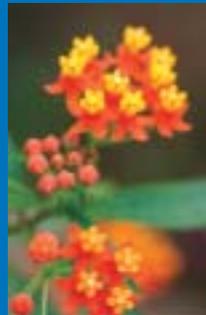




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UVI *magazine*

2003, VOLUME 7



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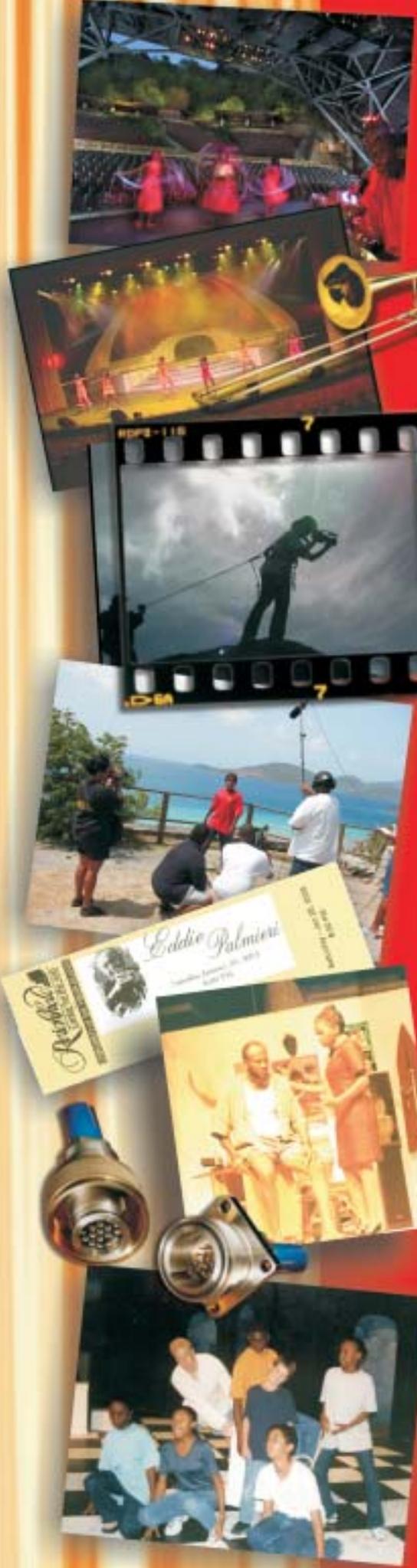
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contents



2003 FEATURES

- 5 < Balanced Ecosystem
at core of UVI Model Farm
- 7 < Taking it to the Streets: Service
Learning Provides Practical Experience
- 8 < Tennis Anyone?
Top-Notch Team Seeks Competitors
- 9 < Eat Your Vegetables: UVI biotechnology
research enhances plants
- 11 < UVI's Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program
- 13 < Making House Calls
- 15 < Depth Charge: Anegada Climate
Tracers Probe Caribbean Sea
- 17 < The Making of a President
- 23 < Innovation, Creativity Generates
Campus Changes
- 27 < If Cows Could Talk: An Overview of Advances
in St. Croix's Senepol Cattle Industry
- 31 < Five Lives Evolve
- 34 < Striving for Success
The Workforce Training Edge
- 35 < The Year in Review
- 39 < UVI: Blanketing the Community,
Shaping Lives
- 42 < UVI Helping Children
Youth and Families at Risk

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 < Editor's Corner
- 4 < Presidents Message
- 43 < Alumni News
- 45 < UVI Trustees



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Photo by Ethelbert Bedminster



EDITOR'S CORNER

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

The College of the Virgin Islands took its first steps toward academic excellence some 41 years ago. In the years since, the University of the Virgin Islands' commitment to providing superior academic instruction, quality research, as well as services the local community can use has proved equally determined.

In this edition of UVI Magazine I invite you to discover the various programs that demonstrate that the University has become a bona fide community partner. Collaboration and cooperation are what make all of the University's relationships in the community work.

UVI's model farm on St. Croix, Upward Bound programs on both islands, Small Business Development Center and Workforce Development Training Institute, are just a few of the many ways UVI has become engaged with the community and emerged as a vital community resource.

New in this edition of UVI Magazine is the "Year In Review" section, which highlights local and national events that have brought the University of the Virgin Islands much deserved recognition.

So much of what UVI accomplishes is done without a lot of fanfare. What you will find contained in these pages are the success stories – the opportunities that UVI has provided for individuals to excel, for businesses to get started and for research to be conducted that has the capacity to change all of our lives for the better.

Students, our first priority, are prominently featured within these pages. This issue also recognizes recent UVI retirees, alumni and members of the Board of Trustees, whose names, faces and reputations have become synonymous with the positive image the institution enjoys in the territory and beyond.

Please join me in recognizing the wealth of community engagement opportunities that exist at the University of the Virgin Islands and in celebrating UVI's truly unique achievements.

Patrice K. Johnson
Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Ethelbert Bedminster

LaVerne E. Ragster

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The University of the Virgin Islands has embarked on an exciting journey.

The University of the Virgin Islands has embarked on an exciting journey. Founded 41 years ago as the sole provider of higher education in the U.S. Virgin Islands, UVI has become so much more.

In a relatively short time, what was the College of the Virgin Islands has progressed to a University with the capacity to be the leading purveyor of intellectual capital in the region. This transformation has been calculated and strategic.

High quality academics, innovative research and dedicated public service remain the institution's core mission. However, as we advance into an era characterized by global access to information, the community UVI serves is changing from a community that is local and familiar to one that is also distant and to some extent undiscovered. This nexus creates many unique opportunities and challenges to help shape the futures of thousands more lives.

It is my distinct pleasure and honor to serve as UVI's fourth president at this important time in our history. With the University's five-year Strategic Plan as our guide, I look forward to developing new and innovative collaborations with community partners, whose social and economic contributions are enhancing the quality of life in the Virgin Islands and beyond.

This issue of UVI Magazine showcases many exciting ways in which UVI is connecting with the people of our community and serving as a catalyst for positive change.

All of our stories demonstrate how education can bring forth the best in people. Please join me in celebrating these accomplishments as we continue this remarkable journey toward a future of partnerships, success and growth for the University and the Virgin Islands.

BALANCED ECOSYSTEM

at core of UVI Model Farm

By Catherine Fahy



Mike McGuire and Jacob Burnett (background) inspect freshly picked vegetables from the model farm on UVI's St. Croix campus.



Dressed in long pants, boots and a wide-brimmed straw hat to shield him from the midday sun, UVI Model Farm Manager Michael McGuire bends to examine a delicate green shoot rising from the edge of a of freshly planted field. “I’ve been waiting for this to come up,” McGuire says, looking triumphant.

As the person responsible for the five-acre farm’s daily operation and – ultimately – its role as an example of the profitability of small-scale integrated farming, McGuire thrives on nature’s small miracles. Helping McGuire run the farm is Chief of Operations Victor Almodovar and Chief Horticulturist Jacob Burnett, two men with many years of farming experience.

The farm spans the low-lying land from East Airport Road to the border of the University campus and appears as innocuous as any other farm on St. Croix. Yet unlike other farms, its components include a one-acre basin for catching rain, seven swimming pool-size fiberglass tanks for raising tilapia and an irrigation pond measuring 12 feet deep. The rest of its gentle green expanse is occupied by two acres of crops, including cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers.

The University’s model farm project began in August 2001, funded by roughly half of a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition to its three full-time staff members, the farm is overseen by a collection of 16 experts from the UVI Agricultural Experiment Station, the UVI Water Resources Research Institute, the UVI Cooperative Extension Service and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture. Additional input comes from agricultural industry experts in Puerto Rico and Guam, a U.S. territory in the Pacific where a similar model farm project is being funded by the other half of the USDA grant.

Initially, experts planned for the UVI farm to begin grossing \$100,000 by the end of its second year, but material and staffing problems have caused delays that make late 2003 a more realistic goal, says UVI Agricultural Experiment Station Director Dr. James Rakocy. The farm’s main earning potential is in its fish tanks, which at the beginning of 2003 were still mostly in pieces on the ground because of problems getting electricity to the site, which should be up and running by September. The tanks are projected to produce 3,000 pounds of fish every month, which at the rate of about \$2.50 a pound will net the farm \$7,500 a month – or \$90,000 a year.

“We really need to get those fish in because that’s the big money maker,” Rakocy said in February. Tilapia are a freshwater fish with white, flaky flesh whose mild taste has become very popular on the mainland, said Rakocy, a member of the board of directors of the American Tilapia Association. And given that 80 percent of the fish consumed on St. Croix is imported, Rakocy says the University’s tilapia should be a welcome addition to the local market. “There is plenty of room for more fish on St. Croix.”

At the heart of the farm is the principle of a “balanced ecosystem,” which formed the basis of “old time” agriculture before new large-scale, monoculture farms with synthetic fertilizers and pesticides came along, Rakocy says. “That type of agriculture has not proved to be sustainable because of the pollution it causes.”

The ecosystem is driven mostly by the rainwater catchment basins and the fish tanks, the source of valuable water and nutrient-rich sludge to irrigate and fertilize the crops.

“The idea is to use the output of one component for the input of another,” says McGuire, going on to explain that the model farm hopes to introduce new, profitable agricultural technology to the farming industry.



“What we want to do is scale farms up to a size that will enable people to have a greater income.”

Photos by Ben Twingley

Rakocy notes that while St. Croix’s farms are for the most part small-scale operations, they have the potential to be larger and more profitable with the right techniques. “One of the reasons there isn’t much large farming here is that I don’t think the young people see agriculture as a viable career,” Rakocy says. “What we want to do is scale farms up to a size that will enable people to have a greater income.”

Like any kind of business venture, however, start-up capital is hard to come by. Rakocy says he’s hopeful that the model farm will prove successful enough to motivate local farmers trying to expand their operations to include more integrated styles of farming. “If we could develop these farms and show profitability, then farmers could take that information to the bank,” Rakocy says.

As it stands now, local farmers produce bumper crops intermittently, flooding the local market with one kind of crop. With that in mind, the model farm emphasizes the principle of “crop rotation,” which promotes profitability and productivity, Rakocy says. Rather than flooding the local market with a single crop, then having nothing to sell for awhile, local farmers can maintain a steady income by staggering harvests close enough to ensure they will nearly always have something to sell. Likewise, island grocers can benefit from a steady supply of produce and consumers can benefit from the satisfaction of buying local produce. According to local agricultural industry estimates, St. Croix grocers spend \$34 million a year importing fresh fruits and vegetables, a cost that could be avoided with a more reliable local supply of produce. Already, St. Croix supermarkets and produce wholesalers are benefiting from the model farm, said McGuire, who on a recent morning delivered 220 pounds of cucumbers. The income, he says, goes back into the farm.

The model farm’s principle of crop rotation also helps the land maintain productivity. To emphasize his point, McGuire pointed to a patch of land that to the untrained eye appeared nothing more than an overgrown tangle of weeds. The weeds, however, were actually a “cover crop” of mucuna, planted to control weeds, encourage soil fertility and prevent erosion. A legume called “lab lab” is a similar crop used on the model farm to build fertile soil. Rakocy says that at any given time one acre of the farm is left fallow, or empty, enabling its soil to regenerate.

Another clever tactic to encourage healthy, abundant crops is the creation of windbreaks at the edge of the farm’s fields. By planting rows of “strong, hulky” bananas and plantains, McGuire says he plans to protect crops from drying winds and reduce the proliferation of pests. One natural enemy of many common pests such as the whitefly is a tiny wasp that has a tough time doing its job in the strong breeze that sweeps the fields.

“If you want them to help you, then you’ve got to help them,” McGuire says.

The daily war against pests is familiar to generations of farmers. As McGuire conducted a tour of the farm, he pointed out common pests such as aphids and worms. Bending down to inspect the fragrant leaves of a tomato plant, he identified a juvenile stink

bug, which renders tomatoes unmarketable by causing cosmetic damage and which so far has proved impervious to the biological pesticides the model farm uses.

McGuire and the other agricultural minds behind the model farm believe technological innovations based on biology are the key to farming’s future. In the early 1900s, biological methods tied to the theory of a balanced ecosystem were used widely on St. Croix to maximize soil productivity. But then came the era of scientific agriculture, which ushered in the chlorinated hydrocarbon-based pesticides such as DDT that over time revealed themselves as the environmental killers profiled in Rachel Carson’s landmark book, “Silent Spring.”

“More and more farmers and researchers are focusing now on zero-tillage and legume-based agriculture,” says McGuire, explaining “zero tillage” as a farming technique that eliminates plowing, which is especially important in the tropics where intense rainfall can cause bare soil to erode.

Maintaining adequate manpower has presented another challenge for the model farm. A typical intensive vegetable farm on the mainland requires at least three people per acre for optimum output, yet the five-acre UVI model farm is attempting to get by on a total of three people, which is why the small signs of success – such as the appearance of small green shoots – come as such victories to McGuire and the rest of the farm staff.

The very fact that nature is doing its job points to the future success of the model farm, which, Rakocy says, will begin making tours and educational material available later this year. 🌱

Taking it to the Streets: Service Learning Provides Practical Experience

By Nanyamka Farrelly



Dr. Patricia Harkins-Pierre and students share a laugh in her office.



Janzie Allmacher

What does campus beautification have to do with a public speaking class? For Merle DeFreitas a campus beautification project meant learning the art of public speaking and giving valuable information to a live audience other than her classmates. DeFreitas was one of the students who participated in a University of the Virgin Islands COM 102 Humanities course, taught on UVI's St. Thomas campus last semester by Dr. Patricia Harkins-Pierre.

Students in Dr. Harkins-Pierre's public speaking class were engaged in service learning projects that involved them in various community services as part of the curriculum. In 2002, UVI received a \$20,000 grant from the Corporation for National Service through the Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges for implementation of the Service Learning Project. Several UVI professors have been incorporating service learning into their curriculum even before grants provided participation incentives.

As part of Dr. Harkins-Pierre's class, DeFreitas was required to make a presentation to middle school-age students on sunflowers and the benefit they would provide to the campus. "We had to put out the information in a way that the audience would want to listen," DeFreitas says. The students were graded on their presentations and evaluated on eye contact, body language and posture.

Dr. Harkins-Pierre, who has incorporated service learning into several of her classes, sees it as a win-win situation. "The students benefit so much from it and I see how much it benefits the community," she says. She has also paired her students with agencies like the St. Thomas Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Enid Baa Library.

Dr. Harkins-Pierre has been using some forms of service learning in her classroom since 1995, establishing a relationship with Upward Bound, UVI's college preparatory program for high school students. At that time her COM 101 and 102 Humanities students served as mentors for Upward Bound students, held workshops and participated in career night.

