



SENATOR MARVIN A. BLYDEN PRESENTS

**5th Annual
V.I. Women United to Empower**

*Scholarship
Breakfast*

Saturday, May 18, 2019

9 a.m.

Victor's New Hideout
St. Thomas, V.I.

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women

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May we RAISE them

*Congratulations
Honorees*

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Marvin A. Blyden
U.S. Virgin Islands Senator



A MESSAGE FROM SENATOR MARVIN A. BLYDEN

I am honored and privileged to welcome you to the Senator Marvin A. Blyden Annual V.I. Women United to Empower Scholarship Breakfast. Now in its fifth year, our scholarship fundraiser has raised almost \$35,000 for high school seniors in the St. Thomas/St. John District pursuing higher education and technical training.

As a son of the Virgin Islands soil, I am truly inspired by the community-minded, hardworking and selfless women of our district. This year's honorees, Mrs. Sara Connell, Attorney Judy Gomez, Ms. Ramona A. Patino Diaz and Mrs. Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan, were selected because of their dedication and commitment to our community. I also recognize honorary woman of distinction, Cleone H. Creque, the first female senator-at-large. It is my pleasure to honor all of these trailblazers for their service! I extend my sincere gratitude as they have used their influence to maximize my team's fundraising efforts.

Furthermore, I thank you, the attendees, and our many sponsors and donors, for your financial support which directly enriches the lives of and creates opportunities for the Territory's young people. I am humbled by the outpour of support that has made this scholarship fundraiser tremendously successful.

With the assistance and guidance of the community that raised me, I am proud of all that I have accomplished in shaping the lives of graduates as they are poised to make significant contributions to our Territory and the world. I aspire to create even more opportunities for our students in the future.

May God continue to bless all of you.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marvin A. Blyden".

Marvin A. Blyden
Senator
33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR ALBERT BRYAN JR.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Virgin Islands, I want to extend words of praise and encouragement to the organizers and attendees of the 5th Annual V.I. Women United to Empower Scholarship Breakfast. Scholarships can change lives by providing financial assistance to ordinary people that often allows them to seek more opportunities to further their education and prepare for their dream career.

As the former Commissioner of Labor and now the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, it is always inspiring to see individuals receive scholarships that were created to enrich their lives and the people in their community. Women continue to make a remarkable impact on the Virgin Islands, reminding us through their accomplishments that an inclusive government that is for the people can yield impressive results.

The students chosen from the St. Thomas/St. John district with plans to attend a college, university, or vocational school in Fall 2019 will have a brighter academic career thanks to this scholarship opportunity. I would also like to congratulate the Honorable Senator Marvin Blyden and his staff for bringing scholarship opportunities meant to empower women in the Virgin Islands for the past five years.

I am pleased to offer this letter and words of encouragement to this year's honorees Sara Connell, Ramona A. Patino Diaz, Judy Gomez, and Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan. The honorees and their many contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands stand out today as we all recognize the impact their selfless acts have had in our community. Congratulations to all the honorees and best wishes to the students chosen this year for this fantastic opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Albert Bryan Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

It is a pleasure for me to offer sincere congratulations to the honorees being recognized for the 5th Annual VI Women United to Empower Scholarship Breakfast. Truly deserving of this distinct honor, these four women: Sara Connell, Ramona A. Patino Diaz, Judy Gomez, and Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan have been pioneers, advocates, and leaders in our community. I commend their passion for service which burns as a beacon to others.

It is said that public service can be a thankless endeavor. For this reason it is so important to recognize and celebrate those individuals who offer selfless service and goodwill to others.

I am delighted by the dedication of the honorees to making a difference. I am also greatly pleased by the ongoing commitment and purpose of the scholarship breakfast. This fundraiser is making a difference by providing financial assistance in the form of scholarships for high school seniors in the St. Thomas/St. John District. A special thank you is extended to the coordinators of this event for lending a helping hand to our students in need.

