



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2020

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Governor Bryan Proclaims Virgin Islands Freedom Week

Proclamation also Honors National Caribbean American Heritage Month

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has issued a proclamation declaring June 29-July 3 – the same week Virgin Islanders celebrate Emancipation Day and Independence Day – as Virgin Islands Freedom Week and National Caribbean American Heritage Month.

“The United States Virgin Islands continues to contribute to the historic heritage narratives, notable achievements of excellence, cultural legacy quests and self-determination liberties with its unique and diverse representation of people, culture, heritage, technology and spirit of the Caribbean,” Governor Bryan said.

The annual observance of National Caribbean American Heritage Month is designated for commemorations, recognitions and celebrations for people of Caribbean ancestry in the Virgin Islands, Caribbean Americas and globally to reaffirm their multicultural ties.

“Virgin Islanders have been active participants on the world stage of ingenuity, communications, trade, international diplomacy, education, art, medicine, law, architecture/engineering, literature and many other fields,” Governor Bryan said.

July 3, Emancipation Day in the Territory, celebrates the day in 1848 that slaves on St. Croix followed Moses General Buddhoe Gottlieb and Admiral Martin King and marched on Frederiksted, demanding the freedom of enslaved Africans. They pulled up the whipping post and tossed it into the sea and marched on Fort Frederik and threatened to burn down the town and the entire island unless Governor General Peter Von Scholten freed them.

Minutes before the deadline, Governor Von Scholten arrived from St. Thomas and declared: “All unfree in the Danish West Indies are from today free,” freeing all enslaved persons in the Danish West Indies from the bonds of chattel.

“I urge all people of the Virgin Islands to take a moment and reflect that had it not been for the brave efforts of our ancestors that came before us, we would have never been able to enjoy and experience the freedoms that we have today, and to also remember our heritage; it is who we are as a people and a culture,” Governor Bryan said.

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