

ST CROIX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2019 Excellence in Business Awards Gala

#chamberstrong





Congratulations!

Business of the Year Nominees and Winners

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Yanelly Marinez - Central High School

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members and Friends of The Chamber,

On behalf of The St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to the Excellence in Business Awards Gala. This evening is an opportunity to recognize individuals and businesses who have thrived and contributed to the success of St. Croix in 2018.

For most, the past 18 months have been far from the norm with many homes and businesses destroyed from the passing storms. As always, our Crucian community has proven to be a resilient and resourceful group able to persevere and overcome any obstacle in our path. This is a testament to all of us here tonight. As our theme suggests, we are: Chamber Strong. As a unified business sector we play a vital role in fueling the local economy and providing opportunities for fellow Virgin Islanders. We will push forward together.

St. Croix saw a great deal of change and hope in 2018. New business owners have embarked on the journey to succeed as entrepreneurs. Many longtime business owners adapted to the ever changing economic landscape and remain cornerstones of our society. The St. Croix Chamber Board of Directors would like to thank you all for your ongoing commitment to the betterment of our community and for never giving up in the face of adversity. Much can be said for those who have overcome the hardships we've endured and still been able to succeed in providing for our families and friends.

Tonight we'd like to especially recognize the offices of Governor Bryan and Congresswoman Plaskett for being with us on this special occasion. Our relationship has certainly strengthened over the past few years and we look forward to your continued support of our vision for St. Croix. We must work together to accomplish our goals and correct issues surrounding our island.

Lastly, and most importantly, we each need to reflect on how we can individually affect change. Each and every day should be filled with purpose and all of us should be mindful that our individual efforts can support a greater purpose. St. Croix is poised for resurgence and the St. Croix Chamber is here to facilitate the private sector in disrupting the status quo.

Congratulations again to all the nominees and please enjoy an eventful evening.

Respectfully yours,

Ryan Nelthropp

Chairman of the Board, St. Croix Chamber of Commerce



Ryan Nelthropp, Chairman of the Board
Marshall & Sterling Insurance

John Lewis, Vice Chair
Lewis Consulting

Diane Butler, Former Chair
St Croix Explorer Map | Sunny Shore Inc.

O'Neil Canton
Mario's Virgin Crystal LLC | Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls of the VI

Amy Parker DeSorbo
St George Village Botanical Garden | Matt Brown, LMT

Leon Hughes
NEARiX, LLC

Gechani Martinex
Bengoa's AC

Maria de Jesus F. Pogue
Maria's Cantina

Anastacia Rivers
New Attitude Television Show Inc.

Kirk G. Thompson
N2 The Blue

Nancy Torres
Glass 2000, Inc.

Emily Weston
Lyric Sails

Alexandra Worede
iCycle

Patricia Worede
Bank of St Croix

James M. Oliver
Honorary Member



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

On behalf of the Office of the Governor, I am both honored and excited to congratulate the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce and its honorees on this occasion of your Annual Excellence in Business Awards Gala. I join with all those who have come in support of those businesses, individuals and non-for profit-organizations who have distinguished themselves through service and leadership over the last year in saying "job well done"!

Since 1924, when the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce officially commenced the representation of industrial, agricultural, and commercial interests on St. Croix, you have encouraged responsible growth on St Croix and throughout the territory. Understanding that to have a strong economic environment you must have a strong community, we are encouraged by the work of your members to improve the quality of life for all through the sponsorship of academic scholarships and educational initiatives, testimony on legislation that offers economic success, informational forums which bring the public together with leaders from the public and private sectors and more.

With the Chamber recognized as one of our territory's most important catalysts for change, the Bryan-Roach Administration looks forward to working with you to support a business-friendly environment which benefits your members and the communities we all serve.

With a hearty thank you for your commitment, I extend best wishes for a successful Awards Gala,

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

STACEY PLASKETT
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Congress of the United States
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
SENATOR WHIP

A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN STACEY E. PLASKETT

On behalf of the Members of the 116th Congress, my staff and myself, I would like to extend congratulations to the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce in celebration of their Annual Business and Professional Excellence Awards Gala.

The St. Croix Chamber of Commerce have done an outstanding service in highlighting how businesses are helping to solve today's greatest challenges through innovation, efficiency, capital, and collaboration. I offer my appreciation and gratitude for the Chamber's continued efforts, dedication and service which have helped to leverage resources, expertise, and talent to make a positive impact in the Virgin Islands.

I take this opportunity to congratulate those individuals, businesses, and organizations who will be recognized for their accomplishments in the following categories to include, New Business of the Year, Small Business of the Year, Business of the Year, Non-Profit of the Year, Professional Woman of the Year, Professional Man of the Year and Donkey Years Award. You have demonstrated unique vision, innovation and achievement in support of our economy and business community.

Congratulations and best wishes!

Sincerely,

Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

kac

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33rd Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Office of the Senate President

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CHAIRMAN:
Committee of the Whole

COMMITTEE MEMBER:
Youth, Sports, Parks & Recreation
Housing, Transportation & Infrastructure
Telecommunications
Hubs & Judiciary

The Honorable
Kenneth L. Gittens
Senate President

March 30, 2019

Good Evening,


On behalf of the 33rd Legislature, it is my pleasure to extend greetings to the members and guests of the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce. It is also my honor to extend congratulations to all of tonight's fine nominees in the various categories.

As our Territory continues to rebound and recover from the devastating storms of the 2017 Hurricane Season, we remain proud of our business community for the many challenges met and overcome. You have demonstrated true resiliency, dedication and a real commitment to our recovery.

As I peruse the list of nominees for the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce Annual Excellence in Business Awards, I am encouraged about the economic future of the Virgin Islands. Our community is only as strong as the people in it and I remain proud to support the Chamber and its members.

Thank you all for your ongoing efforts to support the economic development and overall well-being of our beloved Territory.