During the summer of 2002, Dr. Harkins-Pierre attended the Campus Compact 11th Annual National Conference in California, where she learned structured methods of incorporating service learning into the academic curriculum. Dr. Harkins-Pierre has been invited back to be a workshop presenter this year.

Judith Rogers, library manager at the Melvin Evans Library on the St. Croix campus, co-authored the UVI grant proposal with Communications Professor Lucia DiMeo.

Nursing Professor Janzie Allmacher says even before the grant, service learning provided her students with a perfect opportunity to employ their skills with people who were not sick. Eleven of her students on the St. Croix campus participated in the "VI. Care Force Health Fair" providing blood pressure, blood sugar, foot screenings, flu shots and patient education to about 100 people at the Aldersville Senior Center. Members of UVI's Student Nursing Association participated in the 2003 U.S. Virgin Islands Agriculture Fair on St. Croix, serving more than 200 people over a two-day period.

Marie Hermann's "Principles of Marketing" course provided a different kind of preventative care. The marketing students selected local businesses that needed marketing assistance, researched the business' marketing situation, came up with the problem and formulated a recommendation. Students had the option of

selecting a non-profit or for-profit business. The 41 students were divided into 10 groups, each studying a particular business and comparing it to its biggest competitor. The students were graded on a submitted report on their research and recommendations, and an actual in-class presentation. The service learning portion of the course made up 20 percent of the students' final grade.

Willa Fils, a junior business administration major, says working with bona fide businesses gave her a real sense of the marketing challenges business owners are faced with.

"Looking at where they went wrong in their business we now know how to come up with an effective marketing plan for any business," Fils says. She noted that along with learning from the research conducted with her group, she also learned from the other groups' presentations. Fils said that she felt good in the end, being able to provide a necessary service to a local business.

Hermann also was incorporating service learning into her curriculum before UVI received a grant, for 10 years to be exact. According to Hermann's service learning report, most students rated their experience as excellent or good. In her evening class, consisting of non-traditional, working-class students, they indicated that the course increased their desire to stay in college or complete a degree, improved their self-confidence and provided them with a sense of personal achievement.

Rogers said that because service learning is being embraced by UVI students and faculty, the University must now expand its service learning offerings, encouraging even more faculty to get involved. A program like this must be sustained, she said. ☺

Tennis Anyone? Top-Notch Team Seeks Competitors

By Nanyamka Farrelly

“IN TENNIS
YOU NEED TO
KNOW
exactly
WHAT YOUR
PARTNER
would DO”



Teammates Jendai Richards and Carey Martin. Other sports programs at UVI are: track and field, cross country, volleyball, basketball, tennis and beach volleyball.

While colleges and universities across the nation are cutting mens sports programs like tennis, the University of the Virgin Islands tennis team thrives. The team has an impressive winning record, yet few know of the team's accomplishments.

The UVI women's tennis team won the 2002 Organization of Inter University Sports (ODI) League Tennis Championship and the men's tennis team won second place in that same championship held November 7-9 in Puerto Rico. The women's team made a sweep, with Jendai Richards taking the tournament's most valuable player title, Richards and Carey Martin taking the gold medal in the doubles and the entire team, consisting of Richards, Martin and Hanna Jacobs, winning the gold medal-the ODI League tournament title.

"That's the best that we could have really done," said Richards, a freshman who has been playing tennis since the age of four.

The men's team also did well, with Terrance Jacobs winning a silver medal in number one singles. Jacobs and George Southwell went on to win gold medals in the doubles.

"It was a hard fought victory," said Head Coach Bruce Wray. UVI won overall with a score of 75, just two points more than second-place winners University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla. The teams have done well in ODI League tournaments in past years, Wray said, noting the women's team's 2001 ODI tournament title.

"We've been blessed by having pretty good players to compete in ODI," Wray said, calling the current team one of the best.

Richards said she was surprised to win the MVP title. Richards, who also plays on UVI's women's volleyball team, said that her performance at the tournament was her first competitive match for a few months. She was equally surprised at winning the gold doubles with Martin, since they had only practiced together once.

"In tennis you need to know exactly what your partner would do," Richards said of playing doubles. She said in the doubles tournament she and Martin had to be prepared for anything.

Terrance Jacobs, who has been a member of the men's team for three years, said UVI has had top notch tennis teams over the past few years. He'd like to see UVI compete outside of the ODI League. Players might become more competitive, Jacobs says, if they're exposed to more challenges.

Richards echoed Jacobs' sentiments, suggesting that UVI create its own tournament to compete with teams from around the nation.

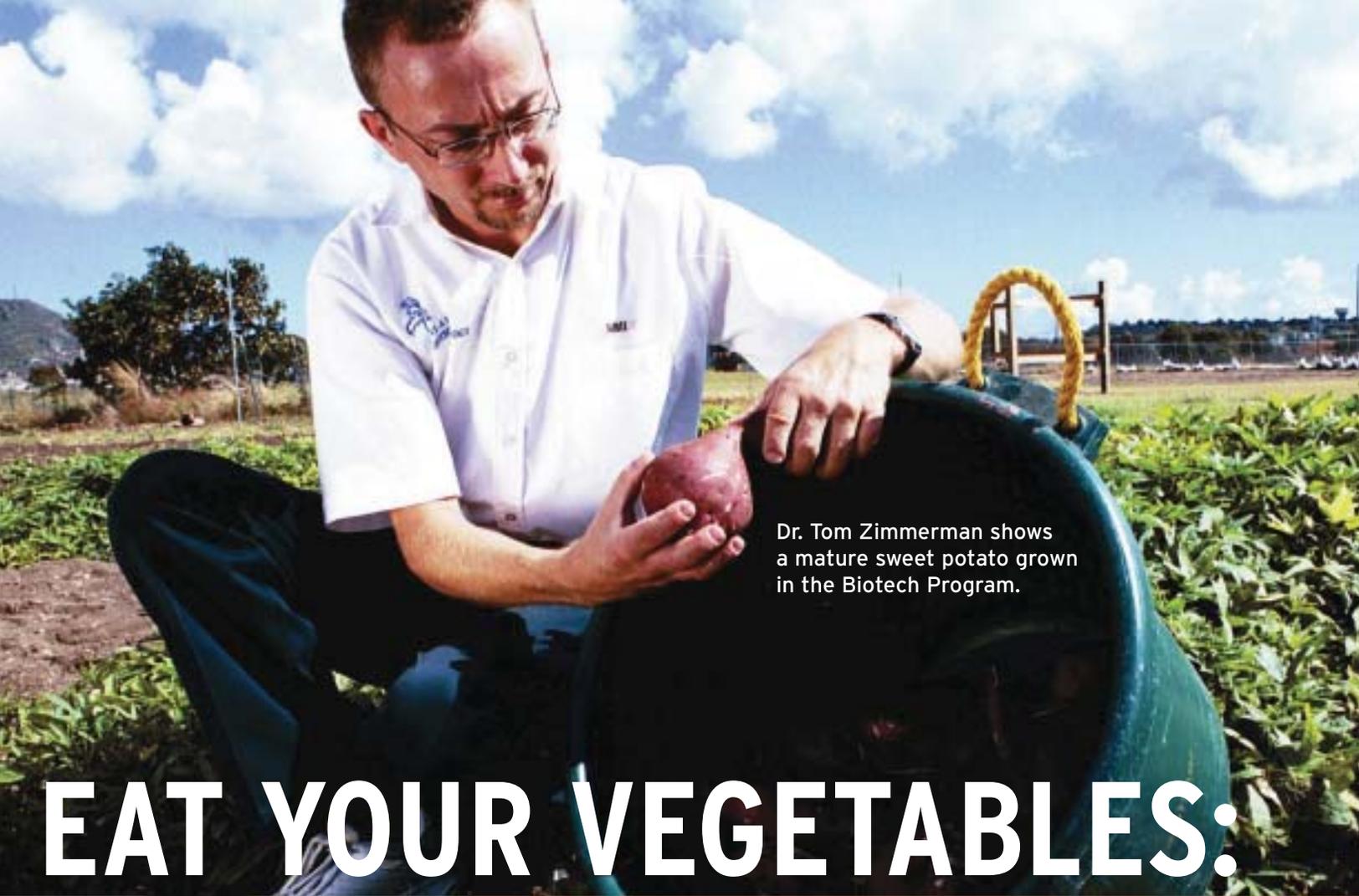
"We wish that there was a way that our teams would get more tennis matches," said UVI's Athletic Director Peter Sauer, congratulating the team for its record. Tennis has been cut from the programs of some colleges and budgets have been cut from others.

The cuts in tennis programs and funds are largely due to the newly enforced Title IX, which refers to Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972. Title IX prohibits gender discrimination in education programs that receive federal funding, including athletic programs. Title IX, as it relates to athletics, mandates that males and females be provided with equal opportunities to participate in sports, receive equal treatment and receive scholarships proportional to their participation.

Sauer says UVI provides equal athletic program opportunities to male and female students, meeting Title IX requirements. UVI, Sauer says, has been used as a model for other schools. But UVI's tennis teams feel threatened by the ODI League, which wants to cut the sport from its program. UVI has been an advocate for keeping tennis in the ODI League.

Although the ODI League Tournament is the only one available to UVI tennis players, intramural matches are organized locally to give the team other opportunities to play. Wray also recommends UVI players for participation in local tournaments. Occasionally players train with traveling teams.

The hardest part of coaching the team, Wray says, is building a new team each year. Wray begins recruiting in September, prepares players for the ODI League Tournament in November and concludes with interscholastic games in March and intramurals in April. 🏆



Dr. Tom Zimmerman shows a mature sweet potato grown in the Biotech Program.

EAT YOUR VEGETABLES:



Photos by Ben Twingley

UVI biotechnology research enhances plants

By Catherine Fahy

To much of the world's population, tropical fruits and vegetables such as sweet potato and papaya represent nothing more than basic sustenance. But to Dr. Thomas W. Zimmerman, head of the Biotechnology and Agroforestry Program at the University of the Virgin Islands' Agricultural Experiment Station, they represent a life's work.

The basis of the University's Biotechnology Program is the application of plant science for the evaluation, development and conservation of tropical plant species. The program's ultimate goal is to develop genetically-enhanced varieties of tropical fruits and vegetables that exhibit higher disease resistance, yield and quality, thereby maximizing worldwide harvests of tropical plant species.

Opponents of genetic engineering take offense at the alteration of a plant's natural state, but Zimmerman noted that without biotechnology, the tomatoes in supermarket produce aisles would be no larger than marbles, many types of fruit would be small and tart and people would be less enticed to eat them.

"Very few of the plants we consume are as they were in the wild," Zimmerman said. "They have been selected over generations by humans for flavor, quality and yield. If you take the true sense of what biotechnology is, you are using an organism to produce a product or run a process, just as yeast is used in bread and fermentation or certain wheats are used in pasta and flour."

Presently, researchers are focusing on the production of cassava, papaya and sweet potato, paying special attention to disease resistance, plant quality, protein content and caliche soil tolerance. The program consists of Zimmerman, research analysts Brian Daly and Jacqueline Kowalski, and field staff members Willie Ventura and Ruben Melendez.

Dr. Tom Zimmerman checks on seedlings in a temperature and light controlled grow room on the St. Croix campus.

Now in its 11th year, the Biotechnology Program has grown from a room with nothing more than two telephones on the floor to a research lab lined with high-tech equipment and a light- and temperature-controlled growth room. The program has forged partnerships with numerous other research centers and put the University on the map for its groundbreaking work with tropical plants. Adding to its credit is the distinction of being the only program of its kind in the Caribbean with three permits from the United States government to grow genetically enhanced tropical plants.

THE PERFECT PAPAYA

For the past seven years, Dr. Zimmerman – also known around campus as “Dr. Z” – has worked to develop a papaya that can fend off the deadly Papaya Ringspot Virus (PRSV), a disease that slowly kills worldwide papaya crops. Plants inflicted with the virus exhibit telltale yellow-tinged, deformed leaves. An extreme example of the virus’ destruction is in Jamaica, where Dr. Zimmerman said it has nearly wiped out the papaya export industry. Even those crops that remain have been forced to retreat to isolated, mountainous rural areas where farmers hope the virus will not find them. So far, several varieties that bear fruit within three feet of the

ground and exhibit PRSV tolerance have emerged from UVI’s research, but none have yet to exhibit total resistance.

Papayas are native to Central and South America. They range in hue from reddish-purple to green and their sweet, flavorful insides can be yellow, orange, pink or red. Dr. Zimmerman’s research is focused on the evaluation and development of varieties that weigh two to five

“Very few of the plants we consume are as they were in the wild,”

pounds and deteriorate particularly fast in the face of PRSV. Like many research projects at UVI, the PRSV-resistance project is a part of a collaboration and Dr. Zimmerman is trading information with scientists from Puerto Rico, Florida, New York and Hawaii.

Most of the papaya trees tended by Dr. Zimmerman and his staff yield ripe fruit within nine months of being planted, making it easy for them to grow upwards of 400 trees a

year. Through controlled breeding and careful observation in the greenhouse and fields at UVI, transgenic seedlings are being bred to resist PRSV and earlier this year the staff was into the third generation of genetically enhanced plants. Yet given the lengthy timeline leading to the approval of most biotech products, Dr. Zimmerman is not anticipating a public offering of the perfect papaya for at least five years.

To Dr. Zimmerman, the papaya’s year-round production, sweet taste and nutritional content make it an exceptional fruit. “I think it might have been in the Garden of Eden,” he says, in all seriousness. “They say it was an apple but I think it was a papaya.” 🍌



UVI's Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program

By Karen D. Gutloff



K'wasi Barnes



Tamisha Ottley



Tricia Wharton Hendrickson

The number of African-American students receiving doctorate degrees in science and engineering at U.S. colleges and universities has improved slightly from 3.5 percent of all students in 1998 to 4.3 percent in 2001, according to a survey by the National Science Foundation.

That increase, however small, is encouraging to people who are working hard to boost the ranks of minorities in the physical and behavioral sciences.

"I know we have a number of students from the University of the Virgin Islands in those numbers," says Dr. Teresa Turner, professor of Science and Mathematics at UVI. Turner is a co-director of UVI's Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program.

The Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program is a compilation of various grant programs at UVI that encourage students to pursue a Ph.D. in the sciences by engaging them in research activities early in their academic careers, says Dr. Camille McKayle, co-director of the program. Those grant programs include Minority Access to Research Careers and Minority Biomedical Research Support, both funded by the National Institutes of Health. Historically Black Colleges and Universities - Undergraduate Program, Our Ocean, and the Computer Science, Engineering and Math Scholars Program are funded by the National Science Foundation.

Since each program has a similar goal, the University merged them under the umbrella Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program to allow for better coordination. Students recruited into the program receive tuition scholarships and monthly stipends earned for their work on research projects, according to McKayle.