On the occasion of the 5th Annual VI Women United to Empower Scholarship Breakfast, I salute the honorees for this worthy recognition and the mark they have left on the Virgin Islands. I also extend best wishes to the scholarship recipients. May they continue to remain focused as they transition from high school and continue their journey to success. There are many doors than can be opened with an education. It is my hope that our students can utilize all resources and assistance made available to them as they pursue their dreams.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tregenza A. Roach". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tregenza A. Roach, Esq.
Lieutenant Governor

STACEY PLASKETT
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

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House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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SENIOR WHIP

A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT

On behalf of the Members of the 116th Congress, my staff and my family, I wish to extend greetings to Senator Marvin A. Blyden on his 5th Annual V.I. Women United to Empower Scholarship Breakfast.

The V.I. Women United to Empower organization has made an indelible mark in our community through its continued support of education, training and professional development for our young people by providing yearly scholarship funding. The youth of our community has the power to turn promises into reality through quick solving of community problems and further development of society.

This year's V.I. Women United to Empower honorees, Sara Connell, Ramona A. Patino Diaz, Attorney Judy M. Gomez, and Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan, have made remarkable contributions to positively impact the quality of life of our Virgin Islands community. Their continued efforts to advance youth sustainability through real, civic action is indeed laudable.

Congratulations and thank you!

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

kac

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*Honorable
Novelle E. Francis, Jr.
Senate President*

***Education is our passport to the future,
for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today***

~Malcolm X

It is with pride that my family, staff and I congratulate Senator Marvin A. Blyden as he hosts the 5th Annual V.I. Women United Empower Scholarship Breakfast as part of his ongoing efforts to support the educational aspirations of our young Virgin Islanders.

I am honored to congratulate the distinguished honorees who represent the best of our community and who have supported not only their children, but many others, with open arms, willing hearts, love and understanding. These women are individually and collectively, the teachers, mentors and champions that our children need and deserve. This scholarship breakfast is a celebration of women who exemplify strength, courage and compassion in the multiple ways they serve our community. My congratulations to ***Mrs. Sara W. Connell, Ms. Ramona A. Patino Diaz, Ms. Judy Gomez and Mrs. Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan*** on this most deserved recognition. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to nurture and support our territory's future leaders and outstanding citizens.

I applaud Senator Blyden for his commitment to support our young scholars by offering the financial assistance needed for them to attend a college, university or vocational school. This financial and moral support is the launching pad for future success and opportunities.

My best wishes to all present for a memorable and successful event.

With Thanks for All You Do,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Novelle E. Francis, Jr.".

Novelle E. Francis, Jr.

Honorees Who Paved the Way

2018

**Dr. Rasha Harris
Gertrudis Jackson
Jody Olson
Dr. Vincentia Paul-Constantin
Andrea Shillingford
Iffat Walker**

2017

**Yvese Calixte
Police Captain Sandra Colbourne
Louise O. Fleming Petersen
Sofia del Rosario
Marjorie Smith**

2016

**Loreen Bannis-Roberts
Carmen Donovan-Acevedo
Delita Farrington-Francis
Yvonne D. Francis, RN
Sadie E. Reaves, LPN
Jeanette Smith-Barry**

2015

**Adriane J. Dudley, Esq.
Jacqueline Freeman
Dr. Gwen-Marie Moolenaar
Joycelyn E. Williams**

Sara W. Connell



Sara Cecilia Watlington Connell was born on November 2nd, All Souls Day on the island of St. Thomas to Arturo & Elesa Watlington. She was educated at Sts. Peter & Paul School from kindergarten through the 12th grade. She continued her educational pursuits and attended college and received her Bachelor's degree from St. Scholastica College in Duluth, Minnesota in Home Economics. Sara returned home to St. Thomas and began working at MCH and the Department of Education before returning to the mainland to complete her Master's Degree in New York. It was there that she reunited with her childhood love and married Olman Connell. From this union they have two beautiful children, Craig and Chelsea', six grandchildren, Chenee, Craig Jr., Hasina, Ciara, Zekoi and Zenaida and two great-grands; Hailey and Kayden.

