farmer of the Year' award in 2003.

*Ag Fair continued on next page*

### *Events Calendar*

|             |                         |     |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----|
| March 22-24 | Health Fair             | STX |
| April 1-4   | Theatre Play "1984"     | STT |
| April 8     | Student Lit. Conference | STT |

## UVI Students Eager to Become Homeowners

It was standing-room-only in the Chase Auditorium on the St. Thomas campus on March 1, when members of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) taught students and community members how to become homeowners. The program called SHOP (short for Student Homeownership Opportunity Program) attracted more than 100 people on both campuses. Designed to empower young minorities to cultivate wealth through homeownership, the program tours select Historically Black Colleges and Universities offering information and real estate financial assistance to graduating seniors.

CBCF presenter Vanessa Warrick said getting educated is the most important step in the home buying process. Warrick's message was delivered in an informative and humorous way that connected with the students.

"Even if you're not ready the minute you graduate (to buy a house), start thinking about it," Warrick said. "You have to be ready – not just financially, but emotionally – because it is a responsibility."

Warrick used her own life as an example to show the power



*Vanessa Warrick of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, far right, lectures an eager audience about the process for becoming a homeowner at the SHOP seminar.*

of homeownership. Warrick, 30, owns her own home in the Washington D.C. area. She boasted that her tenant pays the car note on her Mercedes Benz, explaining that her extra income from the rent finances her comfortable lifestyle.

Attendees were quizzed on things like credit score, depreciable versus appreciable assets, and the average down payment of a home. An eager audience asked questions and engaged the panelists in discussion.

Along with Warrick, other panelists were Audrey Morton and Desirey Brooks from the VI Housing Finance Authority, and Rosemary Sauter Frett of Century 21 Sauter and Associates.

"This is something that peaked our students interest," a delighted St. Thomas campus Associate Chancellor Dr. Doris Battiste said after the seminar. "Even if they (students) don't by a house right away, they have enough information so that they are

prepared."

The seminar was sponsored by the CBCF and the Office of the Associate Chancellor on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses.

### Ag Fair Continued

"It's good to be back here," Bulbulla said as he accepted the 2005 award. "It's good to be back and I'm going to try to keep coming back."

The Farmer of the Year award was just a few highlights of the annual three-day fair. Thousands of people flocked to the islands for the perfect mix of culture and fun. Lispth Helm and Ellen Christensen, two of a group of 20 teachers from Denmark, were grateful that their project on St. Croix coincided with the

fair. The group was in the VI for a UNESCO project that seeks to establish links between schools in Europe, the Caribbean and Africa.

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