"We also make them aware of internship and research opportunities in the sciences," McKayle says.

Under the tutelage of UVI professors, students engage in hands-on science research and data gathering. They also learn how to analyze and present their findings in professional forums. The program has helped UVI graduates get accepted to

Ph.D. science programs at the University of Maryland, Vanderbilt University, the University of California - San Diego, Boston University, the University of Michigan and Purdue University.

K'wasi Barnes, a 2000 graduate of UVI, is in the third year of a Ph.D. program in biological oceanography at the University of South Florida. Barnes spends most of his days in the University's Coral Reef Indicators Lab studying the DNA of organisms that live on coral reefs.

As a UVI undergraduate and MARC program participant, Barnes worked in the Marine Science Center conducting research under the guidance of Professor James Battey.

"The lab skills I learned working with Professor Battey at UVI have definitely carried over to where I am now. We use a lot of the same techniques here," says Barnes, who graduated from UVI with a double major in marine biology and mathematics.

Barnes also had the opportunity to participate in summer internships and fellowships across the United States.

"I did summer internships at the Georgia Institute of Technology and at the University of California - San Diego. I also did a six-month internship at Western Washington University, where I had the opportunity to study coral reefs," says the St. Croix native who plans to work as a university professor.

For Tricia Wharton Hendrickson, the assistance she received through the Emerging Caribbean Scientists program helped pave the way for her doctorate work at Emory University.

"It made me eligible to apply for certain graduate fellowships. Having my own funding during graduate school allowed me the freedom to attend a number of scientific meetings, including one in Edinburgh, Scotland where I met Nobel Laureate Sir Paul Nurse," Hendrickson says. Hendrickson, who completed her Ph.D. work at Emory in 2001, says, "I'd like a tenure track position at a college where I can interact with students and introduce them to research."

Students in the Emerging Caribbean Scientists Program are also encouraged to pursue careers in behavioral sciences, including psychology, through the NIH programs, McKayle says.

Program participant Tamisha Ottley is working her way toward a Ph.D. in clinical psychology after her graduation from UVI in May 2003.

"I want to own a practice offering counseling in domestic violence, child abuse, rape and how that affects individuals and the family," says Ottley, who has a double major in psychology and speech, communication and theater.

As part of the MARC program, Ottley receives a monthly stipend to work with Professor Agatha Nelson on a research project entitled, "The Socialization and Risk Perception Project." "The project is in response to the high rate of teen pregnancy and drug use," Ottley explains. "We use focus groups to survey adolescents on what they perceive as risky behaviors, then compare that data to what parents think."

Ottley also did a research internship at Howard University in Washington, D.C. where she surveyed students on "ethnic identities and expectations for success."

"One of the good things about the program is that I not only get to do research, but I've also learned how to write up the presentation and present the findings before groups of scientists," says Ottley.

In November 2002, Ottley presented the findings from her research at Howard University to the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in New Orleans. Ottley has since applied to graduate clinical psychology programs at Howard University and at the Virginia Commonwealth University.

"I didn't dare to dream about a Ph.D. as a freshman, it was too intimidating," says Ottley. "Things I never thought about are now a reality because of my work in this program." ☺



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MAKINGHOUSECALLS

By Molly Morris



From top left to right: Jinne Richards, Vicky Ann Samuel. From bottom left to right: Nicole Hanley, DeNita Lima.

The four UVI juniors who will attend Boston University as participants in the Early Medical School Selection Program this year have one common trait – an unwavering will to succeed. Each has her own definite ideas about the world of medicine soon to be at her fingertips.

A scholarly quartet of 20-year-olds – three Charlotte Amalie High School graduates and one from Good Hope School on St. Croix – will leave UVI's St. Thomas campus this year for their second six-week summer session on the Boston University Medical School campus. They will also complete their senior year in Boston, although they will return to UVI to graduate with their class.

The Boston University School of Medicine sits at the hub of a modern urban academic health center that includes Boston Medical Center, two Veterans Administration hospitals, two graduate schools, BioSquare and a growing number of biotechnology firms. With its clear leadership in clinical medical research, the school steadfastly pursues its mission to continue as a model urban medical center.

UVI is one of about 15 historically black universities selected to participate in Boston University's highly competitive program, which was developed to increase the minority physician population.

DeNita Lima says she has almost always known she wanted to be a doctor. "I had that interest from the time I was very small. My grandfather had diabetes and I was surrounded by doctors helping him. I came to appreciate that profession. I was always interested in science, but that exposure so young helped gear my ideas."

Having spent last summer in Boston, Lima and the other students are no longer greenhorns. Admission to the prestigious school was fraught with numerous interviews and testing. After having passed their initial interviews at UVI with Boston University's Dr. Kenneth Edelin, Lima and the others went to Boston. "(Edelin) determines if you are strong enough, if you are a good candidate for the school," Lima says. "If you pass that, you are invited to Boston, where you meet about 40 students from some other schools. You talk and you bond, you're all going through the same thing."

"Most of the time, it's doctors interviewing you; they really try to get inside your head," Lima says lightly, but with obvious relief at having passed muster.

The recipient of scholarships including the Jane E. Tuit scholarship, Lima has not decided what field she will specialize in. "I change my mind every other week – one week it's pediatrics and the next maybe surgery." Will she come back to the Virgin Islands to practice? "Oh, that's too far away" Lima says.

Vicky Ann Samuel is certain. She knows exactly what she will practice – radiology – and where she will practice it – St. Thomas. "Of course, I'll come back to St. Thomas," she says, mildly puzzled at the question. Echoing Lima's determination, Samuel says of her decision to pursue medicine: "Once you really want to do it, you can. Your mind is set."

Samuel's inspiration was kindled when she served as a candy striper at Roy Lester Schneider Hospital while in junior high school. "I loved talking to the patients, I enjoyed helping them, and I realized that this was what I wanted to do." She graduated from candy striping to lab work in high school.

When Samuel enrolled at UVI she wasn't aware of the Boston program. "As soon as I heard about it, I applied," she says. Samuel is fascinated by the growing field of radiology. "There's oncology, laser surgery, sonograms, mammograms – all new ways to deal with cancer. I'll specialize in oncology," she says. "When former Gov. (Roy L.) Schneider spoke about the cancer center at the hospital, he said we'd be needing oncologists. We still need them."

Samuel doesn't have time for outside activities. In fact, all of the young women expressed surprise at being asked. Samuel is looking forward to another summer in Boston.

"We get to talk to the doctors and we get good insights," she says, "and the summer bio-chemistry course is on the medical school level."

Nicole Hanley has a unique perception of her role as a doctor – in her case, an ophthalmologist. "I see a doctor as a detective," Hanley says. "You have to look at a patient's chart and listen to what they're telling you – and what they're not telling you – and figure out how to help this person."

Like her classmates, Hanley decided early on what her path would be. "At one point in high school, I had minor eye surgery, and I think that's when I found medicine so interesting," she says. "The minute stuff in the eye, it's so complicated; I think that's what attracts me to the eye." The recipient of a National Institutes of Health Research in Science and Engineering (RISE) scholarship, Hanley served as a tutor for a biology course one semester and also was a teaching assistant.

She says her eyes were really opened when she worked in the maternal child health care clinic at Schneider Hospital one summer, where she didn't really get to interact with the doctors. "People would ask me why I didn't want to be a nurse," she says. Allowing for the importance of nursing, Hanley says, "I realized I wanted to be put in charge."

Hanley says the prospect of returning to practice in the Virgin Islands is a big decision that's far off. "I'm really undecided now," she

says. "I know ophthalmologists are needed here, and eventually I'll come home, but I'll have to look at the opportunities. That's just too far away now."

Though not in her chosen field, last summer Hanley was assigned to "shadow" a Boston gynecologist. Mornings were spent in the clinic, but during the afternoons Hanley was paired with another doctor and was able to be present in the delivery room and post-partum areas.

"I even got to go into the operating room to see a C-section (Caesarean) and vaginal deliveries, too," Hanley says.

And that is right where Jinne Richards wants to be. The only Crucian in the bunch, Richards knows exactly what she wants to do. "I want to deliver babies," she says, "I want to be a gynecologist. You have to be sure what you want to do. You would hate to get to fourth year in med school, and discover you'd not made the right choice."

Richards says she came by her desire early, as medicine runs in her family. "My father and my brother are dentists, and after interning summers with my father, I knew that I wasn't interested in that."

While attending Good Hope School, Richards volunteered at the Queen Louise Home for Children, an orphanage. "They needed people to care for the babies, people who would play with them and give them some attention," she says. She found the experience painful, because many of the infants were "crack" babies, born to addicted mothers.

Richards' compassion for the newborn has a poignant, personal aspect. "I had a sister who was stillborn," she says, "and I felt that if the gynecologist had paid more attention, my sister might still be alive. I want to prevent as many stillborns as I can."

Richards enrolled at UVI specifically because of the Boston program, and, like her classmates, has survived the rigorous interview process. "I had interviews, and more interviews before they finally got about 20 of us and narrowed it down."

Richards is sure that after a demanding next nine or 10 years she will "eventually move back home to practice."

This summer Lima, Samuel, Hanley and Richards will be immersed in summer courses. They will also study for the Medical College Admissions Test, better known as the "M-CAT." Although they've been told not to stress about the test, Lima says, "I really want to do well."

"The M-CATs can be complicated," Hanley says, "but they don't look at those scores to decide if you'll get into medical school; they are more to determine your strengths."

If that's so, these young women should do just fine. ☺

DEPTH CHARGE:

Anegada Climate Tracers Probe Caribbean Sea

By Molly Morris



UVI student Leukemia Mounce (left) stands in front of the Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) used to probe the submarine volcano near Grenada called Kick 'em Jenny. The other members of the Kick 'em Jenny exploration, March 2003 are: (left to right) Celeste Mosher (UVI '02); NOAA's chief scientist Doug Wilson; Lincoln Critchly (UVI '02) and Kevin Brown, UVI Senior Technician (UVI '02)

Top right: Professor Roy Watlington

UVI Professor Roy Watlington is doing what he loves best – studying the waters that surround the earth, in particular those that flow through the Anegada Passage in the British Virgin Islands. After three years as chancellor of UVI's St. Thomas campus, Watlington, the principal investigator and driving force behind the Anegada Climate Tracers Study (ACTS), is once again in pursuit of things scientific.

The data that Watlington and other ACTS researchers compile is set off from that of their colleagues in UVI's William P. McLean Marine Science Center in that it focuses not on marine biology, but on the characteristics of the water that sustains marine life. "We look at global climate change from an unlikely place with potentially big payoffs."

ACTS research is exacting, even tedious in its precise nature, but its results can be exciting – revealing age-old secrets to the earth's climate. Climate phenomena such as La Niña, El Niño and global warming are studied through the infinitesimal trace substances gathered in water samples ACTS researchers retrieve.

ACTS is conducted in conjunction with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and would not be possible without it. UVI researchers work under the direction of NOAA Chief Scientist Douglas Wilson. The ACTS research is conducted jointly by NOAA and the UVI Center for Marine and Environmental Sciences and was funded by the U. S. Department of Energy Oak Ridge Institute of Science and Education, and in-kind contributions mainly from NOAA, Watlington says.

"NOAA is an essential partner in every effort of ours," he says. "The research vessels we use would cost \$25,000 a day." UVI students conduct NOAA research while simultaneously gathering ACTS climate data to pay for their room, board and, most importantly, all the scientific tools and instruction. "They loan us instruments," Watlington says, "They are not allowed to give things away."

Inside Watlington's small office in UVI's Marine Science Center are papers, instruments, photographs, all manner of scientific manuals, and even a round current drifter. Reaching up to an overhead shelf, Watlington extracts two brightly painted Styrofoam cups, one dwarfing the other. "This is something we did for fun," Watlington says. We dropped them, along with the samples, down to 4,000 meters and this is what happened." The smaller cup had shrunk under the enormous pressure to about an inch and a quarter high, like a large thimble. "Just imagine what that would do to a human."

Water samples are taken from down as far as 1,900 meters, about 1.2 miles, and then retracted. "These samples are nothing more than ocean

water, of no inherent value," Watlington says, "But they are worth \$2,000 each in terms of effort."

The samples are studied for salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, carbon dioxide and the man-made gas freon. The freon samples are analyzed at the University of Miami and the carbon dioxide at the NOAA laboratory in Florida. The balance of the testing is done on UVI's St. Thomas campus.

One of the key substances ACTS researchers look for is freon which, Watlington says, exists in larger amounts in northern waters. By tracing it, scientists can determine evidence of where the water is flowing, and where it has been.

Forty-five years ago Dr. Wallace S. Broecker devised his theory of global ocean circulation that revealed the existence of an underwater "conveyor belt" that generally flows past the Caribbean chain. The belt runs through the Atlantic Ocean, enters the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean at great depth before surfacing to flow back to the North Atlantic again in a continual flow. A small but important part of this global conveyor belt passes through the Anegada Passage, where the northern waters from as far away as the Labrador Sea empty from the north and flow into the Caribbean.

"Were it not for this diversion," Watlington says, "we would be totally out of the deep part of the loop. "The passage is the deepest entry into the Caribbean", Watlington says, "And it draws visiting scientists for that reason, to say nothing of the Caribbean weather they can enjoy at the surface."

But it's not all climate studies all the time. ACTS has occasionally led to intriguing discoveries including what Watlington calls a "small contribution" to Caribbean geology, when the NOAA and ACTS teams used some extra ship time to conduct a sonar scan of the submarine volcano called Kick 'em Jenny, north of Grenada in the Lesser Antilles.

What Watlington refers to as the "serendipitous study," took place during ACTS-2 and 3 in 1996, when the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory and the University of the Virgin Islands determined that the volcano's summit lay 178 meters, or about 587 feet, below the surface. This represented an 18-meter drop from 1989 surveys. Watlington has published a paper on the study in the prestigious reference journal, *Marine Geophysical Researches*.

ACTS has taken place during an eventful period in the scheme of natural events. The study was initiated immediately after the destructive passages of Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn in 1995. In spite of these and additional storms, ACTS has proceeded on track, Watlington says, with 14 excursions to date.

UVI student researchers and Kevin Brown, a UVI marine research specialist, took part in an exploratory excursion to Kick 'em Jenny in mid-March of 2003 with Haraldur Sigurdsson, a famous volcanologist, as the principal investigator.

Brown worked with Watlington on the relatively small research ship RV Isla Mayaguez and accompanied several of the expeditions including an almost-aborted trip in 1998 when the crew was ready, but unable, to board the RV Seward Johnson at Fort Pierce, Florida, because of the threat of Hurricane Georges. "It gets pretty exciting trying to keep 10 students occupied,"



NOAA's newest large research vessel, the Ronald H. Brown

Brown allowed. Eventually they returned to St. Thomas and again to Florida to pick up the ship that made one of its most successful excursions.