Education has always played an important role in Sara's life. She fulfilled a number of roles at the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School,

including teacher, assistant principal and principal. She later retired from the public school system and became the principal of her alma mater. She traded it all to stay at home with her grandson in 2000. She has always taken special interest into the education of her children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Her temperament and dedication is to be admired from the schools to home. She owned and operated Educare School for over 36 years along with her friend and partner, Mrs. Winifred L. Garfield.

True to her dedication to the youth and community, Sara has played a vital role and currently serves as the public relations officer of the Long Path/Garden Street Association. She has followed the project of the local community center from its birth and has adopted the project as her personal baby.

She has a love for singing and classical music. She enjoys singing and directing the choir at the Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral. When she is not involved in putting together the next fundraiser, church concert, or family event, Sara enjoys reading and you can count on her always having a novel in her bag.

She is a true home economist that has always enjoyed cooking and baking various, unique treats and eats for everyone. Folks can hardly wait for the holiday season to receive the boxes of treats she religiously mails out to her family and friends.

Sara's residence is affectionately referred to as "cost U nothing" for she is always has the one ingredient you forget to pick up at the store or an extra loaf of bread because you forgot to pick one up, or the product or item you would never have seen in the store yourself.

Judy M. Gomez, Esq.



Attorney Judy M. Gomez is a woman for all seasons. She has answered many calls and has risen to the social and educational needs of her island community in a variety of areas.

Born and raised on the island of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Attorney Gomez is the mother of one son and the grandmother of two. She received her early educational training beginning at the Nisky Demonstration School (which is now the Ulla Muller School), the St. Mary's Catholic School on the island of St. Croix and graduated from Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic High School in 1967.

Judy M. Gomez began her secondary academic pursuits at the University of the Virgin Islands and graduated in 1977 from Morgan State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and was inducted into the esteemed Kappa Alpha Mu National Honor Society. Ms. Gomez returned to St. Thomas and worked as an

elementary school teacher for 11 years at the Gramboko and Ulla Muller Schools. Her quest for further knowledge and her desire to serve in another capacity, led her to pursue a law degree at Howard University in Washington, D.C., where in 1983, she received a Doctorate of Jurisprudence.

As an attorney, Ms. Gomez held positions in various agencies, including the Office of the Virgin Islands Delegate to Congress and the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. She also worked as an instructor of the Adult Education Program and as a part time professor at the University of the Virgin Islands. She later served as a member of University of the Virgin Islands' Board of Trustees.

With a keen interest in the future of the Territory, Attorney Gomez was first elected as a member of the Virgin Islands Board of Education in 1990, and served for one term as secretary. In 1992, she was elected as a senator of the Virgin Islands Legislature and served with distinction for eight years. During her tenure, Senator Gomez held several positions of leadership including Vice President, Legislative Secretary, and Chairperson of the Education, Youth and Human Services and Finance Committees. Her service also included membership on the Law Revision Commission, and as Liaison to the White House. In November of 2004, she was re-elected to the Virgin Islands Board of Education and served as Chairperson, from 2004 to 2006. She presently co-chairs the Polices, Rules & Regulations Committee.

In 2002, Attorney Gomez also returned to the V.I. Department of Justice as the Coordinator of Special Programs, with the responsibility of coordinating crime prevention programs. She is credited for the formation of the first Junior Assistant Attorneys General Program, a mentorship program for high school students. Presently, Gomez serves

as the Hearing Officer at the Division of Paternity & Child Support, and is Director and Coordinator of the Street Law Programs at the Charlotte Amalie High School.

Additionally, over the years, she has been credited as founder or sponsor of several organizations.