Regards,



Kenneth L. Gittens
Senate President

"Restoring Unity and Trust through Vision and Integrity"

Schedule

- 6pm Cocktail hour
Music by Jazz Central
Welcoming Remarks
- 7pm Dinner
CoralFire Glow Show
Keynote Speaker, Geraldine Pitt
Office of the Delegate
Chamber Awards Presentation
Office of the Governor
Closing Remarks
Dancing - DJ Unlimited Sounds

Menu

- Mahi w/Ginger-Lemon Sauce
- Roast Beef Au Jus
- Chicken w/Mushroom Sauce
- Pasta Primavera
- Seasoned Rice
- Fresh Steamed Vegetables
- Assorted Salads
- Assorted Desserts
- Rolls & Butter
- Fruit Punch or Ice Tea



Cash Bar

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Geraldine Pitt VIYA CEO

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Geraldine Pitt joined Viya as Chief Executive Officer in November 2018.

Prior to her current role, she held executive positions in telecommunications enterprises throughout the region for over 12 years. Her experience includes Chief Executive Officer roles for multi-island operations for Digicel and Cable and Wireless across the islands of Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica and St. Lucia.

In each of these instances and in her current role, Ms. Pitt became the first female Regional CEO for these entities.

In each of these positions she successfully built networks; improved customer satisfaction; navigated disasters and improved the overall customer-centric culture of the telecoms entities that she managed.

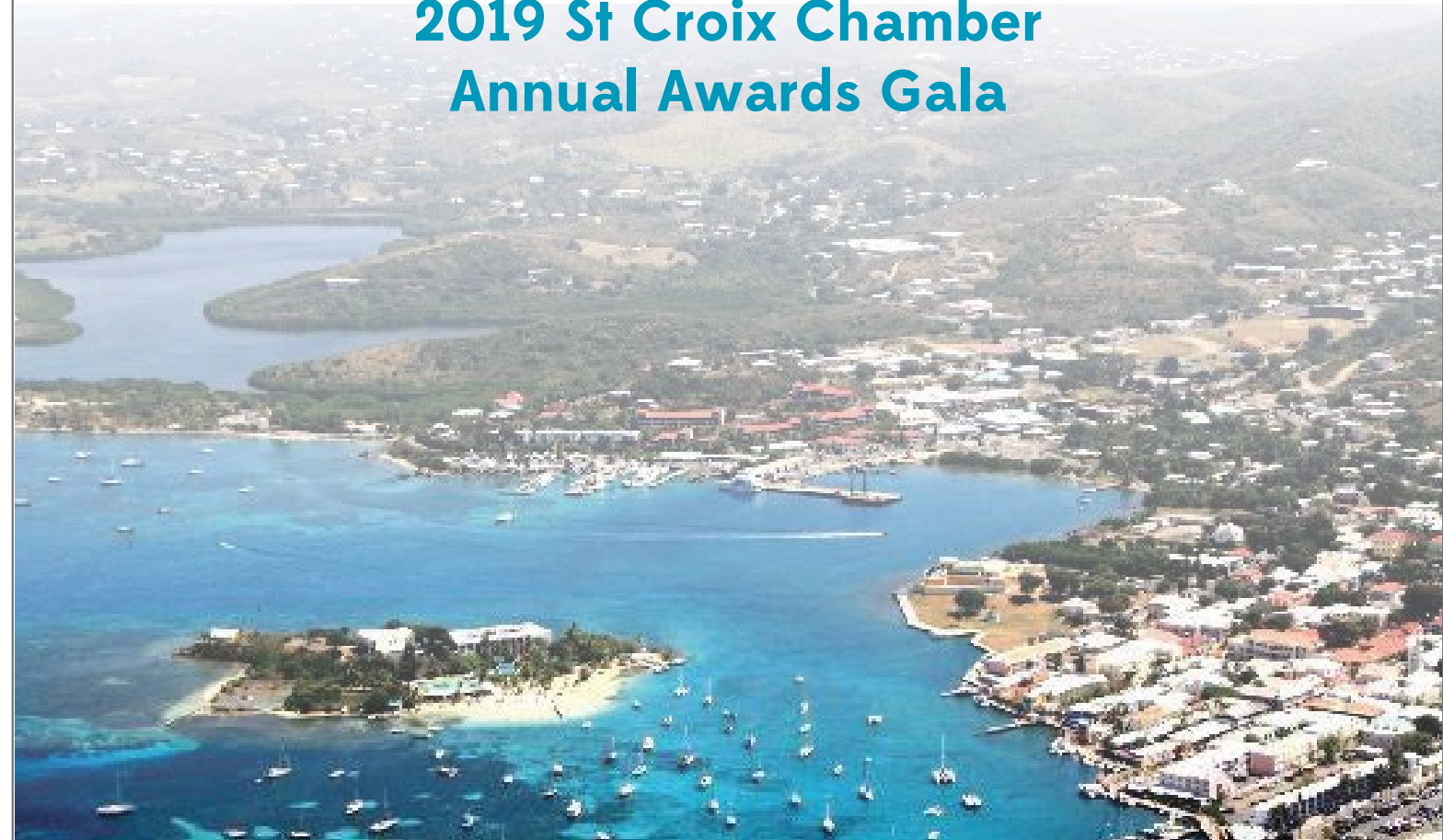
Ms. Pitt is proud to lead the team at the premier telecommunications provider in the US Virgin Islands, Viya.

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2019 St Croix Chamber Annual Awards Gala



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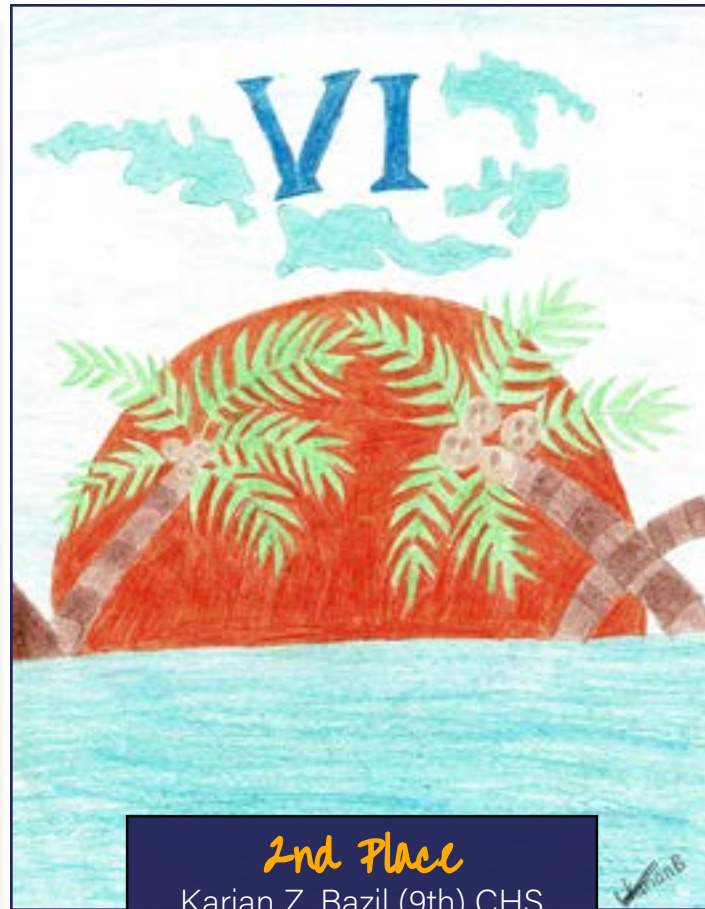
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The vibe that connects us.