A veteran of that trip and many others, alumnus Barry Volson is now a second year graduate student in oceanography at Rhode Island University. While at UVI, Volson used his ACTS expertise to study water quality, marine life and the general condition of John Brewer's Bay. Ronald Olivacce, the first ACTS student intern, is now working in Texas for an environmental agency.

Closer to home, UVI alumna Shenell Gordon is a fisheries assistant in the Fish and Wildlife Division of the VI. Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Celeste Mosher is a laboratory instructor and Steve Herzleib is a research assistant – both at UVI. UVI senior Leukemia Mounce is employed as an aquarist at Coral World, a marine park and undersea observatory in St. Thomas. 🌊

THE MAKING

Ask her childhood friends and they'll tell you that LaVerne Ragster was destined for success. Ask her relatives and they'll tell you that her brilliance was evident at an early age.

OF A

PRESTID

By Nanyamka Farrelly





MENT



Ask her colleagues and they'll tell you that Dr. LaVerne Ragster's leadership, vision and determination are unmatched.

A native Virgin Islander, Dr. Ragster is humble about becoming the fourth and first female president of the University of the Virgin Islands. She says she hopes other women will be encouraged by her accomplishment.

"Being a role model is important but the object is really to focus on what has to be done."

Albert and Agatha Ragster enrolled LaVerne, their talkative first born, in pre-school in the home of her maternal great-grandfather, E. Benjamin Oliver, a celebrated Virgin Islands educator.

"I've been in school from the time I was a year old and have never left," Dr. Ragster, the newly installed UVI president, says. "It's been a long time in education."

The young woman who later went on to earn a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from the University of Miami, a master's degree in biology from San Diego State University and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of California at San Diego, was installed as president of the University of the Virgin Islands on March 16, 2003, in the presence of hundreds of dignitaries and well-wishers.

Her goal as the leader of an institution that serves 2,500 students, employs 550 faculty and staff, and is available to the 110,000 people of the Virgin Islands, is to improve its services to better serve the entire community. Dr. Ragster plans to strengthen UVI's relationships with the private sector, the community and the government, extend technical assistance to the local and federal government, and oversee the startup and fruition of UVI's Research and Technology Park. Other things she envisions include increasing dormitory space and training facilities, which will be clearly outlined in a 10-year master plan that is in development.

"I see this institution being a very different place in five years — and for the better," Dr. Ragster says. She's very keen on the importance of setting clear visions and goals. "Goals help you to focus your activity," she says, and her life is a testimony to that statement.

When she began the ninth grade, Dr. Ragster says she knew she would be the valedictorian of her 1969 Charlotte Amalie High School graduating class. Her sheer determination was even evident to her classmates.

"LaVerne was always at the head of her class," said her former classmate, VI. Territorial Court Judge Audrey L. Thomas. "Not only was she the valedictorian, there was no doubt in our minds that she would be the val. Hands down, we knew LaVerne would be the val," Thomas said.

There was something special about LaVerne Ragster, and everyone noticed it.

"She was set apart from most people in terms of her intellect, which is really superior," said her cousin and UVI Assistant Professor of English Carol Henneman. "Her vision for herself was clear at a young age."

Henneman, who grew up in the St. Thomas neighborhood of Anna's Fancy, just a few minutes walk away from Mahogany Estate, where Dr. Ragster was raised, credits her cousin's consistency as her best attribute. Henneman admired Dr. Ragster's decision to return to the territory after completing her education.

"LaVerne could have earned a high salary anywhere in the world," Henneman said, noting that her cousin was a rare find — a black female with a Ph.D. in biology, "but she chose to come home."

"What is very, very significant is that she is tangible proof that the public school system in the Virgin Islands can produce the best," Henneman continued.

Dr. Ragster's selection as UVI's president, while no surprise to those who know her capabilities, generates a proud feeling in those who watched her grow.

"It's probably one of the best things that have happened to the Oliver family," said Henneman. Other family greats, mainly educators, have followed in the footsteps of their late patriarch, E. Benjamin Oliver, for whom a St. Thomas elementary school is named.

President LaVerne Ragster has been involved with several non-governmental and regional organizations including:

- > Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (past sub-secretary general)
- > Consortium of Caribbean Universities for Natural Resource Management (past coordinator)
- > Caribbean Studies Association (past president)
- > Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (board member, past chair of the board)
- > Caribbean Conservation Association (past vice president)
- > Island Resources Foundation (board member)
- > The Nature Conservancy (former board member)
- > Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (USVI representative)

Both of Dr. Ragster's parents were educators who held master's degrees. Her mother Agatha was an elementary school science teacher and supervisor of science for the Department of Education. Her father Albert taught vocational education at local high schools until he was appointed assistant state director of vocational and technical education. The VI. Education Department established the Albert Ragster Sr. Scholarship in Vocational Education in his honor.

The Ragster household was unorthodox. "We had an interesting childhood because my mother let us try a lot of different things," says Dr. Ragster, the oldest of five siblings — Eva Ragster Lans, Albert Ragster Jr., Fitzgerald Ragster and Clarisa Ragster Wilson. At home they raised unusual animals and conducted experiments. As a youngster, LaVerne even competed and was first runner-up in the St. Thomas Carnival Prince and Princess Pageant. When they were ready to enter high school, the Ragster children had the option of attending a public or private high school.

When, as a teenager, her mother offered her the opportunity to go to France to learn to speak French, she passed it up. Years later, Dr. Ragster says, she understood the significance of the offer.

“She never forced us. If you were ready, you could have it. If you weren’t, you missed it. The one thing we did understand is that we needed to try our best and that education was important. That was very, very clear.”

After her early days at her great-grandfather’s school, LaVerne Ragster attended first grade at Lucinda Millin’s Private School. With the first, second and third grades in one room and fourth, fifth and sixth grades in another room, the talkative and intelligent LaVerne learned all she could and was quickly placed with the fourth, fifth and sixth graders.

“By the time I finished first grade, I was not interested in second grade,” Dr. Ragster remembers. Nevertheless, she entered the

Taught how to swim by American Red Cross instructors when she was seven years old, LaVerne volunteered at the Red Cross as a teenager, teaching others how to swim.

Willard John, a childhood friend and swimming buddy, remembers when they both taught swimming at Lindbergh Bay during the summers and took life-saving courses until they became certified as lifeguards.

“My recollection of her was that she was a very persistent person,” said John, an assistant principal at the St. Croix Educational Complex Vocational School. Dr. Ragster was one of the few females in the life-saving courses.

“She was neck and neck with all of us, if not better,” John said. “I knew she would be very, very successful.”

Her early exposure to the beaches of St. Thomas developed into a love for the water that grew into a career opportunity.

“I thought fish were the most graceful things

After fulfilling her vision of being the valedictorian of her graduating class, Dr. Ragster left the island to attend the University of Miami. During her first three years there she never felt homesick, but by her junior year she longed for the islands.

“When I graduated with my bachelor’s degree I knew that I didn’t know anything. I had to continue learning, there was no question,” Dr. Ragster says. She moved to California to attend San Diego State University, where she earned a Master of Science degree. She stayed in California, attending the University of California, San Diego, where she earned her Ph.D.

Yearning for the community that molded and nurtured her, after 10 years abroad completing her education, Dr. Ragster was ready to return home.

“The mainland has tremendous opportunities and conveniences, but there is something about this community that I wanted to be a part of.

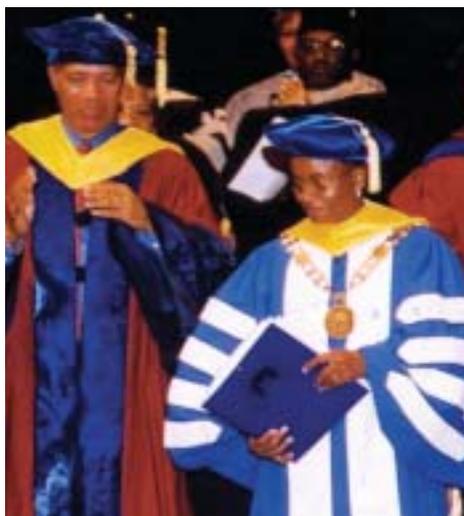


Photo by Ethelbert Bedminster

A newly robed President Ragster receives the University’s medallion at her inauguration on March 16, 2003.

second grade at Nisky School, in Sub Base, which later became the Uller Muller Elementary School. She attended seventh grade at the Lockhart Elementary School while the Wayne Aspinall Junior High School was being built, and began the eighth grade at Charlotte Amalie High School.

At CAHS she joined the band, where she played the first chair clarinet. With the band she traveled to St. Croix and New York. She also competed in and won first runner-up in a Miss CAHS pageant. Her high school days were a delicate balance of academics and extracurricular activities.

on earth and I always tried to emulate them when I was in the water,” Dr. Ragster says. She was also an avid diver and loved plants, so studying marine biology was an easy pick. The choice was between marine biology and dance. Dance became a hobby, which she still enjoys. Her other hobbies include diving, listening to music and reading. Soca, zouk, kaiso, salsa, calypso — Dr. Ragster likes just about all Caribbean music. She also enjoys classical music and jazz.

Always an avid reader, she favors fantasy, sword and sorcery and science fiction. Frank Herbert and Marion Zimmer Bradley are among her favorite authors.

You can make a difference here if you try hard enough,” says Dr. Ragster, whose favorite dishes are boiled fish and fungi. “This is one of the most beautiful places in the world . . . there’s just no comparison. It just didn’t make sense to do anything else.”

Dr. Ragster was hired as an assistant professor of marine biology at CVI in 1981, when William MacLean was head of the Science and Math Division. “He let me know that I was being hired instead of people who had written books and were big, famous people,” she says.

Ironically, years later, when MacLean was on leave for several months, Dr. Ragster filled in for him, acting as the vice president for academic

affairs. It was then that her colleagues realized her leadership potential.

“At that point I began to see her as presidential material,” said St. Croix Campus Chancellor Jennifer Jackson, who started working at CVI around the same time as Dr. Ragster. They became acquainted when Dr. Ragster approached Jackson about forming a group to tackle faculty concerns. Dr. Ragster also led an exercise class that Jackson took. Jackson applauds the President’s well-roundedness.

“She focuses on the whole person, not only the academics,” said Jackson. “She is very family centered and the Virgin Islands is her family.”

Dr. Ragster advanced from an assistant professor to senior vice president and provost before being named president of UVI. She has held the positions of chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics, faculty representative to the UVI Board of Trustees and acting vice

I run to for solace and love belong to an amazing man,” she said of Gardner. She called Gardner, an environmental planner, “my life partner, my best friend and husband.”

Sitting behind a mahogany desk in her St. Thomas campus office, the petite president wears a floral shirt and slacks, gold-framed eyeglasses and minimal makeup, if any. Her trademark earrings, noticeable but not distracting, frame her face.

Dr. Ragster explains that her earrings have become a distinguishing part of her identity, along with her handmade leather sandals. She loves the curves and lines of the flat, wood-like, cone-shaped earrings made from the dried fruit of the sandbox tree (*Hura crepitans*), so much so that she has been wearing them for more than 20 years and collecting them from around the Caribbean.

“One of the challenges I have is that I don’t fit some of the images of a CEO,” Dr. Ragster

Although she has achieved much and no doubt has much more to accomplish, Dr. Ragster believes that the true measure of a person is how that person treats others.

“People worry about making a difference in the world. I think if you do the best you can with the small things, it adds up in the end,” she says.

She tells the story of a boy who notices several starfish washed up on the shore at low tide. As the boy throws each starfish back into the ocean someone tells him that there are millions of starfish in the ocean and tossing in those few will not make a difference. The boy picks up another starfish, throws it into the sea and responds “it made a difference to that one.”

That story is indicative of Dr. Ragster’s perspective on her life and her career.

“You can’t do it all, but what you do makes a difference because maybe it would not have gotten done otherwise,” she says.



(Left to right) A young LaVerne Ragster, left, with sisters Clarisa, center, and Eva, as a student in the 1970s, and with her husband Lloyd Gardner.

president for Research and Public Service. Since coming aboard at UVI, she has expanded her environmental interests in the Eastern Caribbean, joining many organizations and holding several leadership positions in them.

“I haven’t been bored since I’ve come home. I’ve always found more things to get involved in and there is always some new project, some new change, something that I want to do,” Dr. Ragster says.

Seven years ago Dr. Ragster married her soul mate Lloyd Gardner, who she described at her inauguration as the “very special person” in her life. “The mind I respect and enjoy engaging, the shoulders I lean on for support and the arms

says, noting her love for color and the fact that she owns and wears several business suits that are not the traditional blue or black. “It’s about your own style. Everyone should have their own style and still meet whatever the (dress) requirements are of a particular job.”

Almost a year since beginning her tenure as president, Dr. Ragster says she is still developing a rhythm.

“One of the things that I’ve learned over the years is that an indicator of change and growth is discomfort,” she contends. “I’m in a period of learning and change and I’m not comfortable, but I am excited.”

Dr. Ragster considers herself fortunate to have been born in the Virgin Islands and having had the experiences that she has had.

“I’m a product of some of the best things of this society,” she says. “I’ve had many influences from elsewhere, but my base is here. That’s what drives me – creating situations that will similarly empower others. This has been a great place to grow up and I would like to see it be that for a number of other young people.” 🌱



University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas campus

INNOVATION, Creativity Generate Campus Changes

By Molly Morris



Business and Facilities
Services Director Peter
Abrahams

While a nursery, new palm trees and walking paths will welcome students on the University of the Virgin Islands' St. Croix campus by fall, new and reconfigured construction is booming on St. Thomas.

A journey that would have routed students all over the sprawling St. Thomas campus, by Spring 2004 will deliver them to a "one-stop-shop," the renovated and reconfigured Harvey Administration and Conference Center, says Pat O'Donnell, UVI's capital projects director.

"It's a simple concept," O'Donnell says. "You follow the threads and consolidate student life, which will help students and administration alike. Students can register, pay bills and apply for financial aid in one step."

The reconfigured 30,000 square foot Harvey Center will house all administrative offices, accounting, the offices of the provost, registrar, financial aid and university computing, as well as a state-of-the-art teleconferencing center.

O'Donnell estimates that about 20,000 square feet of academic space will be saved by putting everything under one roof at the reconfigured Harvey Center. "It's a concept called 'adaptive reuse,'" he says. The term applies to taking a building and modifying it, changing its function, as opposed to building new facilities. "Sometimes I've had people say, 'Why don't you tear it down and build a new building – it's cheaper that way,'" O'Donnell says. "But it doesn't work that way."