Among her activities and programs of interest are:

- Students Promoting Awareness, Responsibility, Knowledge and Service (SPARKS), a youth organization, which began in 1993, to enhance the social, spiritual and academic growth and development of high school students by the implementation of positive programs and activities
- Stride Onward to Academic Excellence, a scholarship program which encourages and inspires elementary and junior high school students to set academic goals and embrace them
- Moms Raising Sons, a support group for single women raising sons in today's world
- Virgin Islands Promise, an affiliate of America's Promise

She has received a number of awards and commendations for her work with children and has been honored by Miracle Babies Support Foundation, the Virgin Islands Bar Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the local chapters of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Attorney Gomez has been a member of Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, the National School Board Association and the Virgin Islands Bar Association.

Ramona A. Patino Diaz



Ramona A. Patino Diaz was born in the Dominican Republic, and moved to the Virgin Islands in 1986. She has two children: a son, Hector Mejia and a daughter, Zorichell Aquendo Patino. She also has four grandchildren, all of whom she loves dearly.

Ms. Patino Diaz pursued her love of beauty by starting her career as a beautician upon her arrival in St. Thomas. She began working in Celsa's House of Beauty in Winward Passage Hotel and eventually bought the business in 1992. She later moved the salon to the Altona area.

Throughout her 40-year career, she has had many accomplishments, including being honored by the Cosmetology Association. This successful entrepreneur recently opened her first restaurant and is now studying to be a chef.

She is a member of the Comité Dominicano Pro and is the founder of the Sugarcane Sweet Carnival Troupe.

Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan



Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan is Director of the University Bound Program (UB) (formerly Upward Bound Program) at the University of the Virgin Islands. She has served as Director since 1988. From 1978-1988 she served as Assistant Director for the program. For more than 40 years she has demonstrated a commitment to assisting UB students in their quest for higher education. She has assisted hundreds of Virgin Islands students and their families in charting their progress toward completing high school and going on to pursue post-secondary education. Rosalia is a co-founder and chairperson of the UB Academic Growth Scholarship Committee.

Prior to her employment at the University, she served as a classroom teacher. Rohan received a MA (Education) from the University of Connecticut ('78) and a BA (Elementary Education) from the College of the Virgin Islands ('74).

As director of the University Bound Program, Rohan's mission has been one of motivating, guiding and assisting secondary school students (Territory-wide), to complete high school, enroll and succeed in post-secondary education (UVI is priority), realize fulfilling careers, and becoming productive citizens. Ultimately, her mission is to assist in increasing the college going and college completion rates in the US Virgin Islands.

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Congratulations

Mrs. Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan

As one of the
2019 V.I Women United To Empower Scholarship Breakfast Honoree

"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word." – Isaiah

66:2

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MESSAGE FROM SENATOR CLEONE H. CREQUE, HONORARY WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

I wish to commend Senator Marvin Blyden on this most auspicious occasion, as he annually reaches out to the community to help sponsor the much needed, and I am sure appreciated, scholarship initiative.

We are also proud as we recognize his non-stop efforts to monitor, sponsor and process legislation that has a history of benefiting all of our people. His achievements too, must be noted and recognized as he continues to serve so commendably.

It is with regret that due to unforeseen circumstances off-island, I am unable to attend this event; however, I thank you, Senator, for considering me worthy to be included in this group of well deserving servants of our people.

Congratulations to the other honorees and may God continue to bless you and your service to our people.

Best wishes,

Cleone H. Creque

Cleone H. Creque



Past Scholarship Recipients

2018

**Jahkyra Carrington
Tasha Freeman
Ketura Harrigan
Lakesha Hillhouse
LeAnn Horsford
Shenice Labadie
Jucara Margetson
Aria Rawlings**

2017

**Chinique Charles
P'Azhae Harrigan
Shanique Henley
Makeda Milla
Mariamma Richards**

2016

**Muhammad Ali
Felicia Fontenelle
Jemoi Gibbs
Peter Jean-Baptiste
Takia Joseph
Joah Merrifield
Kayla Webster**

2015

**Mary Buendia
Genisa Callwood
Dejane Cameron
Jershawn Casimir
Rayann Charlery
Je'Quan Dias-Hines
Ajayi Pickering Haynes
Shaedaya Varlack**