1st Place
Yannelly Marinez (10th) CHS



2nd Place
Karian Z. Bazil (9th) CHS



3rd Place
Ethan Stamper (12th) GHCDS

This year, high school students across the island were invited to participate in an art contest for our Gala Booklet cover.

A number of talented young artists submitted their work and the Chamber Board of Directors voted on their favorites to grace the cover of this booklet.

Cash prizes were awarded to the young artists in the top three spots.

- 1st Place \$150
- 2nd Place \$100
- 3rd Place \$50

Supporting Education

CHAMBER SCHOLARSHIP

During the early 2000s a scholarship fund was established by board members of the St Croix Chamber of Commerce for students interested in degrees that encouraged entrepreneurship. With a subsequent change in the board, the money accrued in an account.

The first scholarship was awarded in 2016 and currently, three college students benefit from the Chamber's scholarship funds.

In June 2018, the St Croix Chamber of Commerce Scholarship was presented to St Croix High School senior, Sahimelique Roebuck, a graduate of the The St. Croix Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC).

Currently, the scholarship is a \$4,000 award paid out over 4 years at \$1,000 per year to a recipient majoring in Business Management, Administration and/or related fields such as, but not limited to, Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Information Technology and who has completed 60 hours of community service. Last year, the Chamber awarded an additional smaller scholarship to runner up Lily Grouby, a graduate of St Croix Central High School.

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Interested in donating to the Chamber Scholarship Fund?
Email us at info@stxchamber.org or contact a Board Member.



Scholarship recipient Sahimelique Roebuck (center) with her mother and the Chamber Board

Meet the Nominees

2019 EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS

The St. Croix Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce this year's nominees for the **Excellence in Business Awards** based on their respective contributions to the community and economic growth of St Croix. According to Chamber Chairman, Ryan Nelthropp:

“The gala is the Chamber’s annual premier event to recognize and offer well deserved accolades to all of our member businesses. We are especially excited about this year’s nominees as they have demonstrated over the last year their willingness to go that extra mile to demonstrate the Chamber’s mission to build a community of caring, optimism and collaborative work for the common good.”

Best New Business of the Year

- iCycle
- Leatherback Brewing Company
- Sunny Shore, Inc.

Small Business of the Year

- Cultured Naturals Body Care
- CHOP Bar & Grill
- My Girlfriend’s Closet

Business of the Year

- BJ Electric
- KAC 357, Inc. dba Plaza Extra West
- Plessen Healthcare, LLC

Nonprofit of the Year

- Cane Bay Cares, a division of Cane Bay Partners
- Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls of the VI
- Women’s Coalition of St Croix

Business Woman of the Year

- Elena Hensley
- Emily Weston
- Pat Worede

Business Man of the Year

- Ed Buckley
- Nazario Navarro
- Derek Shupe

Donkey Years Award

- Bohlke International Airways
- Budget Rent A Car, LLC
- Gertrude’s Restaurant

Lifetime Achievement Award

- John Macy
- Sweeny Toussaint
- Dr. Marlon Williams

BEST NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

ICYCLE

Find your escape and get into your zone at the new spot to have fun while you workout! If you're ready to be your best self and build long, lean muscles then check out iCycle - a boutique indoor cycling studio that offers dynamic classes led by energetic and friendly instructors.

This low impact workout is great for all fitness levels! Classes that are like a dance party on the bike- the room is dark, the music is on point, the disco lights flash and the energy is high! Stop by and check out what the buzz is about! Located in downtown Christiansted, across from the Caravelle Casino and up the boardwalk from Shupe's.



LEATHERBACK BREWING COMPANY

Leatherback Brewing Company proudly produces and distributes authentic Virgin Islands craft beer with uniquely Caribbean grown ingredients and influences alongside traditional beer styles. They aim to build the community and culture around well crafted beer and to celebrate and steward our Caribbean life!

Each of the owners had followed their own path into the world of craft beer, however they all agreed that St. Croix was the perfect place to continue the journey. Three of the four founders proudly call this Caribbean island home and the fourth doesn't miss a chance to work and play in this sunny locale.



SUNNY SHORE, INC.

Nick Goldman and Diane Butler started Sunny Shore Up food truck in 2016 serving breakfast at Cane Bay Beach and serving lunch at special events where needed around the island.

They have been serving up generous servings of scrumptious food at Leatherback Brewery, Point Udall sunrise Jan first, J'ouvert morning in Frederiksted, Mardi Croix parade and various other events including servicing one of the "kitchens" at this year's Inaugural Ball.



Recently, business partners Nick and Diane opened the Sunny Shack at Gentle Winds Condos, a private beach bar for residents. Stay Tuned for the next food truck ...

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

CULTURED NATURALS BODY CARE

Cultured Naturals Body Care's products are purely plant based, featuring powerful botanicals and essential oils that are gentle and functional enough to take care of the entire family. Cultured Naturals has a baby line and will be launching a men's line and makeup line shortly. Ramone also offers product making classes and often collaborates with other local entrepreneurs to create products, services and events at her store.

Ramone started her college studies in the Bahamas at 15 years with a focus in Chemistry where after she received a full scholarship to the University of Havana to study medicine. She moved to Cuba where she had gotten the opportunity to chase her dreams of becoming a doctor.