Another building with a new face is the Classroom Administration building, which, in addition to classrooms and computer and physics laboratories, houses the Science and Mathematics Division's faculty and staff, the Office of the Registrar, and other academic and administrative offices. The building got a new coat of paint, its roof repaired and a new fire escape with an exit link to the Little Theater. The Harvey Center has known other incarnations. It was first a U. S. Navy barracks during World War II, after which it became the popular Trade-winds Hotel, in the late '50s and '60s, before its academic career.

And that is hardly all. A centerpiece of the capital improvements program, a handsome

new centrally located dining pavilion will be ready this summer. In keeping with St. Thomas campus architecture, the pavilion has a pagoda-style, tiered roof, with a spacious many-windowed 125-seat dining area, which O'Donnell hopes won't just be utilized for meals. He envisions the area – located in the heart of the student dorms and open from early morning until late evening – as a gathering place for student life.

The Reichhold Center for the Arts is getting a new face and new foliage. The splotchy, flecked performance canopy has been scraped and refinished. Gutters have been repaired, the vertical siding has been resealed to prevent leaks that have plagued the area, and sections of the roof have been replaced.

Arnold Brown, a 35-year veteran of UVI landscaping and groundskeeping, has virtually come out of retirement to supervise landscaping, especially around the Reichhold Center. "I'm not officially back at my old job," he remarked, gazing at the lush new planting across from the Reichhold Center office. "I am really a consultant."

Brown and O'Donnell take particular pride in knowing that the Reichhold Center was able to showcase its attractive new roof, new siding and landscaping for Dr. LaVerne Ragster's March 16 inauguration.

Work is ongoing on the St. Thomas campus's 17 dormitories, one dorm at a time. The old

wooden louvers which allowed rain to get in, have been replaced with glass to improve the interior lighting and ventilation. Inside walls are being painted a bright white, bathrooms are getting new fixtures, acrylic tile showers, and all dorms are getting new lighting as well as fire exits.

More than 500 light fixtures have been reconfigured and replaced in the upper campus academic building, and 328 windows have been replaced with energy efficient glass. O'Donnell said the 296 window pieces installed in the library, combined with a revamped air conditioning system, have reduced humidity in the archive sensitive area from 78 to 55 percent.

A major energy conservation effort is planned for both the St. Croix and St. Thomas campuses in 2003.

Attractive sandstone information kiosks – holding maps, directions and notices of current events – will greet visitors to both campuses this fall. The kiosks, which will be located across from the University's St. Croix and St. Thomas main gates, were President Ragster's idea to make each campus more accessible to newcomers.

On St. Croix, Business and Facilities Services Director Peter Abrahams is not faced with an immediate building program. He devotes his energies to more long-range projects, always with an eye toward aesthetic as well as pragmatic value.



Melvin Evans Center on the University of the Virgin Islands St. Croix campus.



Improvements were made to the performance canopy of the Reichhold Center for the Arts on the St. Thomas campus.

One thing of immediate economic concern, however, is the effort to keep power costs down. “One of the big issues on the St. Croix campus is developing innovative ways to bring down our dependence on WAPA,” Abrahams says. “Our utility bills are upwards of \$600,000 per year. We’re expanding on a regular basis – nothing is getting smaller. Ten years ago computers were not a big thing. Now we have one, sometimes two for each professor, and the laser printers are power hungry. We have to find creative ways to supply the power.”

Motion sensors have been installed in classrooms, so that lights turn off when rooms aren’t used for 20 minutes. Timers for the air-conditioning units have been installed in some of the smaller units (it would take too long for the larger units to cool down and reheat) and dedicated circuits have been added to all offices to resolve grounding problems, Abrahams says.

Water is no longer a problem. “We are not totally self-sufficient,” Abrahams says, but that is the goal. “We activated an old campus well, and we are getting 7,000 gallons a day from that,” he says

And the St. Croix campus is collecting surface water in parking areas, which is used in two

campus ponds. “We installed tilted parking so the water drains to a corner, where it goes through tanks with baffles to keep out the sludge,” Abrahams says.

Nothing is more practical than Abrahams’ idea for the St. Croix campus kiosk, which he has turned into a wellspring of water, as well as information.

“When I heard about the kiosk, I thought it was a perfect opportunity for energy conservation,” Abrahams says. “It’s on an angle, so it will drain into a 20,000 gallon cistern underneath the structure. And it will have a watershed roof. The collected water will be used for irrigation.”

“We want to get the feel of the campus back to the feel it had years ago,” he says. “With budget crunches, the busted pipe took priority over trees. It’s a health and safety issue, so the first thing to go is landscaping.”

Abrahams says natural disasters also have taken their toll on campus foliage, primarily the handsome, sensitive and expensive Puerto Rican royal date palms that dot the entrance. “A year ago we secured an urban forestry grant for more palms and we located 26 in Puerto Rico and brought them back. Now we have to monitor their health.”

Working closely with the UVI Cooperative Extension Service, the St. Croix campus will develop a nursery later this summer. “We want to promote indigenous plants,” Abrahams says. “The University has never had a nursery. We will be growing our own trees, raising our own shrubs and plants, and when their life cycle is over, we can replace them. It’s also a cost-saving initiative.”

And let us not forget the perimeters of the campus. “We will have hiking, walking trails, not just for the students, but for everybody,” Abrahams says. “We want more light there and more trees. It’s a popular area to walk. We will put nameplates on the trees and put exercise stations along the way.”

Abrahams says everything his department does on the campus must meet the “three S’s.” “That is safety, security and service.” Lighting is especially important since most St. Croix classes are at night. “It’s like a mini-city at night,” Abrahams says. An outside lighting project begun last year continues. “We want to provide a safe, healthy area for our customers – the students.”



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IF COWS COULD TALK

AN OVERVIEW OF ADVANCES IN ST. CROIX'S SENEPOL CATTLE INDUSTRY

By Catherine Fahy



To gaze into the eyes of a Senepol is to experience deep, warm, long-lashed liquid wonder. Its slow-blinking stare holds a contemplative curiosity that can cause a person to feel a little silly for being so “MOOOved” by a mere bovine.

But to call a Senepol a mere bovine is to discount its lofty heritage. Bred on St. Croix to withstand the rigors of drought and heat, the Senepol has evolved into a breed regarded worldwide for its adaptability, mild disposition and tender beef.

Dr. Bob Godfrey, the assistant director of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station and the leader of its Animal Science Program, likes to recount the story of a Brazilian couple who sent him a videotape of their new Senepol herd with the Mac Davis song “Lord, It's Hard To Be Humble” playing in the background. Godfrey, who has photos of Senepol adorning his office walls, understood the humor immediately. “It's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way,” he says, reciting the song's refrain with a smile.

These days, however, if any of the approximately 600 Senepol on St. Croix could talk, they might say they are feeling a little unsure of their footing in the cattle industry.

Technological advances in freezing semen have made it easier for breeders elsewhere to build their herds without buying cattle directly from St. Croix. As a result, the local export market has decreased.

St. Croix cattle rancher Hans Lawaetz has trimmed his Annaly Farms herd by approximately 1,300 head since 1990 and now counts just 200 Senepol on his land. Henry Nelthropp, the owner of Estate Granard, sold his herd to a farm in Puerto Rico a few years ago. His grandfather, Bromley Nelthropp, bred the first Senepol in the early 1900s by crossing an English

Red Poll bull from Trinidad with an N'Dama heifer from the West African country of Senegal. “It's not that the market isn't there, it's that the cost of production, marketing and transportation is so high,” Godfrey says.

In response to the high cost of shipping cattle by air, Enrico “Kiko” Gasperi, the co-owner and manager of Castle Nugent Farms, has started exporting cattle by boat to South America and the U.S. mainland.

Despite the many factors that impact the local Senepol market, one hopes that the cattle chewing their cud beneath the wind-stiffened trees in St. Croix's pastures are not counting their days just yet.

For decades, local farmers have meticulously chronicled each herd's bloodlines and production records while UVI scientists have worked hard to introduce research documenting the Senepol's superiority. Dr. James Rakocy, the director of the University's Agricultural Experiment Station, says UVI is at the forefront of Senepol research.

Last November, UVI hosted “Senepol – Cattle for the New Millennium,” a conference marking the 25th anniversary of the Senepol Cattle Breeders Association, which was founded on St. Croix in 1977. The conference drew more than 60 people to St. Croix for two days of farm tours and research presentations.

With breeders from Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela making up the foreign contingent, Godfrey says that it became clear that



South and Central America are emerging as the leaders in the Senepol industry. In the past 10 years more than 300 Senepol have clambered into boats and planes, bound for regions south of St. Croix. A paper presented by Venezuela breeder Octavio Martinez stated that, "...evidence of the demand (for) Senepol genetics in Venezuela is the constant growth of the 'national herd' plus the increase in semen sales...as well as the behavior of the market for (full-blooded) and purebred live animals."

Richard Browning Jr., an animal scientist from Tennessee State University's Cooperative Agricultural Research Program in Nashville, presented a paper on the Senepol's resistance to a fungus in grass that is toxic to many other breeds. "That shows the utility of the Senepol even outside our environment," Godfrey says.

Researchers are also using Senepol as positive controls in studies to determine why Holstein dairy cattle do not adapt well to heat. "We're focusing on body temperatures," says Godfrey, who is conducting the study in collaboration with researchers from North Carolina State University and Mississippi State University.

Senepol themselves do not make good dairy stock, Godfrey says, because their milk production is not as high as that of dairy stock. And crossbreeding them with dairy stock usually results in the dilution of each breeds' desirable traits. The goal of crossbreeding, Godfrey explains, is to achieve "hybrid vigor," which is a calf's expression of traits such as fertility and survivability that exceed those of its parents' respective breeds. One breed with which the Senepol finds itself in direct competition is the Brahman, a breed native to India that

makes up more than 90 percent of the world's warm-weather cattle. Like Senepol, the Brahman is a striking breed, with their humped backs, floppy ears and loose-fitting skin.

Senepol, however, are showing their edge by adapting well to winter weather on U.S. cattle farms, despite being bred for warm weather.

In an interview with the Virgin Islands Daily News, Lawaetz said the owners of Deseret, the largest cattle farm in the United States, are considering replacing their herd in Texas with Senepol. If that happens, St. Croix stands to reap greater recognition as the Senepol's birthplace.

Senepol are also expanding their numbers through technology. Using superovulation and embryo transfer procedures, Godfrey says farmers are finding a different way of exporting Senepol from St. Croix to Australia. Superovulation is a process that involves treating cows with hormones that make them produce more than the normal one egg per cycle. After a cow is bred, eight to 20 embryos are flushed out of the uterus and frozen for transplant at a later date.

A technological advance that came out of reproductive research at UVI enables local breeders to predict the fertility of bulls.

By evaluating semen and testicular characteristics, buyers can be assured that they are not getting a "dud," says Godfrey.

Occasionally,

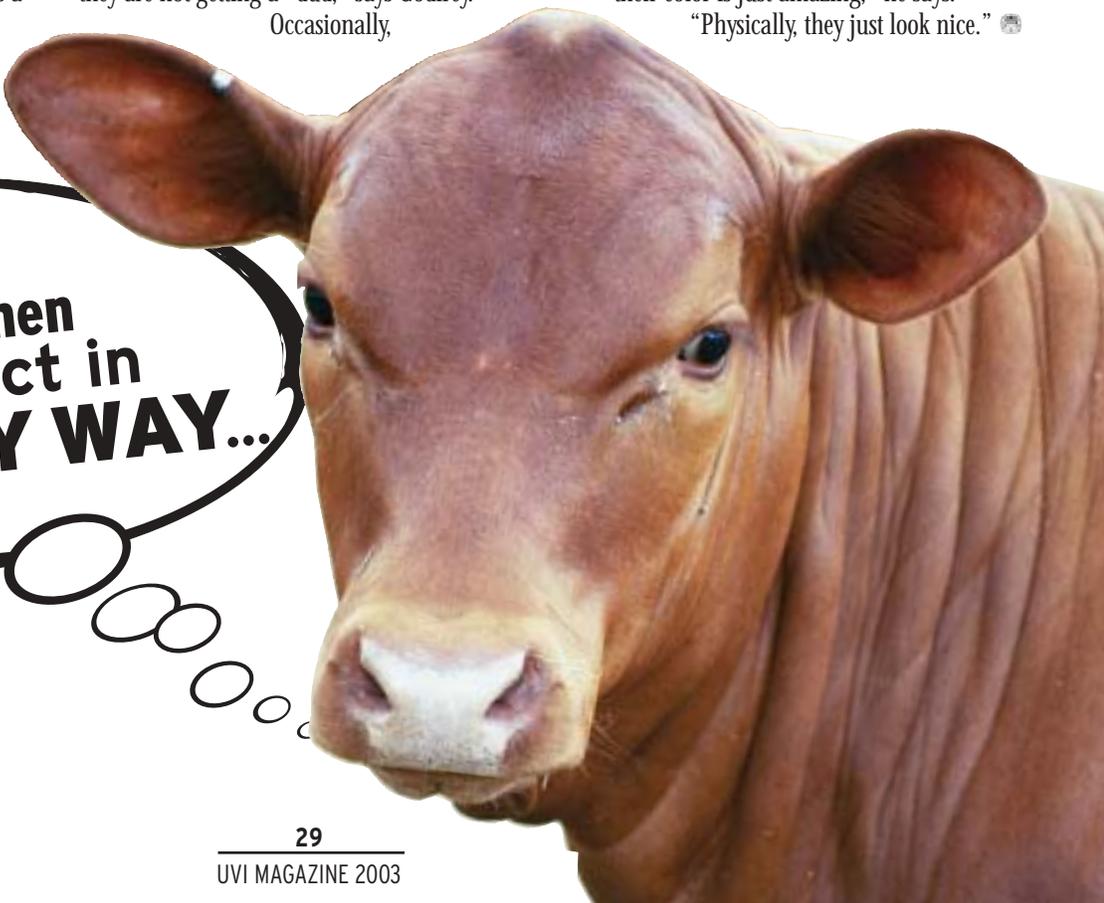
though, nature throws breeders a wild card. He relayed the story of a top-dollar bull who was exported to Texas last fall to have his semen collected at a germplasm center and shipped to Australia, but who has so far been impotent. The bull's infertility could be caused by anything from food allergies to stress, injury or fatigue and its new owners are still hoping for a turnaround, Godfrey says.

Ultimately, breeders and researchers on St. Croix dream of UVI having its own germplasm center, which would enable them to collect, store and ship semen and embryos from local stock directly to faraway places such as Australia. Germplasm centers, which are common in larger markets, require liquid nitrogen to keep semen and embryos alive in a frozen state. Even a modest center at UVI would cost more than \$1 million, Godfrey says, but would secure St. Croix's foothold in the worldwide Senepol industry.