Program

Welcome/Mistress of Ceremonies

Lillian V. Moolenaar

Invocation

Sandra Frett

Black National Anthem
Virgin Islands March

Breakfast

Musical Entertainment Provided by
DJ Shine

Special Guest Speaker

Khadija Blyden

Musical Selection

Lorna Freeman & Howard Jones

Honoree Presentations

Closing Remarks

Senator Marvin A. Blyden

Benediction

Sandra Frett

Musical Selection

George "General Val" Whyte

Menu

Stewed Saltfish
Spinach & Okra
Scrambled Egges
Bacon

Home Fried Potatoes
Butter Bread
Fruits

Orange Juice
Apple Juice
Cranberry Juice
Bush Tea
Coffee



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Virgin Islands Board of Education



Thank you for all that you do!

My deepest gratitude to all of the honorees for your positive contributions
to the people of the St. Thomas/St. John District.

Jean A. Forde



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CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES ON THEIR
WELL DESERVED RECOGNITION!

Congratulations to the Honorees!

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**“How Important
It Is For Us
To Recognize
& Celebrate
Our Heroes &
She-roes!”**

~ Maya Angelou ~

CONGRATULATIONS

**Mrs. Sara Connell
Ms. Ramona A. Patino Diaz
Ms. Judy Gomez
Mrs. Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan**



Always by your side!

Sara Cecilia Watlington Connell

We salute you today and always!



You are the heart that beats the body of our family. Congratulations on being honored.

Your husband, *Olman*, children, *Craig & Chelsea*' grandchildren *Chenee, Craig Jr., Hasina, Ciara, Zekoi, Zenaida* great grands: *Hailey & Kayden*



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ROSALIA ROHAN
CONTINUE TO SERVE THE CHILDREN OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

The University Bound Parents' Association



The University Bound Program

Formerly the Upward Bound Program

1966-2019

The University Bound Parents Association congratulates the
2019 Women United to Empower Honoree

Rosalia Rohan

We applaud you for your exemplary and outstanding leadership,
community engagement, and commitment to the children of the U.S.
Virgin Islands.

Congratulations!!

May God continue to bless you in your future endeavors!

aints Peter & Paul Cathedral

P.O. Box 301767, St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands 00803 Tel: (340) 774-0201 Fax (340) 776-9586 Webpage:
www.cathedralvi.com; Email: cathedralvi@gmail.com

Heartfelt Gratitude
and
Congratulations to
Sara Connell

for her untiring work as a disciple
of Christ and continuous service to
the people of the Virgin Islands



Mary, Undoer of Knots Pray for Us!

**CONGRATS TO THE HONOREES
FROM**

THE FRUIT BOWL

WHEATLEY CENTER
ST. THOMAS, V.I. 00802
(340) 774-8565

INFO@THEFRUITBOWLVI.COM

Congratulations to Our Mother

Rosalia Rhymer Rohan

2019 V.I. Women United to Empower Scholarship Honoree



You have always showed us love, and compassion and taught us the importance of a good education. But most importantly we have witnessed your enthusiasm, commitment and love for being of service to the students of the Upward Bound and University Bound programs. We are proud of your accomplishments and your unwavering dedication to helping others.

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it". Steve Jobs

We Love You mom,

Charryse Joseph Matthew & Anwar Z. Rohan

*5th Annual U.I. Women United to
Empower Scholarship Breakfast*

Congratulations!

To the following Honorees:

Mrs. Sara Connell

Ms. Ramona A. Patino Diaz

Ms. Judy Gomez

Mrs. Rosalia Ryhmer - Rohan

For your leadership and commitment to the people of the US
Virgin Islands.