Due to the political climate within Cuba, she left with a diploma in Spanish Language and continued her studies in Jamaica, earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing to become a Registered Nurse. Ramone practiced nursing for a few years and then started her grad studies at Nova Southeastern University, Nassau and Fort Lauderdale where she completed her MBA.

Ramone's greatest accomplishment was overcoming illness and then in 2017 and 2018, having her daughters Juliett and Gracie now 11 months and 21 months old. The babies, young entrepreneurs in their own right, are the faces of the Cultured Naturals Baby line. Ramone, a "mompreneur" opts to take her babies to work with her at the store. Customers who visit the Christiansted store always are delighted to be greeted when they come in with a smile, coo or little wave.



CHOP BAR & GRILL

CHOP (Crucian Hospitality Our Promise) & Grill Restaurant is a family friendly restaurant that focuses on quality affordable meals. They offer breakfast, lunch and dinner all day served up with a huge dose of Crucian Hospitality! CHOP specializes in comfort, local and continental foods and aim to partner with as many local farmers and vendors as possible to create an authentic Crucian experience. December 9th will be their 10 year anniversary and they are truly grateful that our community has embraced and supported us for all of these years.

Owner Sana Joseph Smith was born in St. Croix, VI, and is a graduate of the University of Virginia. Her affinity for finances took root in college when she assisted her peers in creating and balancing their personal budgets after receiving their financial aid refunds. Sana's career in financial services officially began in 1999, as a Business and Retail Lender for a major bank in the DC Metropolitan area where she subsequently became a Branch Manager and Small Business Lender.

While continuing to work as a loan officer, Sana became the founder and director of Strategic Solutions Network, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Strategic Solutions

promotes financial literacy and encourages employability through a variety of seminars within the community. Through partnerships with numerous local businesses, organizations, and government agencies, Strategic has trained thousands of students, at-risk youth, adults, and businesses across

the Virgin Islands and the DC metro area. Sana is a partner in PJP Real Estate Development and Management Partnership, which owns several investment properties. She opened IHOP St. Croix December 9, 2009 and later transitioned to CHOP & Grill Restaurant March 1, 2016.



MY GIRLFRIEND'S CLOSET

My Girlfriend's Closet is a darling boutique that aims to 'Empower Women Through Fashion, Faith & Friendship!'

Opened in 2011, this locally owned gem is the vision of owner, Khnuma Simmonds (aka The Chic Trendsetter) and inspired by her closest girlfriends - Carmen ('Mom' aka The Comfy Athlete), Xaulanda ('Big Sis' aka The Classy Professional) and Xauskya ('Mini Me' aka The Chic Bohemian) - whose eclectic styles are represented throughout the boutique.

Nestled on King & Prince Street, MGC is housed on a family-owned property with both historical and fashionable narratives as well as Fine Art by Virgin Islands artist, El'Roy Simmonds. When the boutique is not a 'safe space' for women to embrace their God-given beauty and express their personality language through fashion or a creative space for impromptu artist talks, MGC serves as the home for 'Wisdom Walk Talks' which are inter-generational conversations for women, by women which have included 'Sex, Science & Spirituality' by Dr. Micah McIntosh and 'The Art of Forgiveness' by Dr. Migdalia Brathwaite - just to name a few. Serving as a fashion 'hub' for women who are empowered by uplifting other women, MGC considers all of their supporters 'girlfriends' whose photos can be found framing the boutique, illuminating our social media pages and crafting the handmade, women-owned designs that are offered in the store.

Beyond fashion, MGC is built on faith and sustained by genuine friendships that have been cultivated and nurtured. It is this 'love' that has given birth to MGC's St. Croix born and nationally known campaign - Girlfriendism™ - which shares a spirit of empowerment among women while embracing the soul of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands! To learn more, visit My Girlfriend's Closet on Face Book or Instagram '@mgcstx' or shop online at www.mgcstx.com. Until next time, we appreciate your love, support and Girlfriendism!



BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



BJ ELECTRIC

BJ Electric, Inc is an Electrical contractor, owned and operated by Bravely Joseph, who's been with the company since 1997.

BJ Electric Inc specializes in trouble shooting electrical systems for residential and commercial services and installations of electrical equipment and generators.

KAC 357 INC. DBA PLAZA EXTRA WEST

Plaza West is pleased to provide our customers with the best shopping experience, through hard work and the commitment to offering only the finest and freshest foods and taking great care in assembling a team dedicated people of knowledgeable associates, experienced butchers, talented chefs, and friendly service staff.

The Hamed Brothers made it their business to focus on the value of supporting local farmers, non-profit organizations and charities, while offering the finest food selections and savings. Our employees are the greatest asset, 400 strong!

Recently, we partnered up Diane and Gary Brooks to bring the Plastic Drop off & Recycling Project to St Croix. We collected, sorted, bailed and shipped tons of plastic to a recycling facility in the mainland. Plaza West could have not done this without the community and the many volunteers for their hard work, devotion and the love that we all share for our Islands.

We are thankful for our customers and employees and continue remaining deeply dedicated to customer service and community involvement and being a great place to work and shop.



PLESSEN HEALTHCARE, LLC

Plessen Healthcare was founded in 2015 on the fundamental beliefs that world class health care should be accessible to everyone and that the work-place should be a joyful and fulfilling practice for their entire team.

Plessen Healthcare comprises a state of the art, fully CMS accredited Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC), where outpatient surgeries in multiple specialty disciplines including vascular, general surgery, orthopedics, pain management, ophthalmic, plastic and cosmetic surgeries are performed. In addition, Plessen Healthcare's full-service Medical Clinic provides adult general internal medicine and primary care as well as specialty care for all stages of kidney disease and hypertension. Plessen provides high quality surgical and medical care for all who reside in the US Virgin Islands and surrounding territories, regardless of insurance status. They perform approximately 1400 surgeries each year, and see nearly 7,000 patients on an annual basis.

Plessen's ASC has been fully accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, Inc. (AAAHC), since August 2015. Plessen's Medical Group has been certified by CMS as a designated Medical Home since 2017. The accreditation process is underway with completion anticipated in 2020.

Plessen is a proud member of the St Croix community and since their inception has supported numerous local organizations, causes, and events, such as the St. Croix Environmental Association, St. Croix PRIDE, and St. Croix Foundation.