Over lunch at the UVI cafeteria, Godfrey hints at the possibility of a germplasm center becoming part of the UVI Research and Technology Park and says he has discussed such a venture with a company in California – Pacific International Genetics.

But even if a germplasm center doesn't spring up right away, Godfrey says he has no doubt the mighty Senepol will continue dotting St. Croix's windswept pastures and adding a pleasant aspect to the local landscape. "They're very docile and their color is just amazing," he says.

"Physically, they just look nice." 🐮



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Five Lives Evolve

By Molly Morris



Dr. Gilbert Sprauve



Dr. Erika Waters

When Dr. Gilbert Sprauve isn't telling stories, playing tennis, dreaming up this year's Carnival persona, working on his creative new French course, or caring for his 89-year-old mother, he might have time to go fishing for yellowtail, a fish he says he is "learning a little more about."

For one thing, "you have to have the right bait," he says. Dr. Sprauve's own bait for many years has been the intelligence and creativity he has brought not only to his students at the University of the Virgin Islands, but to the Virgin Islands community. His annual Carnival treks, as a single entry, are well known for their political and humorous flavor. "I see the parade route as a stage and a chance for a little bit of theater to get the crowd involved with me," he says.

The multilingual professor taught languages on the St. Thomas campus for 37 years, his longevity a testament to his remarkably successful career. Though a long-time St. John resident, he currently makes his home on St. Thomas with his mother, Eunice Sprauve, herself a long-time, revered St. Thomas teacher.

Dr. Sprauve's new focus is developing a French course, *Francophonie en Marche*, a concept that embraces the teachings and language of all the French-speaking countries in the world, and in this case, specifically Caribbean islands where either standard

French or French Creole is spoken.

Dr. Sprauve wants to teach from the perspective of a young Caribbean or Afro-Caribbean person, engaging students in a dialogue about poverty and other social issues, government and ecology. Students will learn vocabulary during the dialogue.

"I still tell stories when I'm asked," he says. In February, in celebration of Black History Month, Dr. Sprauve told the tales for which he is so well-known at the Julius Sprauve School on St. John and Joseph Gomez and Seventh Day Adventist schools on St. Thomas.

His enthusiasm has not waned. "I try to base the stories on the Dutch Creole language that used to be spoken here. I usually begin with a few proverbs – like "cockroach got no business in fowl house" – till they slowly guess what it means, then I tell them the importance of cultural experience through language, and I might teach them a little song."

Dr. Erika Waters, professor, writer, founder and long-time editor of the prestigious literary journal, *The Caribbean Writer*, says she is "enjoying the differences," between her present home in Maine and the 30 years she spent on St. Croix, 26 of them teaching English on the St. Croix campus.

Dr. Waters took early retirement in 2002 to move with her family to her husband's home

area in Maine. She is still teaching English, but with a Caribbean touch. "I introduce Caribbean writing they otherwise would not have known to my students here and they love it; they are fascinated," she says.

In the almost 17 years since Dr. Waters began *The Caribbean Writer*, multitudes of readers have had the same experience, getting to know writing that was not being published elsewhere. The internationally respected journal published by UVI, focuses on Caribbean writing, or writing with a Caribbean influence.

And Dr. Waters still is active in the journal as book review editor. She says the book reviews were one of the most satisfying aspects of her career. "Book reviews were not part of the original plan, but they have proved to be very valuable for librarians and readers of Caribbean literature. My own feeling," she continues, "was that we should find room, first, for books that weren't getting publicized elsewhere, and I think we did get exposure for many small press books by lesser-known authors. The number of reviews has expanded each year – last year we had more than 30."

The Caribbean Writer has succeeded in Dr. Waters' eyes. "I wanted it to follow in the tradition of the great Caribbean literary magazines of the past; particularly, I had in mind *BIM* from Barbados, which launched



Elridge Blake

nearly every major writer from the first generation of Caribbean writers. When both George Lamming and Kamau Brathwaite wrote (in Volume 15) that they felt The Caribbean Writer was rightfully in such legendary company, I felt we had, in fact, succeeded in our goal.”

Dr. Chris Ramcharan’s 24-year career on the St. Croix campus is more green than literary. His contributions to UVI, and to the world of horticulture have taken place largely in the laboratory and the greenhouse where he distinguished himself by his expertise, his curiosity about growing things, and his perseverance.

Today he says, sadly, that he has had to put his teaching on the back burner because of a heart condition. But that hasn’t affected his enthusiasm for plant life and his many discoveries.

Dr. Ramcharan is best known for his work with tissue cultures on papayas and bananas. He introduced the first tissue-cultured banana plantains into the Virgin Islands for field trials at UVI’s Research and Extension Center.

And his efforts have been internationally rewarded. He has worked with Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance and with Winsock International, organizations funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.



Juanita Woods

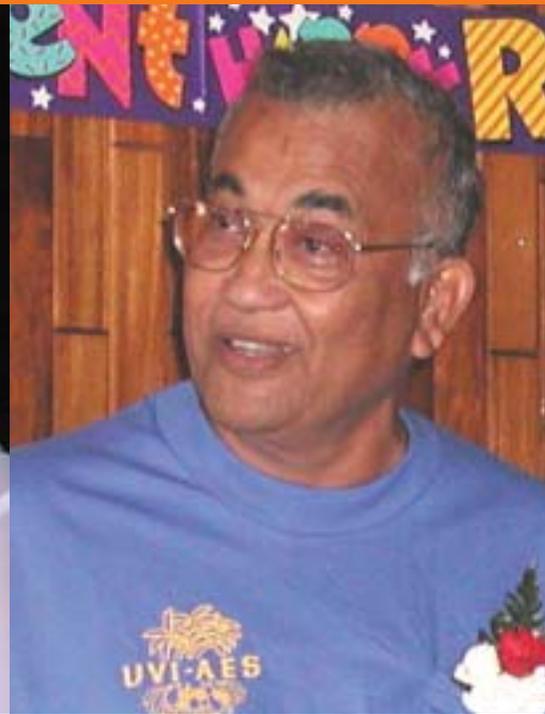
His expertise took him from Brazil to Nepal, where he helped fruit growers in the foothills of the Himalaya mountain range.

A Trinidad native, Dr. Ramcharan came to the St. Croix campus in 1978, where he started off as a research horticulturist. In 1984 he returned to his alma mater, the University of Florida, and received his doctorate in horticulture. He was promoted to research associate professor at UVI in 1995, a position he held until his health forced him to seek early retirement last year.

Dr. Ramcharan will by no means abandon the world of flora and fauna when he and his family move to Florida later this year. “Now I will have time to finish editing my book,” he says. Entitled, “Tropical Fruits in the Caribbean,” the book will be published in four languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Though many books have been written about tropical fruit, Dr. Ramcharan says none have been written specifically for the Caribbean and Latin America. And how about the green world outside his desk window? “Oh, I definitely will have a little garden in Florida,” he says with a smile.

UVI Physical Education Prof. Elridge Blake’s outlook hasn’t changed much in the 28 years he has worked at the University of the Virgin Islands. Still teaching part-time after his



Dr. Christopher Ramcharan

retirement from full-time duties in January 2003, Blake is looking forward to the days ahead. “I just enjoy life,” the 1965 graduate of St. Thomas’s Charlotte Amalie High School says.

After completing his bachelor of science degree in health and physical education in 1969 at Fisk University in Nashville, Blake came home to the Virgin Islands. In 1974, he began teaching at the College of the Virgin Islands and in 1989 he completed a master’s degree in administration and supervision in education at UVI.

Known as “Coach Blake” to those on UVI’s St. Thomas campus, as well as to the Virgin Islands community, it’s hard to figure out just which sport is this perpetual athlete’s favorite. Having served as head coach of UVI’s men’s and women’s varsity volleyball teams for 25 years, one would think it might be volleyball. But Blake, who has also served as assistant basketball coach, is quick to point out that he loves “all sports,” and that the only one he hasn’t played consistently yet is golf. He has coached regional volleyball teams in the British Virgin Islands and trained volleyball teams in St. Kitts, St. Maarten, Anguilla and Curacao.

The divorced father of two is as proud of his daughters’ athletic achievements as he is of the many student athletes he has influenced. He’s quick to say that both of his daughters played Division I volleyball at North Carolina A&T

University. One was voted Player of the Year in the 2000 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and was Most Valuable Player in the 2000 MEAC Playoff Championships.

Blake says he's facing this next chapter of his life filled with anticipation. "I am not going to be inactive," he says. "Retirement for me means activity, doing what I want. I'm not heading off into the sunset."

Change has been the one constant in the 25 years that Juanita Woods spent as an administrator on UVI's St. Croix campus. Her retirement in November 2002 signaled the end of a career marked by long workdays, work nights and weekends. In retrospect, Woods calls the time she spent catering to college students "a wonderful experience."

When she first came to the College of the Virgin Islands in 1977 as a counselor and administrative aide to Campus Director Mary Savage, Lawrence Wanlass was president and the St. Croix campus was a tight-knit community characterized by close relationships.

Woods was later promoted to student personnel officer, director of student life, dean of students and finally, associate chancellor of the St. Croix campus.

Throughout the administrations of four University presidents – Drs. Wanlass, Arthur Richards, Orville Kean and LaVerne Ragster – Woods remained committed to student concerns.

Characteristic of the early days at CVI, Woods says she and others on staff did what needed to be done for the good of the institution.

"I viewed students as consumers of higher education," Woods said in a telephone interview from her Estate Montpelier home. She wanted students on St. Croix to receive the same services that students on CVI's St. Thomas campus received.

"We didn't have anybody to do financial aid, so I did it. We didn't have a testing officer, so I did it," she said. Back then, administrators didn't stand on ceremony.

In the late 1980s an accreditation mandate by the Middle States Commission on Higher

Education required the University to offer comparable facilities, programs and services on each of its campuses.

Woods said that in the years between 1991 and 2001, her motivation was the development of a full student affairs component on the St. Croix campus, as well as the development of a campus health center, which was completed in 2001. She says it's gratifying to know that the St. Croix campus achieved each of the goals that were set by the mandate.

This next phase of Woods' life represents promise and possibility. "It's the first time that I am just responsible for me instead of other people," she says. "I always put a lot into my work and I just feel retirement represents a sense of freedom.

For the time being, don't come calling on Juanita Woods with career offers. She may do some painting, and then again, maybe not. "I'm not taking anything on professionally," she says. "I'm really just starting to experience what retirement is all about." 🌸

Seslia Congratulates Dr. LaVerne Erina Ragster



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RETIREMENT PLANNING COLLEGE SAVINGS INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS LIFE INSURANCE

Striving for SUCCESS

The Workforce Training Edge

By Karen D. Gutloff



Divi Carina Bay Resort & Casino employee Miquel Ramos.

Miguel Ramos never dreamed that answering a simple newspaper advertisement would make such a difference in his life. In early June 2002, he saw an ad describing a six-week job skills training course sponsored by the Workforce and Economic Development Institute at the University of the Virgin Islands.

The Institute, funded through a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides Virgin Islands residents with job skills training in the areas of information technology and hospitality.

The 56-year-old Ramos, who works as a slot attendant and customer service aide at the Divi Carina Bay Resort & Casino on St. Croix, saw the training as a chance to upgrade his workplace skills.

"In the casino you need to know how to treat a customer," Ramos says. "I thought, maybe I can learn a little more about people and how to perform even better on the job."

He began the training with a one-week course on the basics of preparing resumes and navigating employment interviews. Ramos then attended classes in the hospitality training program, learning the importance of customer service and problem solving. An ex-military officer, Ramos says the course was an eye-opener.

"Coming from the military, I can be kind of a rough guy. The course woke me up to the fact that I need to learn about people's feelings and listen more to what they go through," he says.

The training also resulted in a job promotion. "When I showed the manager at work my certificate, he became more aware of the fact

I have something useful to our section. They gave me a promotion and a small (salary) increase," Ramos says.

WEDI was brought under the umbrella of UVI's Community and Personal Development Unit. CPD Unit Director Ilene Heyward Garner says job skills training is part of UVI's overall mission to play a greater role in the economic and social transformation of the Virgin Islands.

"Tourism is the biggest economic industry on St. Thomas and we have the Research and Technology Park coming to St. Croix soon," Garner explains. "We are helping to train the workforce to be prepared to assume positions in these industries."

She adds, "While many residents desire four-year degrees, some just need additional skills in particular areas, or they want to make a career switch. This program allows people to become certified in a field without going through a four-year program."

According to CPD unit assistant Cindy Richardson-Hunt, the initial WEDI training session received 85 applications. Some 50 people on St. Thomas and St. Croix were selected to participate and 39 of those participants successfully completed the job skills training. Each trainee received a certificate of completion from UVI.

A number of trainees who completed the computer technology courses are taking a series of exams to earn an International Computer Driver's License Certificate, Garner says. "This is an internationally recognized certificate that says you have a level of competency in Word, Excel, Windows and the Internet."

One of the Institute's goals is to place participants in internships once their training was completed, according to Richardson-Hunt. A number of trainees were placed in internships at Coral World, Ambassador Financial Group Inc., and Crown Mountain Water, she says.

Felecia Prentice landed an internship as a legal secretary to three attorneys at Smock Law Offices, PC on St. Thomas, after completing six weeks of information technology training. Prentice, the mother of three boys, says she worked as a money transfer processor at Chase Bank for six years before deciding to make a career change by signing up for the training program. The skills she acquired in word processing and spreadsheets were valuable, Prentice says. The biggest lesson she learned, however, is how to overcome nervousness during job interviews.

"They told us how important eye contact is and how to dress appropriately during interviews," says Prentice. "Now I know I can go for any job that I want, because I have that skill."

Garner and her staff are preparing to launch the Summer Institute of the International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) program. Participants can expect an expanded program with offerings in financial services and other areas later this year. The unit will also offer an ongoing review course for the Legal Assistant Certification Exam. Expanded programs will include courses in business writing, customer service, finance for non-finance managers, as well as Microsoft certifications. ☐

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AG FAIR FEBRUARY 2003

An estimated 30,000 people attended the 32nd annual Agriculture and Food Fair of the U.S. Virgin Islands, held Feb. 15-17, 2003 on St. Croix. A blimp bearing the UVI logo marked the spot of the dozens of UVI exhibits and offerings at the northern end of the fair grounds in Estate Lower Love. Everyone at UVI shared the success of Aberra Bulbulla, a UVI Agricultural Experiment Station research analyst who was named Produce Farmer of the Year. Bulbulla, who has farmed for eight years, grows more than 30 different varieties of fruit trees and plants on his four-acre farm in Mountain Estate.