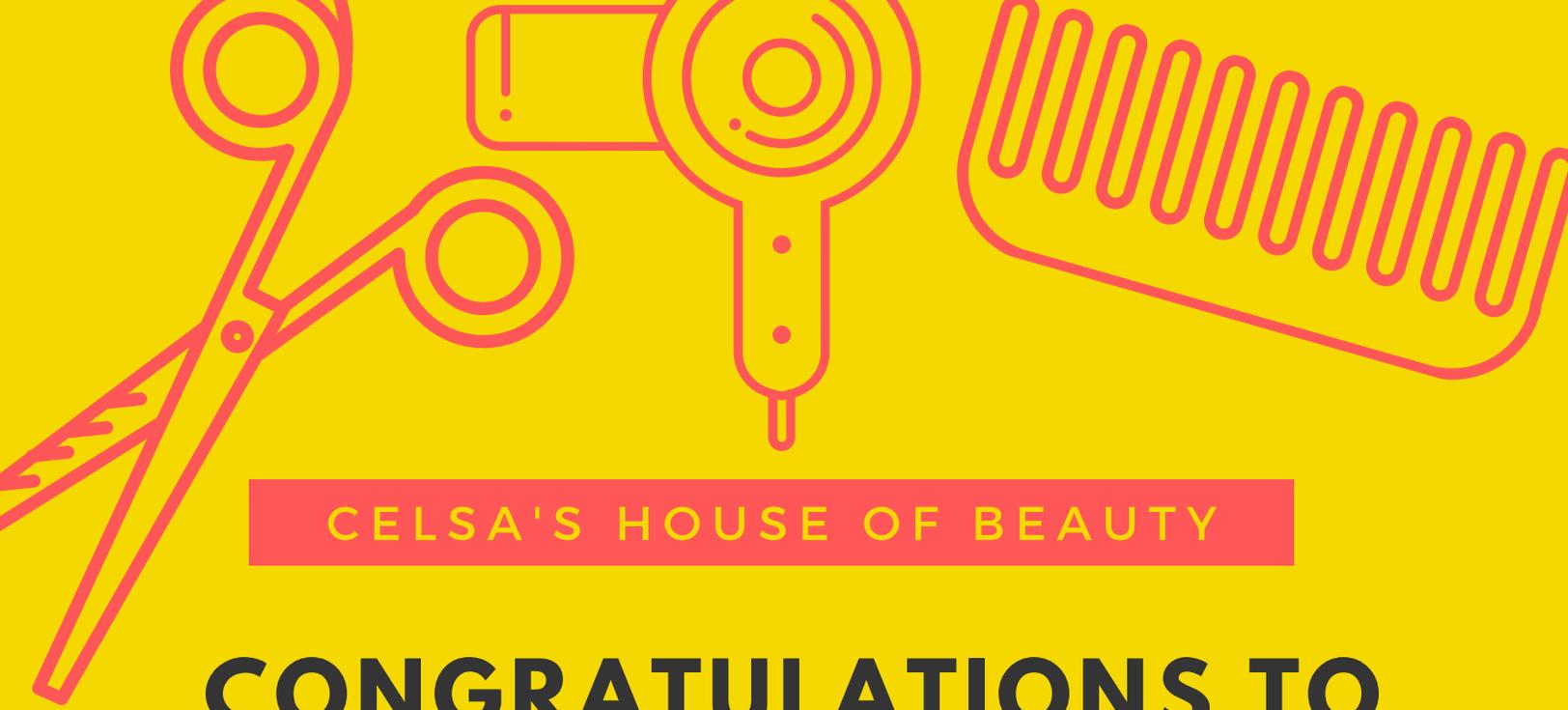
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CONGRATULATIONS TO RAMONA A. PATINO DIAZ!





Senator Myron D. Jackson

Congratulations!

*** MRS. SARA CONNELL * Ms. RAMONA A. PATINO DIAZ ***

*** Ms. JUDY GOMEZ * & MRS. ROSALIA RHYMER-ROHAN ***

**5TH ANNUAL V.I. WOMEN UNITED
TO EMPOWER SCHOLARSHIP BREAKFAST**

"The only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work hard for them" - Michelle Obama



**THE 19TH VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMENDS VIBE MEMBER JUDY M. GOMEZ, ESQ.**

The 19th Virgin Islands Board of Education invites everyone to join us in honoring our fellow board member , Judy M. Gomez, Esq., as she is honored for her lifelong commitment to the education of the children of the Virgin Islands.

