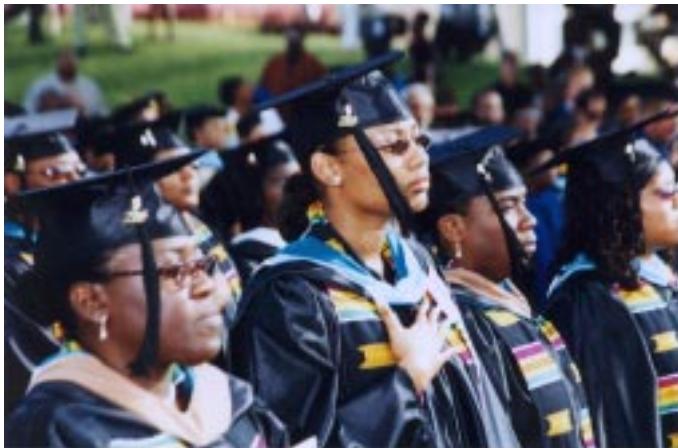




# *dateline: UVI*

The monthly newsletter of The University of the Virgin Islands

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(left to right) Graduates on UVI's St. Croix campus pledge allegiance at the commencement ceremony held on May 18. St. Thomas Chancellor John Leipzig congratulates a graduate at the commencement ceremony held on May 17.

## UVI Graduates Ready to Make a Difference

The University of the Virgin Islands conferred 292 degrees in its 39<sup>th</sup> annual commencement exercises on May 17 and 18 on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses, respectively. On St. Thomas, 188 degrees were presented and on St. Croix 104 degrees were awarded.

The exercises were historic for Dr. Laverne Ragster, fourth president of the university, because they were her first commencement exercises as president.

"This academic year has been a time of great activity, accomplishment and challenges at UVI," President Ragster stated. She spoke about her first academic year in office and thanked local politicians, the Board of Trustees, businesses, and organizations for their support of the University's efforts. As she addressed the "dynamic and determined" class of 2003, she spoke about their accomplishments both academically and personally. President Ragster concluded by giving the class final words of encouragement. "For you, the dynamic and determined class of 2003, I wish the self-discipline you learned brings to life your dreams and the inner strengths to make all challenges that you meet become opportunities for success and growth."

The St. Thomas class, hailed as "dynamic and determined" by UVI administrators, local politicians and various speakers, were reminded that they should not only be dynamic and determined for now, but continue the trend forever.

Class speaker Cira Burke, who graduated magna cum laude, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education, stressed that the Class of 2003 has been, currently is, and will always be a dynamic and determined set of individu-

als. As she delivered her speech, she reminded her fellow classmates that they can accomplish just about anything, once their mind is put to the challenge.

"To find a cure for AIDS or eliminate world hunger, decide what you're willing to sacrifice for it," she said. "Receiving a college diploma does not impact the world, but it is what you do with it that makes the difference," she said during her high-energy address.

The St. Croix class faced many challenges, but the Class of 2003 is now prepared to face many more, according to St. Croix class speaker Ellenor Paul, who graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education.

"My classmates and I are ready to reimburse the territory through service for the dollars that have been invested in their education," said Paul. "We are ready to use our buoyant and dauntless characteristics to benefit the U.S. Virgin Islands and our global community. We encourage you to em-

*Commencement continued on next page*

### *Events Calendar*

May 20-31	Future Global Leaders	STT
May 23	WNET Roundtable Meeting	STX
May 24, 25	STARfest 9	STT
May 28	SBDC Workshop	STX
May 30	Safe Diving Workshop	STT

# UVI Participates and Wins for Carnival 2003

With another set of winning entries in the 2003 St. Thomas Carnival, the University of the Virgin Islands is well on its way to becoming a mainstay in local celebrations. The Cooperative Extension Service 4-H Program entry in the Junior King and Queen of the Band competition started the winning streak.

Ten-year-old Shiraine Stephens, who portrayed the "Empress Princess Moon Child," won the Junior Queen of the Band title. Her costume, a circular piece, was decorated with pink and blue feathers.

The 4-H Junior King of the Band contender Kelvin "KJ" Pickering, depicting the "Prince of Music," was the first runner-up. His costume, which created a half circle around him, was decorated with musical notes.

UVI's 4-H went on to win second place in the "troupe of



*Shiraine Stephens of UVI's 4-H Program portrays the "Empress Princess Moon Child," in the 2003 Children's Parade.*

50 or more" category in the Children's Parade, held on May 2.

UVI's Laura Daniel, a program specialist in the Registrar's Office on the St. Thomas campus, was Grand Marshall of the Children's Parade. Daniel is a long-time carnival participant.

Also participating in the Children's Parade was the UVI Family Life Center steel band.

In the Adult's Parade, UVI's float entry titled "A Mas of Knowledge," won second place. The float was beautifully decorated in shades of blue and white. At the center of the float a huge gold lamp of learning sat atop a stack of books. UVI's President LaVerne Ragster walked

up the parade route alongside the float, while UVI's Queen Alba Harrigan and other members of the UVI family rode on the float.

## *Commencement continued*

ploy us so that you too can be a collaborative partner in our further development."

Donald E. Thompson, division director for the National Science Foundation, made mention of his own college graduation years ago. Thompson's message simply reminded graduates that their future belongs to no one else but them.

"A degree is just the beginning," he said, "but the best is yet to come. For some of you this is the first of many academic pursuits; you may take advantage of future education on this island, mainland United States or in other countries. After that academic sojourn, you should look again to your island as one of the places in the world to help shape the future. This is a glorious place with so much to offer."

Many other dignitaries spoke at both ceremonies. Governor Charles Turnbull spoke about the many challenges that the Virgin Islands government and the society face, such as the financial crisis and the lack of unity as a people. Although the government faces such problems, both Governor Turnbull and Senate President David Jones promised the graduates, family, friends and President Ragster, that appropriations will be made shortly to begin construction this year on the Research and Technology Park on St. Croix.

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FAX: (340) 693-1055

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**2 John Brewer's Bay  
St. Thomas, VI 00802**