During the aftermath of two category 5 hurricanes in 2017, Plessen sent providers to our sister islands to distribute medical supplies and aid and expanded their services and hours to meet the need of a community facing limited medical resources.

Shortly after the storms they hosted a Health Fair to gather medical providers and services that remained open and ready for business and provided an opportunity for the community to connect with them. Participants were able to receive basic health screenings, information, and much needed guidance which allowed them to maintain some sense of hope and normalcy in such turbulent times.

Due to the damage to the dialysis unit from Hurricane Maria, patients dependent on dialysis were not able to receive this life sustaining treatment of St. Croix. The Plessen doctors were instrumental in helping the dialysis team evacuate these patients to the mainland to receive the care they needed. Once the dialysis facility was re-established and St. Croix was able to meet their needs again, 18 months later, Plessen was here to welcome the patients and families back home and to recognize their difficult journey and suffering away from home.

Dr. Jan Tawakol and his wife, Dr. Tasnim Khan, are the founders of Plessen Healthcare. Through their personal vision, intense commitment to exceed expectations, and a genuine desire to help others - the doctors lead by example. They lead by example to foster an environment of trust and collaboration which has proven instrumental in the success of Plessen Healthcare.



NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

CANE BAY CARES, A DIVISION OF CANE BAY PARTNERS

Cane Bay Cares is a service initiative of St. Croix-based Cane Bay Partners VI, LLLP and a project of local 501c3 St. Croix Foundation. Its long-term mission is to raise awareness and support for critical issues facing the island of St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands.

Cane Bay Cares was established in response to the devastating impact two category five hurricanes had on the USVI with targeted relief efforts on St. Croix. Cane Bay Cares distributed more than 75,000 pounds of supplies, including generators, water, solar lights, food, tools and tarps in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The organization is committed to addressing both short and long-term issues facing the island and its residents. The initiative's long-term focus is on supporting innovative educational programs, particularly its flagship after school program Operation Inspire, slated for the John H. Woodson Junior High School. CBC has continued to work both financially and operationally with the World Ocean School, Coral Reef Academy, Project Promise, KidsCount, and various public schools to help carry out its education-focused mission.

More information can be found at www.canebaycares.org



CARIBBEAN CENTERS FOR BOYS & GIRLS OF THE VI

The Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls of the Virgin Islands, Inc. (CCBGVI) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization which has been at the forefront of youth development since it was founded in 1973 by Donald S. Walker in Frederiksted, St. Croix. The Boys Club of St. Croix, as it was chartered, was a safe home away from home for many young men in the community. In 1974 services were expanded to Christiansted with the opening of the second Club. In 1998 the name was changed to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virgin Islands, as girls were already attending the clubs many years prior. In February of 2018, after becoming independent of the national organization, the name was changed to Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls of the Virgin Islands, Inc.

Throughout its 46 years, the focus has always been on positive youth development. CCBGVI's Vision is to see a Caribbean Center in every island nation in the Caribbean in the next 25 years. Their Mission is to empower all Children of the Caribbean, to take full responsibility of their success through participation in high-quality programming, meaningful collaborations & strong family involvement. This is done by a concentration in the following program areas: academics achievement, social emotional learning, culture, fitness & health and college & career readiness.

CCBGVI conducts its extended learning opportunities during after-school and summer programming where they currently serve over 300 members annually with an average daily attendance of 175. Integral to their daily agenda, is maintaining connections to the regular school day so that members can



build better understanding of what school success means. Data collection and external program evaluations are keys to ensuring their success. They recently partnered with the Department of Education to analyze the data on our members. The comparison of elementary students showed that those students that attend the Clubs are growing at a faster rate towards proficiency than those students who do not attend. The Directors, Certified Teachers and Youth Developers on staff are responsible for fostering these outcomes.

CCBGVI is proud of their local partnerships and has also undertaken efforts on a national scale to secure and include partners like the Denver Institute for Science & Technology with whom they have exchanged students to participate in Leaders In Training (LIT) summer reading programs; volunteers from the Jr Scientists in the Sea (Florida), who SCUBA & PADI certified 20 Club members, some are currently working on a coral restoration program with the Nature Conservancy; and their volunteers from Archeology in our Community (Washington, DC) who are preparing for the third one week summer field study in Terrestrial Archeology also at the Nature Conservancy in La Grande Princesse.

It has been a journey for CCBGVI and even after Hurricanes Irma & Maria destroyed the Christiansted Club (the old Crucian Moon Night Club) and left behind an estimated 1 million dollars in damages, the organization remains resilient and continues to "Re-Brand, Re-Build & Will Continue to Serve..."

WOMENS COALITION OF ST CROIX

Over 38 years ago, a major outcome of a symposium for women writers was the unanimous recognition of the problem of violence against women and children on St. Croix. After the conference, a group of the women continued to meet to address this issue, and the idea for the Women's Coalition of St. Croix (WCSC) was formed.

WCSC's first program started in 1981: a training program for volunteer advocates, to offer supportive crisis intervention for victims of rape. The first crisis center was opened in 1990. WCSC's Sojourner House emergency shelter's doors opened in 1994: the only facility on St. Croix providing support services for victims survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking and their children. Over the years, WCSC also established the Alice Pfaelzer Children's Center for education programs focused on youth, Closet To Closet thrift stores and the first transitional housing program for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the Territory. Other services include 24/7/365 crisis intervention, parenting classes and a support group for survivors of domestic violence.

WCSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, evolving to meet the changing needs of the community. Its current mission is to support and empower people impacted by violence. In 2018, WCSC provided crisis intervention and counseling services to over 1,022 victims survivors with 3,912 follow-up contacts. Additionally, 32 families were sheltered at Sojourner House, and 5 survivors and their children received services through WCSC's Transitional Housing Program. Visit WCSC online at wcstx.org, fb.com/WCSTX, Instagram - @wcstxvi, Twitter - @WCSTX and YouTube - www.youtube.com/wcstx.



BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR

ELENA HENSLEY (DEEP END BAR & GRILL)



Elena Lee Hensley was born in Washington D.C. in 1956. She received a BA Degree in ART from Lynchburg College in Virginia in 1978 and came to St. Croix and started her first job at Central High School as an Art Teacher.