An attorney by trade, Ms. Gomez has also served the Virgin Islands as a Virgin Islands Legislator and an educator. As an esteemed member of the Virgin Islands Board of Education, she has helped to create policies and curriculum to better our educational facilities, instruction, certification processes and the safety of our school grounds. Currently, she is the chairperson of the VIBE's Ad Hoc Scholarship Committee.

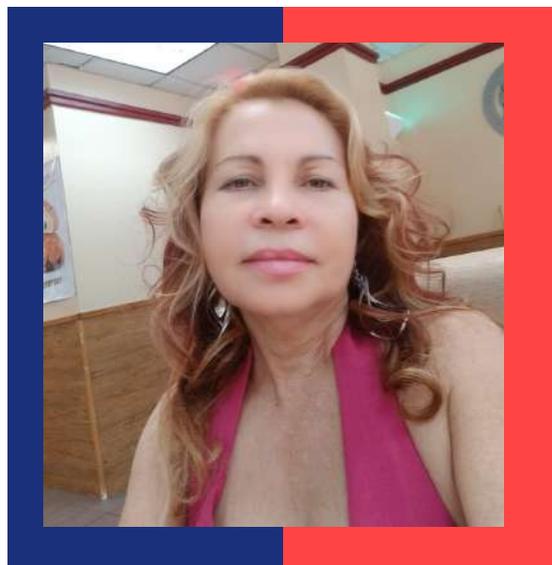
Renowned educator Booker T. Washington once said that he learned the best way to lift one's self up is to help lift someone else. Judy M. Gomez, Esq. has made uplifting the children and people of the Virgin Islands her life's quiet mission. We, the members of the 19th Virgin Islands Board of Education, have seen and admired her dedication, drive and commitment for years. We know her excellence of execution, caring and determination and we join you all in honoring her.

Congratulations, VIBE Member Judy M. Gomez, Esq.!!

*Congratulations,
Ramona A. Patino Diaz!*

From Your Friends at:

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Jungle Night Club Bar +
Rosa's Place Bar & Restaurant**





Congratulations

*to the Honorees of the 3rd Annual V. I.
Women United to Empower Scholarship
Breakfast*

Ms. Sara Connell
Ms. Ramona A Patino Diaz
Ms. Judy Gomez
Ms. Rosalia Rhymer - Rohan

- Senator Donna Frett-Gregory

Email: senatorfrett-gregory@legvi.org
Tel. (340) 693-3686

The American Legion and Auxiliary



**Patrick U. George
Post 90 and Unit 90**



**Congratulates Senator Marvin Blyden on honoring the
following Women United to Empower:**

**Mrs. Sara Connell, Ms. Romona a. Patino Diaz
Ms. Judy Gomez, Mrs. Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan**

Thank you for your service

Congratulations

Atty. Judy M. Gomez

**“You are a Woman of Various Seasons,
who has accepted and embraced each Season
of Your Existence and has shown us that, it
was just that, A Season....We have Learned
from You, We are Proud of You and We cherish
You...**

God’s Richest Blessings,

SPARKS YOUTH ORGANIZATION



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PRESIDENT'S CLUB

Congratulations

JUDY M. GOMEZ, ESQ.

You are most deserving of this Honor.

*Thanks for being the kind and loyal mother,
grandmother and sister that You are.*

*You have helped to create an atmosphere in our home
where love and fairness are dispensed freely and the
spiritual and physical needs of all are met.*

Your Family

JUSTIN BROTHERS

QUALITY MACHINING & WELDING



**Congratulations
to the honorees:**

**Sara Connell
Judy M. Gomez
Ramona A. Patino Diaz
Rosalia Rhymer-Rohan**

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Congratulations
to the
Honorees!

*Thank you for your
service to our
community.*

Thank You, Patrons!

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Bernadine Barnes
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