Photo by Dale Morton

MISS UVI FEBRUARY 2003

In an enchanting evening of pageantry, Alba Harrigan was crowned Miss University of the Virgin Islands on Saturday, February 15, at the Island Center on St. Croix. Harrigan, a sophomore psychology major attending UVI's St. Thomas campus, also won the titles of "Miss Congeniality," "Best Ambassadorial Presentation," "Best Talent," "Best Evening Wear" and "Miss Intellect." The first runner up was Demelza Lawrence. The second-runner up was Michael Lake who was also named "Miss Photogenic." Keischa Brooks, the third runner up, was named "Miss Popularity." More than 300 people attended the ambassadorial competition.

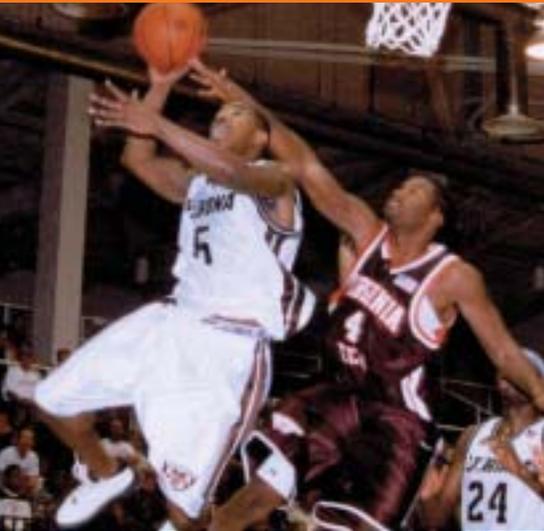
Photo by Dale Morton

CRUCIAN FESTIVAL JANUARY 2003

With a brilliant display of culture and creativity, UVI's Festival Troupe won first place in the "Floupes less than 100" division in the St. Croix Festival Adults Parade. The troupe's theme, "From the School House to the Technology Park: Educating our Community Throughout Time for a Golden Future," depicted early Virgin Islands educators and transitioned to cyberspace workers of the future. The costumes were designed by Crucian historian and fashion designer Wayne James. Each segment was meticulously detailed with accessories from the particular time period.

REVIEW

By Nanyamka Farrelly



PARADISE JAM NOVEMBER 2002

Virgin Islands basketball fans received an early Christmas present in November of 2002, as the University of the Virgin Islands and Basketball Travelers Inc. hosted the 2002 edition of the University of the Virgin Islands Paradise Jam. The NCAA Division I pre-season basketball tournament, which is growing in stature and popularity, drew six top men's teams and an outstanding women's division, led by the nation's number-one ranked Duke Blue Devils. Other participating women's teams were from the University of Arkansas, Boston College, Hampton University, Old Dominion University, the University of Oregon and the University of South Carolina. Participating men's teams were Brigham Young University, St. Bonaventure University, Virginia Tech, Kansas State University, the University of Michigan and the University of Toledo.



NASA AWARENESS DAYS NOVEMBER 2002

Thousands of Virgin Islands students got the chance to see a real astronaut, not on television, but live – at the University of the Virgin Islands NASA Awareness Days. The three-day event ran from Nov. 17 to 20 on UVI's St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. Designed to bring an awareness of space administration to the community, NASA Awareness days featured astronaut Stephanie Wilson and Astrophysicist Dr. Beth Brown. Wilson and Dr. Brown are both African-American women who have set records in their fields.

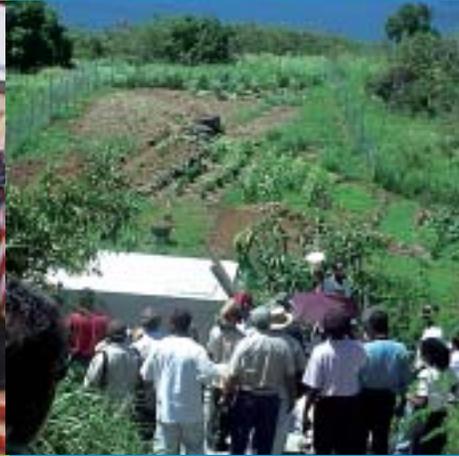
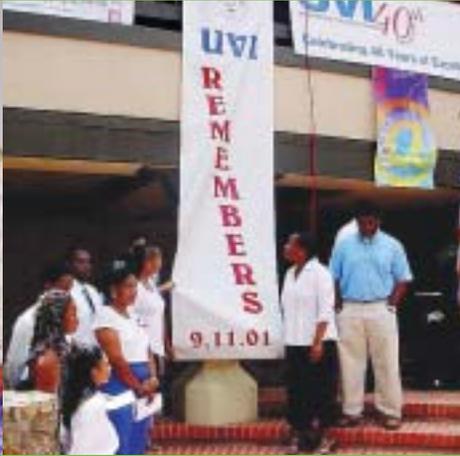


ROAST AND TOAST SEPTEMBER 2002

More than 300 individuals attended the 40th Anniversary Roast and Toast Gala in honor of UVI President Emeritus Dr. Orville Kean on September 28, 2002. Held at St. Thomas' Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort, the Roast and Toast raised more than \$50,000 toward the establishment of an endowed scholarship for international students at UVI in Dr. Kean's honor.

Dr. Kean served 12 years as president of UVI. His affiliation with the College of the Virgin Islands, which later became the University of the Virgin Islands, spans more than 35 years. Before being appointed President on March 17, 1990, Dr. Kean had served UVI as a Professor of Mathematics, Vice Chair of the Science and Mathematics Division, Dean of Instruction, Acting Director of the Caribbean Research Institute, Executive Vice President and Director of the Eastern Caribbean Center and Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Photo by Ethelbert Bedminster



KEAN LUAU SEPTEMBER 2002

UVI's St. Croix campus hosted a Caribbean Luau on Sunday, September 22, 2002 in honor of President Emeritus Dr. Orville Kean. Some 120 individuals turned out during the afternoon to share food and enjoy entertainment. The day also gave UVI departments on the St. Croix campus a chance to provide the public with information on their programs and offerings. Dr. Kean was presented with a large plaque commemorating his successful efforts to expand and develop the University's St. Croix campus. Musical entertainment was provided by a Caribbean Fusion, Valrica Bryson, Voices in Harmony, Ayinde Popo, Ronnie Russell, the V.I. Arts Ensemble and Big Band.

SEPTEMBER 11TH COMMEMORATION SEPTEMBER 2002

The University of the Virgin Islands joined schools and organizations throughout the territory and the world in recognizing the first anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States. Events were held on both campuses where students, faculty, staff and administrators remembered the attacks and paid homage to the thousands of people who lost their lives. On the St. Croix campus the theme for the day's events was, "UVI Remembers 9/11." The blowing of the conch shell announced the commencement of a minute of silence at the exact times of the attacks. The theme for the events on the St. Thomas campus was, "We Remember 9/11 . . . A Tree Planting for Peace." A *lignum vitae*, which produces one of densest woods in the region, was planted. It was surrounded with red and white bougainvilleas and several small American flags.

AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP AUGUST 2002

Farmers in the territory received information they otherwise may not have had access to thanks to the Virgin Islands Natural Resources and Agricultural Workshop held August 5-9, 2002. The workshop, held for two days on St. Thomas and two days on St. Croix at the University of the Virgin Islands campuses, put local farmers in direct contact with officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The workshop, held annually on the mainland, was held for the first time in the Virgin Islands. The workshop included sessions in farm management and planning, crop insurance, financing small farm operations, agro-forestry, organic crop production practices and the 2002 Farm Bill. There were also several panel discussions. Participants learned about services like low interest loans and cost-sharing initiatives. Day two of the workshop included seminars in the morning and a field trip in the afternoon, when farming concepts and practices were highlighted.



PRESIDENT RAGSTER BEGINS TENURE AUGUST 2002

Dr. LaVerne Ragster made her debut as president of the University of the Virgin Islands, on August 1, 2002 in front of colleagues, supporters and members of the media. UVI's fourth president and first female president, Dr. Ragster spoke about her goals for UVI. At a press conference in the Sports and Fitness Center, she said she looks forward to working with faculty and staff to lead UVI boldly along its continued path of success.

UVI WRITING PROJECT JUNE-JULY 2002

Twenty-two teachers from throughout the territory spent four weeks at the University of the Virgin Islands - from June 17 to July 18, 2002 - learning writing techniques to take back to their classrooms. The teachers were participants in the Virgin Islands Writing Project, a local chapter of the National Writing Project, which uses the approach of "teachers teaching teachers" to help kindergarten through college-level teachers better learn how to teach writing and develop their classroom skills. It is the first such program established in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Participants attended daily classroom sessions, some of which included guest lectures. UVI Humanities Professor Dr. Trevor Parris is the director of the VIWP. Ivanna Eudora Kean, English Teacher Amy Roberts is co-director. Dr. LeRoy Trotman, the VI. Department of Education's deputy commissioner for curriculum and instruction, is facilitator of the project.

TOM JOYNER MONTH AT UVI MAY 2002

The University of the Virgin Islands received a special 40th anniversary gift when it was selected as the Tom Joyner Foundation featured Historically Black College and University (HBCU) for the month of May 2002. Forty-seven UVI students received a combined total of \$92,152 in scholarships, five laptop computers and four desktop computers from corporate sponsors of the Tom Joyner Foundation. UVI also received scholarship funds from individuals who pledged donations during May and December. Along with receiving scholarship assistance, the University was featured on the nationally syndicated "Tom Joyner Morning Show," which is broadcast to 102 stations including WWKS-FM 101.3 in the Virgin Islands. UVI was also recognized during a "Sky Show" broadcast from Selma, Alabama. While their "Fantastic Voyage" cruise was docked in the Charlotte Amalie Harbor, Tom Joyner and crew were the featured guests at a luncheon hosted by UVI.

5K RUN/WALK MARCH 2002

As part of the University of the Virgin Islands 40th Anniversary events, a 5K Walk-Run was held on St. Croix. The route from Sunshine Mall to UVI was trailed by 80 people who walked, ran and jogged. UVI's students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in the event. The event was so successful that organizers have made it an annual event to be held during UVI's charter month, March. About 100 people participated in the Second Annual UVI Queen Mary Highway 5K Walk/Run held in March 2003.

UVI:

Blanketing the Community, Shaping Lives

By Nanyamka Farrelly



“There are so many ways that this program touched the lives of students... I think that Upward Bound in and of itself is a success story -”

Rosalia Rohan, Director

“In Upward Bound they dealt with me as an individual, as a whole person - ”

Winifred Anthony-Todman



When Winifred Anthony was failing math in the seventh grade, neighbor and friend Rosalia Rohan encouraged her to join UVI's Upward Bound program.

Upward Bound is a college preparatory program designed to develop skills and motivation in students to help them attain academic success in high school and beyond.

Anthony progressed well in the Upward Bound program and by the next reporting period she had raised an F in math to an A.

“In Upward Bound they dealt with me as an individual, as a whole person,” Anthony, now Anthony-Todman said. She explained that years ago she had the aptitude but lacked the motivation to excel in school.

Today, Anthony-Todman is an Upward Bound counselor who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work and a Master of Arts degree in education with concentrations in counseling and guidance from UVI.

Upward Bound was designed to assist high school students from low income families and potential first generation college students. It was one of the TRIO Programs created by former President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty Act. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by UVI, there are Upward Bound offices on UVI's St. Croix and St. Thomas campuses. Students from St. John attend Upward Bound on the St. Thomas campus.

Upward Bound Director Rohan said that Anthony-Todman is one of Upward Bound's many successes.

“There are so many ways that this program touched the lives of students,” Rohan said. “I think that Upward Bound in and of itself is a success story.”

Thousands of students have passed through Upward Bound during its 37 years of existence. “There are so many students from all walks of life who have been through the program. It's amazing, really,” Rohan said, noting that most of the program's students go on to earn college degrees.

Seventy students throughout the territory are now enrolled in UVI's Upward Bound program,

which started out serving students in grades 10 through 12. It has since expanded to include ninth graders and recent high school graduates, who are involved in the Upward Bound “bridge” program. Academic and recreational offerings have also increased.

“I can recall when we pretty much focused on the three Rs,” said Rohan, who has worked with Upward Bound for 25 years and has been its director for 15 years. The program now has tutorials for just about every class offered in high school — algebra, pre-calculus, chemistry, physics, French and Spanish, to name a few. The summer program has also evolved to include classes in steel pan, beginner’s swimming and public speaking.

“We’ve added so many dimensions to the program in hopes of developing well-rounded

Another program that has become essential to the Virgin Islands community is UVI’s Small Business Development Center. The center is a partnership program with the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBDC’s Lead Center and Service Center offices are located in Nisky Center on St. Thomas and Sunshine Mall on St. Croix, respectively. UVI-SBDC serves the community in three basic ways. The staff provides one-on-one management and technical counseling assistance to business owners and potential business owners. The center offers training sessions that include workshops, seminars and conferences to its clients and to the wider community. UVI-SBDC also conducts entrepreneurship outreach initiatives at local schools, to non-profit organizations and other related entities.

Senior Business Counselor and Acting Associate Director Linroy E. Freeman said that while creative business opportunities exist in the Virgin Islands, several things make starting a business challenging. That’s where UVI-SBDC comes in.

“Potential small businesses and owners fall short many times in their ability to properly engage in pre-business planning and research,” Freeman said. Too many businesses fail or experience unnecessary stress because of the owner’s lack of planning. He said that one of the primary functions of UVI-SBDC is to provide clients with pre-business planning to help ensure a successful business.

The idea of opening a retail business intimidated St. Croix jewelry designer Anita Shultz so much that when she decided that it

“I like to view upward Bound as a program that makes a difference”- Rosalia Rohan

students,” Rohan said. The program also collaborates with other universities, which provide exchange opportunities to students in its summer and bridge programs. Some of the institutions that Upward Bounders get to attend during the summer include Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and the State University of New York at Buffalo.

UVI’s Upward Bound program has recently been given a new mandate to serve “higher risk” students.

“We need to find students who may have no interest whatsoever in going to college and motivate them to join the program,” Rohan explained. The new mandate will make entry into the program even more competitive than it has always been.

Rohan and her full-time staff of three have submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education to increase the program’s serving capacity to 130 students per year. Rohan said that the new mandate and an increase in students will mean that Upward Bound will have to increase its services and focus more on parental and community involvement.

“Upward Bound is not even a drop in the bucket for what the Virgin Islands community needs,” Rohan said, still she cannot imagine what the community would be like without Upward Bound. “I like to view Upward Bound as a program that makes a difference.”

UVI-SBDC counsels about 800 business clients per year. About 1,000 people attend the training sessions and workshops annually.

UVI-SBDC State Director Warren Bush said that the center has a tremendous technical, social and economic impact on the community, providing services that otherwise would not have been available to the local population. Seventy percent of the clients seek UVI-SBDC assistance when they are in the start-up phase of a business.