While teaching art she started her first business, Aerobic Dancersize, at The Lutheran Parish Hall in Christiansted. This was the first "Aerobic's Business" licensed in the Virgin Islands.

While "Aerobic Dancersize" was going strong, Elena left Central High School and opened up Creative Catering in 1983, which was based out of the St. Croix Yacht Club on the East End.

In 1986 she continued her aerobics business and opened up Elena's Bay Cafe located at Coakley Bay Condominiums. She married Charles Hensley in 1988 and thought she had sold Elena's Bay Cafe in September of 1989 but Hurricane Hugo "dined at

Elena's" and the sale fell through due to hurricane destruction.

In 1990 she opened up a Gourmet To-Go Delicatessen in Gallows Bay called Anything Goes. After giving birth to her daughter, Jennifer Marie Hensley, she sold the deli and moved her aerobics business to join Doug Menzies at the Beeston Hill Health Club. She went from aerobics Instructor to managing the club in a matter of a few years.

After giving birth to her son, Alexander Charles Hensley, in 1994 she left the Health Club and became the Development Director at St Croix Country Day School in order to keep on the same schedule as her children.

Elena stayed at CDS raising a lot of money through auctions and events for the school for 18 years. She supported numerous non-profit organizations and became aware of the community's needs.

In 2013 Elena left CDS, since her children were now in college, and she bought The Deep End Bar and Grille. She holds many events to help non-profits such as her annual Bartender's Olympics supporting the Animal Welfare Center.

In 2019 she signed another five year lease with the option for another five years at the Deep End Bar.

EMILY WESTON (LYRIC SAILS)



Originally from London, England, Emily has lived on St. Croix for the past 15 years. A love of leatherback sea turtles first brought her to the island and inspired her to pursue a career in marine biology. She earned her undergraduate degree in Marine Science and Biology (along with a BA in English Literature) from the University of Miami and a Master of Science degree in Marine Biology from Florida Atlantic University.

For several years she continued to work as a researcher on the leatherback sea turtle project of St. Croix. Since then, her career has gone through several iterations including positions as a coral reef researcher, environmental educator, veterinary technician, restaurant server and manager, bartender, PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor and a professional photographer,

exhibiting her work in galleries on St. Croix and St. Thomas. She is also a USCG licensed Captain.

In 2015, all these varied skills came together when she bought the 63ft catamaran Jolly Mon and founded Lyric Sails in Frederiksted. Lyric Sails is a charter boat business specializing in sunset sails with live music and private day sails on the West End of St. Croix. After seeing a need for more eating and drinking options in Frederiksted, she opened her second business, Tap Deck Bar & Billiards, in front of the Frederiksted pier in 2017. Tap Deck is a cozy bar and restaurant serving eclectic small bites, craft cocktails, draft beer and wine. Lyric Sails is now conveniently headquartered at Tap Deck so charter guests can grab a quick bite or drink or buy a souvenir-shirt before their sail!

Emily also works actively in the St. Croix community, as a board member of the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce and the Frederiksted Economic Development Association (FEDA). She is a graduate of the 2018 SBA Emerging Leaders Program. When not working at the bar on or the boat, she can be found underwater taking photos or hanging out with her rescue menagerie, including dogs, cats, horses and tortoises.

PAT WOREDE (BANK OF ST CROIX)

Pat was raised on St. Croix and returned home with her husband Yohannes after graduating from Berry College in Rome, Georgia.

She raised her two daughters on St. Croix and has been an active member in the community. She has been in banking for over 25 years and is currently the Vice President of Commercial Lending at Bank of St. Croix. She currently serves on the St Croix Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Pat enjoys meeting her clients and working together with them on many different requests.



BUSINESS MAN OF THE YEAR

ED BUCKLEY (ST CROIX ULTIMATE BLUEWATER ADVENTURES)

Captain Ed Buckley, along with his wife Molly is the owner of St. Croix Ultimate Bluewater Adventures (SCUBA). Ed's time on St. Croix began just over 33 years ago when Metro Airlines purchased Sunaire Airlines to begin doing business as Eastern Metro Express, the code share feeder of Eastern Airlines. Though Eastern's new (at that time) Caribbean hub was based in San Juan the operations base for Eastern Metro Express remained on St. Croix. Ed was brought down as the Vice-President of Marketing for the Caribbean.

Ed took up scuba diving as a hobby while riding his bike through Frederiksted one afternoon and noticed a sign in front of a dive shop advertising scuba classes. It was a hobby that quickly became a passion and he progressed with his training and eventually became a scuba instructor.

In January 1991 Eastern Airlines ceased operations and Eastern Metro Express went back to the Sunaire name and operated as an independent airline. Ed hired his, now, wife Molly as Director of Yield Management for the airline and together they ran the Marketing Department of the airline. Despite the airline's rules against nepotism the two fell in love and, as Molly puts it "I divorced my husband and married my dive Instructor".

In August of 1994 Sunaire folded and the couple, not wanting to leave St. Croix decided to take Molly's background in retail sales and combine it with Ed's scuba diving and go into the dive business. Ed then also became a U.S. Coast Guard certificated Captain.

On July 15, 1998 they opened St. Croix Ultimate Bluewater Adventures (the acronym is SCUBA) in its current location in the Caravelle Arcade in Christiansted.

In October of 2017, not long after two Cat 5 storms visited the island, the couple opened a second dive shop in Frederiksted directly across from the cruise ship pier.

Both locations have custom dive boats and are full service scuba dive centers. Both are also co-located with "Molly's Tropical Boutique".

For all of the twenty plus years that SCUBA has been in business, Ed has been marketing St. Croix across the U.S. at scuba diving consumer shows, telling divers about the world class scuba diving found here on St. Croix.

Ed also performs weddings as both a Captain and Ordained Minister.



NAZARIO "BULLEY" NAVARRO (LOVE-CROIX HELADOS & EATZ)

Nazario Navarro is 39 years old and was born on the beautiful island of St. Croix. From his youth he had an inclination towards becoming an entrepreneur. Today, he is the founder of the Love Croix brand and owner of the Love Croix Heraldo's & Eatz Restaurant. The Love Croix brand continues to grow. Love Croix Heraldo's & Eatz Restaurant emerged with advertisements of exclusive visuals of the island of St. Croix while promoting and providing delicious-exquisite food. Mr. Nazario believes that to be successful in business one must be passionate and active towards reaching their goals, love people and the community, work diligently and never give up because in life--everything has a time and a place.

Nazario started his business journey selling ice cream. It was not unusual to see him, on the streets of St. Croix, pushing and moving around his colorful--vibrant ice cream cart. Thereafter, he moved forward by acquiring a food truck, which has become an outdoor food truck restaurant selling delicious Latin Cuisine. His Facebook page, Love-Croix, which began as a picture taking hobby, continues to generate millions of views globally. Now, it is one of the most viewed social media pages in our community. Such a large virtual audience has contributed to the success of Navarro's business, even so that many individuals have personally visited the island of St. Croix, to personally visit with "Bulley" as his friends know him.. He has an online Amazon-Clothing store connected to his Facebook page. Recently he has become involved in the music industry, inspired by the voice of Kruziano, a young man that he has been mentoring. Mr. Navarro seeks ways to inspire and engage the youths in our community.

Nazario will soon retire from the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority after 20 years of dedicated service in order to dedicate more time to his business pursuits. Mr. Nazario is married to Marilyn Laurencin and they are the proud parents of two beautiful daughters



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BUSINESS MAN OF THE YEAR (cont.)

DEREK SHUPE (BREW STX & SHUPES ON THE BOARDWALK)

Derek Shupe moved to St. Croix in 2006. Upon his arrival, he worked construction during the day and in the evenings he worked at Club 54 & Bongo's. In 2007 he was hired as the manager at the Fort Christian Brew Pub and successfully ran it for the next seven years. During that time he partnered with Kurt Schindler and they purchased and built the Heineken floating stage where they have held several concerts and shows including the world famous DJ group, Major Lazer.

October of 2014 Derek purchased the lease at the restaurant at Chenay Bay. After some extensive renovations Shoreline at Chenay Bay was open for business in December 2014. In November of 2015 Derek purchased the lease to the old STIXX location and opened Shupe's on the Boardwalk. Shupe's is best known for their build your own burgers and a great place to stop in on the boardwalk to grab a nice cold beverage and enjoy the view of the Christiansted harbor.

In June of 2016 a fire destroyed Shoreline at Chenay Bay restaurant. This did not slow Derek down because in August of 2016 he bought the lease to the former Fort Christian Brew Pub. He renamed it Brew STX and not only are they serving lunch and dinner but brewing their own beer in house.

In July of 2017 Derek married his beautiful wife, Jenn, who now works with him in the day to day operations of both businesses. Shupe's on the Boardwalk combined with Brew STX has helped rejuvenate the boardwalk and nightlife in downtown Christiansted.



DONKEY YEARS AWARD

BOHLKE INTERNATIONAL AIRWAYS

Bohlke International Airways was established in 1959 by Bill Bohlke, Sr.

Bill Sr. left Spring Valley, New York with the dream of starting an airline in the Caribbean and landed on the beautiful island of St. Croix. Over the years, Bill Sr. was involved in the commuter airline business, air cargo, flight school and maintenance services. His son, Bill Bohlke Jr., soon followed in his father's footsteps. He came to the island when he was sixteen to help with family aviation endeavors and build the business.

Unknown to Bill Bohlke Sr., one of his customers (Richard Wolfferts, Sr.) would help continue the family aviation legacy and grow the company via marriage. Wolfferts, Sr. was a stone crab fisherman from the Florida Keys. He looked for a place to plant roots in the Caribbean-- from St. Lucia to Trinidad, Puerto Rico, even a consideration of Cuba prior to the revolution-- before settling on St. Croix. Bohlke, Sr. began flying fresh lobster off to Puerto Rico for Wolfferts, Sr. It was via this business relationship, that Bill Bohlke Jr. and Ruth Ann (Tuddy) Wolfferts, were set-up on a blind date. They married in 1966 at the young ages of 19 and 20 respectively.

The couple worked well together, further expanding the family aviation business through many exciting stages – 'Virgin Islands Airways' and 'Eastern Caribbean Air' – until 1984 when Bohlke International Airways was officially formed.

Today, Bohlke, LLC is an award-winning FBO (fixed-base operator), charter fleet and 145 repair station. Bill and Tuddy's son, William Richard (Billy) Bohlke, is acting president and chief pilot, with his parents retired and acting in advisory roles to the business.

Bohlke International Airways is majority family-owned and operated. However, the company would not be what it is today, if not for all the hardworking team members, some of whom have been with the company for more than 35 years. In this sense, Bohlke International Airways embraces the word 'family' in its true Caribbean meaning – a warm and friendly community of people who are united in their desire to support each other, serve and excel.

The company celebrates sixty years in business in 2019. More information can be found at Bohlke.com.



Budget Rent a car, LLC of St. Croix, a local franchise, has been in business from 1977, started by Roy Trantham with two locations, (the Ford dealership then Armstrong Ford and the King Christian Hotel in Christiansted).

The company then moved to the then, Alexander Hamilton Airport, (now Henry E. Rohlsen Airport) in January 1984 and have two locations, the airport and the downtown Prince Street location. Budget was started when the owners saw the need for the visitor's transportation experience to discover our island paradise.

Budget's vision has always been to be a growth-oriented car rental company with the focus of delivering top class customer service, the best quality product and great value that make customers confident that Budget St. Croix is their best choice for their car rental needs. Budget has a diversified fleet of cars, SUVs, jeeps, vans and trucks.

Led by the General Manager (Careel Shillingford), Budget St. Croix has a professional, caring and customer service focused staff who believes that excellence in the workplace and outstanding customer service are two of the most important aspects which will move our STX paradise to the next level. Budget has received numerous awards from both corporate and local organizations & has been the recipient of the Daily News "Best Car Rental" for the past eight years.

In the words of Maya Angelou, Shillingford says that Budget's staff has learned that "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel".

BUDGET RENT A CAR, LLC



DONKEY YEARS AWARD (cont.)

GERTRUDE'S RESTAURANT

Gertrude Tuckett Gumbs was born in 1947 on the island of St. Kitts. She arrived on St. Croix in 1967, and started working for the Herbert Grigg Home as a Nurse's Aide 1, making \$69 every two weeks. She had to work three jobs in order to meet her financial obligations, in other words, just to make ends meet.