Business counselors guide those clients through the step by step processes of starting a business, dealing with everything from registering a trade name to writing a business plan to getting a loan. Staff members follow a business from start-up to fruition.

Existing business owners can also receive technical counseling from UVI-SBDC. The center offers many training sessions throughout the year. More than 60 training sessions are scheduled for 2003. Training is conducted by the UVI-SBDC staff, contracted consultants and via in-kind presentations from UVI personnel and other public and private sector professionals.

Perhaps the best thing about UVI-SBDC is that all of the counseling and most of the training is free and the services are available to anyone. There are no eligibility requirements. All program offerings are free to UVI faculty, staff and students.

was her destiny to open a jewelry repair and handmade jewelry design store she immediately went to UVI-SBDC. Daniel Hogue, the former associate director of UVI-SBDC, gave her the confidence to proceed in the business.

“He was able to give me really concise marketing and industry advice,” Shultz said. Hogue and Senior Business Counselor Phyllis Bryan helped Shultz develop a business plan, which Shultz says she considered difficult, since she had no previous retail experience. With a \$5,000 loan from a bank in Georgia and a \$10,000 loan from a friend, Shultz was able to open Jewelweed on what she called a “shoe-string budget for a jewelry store.”

“I had nothing much, but I had people who trusted in my ability,” Shultz said of the UVI-SBDC staff. “I was instilled with confidence from having such a great business resource at my fingertips,” she said. “Phyllis was my coach and my cheerleader.”

After about a year in business, Shultz encountered some bookkeeping problems and called UVI-SBDC. Bryan sent over an accountant who solved the problem. Shultz ended up hiring the accountant, who still does the bookkeeping for Jewelweed.

Jewelweed, which occupies 900 square feet space in a store on Queen Cross Street in Christiansted, has developed a clientele of mostly locals who purchase Schultz’s handmade special

custom pieces made from silver, platinum and gold. During the first year in business Jewelweed expected \$67,000. Now two years later, Jewelweed expects to double that amount.

“When people are spending more and more money on the pieces you make, it’s a good thing,” Shultz said, grateful to the resources of UVI-SBDC.

Bush said that while UVI-SBDC provides expert advice and services to business owners and potential business owners, there is a key factor that frustrates his staff and his clients alike — the shortage of funding sources in the Virgin Islands.

“We need a venue that would create more lending opportunities,” Bush said, noting the need for non-traditional lending sources and specialized lending institutions. Lending institutions are necessary, especially given

coral reefs, few other places in the world offer the type of environment that UVI’s Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station (VIERS) offers.

VIERS is an eco-camp and research facility that is home to some of the best coral reefs in the Caribbean. Located on Lameshur Bay on St. John, within the boundaries of the V.I. National Park and the UNESCO biosphere reserve, it allows research in a pristine, undeveloped habitat. VIERS has been providing unique research and learning opportunities for 37 years. It has been a UVI facility for 33 years.

Originally commissioned by the U.S. Navy for Project Tektite, an underwater habitat and research project that was conducted in 1969 and 1970, the Lameshur Bay campsite was turned over to the College of the Virgin Islands (now the University of the Virgin Islands) in 1970.

According to Dr. Richard Nemeth, UVI’s

as an important habitat for juvenile sea species. UVI received a grant to restore the mangroves in the Lameshur Bay area to the condition they were in 15 years ago.

VIERS has five dormitory-style cabins, two research cabins, a classroom, library, office, restroom and shower facilities, a kitchen and dining hall. There is also a diving facility and laboratory with a circulating sea water aquarium. The camp can accommodate up to 40 people.

Along with researchers, VIERS welcomes members of the local community. Groups interested in nature can stay overnight at the campsite and participate in educational programs that include seashore exploration, animal and plant identification, mangrove walks and snorkeling. Nature trails maintained by the National Park Service, which include

“I was instilled with confidence from having such a great business resource at my fingertips” - Anita Shultz, Business Owner

the high cost of doing business in the territory. “The cost of starting a business is so expensive here,” Bush said. Starting a business in the territory costs about 30 percent more than in the states, mainly because everything has to be shipped in, he said.

Freeman noted that potential business owners should always take into consideration their personal credit. The path to starting a business can be smooth until it is time to get a loan and someone is given a credit check, he said.

Bush said that one of the center’s goals is to expand its services and offerings on the island of St. Croix, which is economically depressed. He said that UVI-SBDC is working with the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce to develop programs specifically aimed at developing the St. Croix economy. The center will also work with banks on St. Croix to recognize and help businesses that are experiencing problems.

The creation of more small businesses in the territory will lead to increased employment opportunities for locals and more tax collection for the government, Bush says. And the UVI-SBDC provides a win-win opportunity for everyone.

Dr. Peter Edmunds, a visiting scientist from the U.S. mainland, has been conducting coral reef research for the past 12 years. Because of the type of research he does, studying the impact of hurricanes on the growth and mortality rate of

director of the Center for Marine and Environmental Studies, VIERS has continued its history of significant research during the past few years.

“VIERS has the potential to become a thriving research center,” Dr. Nemeth said, noting that the station is used by visiting scientists, faculty, students and community groups.

Between 1998 and 2002 about 3,600 people visited VIERS. During that period the facility has housed 78 educational groups from the V.I. and the Caribbean; 55 educational groups from the U.S. and other countries; and 25 groups of researchers. Dr. Nemeth hopes that in the coming years even more people will find VIERS useful for research and educational purposes.

“In the last few years, Clean Islands International has been successful in getting grants for eco-camps,” Dr. Nemeth said of the non-profit company contracted by UVI in 1997 to manage VIERS. The eco-camps target Virgin Islands children and provide ecological marine and terrestrial education.

Clean Islands International provides educational and technical assistance to island communities. UVI’s contract with Clean Islands International was recently renewed for five more years.

One of UVI’s current projects is a mangrove restoration at Lameshur Bay. Mangroves are significant in that they prevent erosion and serve

historic sugar estates, bay rum distilleries and petroglyphs, are also accessible from VIERS.

Dr. Nemeth and his staff are writing a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation, that, if approved, would provide funding to upgrade the lab facilities which will encourage more scientists to use the station.

At a time when international conflict is on the rise, VIERS provides researchers with an excellent alternative to any tropical study site in the world.

UVI’s Upward Bound, Small Business Development Center and Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station are just a few of the exceptional opportunities available to members of the community. UVI has made a commitment to improve the quality of life in the Virgin Islands and beyond with these and many more outreach programs. 🌿

UVI Helping Children, Youth and Families at Risk

By Karen D. Gutloff

Henry Thompson's face is fixed with a smile as he sits before a 15-inch computer screen, sifting through mounds of clip-art images that will enliven his cyber newsletter.

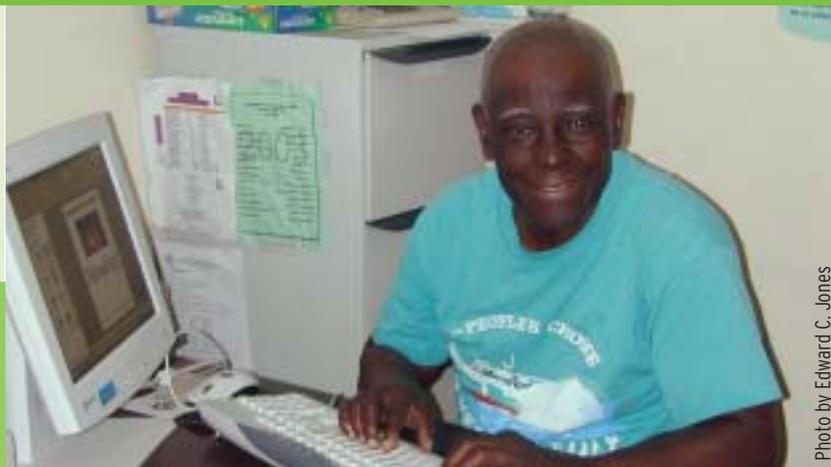


Photo by Edward C. Jones

82 year-old CYFAR participant Henry Thompson.

With a quick click of the computer mouse he settles on the perfect picture to complement an article, then transports the image into the newsletter. After a few more keystrokes, Thompson prints the document, proudly viewing his work before tucking the newsletter inside a blue work portfolio.

If Thompson is proud of himself, he has good reason to be. At age 82 he has mastered technical skills that leave many people half his age scratching their heads in frustration.

In the Fall of 2002, Thompson signed up for a computer course through the University of the Virgin Islands' Children Youth and Families at Risk—or CYFAR—program. The program is administered through UVI's Cooperative Extension program.

CYFAR is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through a five-year \$150,000 grant. The program operates in two areas of the Virgin Islands designated as high-risk by the federal government—Tutu Hi-Rise Apartments on St. Thomas and the Louis Brown Villas on St. Croix.

"The basic goal is to provide technology skills and to get the youth to come in off the street and become productive members of society," says Helen Dookhan, coordinator of the CYFAR project on St. Thomas.

CYFAR, now in its third year, has taken its mandate and run with it. The proof of the program's success is evident in the lives of adults like Thompson, who says he entered the program with one simple goal.

"I wanted to learn to type a letter without looking down," he says. He admits to typing with an occasional peek at the keyboard, but he has far exceeded his goals. Thompson's portfolio is filled with colorful fliers, newsletters, business letters and eye-catching charts created using the Excel computer program.

"Before taking the class I would hang around in town with the guys and go to lunch," says the retiree. "The class gives you an outlet to use some of your time productively, instead of wasting time gabbing about everyone."

The adult computer class meets in the recreation center at Tutu High Rise. Some students live in the housing complex, while others live in the surrounding area.

Few of Thompson's classmates are under age 65, which presented a challenge for Jacqueline Blyden, the instructor and program assistant for CYFAR.

"I had to use a lot of patience because many of them had never touched a computer before. I taught them how to use the keyboard, then we practiced using the mouse because they had it going all over the place," she says laughing.

Now, students like Clement Friday, a retired supervisor at Texaco, and his wife Lillian, zip along on the Gateway computers each morning.

"You need to know computers to be able to get ahead because that's what the world is all about now," says Clement as he shows off a thank-you card he made on the computer.

Lillian, a retired nurse, says, "I tell other people, if I can do it, everyone else can. It's not as hard as it seems."

Ellen Daniel, 75, had a computer in her house, but says, "Unless my grandchildren were there to show me, I didn't know much."

Daniel, a CYFAR student for the past 18 months, now has a portfolio full of envelopes, business letters and report cover sheets that she created.

"Grandchildren need to look up to you and know you can do something," she says.

Thompson, Daniel and the other adult students file out of the classroom at noon, leaving Blyden time to get the area ready for

the dozen or so public school students who come in after school.

The students, who attend nearby E. Benjamin Oliver and Joseph Gomez Elementary schools, use the computers for homework and Internet research projects. Blyden provides assistance with math and English skills.

According to Dookhan, the students also attend workshops on gardening, tree planting, and arts and crafts.

Youth on St. Croix engage in similar activities through the CYFAR program on that island, according to Lois Sanders, assistant director of 4H/Family & Consumer Sciences program at UVI.

"We have 10 to 15 children who come in daily after school. We do a lot of 4H activities that engage children in positive leadership and citizenship activities," says Sanders.

Because of the renovation activities underway at Louis Brown villas, CYFAR activities take place on the UVI St. Croix campus, she says.

CYFAR's adult computer classes on St. Croix are conducted with a twist, Sanders adds.

"We are working with farmers, teaching them how to record what they're growing and how much they sell, using the computer," she says.

Some eight farmers attend evening computer classes twice a week, where they learn the basics of keyboard usage and creating charts and billing statements, according to Sanders.

The program also offers residents some traditional cooperative extension program workshops, such as money management.

"One reason the federal government gave this money to Cooperative Extension Services throughout the nation is so we could make our offerings available to particular communities," Sanders says.

"We are definitely doing that." 🌱

ALUMNI

UVI alumna Hazel Brandy ('98) has been awarded a British Chevening Scholarship for St. Kitts and Nevis. The British Chevening Scholarship has made it possible for Miss Brandy, who received a bachelor's degree in business administration from UVI, to study for a master's degree in risk management and financial services at the Glasgow Caledonian University. The British Chevening Scholarship provides awards for one year's postgraduate study in the United Kingdom to nationals of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Upon the completion of her degree, Miss Brandy plans to return to work for the Ministry of Finance in Nevis.

Thanks to the generous support of more than 348 UVI alumni and friends, the 2002-03 Alumni Phonathon goal of \$22,000 has been surpassed. Proceeds from the annual phonathon support scholarships and programs that benefit UVI students. Those alumni and friends who were not able to make a contribution to the University through this most recent phonathon can join fellow alumni and others for the 2003-04 Alumni Phonathon which kicks off in September. Help raise the bar on alumni giving at UVI. To volunteer to place calls for the phonathon, please call 693-1046.



(left to right) Rosalia Payne '68 & '70, Ronald Harrigan '68 & '72, and Yvonne Solomon Freeman '78 & '97 view cultural displays during inaugural week.



Richard Skerrit '80 (left) UVI's first Rhodes Scholar and manager of the West Indies Cricket Team, and Eustace Hobson '71 (right) architectural entrepreneur, both of St. Kitts. Skerritt and Hobson visited the St. Thomas campus for the inaugural activities in March, when Skerritt took time to admire his UVI sports Hall of Fame award in the Sports and Fitness Center showcase.

NEWS



Nevis' Newcastle Airport is renamed Vance W. Amory International in recognition of UVI Alumnus the Honorable Vance W. Amory, Premier of Nevis.



Attorneys Aquanette Chinnery '77 and Renee Gumbs-Carty '87 review a UVI yearbook at the alumni reception in the Sports and Fitness Center during inaugural week



UVI alumnus Robert L. Scatliffe ('99) arrived off the coast of Kuwait in the North Arabian Gulf while assigned to the dock landing ship USS Rushmore, which is based in San Diego. The USS Rushmore was one of the ships in the Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Scatliffe, a lieutenant with the U.S. Navy, received a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from UVI.



St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Denzil L. Douglas and UVI President LaVerne E. Ragster meet in the Prime Minister's Basseterre office in January 2003. The meeting was part of a visit Dr. Ragster paid to UVI alumni and friends of the University in St. Kitts and Nevis.



University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees 2002-2003

Back center: Alexander Moorhead. From left, back row: Henry Smock, Noreen Michael, and Jorge Galiber; Middle Row: Chair Auguste E. Rimpel, Jr., Yvonne E. L. Thraen, Campbell Barnes, Ellen Murraine, John Munro, Roy D. Jackson; Front Center: President LaVerne E. Ragster. Not present for the photo were: Gov. Charles W. Turnbull, Paul Arnold and Bernard Paiewonsky.

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Students gather in the lobby of the UVI Sports and Fitness Center on the St. Thomas campus.

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