In 1969, after relentless urging by family members to pursue her passion for cooking, Gertrude took up the challenge. She started out from the back of her blue Vauxhall Beaver, selling pastries at different construction sites. She then added sandwiches, and later expanded to a station wagon. Business was booming, the opportunity was there, there was a surge in construction throughout St. Croix. In 1970, Gertrude designed a make-shift van in which she could stand and started selling food. In 1975, Gertrude flowed with the economic boom and ordered a state-of-the-art stainless steel van, and started serving breakfast at locations with the larger concentration of employees and where there was a serious void in the provisioning of meals. She serviced VITELCO's Central Office, Mark 21, the Hess Refinery, WAPA, the Stone Quarry, and others, then hustled back home in time to pick up and return ready with succulent, tasty well-known Caribbean dishes for the lunch session. Gertrude had become the Number 1 Mobile Concession Icon for those populous worksites around St. Croix. It was obvious that she had to make the next step.

Gertrude started laying the foundation for the development of her restaurant in 1992, and within a year of focused construction, completed the project and was ready for opening. She needed a name for the establishment. She queried family members and close friends for a suitable name for the facility. It was obvious. She was already an Icon on St. Croix, "Gertrude's" it is! Gertrude's is a full-service facility: catering, in-house or delivery; conference Room for meetings; areas to host weddings/receptions, reunions, parties, etc.

A very, very hard and seemingly tireless worker, with little time for personal recreation as we know it, Gertrude developed a strong generosity towards helping her community. Among her favorite agencies she supports are, The American Red Cross, St. Ann's Church, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the St. Croix Animal Shelter Flea Market, and Relay For Life, to name a few.



Gertrude is married to Collins McRoy Gumbs, and they have one son, Anthony Gumbs.

Gertrude intends to keep on providing the best West Indies cuisine, until she starts the next chapter in life by gardening, taking care of her three dogs, Bully, Junior and Queenie, and traveling.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

JOHN MACY (BIG BEARD'S ADVENTURE TOURS)

In January of 1979, John Macy decided on seeking a new way of life and headed out.

He landed on St. Croix to visit a friend and is still here! On his third day on the island he secured a job as a crew member on the Sea Spy, part of the Buck Island fleet at the time. Macy got his captain's license, diving certification, etc and eventually worked his way to part owner, and then owner.

After 40 years John says, "I am proud of where we are now. I served on several committees within the Hotel Association, was one of the founding members of the Christiansted Restaurant and Retail Association, and was on the Boardwalk Committee during its expansion.



Big Beards Adventure Tours has donated hundreds, if not thousands, of trips to various charity groups over the years, and have taken out countless school children on class excursions. Then, when our newest boat, the Adventure, arrived, I donated our original catamaran, the Flyer, to the Boys and Girls Club. And yes, I've been Santa Claus a time or two.

It has been a great ride, and given the choice I would do it all over again, I have turned over the operation of Big Beard's Adventure Tours to Steve Kammerzelt, but you can still find me on the boardwalk greeting the boats as they come in. I continue to love St. Croix for the beautiful place it is."

SWEENY TOUSSAINT (SWEENY'S TAXI & SAFARI TOURS)

Sweeny Toussaint has lived on St. Croix for 54 yrs

After graduating from high school, he enrolled in the Trinidad and Tobago Hotel Training School, where he graduated in Back of the House Management. He was then hired by the Trinidad Hilton Hotel. He worked there for two years as a Bartender/ Wine Sommelier.

Sweeny was then hired by The Grapetree Bay and Beach Hotels on St. Croix where he worked for two years before being drafted into the US Army.

After his military obligation, he returned to the Grapetree Bay and Beach Hotels as a Desk Clerk.

While working his way through the ranks, Sweeny was selected by the hotel owners to attend Cornell University Hotel Management School. On return, he became the General Manager in 1972, a position he held for 15 years.

In 1988 he opened Sweeny's Tours, a Destination Management Company. His son Andre now manages the company and his wife Yvonne is Secretary. Sweeny has three other boys, Marlon, Sweeny III, and Akil.

Sweeny served as the President of the St. Croix Hotel Association, President of Friends Of Denmark Society, President of the Rotary Club of Mid Isle, President of Grapetree Bay Home-owners Association, Board member of: St. George Village Botanical Society, St. Croix Chamber Of Commerce, The Caribbean Hotel Association.



MARLON S. WILLIAMS

Dr. Marlon S. Williams was born on the island of Trinidad in 1956.

He first saw St. Croix in the late sixties when his parents moved here. At age eighteen he joined the U.S. military and served with the 82nd Airborne Division, America's guard of honor.

After military service he enrolled at Western Kentucky University to study pre med and also to train for the Olympic Games. Dr. Williams graduated as a Chiropractic Physician from Logan Chiropractic College in 1985 and established Williams Chiropractic in 1988 which is still serving this community today. He is happily married to his wife, Cindy, for almost forty years. Their two sons, Sheldon and Jason, have followed in their father's footsteps as Chiropractic Physicians.

As a life-long distance runner and marathoner, Marlon represented the Virgin Islands at the 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games. Over two decades he also represented at several Pan American Games, Central American Games and World Cross Country Championships. Recently he was inducted into the Virgin Islands Track and Field Federation Hall of Fame. Marlon also served as team doctor and Vice President of the Virgin Islands Olympic Committee from 1996-2008. He is currently serving as president of the Virgin Islands chapter of the World's Olympian Association.

Having been retired from practice for almost twelve years, Marlon's passions involve staying fit, life coaching, spending time with his grandchildren and helping to establish a Children's Museum on St. Croix.





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Hosting a BAH is a great opportunity to get your business in front of potential clients and customers. Like ribbon cuttings, BAH events are promoted to our membership and the public through our email newsletters, social media posts, website articles and press releases.

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The Chamber works for small and large businesses on the island of St Croix as well as supporting pro-business governmental initiatives. Advocacy on behalf of the business community is a cornerstone of the Chamber's mission.

For more information and ways to become involved, visit our website at www.stxchamber.org and be sure to sign up for our email newsletters.



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